



**VOICE
4CHANGE
ENGLAND**

HOUSING TOOLKIT

Everyone deserves access to healthy housing

At Voice4Change England, we fight for safe, healthy, and equitable housing for all.

London is diverse and vibrant –but also expensive and unequal. Black and Minoritised Ethnic Londoners are disproportionately affected, facing overcrowding, unsafe conditions, and skyrocketing rents. Decades of neglect have weakened social housing, leaving too many communities without stability or dignity.

Housing is more than bricks and mortar: it shapes health, education, economic security, and community life. It can either empower or exclude, and currently, far too many families are paying the price of systemic inequality. Average rents in London now reach £2,695 per month, and vulnerable families face impossible choices, and sometimes with tragic consequences, as in the case of two-year-old Awaab Ishak.

The UK housing system also perpetuates inequality for asylum seekers, disabled people, and low-income renters, forcing many into temporary accommodation or unsafe conditions. These disparities affect education, health, social cohesion, and economic opportunity, but they can be addressed.

London alone needs 88,000 new homes every year, but it's not just about numbers. We need homes that are truly affordable, safe, energy-efficient, and built in historically overlooked communities.

Insights from our internal housing roundtable will guide our ongoing advocacy efforts. This toolkit is for everyone whose housing struggles are too often invisible. At Voice4Change England, we advocate for a housing system that is safe, accessible, environmentally conscious, racially equitable, and humane.

Housing must be the foundation of a fairer society.



Housing Roundtable: Visual Toolkit of Key Sources

1. Racial Inequities & Discrimination in Housing

Black and Minoritised Ethnic people face higher housing insecurity:

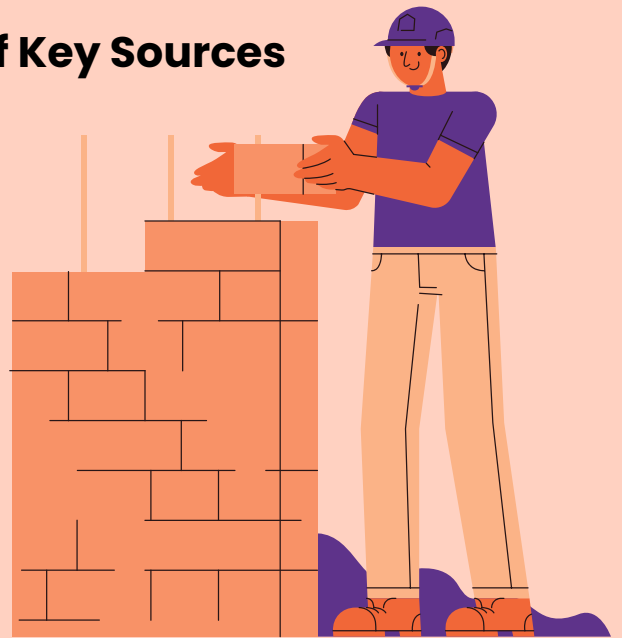
Black Londoners are nearly 3x more likely to live in social housing (Ethnicity Facts & Figures).

One in three Black Caribbean, Black African, and Pakistani households report discrimination in private renting (Single Homeless Project).

Property agencies have been shown to refuse flats to Black tenants (Lynn & Davey, 2013).

Systemic racism in housing contributes to homelessness (Single Homeless Project; Trust for London; Heriot-Watt University & Shelter via Housing Digital).

Evidence shows discrimination is often subtle, unconscious, and hard to prove (Fitzpatrick et al., 2024).



2. Private Renting & Affordability

Three-fifths of private renters cannot afford the cost of living (New Economics Foundation – Three-fifths of private renters cannot afford the cost of living).

Rising rents and unstable housing impact young and over-50 renters (Big Issue – Why are rents so high and will they keep going up?; BBC – Over-50s turn to house-shares to beat rising rents).

Historical and generational challenges make buying a home difficult (World Economic Forum – Why it's harder for young people to buy a house now; BBC – More adults living with their parents).

Stories of financial impact highlight renter vulnerability (Generation Rent – James's Story; Generation Rent – Young minority ethnic people priced out of communities).

Homelessness amongst Black and minoritised ethnic communities in the UK: a statistical report on the state of the nation ([Heriot-Watt University – Homelessness amongst Black and minoritised ethnic communities in the UK: a statistical report on the state of the nation](#))

3. Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Unsafe housing can be fatal, e.g., Awaab Ishak case ([Guardian – Father of boy killed by mould in flat welcomes law](#); [Wikipedia – Death of Awaab Ishak](#); [Centre for London – What is Awaab's Law?](#)).

