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POLICY BRIEF

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HOUSING AND RACIALISED SEX WORKERS IN THE UK

Housing and Racialised Sex Workers in the UK

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National Ugly Mugs:

Ending All Forms of Violence Against Sex Workers

[National Ugly Mugs \(NUM\)](#), formerly the UK Network of Sex Work Projects (UKNSWP), is a UK-wide charity working to end all forms of violence against sex workers and the conditions leading to survival sex work. We deliver pioneering digital safety tools and direct support programmes, as well as advocacy, community education and research projects on the conditions, trends and inequalities around sex work. We're pushing for systems change: an end to the disproportionate discrimination, violence and poverty currently facing sex workers.

Our work is guided by three core principles:

1. **Sex Workers First:** privileging lived experience in sex industries as a primary way of knowing and responding to sex workers' priorities around safety, health and rights.
2. **Quality Support:** working with sex workers to prevent violence, support survivors in seeking justice and recovery, and end the conditions driving survival sex work.
3. **Learning and Innovation:** committing to consistent improvement, learning and growing in our approach to what we do, why we do it, and how we do it.

NUM is the only UK-wide reporting and alerting mechanism for sex workers, and a world leader in digital tools and individualised support services that promote their safety and wellbeing. We work alongside other sex worker-led groups around the world, including reporting mechanisms such as [Ugly Mugs Ireland](#) and France's [Projet Jamine](#), and advised on the development of [Ugly Mugs Netherlands](#).

We curate the national database of harms against sex workers, developed over the past 12 years, and have 9,800 members at the time of writing. In 2023, we sent out 849,631 safety alerts (3.3 million since inception) and processed 578 reports of violence against sex workers, containing 812 accounts of harm. We provided direct victim support services to 1,027 sex workers, and welcomed a further 281 to our [NUMbrella Lane drop-in service](#)

Sex work research is complex. While female, street-based sex workers often feel over-studied, those of other genders and forms of work are typically under-researched. What almost all sex workers are, though, despite differing levels of academic interest, is under-served by actual policy developments and adequate service provision. As such, the participation of sex workers in studies like this is greatly valued. We hope that as a result of their contributions, and the trust they've placed in us through them, we can effect change that materially improves their health and wellbeing.

Racial Justice for Sex Workers: Introduction and Methodology

Rights, Recognition and Redress, or the Racial Justice for Sex Workers Project, is the beginning of NUM's work on reclaiming narratives around sex work and race through in-depth conversations, research and collaboration between racialised sex workers and anti-racist activists.

Supported by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the first iteration of the project focused on the relationships between racialised sex workers and public services. This document is one of five policy briefs on the experiences of racialised sex workers in five key areas of public life: policing, healthcare, housing, further education, and support services. You can find the other briefs, as well as information on our ongoing anti-racism work within NUM, [on our website](#).

Racial Justice for Sex Workers is based on a Participatory Action Research methodology¹, where researchers work in collaboration with participants to understand an issue and change it for the better. Rather than studying participants as unempowered subjects, this project adopted an approach that focused on the expertise of racialised sex workers through their lived experience, developing a group of collaborators whose contributions guided the research and service outputs of this project.

Through this process, NUM has developed this series of reports, a range of advocacy materials, and a Reporting Professionals Tool: a new digital platform that will allow sex workers to report harms (such as racial discrimination, refusal of service, or abuses of power) perpetrated by individuals in positions of public trust, like police officers or doctors. The Reporting Professionals Tool will sit within our victim support casework team, and allow NUM to better support sex workers navigating harm recovery and justice processes within professional settings.

The Policy Briefs are constructed from a series of interviews conducted with 38 racialised sex workers in the UK. Participants were provided with an honorarium as a thank you for their knowledge contribution and time, and were assured at the beginning of their interviews that all responses would be anonymised. We also conducted a documentary review of recent research projects at NUM (both published and unpublished), led by sex workers and sex work researchers, for inclusion.

