

Moving from Concern to Concrete Change:

Research Methods Appendix

This supplement provides detailed information on the research that informs FrameWorks' strategic memo on social housing. Below, we outline the research conducted for the project, describing both methods used and the sample composition. This research provides the evidence base for the recommendations in the strategic memo.

Appendix A: Research Methods

To arrive at the recommendations described in the strategic memo, FrameWorks conducted two online survey experiments to test the effectiveness of frames on public understanding, attitudes and support for policy. These experiments were conducted in September and November 2020 and included 4,750 and 1,750 respondents, respectively, for a total of 6,500 respondents. The respondents were UK residents matched to national quotas for age, gender, household income, education level, race/ethnicity and political party identification. See below for more information about the sample composition.

In each experiment, respondents were randomly assigned to a treatment or control condition. Those assigned to a control condition received descriptive information about a fictional policy proposal (the 'Social Housing Bill').¹ Those assigned to treatment conditions received identical information about the same proposal but framed with a particular frame element (for example, 'this issue is about' frames or different types of explanations or metaphors). The name of the initiative was also changed to enhance or strengthen the frame.

After reading the message, all respondents were asked an identical series of questions designed to measure knowledge, attitudes and policy preferences related to social housing. Questions were Likert-type items with five- or seven-point scales, yes/no questions or open-ended questions requiring free-text answers that were presented in a random order. For analysis, responses to these questions were aggregated to a set of composite measures, or 'batteries'. Example questions are shown in Appendix C.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine whether there were significant differences in responses to questions between the treatment group and the control group. To ensure that any observed effects were driven by the frames rather than demographic

variations in the sample, all regressions controlled for the demographics mentioned above. A threshold of $p < 0.05$ was used to determine whether treatments had any significant effects. Significant differences were understood as evidence of a frame effect an effect of the frame on the particular outcome (for example, policy support, attitudes around the issues, understandings about the issue).

Appendix B: Sample Composition

Demographics	% of sample (n=6,500)
Age	
– 18–29	– 9%
– 30–44	– 27%
– 45–59	– 30%
– 60+	– 35%
Gender	
– Female	– 51%
– Male	– 49%
– Non-binary/other	– <1%
Household Income	
– Less than £15,600	– 16%
– £15,600–£31,200	– 34%
– £31,201–£46,800	– 23%
– £46,801 or more	– 27%
Education level	
– No formal qualifications	– 6%
– GCSEs or equivalent (for example, O-Levels)	– 31%
– A-Level, Apprenticeship, or equivalent	– 28%
– Undergraduate or graduate degree	– 35%

Appendix B: Sample Composition (cont.)

Demographics	% of sample (n=6,500)
Race/Ethnicity	
– White	– 93%
– Asian/Asian British	– 4%
– Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	– 1%
– Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/Other	– 2%
Political party identification	
– Conservative	– 41%
– Labour	– 33%
– Liberal Democrat	– 7%
– Scottish National Party	– 4%
– Other (for example, Green Party, Plaid Cymru)	– 15%

Appendix C: Desired communications outcomes: knowledge, attitudes and policy support

Below is a list of sample questions used in the survey experiment, along with the distribution of participants' responses at baseline (that is, for those participants in the control condition who were not exposed to a framed message).²

Scales	Sample Question	Response at baseline
Support for policy	How much do you favour or oppose the Social Housing Bill?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strongly oppose: 4% – Oppose: 6% – Somewhat oppose: 6% – Neither favour nor oppose: 12% – Somewhat favour: 29% – Favour: 24% – Strongly favour: 19%

Appendix C: Desired communications outcomes: knowledge, attitudes and policy support (cont.)

