



WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE HOMES FOR US ALLIANCE?

Outlining the discussions from the 2025 Homes for Us summit and our plans for the coming year.

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INTRODUCTION

The UK housing system needs radical reform. From more social homes to a smaller, more affordable, and better regulated private rented sector, reforms that fundamentally shift housing away from being a commodity to a public good are vital. The struggle for accessible, sustainable, and high-quality homes will only be won through a strong, organised, and diverse housing movement.

The Homes for Us Alliance (HFU) is facilitated by the New Economics Foundation and is made up of grassroots groups, tenants unions and charities. The Alliance's work is steered by a committee of 10 elected reps from its member groups. For the last four years, the HFU Alliance has been building a collective movement in the fight for secure, affordable housing for all. The HFU Alliance has five demands:

1. 3 million more social homes
2. Public buy-back of poor private rentals
3. End the sell off of affordable homes
4. Control rents and regulate service charges
5. Tax landlords fairly

In October 2025, the HFU Alliance met for its second annual summit, reflecting on the past year and consolidating its strategy for the year ahead.

THE PAST YEAR

There have been a number of significant policy developments in the housing sector since the last HFU Summit:

- Labour's plans to build 1.5 million more homes by 2029 have been supplemented with an announcement that all local councils in England will have mandatory housing targets.
- The planning system is being overhauled through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. The Housing Secretary issued a call to arms to developers to "Build, baby, build" through a review of green-belt boundaries, a prioritisation of 'grey belt' and brownfield sites for new homes, and sweeping deregulation of the planning sector.

- In July 2025, the government announced a £39bn programme to build 300,000 new social and affordable homes, with at least 60% of them for social rent.
- The Renters Rights Act (passed in October 2025) will see increased security for tenants – including the end of Section 21 no fault evictions, changes to rules around pet ownership in the private rented sector, and the extension of the decent home standard into the private rented sector.
- Reforms to Right to Buy have seen the discount lowered, and will allow councils to keep 100% of receipts from sales.

While a number of these changes were the result of determined campaigning from tenants, housing activists and charities, they do not go far enough to secure the safe, accessible, secure homes we need. Questions remain about enforcement of the Renters Rights Act, especially given the severely diminished capacity of local government after a decade of austerity. Moreover, many of these reforms are premised on a developer-led model, which prioritises private profit over people's right to a safe, secure home.

Over the past year we have also seen the weaponisation of housing by the far right. There is an urgent need to build a housing movement which counters far-right narratives.

The strength of our movement is in our ability to build networks of solidarity that sustain collective action against the far right, and against a business as usual approach to housing policy. This was echoed by organisers at the summit, as Basem, from Food & Solidarity in Newcastle, reminded us:

This alliance has a lot of strength from having so many different types of people and different types of groups involved. One organisation on its own won't be able to achieve much, but together as a whole, we can achieve a lot more.

People in power are starting to think more about how much they need to listen to people on the streets, and to ordinary



people. We can see that they are rattled by the Palestine movement. That movement is a lesson to us all, and its growing strength makes us stronger here in the housing movement

If we keep pushing together, I feel very confident that by the end of next year we can achieve something very real on rent control. And winning that will be a way to win even more on social homes.

THE MOMENT WE'RE IN: THE ROLE OF THE HFU ALLIANCE

The previous section detailed the particular political moment that the UK housing movement is operating within. Positive policy changes are happening, but within a developer-led framework that does little to disrupt existing power dynamics.

As organisers and campaigners involved in the HFU Alliance, it's important for us to understand what is happening politically, so that we can figure out how to solve the housing crisis together.

The HFU Alliance has developed a collective analysis of the political moment, focusing on the power that the housing movement has, and the power that our opponents have. The Alliance analysed three different forms of power: political power, social and solidarity power, and narrative power.