More information on the Racial Justice for Sex Workers project can be found on our [landing page](#).

¹O'Neill, Maggie. ['Cultural Criminology and Sex Work: Resisting Regulation through Radical Democracy and Participatory Action Research \(PAR\)'](#). *Journal of Law and Society* 37, no. 1 (2010): 210–32.

Introduction and Context

In 2016 the Home Affairs Committee estimated that there were 73,000 sex workers in the UK², but the real number is likely to be much higher³. In England, Scotland and Wales the exchange of sexual services for money is entirely legal⁴⁵. However, almost all activities necessary to engage in sex work safely are criminalised under both historic and contemporary legislation, with restrictive laws around working together and communicating services meaning that sex workers are excluded from public spaces and isolated to the detriment of their safety.

The right to housing is protected under international human rights law, which includes safeguards against discriminatory eviction⁶. Research from the Global Network of Sex Work Projects, however, identified systemic inequalities that mean *“sex workers are denied housing, unlawfully evicted, reported to law enforcement by neighbours or landlords, or overcharged and forced to live in substandard conditions. Sex workers also encounter discrimination when trying to obtain temporary accommodations”*⁷.

For this report, we worked with 38 racialised sex workers to identify common experiences with housing in the UK. Participants shared experiences of private renting, living in social housing, and living in housing associations, as well as experiences of homelessness. No participants shared experiences of buying or owning a home, potentially due to a decline in home ownership generally⁸, racial inequalities in home ownership and rates of social housing⁹¹⁰, and the financial discrimination facing sex workers in the UK¹¹.

² [Prostitution report, 2016-17 | House of Commons Home Affairs Committee](#)

³ Sex workers are likely to under-report due to societal stigma, as well as institutional persecution from the police (see our policing policy brief), [banks](#), and government bodies like the DWP and Home Office. Since this estimate NUM has also witnessed the COVID-19 pandemic, widespread economic uncertainty, and the Cost of Living Crisis drive more people to starting or increasing their engagement with sex work. As such, the number of people selling sex is likely to be much higher.

⁴ [Sex worker safety | Metropolitan Police](#)

⁵ In Northern Ireland selling sex, soliciting and loitering are entirely legal, but paying for sex is a crime: [paying for sexual services | nidirect](#).

⁶ [The human right to adequate housing | OHCHR](#).

⁷ [The Right to Housing and the Unmet Needs of Sex Workers | NSWP](#)

⁸ [Renting is up and home ownership down since 2011, according to latest Census data](#)

⁹ Mohdin, A. and García, C.A. (2023) *‘Black people in England and Wales three times as likely to live in social housing’*, The Guardian, 15 March.

¹⁰ [Home ownership | GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures, 2023](#)

¹¹ [Payment Rejected: Financial discrimination against sex workers in the UK | National Ugly Mugs](#)

Private Renting

In general, participants described private housing as defined by transience and instability. One participant described a “*very difficult*” period of moving six times within their first two years in the UK, and another explained the challenges facing sex workers in a private rental sector that saw its largest rent increase on record last year¹²:

“As a sex worker you are not necessarily guaranteed that you will always have the money. . . it fluctuates. Today you can hit with a surplus, then tomorrow it’s a deficit . . . you just have to keep changing addresses, changing spaces.”

Project Participant

Our research found a correlation between financial instability and housing inconsistency that creates a cycle of uncertainty for many racialised sex workers, compounded by a power imbalance with private landlords that puts many workers at risk of discriminatory evictions or denial of housing, homelessness, and exploitation.

Council Housing

Shelter describes social housing (housing through councils or housing associations) as “*the only genuinely affordable type of [rented] home, because their rents are set by a formula tied to local incomes.*”¹³ However, the large-scale loss of social rent homes - over 250,000 in England in the past decade, for example¹⁴ - has seen the UK’s social housing waiting list grow to almost 1.7 million people¹⁵.