Scales	Sample Question	Response at baseline
Understanding of the effects of building new social housing	How much of an effect do you think the Social Housing Bill would have on rates of poverty in the United Kingdom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No effect: 9% – A small effect: 23% – A moderate effect: 39% – A large effect: 22% – A very large effect: 7%
Attitudes and perceptions of social housing	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'Living in social housing is a good place to raise a child'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strongly disagree: 2% – Disagree: 6% – Somewhat disagree: 6% – Neither disagree nor agree: 32% – Somewhat agree: 24% – Agree: 20% – Strongly agree: 10%
Collective efficacy	How much do you think the UK government can do to make good homes affordable for everyone?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nothing at all: 1% – A very small amount: 4% – A small amount: 12% – A moderate amount: 30% – A large amount: 22% – A very large amount: 16% – An extremely large amount: 15%
Collective responsibility	In your view, how much of a responsibility does our society have to ensure that good homes are affordable for everyone?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No responsibility at all: 3% – A very small responsibility: 5% – A small responsibility: 8% – A moderate responsibility: 24% – A large responsibility: 27% – A very large responsibility: 19% – An extremely large responsibility: 14%

Appendix C: Desired communications outcomes: knowledge, attitudes and policy support (cont.)

Scales	Sample Question	Response at baseline
Saliency	How important do you think it is to build more social housing across the United Kingdom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Not at all important: 4% – Slightly important: 12% – Moderately important: 29% – Very important: 31% – Extremely important: 24%

Appendix D: Frames Tested

1. Base Message (Control Condition)

The Social Housing Bill will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

2. Issue Frame Condition: Poverty

By Building More Social Housing, We Can Reduce Poverty

Building new social housing helps address poverty. Millions of people in the United Kingdom live in poverty, and given the high cost of housing, these numbers will continue to rise. When people don't have secure and quality housing that they can pay for on their income, they can easily fall into poverty. The Covid-19 pandemic has made living in poverty even worse. Over the past few months, increasing unemployment, wage cuts and illness have pulled many more people into poverty. Having housing that can be paid for on one's income means that people can get through difficult times without having to struggle with poverty. By building more social housing, we can help keep everyone out of poverty.

That's why the government needs to pass the Addressing Poverty Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

By building more social housing, we can ensure that people across the United Kingdom will have what they need to stay out of poverty – now and after the Covid-19 pandemic has ended.

3. Issue Frame Condition: Economy

By Building More Social Housing, We Can Strengthen the Economy

Building new social housing helps strengthen the economy. Millions of people in the United Kingdom struggle to pay rent due to the high cost of housing. When people don't have secure and quality housing that they can pay for on their income, they're less likely to spend money, which slows the economy. The Covid-19 pandemic has put our economy under even more strain. Over the past few months, increasing unemployment, wage cuts and illness have meant that fewer people are in the workforce and able to contribute to the economy. One way to make the economy stronger is to build new social housing. This would not only create new jobs in construction but would also let tenants spend less money on rent, making them more likely to put money into the economy. And they'd have more income to pursue further education and training, which would set them up to contribute to the economy in the future. By building more social housing, we can make sure our economy does well.

That's why the government needs to pass the Strengthening the Economy Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

By building more social housing, we can ensure that the UK economy will be stronger – now and after the Covid-19 pandemic has ended.

4. Issue Frame Condition: Homelessness

By Building More Social Housing, We Can Reduce Homelessness

Building new social housing helps address the issue of homelessness. Millions of people in the United Kingdom struggle to pay rent due to the high cost of housing. This leads to high rates of homelessness. When people don't have secure and quality housing that they can pay for on their income, it puts them on the edge of homelessness. The Covid-19 pandemic has made homelessness worse. Over the past few months, increasing unemployment, wage cuts and illness have caused many people to lose their homes. Having stable, quality housing means that people can get through difficult times without falling into homelessness. By building more social housing, we can reduce homelessness.

That's why the government needs to pass the Addressing Homelessness Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit

the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

By building more social housing, we can ensure that more people across the United Kingdom will be kept out of homelessness – now and after the Covid-19 pandemic has ended.

5. Issue Frame Condition: Health

By Building More Social Housing, We Can Improve Our Country's Health

Building new social housing can make the country healthier. Millions of people in the United Kingdom struggle to pay rent due to the high cost of housing. When people don't have secure and quality housing that they can pay for on their income, it strains their health and wellbeing. The Covid-19 pandemic has made this problem worse. Over the past few months, increasing unemployment, wage cuts and illness have left people without stable, quality housing, which harms their health. Living in stable, quality housing can improve physical and mental health: People are under less stress, are less likely to catch illnesses due to dampness and cold and have resources for nutritious food and other expenses that support health and wellbeing. By building more social housing, we can improve health.

