

Talking about Homes

Evaluation of Phase 1 Mobilisation: 2023-2024

By DHA Communications



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Executive Summary

The Talking about Homes project is a partnership between the Nationwide Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The project aims to mobilise the use of tested framing recommendations in communications to address negative and unhelpful mindsets about homes and housing. This is intended to lead to better public understanding and conversations about the solutions we need to increase the availability of decent and affordable homes.

A two-year research phase was undertaken by FrameWorks and completed in 2022, with support from a sector advisory group. Talking about Homes then began its mobilisation in partnership with FrameWorks by launching a toolkit in 2023. The project has engaged with organisations that talk about decent and affordable homes to their audiences.

The Talking about Homes project has worked in depth with a handful of key influential voices that advocate for the availability of more decent and affordable homes. These organisations received tailored support and training on campaigning and communications opportunities, and are referred to in this report as 'depth participants'. A larger number of organisations engaged at what the project referred to as 'breadth' level, whereby they were accessing the toolkit and other published resources, and attending webinars and speaking events. Some of the organisations that showed particular interest were also able to access some elements of the bespoke support.

DHA worked with Talking about Homes as a learning partner, developing a theory of change and an evaluation framework and programme. Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics were commissioned to jointly undertake a study looking at how the framing recommendations were used in practice by participants (participants are those organisations which directly took part whether deeply or only at breadth), and by others who had not directly participated in the project, but whose work appeared to align with the framing recommendations. DHA interviewed participants and stakeholders¹ in the project, and analysed a range of data on webinars and resources.

This evaluation uses six outcomes from the theory of change, organised under three research questions, to analyse what we have learnt about how the project has worked.

We wanted to know **what good use of frames in communications looks like in the field.**

There is strong evidence that depth participants in this project are using their frames across a wide range of formats, and are developing an understanding of which framing recommendations work well in particular formats. There are several examples of framing being used in significant communications moments and campaigns by depth participants, and there is evidence of framing by non-participants (by this we mean voices that we do not know if or how they know about the framing recommendations).

Project participants are broadly comfortable applying the frames, though some recommendations are used more often than others and there are areas in which framing practice could be further developed. There are lots of successful examples of framing.

¹Stakeholders include members of the project team and staff based at the co-funder organisations, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Nationwide Foundation.

Through this evaluation we wanted to understand **what helps or hinders organisations to make good use of the frames, and to normalise this use so that it is sustainable**. We found that organisations engage with framing in a variety of ways, and that organisational context is key to the way they engage with, and seek to, normalise framing. Larger organisations have needed to develop internal champions to engage with framing and support the spread of framing knowledge and practice across their organisations, particularly where parts of organisations are harder to reach than others. The perceived robustness of framing as a practice, underpinned by the FrameWorks research, and the bespoke and responsive elements offered by the project has helped organisations to engage, develop their practice and feel supported in using the framing.

Participants have enjoyed engaging with their peers from other organisations through the project. Activities that focus on tangible policy areas and offer in-person engagement have been particularly valuable in enabling participants to share their framing challenges and practice, though capacity and location have limited some participants' involvement. The project sought engagement with the wider sector via membership organisations and this has been a successful route to reaching parts of the sector.

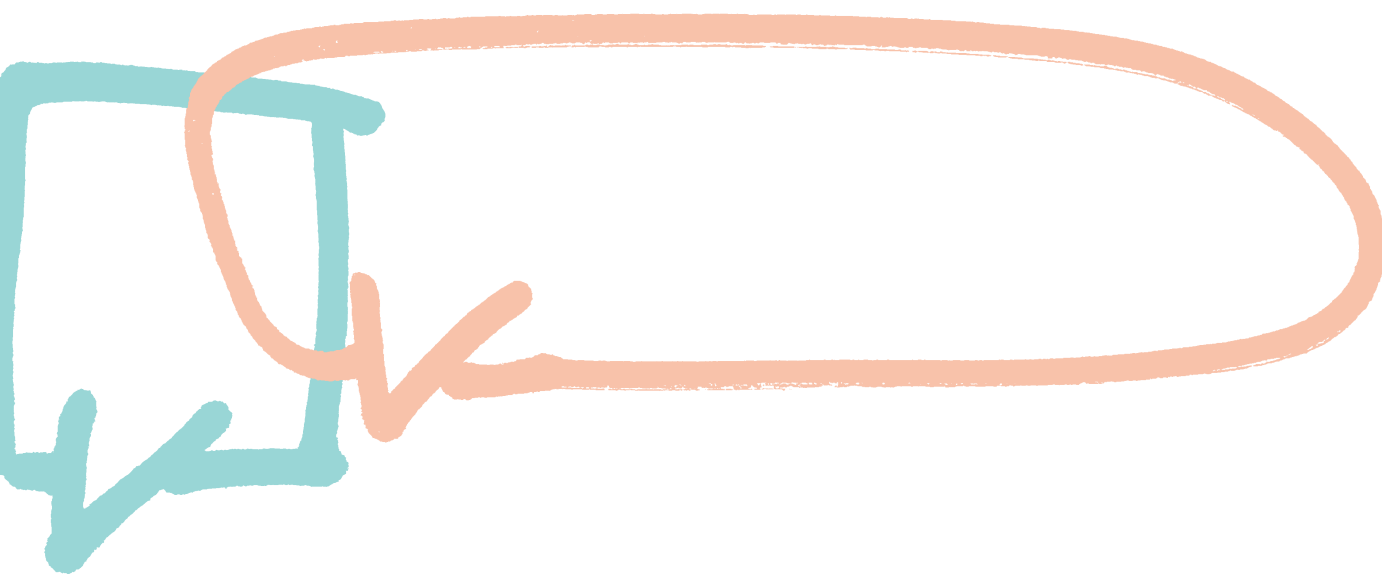
The key resources of the toolkit and webinar are recognised as high quality and accessible. These resources have enabled some breadth participants to apply framing in their own communications. We can see that the project and its resources have been referenced and advertised by other voices in the sector, and that this has helped to build awareness of the project and give it credibility.

Finally, we wanted to know **what participants' perceptions were of the impact of their use of the frames on policy discourse**. Participants, both depth and breadth, feel that framing helps them communicate better, and there is some limited evidence (due to the way in which we can collect data) of audiences responding well to framed material. Framing gives participants confidence that they are addressing key issues of understanding and perception about homes and housing, which they feel it is crucial to do in order to achieve real change. We can see significant engagement from different parts of the housing sector in framing, and this suggests the existence of many other organisations and voices who may already be framing, or be interested in framing.



Beyond these outcomes, the evaluation resulted in four additional, cross-cutting learning points:

1	Organisational circumstances were a key factor in framing practice , so the level of engagement set against the project's expectations varied. On the whole, the project saw more organisations go further than expected; including some organisations that, just by accessing the toolkit and webinars, were able to frame confidently.
2	The partnership between the Nationwide Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Foundation has been very important to the way in which the sector perceives the project. It has given the project a sense of credibility and robustness, and been seen as a generous and facilitative offer to the sector from two organisations which are viewed as being supportive, rather than competitive, with the rest of the sector.
3	There is a shared view in the sector that perceptions of homes and housing held by policy-makers, politicians and the public need to be addressed in order for policy and practical change to be achieved. This has been a motivation for many organisations to use the framing recommendations and engage with the Talking about Homes project. Many organisations believe that there is a growing public consensus that there is a housing crisis, but also that there is no common understanding of the reasons for it, or the potential and best solutions. Framing is seen as one of the tools that can help to address this.
4	Participants in the project recognise that framing is a practice. They recognise that they need to work at framing, and think about how to embed it within their organisations and refresh their practice. They also understand that framing takes place in a wider context, and that as policy discourse changes or new issues are introduced, so the framing guidance may need to be extended or practice may need to adapt.