	The power of the housing movement	The power of our opponents
Political power	<p>Protest and awareness: Collective action and protest are key strategies to raise awareness and demand change.</p> <p>Lobbying: Engage with both direct power holders (landlords, local councils) and those they're accountable to (mortgage lenders,</p>	<p>Who holds power? Developers, investors, lobby groups, landlords, mortgage providers, asset managers, and financial backers — the people and institutions who control capital and property.</p>

	<p>financial institutions).</p> <p>Leftwing surge: The growth in Green Party membership and the launch of the new left party under Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana shows that the public want change. The housing movement needs to continue to organise to ensure these politicians stick to campaign pledges around rent controls and abolishing private landlords.</p> <p>Devolution: Sweeping changes to mayoral powers provides a political opportunity – if we as the housing movement can generate enough pressure.</p>	<p>They use this power to shape housing policy, influence government through lobbying, and prioritise profit over people by driving up rents and pushing unaffordable developments. Their decisions determine what gets built, who can access housing, and whether homes are treated as commodities or as a right.</p>
Social and solidarity power	<p>Solidarity organising: Tenants should connect across shared issues (e.g. shared landlords, building conditions) to strengthen their collective power.</p> <p>Economic leverage: Tenants fund the system through rent — potential for rent strikes or withholding payments as protest tools.</p> <p>Diverse alliances: Includes tenant unions, Disability justice and LGBTQ+ organisations, refugee and asylum seeker groups, charities, and campaign networks. Our strength comes from the fact that housing affects so many different groups of people and is an intersectional issue.</p>	<p>Power lies with those who control financial flows in housing.</p> <p>Councils control contracts and procurement, prioritising profit over people. Accountability is weak, making it hard to challenge decisions.</p> <p>Representation and agency: People living with disabilities have a lack of agency in housing choice, due to limited interest from developers in accessibility standards</p>

	<p>Regional & digital organising: Push beyond London-focused activism; develop regional groups and online toolkits to coordinate strategy.</p> <p>Direct action: Protests, coordinated demonstrations, and regional activism were seen as essential for visibility and pressure.</p>	in housing.
Narrative power	<p>Building unity: Challenge far-right and divisive narratives by connecting across racial, class, and regional lines; show how everyone suffers under the current system.</p> <p>Power of housing movement: share stories of renters driving change, amplify our historic and current wins, expose developers.</p>	<p>Divisive narratives around migrants and people on benefits are perpetuated for political gain.</p> <p>Housing as an investment, with messaging saying ‘there is no alternative’ to how things currently are persuasive.</p> <p>Poor housing accepted as normal, with blame shifted onto individuals instead of structural causes.</p> <p>Renters as victims, developers as saviours. The right is good at simple messaging – we need to improve at building a narrative using simple stories in material ways.</p>

CASE STUDY: GREATER MANCHESTER TENANTS UNION

In 2022, the Middleton branch of Greater Manchester Tenants Union (GMTU) was approached by a single mother on the Langley estate, a Riverside Housing Association property. Her home was plagued by damp and mould, and inaction from the social landlord was causing serious health problems for her child, including regular hospital visits.

After persistent organising, she secured proper repairs and £10,000 compensation. But, when she recognised similar breathing issues in another child at the school gates, she invited the child's mother to join GMTU, and the campaign against damp and mould on Langley was begun.

What began with one case has grown into a campaign involving 22 Riverside tenants, with collective compensation offers totalling £91,000. The problems extend beyond damp and mould, to rats, dangerous disrepairs, poor management, intimidation of lone female tenants, and systemic failures in record-keeping. Despite repeated negotiations with Riverside's senior management, a quarter of members still face unresolved issues.

The branch has combined direct action and advocacy: six face-to-face negotiations with executives, protests outside Riverside offices, national and regional media coverage, and an estate-wide tenant survey to create community data. They have also developed template guides and workshops to equip tenants across the UK to challenge disrepair collectively.

Looking ahead, the campaign is contesting Riverside's inclusion in Greater Manchester's Good Landlord Charter and pressing the Social Housing Regulator to investigate Riverside's competence. In collaboration with Social Housing Action Campaign, they have already gathered testimonies from over 100 Riverside tenants nationwide, building a growing evidence base for systemic change.

DEVELOPING MOVEMENT STRATEGY

Having developed a collective analysis of the current political moment, this section focuses on two priorities for our movement: access and inclusion, and rent controls.

The struggle for accessible housing

The housing crisis in the UK is not only about affordability; it is also about accessibility. Disabled people, migrants, refugees, and LGBTQIA+ communities are disproportionately affected by the chronic shortage of secure, suitable homes. For many, the question is not simply whether they can afford a place to live, but whether they can physically and safely inhabit it. This dual crisis of affordability and accessibility reveals the structural inequalities embedded in housing policy and practice.