That's why the government needs to pass the Improving Health Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

By building more social housing, we can ensure that the United Kingdom will be healthier – now and after the Covid-19 pandemic has ended.

6. Metaphor Condition: Restricts and Restrains

Social Housing Can Loosen the Constraints of Poverty

Social housing can free people from the constraints of poverty. When people are trapped in poverty, it can be difficult to break free. Right now, the high cost of housing is part of what traps millions of people in poverty and makes it harder to get out. When people are forced to focus on immediate needs, like finding somewhere to live or paying rent, they are trapped: They lack freedom, and their opportunities are limited. Access to social housing helps free people from these constraints, allowing them to pursue opportunities and break out of poverty. To break the constraints that poverty places on people, we need a social housing system that is available to everyone.

That's why the government needs to pass the Freedom from Poverty Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

To break the bonds of poverty, people need to have the freedom to pursue opportunities and build their lives. Building more social housing would allow people to escape the constraints of poverty.

7. Metaphor Condition: Current

Social Housing Can Keep Us Out of the Current of Poverty

Social housing can keep people out of the current of poverty. When people are in the current of poverty, it can be difficult for them to keep their heads above water. Right now, the high cost of housing puts millions of people in danger of being swept into poverty. Without stable housing that they can keep, people can easily be pulled under if something difficult happens, like losing a job or needing to cope with a disability. Access to social housing helps keep people out of poverty and keeps them afloat during difficult times. To stop people from being pulled into poverty to begin with, we need a social housing system that is available to everyone.

That's why the government needs to pass the Stemming the Tide of Poverty Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

To stop people from being pulled into poverty, we need to keep people afloat during challenging times. Building more social housing would keep people out of the current of poverty.

8. Problem Condition: Affordability

In Order to Address Poverty, We Need to Make Housing More Affordable

Millions of people in the United Kingdom are living in poverty, and our housing system is only making that worse. The problem is that housing is so unaffordable; as a result, people can't pay rent. This means cutting back on other basic necessities like food and heating or going into debt. Going into debt can make it even harder to get out of poverty and can lead to homelessness.

Building new social housing addresses the problem of affordability. Social rent homes are more affordable and provide an alternative to renting from private landlords. Because rents are determined by local authorities and housing associations, they can be set at rates that people can genuinely afford – whatever their income. This means they won't be pushed deeper into poverty. When housing is affordable, people can get through difficult times without having to worry about where to live.

That's why the government needs to pass the Addressing Poverty through Affordable Housing Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

By building new social housing, we can make housing affordable and help address poverty.

9. Problem Condition: Stability

In Order to Address Poverty, We Need to Make Housing More Stable and Secure

Millions of people in the United Kingdom are living in poverty, and our housing system is only making that worse. The problem is that people's living situations aren't secure, and many people pay high rents to private landlords. If they can't pay their rent, they can easily be evicted, which creates a lot of instability in their lives. Having to find somewhere new to live means that people may have to leave their job or school and move far away from networks of social support. This means they are likely to face added stressor get into debt – or they may even become homeless.

Building new social housing address the issue of housing instability. Social rent homes provide more stability in people's lives and are an alternative to renting from private landlords. Because people in social rent homes have more secure tenancies, they have much greater protection against eviction and better rights than those renting privately. This means they won't be pushed deeper into poverty. When housing is stable, people can get through difficult times without having to worry about where to live.

That's why the government needs to pass the Addressing Poverty through Stable Housing Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

By building social housing, we can make housing more stable and help address poverty.

10. Problem Condition: Quality

To Help People Living in Poverty, We Need to Improve the Quality of Housing

Millions of people in the United Kingdom are living in poverty, and our housing system is only making that experience worse. At the moment, millions of people rent from private landlords, and those homes often fail to meet basic health and safety standards – they can be cramped, damp, mouldy and dangerous and can lack adequate heating.. This makes the experience of poverty even harder.

