

# Social housing allocation and immigrant communities

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Migration, Equalities and Citizenship Team, ippr

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	iv
<b>Acronyms and terminology</b>	v
<b>Executive summary</b>	vii
<b>1. Introduction</b>	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Research aims	2
1.3 Structure of the report	3
<b>2. Methodology</b>	4
<b>3. Migrant communities and their housing entitlements</b>	7
3.1 Migration overview	7
3.2 Residency status of migrant groups	10
3.3 Rights and entitlements to social housing among migrant communities	12
3.4 Future changes to housing entitlement	15
3.5 Key points	17
<b>4. Housing tenure patterns among migrants communities</b>	18
4.1 Housing tenure patterns	18
4.2 Factors influencing housing tenure	19
4.3 Housing tenure by country-of-birth	24
4.4 Housing tenure by ethnicity and religious denomination	26
4.5 Key points	27
<b>5. Is the allocation of social housing fair?</b>	29
5.1 Evolving allocation policies	29
5.2 Equalities aspects of housing policies	30
5.3 Today's social housing allocation systems	32
5.4 Analysis of allocation policies from the perspective of equality	34
5.5 Can we use different systems to allocate social housing?	37
5.6 Key points	38

<b>6.</b>	<b>Public perceptions and community cohesion</b>	39
6.1	Public perceptions and misconceptions	39
6.2	The way forward: a changed local debate on migration and cohesion	44
6.3.	Key points	48
<b>7.</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	50
	<b>References</b>	52
	<b>Appendices</b>	56
1	Additional tables and figures	56
2	Local housing authorities whose social housing allocation policies were analysed	64
	<b>Endnotes</b>	65

## Tables and figures

### Tables

1	Numbers born abroad by country-of-birth, UK estimates for populations over 40,000, 2002 and 2007	9
2	Foreign nationals and eligibility for social housing	16
3	Relationship between local housing pressures and attitudes to new migrants	42
A1	Residency status of the UK's largest migrant communities	56
A2	Socio-economic data for country-of-birth groups larger than 40,000, 2005-2007	58

### Figures

1	Projected increase in number of households in UK	2
2	Social housing stock, UK, 1997-2006	3
3	Migration to the UK by citizenship, 1996-2006	7
4	Immigration and emigration flow to and from the UK, 1975-2006	8
5	Housing tenure distribution by country-of-birth, 2007	18
6	Average gross hourly pay by housing tenure and country-of-birth, 2006-2007	20
7	Foreign-born residents in Inner London by housing tenure, 2007	23
8	Distribution of foreign-born social tenants across regions in UK, 2007	23
9	Social housing tenants' distribution by religious denomination, 2007	27
A1	Percentage of country-of-birth populations in different forms of housing tenure, countries with populations over 100,000 resident in UK, 2005-2007 data	59
A2	Percentage of country-of-birth populations in different forms of housing tenure, countries with populations 40,000 to 100,000 resident in UK, 2005-2007 data	60
A3	Landlord of rental accommodation by country-of-birth populations over 100,000 resident in UK, 2005-2007 data	61
A4	Landlord of rental accommodation by country-of-birth populations of 40,000 to 100,000 resident in UK, 2005-2007 data	62
A5	Social tenants' distribution by aggregated country of origin, 2007	63

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## Acronyms and terminology

A8	The eight Central and Eastern European countries that joined the European Union in May 2004 (Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and not including Cyprus and Malta which joined the EU at the same time, but did not face the same labour market restrictions.
A2	Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the European Union in January 2007.
CECSC	Council of European Social Charter.
Community cohesion	Although a contested term, we define cohesive communities as ones where there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• progress towards equality</li><li>• the integration of community members in economic activity</li><li>• a sense of belonging to a locality and nation</li><li>• trust and reciprocity between members of the community</li><li>• social integration of community members facilitated by social networks, and thus</li><li>• the development of social capital, and shared values.</li></ul>
CORE	Continuous Recording of Lettings and Sales, a social housing survey held by Communities and Local Government.
DL	Discretionary Leave, a time limited immigration status granted to some asylum-seekers on determination of their case.
ECSMA	European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance.
EEA	European Economic Area, a free trade area made up of the 27 EU member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission.
EU	European Union.
HP	Humanitarian Protection, an immigration status granted to some asylum-seekers on determination of their case.
ippr	Institute for Public Policy Research.
LFS	Labour Force Survey.
LGA	Local Government Association.
Migrants	Those born outside the UK. Many migrants have British citizenship and have been resident in the UK for many years,

and are perhaps more often described as members of ethnic minority communities. The report uses both terms, with migrant being used to describe the newly-arrived.

New accession states      The 12 new states (A8 and A2) that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007.

ONS      Office for National Statistics.

## Executive summary

### Introduction

Widespread media reports suggest that migrants receive priority in the allocation of social housing, and in doing so displace non-migrants. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) decided to commission research to look at the facts behind these stories and to examine the allocation of social housing in England.

The research asked three questions:

- Who is entitled to social housing?
- Who receives social housing?
- Do some groups have unfair access to social housing?

This study is set in the context of increased international immigration to the UK and a reduction in social housing stock. Although international migration has always been a feature of national life, this aspect of population change has increased substantially since the early 1990s. This increase has been caused by asylum arrivals, sustained work permit and other work visa flows and large-scale migration from the new EU member states after 2004. The migrant population has also become increasingly diverse and migration flows more complex. Many parts of urban Britain manifest super-diversity where communities that differ in terms of their national origin and residency status live side-by-side.

At the same time, there has been a large reduction in the social housing stock caused by existing tenants exercising their right to buy their properties, as well as a reduction in the numbers of new build social housing over the last few decades. Right-to-buy and less new build social housing has occurred at a time when there has been an increase in the number of households in the UK, caused by greater longevity, marital breakdown and to a lesser extent, immigration. These factors have contributed to larger social housing waiting lists in many parts of the UK.

The research methodology comprised:

- A literature review covering social housing policies in England.
- An analysis of Census 2001 and Labour Force Survey (LFS) data on housing tenure and other socio-economic data for UK and foreign-born communities.
- A re-analysis of four focus groups held with members of the majority community in four locations in different parts of England.

- A survey of 50 selected local authority social housing allocation policies with regard to immigrant communities.

### **Who is entitled to social housing?**

The present criteria for allocating social housing, is outlined in the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Housing Act 2002 and the Housing Act 2004. This says that a number of groups of people should be given priority in the allocation of social housing, namely:

- Those who are homeless, or who are threatened with homelessness.
- Priority needs groups, such as families with children and the elderly.
- People living in unsuitable or accommodation, for example, a home without an inside toilet.
- People living in overcrowded accommodation.
- Those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.
- People who need to move to a particular area to prevent hardship.

Local authorities also have the discretion to add groups, other than the above, who will be given reasonable preference.

Immigration status affects entitlement to social housing. Broadly, to be eligible for social housing, migrants need settled status<sup>1</sup>, or be an European Economic Area (EEA) worker giving them the right to stay in the UK. Most new migrants, including asylum-seekers, students and work visa holders have no entitlement to social housing.

### **Who receives social housing?**

Analysis of the Labour Force Survey highlights differential patterns of housing tenure between the UK-born population and the foreign-born population who have arrived in the UK during the last five years. The latter are overwhelmingly housed in the private rental sector, and not in social housing.

Among UK-born heads of households, an estimated 74 percent are owner occupiers, 17 per cent live in social housing and 7 percent are private tenants. In contrast, of foreign born people who have arrived in the UK in the past five years, about 17 per cent are owner-occupiers, 11 percent live in social housing and 64 per cent are private tenants.

New migrants to the UK over the last five years make up less than two per cent of the total of those in social housing. Some 90 per cent of those who live in social housing are UK born. Most of the newly-arrived migrant group who occupy social tenancies

are refugees who have been granted permission to remain in the UK. This group is numerically small in relation to the total of social tenants in the UK. For example, LFS analysis estimates that 19,200 Afghanistan-born persons were social tenants in the third quarter of 2007, out of 10,337,300 total social tenants in the UK.

Eight factors influence tenure. These include: immigration status; household income; demographic factors such as family size; employment conditions; length of residency in the UK; local housing markets; migrants' aspirations; and migrants' perceptions about particular forms of housing and their safety in particular areas.

### **Do some groups have unfair access to social housing?**

Analysis of social housing allocation policies showed no evidence that social housing allocation favours foreign migrants over UK citizens. But there is a small amount of evidence which suggests that they may, unintentionally, discriminate against ethnic minority communities who may also have less understanding than white groups, of their housing rights and housing allocation.

Social housing allocation policies differed in their content and method of allocating points or bands. There were differences in how characteristics of applicants were weighted by different local authorities, for example, some local authorities awarded points for families with children who did not have use of a garden, while others did not. Some policies, in particular banding systems, lacked transparency and were rather difficult to understand.

Some local authority social housing allocation policies gave priority to certain social characteristics, for example, to a local connection. This had the potential to discriminate against migrants and longer settled ethnic minority communities, who may have few relatives in the UK or a lesser period of settlement.

Overall, policies represented an attempt to prioritise the most needy at a time of severe shortage in the supply of social housing. In this respect, the allocation policies were fair. There was no evidence that allocation policies discriminated against white groups.

### **Public perceptions and community cohesion**

Despite the lack of evidence that shows social housing allocation systems favour one community over another, or to show that migrant populations are disproportionately committing tenancy fraud, perceptions that migrants displace British social housing applicants persist.

Media reporting of issues around migration and social housing migration has great potential to set the public agenda. Anti-migration messages are more consistent than pro-migration messages and are often 'common sense' – for example, migrants put pressure on social housing. Myth-busting exercises about social housing allocation, conducted by local authorities or other interested parties, are unlikely to change public misconceptions about housing allocation.

In many parts of the UK, the sale of social housing and its subsequent use as private rental accommodation for migrants has fuelled misconceptions about the allocation of social housing. Perceptions that migrants displace UK-born social housing applicants may arise from the fact that some private rented housing which is now home to migrants is former social housing stock. Local residents may believe it is still 'owned by the council' despite it now being in the private sector.

This research suggests that we need to re-invigorate the debate about how to improve community relations at a local level. Such a move would provide the opportunity to challenge public misconceptions about the allocation of social housing. In particular, there is a need:

- For further promotion of the race equality duty of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- For greater transparency in the process by which social housing is allocated both at central and local government level.
- To encourage local political and community leaders to engage in a debate about migration and social housing.
- For greater discussion of immigration issues at a local level - by providing local political space.
- To ensure that new migrant groups have the opportunity to interact with others at a local level.

## **Conclusions**

Much of the public concern about the impact of migration on social housing has, at its roots, the failure of social housing supply to meet the demands of the population. More social housing and affordable private housing is needed, and the potential for housing shortages to remain a focus for community tensions should be recognised. Negative attitudes towards migrants are bound up with fears of diversity and change. As a way forward, public policy interventions should focus on changing the nature of debates about migration, and enable British society to accommodate better the greater diversity brought about by international migration, giving greater focus to local interventions. Similarly, public concerns about the effects of migration on the housing market and social housing allocation policies need to be addressed at the *local* level,

as does greater discussion of immigration issues by providing local political space and leadership.

This study has highlighted some of the existing problems in the social housing allocation system, such as the lack of transparency in policies and the monitoring of housing experiences from an equalities perspective, especially in the light of population super-diversity. Further study is required to explore a number of other aspects of social housing. These include the impact and use of public duties and other regulations covering equality and diversity on local authorities and housing associations, the equalities impact of choice based lettings, and how local organisations can utilise their connections to promote better community relations.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Although international migration has always been a feature of national life, this aspect of population change has increased substantially since the early 1990s, caused by increased asylum migration and later, increased work migration from within and outside the EU. At the same time, public concerns about the scale and impact of migration have gained prominence. Among the most controversial and least understood areas of these concerns are the real and perceived impacts of migration on housing demand and supply. In particular, public concerns about housing and migration have focussed on the perception that:

- Migrants put pressure on the supply of social housing.
- Migrants are less deserving of social housing than UK citizens.
- Migrants receive priority in the allocation of social housing.
- Social housing allocation systems are unfair to the white British population.

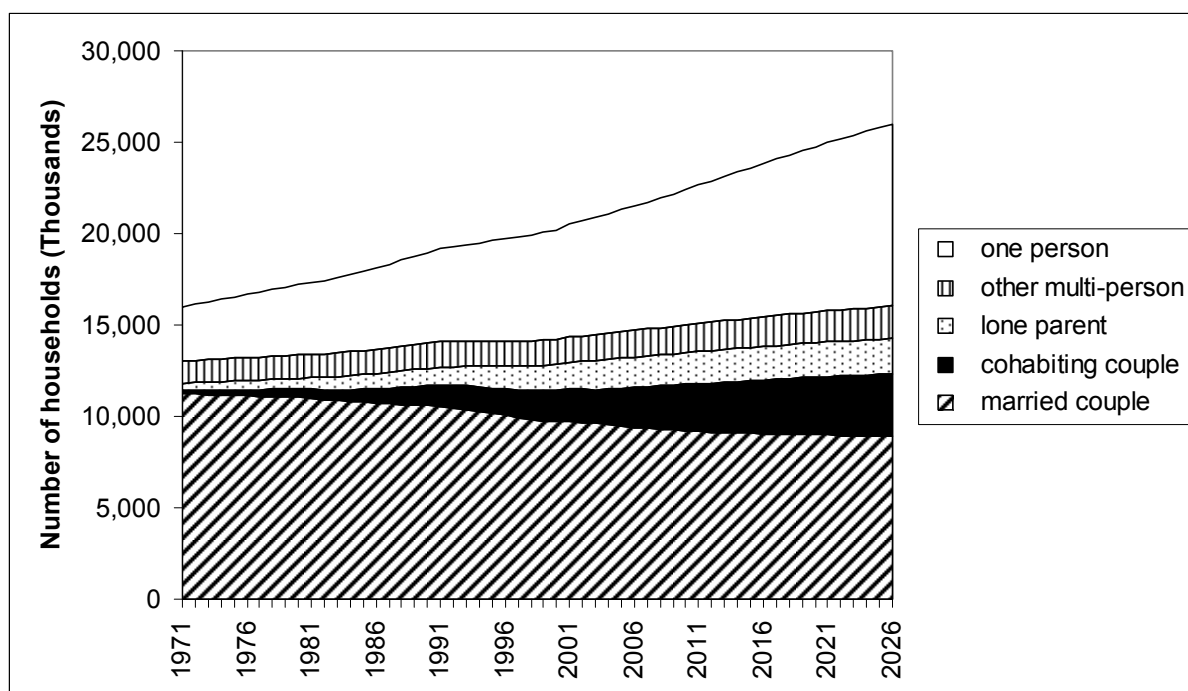
These perceptions were highlighted in May 2007, when Margaret Hodge, MP for Barking, suggested that new migrants should have less right to social housing than established British families. Margaret Hodge's comments are part of a larger debate about the allocation of welfare goods in the UK. Nevertheless, her comments received extensive coverage in the media. Anti-migration groups gave great prominence to her views, as they have to subsequent interventions by national leaders on this issue. In parts of the UK where it is active, the British National Party has attempted to mobilise votes by focussing on local concerns about the allocation of social housing to immigrants. During the 2008 local government elections, claims that social housing allocation policies were 'unfair to the indigenous population of these islands' were top among the manifesto concerns of BNP candidates in many parts of the UK. Media debates about the allocation of social housing to new migrants have continued to the present.

Social housing provides living accommodation for about 4 million households in England (Hills, 2007). Many public debates about the allocation of social housing to new migrants have acknowledged that there has been a large reduction in social housing stock in many parts of the UK. This has been caused by existing tenants exercising their right to buy their properties, as well as a reduction in the numbers of new build social housing over the last few decades. These have occurred at a time when there has been an increase in the number of households in the UK, caused by greater longevity, marital breakdown and, to a lesser extent, immigration

(see Figures 1 and 2). These factors have contributed to larger social housing waiting lists in many parts of the UK.

We do know that a growing and more diverse immigrant population places new pressures on housing. However, housing tenure patterns among migrants and how current social housing allocation applies to immigrant communities is far from clear. Indeed, there has been very little empirical research about housing tenure patterns in migrant communities, including the allocation and uptake of social housing.