This report covers the first two years of the mobilisation (2023-24), with the project continuing and planned to conclude in 2027. At the end of this first mobilisation phase of the project, it is important to think about what we have learnt, and what this means for the second phase of the mobilisation. We asked participants to tell us what they thought they needed in order to continue framing, and we have looked over the wider learning from the project to identify some key opportunities. The following areas should be key considerations for the next phase of this project:

Things to be continued

- Training to be available for new staff in relevant organisations, and for those organisations which are new to framing.
- Ongoing support and training opportunities to refresh and deepen the practice of staff who have already engaged with the project.
- High quality, bespoke support to key organisations so they can capably frame their campaigns and messages.
- Light-touch opportunities for practitioners of framing to engage with peers e.g. spaces are facilitated in which organisations feel comfortable to talk about their framing practice and any challenges they face.

Things to be extended or refreshed

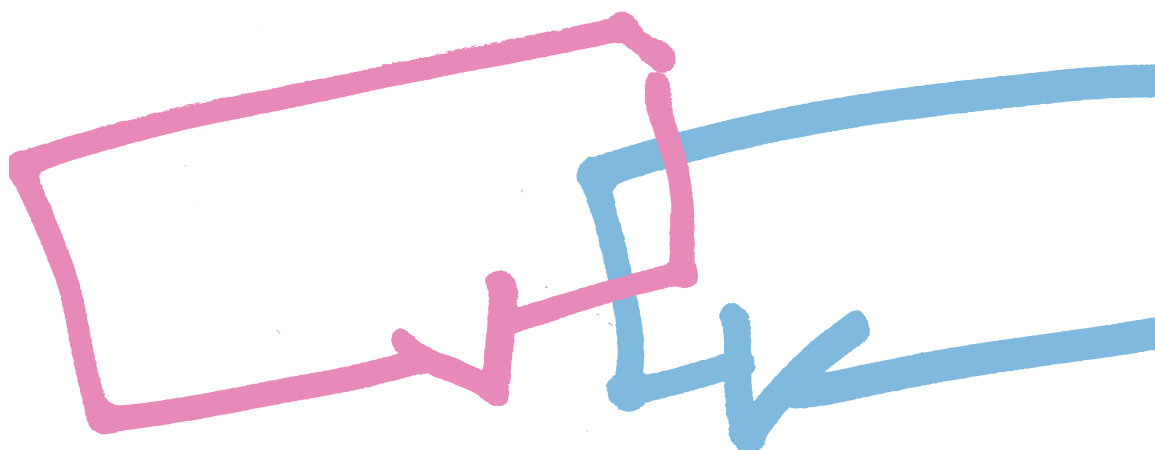
- Consider how the project helps to make the case for narrative change, including making it easier for individuals and organisations to make the case for framing to internal and external stakeholders.
- Showcasing and celebrating real-life examples of framing as part of the resources.
- Expanding the mobilisation of the framing recommendations to explaining key policy areas that intersect with housing and homes, which may attract new relevant audiences.

Things to be further explored

- Extend the project's reach amongst stakeholder groups, including local authorities and housing associations.
- Intervening where key opportunities in the policy discourse occur to maximise the opportunity to spread and embed framing, e.g. around election periods.
- Explore supporting collective cross-organisational voices to frame their shared messages and utilise the project's convening role in these housing ecosystems.

Things that the sector needs to do

- Organisations wanting to become or to remain capable framers recognise they have an ongoing responsibility to do the internal work of embedding framing.



1

Introduction



1. Introduction

The Talking about Homes project is a partnership between the Nationwide Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It began in 2020 with these co-funders commissioning research from FrameWorks to identify and explore the mindsets held by the public that present challenges and issues when communicating about the importance of decent and affordable homes.² FrameWorks then tested ways in which framing could be used to shift mindsets.³ Supporting this research phase was an advisory group of stakeholders, including organisations that regularly seek to influence and engage in the policy discourse about homes and housing.

The project moved into a 'mobilisation' phase in early 2023, working with FrameWorks. Outputs included publishing a toolkit⁴ and undertaking webinars, training sessions and a range of bespoke support activities, to encourage and enable organisations who talk about homes to use the evidence-based framing recommendations in their own communications.

In May 2023 DHA was appointed as the learning partner for the Talking about Homes project. The role of the learning partner was to support the project, its key staff and the co-funders to:

- Refine their thinking and planning for the project, including developing a detailed theory of change.
- Develop an evaluation framework and approach for the project.
- Use the learning from the evaluation, and other reflective approaches, to inform and guide the project as it progresses.
- Provide a final, summative evaluation of this phase of the project.
- Support future thinking and planning for the next phase.

At the time the evaluation began, the project mobilisation was due to finish in January 2025. It has now been extended by the funders and will conclude in July 2027. This report is, therefore, the evaluation of the first mobilisation phase of the project, and includes data gathered up to 2nd December 2024.

The report introduces key elements from the theory of change, and outlines the main methodologies used to gather and analyse learning. The report brings together a range of data, examining it against the outcomes and destinations established in the theory of change to understand the degree to which the project progressed as anticipated. In the conclusions, we offer a final summation of the key learning, and some thoughts for the next phase of the project.

² Which is captured in a strategic brief, published by FrameWorks in May 2021 and available here: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/housing/communicating-about-housing-in-the-uk-obstacles-openings-and-emerging-recommendations>

³ Reflected in the follow-up brief, published by FrameWorks in November 2022, setting out the full research and recommendations, available here: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/housing/talking-about-homes-the-foundation-for-a-decent-life>

⁴ Written by FrameWorks and available here: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/housing/a-framing-toolkit-how-to-talk-about-homes>

