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Race, ethnicity and homelessness in England

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Aims

1. To offer an authoritative account of the overall statistical picture on homelessness amongst Black and minoritised communities in the UK.
2. Generate rich qualitative evidence that will offer a 'deep dive' into key groups, issues and experiences of concern.
3. Capacity building in sector, including via research internship programme and networking activities



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Programme Reports



- July 2024) [State of the Nation](#), Bramley et al (November 2022)
- [Taking a Race and Ethnicity Lens to Conceptualisations of Homelessness in England](#) Fitzpatrick et al (April 2024)
- [Exploring the Phenomenon of Roma Homelessness in the UK](#), Ionut Ciorta (August 2023)
- [Young Black Experiences of Homelessness in London](#), Christiana Ajai-Thomas (July 2024)
- [Race, Ethnicity and Multiple Disadvantage](#) (Nifemi Adesina) (May 2025)
- [‘Designing out’ homelessness amongst minoritised communities in the West Midlands](#) Fitzpatrick et al (May 2025)
- [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK: Final Report](#) Fitzpatrick et al (July 2025)

<https://i-sphere.site.hw.ac.uk/homelessness-and-black-and-minoritised-ethnic-communities/>

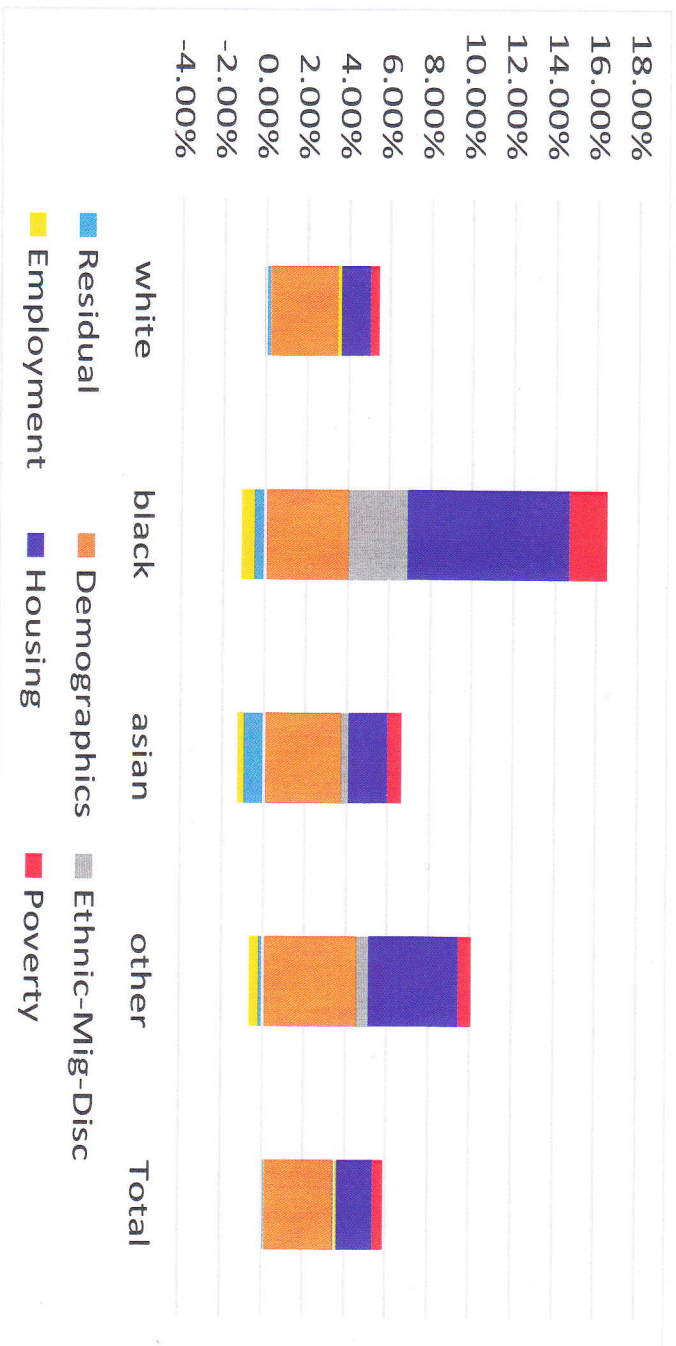
Statutory homelessness

Ethnic group	Non-met areas	Met Areas	London	England
White	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Black	2.40	2.51	3.90	3.50
Pakistani - Bangladeshi	0.99	0.86	1.28	1.34
Indian / other Asian	0.51	0.69	0.80	0.70
Mixed/ multiple	0.81	1.16	1.20	1.06
Other ethnicity	1.44	2.33	2.49	2.37
All ethnicities	1.01	1.05	1.46	1.09

Overcrowding

	% overcrowded	Risk ratio
Ethnicity		
White	2.1%	1.00
Black	12.5%	6.00
Indian	5.2%	2.48
Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	15.2%	7.27
Other Asian	11.4%	5.45
Chinese	3.2%	1.52
Mixed	8.8%	4.19
Other	11.3%	5.41
All households	3.1%	1.46