**Figure 1 Projected increase in number of households in UK**



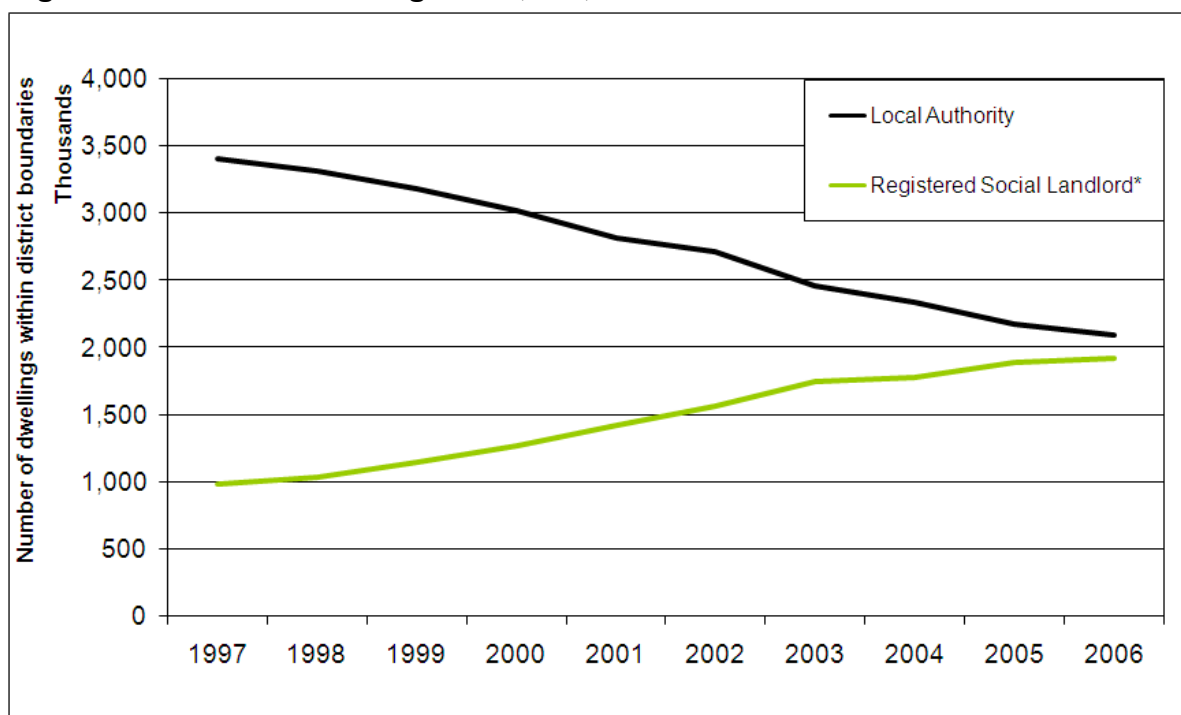
Source: Communities and Local Government Housing Statistics Live Tables (2008). Available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/402.xls>

## 1.2 Research aims

This research was commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in association with the Local Government Association (LGA). One of the EHRC’s core mandates under Section 10 of the Equality Act 2006 is to promote good relations between and within different groups in society. Given the widespread perceptions, as noted above, that some groups have an unfair advantage in the allocation of social housing, the Commission felt it was important to conduct an independent assessment of social housing allocation policy. To these ends, the research had four broad aims, namely:

1. To identify patterns of uptake of social housing among migrant communities and settled communities, including any emergent inequalities in these patterns of uptake, within and between communities.
2. To examine the impact of race, gender, sexuality, age, belief and disability on the allocation of social housing to migrants and settled communities.
3. Explore whether there is any evidence of bias in the current housing allocation system on the basis of available data.
4. Analyse the impact of debates and data about social housing allocation on community cohesion.

**Figure 2 Social housing stock, UK, 1997-2006**



Source: Communities and Local Government Housing Statistics Live Tables (2008).

Note: \* Figures before 2002 include self-contained units only and from 2002 bedspaces as well as self-contained units.

### 1.3 Structure of the report

This research contributes to the knowledge gap by reviewing the history of the supply and allocation of social housing in England, presenting data on the distribution of social housing amongst immigrants and established residents, considering the wider equality and cohesion impacts of the current situation, and contributing to the current debates about the purpose and future of social housing. Chapter 2 outlines the methodology used in this study, Chapter 3 examines who migrant communities are and their housing entitlements while Chapter 4 looks at housing tenure patterns among migrant communities. Chapter 5 asks if the current allocation of social housing is fair and Chapter 6 explores what is known about public perceptions and issues related to community cohesion. The final chapter offers some conclusions.

## 2 Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology adopted for this study. The study focuses on international migrants – those born outside the UK. Many migrants have British citizenship and have been resident in the UK for many years, and are perhaps more often described as members of ethnic minority communities. The report uses both terms, with migrant being used to describe the newly-arrived.

Our methodology comprised:

1. A literature review covering social housing allocation policies in England, housing tenure patterns among immigrant communities and how neighbourhood conditions affect community cohesion.
2. An analysis of Census 2001 and 2005-2007 Labour Force Survey (LFS) data on housing tenure and other socio-economic data for UK and foreign-born communities.<sup>2</sup> The LFS is a comprehensive quarterly sample survey of households living at private addresses in Great Britain, carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The data is descriptive and can be used to capture the housing profile of foreign and UK-born people and to compare this profile with other variables such as household income.<sup>3</sup>

We used country-of-birth data to define migrant groups in most of our analysis rather than ethnicity or nationality. Ethnicity data in both the Census and LFS is very broad. Nationality data is also imprecise, as migrants may retain the citizenship of their country-of-birth, take up British citizenship, possess the citizenship of a third country or be stateless. Our analysis of tenure patterns is therefore restricted to the 36 country-of-birth groups whose estimate of population size was greater than 40,000.

The LFS provides the best statistical overview of housing trends within migrant communities, particularly given shortcomings with other sources of housing data. Existing Tenants Surveys, English House Conditions Survey, the Survey of English Housing and homelessness statistics collect information on ethnicity but not on immigration status or country-of-birth. The Continuous Recording of Lettings and Sales (CORE), held by Communities and Local Government has had a nationality question in it since 2006 but data returns from housing associations and local authorities are far from complete. As many overseas-born populations have British nationality, nationality data coupled with very broad ethnicity categories used in CORE has not improved understandings of the housing experiences of migrant communities.<sup>4</sup>

3. A re-analysis of focus group data from a 2007 Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) project (ippr, 2007b). This project examined the reception of new migrant communities and included interviews with non-migrant communities in four locations:

- Barking and Dagenham (London borough).
- Birmingham (English city).
- Crewe (English city).
- South Holland (English rural area).

The focus groups examined insights and opinions about migration and had much relevant data about perceived impact of migration on housing markets. Each focus group comprised seven or eight participants of UK-born communities. Our selection of interviewees was purposive and designed to ensure a mixture of social class, age, ethnicity and gender. Interviewees were recruited using a research recruitment agency.

4. A survey of 50 local authority social housing allocation policies with regard to immigrant communities. The sample represents 14 per cent of all local housing authorities in England. We analysed the allocation policies of a range of local authorities (by online research and by contacting officials) in order to assess whether there is likely to be differential impact on particular groups. The sample of 50 local authorities was purposive and comprised:

- Inner London local authorities (5).
- Outer London local authority (5).
- Rural district councils, ensuring a regional spread, with at least two councils drawn from each of the nine Government Office regions of England (20).
- Urban unitary local authorities outside London, again with the same regional Government Office regions of England ensuring a regional spread (20).

A list of local authorities whose policies we examined is given in the appendices. Our analysis examined three issues. Firstly, we looked at the content of the policy and their method of allocating points. We analysed the social characteristics that are used to prioritise social housing and the weightings given for different social characteristics and how they differed between local authorities. Different weightings systems have the potential to treat the same family in a different manner.

Secondly, we examined transparency. We graded each allocation policy on a scale of one to five in terms how easy it was to understand, with five being the highest score.

Thirdly, we looked for evidence of differential treatment of different groups, with particular reference to new migrants. We took two hypothetical families:

- Family A: A UK-born family comprising two adults and two children who have lived in the local authority for all their lives. They have just been served an eviction order by their private landlord.
- Family B: An EEA worker and family, with the household comprising two adults and two children. They have lived in the UK for just six months. The family has just been served an eviction order by their private landlord.

and explored how each allocation policy would treat these two families. We chose a family who had an entitlement to social housing and who was new to the UK, to see what impact newness to the UK had on a household's accumulation of points.

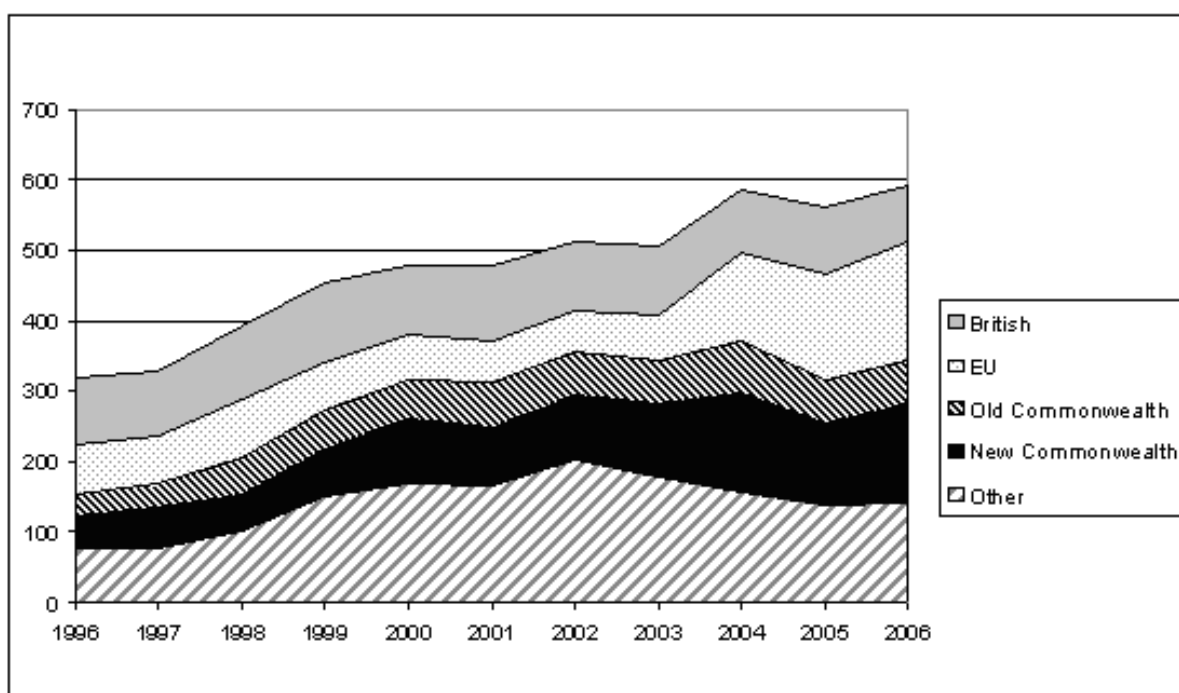
### 3 Migrant communities and their housing entitlements

#### 3.1 Migration overview

This chapter examines the different migrant groups arriving in the UK and outlines their entitlement to social housing.

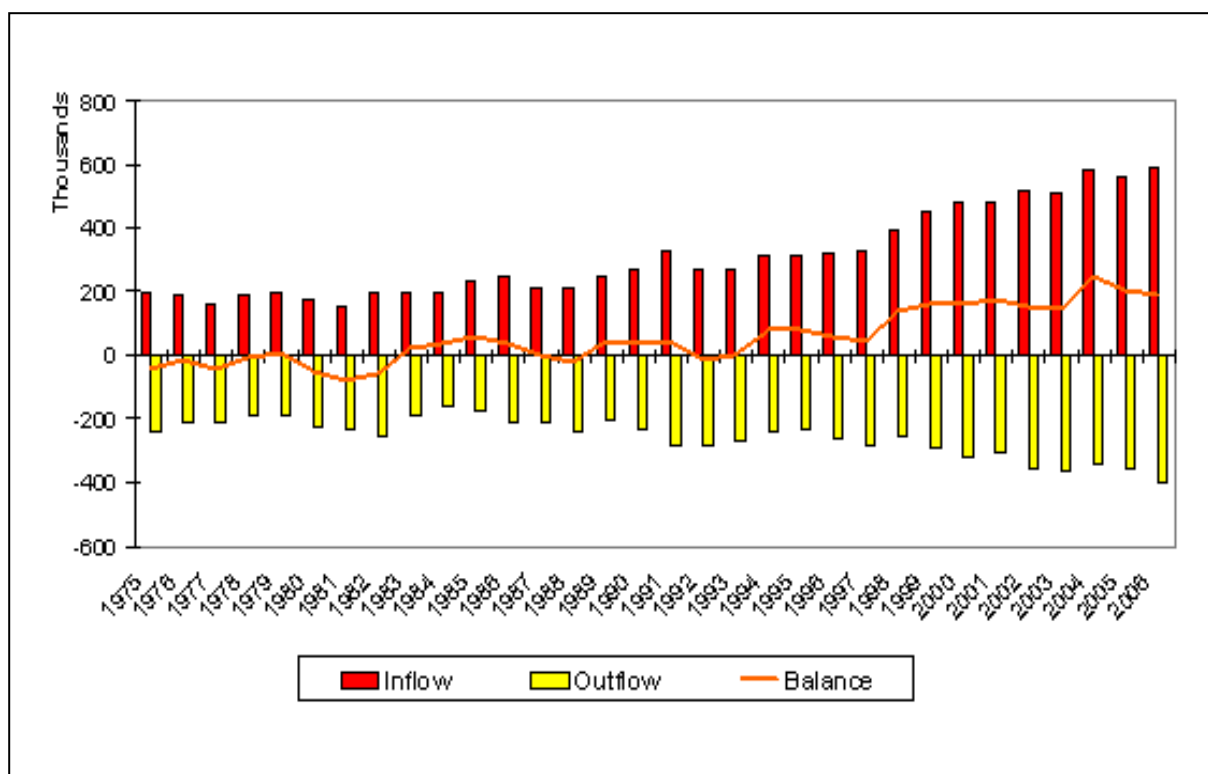
Increased immigration to the UK in recent years has been caused by the arrival of asylum seekers, sustained work permit and other work visa holders and large scale migration from the new EU member states since 2004 (see Figure 3 and the appendices). At the same time, emigration of British and non-British nationals from the UK has also increased, although since 1995 there has been net immigration into the UK, with immigration exceeding emigration. The impact of net immigration has been to increase the proportion of the population born overseas. Census data show that the foreign-born population rose from 2.1 million (4.2 per cent of the population) in 1951 to 4.9 million (8.3 per cent) in 2001. LFS data from 2007 suggest that 10.7 per cent of the UK population was born abroad (LFS-Q3, 2007).

**Figure 3 Migration to the UK by citizenship, 1996-2006**



Source: ONS Total international migration 1991-2006 data.

Note: EU data is EU15 for 1996-2003 and EU25 for 2004-06.

**Figure 4** Immigration and emigration flow to and from the UK, 1975-2006

Source: International Passenger Survey and Total International Migration data, ONS 1975-2006 as cited in Rutter and Latorre, 2008.

### Super-diversity among migrant populations

As well as the migrant population increasing in number, it has also become increasingly diverse and migration flows have become more complex. Table 1 presents data from the LFS on the UK's largest country-of-birth populations. In the past, UK migrant and minority populations comprised a small number of large communities, predominately from the UK's former colonies. Today, many parts of urban Britain manifest super-diversity where many different communities live side-by-side. These communities are different not only in their national origin, but also in terms of their residency status. Within communities there is also great diversity in relation to ethnicity, language, religious practice, household composition, employment experiences and educational qualifications. In the UK, there can be local variations in a community's composition. These factors can all affect a person's place and type of accommodation and are examined further in the next chapter.

Population super-diversity also places new challenges on the social housing sector, particularly in relation to ethnic monitoring, including monitoring the uptake of social housing. Much existing housing data, such as the Existing Tenants Survey (held by the Housing Corporation) uses very broad ethnicity categories, essentially the 16 ethnicity categories used in the Census. Such broad categories aggregate data on

very diverse groups, for example, Congolese, Nigerians and Somalis are subsumed within the category Black African. It would be useful to reconsider systems of ethnic monitoring in the light of growing population super-diversity.

**Table 1 Numbers born abroad by country-of-birth, UK estimates for populations over 40,000, 2002 and 2007**

Rank in Q3 2007	Country	Quarter 3 2002	Quarter 3 2007
1	India	445,100	568,700
2	Ireland	482,200	425,800
3	Poland	65,700	420,600
4	Pakistan	288,500	403,600
5	Germany	270,300	265,100
6	Bangladesh	174,600	191,500
7	South Africa	153,300	189,400
8	China and Hong Kong	131,700	177,500
9	Jamaica	146,100	172,000
10	United States	141,100	169,100
11	Nigeria	76,800	153,600
12	Kenya	115,800	135,700
13	France	101,600	117,700
14	Australia	107,100	116,600
15	Sri Lanka	86,200	105,200
16	Zimbabwe	70,300	103,300
17	Italy	87,000	101,000
18	Philippines	54,300	94,600
19	Somalia	72,100	90,200
20	Ghana	49,000	87,000
21	Canada	69,000	70,100
22	Cyprus	66,800	67,700
23	Turkey	52,700	66,300
24	Spain	55,400	66,100
25	Portugal	69,800	64,300
26	Netherlands	43,300	62,200
27	Iran	50,800	60,700
28	New Zealand	57,300	59,100
29	Malaysia	63,400	57,200
30	Lithuania	*	55,100
31	Uganda	57,000	53,900
32	Iraq	<40,000	53,500
33	Afghanistan	*	49,800
34	Slovakia	*	48,100
35	Brazil	<40,000	42,200
36	Singapore	<40,000	<40,000

Source: LFS and ippr calculations.

Note: \* No information available.

### **3.2 Residency status of migrant groups**

The immigration status of migrant communities is diverse and affects their entitlement to social housing, as well as migrants' aspirations, which can in turn affect their housing choices. The residency status of new migrants comprises seven major categories, detailed below.

#### **i. Asylum-seekers and refugees**

From 1989 until 2002, asylum migration increased in the UK. Although the numbers of asylum applications has decreased since then, some 23,430 asylum applications were lodged in the UK in 2007 amounting, with dependants, to 27,900 persons (Home Office, 2008). Most asylum-seekers are young males; the proportion of asylum applicants with children has always been small, a factor that limits demand for social housing.

The asylum migration flow from particular countries varies considerably from year to year. Since 2002, the main countries of origin of asylum-seekers have comprised the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Turkey, Afghanistan, China, Iran, Iraq and Sri Lanka (ibid). Population estimates for the main country-of-birth groups of asylum-seekers and refugees are given in Table 1.