Building new social housing addresses the problem of poor housing quality and provides an alternative to renting from private landlords. Social rent homes are built to new, higher quality standards that ensure that homes are safe and healthy; they have kitchens and bathrooms in good working condition. Housing associations or local councils are also much more likely to carry out regular maintenance and repairs to keep the home in good order – protections that aren't available to people renting from private landlords. When housing meets quality standards, people living in poverty can have a home that is safe, warm and secure and that doesn't add to their problems by harming their health and wellbeing.

That's why the government needs to pass the Addressing Poverty through Quality Housing Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

By building social housing, we can make sure that people have better quality housing and help people living in poverty.

11. Tone Condition: Solution Only

According to a recent survey, more than 8 million people across the United Kingdom are unable to find secure or suitable housing that they can pay for with their incomes. The lack of secure and stable housing means low levels of home ownership, millions of families stuck renting from private landlords and rising rates of homelessness.

That is why the government needs to pass the Social Housing Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

12. Tone Condition: Solution + Crisis

A Housing Crisis is Raging Across the UK – and it’s Getting Worse

Right now, we’re facing a national housing emergency. According to a recent survey, a staggering eight million people across the United Kingdom are struggling to find secure or suitable housing that they can pay for with their incomes. The lack of secure and stable housing means that home ownership is slipping out of reach, millions of families are stuck renting from private landlords and homelessness is rising. This is a national emergency: If we don’t act now, it will be too late, and the consequences will be catastrophic.

That is why the government needs to pass the Housing Crisis Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

The housing crisis is threatening our country. We need to address this national emergency, or we will suffer disastrous consequences.

13. Tone Condition: Solution + Efficacy

We Can Improve Access to Housing in the UK by Acting Now

By taking action, we can reduce the shortage of housing in the United Kingdom and improve people’s lives. According to a recent survey, more than eight million people across the United Kingdom are unable to find secure or suitable housing that they can pay for with their incomes. The lack of secure and stable housing means less home ownership, millions of families stuck renting from private landlords and rising homelessness. This affects people’s quality of life, their opportunities and their financial security.

The good news is that this is a problem we can solve. Housing shortages are not inevitable, and it’s within our ability as a country to address it.

That is why the government needs to pass the Addressing Housing Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

By taking these simple, practical steps, we can reduce the shortage of housing and improve people’s lives.

14. Beneficiary Condition: Universal

Social Housing is There for All of Us

Every one of us relies on public services and support systems. No one is successful on their own. Everyone's success relies on having publicly-funded services – like the NHS, education and emergency services – and we use these services all the time. Having these sorts of public services and supports means we have help in times of need, and this allows us to live our lives without fear of hardship.

Social housing is one such type of support that is there for all of us should we need it. That's why the government needs to pass the Social Housing for All Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

Our public services are there for all of us. That's why we need to invest in social housing.

15. Beneficiary Condition: Targeted

Social Housing is There for Those Who Need It

People who are struggling often rely on public services and support systems, which help them get through challenging circumstances, such as poverty. These publicly funded services – like housing benefits, jobseekers' allowances and programmes that provide job and skills training – are there for people during hard times, which allows them to plan their lives without living in fear of hardship.

Social housing is one such benefit that enables people to get out of poverty. That's why the government needs to pass the Social Housing for Those in Need Bill, which will invest £14 billion a year over 10 years to build more social rent homes. The bill will commit the government to building 90,000 social rent homes per year over the next decade. These homes will have rents that are based on the average income of people living in the local community rather than the market rate.

We need to help the least well off among us. That's why we need to invest in social housing.

