# Mother and children face dire conditions in temporary accommodation



A mother and her three children have found themselves in a distressing situation, living in substandard temporary accommodation arranged by Lambeth Council in outer London. Zena Ekada, 42, has reported significant health hazards and uninhabitable conditions in the house where they have been residing since January.

Ms Ekada described her despair at the absence of a functioning toilet for four weeks, forcing her family to resort to using bin bags in their back garden for sanitation. “We had no toilet for four weeks. We had to poo in bin bags in the back garden. [For] four weeks nobody listened,” she recounted to the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS).

Adding to their plight, the family has been warned not to use the gas cooker in their temporary home for safety reasons, resulting in a diet limited to canned food and takeaways—apart from weekends when Ms Ekada can cook meals at friends’ houses. The conditions within the house have further deteriorated due to a mouse infestation, preventing them from unpacking most of their belongings. “The mice here have been eating through [everything]. They’ve started digging. They play around. They’re everywhere. It’s unbelievable,” she expressed.

Despite her efforts to alert the property’s managing agent about ongoing maintenance issues, Ms Ekada claims that the response has been inadequate, with builders carrying out unsatisfactory repairs. Emails sent to Lambeth Council staff regarding her situation have reportedly gone unanswered. This lack of response has continued even after her local MP contacted the council, labelling the conditions as a “clear health and environmental hazard” and urging action to relocate her family.

Concerns regarding the family’s health have been raised not only by Ms Ekada but also by her social worker and a family outreach worker associated with her younger daughter’s primary school. The mother indicated that her son has experienced hives, which she associates with the stress caused by their living conditions. Both of her daughters have suffered from urinary tract infections since moving into the property, while Ms Ekada herself is on medication for hypertension. “We’re on constant antibiotics and medication. I can’t continue like this. It’s traumatising for the kids. I’m very concerned for my children now. This is not good for my health either. I don’t know what else to do,” she said.

This family’s current struggles are not isolated; they have previously lived in at least six different temporary accommodations since their eviction from their home in Brixton nearly two decades ago. In the past, they’ve had to vacate some properties due to dangers posed to her son from local gangs, leading to alarming incidents, including his disappearance and subsequent discovery far from home.

In response to Ms Ekada’s situation, a spokesperson from Lambeth Council expressed their regret regarding the challenges the family has faced in their temporary accommodation. They stated that the council is actively pursuing resolution of the complaints with the property’s managing agents. The spokesperson acknowledged the difficulty of finding suitable housing, particularly given the family's safety concerns about residing in a very limited geographical area.

Lambeth Council has noted a substantial increase in the number of households requiring assistance, with a 50 per cent rise in the last two years. Currently, the council is providing temporary accommodation for over 4,700 homeless households each night, with the cost of housing these families exceeding £100 million yearly. The waiting list for social housing in the borough stands at over 35,000 households.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-04/housing-placement-policy-feb-2022.pdf> - This URL supports the information about Lambeth Council's housing placement policy, including the allocation of temporary accommodation and prioritization of housing needs. It provides context on how the council manages housing-related issues.
* <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/more-than-2500-severe-hazards-found-during-london-councils-stock-survey-85343> - This URL corroborates the challenges Lambeth Council faces with housing quality and safety, highlighting over 2,500 severe hazards found in their housing stock survey, which includes issues like mold and electrical hazards.
* <https://www.lambethtogether.net/delivery-alliances/homeless-health-programme/homeless-health-programme-priorities/> - This URL supports the initiatives by Lambeth to improve housing conditions and health outcomes for homeless individuals, including specialist outreach support and improved temporary accommodation quality.
* <https://www.mass.gov/guide-to-evidence/article-xi-miscellaneous> - This URL does not directly support any claim in the article about the family's living conditions or Lambeth Council. It pertains to legal procedures unrelated to the specific housing issues in Lambeth.
* <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/climate-emergency-fund-proposal-puts-pressure-on-councils-to-increase-new-homes-supply-63786> - There was no related search result directly addressing Lambeth Council's housing or climate initiatives specific to the article's context.