Of those who received an initial decision on their asylum application in 2007, 16 per cent were granted refugee status, 11 per cent were granted humanitarian protection or discretionary leave to remain in the UK and 73 per cent were refused (Home Office, 2008). Among those who appealed against an initial negative decision, 23 per cent were successful.

A small numbers of refugees have also come to the UK through the Gateway programme and other programmes<sup>5</sup> for vulnerable refugees, whereby persons of concern to UNHCR are identified by them, granted unlimited refugee status, brought to the UK and offered a package of support by local authorities and refugee organisations (see p.13).

#### **ii. EU and EEA migrants**

Substantial numbers of migrants from EU states are resident in the UK. They comprise migrants from pre-2004 EU states such as Ireland, France and Portugal, as well as migrants from the 12 new accession states of 2004 and 2007.<sup>6</sup> Population estimates for the main country-of-birth groups of EU migrants are given in Table 1.

By far the largest national group from new accession states of the EU are Polish nationals, of whom an estimated 420,600 were resident in the UK in the third quarter of 2007, compared with an estimated 65,700 in the same quarter of 2002 (LFS-Q3,

2007). Unlike much previous migration to the UK, where most new arrivals tended to settle in urban areas, significant proportions of migrants from the EU's new accession states have settled in rural areas, which in the past have received very few new migrants (CRC, 2007). In many parts of the UK there is proportionally much less social housing stock than in urban areas (CRC, 2006).

Nationals of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein (part of the European Economic Area (EEA)) as well as Swiss nationals have the same rights to residency, work and benefits as EU nationals. The LFS and Census 2001 analysis indicates an estimated 35,000 nationals of these four countries living in the UK. Population numbers have remained constant over the last ten years.

In the last five years there has also been a significant onward migration of migrant communities from other EU countries to the UK, often people who have secured citizenship in other EU member states after being granted refugee status or leave to remain. One of the largest of this type of migratory movement is that of Somalis from the Netherlands, Germany and Scandinavia to the UK. Other large intra-EU onward migrations to the UK include:

- Nigerians and Ghanaians from Germany and Austria.
- Sri Lankan Tamils from France, Germany and Switzerland.
- Congolese and Ivorians from France.
- Latin Americans from Spain.

However, not all of these secondary migrants have secured EU citizenship; some have limited leave to remain and some have an irregular status i.e. remain illegally (Koser, 2005).

### **iii. Work permit holders**

Labour migrants also come from outside the EU. In 2006, some 96,600 work permit and other work visa holders came to the UK from outside the EU. The main countries of origin of work permit holders were South Africa, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Japan, the Philippines and Australia (Home Office, 2007a). The work visa scheme is undergoing simplification and change, with a view to developing a five-tiered system comprising:

- Tier One – a points based scheme for highly-skilled migrants, replacing the present Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP). This was launched in January 2008.
- Tier Two – skilled workers with a job offer who will be employed to fill gaps in the UK labour market. This scheme is due to be

launched in late 2008.

- Tier Three – low skilled temporary workers. There are presently no plans to recruit this group.
- Tier Four – students.
- Tier Five – youth mobility and other schemes, where the aim of working in the UK is not primarily economic.<sup>7</sup>

**iv. Those admitted for the purposes of family reunion or family formation**

In 2006, 47,100 spouses, fiancé(e)s and civil partners were admitted to the UK, with the top five countries of origin of spouses comprising Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, USA and Thailand (ibid).

**v. Overseas students from outside the EU**

According to the Home Office (2007a), some 309,000 overseas students entered the UK in 2006. The number of overseas students has increased gradually over the last ten years. The largest proportion of this group come to study in universities, but significant numbers are also studying in private English language colleges, independent schools and as self-funded students in further education colleges. The main countries of origin of overseas students comprised China, Russia, Japan and the United States. Students also come from less economically developed countries: for example, nearly 7,000 Nigerian students were admitted to the UK in 2006 (Home Office, 2007a).

**vi. Returning 'British' nationals**

A further group of international migrants comprise British nationals 'returning' to the UK. Research suggests that in 2005 there were 5.5 million British nationals living abroad (ippr, 2006a). British nationals who live abroad are a diverse population, for example, many British passport holders living in Denmark are of Pakistani origin.

**vii. Irregular migrants**

There are also an unknown number of irregular migrants in the UK. This group of people mostly comprise visa and asylum overstayers, as well as a smaller number of illegal entrants (ippr, 2006b). Research commissioned by the Home Office estimated an irregular migrant population of between 310,000 and 530,000 persons in 2001 (Pinkerton et al., 2004). This group has no entitlement to social housing.

**3.3 Rights and entitlements to social housing among migrant communities**

The different residency statuses of migrant groups outlined above determine entitlement to social housing and housing benefit in the UK. Entitlements are discussed below and some of the main features of the complex legal situation regarding foreign nationals' eligibility for social housing are summarised in Table 2,

below. Our data show that many newly arrived migrants have no entitlement to social housing.

#### **i. Asylum-seekers and refugees**

The housing entitlements of asylum-seekers have changed considerably during the last 15 years. The most significant change was in 2000, after the implementation of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. The Act removed existing rights to housing and all types of benefits, and set up a new housing and subsistence scheme for asylum-seekers, administered by the UK Border Agency. Since 2000, homeless asylum-seekers have been housed in specially commissioned emergency accommodation on first arriving in the UK. After this they have the option to apply for a 'subsistence only'<sup>8</sup> package or for subsistence and accommodation.

The UK Border Agency commissions housing for asylum-seekers who require accommodation, known as Section 95 housing. Almost all of this housing is located outside Greater London and South East England, part of a policy decision to disperse asylum-seekers away from these areas. Accommodation is provided by private property management companies and a number of local authorities. Both our research and a number of other reports (ICAR, 2004) argue that the use of empty social housing by the UK Border Agency to accommodate asylum-seekers has fuelled misconceptions that asylum-seekers are 'queue jumping' and being allocated social housing ahead of white British applicants.

The Government envisaged about 500 persons being brought to the UK every year as part of the Gateway programme which relies on participating local authorities signing up to offer housing and other forms of support. Some 335 refugees entered through the Gateway programme in 2006 from countries such as Burma, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia and Sudan (Home Office, 2008). Those brought to the UK through this programme are usually placed in a hotel on arrival in London before being moved into temporary accommodation in the participating local authority. After a period of time in temporary accommodation, they are moved into social housing if they qualify as homeless (Robinson and Reeve, 2007).

#### **ii. EU and EEA migrants**

For EEA nationals, rights of residency in the UK, to work and to claim benefits, are complex and are frequently misinterpreted. Under Article Six of EC Directive 2004/38/EC all EEA nationals and their family members, plus Swiss nationals and their families, have the right to reside in another EEA country or Switzerland for an initial three month period. Article Seven of the same directive gives these nationals, and their family members, further rights of residence dependent on them fulfilling conditions as a qualifying person, granting them EEA worker status. Essentially, a

person must be in employment to secure EEA worker status. Nationals of the new accession states must additionally enrol on the Workers Registration Scheme or be self-employed to qualify for EEA worker status.

At present, all those who qualify as EEA workers are entitled to apply for social housing (London Councils, 2007). There is also a growing body of case law in relation to the possession of EEA worker status, on issues such as part-time working or the loss of a job by someone who previously held EEA worker status. Much of this case law has been generated as a result of disputes over entitlement to benefits and social housing, for example, how many hours per week a person must work in order to qualify as an EEA worker.

Nationals of EU states who are not working may apply for social housing or housing benefit/local housing allowance if they can show that they have 'usual residency' in the UK. National regulations do not define what 'usual residency' comprises but generally this means that the UK is a person's usual place of residence and that he/she has been living in the UK for a specified period, usually 12 months. Normally, an EU national applying for social housing would have to show a local connection with the local authority in which they have applied and show that they have not made themselves intentionally homeless by migrating to the UK.

After 12 months of residency in the UK, EEA nationals do not have to show EEA worker status in order to qualify for social housing.

A British national who has previously resided abroad will also need to prove that they have EEA worker status, or that the UK is their normal place of residence in order to gain an entitlement to social housing.

Nationals of Romania and Bulgaria, both of which joined the EU in January 2007, have restricted rights to work in the UK; some nationals of Bulgaria and Romania – those on the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme – also have restrictions placed on their residence in the UK (ibid and ippr, 2006c). However, all Bulgarian and Romanian nationals who have worked legally in the UK for 12 months gain EEA Worker Status and have full access to the UK labour market and can apply for social housing.

### **iii. Work permit holders and those admitted for the purposes of family reunion or family formation**

Work permit holders and those admitted for the purposes of family reunion or family formation are not entitled to social housing until they are granted settled status –

sometimes called 'indefinite leave to remain' or 'permanent residency' in the UK. Spouses may apply for settled status after a two-year period of residency, provided a number of conditions are met. Work visa holders may apply for settled status after five years' residency in the UK.

**iv. Overseas students from outside the EU**

Overseas students from outside the EU are not permitted to apply for settled status while they remain in the UK with a student visa. They have no entitlement to social housing and may not gain that entitlement as a student.

**v. Emergency housing provided by local authorities**

Irregular migrants have no entitlement to social housing, although occasionally some local authorities provide emergency housing to irregular migrants who cannot be removed from the UK for humanitarian reasons such as severe illness. (London Borough of Islington, 2006) Emergency assistance is also sometimes given to other groups with no entitlement to social housing, for example, an overseas student with a family who has become unemployed and unable to pay rent. Most London local authorities are supporting between 30 and 300 destitute migrants, who have similar cases to these (ibid).

The European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance (ECSMA) and the Council of European Social Charter (CESC) give the nationals of Turkey and Croatia the right to assistance if homeless, providing that person is lawfully present in the UK and does not have 'no recourse to public fund' restrictions placed on their stay (ibid). The provisions of ECSMA and CESC, however, are very rarely used.

For all three groups emergency assistance usually comprises a hostel or sometimes rental accommodation, provided by a local authority.

**3.4 Future changes to housing entitlement**

Government proposals, published as a Green Paper in 2008, proposed amending migrants' entitlement to social housing (BIA, 2008). Settled status may in future be abolished and instead replaced with a status which the Government's Green paper has termed 'probationary citizenship', with no entitlement to social housing and most benefits. The Government proposes that a person has to meet criteria such as showing some fluency in English before probationary citizenship is granted. The probationary citizen will have to meet further requirements before full citizenship is granted. Consultation on these proposals was undertaken in Spring 2008, with government intending to table legislation in the 2008-09 Parliament.

**Table 2 Foreign nationals and eligibility for social housing**

The key issue affecting eligibility for social housing is whether a person is subject to immigration control. If they are subject to immigration control they are generally not eligible except in certain circumstances	
	<b>Eligibility for social housing</b>
EEA nationals	EEA nationals and their family members are ineligible for allocation of social housing unless they have a right to reside. In this case, they do not have to be habitually resident * in order to be eligible for accommodation. This includes EEA nationals who are workers, self-employed or Accession state workers requiring registration, and their family members.
Those with refugee status, humanitarian protection and discretionary leave	Can apply to the relevant local authority for assistance, normally the one where the person has been living while awaiting for his or her asylum claim to be determined. Can also apply to another LA if they can prove a local connection on the grounds of employment, family associations or other special circumstances. Includes refugees entering the country through the Gateway Programme.
Asylum-seekers	Those subject to immigration control are not eligible for social housing. Housing must be provided by the UK Border Agency if required (although three categories are eligible)
International students from outside the EU	Not eligible

**Notes:** \*The 'habitually resident' test seeks to establish that a person is voluntarily in the UK, is resident in UK, has a settled intention to remain in UK, and has been in UK for an appreciable period of time.

Different rules apply in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This table is only a summary of some of the main features of entitlement. It is a very complex situation and readers who require further detail are advised to visit a specialist website or seek expert advice e.g. Department of Health (2006) Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities. See Chapter 9 'Eligibility'; [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum.support/](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum.support/); [www.legalservices.gov.uk](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk); [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk).

As they stand, the proposals will affect a number of migrant groups, particularly refugees and those who have been granted settled status prior to acquiring full citizenship. Numerically, the largest national group who are likely to be affected by this proposed change are Bangladesh-born spouses who settle in the UK.

### **3.5 Key points**

- Immigration to the UK increased over the last decade due to the arrival of asylum seekers, sustained work permit and other work visa holders and large scale migration from the new EU member states since 2004. There is net immigration into the UK, with immigration exceeding emigration.
- The migrant population has also become increasingly diverse and migration flows have become more complex. Many parts of urban Britain manifest super-diversity where communities that differ in terms of their national origin and residency status, as well as other factors such as ethnicity, live side-by-side.
- The migrant population of the UK comprises persons with different residency statuses, including asylum-seekers, refugees, migrants from EEA states who have rights to seek work in the UK, work visa holders, overseas students, spouses and civil partners as well as irregular migrants.
- Only resident British nationals and certain categories of foreign nationals such as EEA workers and those with refugee status or settled status are entitled to apply for social housing in the UK. There is a disjuncture, however, between this reality and public perceptions that newly arrived migrants are being given social housing.
- The use of empty social housing by the UK Border Agency to accommodate asylum-seekers may have helped fuel misconceptions that asylum seekers are 'queue jumping' and receive social housing ahead of British-born families.

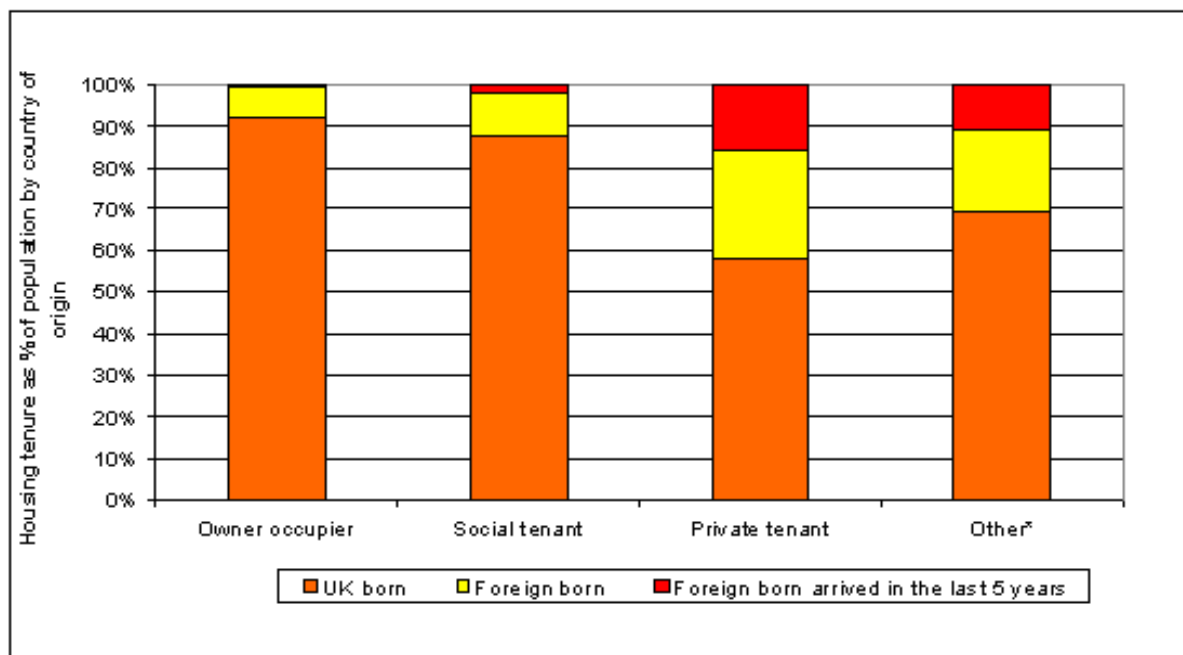
## 4 Housing tenure patterns among migrant communities

As already noted, many public concerns about migration have focussed on the perception that migrants receive priority in the allocation of social housing. However, there has been very little empirical research about social housing tenure patterns in migrant communities. This chapter presents new data from the LFS on social housing tenure patterns among foreign-born communities.

### 4.1 Housing tenure patterns

Figure 5 shows that foreign-born populations who have arrived in the UK during the last five years are overwhelmingly housed in the private rental sector, and not in social housing. Those who hold social tenancies are overwhelmingly UK-born. A large proportion of overseas-born households are housed in the private rental sector with migrants who have arrived in the UK during the last five years particularly over-represented in this sector. We took five years as a point in our analysis, as this is the minimum length of time that refugees with humanitarian protection, discretionary leave and work visas would take to get settled status.

**Figure 5 Housing tenure distribution by country-of-birth, 2007**



Source: LFS and ippr calculations.

Note: \* Includes rent relative of household member or related to work.

Our analysis shows that:

- Some 64 per cent of new migrants to the UK over the last five years are housed in private rented accommodation.

- New migrants to the UK over the last five years make up less than two per cent of the total of those in social housing.
- Some 11 per cent of new migrants have been allocated social housing. The comparable figure for UK born residents is 17 per cent, and for all foreign-born UK residents 18 per cent.
- Over 90 per cent of those in social housing are UK-born.

This indicates that although some migrants do benefit from social housing, they are unlikely to do so until they have been settled for several years and acquire settled status, refugee status or become British citizens and that they are not significantly more likely to benefit than other residents.

#### 4.2 Factors influencing housing tenure

ippr analysis suggests that eight factors influence tenure patterns among migrant communities and account for their uptake of social housing. These factors can be inter-related, for example, length of residence in the UK may influence employment and the capacity to save money. These eight factors are discussed below and comprise:

- Immigration status, thus entitlement to social housing.
- Household income.
- Demographic factors such as family size.
- Employment conditions.
- Length of residency in the UK.
- Local housing markets.
- Migrants' aspirations.
- Migrants' perceptions about particular forms of housing and their safety in particular areas.

