

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities

Ref.: AL GBR 15/2025

(Please use this reference in your reply)

1 October 2025

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises and Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 52/10, 53/3 and 53/14.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the impact of **London & Quadrant (L&Q)'s quality of housing, property management and customer support services on the right to adequate housing of its tenants. In one emblematic case, Mr. S. Ramburn, a person with disabilities residing in a property in Forest Gate, in the London borough of Newham, and his family of five had to live for several years with no electricity, experienced four ceiling collapses, as well as severe damp and mould which affected the health of the family, including causing tinnitus and skin issues for one of the children, and severe mental health issues for Mr. S. Ramburn. L&Q and several other residential developers and housing associations managing social housing in England appear to systematically fail to ensure or restore the habitability of their rentals, a key element of the right to adequate housing. Despite past interventions of the Housing Ombudsman, the situation does not appear to have improved.**

Similar concerns were previously raised with your Excellency's Government in GBR 3/2023, and Co-op Homes (South) Ltd (OTH 14/2023).

According to the information received:

L&Q is one of England's largest housing associations and residential developers. Based in London, it works alongside local authorities, developers and other partners to deliver social housing. It houses over 250,000 people in more than 105,000 homes, primarily across London, the South East and the North West of England.

Mr. S. Ramburn is a social housing tenant of L&Q. He is a migrant to the United Kingdom and moved into his current apartment, a one-bedroom ground-floor flat, on 9 December 2013. Two weeks after moving, an L&Q employee visited him in the flat to sign a contract. At the time, Mr. S. Ramburn pointed to watermarks on the wall, and the L&Q employee assured that they would be fixed. These were never addressed. On 17 March 2014, the ceiling in the

kitchen, where the watermarks were seen, collapsed.

The hole in the kitchen ceiling was not fixed for three years, between 2014 and 2017. Due to this, in these years, there was dust everywhere in the kitchen, which contaminated the tenant's food and affected his health. Damp and mould developed in the house.

In 2017, the other half of the kitchen ceiling collapsed, as well as the bathroom ceiling. At this point, the collapsed ceilings were fixed by L&Q, but the mould and damp in the house, as well as the water damage, remained unaddressed, and continued to affect the tenant's mental and physical health.

Throughout this time, Mr. S. Ramburn was also reportedly subjected to racial harassment and anti-social behaviour at the hands of his upstairs neighbour. The neighbour made death threats. While L&Q has a Hate Crime and Hate Incidents Related Policy¹ and Mr. Ramburn alerted L&Q through their complaint process, no action was taken to protect the tenant.

In 2019, Mr. S. Ramburn had a workplace accident resulting in physical disability. Following the accident, he was compelled to spend the vast majority of his time in the house. The mould, damp and neighbour harassment severely affected his well-being in this time, as he was not able to leave the house for respite. He also began needing full-time support for his daily tasks (dressing, walking, showering). For this reason, his wife and children moved in to provide support. After his accident, it became a necessity to live with his family. The one-bedroom flat became overcrowded and not appropriate for the support needs caused by Mr. S. Ramburn's impairments. In this time, the severe disrepair and overcrowding in the house severely affected the family's health. Mr. S. Ramburn developed mental health issues, the children developed breathing issues, tinnitus and skin issues. Their studies were also affected.

In 2020, Mr. S. Ramburn met with L&Q, showing them all the issues with mould and damp in the house. They promised a solution, which never came.

In the following year (2021-2022), the damp severely worsened, with water rising up the wall. In August 2021, the electricity shut off due to this. For two and a half years, the family lived with no electricity except from a single socket. This affected the children's ability to study in the evening, as there were no other functioning plug sockets in the house, and equally, no electricity or lighting at all in the bathroom. In this time, the damp and mould rendered the one bedroom unusable due to the strong smell. As a result, the entire family was forced to sleep in the living room.

On 12 February 2023, a surveyor sent by L&Q inspected the house. His report said the house was not fit for habitation due to severe hazards. No action was taken by L&Q to rectify the issue. On 6 June 2023, L&Q's area manager and another surveyor visited the house to inspect the internal and external condition of the property. After this, Mr. S. Ramburn received two emails related to the

¹ <https://www.lqgroup.org.uk/-/media/files/policies/lq-hate-crime-policy.pdf>

condition of the external roof and the guttering of the property, however nothing was noted regarding the internal conditions.