Appendix E: Evidence Supporting Recommendations

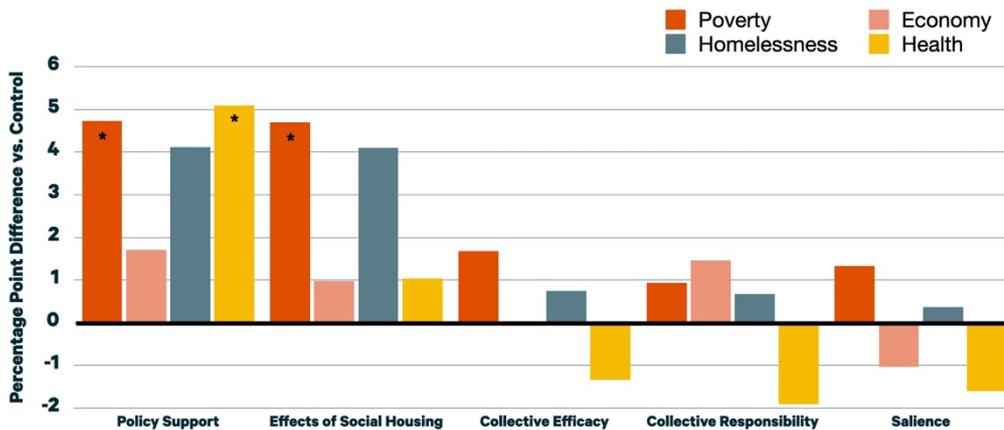
The data and evidence supporting each of the recommendations in the memo is provided below.

Recommendation #1. Connect social housing to poverty *and* Recommendation #4. Explain how social housing can improve the nation’s health and wellbeing.

Issue frames establish what a topic is actually 'about'. For example, one could say that social housing is, at its core, about poverty. Alternatively, social housing could be considered first and foremost about supporting our economy or improving our country’s health. Experts recognise that there are many dimensions to this issue. But in public discourse, one dimension of a topic – also known as an issue frame – is frequently invoked. Framing research shows that foregrounding particular issue frames can dramatically affect public thinking and policy support.

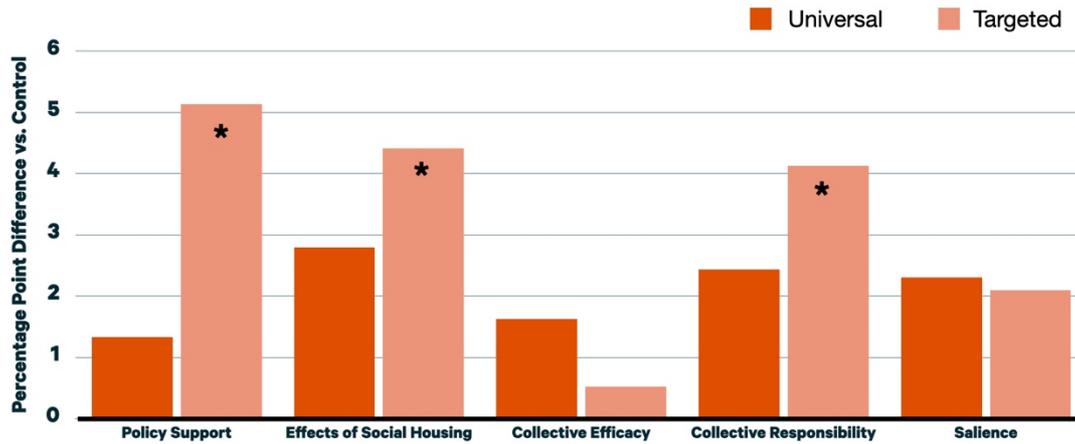
To that end, we tested four issue frames designed to speak about social housing in terms of either *poverty*, the *economy*, *health*, or *homelessness*. As shown below, the *poverty* and *health* issue frames were effective in increasing people’s support for policies to build new social housing. The *poverty* frame also helped people understand the effects of building new social housing (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Recommendation #1 and #4



In a separate experiment, we tested two separate frames designed to speak about social housing as *either* a public service and support designed for all members of society (a *universal* frame) or as a resource available for people in hard times (a *targeted* frame). The *targeted* frame was more effective, leading to statistically significant increases in people’s support for policies to build new social housing, their understanding of the effects of new social housing and collective responsibility (Figure 2). This, like the *poverty* issue frame described above, underscores the value for framing social housing in terms of addressing poverty and hardship, rather than as a resource that benefits everyone.