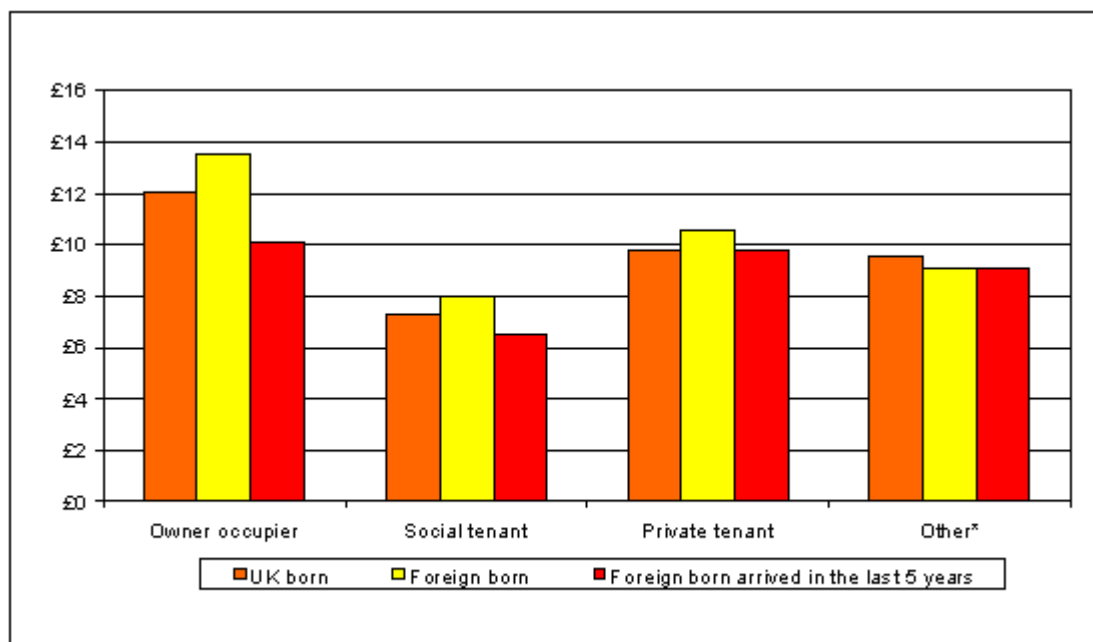
**1. Immigration status:** As already noted in Chapter 3, this influences entitlement to social housing with many migrant groups having no entitlement.

**2. Household income:** This determines a person's ability to buy property or secure a mortgage. Figure 6 shows that average gross hourly pay of social tenants is less than that of persons in other forms of housing tenure. The foreign-born population which has arrived in the UK in the last five years has the lowest gross hourly pay and, therefore, the least ability to purchase property.

Figure 6 also shows that foreign-born populations who are owner occupiers or living in rental accommodation generally have a slightly higher income than UK-born

populations. This may be caused by the 'London factor'. Average incomes for those in work are higher in London than elsewhere in the UK, for migrants and non-migrants alike. Some 38 per cent of the UK's foreign-born population reside in London, compared with just 13 per cent of the UK's total population. Migrants' higher incomes are partly a result of their disproportionate concentration in the prosperous capital.

**Figure 6 Average gross hourly pay by housing tenure and country-of-birth, 2006/07**



Source: LFS 2006 Q4-2007 Q3.

Note: \* Includes rent relative of household member or related to work.

However, not all foreign-born populations have a higher than average income. The ippr analysis indicates that three types of foreign-born populations have an average weekly income that is significantly less than the UK-born population (ippr, 2007a).

They comprise:

- Recently arrived refugee groups (from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Zimbabwe) who experience high levels of unemployment.
- Recently-arrived European migrants (Lithuanians, Poles, Portuguese and Slovaks) who are disproportionately employed in unskilled occupations.
- Longer established ethnic minority communities who experience high levels of unemployment (Bangladeshis and Turks).

All of these groups have very low rates of owner occupancy. They are, therefore, more likely to be dependent on the private or social rental sector for housing. Those whose household characteristics result in them being prioritised for social housing – for example, those with children – are likely to be social tenants.

**3. Demographic factors:** Family size or age at the time of migration will impact on housing tenure. Larger families with lower incomes may be unable to afford to purchase suitable property and will be reliant on social housing, if entitled. Older people may also qualify for social housing as vulnerable persons.

We analysed household characteristics for the 36 largest country-of-birth groups, focussing on:

- The proportions of the population of a particular country-of-birth group who are aged 65 or over.
- The numbers of households with three or more dependent children.
- The numbers of households with five or more dependent children.

The Ireland, Italy and Jamaica-born populations have a particularly high proportion of elderly among them. This reflects migration flows to the UK of these groups, with much migration occurring in the 1950s. Migrants who came as young adults at this time are now old, and may qualify for social housing.

Family size among foreign-born populations is higher than the UK-born population. Proportionally more households have three or more children, and the Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Somalia-born population have the highest proportion of families with five or more children. For example, some 10.8 per cent of Somalia-born households have five or more children, compared with just 0.3 per cent of the UK-born population. These groups are overwhelmingly housed in the rental sector, in social housing or in private rental accommodation, as many of those with larger families and lower incomes may be unable to afford to purchase suitable property.

These figures need to be kept in context. Although there are proportionately more large families among some country-of-birth groups, in absolute numbers there are many more UK-born large family households. Additionally, household size among some groups is far lower than the UK-born population. Migrants from the EU's new accession states are overwhelmingly young and childless – just six per cent of migrants from A8 countries had dependants with them when they applied to the Workers Registration Scheme (Home Office, 2007b). As a result, few will qualify for social housing.

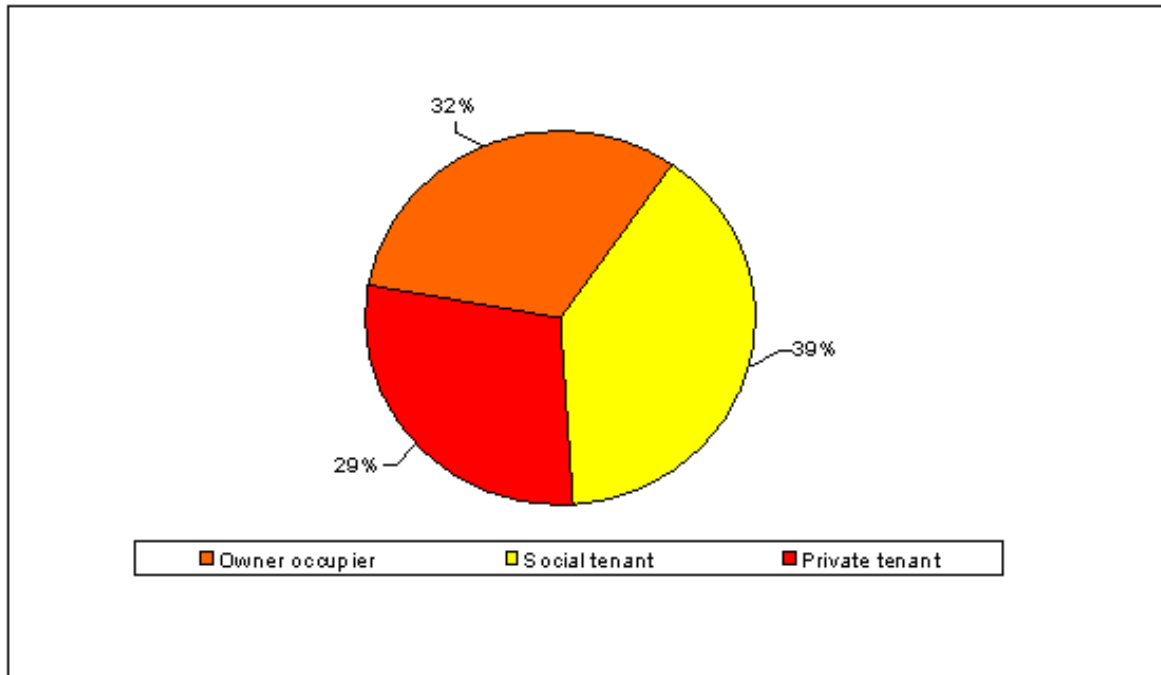
**4. Employment conditions:** Temporary work contracts or agency work may affect decisions made about housing, with those with temporary work usually deciding to live in private rental accommodation. Insecure employment may affect housing aspiration and limit a person's ability to purchase property. Some employees also have accommodation tied to their job. Tied housing is most often provided for the armed services, domestic workers such as au-pairs, and those working in agriculture, health and social care and hospitality sector, all of which employ high proportions of foreign-born persons. The provision of tied housing for groups such as the Philippines-born population may partly account for lower uptake of social housing.

**5. Length of residency in the UK:** Longer-established migrants are more likely to have secured settled status or British citizenship, affording them an entitlement to social housing. Conversely, they are also more likely to have re-established their careers and have accumulated sufficient savings to buy a home or secure a mortgage. Length of residency in the UK increases the likelihood that migrants will move out of private rental accommodation, becoming social tenants, or owner occupiers.

The appendices present data on the proportions of particular country-of-birth groups who have arrived in the UK since 2002. They show that some populations are largely 'new to the UK'. Over 60 per cent of those born in Afghanistan, Brazil, Iraq, Lithuania, the Philippines, Poland, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa and Zimbabwe have arrived since 1997. Most of these groups are disproportionately over-represented in private rental housing; only those from Afghanistan and Somalia are over-represented in social housing. These two groups have generally moved as refugees to the UK and been accompanied by families (Home Office, 2007a). Refugee status or leave to remain is usually granted within six months of arrival in the UK, so refugees may be able to apply for social housing relatively soon after their arrival in the UK.

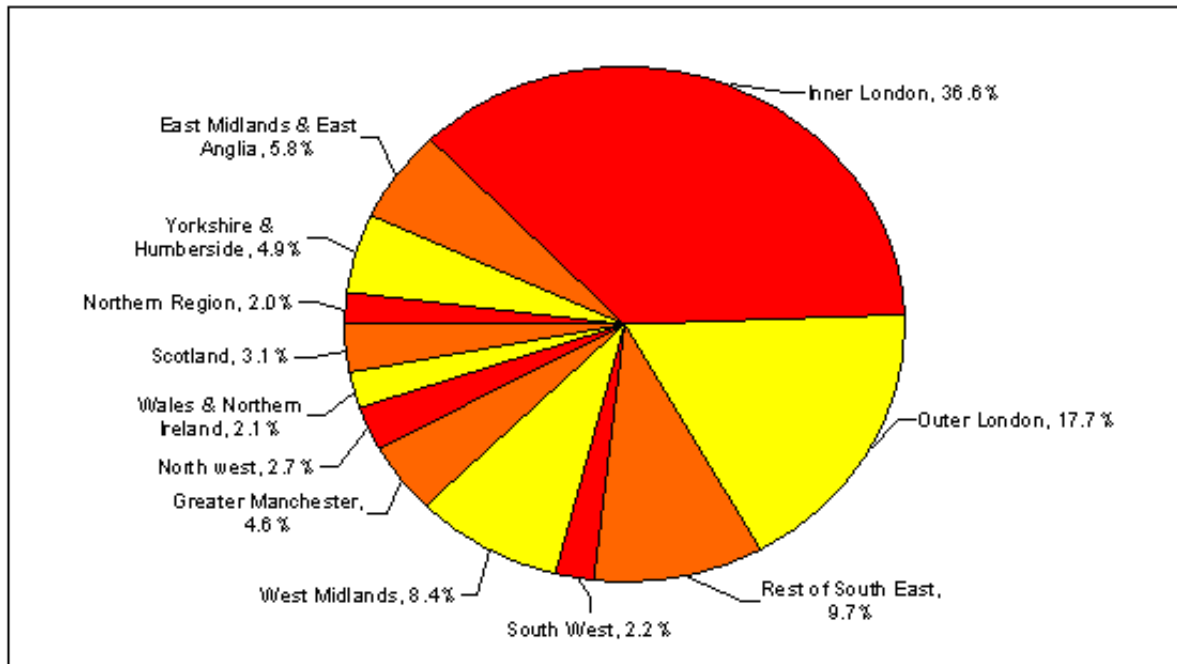
**6. Local housing markets:** The type of accommodation available to migrants is affected by the local housing market. Where housing is of high cost, a greater proportion of migrants may live and remain in social housing, partly accounting for the high proportions of overseas born populations in social housing in inner London in comparison with other parts of the UK (see Figures 7 and 8). Some 17.3 per cent of the UK's overseas born population lives in inner London compared with 36.6 per cent of the UK's overseas born social tenants. Overall, some 54.3 per cent of the UK's migrant social tenants live in inner and outer London, although this region houses just 38 per cent of the UK's overall migrant population.

**Figure 7 Foreign-born residents in Inner London by housing tenure, 2007**



Source: LFS 2006 Q4-2007 Q3.

**Figure 8 Distribution of foreign-born social tenants across regions in UK, 2007**



Source: LFS 2006 Q4-2007 Q3.

**7. Migrants' aspirations:** Migrants' desire to remain in the UK or to re-migrate, or their desired place of residence in the UK, may affect housing tenure. Analysis suggests that migrants who do not know if they will stay or remain, or who see their stay in the UK as a temporary sojourn, are less likely to purchase property than those who wish to remain in the UK for a more substantial period of time (Rutter and Latorre, 2008). Many migrants from Europe's new accession countries are likely to see their stay in the UK as temporary and are, therefore, unlikely to purchase property (Pollard et al., 2008).

**8. Migrants' perceptions:** Perceptions about particular forms of housing or personal safety in certain areas also have an impact on where migrants live. Research shows that among both migrant and visible ethnic minority communities, some parts of the UK are felt to be 'off limits' because of the risk of racially aggravated violence (Communities Scotland, 2004). There is some evidence of migrants choosing to live in private rental accommodation rather than large social housing estates, as they felt safer in the former (Hewitt, 2003).

#### **4.3 Housing tenure by country-of-birth**

Analysis of housing tenure by country-of-birth for the 36 largest country-of-birth groups was undertaken, using the LFS (sample size errors prevent us undertaking this analysis with smaller country-of-birth groups (ONS, 2003)). Data are presented in the appendices and highlight differential patterns of housing tenure among the UK's different foreign-born communities. For example, the Kenya-born population has a higher rate of owner-occupancy than the overall UK population. This group comprises high proportions of entrepreneurial British Asians who have left Kenya over the last forty years. Their household income and length of residency in the UK account for high levels of owner occupancy. Among communities that are newly established in the UK, for example, Afghans and Slovaks, rates of owner occupancy are much lower.

As Figure A5 indicates, most social tenants are UK-born. Social tenants from the EU's new accession states form a very small proportion of the total social tenant population – just 0.5 per cent. Of overseas-born groups it is refugees who are disproportionately represented in social housing with 1.9 per cent of social tenants being born in countries where the predominant migrant population comprises refugees.<sup>9</sup> Their entitlement to social housing as refugees, coupled with lower household income and the concentration of these communities in London are the factors that account for this pattern. However, their overall numbers are small in comparison with the UK-born population.

Only four country-of-birth groups have higher proportions of persons living in social housing than the UK-born population. These are the Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Jamaica and Somalia-born populations. Over 95 per cent of the Somalia born population lives in rental accommodation and of this group, nearly 80 per cent are in social housing. However, these groups are numerically small in relation to the total of social tenants in the UK. The overall size of the Somalia-born population is small - an estimated 92,200 persons in Quarter Three of 2007, of which 72,800 were social tenants, compared with 8.4 million UK-born social tenants. An LFS analysis estimates that 73 per cent Afghanistan-born persons were social tenants, amounting to just 19,200 people.

A number of factors account for the over-representation as social tenants of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Jamaica and Somalia-born populations. These include:

- Lower household income, thus an inability to purchase property (for Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Somalia-born populations).
- Larger family size, with many families being unable to afford suitable properties (for Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Somalia-born populations).
- A preference for settlement in London, where property prices are higher and greater proportions of all country-of-birth groups are social tenants (for all four groups and UK-born populations).
- High proportions of new arrivals among the population, with new arrivals least likely to have accumulated the savings needed to purchase property (for Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Somalia-born populations).

Thus for each foreign-born group, a number of factors cause particular patterns of housing tenure. Three examples are given below.

- The India-born population has a low uptake of social housing. It is predominantly a long-settled community in the UK, whose average income is higher than the UK mean (ippr, 2007a). Newer arrivals are largely highly-skilled work visa holders or students who have no entitlement to social housing. The factors that account for a low uptake of social housing are high-income levels and immigration status.
- The Polish-born population has a low uptake of social housing. Most of the community has migrated since 2002 and its average income is lower than the UK mean (ibid ). Poland-born migrants are largely childless and many Poles aspire to return home

(Pollard et al., 2008). Some Poles are also living in tied accommodation. The factors that account for a low uptake of social housing comprise alternative forms of accommodation and family characteristics; as most Polish migrants have no children they would not be prioritised for social housing.

- The Somalia-born population has a high uptake of social housing. Most Somalia-born persons living in the UK have secured refugee status, settled status or UK or EEA citizenship thus qualifying them for social housing. Many Somalis migrated as family groups with their children and family size is much larger than the UK mean. The Somalia-born population includes many people who are economically inactive or unemployed. Those in work have an average income much lower than the UK mean (ippr, 2007a). The factors that account for a high uptake of social housing comprise low household incomes, large family size and immigration status.