On 19 November 2023, the ceiling collapsed in the living room. Mr. S. Ramburn, his son, and his youngest daughter were all caught in the collapse. Mr. S. Ramburn's eldest daughter only escaped as she had gone to the kitchen to cook. Mr. S. Ramburn's youngest daughter sustained an injury to her foot. Mr. S. Ramburn's son tore a ligament in his ankle, and Mr. S. Ramburn injured his back, as they attempted to escape the ceiling collapse. L&Q took action to fix the ceiling, but only painted over the mould.

In January 2024, an electrician sent by L&Q warned Mr. S. Ramburn that the damp in the house was so severe that the electrical circuits were not safe.

In March 2024, Mr. S. Ramburn contacted the Housing Ombudsman highlighting the issues he and his family had been facing with disrepair, overcrowding, and L&Q's lack of response. At the time of writing, he is still awaiting a response.

Across 2024, multiple leaks occurred in the house, which kept returning after being fixed. The neighbour upstairs also continued to harass Mr. S. Ramburn causing him significant psychological distress and leaving him fearful for his safety.

In May 2025, a pipe burst in the house and was not fixed for three weeks.

Whilst L&Q have offered Mr. S. Ramburn compensation totalling 2,271.60 pounds, he has rejected this offer, noting that it is wholly inadequate considering the totality of the harm he and his family have suffered. In June 2025, senior managers from L&Q met with Mr. S. Ramburn and representatives from the London Renters Union and promised temporary rehousing in a two-bedroom flat while significant repairs are undertaken, and further conversation about significant compensation.

The lack of adequate responses to many years of complaints about unsafe housing conditions have left the family with long-term mental and physical health issues. Mr. S. Ramburn lives in a house that still has severe damp and mould which affects his health and that of the family. His son allegedly developed tinnitus and skin infections due to the damp and mould. Mr. S. Ramburn's mental health reportedly further decreased due to the housing conditions. It remains unclear whether the ceilings are safe after four collapses occurred, given the persistent problem with damp and mould. Up until September 2025, L&Q had not taken action to address the causes of the leak, damp and mould in the flat.

In September 2025, Mr. S. Ramburn and his family were offered temporary rehousing in another building owned by L&Q, while the previous apartment would undergo repairs. The temporary housing is located on the same street as the other flat, but is allegedly inadequate for the family's needs, having only one small bedroom for five persons, and may have similar issues with poor

maintenance as the other flat. Mr. S. Ramburn has accepted the temporary housing offered by L&Q, as he worried that by not doing so, he could have been seen as obstructing the repairs process.

Reportedly, the harm suffered by Mr. S. Ramburn and his family are not isolated; instead, L&Q's failures appear to be systemic. Since 2019, the Housing Ombudsman has been documenting cases of maladministration at the hands of housing associations, including L&Q.² These typically involve instances where L&Q failed to undertake adequate action to address necessary repairs, or they took measures only after severe delays. Often urgent repairs were deferred in favour of major works later on. In other instances, temporary fixes were made (for example painting over the mould), but a permanent solution was severely delayed or never came. Moreover, tenants have often reported poor or delayed communication, lack of respect, empathy, and understanding of individuals' and families' specific circumstances and potential vulnerabilities, including the presence of children, persons with disabilities, older persons, or people with health conditions. In cases where compensation was provided, it was often deemed inadequate considering the harm suffered by tenants.

In 2023, the Housing Ombudsman released a special investigation report on L&Q,³ where it concluded that the landlord had "consistently failed" to resolve vital issues that it had been facing. In the report, the Ombudsman made 103 formal decisions involving L&Q in the months from January to June 2023, spanning 30 local authority areas, and ordered L&Q to pay 142,000 pounds in compensation to residents, at a rate of 1,350 pounds per case. Overall, the Ombudsman found a severe maladministration rate of 13 per cent, more than double the national average of 6 per cent, for disrepair, poor repair services, mishandling of charges for leaseholders, and failures supporting residents experiencing antisocial behaviour. Severe maladministration is defined as the most serious category of failure, occurring when a landlord's actions, or cumulative failures, have caused a seriously detrimental impact on the resident. The investigation further found that L&Q was silencing tenants who reported issues, including requiring a tenant to sign a confidentiality agreement before providing them with compensation, and expressing concern at tenants reporting issues to the press.