One project participant described spending years in temporary accommodation despite being entitled to social housing as a care leaver, but having finally secured social housing reflects that she is

¹² [Private rent and house prices. UK: March 2024 | ONS](#)

¹³ [What is social housing? | Shelter England](#)

¹⁴ Jayanetti, C. (2024) ‘[Social rent homes in England fall by more than quarter of a million in decade](#)’, The Guardian, 9 June.

¹⁵ 1.3 million in [England](#), 250,000 in [Scotland](#), 67,000 in [Wales](#), and 45,000 in [Northern Ireland](#)

“fortunate to not have been on the receiving end of things that [private landlords] can do” like no-fault evictions¹⁶ (despite government ministers promising to end the right of landlords to evict tenants without reason in 2019, 2023 saw a record 26,000 made homeless or threatened with homelessness through no-fault evictions¹⁷).

Participants described council housing as a rare and positive source of *“secure fucking housing”*, and shared experiences of negotiating rent arrears and working with council landlords on bills - in contrast to issues of quick evictions and harsh treatment of arrears in the private sector.

Housing Associations

Housing associations also provide social housing, but by operating as individual charities they can have more apparent cultures and attitudes than councils. One participant who rents within a housing association described experiencing discrimination and harmful stereotyping, reflective of an attitude that *“you are poor and you should be thankful you have this, even though their services aren’t brilliant”*.

While still more affordable and sustainable than private rentals, participants described some housing associations as more like *“church do-gooding groups”* than housing providers, *“a bit like the Salvation Army”*. As well as condescending attitudes towards marginalised residents including sex workers, asylum seekers, and people with addiction issues, one association also conducts Sunday morning parades through their housing complexes - *“it’s like, you shall not be in bed with a hangover, I am going to bash my tambourine really loudly outside your window!”*

Another participant described past encounters with solo male staff, visiting her home to perform repairs and inspections, as *“really problematic, you know, and quite scary at points”*. When she voiced her discomfort to the Housing Association, she was merely told *“you can just call [us] and check they are bona fide”* without further assurances or action - something that was *“unhelpful [as] a single woman with a, kind of, traumatic past - or present”*.

Overall, housing associations were described as more secure than private rentals, but with less predictability around housing quality and treatment of tenants than council landlords.

¹⁶ “Landlords can currently evict tenants who are not on fixed-term contracts without giving a reason, under housing legislation known as Section 21. After receiving a Section 21 notice, tenants have two months before their landlord can apply for a court order to evict them.” ([BBC News, 2023](#))

¹⁷ [Spike in no-fault evictions behind 'shocking' record-breaking number of households made homeless | The Standard](#)

Precarity, Homelessness and Exploitation: Sex Work and the UK Housing Sector

Most participants described a stark tradeoff between affordability and living conditions, with many having to accept substandard or unsafe living conditions. As one told us, *“[my] place is like, falling to bits. There’s mould everywhere. It’s a complete shithole, [but] it’s like, you know, £800 a month. Which is just not normal [but] you are just faced with so little choice”*. 60% of participants identified as disabled, and multiple participants experienced a lack of quality and consistency in housing that was *“detrimental to [their] health”*.

Another participant, Jamah¹⁸, has been living in London *“for five years, and I’ve been evicted like six or seven times”*, largely due to a lack of references or registered employment meaning they have to rely on *“dodgy”* landlords who can be more volatile or unpredictable. The *“precarity”* and *“expense”* associated with being a particularly marginalised tenant in an already insecure market has created a cycle of instability for Jamah, making it hard to establish any sense of permanence or security. Jamah expressed a need to leave sex work, *“because I think [housing for sex workers] is going to get worse and worse as time goes on, like, as everything gets automated and we all get these, like, digital profiles of who we are”* that can alert landlords to someone’s sex worker status.