#### **4.4 Housing tenure by ethnicity and religious denomination**

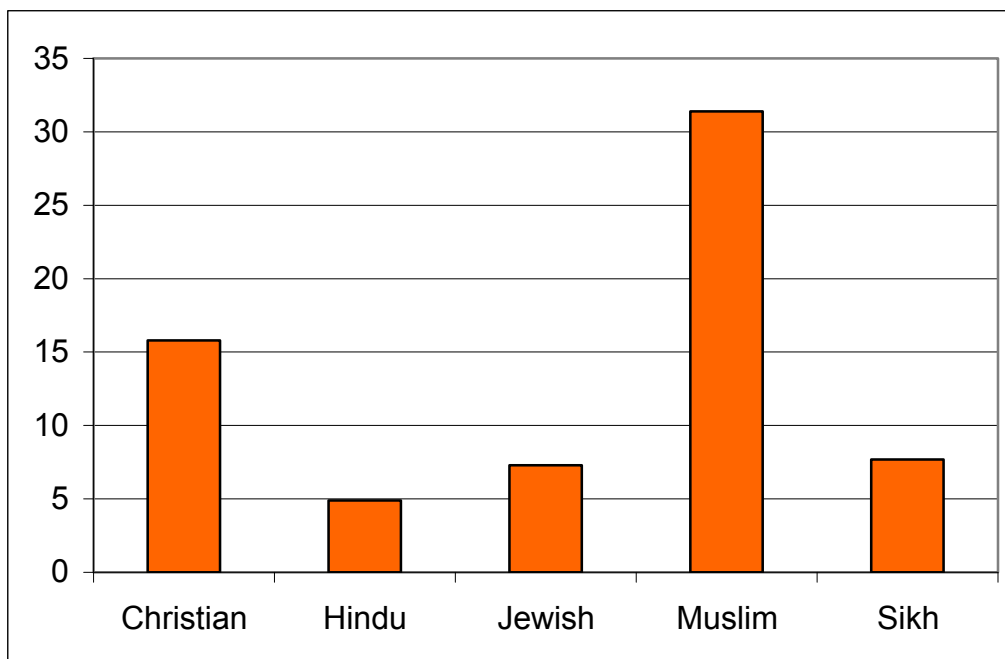
The LFS, CORE data and the Survey of English Housing all provide a measurement of housing tenure patterns among different ethnic groups. The LFS can also be used to analyse housing tenure patterns by the main religious denominations (but cannot highlight differential patterns in housing tenure by gender, disability, sexuality or age). An analysis of housing tenure by ethnicity and by religious denomination is relevant to this research because although many members of ethnic minority groups are not migrants, having been born in the UK, they may be perceived as migrants within their neighbourhoods. Similarly, many Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs may be perceived as migrants.

Overall, in 2006, 27 per cent of ethnic minority households were social tenants, compared with 17 per cent of white households. Ethnic minority households were also more likely to be in the private rental sector than white households. However, Indian, Pakistani and Chinese households were less likely to be social tenants than the white population whereas the Black Caribbean, Black African and Bangladeshi population were more likely to be social tenants than the white population (Hills, 2007). As the public does not distinguish between long settled ethnic minority communities and new migrants, the above tenure patterns may account for perceptions that social housing allocation favours particular communities.

Figure 9 shows that a higher proportion of the Muslim population are social tenants than any other religious denomination, although of course, the greatest number of social tenants in the UK identify themselves as Christian. Most people in the UK

who identify themselves as Muslims are of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Somali origin. Again, the public may identify an observant Muslim as a migrant.

**Figure 9 Social housing tenants' distribution by religious denomination, 2007**



Source: LFS, 2007.

#### 4.5 Key points

- New migrants to the UK over the last five years make up less than two per cent of the total of those in social housing. In contrast, over 90 per cent of those in social housing are UK born.
- Of foreign born people who have arrived in the UK in the past five years, 17 per cent are owner occupiers, 11 per cent live in social housing and 64 per cent are private tenants.
- Eight factors influence housing tenure. These include immigration status, household income, demographic factors such as family size, employment, length of residency in the UK, local housing markets, migrants' aspirations, and migrants perceptions about particular forms of housing and their perceived safety.
- These factors are inter-related to country-of-birth. Some populations have a low uptake of social housing because of their high income level, immigration status, or lack of children. Other populations have a high uptake of social housing because of their low income, large family size

and a different immigration status.

- Only four country-of-birth groups have a higher percentage of their population living in social housing than the UK born population: the Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Jamaica and Somali-born populations. These groups are numerically very small in relation to the total number of social tenants in the UK.

## 5 Is the allocation of social housing fair?

The previous chapter showed how a number of legal and socio-economic factors may influence housing tenure, including the uptake of social housing. This chapter examines a further factor that might cause differential tenure patterns, social housing allocation policies and practice. It also explores the evolution of social housing policies in England and investigates how and whether allocation policies are meeting equality standards.

### 5.1 Evolving allocation policies

Attempts to create procedurally fair systems for allocating social housing – a scarce resource – date back to the Housing Act 1936 when local authorities were required to give reasonable preference to applicants who met certain criteria. The Housing Act 1936 was passed at a time when demand for social housing was increasing; many people wished to move from older privately rented housing into better quality and newer social housing. At this time, stable working class households with a regular income, rather than the poorest in society, were often prioritised for new housing.

After 1945, the idea that social housing should provide a welfare safety net for the most vulnerable in society gained pre-eminence among successive governments. Those who met certain criteria – reasonable preference criteria – were obliged to be housed by local authorities, who at this time managed most social housing. Reasonable preference criteria included homelessness and poor housing (see below for current criteria). At the same time there was a large increase in the number of new build local authority housing, particularly in the period 1950-1954 and 1962-1970 (Mullins and Murie, 2006). The expansion of social housing enabled slum clearance during the 1950s and 1960s. By the mid-1960s, one third of all households in the UK were social tenants, mostly of local authorities.

The 1960s and 1970s saw an expansion of housing associations, prompted by growing public concern about homelessness.<sup>10</sup> These not-for-profit organisations also aimed to provide a welfare safety net for the most vulnerable, although they often had additional criteria for prioritising and allocating their housing, for example, to members of particular churches.

The amount of new build local authority housing fell dramatically after 1978. The Housing Act 1980 changed the public housing finance system and made it more difficult for local authorities to raise monies for new build social housing. This legislation also gave local authority tenants the right to buy their housing. As a consequence of these two changes the number of local authority dwellings fell considerably. However, these changes occurred as the demand for social housing

was increasing as a result of a widening of the reasonable preference criteria after the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977.

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 consolidated the notion that the prime aim of social housing was to provide a welfare safety net for the most vulnerable. It placed a duty on local authorities to provide advice and assistance. It also obliged local authorities to provide housing for those who were judged to be in 'priority need'. After 1977, the number of households accepted by local authorities as being homeless grew in England. This was a result of a widening of the criteria for allocating social housing.

The present criteria for allocating social housing, including the broad reasonable preference criteria, are outlined in the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Housing Act 2002 and the Housing Act 2004. The process for applying for social housing is explained below. Prior to 1996, many more persons from abroad without settled status could apply for social housing in the UK. The Housing Act 1996 was significant in that it limited access to permanent social housing tenancies to those with refugee status, asylum-seekers granted leave to remain in the UK and those with settled status in the UK.

## **5.2 Equalities aspects of housing policies**

As noted above, there have been substantial changes in the way in which social housing has been allocated over the last 70 years. While procedures that followed the Housing Act 1936 notionally attempted to introduce distributive justice and transparency into the social housing allocation system, there was substantial evidence of racial discrimination – against those judged feckless or undesirable. The Government's own Cullingworth inquiry report notes:

The underlying philosophy seemed that council tenancies were to be given only to those who deserved them and that the most deserving should get the best houses. Thus unmarried mothers, cohabitees, 'dirty' families and transients tended to be grouped together. (Cullingworth, 1966)

Extensive studies conducted over a thirty-year period have shown discrimination against black and ethnic minority households in the allocation of social housing, as well as in other aspects of the operation of social housing policy. There is very little research on the other strands of equalities, for example, religious or gender discrimination in the allocation of social housing. Black and ethnic minority households tended to be allocated the worst quality social housing (Henderson

and Karn, 1987) while the institutional discrimination of social landlords who have constantly failed to build accommodation suitable for larger families, which are more prevalent among some ethnic minority communities, has been highlighted (Mullings, 1991). Ethnic minority families also appeared to spend longer in temporary accommodation before being granted permanent social housing (Shelter, 1995).

A number of formal investigations conducted by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) supported the above research findings.<sup>11</sup> A landmark document was the CRE's 1984 investigation into the London Borough of Hackney (CRE, 1984). This drew attention to the discretion granted to the, then, mainly white housing staff in the allocation of social housing and the tendency to allocate the worst housing to black households. It resulted in the introduction of ethnic monitoring in the allocation of social housing. At around the same time as the Hackney formal investigation, a number of local authorities were forced by the CRE to drop their 'sons and daughters' tenancy allocation policies, whereby the families of original tenants could inherit tenancies from deceased parents even if these relatives did not live with the original tenant. These were judged to be discriminatory against ethnic minority groups and to be responsible for some of the ethnic segregation in cities (Hewitt, 1996).

Since the 1984 Hackney investigation local authorities and housing associations have attempted to monitor their lettings, using the 16 broad ethnicity categories, although not all local authority ethnicity data is complete. Today, as public authorities, they are bound by the duties of the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. There has been little research on the impact of the race equality duties on the everyday work of local authority housing departments and Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs).<sup>12</sup> This is an area which requires further study. Even less researched has been the impact of other equalities duties outlined in the Equality Act 2006. There is also little policy guidance issued by local authorities on how to meet some aspects of equalities legislation within housing.

Housing associations are not public authorities as defined by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Instead they are regulated by the Housing Corporation whose 2002 Regulatory Code and Guidance requires the governing body of the housing association to adopt an equalities and diversity policy that covers all aspects of equality. In particular, the Housing Corporation 2002 Regulatory Code and Guidance requires that housing associations set targets in relation to:

- Lettings to black and ethnic minority communities - these need to be proportionate to housing need among different communities.
- Tenant satisfaction and black and ethnic minority communities -

this should be as high proportionately as among the majority community.

- Racial harassment.
- Governing body membership - this has to reflect the composition of tenants and local communities.
- Staffing - this has to reflect the composition of tenants and local communities.
- Representation in tenants' or residents' associations - this has to reflect the composition of tenants and local communities.
- Employment performance of suppliers as a criterion for the award of work.

These regulatory requirements mean that housing associations need to keep data on the ethnicity of tenants, although many tenants decline to supply this. Again, there has been little research on the impact of these duties on the everyday work of housing associations.

### **5.3 Today's social housing allocation systems**

Under present legislation, local authorities have a duty to examine the case of anyone who presents him/ herself to a housing department or homeless persons unit. Local authorities also have a duty to provide accommodation to anyone who falls within a priority need group.

Usually an applicant for social housing will fill in a form which asks about immigration status and present housing conditions. This data and any subsequent interviews and inquiries aim to establish the entitlement and characteristics of a household, including if they are entitled, by immigration status, to apply for social housing or emergency support.

By law, local authorities must provide accommodation to anyone who falls within a priority needs group and is not disbarred because of factors such as immigration status. The Homelessness Act 2002 defines these groups, which include households with dependent children, pregnant women, homeless minors, care-leavers under 21, the elderly and those fleeing domestic violence. Most local authorities will provide emergency or temporary accommodation for those who are judged to be in priority need, before a move into permanent social housing. Temporary accommodation may comprise a bed and breakfast hotel, a hostel, or accommodation that has been rented by a council from a private landlord. In many parts of the UK temporary accommodation is provided outside the boundaries of the local authority responsible for accommodating that household.

In England, permanent social housing may be provided by a local authority. Local authorities also nominate those in priority need or on social housing waiting lists to housing associations. Housing associations vary in the proportion of local authority nominees that they accept. For example, some housing associations in London only accept 40 per cent of their tenants from local authorities. Housing associations may accept tenants nominated by a number of local authorities. Some local authorities also accept tenants nominated by other local authorities.

### **Reasonable preference**

The housing department or homeless persons unit will also gather data to establish if an applicant must be given reasonable preference in the allocation of social housing. Legislation dictates that a number of groups of people must be given priority or 'reasonable preference', namely:

- Those who are homeless, or who are threatened with homelessness.
- Priority needs groups, such as families with children.
- People living in unsuitable accommodation, for example, a home without an inside lavatory.
- People living in overcrowded accommodation.
- Those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds.
- People who need to move to a particular area to prevent hardship.

Local authorities also have the discretion to add groups, other than the above, who will be given reasonable preference. In addition to the main mechanisms for allocating social housing a number of local authorities, primarily in London and the South East of England, reserve some social housing for key public sector workers.

As social housing is a scarce resource, local authorities use either a points system or a banding system to decide who has the greatest priority and will, therefore, receive permanent accommodation most rapidly.

- **A points-based system** allocates a certain number of points for a particular social characteristic. For example, Northampton Borough Council allocates 35 points to a household that is judged to be homeless, 25 points for a household issued with a notice of eviction, 15 points for no inside lavatory, 3 points for no heating in the bedroom of the present property and so on. The points are totalled and the household with the highest number of points is highest on the waiting list and will receive the next vacant property that is appropriate to their needs. (A household comprising an adult and two children will receive the next vacant three bedroom house).

- **A banding system** operates by placing those applying for social housing in a number of groups or bands, according to their social characteristics. For example, the London Borough of Brent, which operates such a system, has 33 sub-bands, each of which is further grouped into four main bands: A, B, C and D. Band A sub-bands include those who are judged to be homeless and in priority need, and those households who are under-occupying a local authority property.<sup>13</sup> Band B sub-bands include those on the medical housing register and those who are living in overcrowded accommodation. Band C sub-bands include those living in private rental accommodation in Brent who want to apply for social housing. Within each of the four bands, all applicants for social housing are grouped according to their perceived priority and date of application. Appropriate properties are allocated firstly to applicants in Band A, by priority then by date of application, then to Band B and so on.

Local authorities have discretion about the operation of their points based or banding system, for example, the number of points for a certain characteristic or how they define their bands.

In addition to this method of prioritisation, about 40 per cent of local housing authorities operate a choice based letting system. Government has set a target for all English local authorities to operate such a system by 2010. Rather than allocate housing solely via a local authority waiting list, choice based letting allows applicants for social housing (and existing tenants who want to transfer) to apply for vacancies which are advertised in the neighbourhood. A household wanting social housing is assessed via a points based or banding system as described above. Usually properties are advertised weekly in a local newspaper and applicants can see a range of properties before applying for properties to which they are matched. (A childless couple, for example could not apply for a four bedroom house). Where a number of households bid for one property, priority is given to those who possess the most points or are placed in the highest priority band. While those allocated social housing appear satisfied with choice based lettings, there has been little research on the equalities impact of this system across England.

#### **5.4 Analysis of allocation policies from the perspective of equality**

In order to explore social housing allocation in more detail, we analysed the social housing allocation policies of 50 local authorities (see Chapter 2 for details of our methodology). These were chosen to represent a cross-section of local authorities in England with different characteristics and are listed in Appendix 2.

Three issues were examined. Firstly, the content of the policy and their method of allocating points. We looked at selection of the social characteristics that are used to prioritise social housing, as well as the weightings given for different social characteristics. Secondly, we examined transparency and graded each allocation policy on a scale of one to five in terms of how easy it was to understand, with five being the highest score. Thirdly, we looked for evidence of differential treatment of different groups, with particular reference to new migrants, by looking at how the policies would treat two hypothetical families:

- Family A: A UK-born family comprising two adults and two children who have lived in the local authority for all their lives. They have just been served an eviction order by their private landlord.
- Family B: An EEA worker and family, with the household comprising two adults and two children. They have lived in the UK for just six months. The family has just been served an eviction order by their private landlord.

Findings are summarised below.

**Content:** Policies differed in their content and method of allocating points. Those that operated a points system allocated different proportions of points to different social characteristics. For example, one local authority awarded points for families with children who did not have use of a garden, while another did not. Some local authorities awarded additional points for length of time spent on a waiting list, while others did not. The greatest differences occurred among the local authorities that operated a points system, rather than a banding system. However, banding systems differed in the way bands were defined.

**Transparency:** Most points based allocation scored fairly well in terms of their ease of understanding (to a native speaker of English). Many banding systems did not, lacking in transparency, and being rather difficult to understand. Almost all banded allocation policies failed to explain how households are prioritised *within* each band. This had the potential to lead to misconceptions that other households were being prioritised in the allocation of social housing.

We were also concerned that Government research has shown that ethnic minority communities, with the exception of Black Caribbean communities, have less understanding of their housing rights and social housing allocation systems than white British groups (Office for the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005). More recent ippr research also suggests that many new migrants from EU countries do not understand their housing rights (Rutter and Latorre, 2008). A lack of transparency

in allocation systems has the potential to add to misconceptions about the allocation of social housing, among all ethnic minority communities. Arguably, central government might wish to reconsider greater harmonisation of social housing allocation policies, given the common legislation on which they are based.

**Differential treatment:** As noted, some local authority social housing allocation policies gave priority to certain social characteristics. From an equalities perspective, we noted:

- Some local authorities gave priority to a local connection. A number of local authorities, all of which were located outside Greater London, prioritised those who had previously lived in that local authority for more than ten years while some prioritised those who had immediate relatives who had lived there for more than ten years. We felt that these policies had the potential, unintentionally, to discriminate against migrants and settled ethnic minority communities, who may have few relatives in the UK or a shorter period of settlement. In relation to the two families, Family A would be prioritised over Family B.
- Local authorities sometimes allocated additional points to agricultural workers and former armed service personnel who had lost their tied accommodation (in addition to points allocated to homelessness). Given that certain ethnic groups are under-represented among agricultural workers or in the armed services, this has the potential unintentionally to favour or discriminate against particular groups.
- One local authority deliberately housed families from ethnic minority communities in groups in particular areas. This was a local authority that had seen high levels of racial harassment of ethnic minority communities and received many requests from them for re-housing, away from a particular area. It effectively meant that social housing applications were sorted by ethnicity. The local authority decided to undertake such an intervention in order to build more sustainable communities and had sought a legal opinion about this policy change. The question is whether such an approach will appease tensions, or entrench segregation and build up tensions in the long term.

