



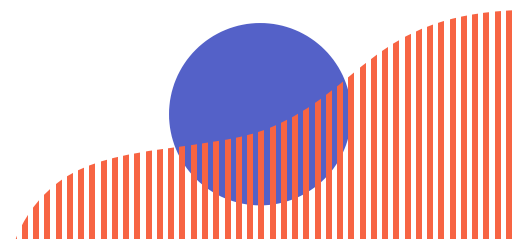
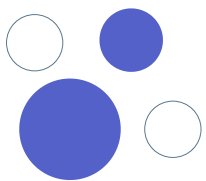
# The Impact of inadequate housing on educational experience: *A pilot study in Newham*

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June 2024



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## Introduction:

This project has explored the impact of inadequate housing on early childhood development/educational experience in Newham but its findings are applicable to children and young people across the country.

The housing crisis is worsening year by year, month by month and day by day and is now better understood as a housing emergency that is impacting more and more people, including those who previously would have found it relatively easy to secure a home on the open market. The COVID-19 pandemic brought into stark contrast disparities in the quality of housing and the importance of well-designed/spacious homes with access to green space. In 2020 as we entered lockdown TELCO (The East London Citizens Organisation) were working on a film about the housing legacy of London 2012 with schools and community groups in the four legacy boroughs and it was clear that the housing crisis was having a severe impact on the lives of children and young people.

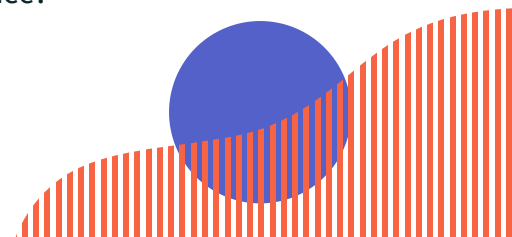
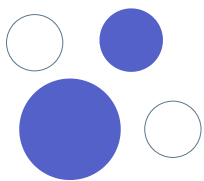


## Research Aims:


In 2021 TELCO (The East London Citizens Organisation) decided to extend the research by undertaking a more in-depth pilot project on the basis of these initial findings, looking at the impact of inadequate housing on children and young people's educational experiences and well-being in one of the legacy boroughs. We decided to focus on Newham because it has some of the highest levels of housing need in England.

**Specifically, the research aimed to offer insights into:**


1. How inadequate housing affects Early Child development/educational experience of children and young people from 0-18.
2. How inadequate housing impacts the emotional and physical well-being of children and families.
3. What kinds of strategies and policies could be put in place to mitigate the negative impact of poor housing on children and young people's educational experience.




## KEY FINDINGS




Children and families living in Newham are at the epicentre of the UK's housing emergency and bearing the brunt of decades of failed housing policies. This means that too many children are growing up in housing that is not fit for purpose. This is having a detrimental impact on many aspects of their lives including their ability to play, learn, study, socialise with friends and more generally thrive in their home.




Overcrowding is a key issue that negatively affects all family members, limiting privacy and space, and impacting their emotional well-being. Due to the lack of housing, it is not unusual for a parent and child, or a whole family of four, to share a bedroom.




Asylum-seeking families live in very unsuitable/substandard housing, often sharing facilities with other families. Their housing is subject to a different regulatory regime.




Families in housing need feel abandoned by statutory authorities, often bidding for several years without viewing a property. The choice-based lettings scheme is a source of frustration, and does not appear to be fit-for-purpose.




Voluntary and statutory organisations are vital in supporting infants, children, and young people and their families living in inadequate housing.



School-based social workers/support workers can play a vital role in supporting children and their families with various difficulties, including housing.



Central Government and local authorities spend substantial amounts of money on housing benefits and temporary accommodation with limited return on investment and poor outcomes for children and young people. Investing in new socially rented homes would save £180,000 per unit across 30 years.



The UK is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC). Article 27 states that every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development. In many instances, the standard of housing provided is inadequate and therefore may be in breach of Article 27.

## For Central Government

-  The government should work with the London Borough of Newham to radically increase the amount of socially rented housing that is built in the borough.
-  The government should work with LBN to ensure that there is a limit to the amount of time children spend in temporary accommodation.
-  The government should ensure that Local Housing Allowance rates are adequate to enable families to access housing that meets their needs.
-  The government should ensure that there are consistent regulatory standards that apply to all children and families living in the Private Rented sector, irrespective of immigration status.
-  Families with children should be placed in self-contained accommodation with their own separate facilities.
-  The government should introduce good practice guidance for local authorities that sets out how they can support the additional needs of children and young people living in inadequate housing in a holistic way.
-  In March 2024 the government updated its Homeless Code of Guidance and stated that housing would not be suitable if there was not enough space for a cot for each child under 2. This guidance is welcome, but the government needs to ensure that this is fully implemented.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### For London Borough of Newham (LBN)

-  The London Borough of Newham to work with Central Government and the Greater London Authority to radically increase the amount of socially rented housing in the borough.
-  LBN to continue raising housing standards in the social-rented and private-rented sectors.
-  LBN to limit the amount of time that children spend in inadequate and temporary accommodation, and ensure that relevant guidance is adhered to.
-  LBN to establish and support a time-limited Taskforce led by children and young people to take forward recommendations in this Report
-  LBN to establish a time-limited Working Group with relevant statutory and voluntary sector agencies, and scale up support to develop a comprehensive plan to take forward recommendations in this Report.
-  LBN to review the choice-based letting system and establish a user-orientated support service for those who need housing advice or are on the housing waiting list.
-  LBN to ensure that there is a whole-family Support Practitioner for every school to work with young people and their families to identify and unpick underlying causes of persistent absence.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



### PENNY BERNSTOCK

Penny Bernstock has written extensively on housing and urban regeneration in East London. She was previously Head of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of East London and Head of Education and Society at the University of West London. She is currently a Visiting Professor at UEL's Housing Knowledge Exchange Unit and co-chair of TELCO's Olympic Strategy Group.



### ANDREW HOLT

Andrew Holt has over thirty years' experience drawn from across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. He worked as an Associate Director at a large consulting firm, running public-sector research teams for several years. He now works as an independent consultant.



### FRANKIE WEBB-HUSEYIN

Frankie Webb-Huseyin helped to carry out the research as part of a paid post-graduate research internship whilst studying for her Masters in NGO and Development Management at the University of East London. She is now Grants Officer at the Essex Community Foundation.



### DEBBIE HUMPHRY

Debbie Humphry has been a researcher for over twenty years with a focus on community, housing and neighbourhood, situating lived experiences within wider social and political contexts. She has conducted research for academic, voluntary and public sector organisations and is currently a Research Fellow at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, looking at housing and health: [National Evaluation of the Health and Social Impacts of Selective Licensing for Private Rented Housing in England](#)