Over the past forty years, successive governments have treated housing as a commodity rather than a human right. The result has been the systematic erosion of social housing stock. In the last decade alone, 260,000 social rent homes have been lost, replaced by unaffordable private developments and misleading “affordable rent” schemes. As demand continues to outstrip supply, more people are pushed into the private rented sector, which is often characterised by poor quality, high costs, and inaccessibility. For Disabled people, this sector is particularly hostile: there are around 1.6 million Disabled private renters in England, many of whom face discrimination when

requesting basic adaptations, such as ramps or handrails. Landlords frequently respond with rent increases rather than reasonable adjustments, effectively punishing tenants for asserting their rights.

The scale of unmet need is stark. More than 152,000 Disabled households in England are currently on social housing waiting lists, with over 23,000 in London alone. Many wait years, even decades, for a suitable home. Yet successive governments have failed to prioritise accessibility in housing policy, continuing to build homes that cannot be adapted and excluding millions of people from secure housing.

Intersectionality is crucial to understanding the depth of this crisis. Disabled people are not a minority; there are 9.8 million Disabled people in England and 16.1 million Disabled people across the UK. Many Disabled people face additional barriers because they are LGBTQIA+, Black or brown, women, or migrants. These intersecting identities compound the barriers faced.

Disabled asylum seekers encounter structural and attitudinal obstacles that have been described as dehumanising by those who have experienced them. These include language barriers, a lack of financial support, inadequate medical equipment, and insufficiently trained staff. LGBTQIA+ Disabled people are at heightened risk of homelessness, particularly young people who may be rejected by their families or excluded from single-sex housing provision. Structural racism, ableism, homophobia, sexism, and xenophobia intersect to intensify the housing crisis for those who experience multiple marginalisations.

The struggle for accessible housing is therefore inseparable from broader struggles for justice. Embedding solidarity in the housing movement requires more than inclusion; it demands transformation. Campaigns for rent controls must highlight the disproportionate impact of rent hikes on Disabled tenants. Calls for more public housing must insist on accessibility as a non-negotiable demand. Organising efforts must ensure demonstrations are inclusive, steering groups are representative, and alliances are built with Deaf and Disabled people's organisations and other user-led groups. Policy briefings and media narratives must reflect the lived experiences of those at the sharpest end of the crisis.

Accessible housing benefits everyone. Yet developers continue to prioritise profit over people, building homes that exclude rather than empower. Radical reform is needed to shift housing policy away from commodification and towards human dignity. Only by centering intersectionality and embedding solidarity can the housing movement build a future where no one is left behind.

What kind of rent controls should we demand?

For decades, governments have pushed the idea that homes are an asset, rather than a basic need. As a result, housing policy often prioritises landlord profit over access to secure homes. Successive governments have overseen the expansion of the most profitable part of the housing sector – the unregulated private rented sector – to the detriment of public housing.

The results of this policy approach have been disastrous. [Shelter](#) reports that the number of people living in temporary accommodation since 2010 has increased by 162% – with 131,140 households and 169,050 children living in temporary accommodation. Since 2020, rents have risen 38% across England and Wales, with the average asking rent outside of London rising from £756 to £1,385 ([Rightmove, 2025](#)). This extortionate rise is fuelling displacement and deepening inequality.

Rent controls are needed to push back against this profiteering and protect the social fabric of our communities. But what are rent controls?

Rent controls put a limit on how much landlords can charge tenants. Rent controls reduce rents, tackle evictions and homelessness, and give tenants more control over their homes, as well as more ability to demand repairs and adaptations, all of which contribute to bringing us closer to a fairer housing system. In-tenancy rent controls cap rent rises during an existing tenancy, protecting tenants from sudden or excessive increases. Between tenancy controls also cap rent rises when a new tenancy begins. This prevents landlords from increasing rents drastically between tenancies.

17 European countries have some form of rent controls, and they once existed in Britain. In Scotland, the tenants movement has recently won rent control zones in the Housing (Scotland) Bill, which come with annual rent caps

aligned with inflation. However, these changes do not come into effect until 2027, and will not be automatic – councils will have to use the powers, rather than them being mandatory. This means that tenants must stay organised to ensure councils actually designate rent control zones, enforce the caps, and resist pressure from landlords to water down or delay these hard-won powers.