L&Q acknowledged the failings and made substantive investment into ensuring the adequacy of their housing, as well improved responsiveness to complains and support for vulnerable residents.⁴ However, many of the concerns expressed by the Ombudsman have remained, as showcased by Mr. S. Ramburn's and other tenants' situation. Between 2024 and 2025, L&Q reportedly took 14 months to repair the back door of a resident who had experienced domestic abuse and requested to have the issue reported as an emergency.⁵ Between 2024 and 2025, after L&Q failed to report and repair a leak, a household experienced power cuts, a ceiling collapse, falling debris and was without a bathroom for

² <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/reports/severe-maladministration-findings/>

³ [2023-07-26-LQ-P49-Final-Report.pdf](https://www.lqgroup.org.uk/media-centre/news/putting-things-right-our-response-to-the-housing-ombudsman?utm)

⁴ <https://www.lqgroup.org.uk/media-centre/news/putting-things-right-our-response-to-the-housing-ombudsman?utm>

⁵ [London & Quadrant Housing Trust \(L&Q\) \(202316143\) - Housing Ombudsman](#)

6 months.⁶ In 2025, a 90 year old resident in Vauxhall was left with a broken door for 3 months as L&Q failed to repair it, causing breathing problems due to dust as well as fears over her safety and privacy. In 2025, L&Q residents in Sidcup, including older persons and persons with disabilities, were left without water for 12 days when a subcontractor shut off a pipe without prior notification. This occurred during repairs to a leaking supply pipe, which were allegedly delayed and caused black mould to develop in the building. L&Q has offered residents 420 pounds compensation for the disruption to the power supply.

Following the death of a two-year-old child due to prolonged exposure to damp and mould in a housing association property in 2020, the United Kingdom government has introduced the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which is expected to come into force on 27 October 2025.⁷ Among other things, the legislation requires social landlords to fix reported damp, mould and emergency repairs within strict timeframes.

Without prejudging the accuracy of the information received, we wish to express our serious concern that the delayed, insufficient or lack of action by L&Q to address the issues raised by Mr. S. Ramburn and other tenants, as also documented by the Housing Ombudsman, may be having a significantly negative impact on the enjoyment of their human rights, particularly the right to an adequate standard of living, including housing.

International human rights law establishes that in order for housing to be deemed 'adequate', it should provide legal security of tenure, ensure availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, be affordable, habitable, accessible, in a location that allows access to services and social facilities, and be culturally adequate. The element of habitability, in particular, requires that housing must safeguard the health, safety and well-being of residents, providing protection from conditions that pose risks to physical and mental health, and containing the necessary facilities to allow households to meet their everyday needs, including safe and reliable electricity and water. On the basis of the facts alleged, the situation of Mr. S. Ramburn and his family, together with similar experiences reported by other tenants, appear to fall short of these standards.

We are further concerned that such situation does not guarantee the enjoyment of the core content of the right to adequate housing to the residents living in this building, and that it may impact the enjoyment of other human rights, including their right to equality and non-discrimination, including on the basis of race, colour, sex, disability, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. It should be noted that ensuring essential minimum content of the right to adequate housing is an immediate obligation under international human rights law, not subject to progressive realization and extends to all persons that are living in the territory. States must prevent, investigate, and remedy discrimination (including racial), even when committed by private actors, including landlords, housing associations, or neighbours.