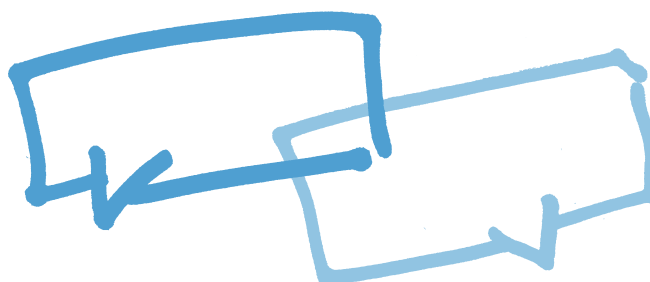
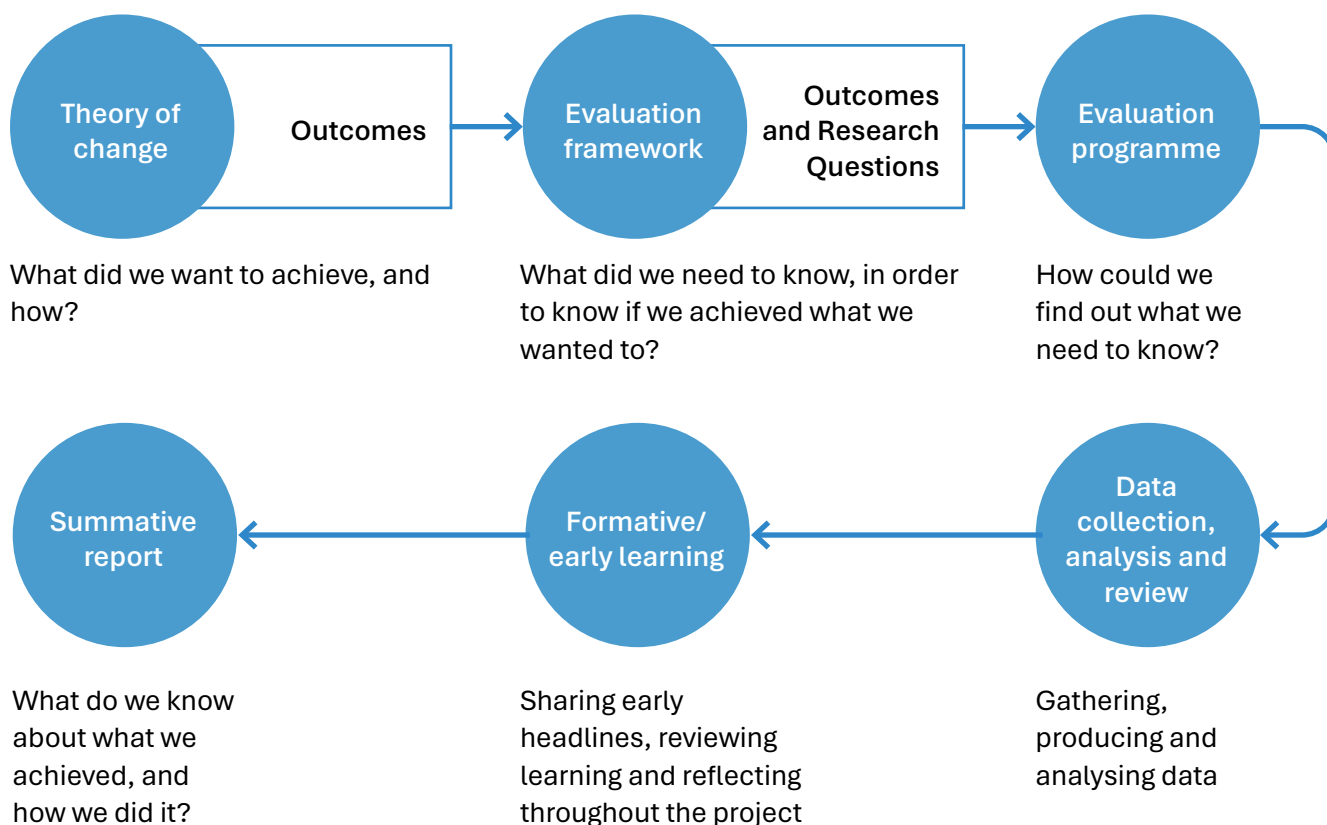


2

Learning partner methodology

2. Learning partner methodology

The learning partner process is set out in the diagram below. Our first key activity was to collaboratively develop a theory of change, which in turn provided the basis for developing an evaluation framework. Working with the project's funders and with FrameWorks, and particularly with the project lead, we have addressed key questions throughout the process.



2.1 Theory of Change

The theory of change process involved key members of the project team, including FrameWorks and staff from both co-funders, in developing an articulation of the project. The approach used for this project included an emphasis on the attitudes and behaviours that are at the heart of what the Talking about Homes project sought to achieve. The project asserts that participant behaviours – in this case, how they communicate - must shift if long-term, sustainable change is to be made in public discourse around decent, affordable homes and, ultimately, improve the wider conditions that allow for better policy and provision. This requires a planned and purposeful approach to behaviour change that is designed into project planning and activities.

This approach to a theory of change emerges from systems thinking in that it sees different components of a system – in this case the system that influences public discourse on decent, affordable homes – as interacting in often complex ways to produce outcomes, either positive or otherwise. These interactions govern the discourse – how people and institutions talk, think and act. If Talking about Homes can describe the most transformative roles that different participants could be playing to reach the project goal, it becomes easier to both see and influence how those roles are being played.

In the development of a theory of change, we went through the following steps:

Step One: Clarifying our destination

The first step in developing a theory of change was to articulate a clear goal that is both ambitious yet achievable within the lifecycle of the project itself. This provides a destination to which desired behaviours and the actions of the project can focus.

Step Two: Stakeholder mapping

Systems can be complex; so this step assessed those who are talking about the need for more decent and affordable housing, the key influencers and actors, and space in which this project seeks to intervene to explore opportunities and relationships.

Step Three: Assessing preconditions

The third step was to discuss and list the important and necessary preconditions for this change taking place. The key question to answer in this step is what are key participants doing if the goal (our destination) is being achieved? This enabled us to develop a series of outcome statements for key participants in the project.

Step Four: Identifying barriers and enablers

Step four took us from where we want to be to where we are now, to begin the process of thinking about routes to change. We used the project team's knowledge and insights into how organisations currently operate, and the context they operate in, in order to identify and explore what the barriers to and enablers for changed behaviour are. This helps to identify early-stage actions.

Step Five: Plotting trajectories of change

With the destination and desired behaviours defined, and a strong sense of where we are now (broad end and start points for our change theory), this step connected the two and defined routes to change. For each stakeholder, the project team explored what they would EXPECT to see; what they would LIKE to see and what they would LOVE to see in terms of stakeholder behaviour change over the programme period. This exercise helped to identify a near-term, project end, and longer-term sustainable progress markers.

Step Six: Action planning and evaluation

This step enabled Talking about Homes to reflect on the actions it took, and to make changes. It also began the process of identifying observable changes, indicators, or areas of enquiry for the learning partner to capture as the project progresses, and effectively led into the development of the evaluation framework and programme. Evidence was gathered and produced between the commencement of the mobilisation phase and 2nd December 2024.

2.2 Our evaluation approach

The evaluation, therefore, sits as the sixth step in the theory of change. Two earlier elements of the theory of change have been particularly important to the evaluation framework: the destination statement, and the outcomes statements developed as pre-conditions to achieving the destination. These formed the basis for the evaluation framework. Overlaid across these were three research questions, allowing the evaluation to take in some broader questions about how and why things happened in the project.

The destination statement, outcome statements and key indicators for the evaluation are laid out, under the research questions, in section 3 of this report.

Using this framework, we then worked with the project team to develop a number of ways to collect, produce, and analyse data. This primarily includes the following:

1. The commissioned **evaluation of frames in practice**, undertaken by Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics, which looks at a sample of output from project participants and some wider sources, and examines how framing is used in that sample. This sample reflects communications from the period when mobilisation began up to May 2024.
2. **A series of in-depth interviews with project participants**, undertaken by DHA in two waves, with a smaller series in summer 2023 informing the theory of change, and a larger series in summer/autumn 2024 informing the evaluation.
3. **A range of data** collected through webinar and event registrations, and relating to the accessing and downloading of resources/materials.
4. **Reflection and reviewing** was ongoing with the project lead, and was carried out at key moments with wider colleagues in Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Nationwide Foundation and FrameWorks.

2.3 The importance of evaluating framing interventions

We evaluate because we want to know whether the Talking about Homes project has achieved what it set out to do, and because we want to know what made a difference to it achieving, or not achieving, its aims. We publish this report on Talking about Homes because we hope that this evaluation will add not only to our understanding, but to others' understanding of this growing area of practice and intervention.