The table below provides an overview of the different types of rent control policy. A mixed approach was favoured by attendees at the Summit, with national controls ensuring a minimum level of protection for everyone, and local controls reflecting local housing market conditions and ensuring local people have input on shaping the system.

Devolved	National	Mix
Local authorities or mayors have the power to set limits, as in Scotland.	National government sets an overall limit on rent increases across the country.	A national baseline limit is set, with local mayors or councils empowered to go further.
Allows rent regulation to reflect local housing market conditions.	Provides consistency and universal protection for tenants.	Balances universal protections with flexibility for stronger local action.



CASE STUDY: BIG POWER FOR LITTLE LONDON

The 'derelicts' is a site of slum houses, owned by a millionaire London landlord that has blighted the ex-mining estate of Little London in Maltby, Rotherham for over a decade with rats, crime and toxic black mould.

For the last two years, residents in Maltby have been organising through Big Power for Little London for the derelicts to be brought down – and to get other unfit housing stock on the Maltby estate upgraded.

In July 2025, the campaign won a written public commitment from the Leader of Rotherham Council and the landlord of the derelicts to bring them down within the next three years. While this is still a longer timeframe than residents wanted, this step represents a major win for the campaign. The fight in Little London continues, with residents continuing to push the council to use all enforcement powers against the landlord to ensure that the deadline is met, and the blight on their town and community is dealt with once and for all.

ACTION PLAN FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

This section sets out the collective strategy agreed at the HFU Summit. Attendees collectively deliberated on the practical strategy for the housing movement in 2026. Alliance members decided on a number of priority actions for **mobilising** around a Spring demonstration for rent controls and accessible public housing, thinking about how to ensure as many people as possible turn out to take part in one big, impactful action. Other members discussed **organising** strategy, thinking about how to build the power of the Alliance and the wider housing movement in the long term.

The actions agreed upon by the Alliance broadly aligned into twelve areas – six actions around mobilising, and seven actions focused on organising. They are:

Mobilising

1. Develop our core messages about the demonstration.
2. Create a mobilisation roadmap and plan.

3. Mobilisation training.
4. Mobilisation in local communities through developed messaging training and materials.
5. Gather signatures in local communities for a petition.
6. Delivery of petition at Spring demonstration with each organisation involved represented with a banner to show that this is a national issue.

Organising

1. Create a retention plan for how to turn people into organisers after the Spring 2026 demonstration.
2. Renew efforts to engage with trade unions, including teachers and healthcare workers' unions.
3. Undertake a mapping exercise of the housing justice movement across Britain, to identify stakeholders and their influence and interest in housing policy to spot opportunities for effective intervention and collaboration.
4. Communicate our wins and victories, and create a leaflet and comms around getting active locally.
5. Develop the policy aims of the HFU Alliance focusing specifically on rent controls and social housing policy.
6. Trainings and webinars, including a 'train the trainer' programme that can be used by groups in their local areas.
7. Internal movement building through localised events, regional HFU Alliance meetings, and delegation debriefs for Alliance members to collectively troubleshoot localised issues.

These actions demonstrate a commitment from Alliance members to build internal capacity and external momentum by deepening local organising and tapping into new areas of struggle. These actions will broaden our base and build durable structures of solidarity that endure long after the demonstration itself.

The importance of access and inclusion across each of these actions cannot be understated. Multiple participants emphasised the need for creative and digital methods to be used to ensure as wide a group as possible can be brought into the demonstration and activated into organisers as part of the Alliance.

CASE STUDY: FOOD & SOLIDARITY

Abdul is a long-term resident in Breamish House, an over-55 block in Newcastle. When water leaked from the flat above his home, his bathroom ceiling collapsed and he was left with extensive damp, black mould, and an unsafe living environment.

Despite family and neighbours repeatedly reporting the problem to Newcastle City Council, no immediate action followed – with the council proposing a repair timeframe that would have left the elderly resident in dangerous conditions for months.

Food & Solidarity organisers worked with Abdul to pursue a collective response. They planned a door-to-door visit across Breamish House to find other residents affected by leaks, damp, or mould; gathering evidence, collecting names for a joint letter, and identifying neighbours willing to attend a meeting with the council.

The action was timed to coincide with a council cabinet meeting on 20 October and with the introduction of Awaab's Law on 27 October. Residents signed a letter demanding urgent repairs, temporary rehousing where required, and a full inspection of damp problems across the block.