Of course, our analysis is based on desk research and a limited number of confidential interviews with housing officials. We are not able to say how local authority housing officers implement prioritisation policies or their equality duties – how they act as ‘street level bureaucrats’. This issue might be worthy of further

research. Additionally, local authority housing officers still have discretionary powers to award additional priority and approve offers of housing outside the allocation system. Little is known about how local authorities exercise this right or the equality implications of this - again an issue that might be worthy of further research.

Overall, social housing allocation policies represent an attempt to prioritise the most needy and vulnerable in society. There was no evidence that allocation policies discriminated against white groups. There was a small amount of evidence that some social housing policies unintentionally discriminated against ethnic minority communities.

### **5.5 Can we use different systems to allocate social housing?**

Social housing is likely to remain a scarce resource in the medium term. Although Government has committed itself to building more affordable and social-rented housing – three million new homes by 2020 – there are doubts about whether this ambitious target can be realised (RICS, 2008). Therefore, a means of fairly allocating social housing will be needed into the foreseeable future. At present, social housing allocation policies represent an attempt to prioritise the most vulnerable in society. Government objectives are for social housing to continue to provide such a safety net, but also to improve the economic outcomes of social tenants (Hills, 2007). Given these objectives, present allocation policies would appear to be both fair and to meet Government objectives. There is no evidence suggesting the need for substantial changes to them.

During the last five years, a number of commentators from the political left and right have argued that British citizens should receive greater prioritisation in the allocation of social housing. The most well-known articulation of this view was provided in 2007 by Margaret Hodge, MP for Barking. Government has responded by announcing a review of housing entitlement as part of the 2008 Citizenship Green Paper, 'The Path to Citizenship' (BIA, 2008). This proposes abolishing settled status and with it the entitlement to social housing. Settled status may be replaced with a status which is termed 'probationary citizenship', with no entitlement to social housing and most benefits. Only those granted full British citizenship, or a new status for those who cannot hold dual nationality, would be entitled to social housing.

This change will affect the housing options of a small number of migrants and cause some hardship. One group who will be particularly affected is former asylum-seekers who are granted Humanitarian Protection (HP) or Discretionary Leave (DL) after determination of their case. This group numbered about 2,200 in 2007, of whom the majority do not have children and will thus be unlikely to be prioritised for social housing (Home Office, 2008). Previously they will have had access to social housing

but will now be required to rely on private rental accommodation. Research highlights periods of homelessness among those recently granted HP and DL, with some unable to secure deposits for rental accommodation (Rutter and Latorre, 2008).

## 5.6 Key points

- Social housing allocation policies show no evidence that foreign migrants are favoured over UK citizens. But there is a small amount of evidence which suggests that they may, unintentionally, discriminate against ethnic minority communities who may also have less understanding than white groups, of their housing rights and the way in which social housing is allocated.
- Overall, policies represent an attempt to prioritise the most needy at a time of severe shortage in the supply of social housing. In this respect, the allocation policies were seen to be fair.
- Social housing allocation policies differ in their content and method of awarding points or bands and there are differences in the way characteristics of applicants are weighted by various local authorities. It has been found that banding systems appear less transparent than points systems. A lack of transparency has the potential to create misconceptions among communities.
- About 40 percent of local housing authorities operate a choice based letting system and the Government has set a target for all English local authorities to introduce these systems by 2010. However, their impact on housing allocation is largely unknown.
- Public authorities and housing associations are required to comply with the duties of a number of acts and regulations in respect of equality and diversity. There has been little research on the impact of these various duties on local authority housing departments, ALMOs, and on the everyday work of housing associations.
- The Government proposes to abolish 'settled status' and with it the entitlement to social housing and most benefits, as part of the 2008 Citizenship Green Paper. This would affect the housing options of a small number of migrants such as former asylum-seekers granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, and could cause some hardship.

## 6. Public perceptions and community cohesion

Our research has established that social factors such as household income and immigration status determine tenure patterns among migrants, including their uptake of social housing. The overwhelming majority of new migrants are housed in the private rental sector, partly because most new migrants have no entitlement to social housing. There is no evidence that newly-arrived migrant populations are queue jumping or being allocated social housing in preference to longer settled communities. Yet perceptions that migrants displace British social housing applicants persist. This chapter examines public perceptions about the allocation of social housing, its impact on community cohesion and what can be done to challenge misconceptions.

### 6.1 Public perceptions and misconceptions

The study re-analysed four focus groups. These were conducted in 2007 for a research project for the CRE that examined the reception and integration of new migrants in the UK. Each focus group solely comprised members of long-settled communities, both white and ethnic minority groups. The interviews were held in four very different locations in the UK: inner city Birmingham, outer city London, rural eastern England and an urban northern town. These are locations characterised by very different housing market conditions, both in relation to the affordability of owner-occupied property and the length of social housing waiting lists (see Table 3).

Each interview yielded a great deal of data on the pressures that migration was placing on public services; indeed, this was the single most dominant theme. Within this, many participants spoke of the pressures placed on social housing by migrants. One of the dominant themes that came out of three of the four focus groups was that migrants received preference in the allocation of social housing and other welfare goods.

The Africans, the West Indians, they come here and they get something straight away, benefits, housing everything they want.  
(Male, Barking and Dagenham)

The government looks after them and not us. I see them and I know they are going to get money and get a house. It puts me back one more step, I'm prejudiced and I don't even know their story. (Female, Barking and Dagenham)

In relation to concerns about the impact of migration on social housing supply and allocation, analysis of the focus groups showed:

- Dominant views about migrants and social housing were threefold. Firstly, that migrants and ethnic minority communities were being granted housing outside the allocation system by queue jumping, perhaps by bribing local authority housing staff.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, some interviewees thought that migrants were committing tenancy fraud, by presenting false information or borrowing children from compatriots. Thirdly some interviewees believed that the allocation systems itself disadvantaged white British. These discourses have had the effect of racialising the allocation of social housing:

All those new flats are being built just for the Polish people. All the flats are going to Polish. Once the council have made up their mind there's nothing you can do. We hear about it once it's done. It's annoying because my sister-in-law is living with her father waiting for flat. She's pregnant and still on the list....Hundreds of them are walking around not working. Being supported from somewhere. don't mind working with foreigners. As long as they are working. (Male, Crewe)

- Public concerns about migration and social housing were intimately bound together with issues around 'race', culture, belonging, identity and economic security, as well as fears about Europe and globalisation.

Everyone who is coming in this country, they get jobs, they get a house, when English people who have lived in this country all their lives are getting redundant.... If you say I am a Londoner, people will think you are posh, you've got money. But if you say I'm from East London, they will judge you, you are poor, you are an immigrant you are from a neglected area....We are turning into a different country, we'll be a minority. In school my daughter is not allowed to say prayers. They should learn that this is England. (Female, East London)

- There were some local differences in attitudes to new migrants. These comprise long-term socio-cultural differences as well as local trigger events that may suddenly increase tensions in a locality. Interviewees talked about specific events that occurred in their localities, such as a disturbance by a group of young people changing their attitudes.

A lot of accidents on the roads are caused by foreigners. They are always under the influence of alcohol. They cause 80 per cent of the fights at weekends. (Male, Lincolnshire)

That migrants were responsible for road accidents seems to be a view of that is unique to rural England.

- This finding is important in relation to interventions to build community cohesion.<sup>15</sup> National political actors may not understand local differences in attitudes to migration or local trigger event, so interventions have to be initiated locally.
- The hostile views expressed by some focus group participants about migration and social housing allocation could be correlated with local housing market conditions. The most hostile attitudes were evident in places where there was a high proportion of the population on social housing waiting lists and where owner-occupancy was most unaffordable, for example, in Dagenham and Barking and in Birmingham. This relationship is summarised in Table Three.
- Those hostile to new migrants could also be hostile to ethnic minority UK nationals as our quotes show. Concerns and misconceptions about the allocation of social housing to new migrants sometimes extended to longer-established ethnic minority communities, such as the 'West Indians' in the account above.

Other research has shown that the housing of asylum-seekers in former social housing fuelled misconceptions about the allocation of social housing to migrants in one location (Fekete, 2001; Rutter and Latorre, 2008). The public sees asylum-seekers housed in property that they assume belongs to the local authority. Therefore, they may assume that asylum-seekers have 'queue jumped' the social housing waiting list. In the same vein, the sale of social housing and its subsequent use as private rental accommodation for migrants has also fuelled misconceptions about the allocation of social housing. The unique architecture of properties may lead local communities to assume it is social housing, which is being privately rented to migrants. The overrepresentation of some long-settled ethnic minority communities in social housing may also fuel public misconceptions about social housing allocation (Rutter and Latorre, 2008).

**Table 3 Relationship between local housing pressures and attitudes to new migrants**

Location	Difficulty of access to owner-occupation indicator, 2004 (1) Household score	Social rented housing: percentage on the LA register (2) % Households	Owner occupied: Owns with mortgage or loan (3) % Households	Housing pressures negatively associated with arrival of new migrant communities
South Holland	73	5	38	<b>NO</b> – overall, research participants mentioned housing pressure as a broader local problem that was not strongly associated with the arrival of new migrants
Crewe	66	3	42	<b>NO</b> – housing pressures were not an overall concern and research participants made no association with local housing pressures and new migrants
Birmingham	75	4	33	<b>YES</b> – housing pressures were mentioned by all research participants. Those from the established communities thought new migrants had exacerbated existing housing pressures
Barking and Dagenham	83	3	36	<b>YES</b> – housing pressures featured as one of the top concerns of all research participants. Both white and ethnic minority groups thought new migrants were responsible for local shortages of both affordable and available housing

Sources: Pillai, 2007; CLG Neighbourhood Statistics 2004, 2005.

Notes: 1) Households Score Jan 06. This is an indicator score, which gives a measure of access to affordable housing based on house prices and income/earnings. This indicator is a modelled estimate of the proportion of households unable to afford to enter owner-occupation on the basis of their income for 2002. 2) Households Count Apr 00-Mar 01. Percentage of total households on the LA register of applications for social rented housing as at 1 April for each year of data. 3) Households Percentage Apr 01. All households counted in the area at the time of the 2001 Census, which were owned with a mortgage or loan.

## **Misconceptions**

A number of other housing developments might fuel misconceptions about the allocation of social housing, for example, key worker rental housing schemes operated by local authorities. Some migrants and ethnic minority communities are over-represented in certain public sector jobs that are defined as key worker posts. Well over 20 per cent of employed persons born in Ghana, Jamaica, Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia, Uganda and Zimbabwe work in the health and social care sector, many of them employed as nurses or residential social workers. While key worker rental and part-rent, part-buy key worker housing is restricted to EU/EEA nationals and those with settled status in the UK, the reliance the health and social care sector has on overseas-born staff may contribute to misunderstandings about the allocation of social housing. Furthermore, Government policy is to encourage housing association mixed-tenure developments which minimise architectural differences between social housing and those which are owner-occupied. In some new developments, it is very difficult to differentiate between the two types of tenure. A person may see an owner occupied property, purchased by a migrant household, and assume it is social housing.

## **Public attitudes towards migrants**

A number of studies have explored how public attitudes to migrants are formed and reproduced. Lessons have emerged from this research in relation to changing perceptions about the allocation of social housing, namely:

- Media reporting of migration has great potential to set the public agenda, for example, if the national media includes stories about migrants' queue jumping or being favoured in the allocation of social housing. However, there are a number of factors that determine how individuals will receive media messages on migration. These include the individuals' prior awareness of migration issues, their personal experiences and the prominence, simplicity and repetition of messages (Finny and Peach, 2004).
- Anti-migration messages are often simpler and more consistent than pro-migration messages. They may also be 'common sense' – for example, migrants put pressure on social housing. The simplicity of this message and that it chimes with basic economics, means that it has prominence (Newman, 2007).
- There are local differences in attitudes to new migrants, including housing perceptions. These comprise long-term socio-cultural differences as well as local trigger events that may suddenly increase

tensions in a locality. For example, one research study showed that perceptions that migrants did not know how to dispose of household waste magnified anti-migrant sentiments in one particular local authority. Local interventions to build better community relations had to address this issue (Hickman, Crowley and Mai, 2008). National political actors may not understand local differences in attitudes, such as the above, and may not be able to intervene in a productive way.

- Myth busting interventions to dispel tensions about migration appear ineffective. The public finds it difficult to assimilate hard facts about migration, housing tenure patterns and so on. Research shows that many people cannot conceptualise numbers of asylum-seekers (Rainey Kelly Campbell Roalfe, unpublished 1997). Myth-busting may also reinforce prejudice, because readers see the myth, not the rebuttal (Newman, 2007).

## **6.2 The way forward: a changed local debate on migration and cohesion**

The focus group findings and short review above, lead us to a number of conclusions in relation to addressing misconceptions about social housing legislation. Myth-busting exercises about social housing allocation, conducted by local authorities or other interested parties, are unlikely to change public attitudes.

Negative attitudes towards migrants are often bound up with fears of diversity and change, as well as perceptions about pressures put on public services. One way forward is for public policy interventions to focus on changing the nature of debates about migration, and enable British society to accommodate better the greater diversity brought about by international migration. Such interventions must give greater focus on local interventions.

In order to change public concerns about the effects of migration on the housing market and social housing allocation policies, better ways of building good community relations at a *local* level need to be developed.

Of course, the UK has a long tradition of interventions that have aimed to build better community relations. Today, all public bodies, including local authorities have the statutory duty to promote good race relations as part of their race equality duty outlined in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. This is a potentially useful tool for public bodies to use to encourage better community relations in areas where there are tensions that focus on migration. Additionally, guidance issued by the CRE on promoting good race relations already exists; it suggests that public authorities should clearly explain their rationale for grant allocation between different racial

groups, to avoid misunderstandings and mutual resentment around perceived priority being awarded to some groups over others (CRE, 2005). The present community cohesion objectives of Government also have the stated aims of improving community relations at a local level.

However, a number of recent studies have pointed at shortcomings in local authorities' use of the race equality duty to work for better community relations. A 2007 study undertaken by ippr for the CRE suggests that both policies demanded by the 2000 Act and the CRE guidance are not consulted because new migrants are not commonly considered 'racial groups' among public bodies (ippr, 2007b). Research undertaken for this project suggests that this situation has not changed. Drafting of race equality policies are rarely used to promote constructive debate about equalities issues, despite it being a legal requirement. Race equality policies often remain a one-off statement of intent focussing on anti-discrimination, rather than a document furthering equality and good race relations that is consulted, debated and amended as local conditions change.

We are also concerned about the direction of present policy on community cohesion. In the late 1990s, concerns about urban decay led government to consider how it might promote sustainable and cohesive communities. Although a complex and contested term, cohesive communities are usually defined as communities where there is:

- Progress towards equality.
- The integration of community members in economic activity.
- A sense of belonging to a locality and nation.
- Trust and reciprocity between members of the community.
- Social integration of community members facilitated by social networks, and thus the development of social capital.
- Shared values.

Notions of community cohesion influenced urban regeneration policies and led to such interventions as the former Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the New Deal for Communities Programme and the Government's mixed communities objectives. But since 2001, community cohesion has taken on new meanings that place much greater emphasis on migrant integration, race and religion (CLG, 2007). Analysis of local authority conceptualisations of community cohesion and the interventions themselves suggest greater focus on migrants and minorities themselves, and less on all residents of a neighbourhood (Muir, 2008). Other components of cohesive communities, such as income equality and safe public spaces have often been afforded less emphasis (Griffiths et al., 2005). Interventions tend to be narrower

and not to focus on spatial issues or neighbourhood issues. Thus, the role of 'safe political space' in promoting good community relations has received less consideration.

This research suggests that we need to re-invigorate the debate about how to improve community relations at a local level. Such a move would provide the opportunity to challenge public misconceptions about the allocation of social housing. In particular, there is a need:

- For further promotion of the race equality duty of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- For greater transparency in the process by which social housing is allocated.
- To encourage local political and community leaders to engage in debate about migration and social housing.
- For greater discussion of immigration issues at a local level, by providing local political space.
- To ensure that new migrant groups have the opportunity to interact with others at a local level.

These recommendations are essentially a local project. We need to be cautious about national interventions to change public perceptions about social housing allocation because, as already stated, national 'myth busting' exercises are usually ineffective as the public tends to see the myth rather than the rebuttal. Many of the above recommendations aim to improve personal interactions, between local authorities and the public and between migrants and the settled communities.

### **Race equality duties**

In order for public authorities to realise fully the benefits of race equality policies meeting this statutory duty, a stronger articulation and understanding of 'good race relations' as one which encompasses new migrant communities, including white eastern Europeans is required. For example, the CRE's Race Equality Guidance could be re-launched, both nationally and through local seminars on migration.

### **Greater transparency in the allocation of social housing**

Both central and local government need to consider how they explain and communicate their methods of allocating social housing to those on social housing waiting lists and to the wider community. Similarly, local authorities need to communicate better to local communities the pressures on social housing. Greater harmonisation of social housing allocation policies at a national level, including harmonisation of the wording of such allocation policies, could be considered.