For background context, we have also taken a step back and looked at the wider landscape of this type of narrative change intervention, and what we know about what works in this kind of intervention. Framing, as a practice to achieve narrative change, is becoming more known and understood. The Talking about Homes project builds on Joseph Rowntree Foundation's experience with the Talking about Poverty project, which also used framing to seek change in the discourse about poverty. Participants in the Talking about Homes project have, in some cases, also experienced other framing projects, including Framing Homelessness, which is led by Crisis, and How to talk about the building blocks of health, which is led by the Health Foundation.

Despite the range of framing work taking place, there is a limited amount of learning and evaluation from projects available in the public domain. The majority of this learning and evaluation reflects on the immediate 'mobilisation' stages of a project, when learning practices are being shared with key participants in a discourse. We were able to identify the following examples:

- Joseph Rowntree Foundation shared lessons learnt from the Talking about Poverty project (Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Rights Evaluation Studio, 2023).
- Each and Every Child is an ongoing project in Scotland that seeks to change public perceptions of the care system, and children, young people and families who have experience of care. An evaluation was carried out following the early stages of mobilisation, in which framing practices were shared with three 'early adopter' organisations and information through work with people with lived experience of care (The Lines Between, 2003).
- A journal article which provides some reflections on the Health Foundation's framing project with FrameWorks, and examines the experience of embedding framing practices in a local authority setting (Such, Akakpo et al., 2023)
- Reflections and evidence from FrameWorks' work in the US on framing climate change (FrameWorks, 2019).

There are also organisations, like Heard, which supported the legacy of the Talking about Poverty project; and the Housing Narrative Lab, based in Washington DC, which is engaged on ongoing practice in this area.

Finally, at a broader level there is a useful review of learning about narrative change projects and practices in a study conducted by Heard with Shelley Dorrans, which recognises that narrative change is a broad and complicated area, involving many different and often disparate academic disciplines, and being engaged in by actors from many sectors and different positions and motivations. The review also explores interviewees' experiences about how funding for narrative change works, and whether the resources and thinking are there to support long-term work in this area (Heard and Dorrans, 2022).

This range of learning is valuable, but it is worth noting how recent much of it is, and the degree to which much of the evaluation and learning from interventions reflects the early (or sometimes very early) stages of those interventions (as this evaluation does). Therefore this work is often quite disparate, as Heard and Dorrans' review reveals, and it is nascent.

The background is a solid teal color. A large, hand-drawn white number '3' is positioned in the upper left. A white rectangular box with a slightly irregular, hand-drawn border is centered on the page. Inside the box, the text 'Aims and activities of the project' is written in white. Below the box, a large white checkmark is drawn. In the bottom right corner, there is a white oval shape with a checkmark inside it.

3

Aims and activities of the project

3. Aims and activities of the project

3.1 What the project aimed to achieve

The project destination – developed as part of the theory of change – for Talking about Homes was:

Frames are adopted, normalised and used by voices that are pushing for change

This destination is underpinned by a set of outcome statements, also developed as part of the theory of change. When thinking about our evaluation, we used these outcomes as a framework to identify what we needed to know in order to understand if the project has made progress (and by how much) towards this destination. In addition, we identified three overarching research questions for the evaluation. These enabled us to have a broader framework within which we could produce and analyse evidence against theory of change outcome statements. It also allowed us to pay attention to the approaches used in the project and explore other areas of learning.

Talking about Homes is a project seeking to support and provide infrastructure for narrative change; however, the scale and duration of this project means that we do not expect it to have visible impact on wider public perceptions within this timeframe. Our research questions – and the outcome statements from the theory of change – reflect this understanding of what we can reasonably expect to happen, and observe, within the period of the project. Thus, with Research Question 3 we expected only to begin to explore this question in a limited way.



Research Question 1

What does good use of the frames in communications look like in the field?

We wanted to learn if the framing recommendations were used and adopted by participants. Where they have used the framing, we wanted to know if it's been done effectively, consistently and frequently.

Outcome Statements	What do we want to know?
1. Depth participants are using the frames whenever they communicate about decent and affordable homes, including in key campaign narratives	• Are there types of communications where the frames are more/less used? - Do we know why? - Is framing practice widespread, or limited to particular departments?
2. Frames are used confidently, flexibly, and comfortably (i.e. the organisation has got the expertise it needs to use quality framing)	• How well are the frames being used – and what does ‘good’ usage look like? • How confident do organisations feel about using the frames, and does this apply to all staff using them? - What evidence or indications are there of framed communications gaining traction in the wider policy discourse?

Research Question 2

What helps or hinders organisations to make good use of the frames and to normalise this use so that it is sustainable?

We wanted to understand what support makes a difference and what challenges participants face when they want to use and embed framing.

Outcome Statements	What do we want to know?
3. Framing becomes normalised and part of the internal culture (i.e. narrative change is important to the organisation)	• How is framing practice shared and developed across the organisation? • What role does narrative change play in the organisation's strategic thinking?
4. Key advocates within organisations feel connected to their external peer network of others who are adopting the frames	• What is the effect of being connected to their peers? - How have they connected? - What makes it easy or difficult to do so? - What is the value of doing so?
5. Some breadth participants apply the framing in some of their communications	• What evidence is there of webinar participants and people who access the toolkit applying the framing?

Research Question 3

What are participants' perceptions of the impact of their use of the frames on policy discourse?

We wanted to learn what evidence or indicators there might be that the framing has improved the discourse on housing policy, including whether participants feel that framing helps them to tell better stories.

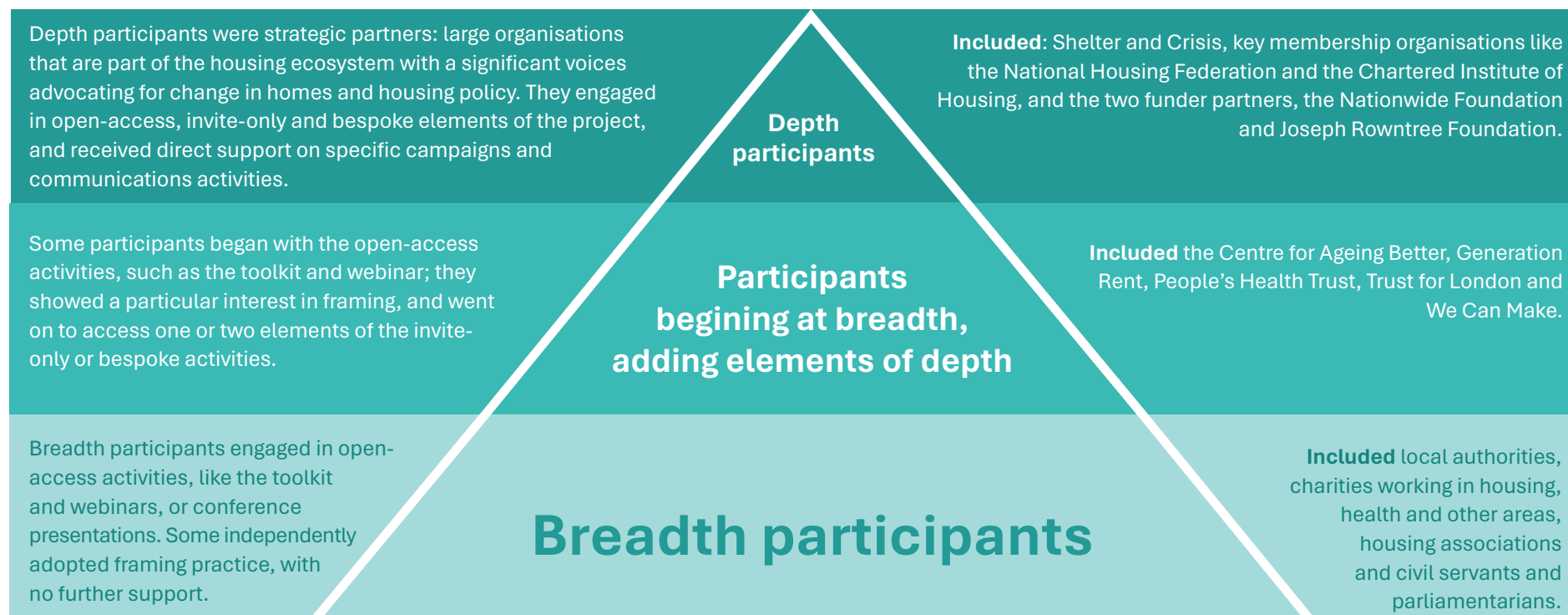
Outcome Statements	What do we want to know?
6. Participants in the housing space demonstrate a growing appetite and awareness for engaging with framing as a practice	• How many people are accessing the toolkits and webinars? • What sorts of people and organisations are accessing the toolkits and webinars? • Who are the participants reaching out to engage directly with Talking about Homes? - Why are they engaging? - Do they find it useful?

