

Warning: Housing Shortage At 'Crisis Point'

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Jane Dougall, Sky News reporter

The UK housing shortage is at crisis point - with building work at its lowest level since World War Two despite a need for a million extra homes, it is claimed.



A report by the [Home Builders Federation](#) found almost five million people are on council housing waiting lists and 1.6 million children are living in overcrowded, temporary or run down housing in Britain.

Executive chairman Stewart Baseley said: "We have a desperate and growing housing crisis that just has to be addressed."

"But despite the shortfall of homes fast approaching a million, we are building less than at any time since the Second World War.

"The social and economic implications dictate that the new Parliament's MPs must address the barriers to delivery as a matter of urgency."

Fatima Bourenane lives in a two-bedroom council flat in west London with her three children. Her two sons aged 10 and 13 share a room that measures around three metres by four.

It is not large enough for a bed each, so the boys take turns sleeping on the floor.



Fatima Bourenane lives in a two-bedroom council flat with her three children.

Fatima's room is not much bigger and her five year old daughter, Nadia, sleeps in a cot next to her bed.

"It's not good enough for us, it's too small." she says. "The boys, they fight all the time, they need more space."

Fatima has lived in the flat for 14 years and for the last nine, has been on a waiting list for a larger home.

The Federation says the shortage is also apparent in the private housing market and is contributing to the many difficulties of getting on the property ladder.

It is a problem that the Government is well aware of.

At the unveiling of 11 new affordable homes in Slough, part of Labour's "Kick-start" scheme, Housing Minister John Healey MP said: "I wouldn't say it's a crisis ... it's a measure of the recession."

He added: "I've been able to make an extra £1.5bn available and we are using that money to kick-start private house building sites.

"We're also using it to get underway this year, the biggest council house building programme this country's seen for nearly two decades."

His critics say it is too little too late. With a shortfall of a million homes, the situation is now urgent.