### **Local political leadership**

Local political leadership on migration is vital for creating the conditions in which migrants can be positively received. Local authorities can make an immediate positive difference to community relations by proactively changing their own public communications, listening to concerns of all sectors of the community and re-affirming commitments to race equality (ippr, 2007b). One way to take this forward would be a series of local seminars on migration, targeting those parts of the UK where local leadership has been most absent.

### **Improving local social interactions**

Much hostility to new migrants has as a root cause low levels of social interactions within communities receiving migrants. While much public policy discussion on social cohesion and inter-ethnic relations has stressed 'mixing' and bemoaned 'segregation', much of this debate has been abstract. Very little consideration has been given to how and where different groups meet and mix in a particular area.

Broadly, we suggest inter-ethnic relations can be improved by providing spaces and opportunities where different groups can meet and interact, though sport, associative circles, volunteering and political activity and friendship networks.

Many meetings of peoples take place in public spaces: parks, neighbourhood parks, courtyards, playgrounds, community centres, leisure centres, allotments, museums and galleries, youth centres, restaurants and bars. Such spaces might be considered to be the 'soft' infrastructure of settlements (Bennett, 2006; Dines and Cattell, 2006). Public spaces enable people to mix with each other, as well as develop local attachments. They can also contribute to the development of well-being, trust and reciprocity - features of cohesive communities where different groups of people get on with each other. Recent research has examined the role that public space might play in promoting meaningful contact between different groups of people, and thus promoting better inter-ethnic relations (Holland et al., 2007).

The need for such soft infrastructure has been acknowledged by central government, in the context of its urban regeneration plans. This acknowledgement has not been replicated in central government policy decisions that relate to the planning of new housing developments or the funding of new build social housing. Today, housing developments are being planned, such as Thames Gateway, with very little consideration given to soft infrastructure and thus to social cohesion (Bennett, 2006). although some local authorities have used Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to compel developers to provide infrastructure, such as roads. We feel there needs to be a more forceful national expression of the importance of public

space in promoting community cohesion. Local authorities could be more visionary and more demanding of what they expect private developers to provide.

Local authority duties to promote community cohesion are both broad and abstract and do not specify that housing and planning departments should be involved in strategies to promote social cohesion, nor housing associations, even when they manage local authority social housing. There is a need to draw a broader range of actors into debates about community cohesion at a local level, and a better marrying of debates about 'space' and 'race'.

Meaningful social interaction between different groups of people is about more than the provision of attractive public spaces. What goes on in neighbourhoods influences how people mix and negotiate conflict. Sports activities, cultural events, gardening, volunteering and adult education appear to be successful in breaking down barriers between 'them' and 'us'.

The research also found that issues such as crime, anti-social behaviour and access to services were the most important concerns for communities, migrant and non-migrant alike (Pillai, 2007). These common concerns could be fertile ground for initiatives aimed at bringing communities together and facilitating interaction between them. Tenants' associations, for example, represent one form of local political space and a movement which has a great deal of potential to debate common concerns as well as challenge misperceptions about the allocation of social housing. Other forms of local political space include local branches of political parties and trade unions and faith organisations.

Further research is needed to explore how these local associations can be utilised to promote better community relations. Such an analysis could also look for and disseminate examples of good practice.

### **6.3 Key points**

- Shortages of social and affordable housing in a local area have the potential to increase hostility to new migrants.
- Myth-busting exercises about social housing allocation, conducted by local authorities or other interested parties, are unlikely to change public misconceptions about housing allocation.
- Negative attitudes towards migrants are bound up with fears of diversity and change. Public policy interventions should focus on changing the nature of debates about migration, and enabling

British society to accommodate better the greater diversity brought about by international migration.

- Open and focussed discussion on immigration issues at a local level may enhance trust among different ethnic minority groups.

## 7 Conclusions

Public concerns about the scale and impact of migration have often focussed on the allocation of social housing, in particular that migrants receive priority in the allocation of social housing, and that social housing allocation systems are unfair to the white British population. The study examined these contentions by asking three questions: who is entitled to social housing; who receives social housing in England; and do some groups have unfair access to social housing?

The present criteria for allocating social housing are outlined in the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Housing Act 2002 and the Housing Act 2004. This legislation says that a number of groups of people should be given priority including the homeless and priority needs groups, such as families with children and the elderly. Immigration status affects entitlement to social housing. Broadly, to be eligible, migrants need settled status, or be a European Economic Area worker, or have refugee status or leave to remain in the UK. Most new migrants have no entitlement to social housing.

Analysis of the Labour Force Survey highlights different patterns of housing tenure between the UK-born population and the foreign-born population who have arrived in the UK during the last five years. Foreign-born populations who have arrived in the UK during the last five years are overwhelmingly housed in the private rental sector, and not in social housing. New migrants to the UK over the last five years make up less than two per cent of the total of those in social housing; some 90 per cent of those who live in social housing are UK born.

Our study also highlighted many problems in monitoring housing experiences from an equalities perspective. One problem concerns the use of broad ethnicity categories by social landlords to monitor housing allocation, which aggregates very diverse groups. Central government, together with the EHRC, may wish to reconsider systems of equalities monitoring in the light of growing population super-diversity.

There is no evidence that social housing allocation policies favour foreign migrants over UK citizens. Overall, these policies represented an attempt to prioritise the most needy in society at a time of severe shortage in the supply of social housing; in this respect, the allocation policies were fair. There was no evidence that allocation policies discriminated against white groups.

Despite the lack of evidence that shows social housing allocation systems favour one community over another, perceptions that migrants displace British social housing applicants persist. Some of the reasons for this disjuncture between reality and public

perceptions may lie in real pressures around access to housing. Total social housing stock has been in decline since the 1980s as social housing has been sold off and new accommodation has not been built to replace it.

Negative attitudes towards migrants and social housing are often bound up with fears of diversity and change. As a way forward, public policy interventions should focus on changing the nature of debates about migration, and enable British society to accommodate better the greater diversity brought about by international migration. giving greater focus to local interventions. Similarly, public concerns about the effects of migration on the housing market and social housing allocation policies need to be addressed at the *local* level, as does greater discussion of immigration issues by providing local political space and leadership.

Much of the public concern about the impact of migration on social housing has, at its roots, the failure of social housing supply to meet the demands of the population. More social housing and affordable private housing is needed, and the potential for housing shortages to remain a focus for community tensions should be recognised. Finally, further research is required to explore a number of aspects of social housing. These include the impact and use of public duties and other regulations covering equality and diversity on local authorities and housing associations, the equalities impact of choice based lettings, and how local organisations can utilise their connections to promote better community relations.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Additional tables and figures

**Table A1 Residency status of the UK's largest migrant communities**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Proportion of population arrived since beginning of 2002 (%)</b>	<b>Community composition by legal residency status</b>
India	25.5	Long settled migrants who came post 2nd World War, more recent work permit holders and large number of students.
Poland	81.7	Some 2nd World War refugees and European Volunteer Workers, plus a much larger number of EEA labour migrants.
Ireland	5.3	Irish nationals have never been subject to immigration control.
Pakistan	15.5	Long settled migrants who came post 2nd World War, family reunion migration, asylum-seekers and students.
Germany	11.0	A few 2nd world War refugees, Germany-born British nationals (children of military personnel) and EEA workers.
Bangladesh	10.7	Long settled migrants who came post 2nd World War, work permit holders, family reunion migration and students.
South Africa	26.2	Largely composed of work permit holders, people on British ancestry visas or eligible for British citizenship and working holidaymakers.
China and Hong Kong	28.3	Asylum-seekers, British nationals from Hong Kong, work permit holders and students.
Jamaica	2.0	Long settled migrants who came post 2nd World War, with small numbers of asylum-seekers and students.
United States	42.1	Work permit holders, people on British ancestry visas or eligible for British citizenship, and students
Nigeria	24.7	Some long-settled migrants as well as more recent asylum seekers, work permit holders, students and EEA secondary migrants.
Kenya	3.1	Older flows of settled migrants (including white Britons and Asians born in Kenya). More recent work permit flows and small numbers of asylum-seekers.
France	31.9	EEA labour migrants.
Australia	32.4	Work permit holders, people on British ancestry visas or eligible for British citizenship and working holidaymakers.

Sri Lanka	17.5	Older flows of settled migrants, students and asylum-seekers, some EEA secondary migration
Philippines	39.2	Largely work permit holders.
Zimbabwe	30.9	Asylum-seekers, work permit holders, people on British ancestry visas or eligible for British citizenship.
Italy	18.4	EEA workers, many of whom are long settled in the UK.
Somalia	29.2	Older flows of settled migrants, more recent asylum-seekers, some EEA secondary migration.
Ghana	28.1	Some long-settled migrants as well as more recent asylum seekers, work permit holders, students and EEA secondary migrants.
Portugal	35.1	EEA workers, some of whom are long settled in the UK.
Turkey	25.9	Asylum seekers, students and some work permit holders.
Cyprus	11.2	EEA workers, some of whom are long settled in the UK. Some refugees from conflict.
Canada	16.6	Work permit holders, people on British ancestry visas or eligible for British citizenship, working holidaymakers and students.
Spain	19.1	EEA workers, some of whom are long settled in the UK and some children of secondary migrants born in Latin American.
Netherlands	33.6	EEA labour migrants with some children of secondary migrants born in Somalia.
New Zealand	34.2	Work permit holders, people on British ancestry visas or eligible for British citizenship, working holidaymakers and students.
Iran	22.7	Settled community of refugees from the 1979 revolution, more recent asylum seekers, work permit holders and students.
Lithuania	*	EEA labour migrants.
Slovakia	*	EEA labour migrants.
Iraq	16.7	Mostly asylum seekers.
Malaysia	26.8	Older flows of settled migrants, work permit holders and students.
Afghanistan	*	Mostly asylum seekers.
Uganda	6.9	Older flows of settled migrants (including Asians born in Uganda) work permit holders, students and asylum-seekers.
Singapore	9.9	Older flows of settled migrants, work permit holders and students.
Brazil	60.6	Work permit holders and EEA secondary migrants.

Source: LFS and ippr calculations. Note: \* No information available, as population small in 1997.

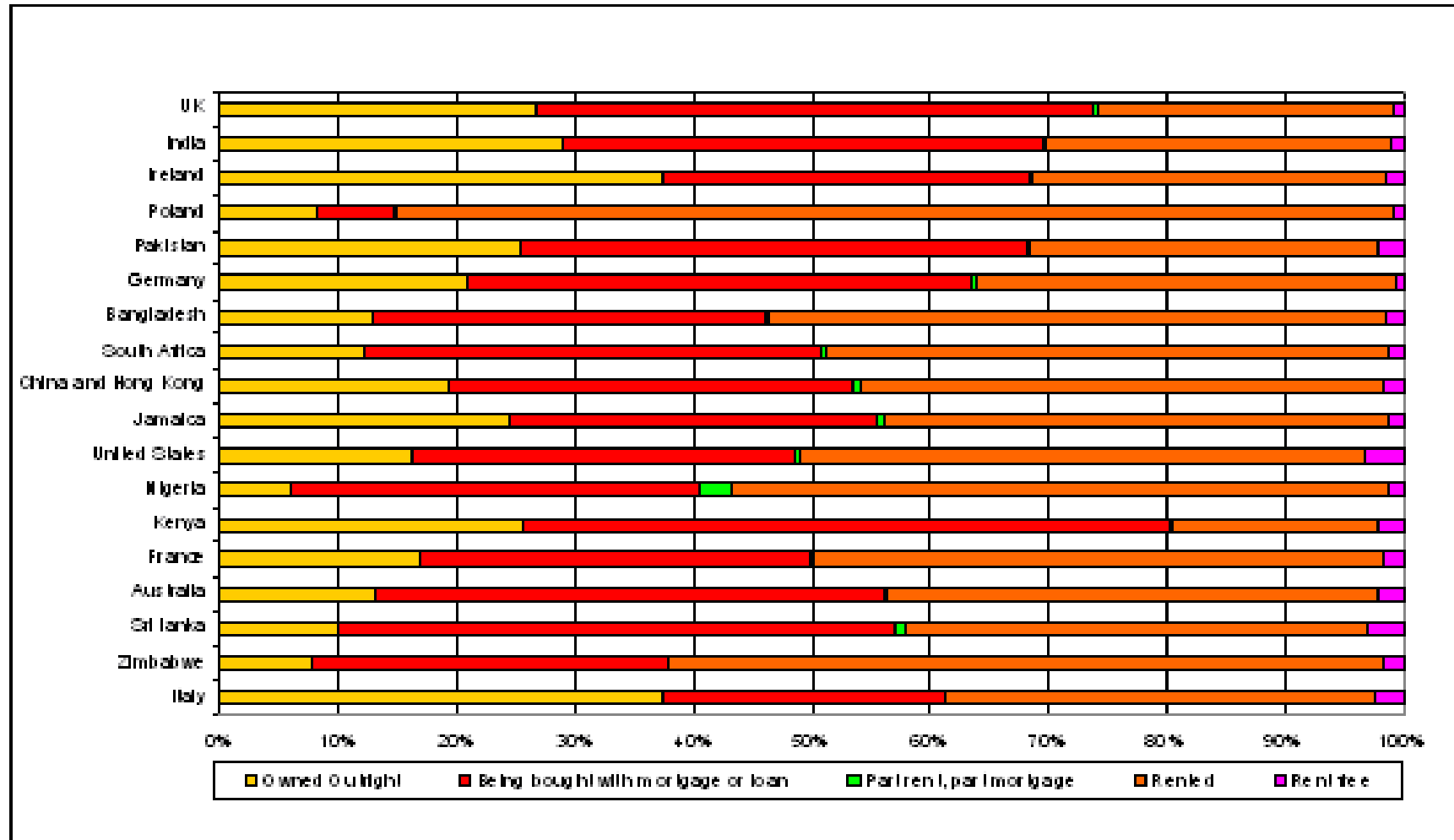
**Table A2 Socio-economic data for country-of-birth groups larger than 40,000, 2005-2007**

Country-of-birth	% population aged over 65	% households with 3 or more dependent children under 19	% households with 5 or more dependent children under 19
India	25.0	6.6	0.8
Ireland	42.5	3.0	0.3
Poland	19.0	1.5	0.2
Pakistan	20.1	29.4	4.0
Germany	21.8	4.9	0.6
Bangladesh	13.7	36.2	5.0
South Africa	14.5	4.5	0.6
China^	15.8	5.5	1.0
Jamaica	40.8	3.6	0.1
United States	14.3	9.3	0.3
Nigeria	11.4	13.0	2.0
Kenya	14.9	6.5	0.0
France	12.9	4.0	0.0
Australia	14.0	5.8	0.7
Sri Lanka	16.5	8.6	0.0
Zimbabwe	7.9	8.0	0.3
Italy	35.6	2.8	0.9
Philippines	8.8	12.7	1.3
Somalia	13.8	35.6	10.8
Ghana	13.2	14.1	0.8
Canada	17.7	10.1	0.0
Cyprus	21.7	4.3	0.0
Turkey	11.8	12.5	2.7
Spain	18.5	8.4	0.0
Portugal	9.4	5.2	0.0
Netherlands	22.4	6.5	0.8
Iran	14.7	3.4	0.0
New Zealand	13.7	2.6	0.0
Malaysia	13.4	6.8	0.0
Lithuania	13.7	1.8	0.0
Uganda	17.0	8.7	0.5
Iraq	13.7	10.8	0.7
Afghanistan	14.4	27.0	5.5
Slovakia	7.5	9.1	0.0
Singapore	13.4	14.1	0.9
Brazil	5.6	7.6	0.0
<b>UK</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0.3</b>

Source: LFS 2005Q4-2007Q3 and ippr calculations.

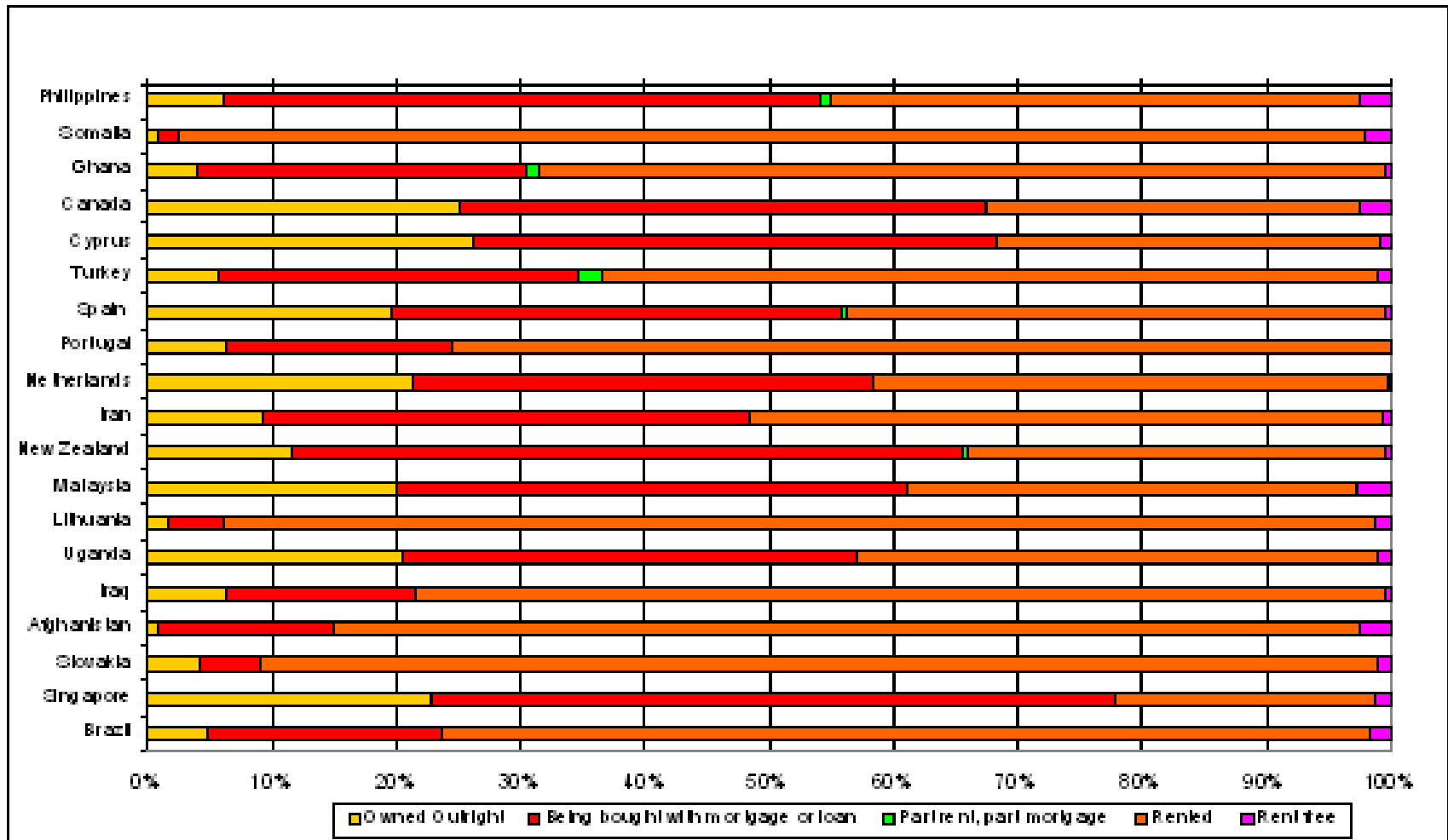
^ Includes Hong Kong.

