

Soaring Temporary Accommodation Numbers Signal UK Housing Emergency

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— Categories: Human Rights



A new report by the Resolution Foundation highlights a record rise in households living in temporary accommodation in England, reaching 128,000 in 2025. The sharp increase, driven by rising rents and a shortage of affordable housing, underscores the urgent need for supply-side reform and practical government intervention.

The Resolution Foundation has revealed that the number of households in temporary accommodation in England has surged to 128,000 in 2025, more than double the figure recorded in 2010. Temporary accommodation includes hostels, bed-and-breakfasts (B&Bs), and short-term rented homes, typically funded by local authorities at significant cost to the public purse.

The report highlights that London is home to more than half of these households, with approximately 72,000 affected. Particularly concerning is the disproportionate impact on single-parent families, who make up 35% of those in temporary accommodation despite representing just 16% of the overall population of families.

Since 2010, private rents have climbed by 54%, while support through housing benefit and Universal Credit (UC), a means-tested welfare benefit for low-income households, has only increased by 36%. This growing disparity has made it increasingly difficult for low-income renters to remain in permanent housing, pushing many into temporary arrangements.

The housing crisis has been exacerbated by the sluggish pace of new home building. Only 7,356 new homes were approved in the final quarter of 2024, the lowest quarterly figure since 1979. Complex planning rules and bureaucratic obstacles have hindered much-needed development, particularly in high-demand areas.

In response to the crisis, Chancellor Rachel Reeves has pledged to deliver 1.5 million new homes by 2029, including £39 billion in funding for affordable housing. Of that, 60% is earmarked for social rent. While the Resolution Foundation welcomed this commitment, it warned that unless

housing supply is increased and benefit levels are adjusted to reflect market rents, the reliance on temporary accommodation will persist.

From a centre-right standpoint, the solution lies not in simply increasing welfare spending but in empowering the housing market. Reforming planning laws, incentivising private development, and reducing red tape can help ease the pressure on housing supply. At the same time, flexible, targeted support for renters could prevent families from falling into emergency housing.

The record-high number of households in temporary accommodation is a symptom of deeper structural issues in the UK housing market. Addressing it requires not just spending commitments but decisive action to unleash housing supply and reduce state dependency.