Poor housing affects mental and physical health ([QMUL Policy Brief – Addressing Housing Distress to Improve Health & Wellbeing](#); [Ella Roberta Foundation – Air pollution, housing, and racial justice](#)).

Disabled renters face hidden inequalities ([EHRC – Housing and Disabled People: Britain's Hidden Crisis](#)).

Women's homelessness is under-reported ([SHP – Hidden Homeless Research](#)).

The impact of racialised identities and housing ([Heriot-Watt University – Black and minoritised people feel forced to disguise their identities](#)).

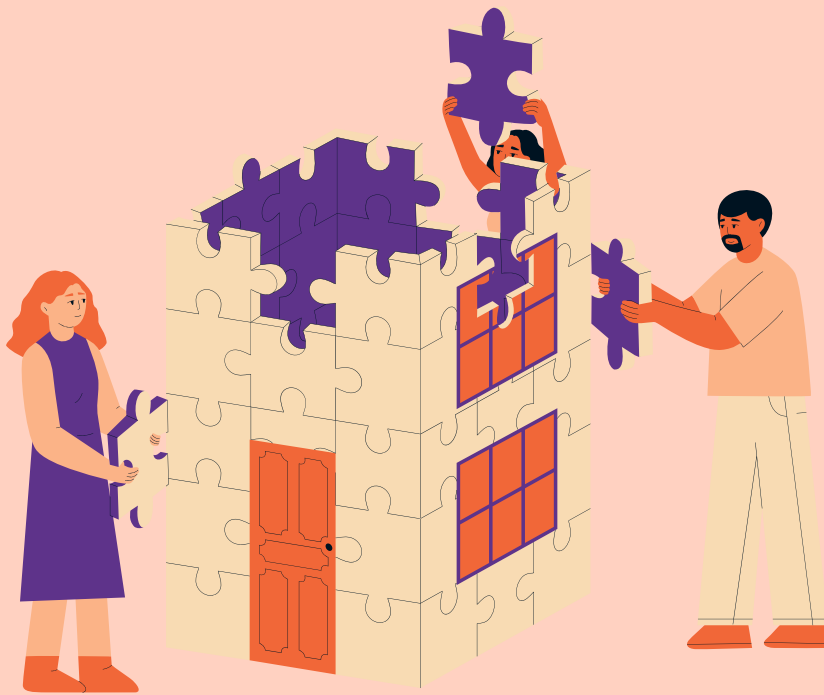
4. Social Housing & Policy Reform

Demand far exceeds supply: 1.29m households on waiting lists ([GOV.UK – Social housing lettings in England 2022–23](#); [GOV.UK – Social housing waiting list](#)).

Loss of social housing worsens inequality ([Shelter England – Loss of social housing](#); [Crisis UK – Housing crisis in the UK](#)).

Policy and planning often fail BAME households ([RTPI – Meeting the housing needs of BAME households in England](#); [King's College London – Prioritising home ownership hurts everyone](#); [Labour Party – Plans to end bidding wars](#)).





5. Inequalities, Generational Impacts & Gentrification

Gentrification and displacement are ongoing in London ([Trust for London – Gentrification across London](#)).

Cost of living pressures are highest for minority and low-income households ([Trust for London – London's Cost of Living Tracker](#)).

High-profile inequality cases highlight social divisions ([Guardian – Grenfell Tower MP highlights huge social divisions in London](#)).

Generational housing wealth gap ([The Private Office – Are Gen Z worse off than previous generations?](#)).

Overcrowding affects South Asian families ([NatCen – Overcrowding in South Asian households](#)).

Some employed households still have no disposable income ([Guardian – 'Endies': Employed with No Disposable Income](#)).

6. Core Data & Context

Baseline demographic and ethnic diversity ([GOV.UK – Ethnicity facts and figures: Regional diversity](#)).

BME poverty and deprivation statistics ([Institute of Race Relations – BME statistics on poverty & deprivation](#)).

Historic perspective on racial equity in housing ([Homeless Link – Why the BME housing sector is as relevant today as 40 years ago](#)).

Union perspective on housing crisis ([UNISON – Housing: Key issues](#)).

Secondary data on housing disparities ([GLA – Housing and race equality in London, 2023](#)).

7. Spotlighting our partnerships

Housing & mental health research methods ([SOAS – Housing & Mental Health Methodology](#)).

Structural homelessness disparities ([Heriot-Watt University, Oak Foundation & ROTA – Homelessness Amongst Black and Minoritised Ethnic Communities](#)).