3.2 Framing recommendations

The following framing recommendations are outlined below from the ‘How to talk about homes’ toolkit, and are what the Talking about Homes project sought to mobilise in participants’ communications.

General Recommendation		Keep homes at the heart by using the words ‘homes’ instead of housing or property to promote ideas of holistic needs and avoid thinking of homes as assets.
1	Recommendation One	Talk about homes as a source of health and wellbeing to build understanding of why access to decent and affordable homes matters; explain how housing problems impact on health and wellbeing; exercise caution when leading with framing about the economic benefits of homes.
2	Recommendation Two	Use explanatory metaphors to make complex ideas simpler to understand and to show how decent and affordable homes are essential. The foundations metaphor evokes the idea that decent and affordable homes are fundamental to our lives. A second metaphor compares decent and affordable housing to ‘clean air’.
3	Recommendation Three	Invoke people’s sense of moral responsibility to build the case for making decent and affordable homes available to everyone. Build a sense of collective moral responsibility alongside clear and concrete policy actions, and connect to systemic solutions.
4	Recommendation Four	Combine a critical tone with explanations of systemic solutions to show who is responsible and build a sense of urgency and efficacy. Identify a specific aspect of a problem today and show how it is a problem of past policy making. Importantly, explain how specific housing policies can address the issue.
5	Recommendation Five	Put individual stories in context to humanise systemic changes to housing. Make an individual’s story part of a wider system story, particularly one that emphasises the government’s role in the crisis. Stories should be combined with reference to solutions to combat systemic inequalities.

3.3 How participant engagement worked



3.4 Snapshot of Talking about Homes' key activities

3.4.1 Key activities in numbers



How to talk about homes toolkit

c. 1,100
hard copies distributed

Main webpage has
7,492
views by **4,564** unique users

3,630 downloads
By **1,806** users prior to December 2023
By **1,048** users since December 2023



How to grow support for building social homes resource

c. 300
hard copies distributed

1,043
views in digital-first format⁵ by **611** unique users; and **150** downloads by **136** unique users



How to talk about private renting resource

c. 120
hard copies distributed

789
views in digital-first format by **463** unique users; and **72** downloads by **64** unique users



Six open webinars on different topics

For the five webinars where we have full data, we know that there were:

3,508 registrations

42%
of unique attendees from the charity sector

1,624 attendances by

17%
from local government, **8%** from housing associations

1,386 unique attendees

4%
from national government



⁵ Digital first format means that all the content of the resource was available to view online, rather than requiring a user to download it. Downloading content enabled users to save it amongst their own files.

Coaching series

Six sessions

17

participants



External events

Framing guidance was presented at **30** externally-hosted events, from conferences to network meetings to workshops with grantees

Sessions attended by more than **1,500** people



Depth organisations

Engaged significantly across the programme

Shelter:

83

staff attended webinars, plus **59** staff received further tailored support

Crisis:

41

staff attended webinars, plus **31** staff received further tailored support



3.4.2 Key activities in words

Talking about Homes began in 2020, when the Nationwide Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Foundation co-funded FrameWorks to research how people think about and understand housing in the UK; and then test communications strategies – or different ways of framing - to shift people's thinking in more productive ways.

To inform the research phase, the project convened and engaged an advisory group, which comprised of 15 organisations. The advisory group ranged from large prominent national housing charities to regionally-based housing associations and also included organisations supporting and representing tenants and disadvantaged communities. Group members were able to input with their insights into the communications challenges they face when pressing for changes, as well as review the research findings.

The research phase completed in Autumn 2022. The Nationwide Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Foundation continued to partner with FrameWorks as the project moved into mobilising.

Mobilisation meant strategically sharing the evidence-based framing recommendations with stakeholders who have a voice into public discourse on housing issues, policies and practice. The mobilisation plans were designed by the project lead for Talking about Homes, with the support of FrameWorks, and the mobilisation was undertaken together. The mobilisation began with the launch of the 'How to talk about homes' toolkit in February 2023.

Talking about Homes's strategic approach involved engaging with a broad range of relevant stakeholders with voices in the housing debate and then equipping them to become more effective storytellers. Stakeholder engagement was tailored according to the reach, prominence and gravitas of organisations, as well as organisations' own appetite to engage. For example, Shelter, Crisis, National Housing Federation and Chartered Institute of Housing were considered key strategic depth participants and therefore received more bespoke support than smaller housing associations. Time and resource meant most efforts from the project were given to supporting depth participants. However, as narrative change requires a broad array of voices to adopt the right framing, the project also valued and sought the engagement and contribution of smaller organisations.

The primary routes through which the project (including FrameWorks) engaged with its participants were:



Production of resources: These included the core 'How to talk about homes' toolkit and then a number of guides on related topics, including 'How to talk about private renting' and 'How to grow support for social homes', as well as a short animation. These free resources were widely available, both in printed versions and as downloads, and were designed to be easy to follow so people could take them away and begin applying the framing without needing further support.



Open webinars: These were free one-hour online events, available for anyone to join. Most were delivered by FrameWorks and hosted by Joseph Rowntree Foundation. In 2024, additional webinars were delivered by FrameWorks and were hosted by Chartered Institute of Housing, allowing the reach to extend to more housing professionals. As well as general framing webinars on the core recommendations of how to talk about homes, there were topic-specific events.



External events: By attending and presenting at relevant housing sector conferences and events hosted by other organisations, Talking about Homes sought to increase its reach, especially to smaller organisations, who were likely to be breadth participants.