Drivers of disproportionate risks



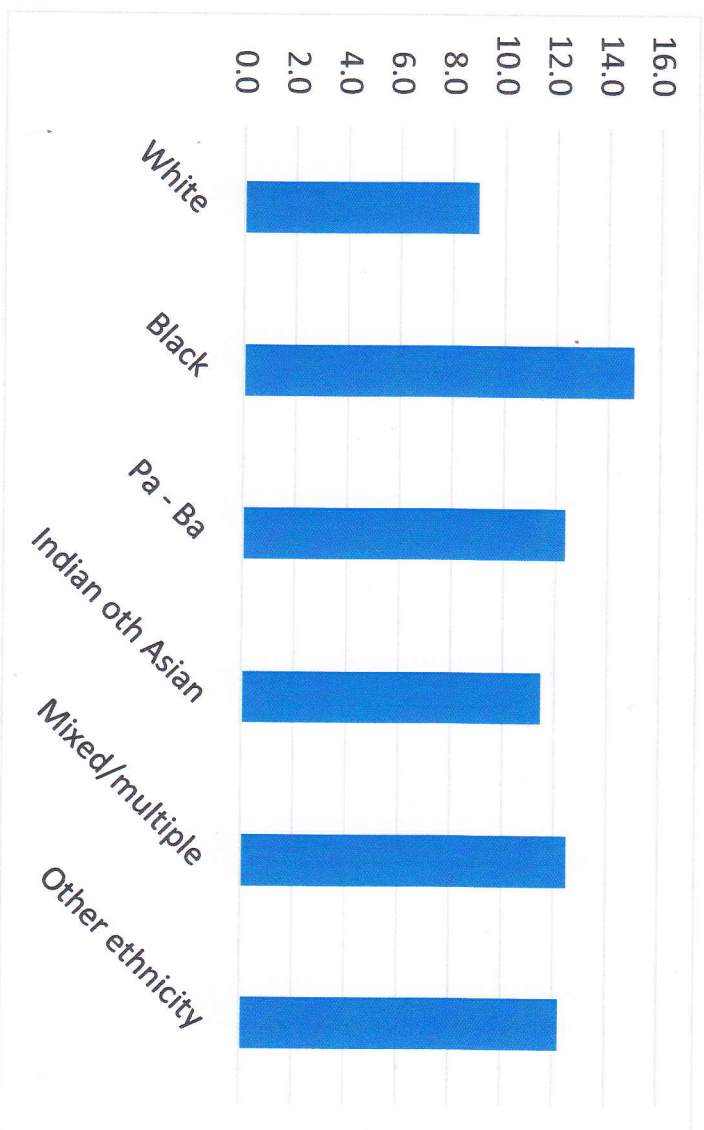
Indirect effects of ethnicity

Vignette Description	Risk ratio vs White UK	Risk ratio excluding mediation	Indirect effect as % of total effect
Black, UK-born, discrimination reported, with otherwise 'average' characteristics	1.47	1.16	66%
Younger, Mixed ethnicity, single, renter, London	1.76	1.18	76%
Middle-aged, Black, UK-born, poorer area, health problem, renter	1.33	1.21	36%
Adult, Other ethnicity, migrant, poorer area, South, rural, renter	2.13	1.49	57%
Younger, Black, discrimination reported, single, poorer, London, renter	5.35	2.21	72%