One participant, an LGBTQ+ sex worker, told us that *“in these circles we are really vulnerable, we are really vulnerable to the landlords. We don’t have, like, a lot of communication with our parents, we don’t necessarily have people who can vouch for us, we don’t necessarily have 9 to 5s, we don’t necessarily have things in place that, like, give us the correct character and morale to be renters, and on top of that there is a lot of poverty”*.

Landlords can ask renters for employment references, bank statements and previous landlord details, and can deny tenancy to those unable to provide them. If tenants fail income or reference checks, common advice is to offer a larger deposit or provide a guarantor¹⁹, but this obviously isn’t helpful to people experiencing poverty or alienation from their family like our participant describes.

¹⁸ All participant names have been changed for anonymity.

¹⁹ [How landlords and letting agents check tenants | Shelter England](#)

“

I didn't think that I would ever be able...have a Landlord
deem me worthy of being in a space as a renter

”

The compounding challenges facing many racialised sex workers - particularly issues around employment and poverty - can make them acutely vulnerable renters. Criminalisation can make it difficult to engage fully with social housing services, and issues around references and income can exclude sex workers from mainstream letting agents and make them reliant on exploitative, potentially dangerous landlords for housing.

Non-Disclosure: References and Brothel-Keeping Laws

One participant, a sex worker with no family support and an autistic individual, described their challenges in accessing housing:

“

My employment history is just, like, non-existent - or it's just, you know, zero hour contracts, stuff like that. [So it's hard] renting through an agency or a proper landlord where you have to declare, like, income, paperwork, employment references. [Instead I've had] really dodgy landlords that have been really abusive.

”

Project Participant

Many participants articulated fears of immediate eviction upon disclosing their status as a sex worker. For one participant, Penelope, constructing an entirely false narrative about her employment and providing fabricated information to landlords became the only means of creating any housing stability. Despite having *“tried to get my own property and...showed like, my tax statements and stuff”*, Penelope found that securing housing was simply *“impossible unless I lie”*.

Maria, meanwhile, says that *“there is no way I am going to put on an application [for housing] that I’m a sex worker, no fucking way...I will always have to fake my paperwork and my payslips.”*

This fear of discriminatory evictions against sex workers is compounded by the dangers created by the UK’s brothel-keeping laws. Running or helping to run a brothel is a crime that can mean up to 7 years’ imprisonment, but there is no statutory definition of a brothel - with the Crown Prosecution Service only stating that a definition *“is likely to require two or more persons to occupy the same premises simultaneously for the purposes of prostitution”*²⁰. Essentially, sex work is legal in England, Scotland and Wales²¹, but only in isolation - making it the only occupation in the UK that is completely legal only when the worker works alone²².

The most obvious impact of forcing sex workers to work in isolation is on their safety, but it also has significant consequences when it comes to housing. It’s not uncommon for multiple sex workers to be living together, with 18% of independent indoor sex workers involved in a University of Leeds study saying they’ve used a sex working housemate as a ‘third party’ (someone not buying or selling sex, but who is still involved for other purposes like safety)²³. This legal grey area around ‘brothel-keeping’ creates significant anxiety for sex workers living together; as one participant told us, *“even if you are just using your house to sleep, they are going to already assume you are going to open a brothel”*.

Between the potential for direct discrimination from landlords and the legal uncertainty created by brothel-keeping laws, it’s understandable that many participants feel the only way they can access secure housing is through hiding or disguising their sex worker status - a forced decision that can put them at risk of immediate eviction upon discovery, or come with significant mental health burdens.

Homelessness

A pattern of stigmatisation and rejection when navigating housing was a common theme in this research, and many participants disclosed experiences of homelessness.

²⁰ [Prostitution and Exploitation of Prostitution | The Crown Prosecution Service](#).

²¹ And while the buying of sex is illegal in Northern Ireland, selling it is legal.

