



Crisis Framing Homelessness Project | Public Attitudes Tracking Summary findings and framing recommendations

Background

To end homelessness for good, a powerful new story must replace old notions of poor choices and inevitability. The Crisis Framing Homelessness Project was established in July 2019 and is funded jointly by Crisis and Comic Relief until 2024. The project represents the next stage of a major initiative to bring about a fundamental shift in the way homelessness is talked about across the UK.

Delivered in collaboration with the FrameWorks Institute, the first two phases of this work laid the foundation through in-depth research to understand what the public really thinks about homelessness and set out how communicators, campaigners, and experts can shift their communications on homelessness to help build public understanding, support, and commitment to end homelessness. This next stage of the Framing Homelessness Project will focus on supporting and encouraging the approaches needed to create joined-up strategic communications in collaboration with the homelessness sector across policy, campaigns, media, marketing, and fundraising work.

A key part of the project's work is tracking the UK public's attitudes towards homelessness over the next four years – starting in October 2020 until September 2023. Crisis has appointed Consumer Insight to deliver this work with us. This note summarises the key findings and framing recommendations from the first survey wave in October 2020.

Methodology

This research takes a quantitative, dip-based survey approach. We will survey 800 people in the UK, bi-annually, over the next 4 years. The content of the survey itself remains broadly the same in each dip, to enable comparisons in response over time.

The survey is conducted online and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. We run this survey as two waves per year, in April and October. The first wave took place in October 2020.

The sample is nationally representative of the UK population of adults, 18+ years. We exclude anyone who took part in the same survey within the previous 12 months. We ask 800 people per dip, which means we have a robust base size and can look at the results by demographic quotas, such as region, gender, and age. Ci are responsible for the data processing, analysis, and reporting to Crisis.

Five big take-aways and framing recommendations

- 1. People see homelessness as common, serious, and important to reduce. But as a priority to solve, it's lagging behind other causes. Use tested values and talk about solutions to frame messages on the urgency and the scale of the problem. This approach, rather than emphasising scale and urgency alone, will drive emotional connection and collective responsibility for ending homelessness, and avoid fuelling fatalism.**
- 2. The view of 'homelessness as rough sleeping' remains present and strong. But we can build on the different forms of homelessness that are coming through, and growing in recognition, in public thinking. In our communications we can keep working to show different forms of homelessness and the different groups of people affected.**
- 3. Individual behaviours and choices are top of mind amongst the causes of homelessness. But structural causes are there in public thinking to be reinforced. Keeping working to bring structural causes into stories about homelessness – show how they affect people's lives, limiting options and pushing them into homelessness, by using our tested constant pressure metaphor.**
- 4. While there remains a sense of fatalism around ending homelessness, there are greater levels of optimism that we can reinforce in our communications. Help close the 'belief gap' around preventing and ending homelessness by telling complete stories with causes and solutions – and be *confident* in the solutions we know will end homelessness for good.**
- 5. Long-term housing and prevention services rank highly in public perceptions as solutions to homelessness. Keep driving this belief by making sure structural solutions play a central role in your stories about homelessness. Show how they work upstream to prevent and end homelessness using our tested metaphors.**

Learn more about framing homelessness

If you would like to know more about the framing insights and strategies mentioned above, there are resources on the Crisis website to help you.

Visit our [Talking about homelessness hub](#) for a summary of FrameWorks research into framing homelessness, for an introduction video series, and for toolkits and guides to help you.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Crisis Framing Homelessness Project, please contact: catherine.ashford@crisis.org.uk