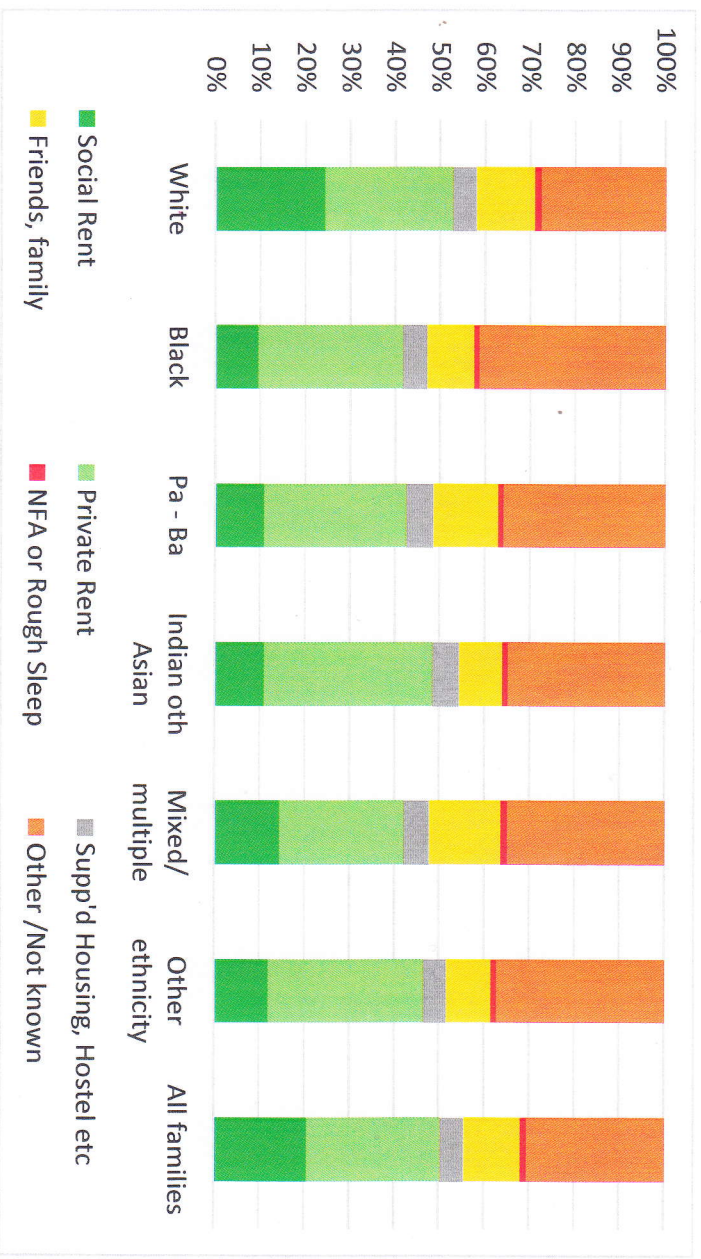
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Time spent in temporary accommodation



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Accommodation outcomes for families



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Treatment in statutory homelessness services

“...when I went to the council, they gave me the accommodation. When I complained [about quality] they told me, ‘You should be grateful for what you have. You don’t have this back in your country.’ The person saying this to me was the same ethnicity as me.” (Lived experience)