⁶ [London & Quadrant Housing Trust \(L&Q\) \(202340261\) - Housing Ombudsman](#)

⁷ [Awaab's Law to force landlords to fix dangerous homes - GOV.UK](#)

We are particularly concerned about the severe impacts that the prolonged exposure to mould, damp, structural and electrical issues, and overcrowding, may have on individuals and groups who are already in situations of vulnerability, including children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and persons with pre-existing health concerns. For them, these hazards may carry disproportionate risks of long-term harm to their health and well-being. The World Health Organization (WHO) has laid out the health risks association with poor housing in its Housing and Health Guidelines.⁸ For example, structurally deficient housing, due to poor construction or maintenance, can increase the likelihood that people slip or fall, increasing the risk of injury. These risks may be aggravated for persons with disabilities or older persons. Indoor air pollution harms respiratory health and may trigger allergic and irritant reactions. Crowded housing increases the risk of exposure to infectious disease, and can also have a negative impact on children's education.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please indicate what measures are being taken to ensure that Mr. S. Ramburn and his family are rehoused in housing meeting the criteria for adequacy, including accessibility, and that they are provided compensation which takes into account both the physical and mental harm suffered.
3. Please indicate the measures, including legislative, regulatory, policy or oversight, that your Excellency's Government is undertaking to ensure that housing associations and developers offer housing options that meet the requirements for adequacy and accessibility, including for persons with disabilities, and families with specific support, care or health needs.
4. Please provide information on any investigations that have been carried out by competent authorities into the business practices of L&Q, and more generally into the compliance of housing associations and property management companies with their obligations in relation to the right to adequate housing and provide information on the number of sanctions that have in recent years be imposed for any irregularities carried out.
5. Please provide more information about how your Excellency's Government is ensuring independent safety inspections of housing rented out in the United Kingdom. How many officials are employed to carry out such inspections, and how many inspections are actually

⁸ <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/276001/9789241550376-eng.pdf?sequence=1>

carried out each year in relation to the overall housing stock rented out (percentage)?

6. Please describe the measures that your Excellency's Government has adopted, or intends to adopt, to ensure that housing associations, including L&Q, provide adequate remedies for tenants affected by disrepair or unsafe housing conditions. In particular, please explain the steps taken to guarantee that affected households are promptly rehoused in conditions that meet international standards of adequacy, and that housing associations establish effective grievance mechanisms to address the adverse human rights impacts resulting from their activities.
7. Please provide more information on how your Excellency's Government is ensuring that renters in public or private housing have effective and timely access to justice, legal advice and legal aid when housing rented out is insecure, faulty or poses health risks. What judicial and non-judicial complaints mechanism exist, and have they been sufficient to effectively and timely solve problems relating to the habitability of housing?
8. Please provide information on the measures that your Excellency's Government has put in place to address systemic issues in the social housing sector, such as delays in repairs, disrepair, overcrowding, lack of accessibility for persons with disabilities, and insufficient responsiveness to tenants' complaints, in order to prevent recurrence of the kinds of situations described above.
9. Please provide information on the measures taken by your Excellency's Government to ensure that businesses in the social housing sector respect human rights in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, in particular how does your Excellency government requires and guides these businesses to conduct human rights due diligence.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations. Specifically, we kindly ask authorities and L&Q to: a) undertake all required reparations of the apartment of Mr. S. Ramburn without any further delays and address similar situations of insalubrious housing, in particular if it poses any serious health risks or dangers, as promptly as possible; b) offer Mr. S. Ramburn and his family temporary rehousing in a suitable, affordable, habitable apartment in close proximity of his current apartment, taking into account any health or disability-related requirements and ensure, if he wished so, his timely right to return after the repairs have been completed on same

contract conditions; c) taking into account the condition of overcrowding in which Mr. S. Ramburn and his family are living, which is tied to Mr. S. Ramburn's support and health needs, consider providing permanent rehousing to the victims in an alternative housing option; d) cover the required costs of moving; e) offer Mr. S. Ramburn and his family a reasonable compensation for the harm caused taking into account the gravity and duration of the above mentioned alleged violations of the right to adequate housing and f) ensure that reported cases of death threats, racial slander or unsocial behaviour by tenants in housing managed by L&Q and other housing management companies are addressed effectively and in appropriate ways, proportionately to their gravity.

We recognize the important work of the Housing Ombudsman to solve conflicts between property owners and tenants. We further note the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, reflecting an acknowledgment of the long-standing issues faced by tenants of housing associations in the United Kingdom. However, we stress that legislative measures must be accompanied by adequate funding for inspection, enforcement, and accountability mechanisms in order to be effective. In this regard, we recommend that the implementation of the new law be accompanied by robust monitoring, clear reporting requirements, and strong enforcement measures.