Residents delivered their letter in person. Within 24 hours, the council sent workers to Abdul's flat and began repairs while he remained in his home. Months of unanswered reports were addressed only after residents acted together.

With the far right using housing as a key focal point of their strategy, building solidarity and inclusion across social, racial and regional divides is crucial for the housing movement at the current moment.. Countering misinformation and divisive, racist rhetoric will create the foundation for a broadchurch, resilient movement that can unite communities, strengthen collective demands, and build the power necessary to win lasting housing justice.

Similarly, understanding housing justice as a disability justice issue means recognising that the right to a home also means the right to an accessible home. Accessibility and affordability go hand in hand, and without both,

Disabled people face unique barriers that deepen inequality. Framing these struggles as part of a shared demand for dignity and security highlights the strength of our movement. While many of our members face unique barriers, we understand the common ground that all of us share, and the need to create an accessible and inclusive housing movement.

Practical next steps

The twelve actions have been divided into four categories to make clear which activities strengthen campaigning and organising, which focus on messaging, which contribute to policy and strategy, and which build training and capacity.

While this helps to clarify responsibilities, there is some natural overlap. For example, housing justice mapping informs both organising and policy, and mobilisation in local communities sits at the intersection of messaging and training. This overlap reflects the reality that effective movement-building requires each strand to work in tandem with the others, and that all Alliance activity is mutually reinforcing.

Each of these areas of work will be carried out by a working group, which members of the Alliance are welcome to join. To find out how to join a working group email info@homesforus.org.uk

Campaigns and organising	Messaging	Policy	Training
Create a mobilisation roadmap and plan	Develop our core messages - rent controls as an accessibility issue, and as a baseline to building more inclusive social housing	Undertake a mapping exercise of the housing justice movement across Britain, to identify stakeholders and their influence and interest in housing policy, to	Mobilisation training - Developing messaging - Canvassing and conversations - Social media

		help spot opportunities for effective intervention and collaboration	
Renew efforts to engage with trade unions , including teachers and healthcare workers' unions	Communicate our wins and victories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection of housing movement success stories - Interviews and images of ongoing campaigns within the Alliance that demonstrate our power - Use this as a platform for framing the rent controls campaign in the language of intersectionality and solidarity across the housing movement 	Develop the policy aims of the HFU Alliance , creating a strategy for how the policy asks relate to advocacy work. Focus specifically on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rent controls policy - Social housing policy 	Trainings and webinars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Know your rights webinar - Anti-racist training on having conversations, collective care, counter messaging - Skills development such as talking to politicians, leadership, myth-busting narratives, and strategising - Train the Trainer around skills development, rent controls, and intersectionality within housing injustice - influencing training - on how to pressure councils, Mayors, MPs

Internal movement building - Localised events and regional HFU Alliance meetings, ensuring these are accessible, inclusive, fun! - Debriefs for Alliance members to collectively troubleshoot localised issues	Create a communication working group and strategic comms strategy - Point of contact or representative from each Alliance member organisation		Create a retention plan for how to keep people engaged and skill them up as organisers after the Spring 2026 demonstration
Mobilisation in local communities - Deliver campaign materials, including translations and easy read formats, in community centres - Host localised events in the build up to the demo - Gather signatures in local communities for a petition			

CONCLUSION

The Homes for Us Summit 2025 demonstrated the strength and determination of the housing justice movement. Across strategy sessions and through collective planning, members reaffirmed their commitment to addressing the housing crisis and building power and solidarity between the members of our network, against the developer-led framework of housing.

The Summit made clear that housing justice is inseparable from Disability justice, racial justice, and class justice. By centering intersectionality and solidarity, we can ensure that the struggles of Disabled people, migrants, refugees, and LGBTQIA+ communities are not treated as side issues but as central to the fight for secure homes. The action plan agreed by Alliance members reflects this commitment: mobilising for rent controls and accessible public housing, strengthening alliances across regions and sectors, and building durable structures of organising that will endure beyond any single campaign.

The year ahead will be decisive. With far-right forces weaponising housing and developers continuing to dominate policy, our collective power must be visible and transformative. The HFU Alliance leaves this Summit with renewed energy, a clear strategy, and a shared understanding that only by acting together can we win the radical reforms needed. The Summit has shown that we are ready to meet this moment, and to fight for a housing system that truly leaves no one behind.

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