“...the ...way they speak to people in the council is very terrible. For someone that is going to the council, they’re already at their low moment. The way that you’re being attended to makes you even feel less of a human.” (Lived experience)

“[Council offices] never reopened after COVID, so they’re still in the office, but it’s just not open to the public. That makes it harder, so things that you could have gone and just sorted out sometimes, just to speak to the right person, you can’t even do that. The [phone] numbers are all not working, and no one answers...back to the emails. We’re just basically screaming and no one’s hearing.” (Lived experience)



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Racist stereotypes affecting service response

“...the response Black women have when it comes to the police, and how believed they are, and when they're talking about their experience of abuse, and it's the unconscious bias that we all have, but it's [present], really, in the mental health services, in the healthcare services, within police services, within the housing services.” (Frontline worker)

“unconscious biases...how receptive [are] we...to a White woman...appearing upset and talking about her mental health, in comparison to a Black woman? It is very, very nuanced...Black people, the perception...is that they're unsafe, they're dangerous, they're aggressive, don't go near them.” (Frontline worker)

“When it comes to how they frustrate you...you want to stand up for yourself, and they'll be like, oh, 'An angry Black woman'. It's like, okay, 'No, don't talk to me like that,' or, 'No, I'm not angry.' You are really frustrated. I just want to stand up for myself. So it's all those racial tones, like calm down. No, I'm not angry. So yes, those are some of the things that I experienced.” (Lived experience)

Racism amongst private landlords

"...they [landlord] didn't want to let me view the house because I was Black...they said that we are very loud...and for the fact that I was a refugee as well...so I had to lie that I wasn't, but still, when I got there, they'd be like, 'No, we can't give it to you because you're Black.'" (Lived experience participant)

"...you're of Bangladeshi heritage. You won't have a clue about how to appeal something, or how to go to the courts? Whereas, if it was someone who was an English-speaker from a White background, they would think, okay, I might be in a bit of trouble here; they probably know that they're talking about; they probably know what route to go down in terms of suing someone or taking them to court." (Frontline worker)

"I can remember a particular, a Pakistani family I was working with, and he, the landlord, was behaving appallingly... they didn't even have a tenancy agreement. [Tenant] was very clearly saying, 'I can't go against the landlord. I don't want to go against the landlord, it's his house.'... 'It's his house. I can't do that.' It took an awful, it took me a long time to persuade them that actually they did need to have a tenancy agreement." (Frontline worker)

Navigating systemic disadvantage

"My sister had to change her name to our father's first name... She had to start watching YouTube channels to speak from a proper English accent...she said it's working for her...My son has an all ethnic name and she was telling me recently, you better change it..." (Lived experience participant)

"I've had to cut my hair to be able to access more services" (Lived experience participant)

"...I always hide my identity. I never tell anyone I was seeking...asylum, because sometimes the way I talk...It depends on where I am, I blend in with them...I've got 21 names that I just go by...because I've experienced a lot of discrimination, I don't like to just tell people anything, about my nationality, about my status." (Lived experience participant)

Recommendations

- Connect with the cross-government homelessness strategy
- Implement 'universal' structural changes required to reduce population-level risks of homelessness
- Prioritise upstream prevention with minoritised communities
- Invest in the professionalisation, training and support of homelessness officers
- Tackle racism amongst private landlords; expanded access to legal advice
- Re-engineer the link between the asylum and statutory homelessness systems
- Reject 'ethnicity-blind' approaches and promote robust ethnic monitoring

Growing Evidence Base



[My colour speaks before me: How racism and discrimination affect Black and Black Mixed heritage people's access to social homes in England - Shelter England](#)

["Where do I belong? Where is home?" Experiences of racism and homelessness Crisis](#)

[Briefing: Are there disparities in the length of time White and Black and Black Mixed heritage headed households are spending in temporary accommodation? - Shelter England](#)

[Moving on: The overrepresentation of Black and minoritised households in out of area housing placements in England – Nottingham University](#)

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