Figure 2: Recommendation #1 and #4

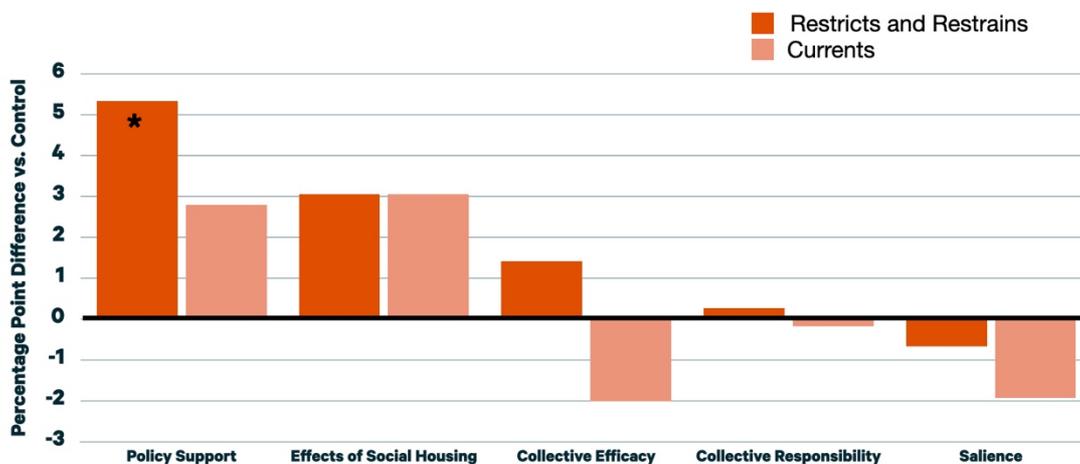


Recommendation #2. Explain how social housing helps release poverty’s grip.

Explanatory metaphors are linguistic devices that help people think and talk about a complex concept in new ways. By comparing an abstract or unfamiliar idea to something concrete and familiar, explanatory metaphors can make information easier to understand – and can have a particular power to change the way a topic is understood.

We tested two explanatory metaphors that have been used by poverty campaigners for a number of years: a *restricts and restrains* metaphor (which explains how social housing can free people from the constraints of poverty) and a *currents* metaphor (which explains how social housing can keep people afloat during difficult times). These were adapted specifically to talk about the ways in which social housing can provide people living in poverty with choices and control. As shown in Figure 3, the *restricts and restrains* metaphor was effective, increasing people’s support for policies to build new social housing:

Figure 3: Recommendation #2

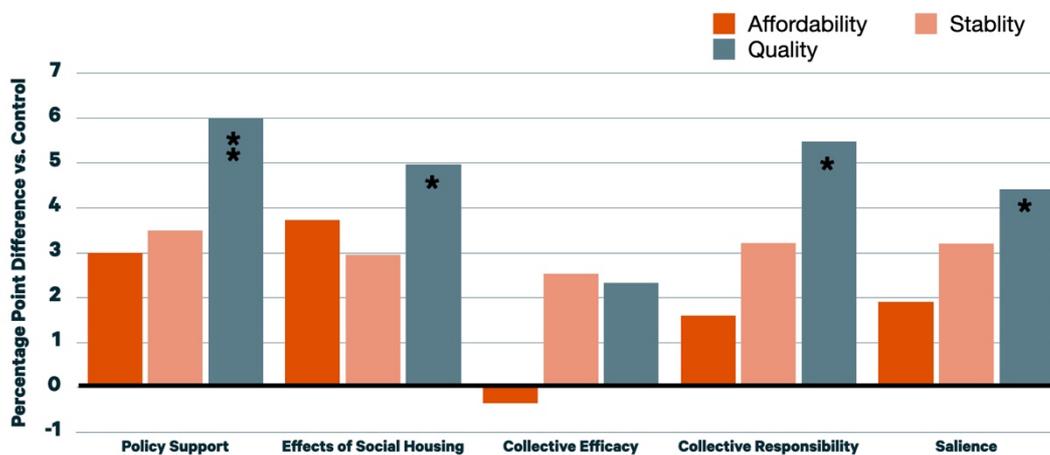


Recommendation #3. Connect the experience of poverty to the quality of housing.