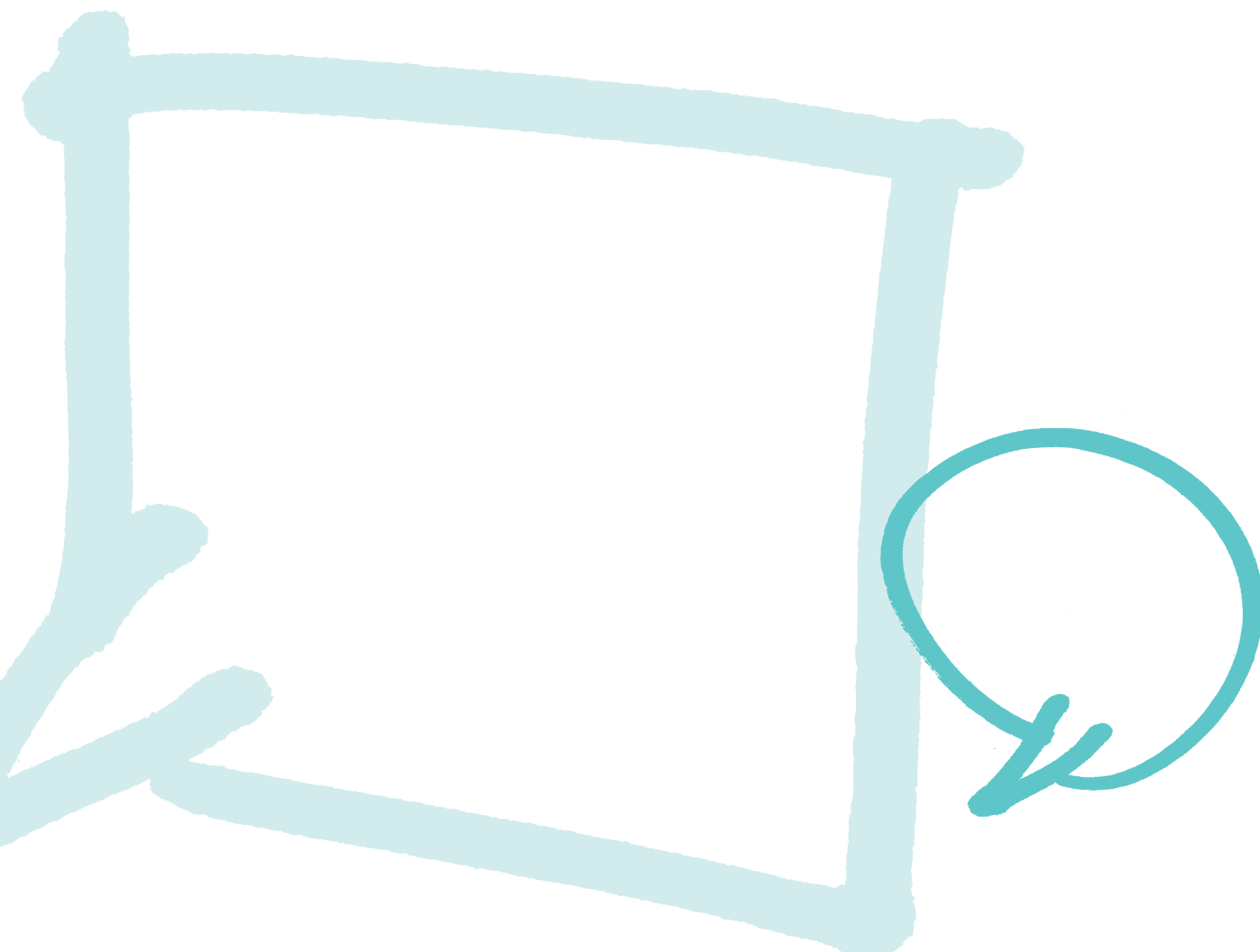
Workshops: These were invite-only interactive half-day workshops and the majority were held in-person, with around 20-30 participants in a session. The participants were selected from the key strategic partners who were engaging with the project at a depth level. The workshops gave participants the opportunity to engage in learning activities and to practise their framing skills, as well as to probe more deeply into specific aspects of framing and how it applied to their own communications. Again the workshops were often themed, such as on social homes or private renting. Some people attended multiple workshops.

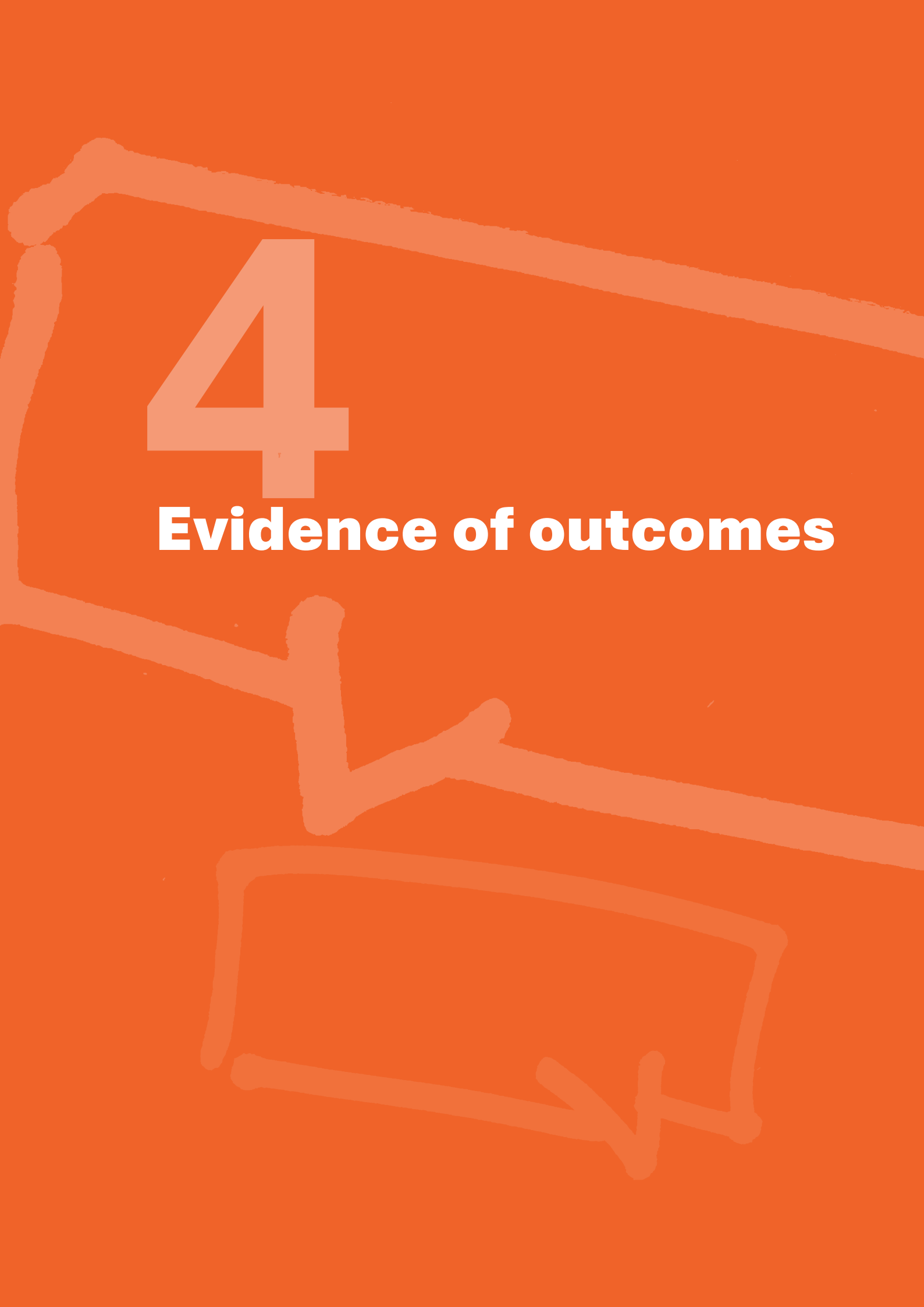


Coaching: These were an invite-only series of workshops that convened a small number of participants to extend their expertise at framing. The participants were from the depth stakeholder organisations only. Held over six sessions - five online and one in-person event – the sessions covered a range of framing skills.