Research on discrimination in renting (Generation Rent – [Mystery shopper](#), [migrant discrimination](#), [vagrancy laws](#), and [exclusion](#)).

Housing & health policy links ([QMUL – Housing & Health Policy Brief](#)).

BME advocacy and resources ([BME National – Official website](#)).

Social Science and Medicine, explores the multiple forms of distress generated through temporary accommodation: ([Science Direct – 'Fighting him': Following distress in hostile housing regimes](#))

Society and Space, examines mould in relation to health impacts and claims-making: ([Sage Journals – Hostile Environments: Mould, race and blame amidst Birmingham's housing crisis](#))

Cultural Anthropology, explores what homelessness means for marginalised people resident in Temporary Accommodation in Britain ([Cultural Anthropology](#).)

Hooyo's Walls documentary which spotlights the experiences of housing disrepair and instability, and their emotional, psychological and political effects of Somali women in Birmingham: ([YouTube – Hooyo's Walls](#))

8. Community-Led Healing & Advocacy

Peer support, youth engagement, and community projects ([Grenfell Foundation – Community Projects](#)).

Campaigns for housing justice and fundraising events ([Shelter – Fundraising Events](#)).

Petitions and advocacy resources to end homelessness ([Crisis – Campaign to End Homelessness](#)).



Quick housing facts:

- 1.Children who have access to affordable homes are more likely to perform well in school.
- 2.The lower a person's income, the more likely they are to suffer from overcrowding.
- 3.One in 47 people in London are homeless.
- 4.The 2008 crisis made getting on the housing ladder difficult for young people.
- 5.Providing housing solutions for low-income households can decrease social tension in cities.
- 6.In more than 50% of OECD countries, house prices have grown faster than incomes since 2015.
7. Londoners believe the cost of living and housing affordability are the most important issues currently facing the capital.



Housing Policy Landscape Autumn 2026

Awaab's Law (Social Housing)

Key Points:

- Is now a law.
- Requires social landlords to fix emergency hazards and damp/mould hazards within set timeframes (from 27 Oct 2025)
- 2026 regulations expand to cover: excess cold/heat, falls, structural collapse, fire/electrical hazards, hygiene, and food safety.

Impact:

- Protects tenants from unsafe living conditions that harm physical and mental health
- Addresses systemic failures highlighted by Awaab Ishak's tragic death.

Gaps:

- The deadline for landlords to meet decent housing standards has been pushed back to 2035. Awaab's Law, which would require landlords to address serious health hazards within set timeframes, should also be introduced without further delay. The Government should bring these measures forward to ensure renters are protected from poor-quality housing sooner.

Renters' Rights Bill (England)

Key Reforms:

- Is now a law
- Ends no-fault evictions (Section 21)
- Replaces tenancy types
- Tenants can request to keep a pet
- Strengthens rules on rent increases and bidding
- Introduces lifetime deposits
- Sets stricter standards for property conditions



Gaps:

- Does not fully address racial discrimination. Explicit anti-racist protections, proactive safeguards, accessible redress, and robust oversight are urgently needed to protect Black and Minoritised Ethnic renters.
- The number one issue for most renters is the cost of renting and the Renters' Rights Act does little to address this. This is especially concerning for Black and Minoritised Ethnic families, who spend a larger share of their income on housing and often get lower-quality homes in return (Resolution Foundation).
- Soaring rents are already pushing many renters into poverty and unaffordable rent hikes could act as a de-facto eviction notice for many, especially those on lower incomes who can't afford market rents. The government should cap rent increases to get a grip on out-of-control rents and keep renters in their homes (Renters' Reform Coalition).

Mayor of London Housing Strategy Aims:**Key Aims:**

- Build more homes and genuinely affordable homes
- Deliver high-quality homes and inclusive neighbourhoods
- Provide a fairer deal for private renters and leaseholders
- Tackle homelessness and support rough sleepers

Labour's Housing Priorities (2024–2029)**Key Points:**

- Build 1.5 million new homes
- Prioritise brownfield development, protect green belt
- Strengthen planning powers and reform land/compensation rules
- Increase social and affordable housing
- Support first-time buyers via local priority and mortgage guarantees



Take Action Today

Even signing a petition or writing to an MP can make a huge difference in housing reform. Your voice matters.



