



Briefing Note on Social Housing and Immigration

Demand exceeds supply

1 The Prime Minister's speech on 25 March 2013 proposed that immigrants should wait 2-5 years before joining the waiting list which, in England, has grown dramatically in recent years from around a million in 2001 to two million today¹.

Immigration Status and Eligibility

2 Currently EEA nationals who are habitually resident in the UK have to be treated exactly the same as British citizens in their application for social housing². This in effect means that EEA nationals can join the social housing register from day one.

3 Nationals from outside the EU can join the social housing register if they have Indefinite Leave to Remain or have been granted refugee status.

4 Recent reforms in the localism act allow local authorities to house homeless people in the private rented sector and to give some priority to people with a local connection. However, most local authorities with large waiting lists have ignored the option of favouring those with a local connection.

The impact of recent immigration

5 Nationally around 1 in 10 new lets goes to foreign nationals but there is huge local variation. For example it appears that nearly half of the lets in the London boroughs of Ealing and Haringey go to foreign nationals³. In Peterborough and Boston in the Fens over a quarter of new lets go to foreign nationals⁴.

6 It is difficult to get a complete picture at the local level because the survey question on nationality is optional. This has allowed some local authorities to avoid answering it. In London less than half the local authority lets had nationality data against them⁵.

Recommendations

7 We recommend that the nationality question be made compulsory and that there be a public inquiry into the allocation of social housing in recent years, particularly in London.

25 March, 2013

1 Local Authority Housing Statistics https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6910/2039199.pdf

2 <http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/briefingPaper/document/289>

3 Paragraph 22 <http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/briefingPaper/document/286>

4 Continuous Recording of Lettings and Sales <https://core.communities.gov.uk/> Advanced Analysis of General Needs new lets by local authority where previous tenure not social housing.

5 <http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/briefingPaper/document/286>