In the survey experiment, we tested a set of frames designed to foreground different challenges with the private rented market that social housing could help address: affordability of housing, stability of housing, and housing quality.

The *housing quality* frame was most effective, resulting in statistically significant increases in people’s support for policies to build new social housing, their understanding of the effects of building new social housing, their positive attitudes about social housing, their sense of collective responsibility for addressing housing issues and their understanding that social housing is a priority, salient issue for the country (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Recommendation #3



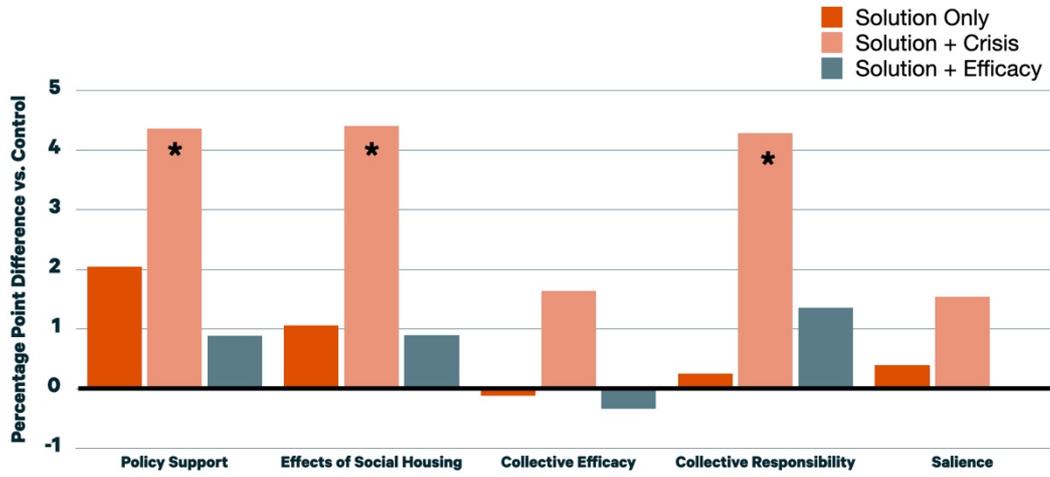
Recommendation #5. Embed specific policy solutions in communications about the housing crisis.

In the experiment, we tested three alternative ways of speaking about social housing policy. The first condition (*Solution Only*) simply proposed a policy proposal to build new social housing. The second condition (*Solution + Crisis*) took this same policy proposal and framed it as a solution to our housing 'crisis' – in other words, calling attention to the idea that lack of housing is an emergency with potentially dire consequences for our society. The third condition (*Solution + Efficacy*) again took this policy proposal but adopted an efficacious tone, describing the ways in which housing shortages are not inevitable and can be addressed through government action.

The results showed that the *Solution + Crisis* message – which pairs specific policy solutions with discussions about the housing crisis – was highly effective. This message led to

statistically significant increases in policy support, understanding of the effects of social housing and collective responsibility.

Figure 5: Recommendation #5



Endnotes

- 1 To ensure that participants were operating with a common understanding of 'social housing' or 'social rent homes', the following definition was provided to them before they read about the fictional policy proposal: The terms 'social housing' or social rent homes' refer to homes that are owned, let or managed by housing associations or local councils. They are typically let at lower rents than homes rented from private landlords.
- 2 These data show responses for the 241 participants who were in the control group for the first wave of the survey.

About FrameWorks

The FrameWorks Institute is a nonprofit think tank that advances the mission-driven sector's capacity to frame the public discourse about social and scientific issues. The organization's signature approach, Strategic Frame Analysis[®], offers empirical guidance on what to say, how to say it, and what to leave unsaid. FrameWorks designs, conducts, and publishes multi-method, multi-disciplinary framing research to prepare experts and advocates to expand their constituencies, to build public will, and to further public understanding. To make sure this research drives social change, FrameWorks supports partners in reframing, through strategic consultation, campaign design, FrameChecks[®], toolkits, online courses, and in-depth learning engagements known as FrameLabs. In 2015, FrameWorks was named one of nine organizations worldwide to receive the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions.

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