Add your name to show Prime Minister Andy Burnham your commitment to ending rough sleeping → [Add your name: back an end to rough sleeping](#) | [Crisis UK](#)



Write a letter to your MP supporting rent caps → [Rent Caps](#)



Sign this petition for stronger laws returning tenant deposits → [Petition](#)



Build more social housing campaign to meet the threshold of 90,000 new homes to reverse the trend of rising homelessness → [Let's build social housing](#) – [Shelter England](#)



Support for housing:

National Housing Help

- Shelter | Helpline: 0808 800 4444 | [Website](#)
- Citizens Advice | Helpline: 0800 144 8848 | [Website](#)

Renters' Unions

- ACORN (UK-wide) | [Website](#)
- London Renters Union | [Website](#)
- Greater Manchester Tenants Union | [Website](#)

London Advice Services

- Advice4Renters | Tel: 0207 624 4327 | [Website](#)
- Safer Renting | [Website](#)
- Z2K | [Website](#)

Mental Health Support

- Samaritans | Helpline: 116 123 | [Website](#)
- Shout | Text: SHOUT to 85258 | [Website](#)

Legal Housing Advice

- RCJ Advice | Tel: 020 3475 4373 | [Website](#)

Swim Enterprises

020 7923 8354 / 07557 260174

Many thanks to [Renters Reform Coalition](#) for providing this comprehensive list.





Recent Housing Blogs:

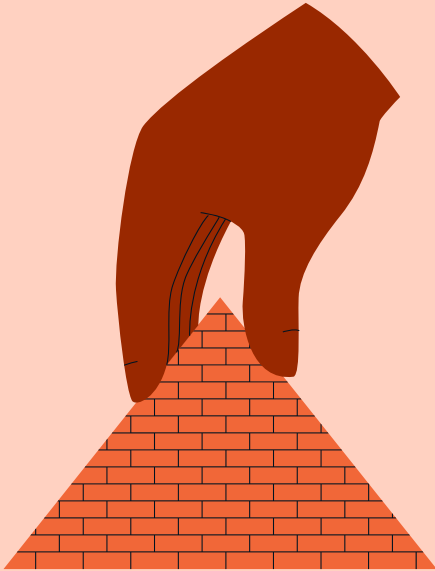
Room for All: Mould as Power and the Ongoing Research into Housing Distress

A reflection on V4CE's Room for All launch in memory of Awaab Ishak, highlighting how mould and damp signal racial and housing inequality. Drawing on research by Dr Simpson, Dr Storer and Dr Dale — including Hooyo's Walls — it shows how overcrowding and the hostile environment disproportionately impact Black and Minoritised Ethnic households, and links to resources on Awaab's Law and the Renters' Rights Act.

Manchester's boom is real, but who has it actually been built for?

A look at Manchester's rapid growth alongside the communities excluded from it — tracing the city's development from its Cottonopolis past to today's investment-led boom, questioning whether Andy Burnham's housing pledges have delivered, and highlighting how Black and Minoritised Ethnic areas face low affordable-home delivery, rising prices, and "Londonification." It ends by calling for housing to be treated as a human need rather than a commodity.





V4CE Housing Roundtable 2026

Date: TBC

NIMBY: If not in your backyard, then where, and who decides?

NIMBYism "Not in my backyard" describes local opposition to development even when people broadly support that development in principle. It operates across housing, infrastructure, and energy, and its effects fall unequally across society.



The UK cannot afford to keep delaying development. Weak regional growth is suppressing incomes, life expectancy, and educational attainment. The UK's post-2007 productivity decline has been sharper than most G7 countries (ONS, 2022). Thousands of homes are being built without the infrastructure such as schools, GPs, green spaces that makes communities viable, which in turn fuels the very resistance that slows future development.

Who gets to object, and who doesn't?

Wealthier, whiter, more established communities tend to have more capacity, time, legal knowledge, social capital to mount effective opposition. Meanwhile, the people most harmed by blocked development (those on housing waiting lists, renters, people experiencing homelessness) are rarely in the room when decisions are made.

Who gets a seat at the 'NIMBY' table?

Local consultation is a democratic good, it gives communities a say in decisions that affect their lives. But it can systematically produce outcomes that harm people with no voice in the process. The UK planning system may amplify this by giving local objectors significant leverage.

Housing for profit, not shelter

For many people in the UK, their home is their primary financial asset. Rising house prices are a direct personal benefit. This means planning decisions are often filtered through concerns about property value, helping to explain why homeowners may resist development perceived to affect local desirability.

Collaboration and partnership
opportunities with Voice4Change
England



Interested in housing reform and creating a racially equitable society? Feel free to share your story or get in touch for a collaboration.

✉ Contact our Policy and Influence Officer:
Christabelle@voice4change-england.co.uk.



As part of the ten-year Horizons London Programme, funded by the Anchor Fund, Voice4Change England is committed to addressing racial disparities across housing, education, environment, and health.

© 2026 Voice4Change England. All rights reserved.