Input and feedback on communications. Talking about Homes worked one-to-one with some organisations so they could adopt and embed the framing in specific campaigns or messaging. Sometimes this involved providing bespoke advice and consultancy as the communications were being planned; or reviewing communications once copy was drafted to check the framing and make recommendations (sometimes referred to as **'FrameChecks'** – one of FrameWorks' methods).



The background of the slide is a solid orange color. Overlaid on this are several hand-drawn, slightly irregular orange lines. These lines form a large rectangular frame that encompasses most of the slide. Inside this frame, towards the bottom, is a smaller rectangle. An arrow is drawn pointing from the right side of this smaller rectangle towards the center of the slide, specifically towards the text 'Evidence of outcomes'.

4

Evidence of outcomes

4. Evidence of outcomes

4.1 Research Question 1: What does good framing look like?

This section looks at what we have learned about research question 1: what does good use of the frames in communications look like in the field.

We wanted to learn if the framing recommendations were used and adopted by participants. Where they have used the framing, we wanted to know if it's been done effectively, consistently and frequently.

4.1.1 Outcome 1: evidence of impact

Outcome 1

Depth participants are using the frames whenever they communicate about decent and affordable homes, including in key campaign narratives



What did we find through Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics analysis, and discussions with participants?

- Depth participants use frames across a wide range of communications formats, from social media to blogs, reports and policy manifestos.
- Some participants use framing to create consistent messaging across the range of communication formats.
- Some participants repeatedly use framing in the same formats.
- Participants' framing features in key campaign narratives, including Shelter's Made in Social Housing campaign and the People's Health Trust New Homes for Health campaign.
- Framing appears to have been used beyond the expected reach of participants' networks.
- The range of communication formats to which framing has been applied suggests that 'there is a frame for all occasions' – though participants feel that some frames are better suited to some formats than to others.

This section considers the evidence from interviews with participants, and from Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics' analysis of a sample of over 100 communications items. We examine where – which platforms and formats⁶ – depth participants⁷ and other framers are using the framing to communicate about decent and affordable homes.

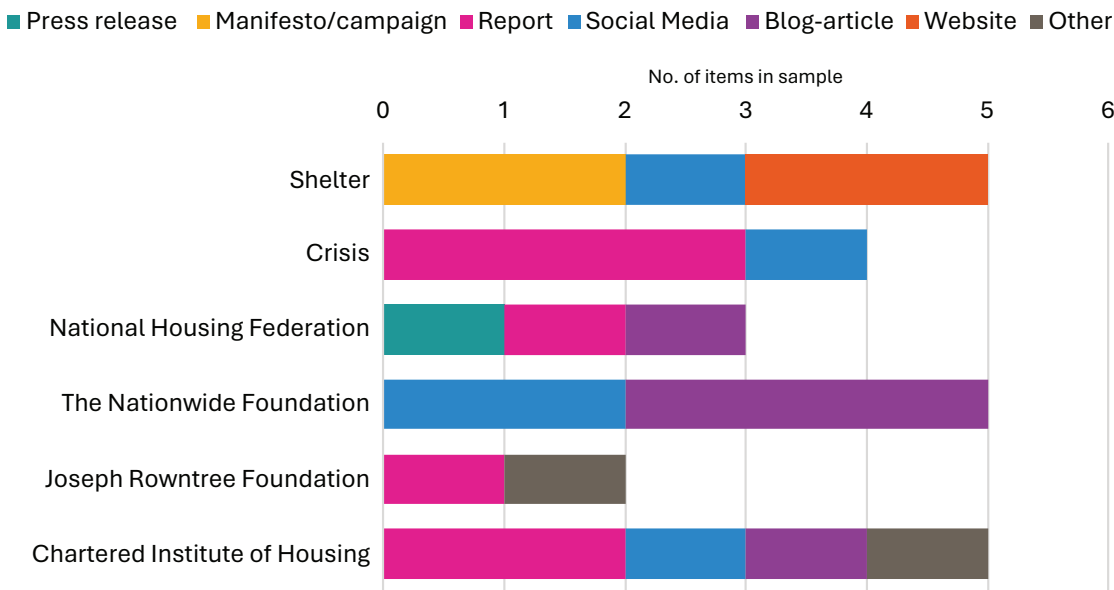
⁶ References to 'platforms' and 'formats' are intended to distinguish between the structure or method of communication (format) and the vehicle (platform).

⁷ Depth participants is not a category which the report by Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics uses. The term, set out in section 3.3. of this report, refers to the way in which different participants have been engaged and supported in the project. Where this term is used here, we have used the analysis from Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics, and identified where their sample relates to material from these depth participants.

We know from the activities of the Talking about Homes project team, that they worked closely with depth participants, providing input and feedback on communications, on a variety of significant communications opportunities including a mixed-media campaign, material related to general election advocacy and an England-wide housing campaign.

The following graph uses the Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics’ sample of communications materials (Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics, 2024: 70-75). The sample is indicative of the range of formats across which depth participants are using framing; it provides a snapshot, rather than a comprehensive picture of everywhere they use framing.

Figure 1: Range of formats used by depth participants in Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics sample



Whilst the graph does not provide an exhaustive list of the formats through which depth participants may collectively be communicating about decent and affordable homes, it clearly demonstrates that **depth participants are applying framing across a wide range of communication formats from public-facing campaigns, policy-informing reports and press releases to TV and radio interviews and social media**. In doing so, it suggests that participants feel comfortable that **the framing recommendations can be applied in most, if not all, formats**, from the informal short form (Twitter/X) to the formal long form (such as the reports referenced above).

In particular, the sample provides clear evidence of depth participants framing in longer-form outputs, including a total of seven significant policy reports produced by depth participants following their involvement in the project. These include the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s ‘Bringing Private Homes into Social Ownership Can Rewire the Housing System’; the Chartered Institute of Housing’s ‘10 Point Plan for More and Better Homes’ and ‘Homes at the Heart Strategy’; the National Housing Federation’s ‘Why We Need a Long Term Plan for Housing’; and Crisis’s ‘Home is the Foundation’, ‘Home is Where the Start Is’ and ‘Make History’ reports.

Further, there is evidence of **depth participants framing in particular formats multiple times**, with the Nationwide Foundation using it in three blogs and Crisis for three reports. Whilst the sample is perhaps not large enough to indicate whether depth participants are using frames ‘wherever they communicate about decent and affordable homes’ (and doesn’t show if individual participants are using frames across most or all formats), it does indicate formats where they feel comfortable framing (this is discussed further in section 4.1.2).

The analysis also highlights several specific examples of framing featured in campaign narratives. These include Shelter’s use of framing in their election manifesto title (‘The Way Home: a manifesto to rebuild our broken housing system’) and the use of lived experience, quoted in its campaign:

“‘I’m one of those families suffering now because of the government’s irresponsible freeze [of housing benefit]” (Shelter, 2024)

In addition, the following quote from the Church of England/Archbishop of Canterbury’s press release quote formed part of the wider Homes for All campaign narrative.

‘These problems are blighting the lives and futures of millions of people, and we all have a moral responsibility to put it right.’ (Church of England, 2024)

Further, other materials covered by the Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics analysis such as the Nationwide Foundation’s Renters’ Reform Bill blog and Crisis’s ‘Home is the Foundation’ report highlight frames that were used in campaign narratives developed by depth participants.

Beyond the activities of depth participants, it is interesting to note the range of formats employed by breadth participants and those who have accessed some elements of depth support (as defined in 3.3) when framing communications about decent and affordable housing. In addition to many of the above communication formats, the Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics’ report highlights use of framing in videos (Generation Rent), a renters’ manifesto (Acorn) and a web-based explanation of social housing (Coastline Housing).