²² [“I feel safe when I’m working with her”: Sex workers’ experiences of management and other third parties | University of Leeds](#).

²³ [“I feel safe when I’m working with her”: Sex workers’ experiences of management and other third parties | University of Leeds](#)

“

When I was working. . . a lot of the time I would be homeless. Or if I did try and get, like, a council flat or anything like that, they would always say my lifestyle was too chaotic. I'd been in hostels and stuff and was always chucked out of them.

”

Project Participant

The barriers facing sex workers in accessing housing - whether that's individual stigma from private landlords, or feeling marginalised by social housing processes - can create a cycle of rejection that makes the notion of secure housing feel impossible.

As one participant told us, *“Who wants to rent his apartment to a sex worker? Accessing housing...was a very bad experience for me”*. Multiple participants shared experiences of ‘hidden homelessness’ including sofa-surfing and relying on friends for temporary housing. Others discussed being forced into over-crowded or dangerous environments, and being subject to armed police raids, before being made homeless. In one case, a project participant had been forced to accept an illegally sublet property and arrived home one day to find the landlord had *“moved in other people and they had, like, literally moved in on top of all my stuff. Like all my clothes were on the floor and everything”*. Their property was displaced and damaged, and they were suddenly homeless.

The destabilising effects of homelessness are clear, and the compounding alienation and police enforcement associated with both sex work and homelessness can put people at acute risk of violence and other harms. Research indicates that ending homelessness and police displacement among street-based sex workers could reduce experiences of violence by 67%²⁴.

Because sex work represents an accessible, flexible form of working that is otherwise unavailable to most people - particularly those experiencing instability and homelessness - it can often be difficult to separate trends around sex workers being made homeless and people who are already homeless engaging in sex work (research by crisis found that a fifth of homeless women had engaged in sex work to fund a night in a hotel or B&B, for example²⁵). What is clear, however, is the need for

²⁴ Walker, J.G. et al. (2024) [‘The impact of policing and homelessness on violence experienced by women who sell sex in London: a modelling study’](#), Scientific Reports, 14(1), p. 8191.

²⁵ Reeve, K. (2011) [The hidden truth about homelessness: Experiences of single homelessness in England](#). London: Crisis.

compassionate, flexible support programmes for homeless sex workers. Despite this, services like hostels and domestic violence refuges often exclude sex workers for having complex support needs²⁶, leaving them further excluded from any kind of accommodation support.

Violence and Exploitation

The insecurity and marginalisation detailed throughout this report puts sex workers at significant risk of harm perpetrated by private landlords - including financial exploitation, poor housing conditions, or direct abuse.

As one participant explained, *“the last three years I’ve been living in this house...because they were, like, one of the few people that would accept me without a guarantor or any paperwork, basically. But that means that, like, the landlord is really dodgy, so there’s a lot of mould that made me really sick that I couldn’t really do anything about because the landlord, like, just doesn’t exist and I [can’t] say anything. Like, stuff’s breaking down all the time, really high rent...you know, just really precarious housing”*.

Another shared her experience of a landlord evicting her after finding out about her profession, despite no previous issues, then asking her *“how many blowjobs”* she would need to give in order to make up a rental deposit that he was illegally withholding after kicking her out.

Research conducted by housing campaign group Generation Rent estimated that 4% of private renters had been offered ‘sex for rent’ by their landlord or letting agent, with that figure rising to 1 in 10 for renters with incomes of less than £20,000²⁷. While landlords offering sex for rent is illegal under the Sexual Offences Act, a sense of precarity (like the housing insecurity facing sex workers) can make reporting difficult²⁸. Sex for rent can be a particular issue for migrants and asylum seekers, with Latin American Women’s Aid claiming that the discrimination and harassment facing asylum seekers in public accommodation facilities *“makes them afraid of accessing these services [and at risk of] abusers living in private accommodation”*²⁹.