**Figure A1 Percentage of country-of-birth populations in different forms of housing tenure, countries with populations over 100,000 resident in UK, 2005-2007 data**



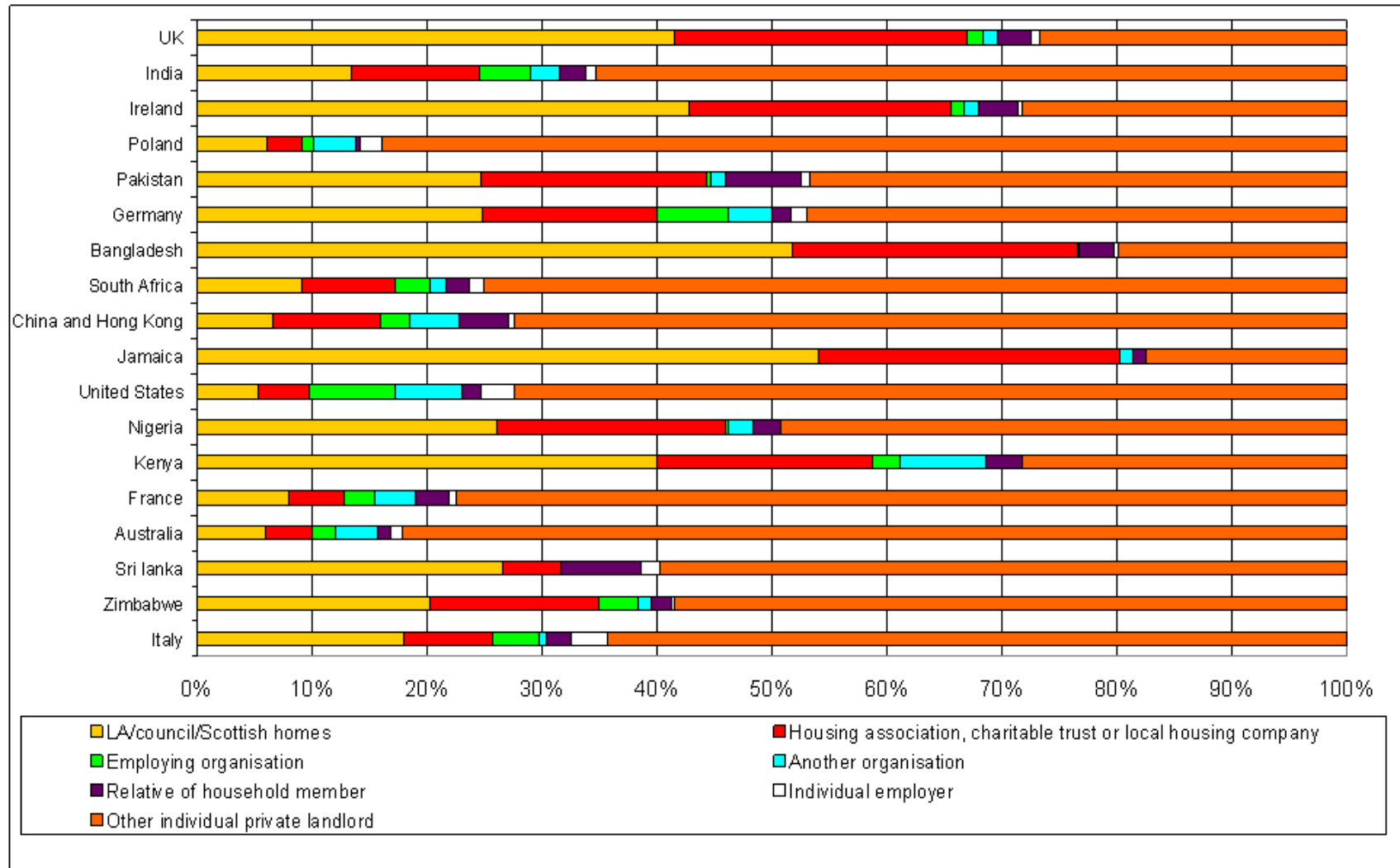
Source: LFS 2005 Q4 - 2007 Q3.

**Figure A2 Percentage of country-of-birth populations in different forms of housing tenure, countries with populations of 40,000 to 100,000 resident in UK, 2005-2007 data**



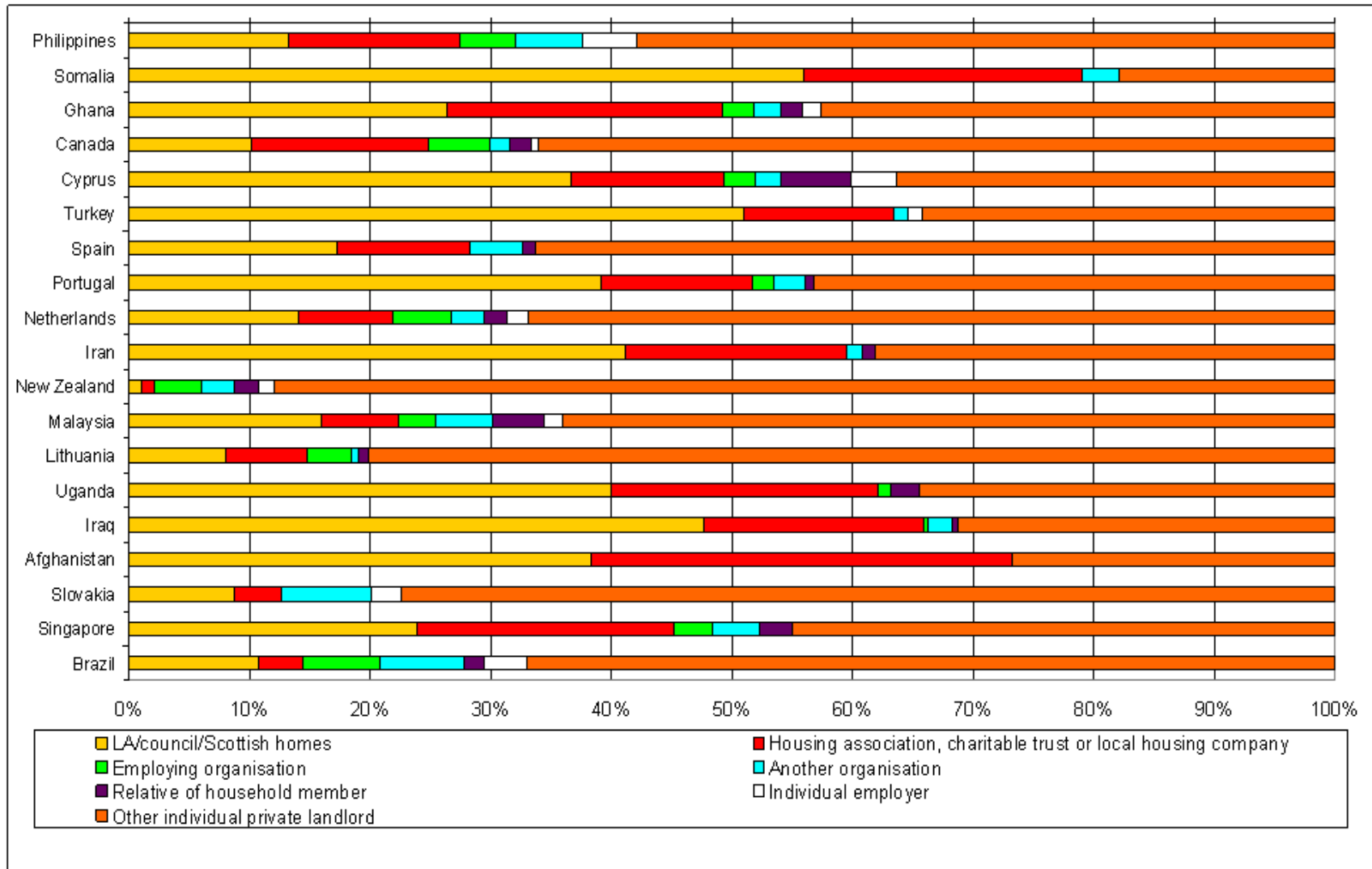
Source: LFS 2005 Q4 - 2007 Q3.

**Figure A3 Landlord of rental accommodation by country-of-birth populations over 100,000 resident in UK, 2005-2007 data**

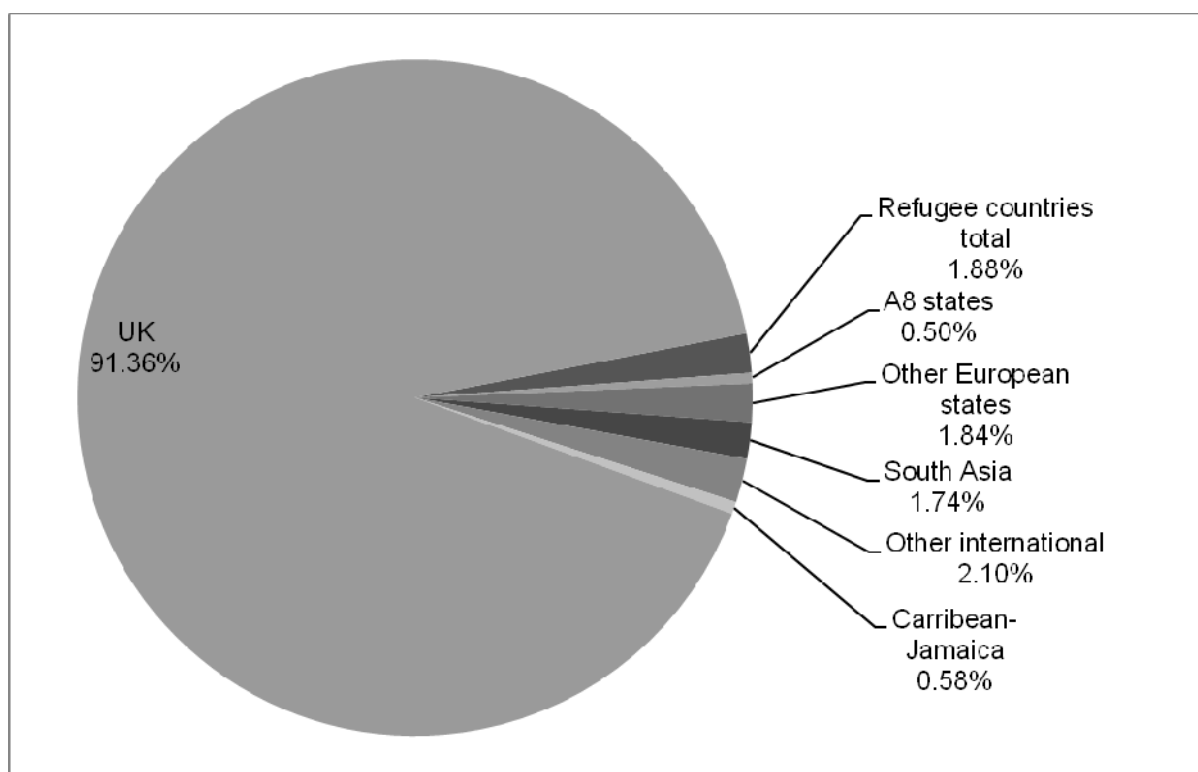


Source: LFS 2005 Q4 - 2007 Q3.

**Figure A4 Landlord of rental accommodation by country-of-birth populations of 40,000 to 100,000 resident in UK, 2005-2007 data**



Source: LFS 2005 Q4 - 2007 Q3.

**Figure A5 Social tenants' distribution by aggregated country of origin, 2007**

Source: LFS and ippr calculations.

## **Appendix 2      Local housing authorities whose social housing allocation policies were analysed**

Alnwick  
Barking and Dagenham  
Basildon  
Bexley  
Birmingham  
Blaby  
Bracknell  
Bradford  
Breckland  
Brent  
Brighton and Hove  
Bristol  
Castle Morpeth  
Coventry  
Craven  
Crewe  
Durham City  
Ealing  
Gloucester  
Hull  
Ipswich  
Islington  
Isle of Wight  
Kerrier  
Lambeth  
Leicester  
Lewisham  
Liverpool  
Malvern Hills  
Milton Keynes  
Northampton  
North Lincolnshire  
Nottingham  
Oldham  
Oxford  
Peterborough  
Plymouth  
Redbridge  
Richmond  
Salford  
Sefton  
Shrewsbury  
Slough  
South Lakeland  
Sunderland  
Sutton

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Settled status in legal terms is an immigration status that usually does not place limits on the period of leave to remain in the UK and gives entitlement to social rights such as home student status and most welfare benefits. Settled status is sometimes called indefinite leave to remain, or permanent residency.

<sup>2</sup> For the LFS analysis, the eight quarterly datasets that make up the two-year period 2005-2007 have been appended together in order to achieve sufficient sample sizes for detailed analysis of socio-economic characteristics such as housing tenure. In order to ensure that each respondent is included only once in the appended dataset, we then excluded respondents on all but one of their participation waves. However it is not possible to extrapolate absolute numbers from the aggregate quarters of LFS data, only percentages.

<sup>3</sup> Because the LFS is a sample-based survey rather than a population census, data from it should be treated as estimates subject to the standard errors. The ippr has rounded the data in the LFS-based tables in this report, usually to the nearest per cent, but the figures remain estimates rather than definitive. If it was possible to collect actual data on the entire population, rather than via a sample, the rankings in some of the tables, particularly those where several groups have very close values, may differ somewhat from those presented here. Survey methodology can give rise to sampling errors. The standard error for an estimate of 500,000 people, for instance, is 13,800 and the 95 per cent confidence interval is +/-27,100, meaning that we can be 95 per cent sure that the actual figure is within 27,100 of 500,000 (see ONS, 2003). These errors get proportionally larger the smaller the estimate. Therefore any one LFS sample can only be used to analyse the characteristics of the larger country-of-birth communities.

<sup>4</sup> Government has acknowledged the shortcomings of CORE data; after 2009 data on migration will be collected through a single merged and amended English housing survey. A replacement for the English House Conditions Survey, the Survey of English Housing will contain a country-of-birth question.

<sup>5</sup> Three programmes are in operation: the Gateway Protection Programme, the Mandate Refugee Programme and the Ten or More Plan.

<sup>6</sup> Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the EU in May 2004. Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU in January 2007.

<sup>7</sup> For further details see web pages of the UK Border Agency.

<sup>8</sup> Until April 2002 subsistence entailed a cash allowance of £10 per person per week, plus vouchers exchangeable at designated retail outlets. Vouchers were abolished in April 2002, and replaced by a cash allowance.

<sup>9</sup> Afghanistan, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Somalia.

<sup>10</sup> The play 'Cathy Come Home' was screened in 1966. Reaction to it led to the formation of Shelter, a homelessness charity.

<sup>11</sup> See the CRE's inquiry and investigation archive.

<sup>12</sup> ALMOs manage local authority housing stock on behalf of a local authority.

<sup>13</sup> For example, adults with a permanent tenancy whose children have left home.

<sup>14</sup> See on-line comments in Daily Express in May 2007 after Margaret Hodge MP suggested that social housing should be allocated to long-term British residents in preference to those newly in the UK.

<sup>15</sup> See acronyms and terminology.

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This report examines the allocation of social housing to migrants in England. It also covers tenure patterns of migrant communities and public perceptions and issues related to community cohesion.

#### WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN ON THIS TOPIC:

- International migration has increased substantially since 1995.
- There has been a large reduction in social housing stock in many parts of the UK.

#### WHAT THIS REPORT ADDS:

- Legal and socio-economic factors may influence housing tenure, including access to social housing.
- Some 64 per cent of new migrants to the UK over the last five years are housed in private rented accommodation.
- Social housing allocation policies apply the same criteria to all groups and do not treat some groups unfairly.
- New migrants to the UK over the last five years make up less than two per cent of those in social housing, whereas over 90 per cent are UK born citizens.
- Shortage of social and affordable housing may increase hostility towards new migrants because they are perceived to get preferential treatment in housing allocation.