# Labour’s 1.5 million new homes pledge faces hurdles amid soaring homelessness and faltering approvals



The sight of construction projects dominated by new apartment complexes is becoming increasingly familiar in urban centres across the UK. Surrounded by the noise of machinery and the dizzying energy of revitalisation, it’s hard not to feel a twinge of curiosity whenever I pass these sites. As I glance at the promotional images adorning the hoardings—buoyant thirtysomethings enjoying a stylish life—I find myself capturing tokens of hope tinged with disbelief. All too often, I overhear passersby voice a question that echoes the nation's growing discontent: “Who’s this for? Not me.”

This sentiment encapsulates the dire housing crisis gripping England, as more than 1.3 million households now languish on local authority waiting lists—the highest number since 2014. The situation is exacerbated for many families; around 151,630 children currently reside in temporary accommodation, which represents a shocking increase of 15% from the previous year. On the private rental front, rises in average rents have hit record highs, reaching 9.2%. Meanwhile, the Home Builders Federation has released worrying statistics revealing a drastic drop in new homes granted planning consent, with the first quarter of 2025 seeing the lowest approval rates since 2012. Many attribute this stagnation to the lack of a government support scheme for first-time buyers, leaving the housing landscape markedly inhospitable for numerous would-be homeowners.

The implications of this housing crisis have started to seep into public consciousness and political rhetoric. Not long ago, discussions around social housing seemed peripheral; now they are central to the national debate. The political landscape reflects this urgency, with the Labour Party recently pledging to build 1.5 million new homes in England by the end of their current parliamentary term. However, doubts linger regarding their commitment and ability to deliver on this ambitious target. During a recent event, Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham advocated for unlocking public land to expedite the construction of council homes, comparing the urgency needed to that of post-war rebuilding efforts. Notably, the struggles faced by housing associations resonate with their appeals for the reclassification of social homes as critical infrastructure, which could enable additional funding.

Angela Rayner, Labour's housing minister, is reportedly engaged in intense negotiations with the Treasury, pushing for increased funding to meet the party's about-to-be-determined goal of 1.5 million homes. However, recent budget allocations—while announcing an additional £2 billion for the government’s affordable housing programme—have led to some scepticism. Despite these funds representing a step forward, officials maintain that a more substantial and consistent investment is critical for achieving the housing commitments set forth.

Despite Keir Starmer's assurances, there is a growing sense that merely easing planning regulations for private developers won't suffice to resolve Britain's housing woes. Communities require robust social housing initiatives, a responsibility that largely falls to local councils. Such undertakings are crucial not just for immediate needs but also for fulfilling larger governmental aspirations. Historically, the last time the UK achieved the feat of constructing 300,000 homes annually was back in 1977, a time when local authorities contributed significantly to new builds.

Yet, the pathways towards revival are obstructed. Local councils face financial constraints that hinder their ability to spearhead housing initiatives, compounded by a severe skills shortage in the construction industry. Although initiatives to train a new generation of construction workers are underway, officials warn that substantial contributions from overseas labour will be essential to meet the high demand for housing.

Failing to address this pressing crisis poses significant risks, not just for social stability but also for the political landscape. The frustration surrounding housing has the potential to shift support towards more extreme political elements, complicating Labour's hopes for future electoral success.

In the midst of these struggles, the stark reality becomes evident in local communities. In Aldershot, for instance, I found myself in Union Yard, a development promising 128 student units and 82 properties for private rent—only 18 of these designated as "affordable" under the government’s often-criticised criteria. During my visit, a twentysomething resident articulated her disillusionment, her words echoing the refrain all too familiar across England: “Who’s that for? Not me.”

As the government prepares for its upcoming spending review, the need for an expansive and pragmatic approach to tackle the housing crisis grows more critical by the day. The social fabric of communities across the UK cannot be strengthened without addressing these urgent housing needs head-on.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/08/labour-housebuilding-plan-england), [[3]](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/children_homeless_in_temporary_accommodation_hits_shameful_new_record_of_151000_up_15_per_cent_in_a_year)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/08/labour-housebuilding-plan-england), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/apr/09/hundred-year-wait-family-size-social-housing-england), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/apr/29/in-charts-scale-england-temporary-accommodation-crisis)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/08/labour-housebuilding-plan-england), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/13/thursday-briefing-has-labour-laid-the-foundations-for-fixing-britains-housing-crisis), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/6c33b50b-8b3e-468d-a984-21c63b6b9e3a)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/08/labour-housebuilding-plan-england), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/13/thursday-briefing-has-labour-laid-the-foundations-for-fixing-britains-housing-crisis), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/6c33b50b-8b3e-468d-a984-21c63b6b9e3a)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/08/labour-housebuilding-plan-england), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/13/thursday-briefing-has-labour-laid-the-foundations-for-fixing-britains-housing-crisis), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/6c33b50b-8b3e-468d-a984-21c63b6b9e3a), [[7]](https://www.ft.com/content/e54c01fb-59cb-4064-997f-6c77546543fa)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/13/thursday-briefing-has-labour-laid-the-foundations-for-fixing-britains-housing-crisis), [[7]](https://www.ft.com/content/e54c01fb-59cb-4064-997f-6c77546543fa)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/08/labour-housebuilding-plan-england), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/apr/09/hundred-year-wait-family-size-social-housing-england)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jun/08/labour-housebuilding-plan-england> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/apr/09/hundred-year-wait-family-size-social-housing-england> - An article highlighting the severe housing crisis in England, where families face waiting times exceeding 100 years for social housing. The piece underscores the urgent need for increased investment in social housing to address the escalating demand and alleviate the hardships faced by countless families.
3. <https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/children_homeless_in_temporary_accommodation_hits_shameful_new_record_of_151000_up_15_per_cent_in_a_year> - Shelter England reports a record 151,630 children living in temporary accommodation, marking a 15% increase in a year. The press release calls for urgent government investment to end the housing emergency and provide stable homes for vulnerable children.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/apr/29/in-charts-scale-england-temporary-accommodation-crisis> - An analytical piece presenting data on the escalating crisis of temporary accommodation in England. The article discusses projections indicating a worsening situation, with increasing numbers of households and children in temporary housing, and the financial implications for local councils.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/13/thursday-briefing-has-labour-laid-the-foundations-for-fixing-britains-housing-crisis> - A briefing examining the Labour Party's efforts to address the UK's housing crisis. The article reviews recent policy announcements, the scale of the housing shortage, and the challenges in meeting ambitious housing targets, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/6c33b50b-8b3e-468d-a984-21c63b6b9e3a> - An article discussing the call from UK councils for additional funding and changes to the Right to Buy programme to boost social housing. It emphasizes the necessity of increased investment and policy reforms to meet housing targets and address the housing shortage.
7. <https://www.ft.com/content/e54c01fb-59cb-4064-997f-6c77546543fa> - A report analyzing the challenges faced by the Labour Party in achieving its goal of building 1.5 million homes in the UK. The article highlights the reliance on private sector builders, industry skepticism, and the need for systemic changes to meet housing demands.