²⁶ Davis, J. (2004) [Off the Streets: Tackling Homelessness Among Female Street-based Sex Workers](#). Shelter England, pp. 3–30.

²⁷ Taylor, W.B. (2023) [‘Tenants targeted by sexual predators in cost-of-living crisis’](#), Generation Rent, 29 June.

²⁸ [‘Home Office Launches “Sex For Rent” Consultation | National Ugly Mugs’ 21 April, 2023](#)

²⁹ [‘Vulnerable UK women forced into “sex for rent” by cost of living crisis’ | The Guardian](#)

One project participant also described exploitation and abuse in supported accommodation - sharing experiences of being extorted for money while living in a mixed hostel and being given “a black eye” - suggesting that the risk of violence can extend past private rentals and into support services.

Intersections: Racism and Anti-Sex Worker Discrimination

Participants discussed experiences of racial discrimination in housing, and its impact on finding secure accommodation alongside inequality across class and sexuality lines. As one participant put it:

“

My name is Latino, so I know for a fact that if two people apply for... an apartment [and] one person has... an English-sounding name, and one person has a foreign-sounding name, they are going to the people with the English-sounding name.

”

Project Participant

Another participant described being “*in a position of more financial stability than I had ever known in my life...where I was like ‘oh my gosh, I’m okay’, like I can afford to live, [but] I still had the most jacked-up time renting*”. Despite achieving a sense of financial security, “*queerphobia, whorephobia,...racism*” meant they were still pushed out of mainstream housing options. In fact, this financial security became suspicious to landlords relying on stereotypes: “*why would she be financially stable? Why is she by herself? Like, you know, it just doesn’t fit*”. Even when trying to rent in share houses, the participant saw landlords “*not trying to have, like, multiple black people in one space*”.

Research by Shelter has highlighted significant disparities in housing experiences for racialised groups in the UK. According to their findings, racialised people are more likely to be homeless or living in poor-quality homes³⁰. Over a quarter of private landlords surveyed said that “*it’s natural that stereotypes and prejudices come into it when I decide who to let to,*”³¹ reflecting the deep-seated biases that affect housing access.

³⁰ [The fight for home is a fight against racism | Shelter England](#)

³¹ ^{31a} [Prejudice in practice: the many faces of discrimination in the private rented sector | Shelter England](#)

Black renters, in particular, face stark challenges, being four times more likely than white renters to be asked for extortionate levels of rent upfront. Additionally, nearly 1 in 10 Black renters reported being denied housing in the last five years due to their race ^{31a}. These alarming statistics call to attention the need for urgent reforms, as also emphasised in Shelter's response to the housing elements of the King's Speech, where they called for stronger protections against discrimination in the housing market.³²

Racialised sex workers, then, are at the intersections of multiple inequalities. On top of the insecurity and cost already associated with the UK housing sector, racism and anti-sex worker discrimination pushes racialised sex workers out of mainstream housing and into less visible, less reliable, and less safe accommodation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Housing in the UK is already defined by inequality and precarity, with 17.5 million people living in overcrowded, dangerous, unstable or unaffordable housing³³. Proper accommodation is a key factor in wellbeing - with the treatment of health problems caused by poor housing costing the NHS £1.4 billion per year³⁴ - and can underpin (or undermine) a sense of security in every other part of life.

Participants in this project described being marginalised by social housing processes, and exploited or endangered by private ones. Financial instability, exacerbated by the fluctuating incomes and banking discrimination³⁵ associated with sex work, often leads to racialised sex workers living in transitory or precarious housing.

Criminalisation and discrimination make it hard for racialised sex workers to secure housing, access support, and represent themselves in cases of exploitation or poor conditions. As such, experiences of abuse or harassment, unsafe or unsanitary accommodation, and sudden homelessness were common. The need for change, then, is clear and urgent.