Finally, we kindly ask you to share this communication with the Housing Ombudsman and the Newham Council.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government's to clarify the issue/s in question.

Please note that a similar letter has been sent to London and Quadrant for their comments.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal
Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context

Pichamon Yeophantong
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises

Heba Hagrass
Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, we wish to draw your attention to the relevant international norms and standards that are applicable to the issues brought forth by the situation described above.

Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), ratified by the United Kingdom in 1976, enshrines everyone's right to adequate housing, without discrimination. Article 12 further recognizes the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. According to general comment No. 4 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one's head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity. Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity.

In order for housing to be considered adequate, the CESCR has clarified that it should a) provide legal security of tenure, b) availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, essential for health, security, comfort and nutrition; c) be affordable; d) be habitable, therefore providing the inhabitants with adequate space and protecting them from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health, structural hazards, and disease vectors; e) be accessible; f) be in a location which allows access to employment options, health-care services, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities; and g) be culturally adequate.

The ICESCR clarifies that the rights enunciated in the Covenant, including housing, are to be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Similarly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), ratified by the United Kingdom in 1969, calls on States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law in the enjoyment of a series of rights including the right to housing. In his report on discrimination in the context of housing, the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing has stated that States must prevent, investigate, and remedy discrimination (including racial), even when committed by private actors, including landlords, housing associations, or neighbors (A/76/408).

We would further like to recall the obligations stemming from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991, in particular article 16, establishing the right of every child to be protected from interference with their privacy, family and home; and article 27, providing the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

We would like to refer to article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified by the United Kingdom in 2009, which recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves

and their families, including housing, and call on States to take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realization of this right without discrimination on the basis of disability. The Convention makes clear that the right to non-discrimination of persons with disabilities is not simply a negative right, requiring Governments and private actors to refrain from actions that exclude persons with disabilities, but also a positive right, requiring them to take measures to ensure the enjoyment of the right to housing. Notably, adequate measures should be taken to ensure that social housing programmes offer housing that is, inter alia, accessible for persons with disabilities and older persons (CRPD/C/GC/2, para. 42). The former Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing has further elaborated on the fundamental principles of a human rights-based approach to disability on her report on the right to housing of persons with disabilities (A/72/128).

We would also like to recall that the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons addressed the vulnerability of older persons in her 2022 report (A/77/239) on older persons and the right to adequate housing. In her report, she emphasized the strong link between adequate housing and older persons' health. In particular, she noted that exposure to cold, damp, heat, limited access to drinkable water and overcrowding, can have a severe and negative impact on older persons' health.

Business entities (including non-profit businesses such as housing associations) have direct human rights responsibilities to respect and fulfil human rights, including the right to housing. We would like to highlight the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which were unanimously endorsed in 2011 by the Human Rights Council in its resolution (A/HRC/RES/17/31) after years of consultation with governments, civil society, human rights defenders and the business community. The guiding principles have been established as the authoritative global standard for all States and businesses to prevent and address business-related adverse human rights impacts. These guiding principles are based on the recognition of: a) "The existing obligations of States to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms. b) The role of business enterprises as specialized bodies or corporations performing specialized functions, which must comply with all applicable laws and respect human rights. c) The need for rights and obligations to be matched by appropriate and effective remedies when they are violated". It is a recognized principle that States must protect against human rights abuses by business enterprises within their territory.

As part of their duty to protect against business-related human rights abuse, States are required to take appropriate steps to "prevent, investigate, punish and redress such abuse through effective policies, legislation, regulations and adjudication" (guiding principle 1). In addition, States should "enforce laws that are aimed at, or have the effect of, requiring business enterprises to respect human rights..." (guiding principle 3). The guiding principles also require States to ensure that victims have access to effective remedy in instances where adverse human rights impacts linked to business activities occur. The guiding principles also clarify that business enterprises have an independent responsibility to respect human rights. However, States may be considered to have breached their international human rights law obligations where they fail to take appropriate steps to prevent, investigate and redress human rights violations committed by private actors.

Finally, we call your attention to the report of the former Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, in which she warned about the risks associated with the increased financialization of housing, where housing is treated as a commodity rather than a human right (A/HRC/34/51).