³² [Shelter responds to housing elements of King's Speech | Shelter England](#)

³³ [What is the housing emergency? | Shelter England](#)

³⁴ Barton, C. and Wilson, W. (2024) ['The role of homes and buildings in levelling up health and wellbeing'](#) UK Parliament. 17 October.

³⁵ [Payment Rejected: Financial discrimination against sex workers in the UK | National Ugly Mugs](#)

Better Routes to Social Housing

While participants shared some negative experiences of social housing, there was a clear distinction in the security and quality of council housing and housing associations compared to private renting. As one participant put it, an issue *“at the hands of the council [is] slightly different because that’s, like, a government body, so you could escalate it quite clearly and, you know, hold them to account...if it was an estate agent, or a private landlords...I’m not sure what my options would be.”*

Precarity and exploitation were issues significantly more associated with private renting, with research even indicating that private renting is linked with faster biological ageing than living in social housing³⁶. However, securing social housing can feel like an impossible task due to falling stock and long waiting lists³⁷. The complex needs that can be associated with sex work, like the disproportionate risk of poor physical and mental health outcomes³⁸, can further marginalise racialised sex workers from this already challenging process.

Targeted efforts to make social housing more accessible to racialised sex workers, including staff training, community outreach and special considerations, would make a significant difference to the acute housing insecurity they face.

Reporting, Accountability and Support Services

Participants discussed the need for proper reporting processes across both private and social housing, and the complexity created by trying to seek justice or change following a negative experience with a person that can influence your living situation.

One participant described *“feeling silenced”* within their housing association *“because I don’t want any comeback”*. Following negative experiences with an employee visiting her home, she said *“what are you going to do...get him sacked, and then fucked off at you? And he knows where you live”*. In the private sector, participants described the processes for holding rogue landlords to account as *“completely unhelpful”*, particularly for *“young [people], or migrants, or people who didn’t really have*

³⁶ Booth, R. (2023) [‘Living in privately rented homes linked to faster biological ageing, study finds’](#), The Guardian, 10 October

³⁷ [UK housing crisis is so bad that some people waiting 55 years for a social home: ‘We need change’](#)

³⁸ [23/27 Interventions to improve health outcomes for sex workers | NIHR](#).

the power to do anything". There's a clear power imbalance preventing accountability within housing and enabling poor treatment.

There must be clear, supportive, and accessible processes for reporting issues and harm within housing. Larger housing charities like Shelter, and more specific services targeting victimisation by landlords like London-based [Safer Renting](#), can be significant sources of support and safety - but must be open and responsive to the unique needs of racialised sex workers.

NUM's new [Reporting Professionals form](#), developed through this project, is another way of mitigating the powerlessness often felt by sex workers navigating housing discrimination. It allows sex workers to report harms - including racial discrimination, exploitation, and abuses of power - perpetrated by individuals in positions of public trust. Reporting sex workers will receive support from NUM's case work team, who will work with them to navigate the recovery from any harm they experience and the appropriate complaints or justice processes.

Unions and Organising

Multiple participants emphasised the invaluable support they received through community networks, often in contrast to inaccessibility around traditional ways of resolving housing issues like formal support services or lawyers. Renters unions, member bodies made up of private renters, offer vital support including attending and stopping illegal evictions, requesting repairs on behalf of tenants, and challenging bad practices like charging illegal fees. Initiatives like [Hookers Against Hardship](#) have further highlighted the urgent need for rent controls and a moratorium on evictions, advocating for policies that better protect vulnerable groups, including sex workers, from housing insecurity.

Renters unions with local branches include:



Acorn

www.acorntheunion.org.uk



London Renters Union
www.londonrentersunion.org



Greater Manchester Tenants Union
www.tenantsunion.org.uk

The support of people in your local community - who are not necessarily housing professionals, but *“who just know their shit about renters’ rights and what you can do to hold different bodies to account”* - can be a lifeline for racialised sex workers facing landlord harassment or illegal eviction.



National Ugly Mugs

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