Further, there is **evidence of frames being applied beyond the immediate spheres of Talking about Homes participants**. For example, the title of the Waltham Forest Council Housing Strategy reflects the framing recommendations, as do speeches by Labour party deputy leader Angela Rayner and leader Sir Keir Starmer, quoted here:

“My parents’ home gave them security and was a foundation for our family.” (Starmer, 2024)

How the framing recommendations reached these organisations is unclear (and discussed further in section 4.2.3; it is possible that staff accessed the toolkit, but also that these organisations are reflecting framing which they have seen in communications from other organisations and voices.

Interviews with participants add to our understanding of where frames are most used and the wide range of contexts in which they are applied.

‘...on an ongoing basis, I’ve used this [the toolkit] as my own, sort of...Bible if you like...for when I [do] particularly media interviews...I’ve specifically used some of the language in this, like foundation of our lives is what homes are, that sort of thing. And so, I...revisit it at least every few months, to make sure I’m staying on message.’

Framing plays a role in enabling some participants to create consistent messaging across different communication formats and channels:

‘...we’ve tried to use it across website copies, news stories, when we’re talking about new programmes, and on social media. We used it in some letters to MPs recently about housing.’

There is evidence, both from interviewees and the activities of the Talking about Homes project team, of framing being used strategically to shape communications. There is evidence that it is being used in communications that are specifically seeking to address negative mindsets or a lack of understanding about aspects of housing, such as social housing.

Whilst the following section, 4.1.2, looks more closely at levels of participant confidence in applying frames, comments from interviewees on the impact that different communication formats have on these levels of comfort are worth briefly considering here:

‘I would say...shorter pieces are definitely easier. Because it’s quite straightforward. Genuinely if I’m sharing a tweet, I’m just going to be saying, potentially, the foundation metaphor, or maybe I’m going to be...talking about health. I’m not going to be having to structure a sentence in a certain way...Whereas on bigger pieces, there’s too many more opportunities to not quite get the framing right. So, I would say it’s certainly easier in smaller chunks to apply framing quickly, because there’s less space to go wrong.’

Further, some interviewees discussed the challenge of using frames in media-facing communications, recognising that journalists will take their own angle; frames, therefore, needed to be included carefully or via quotations, for example:

‘...[the media] will obviously pull out what they want for a press release. So, it’s quite rare that your press releases is used verbatim...But I think where you can really make a difference is in your quotes, if you’ve got a really good quote, that...is really quite compelling.’

Whilst there is good evidence of framing in overall policy reports, some interviewees, particularly those in policy roles, feel that framing does not have such a clear role in complex, technical communications that are produced for civil servants or other policy specialists. Typically they described those communications that are responses to, or advocacy for, very specific policy elements or points. There is some evidence of interviewees feeling that it would be unhelpful to use some of the framing, which might lead them to setting things out in broader or more abstract terms. These interviewees did not feel that they wanted to reframe the terms of the argument by, for example, making the case that homes are the foundation of a decent life. This reticence to use framing in specialist policy communications is worth noting, as – on the whole – these interviewees were otherwise supportive of framing, and interested in using it in others kinds of communications.

On the whole, framing is currently being used particularly, but not exclusively, in policy-facing or policy-oriented contexts and communications. These communications often use public forums (newspapers, websites, national media, etc.), aiming to bring questions of policy into a public domain. Some users report that framing travels well between different audiences or purposes, and that this gives them confidence that they are communicating coherently. However, some larger organisations report that income generation or fundraising parts of the organisation are perhaps less confident using the framing.

Further, as is discussed in 4.1.2, analysis shows how particular communication formats lend themselves better to particular frames, with opinion pieces and platforms like LinkedIn, which are associated with the voice of a specific individual, providing a more natural home for the moral responsibility frame.

There were also some interviewees who wondered whether the recommendations as they currently are would translate well into contexts where communications were taking place with communities on the ground. Some interviewees reported a tension around using framing recommendations where it involved criticising government. More generally, participants reflected on the way in which framing is used in practice, and the degree to which that comes down to individual context and negotiating between different drivers, for example:

‘...when the framing was starting to have priority over style and readability... I would push back a bit on it.’

4.1.2 Outcome 2: evidence of impact

Outcome 2

Frames are used confidently, flexibly, and comfortably (i.e. the organisation has got the expertise it needs to use quality framing)



- Participants are broadly confident and comfortable applying frames, though some frames were used less than others.
- There are many examples of successful framing across the Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics data sample.
- Participants’ use of ‘creative extension’ (linguistic features that extend or elaborate the frames) demonstrates the flexibility with which they apply frames.
- Participants are able to follow some aspects of the framing recommendations more fully than others; there are still areas in which communications could be more effectively framed.
- Participants value the project’s quality of resources, learning opportunities and delivery and the responsive and engaged nature of bespoke support (e.g. ‘input and feedback on communications’⁸ for key campaigns/materials).

This section looks at which frames are used most commonly, the manner of their use, and the extent to which this suggests that participants are applying frames ‘confidently, flexibly and comfortably’. In doing so, it helps us to explore the research question: what does good use of the frames in communications look like in the field? We evaluated this using the Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics’ analysis and what interviewed participants told us.

⁸ ‘Framechecks’ are an element of support which was offered to some depth participants, or participants accessing elements of depth support. In some cases, they involved participants sharing drafts of communications material with the project team, and the project team providing suggestions and feedback to help them frame the material well. In other instances, a member of the project team would be involved earlier on, as communications materials and activities were in the planning and development stages, to provide input on how framing might be used.

Beyond establishing the levels of participant comfort and confidence, there is a further relevant question of whether effective practising of the frames is in evidence, i.e. whether participants' efforts result in the 'quality framing' to which the outcome statement refers. In this section we look at each of the framing recommendations in turn, and explore how participants have used them.

General Recommendation: 'Homes' instead of 'housing' (see section 3.2 for fuller descriptions of all recommendations)

This is used frequently and consistently across all participant groups. This frequency of use, together with the Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics' observation that participants 'find it straightforward to put it into practice', implies both comfort and confidence in using the frame. The following example of a Joseph Rowntree Foundation text demonstrates particular confidence in use of this frame by placing 'home' in a context where it might not normally be expected:

'Councils and housing associations buy already existing homes.' (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2024)

Recommendation One: Homes as health not wealth frame

Also used frequently by participants, with the Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics' analysis finding that it is reflected in most participants' communications, with many of them employing a health frame rather than an economic frame. The following National Housing Federation excerpt is a good example:

'A decent, affordable home ... is the foundation of our health, our happiness and our futures.' (National Housing Federation, 2023)

The comment by Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics that the frame is 'successfully employed and used by organisations from each of the different stakeholder groups across a wide range of communication types' suggests that not only it is well understood, but also **that the frame itself is flexible and relatively easily applied in different communications contexts**. The fact that it is frequently used in shorter form communications (e.g. social media) suggests that it is an easy-to-use frame, that can be kept brief, and perhaps lends weight to the following comment from an interviewee (quoted more fully in section 4.1.1):

'I would say...shorter pieces are definitely easier. Because it's quite straightforward. Genuinely if I'm sharing a tweet, I'm just going to be saying, potentially, the foundation metaphor, or maybe I'm going to be...talking about health.'



(The Quality of Life Foundation, 2023)

In their analysis, Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics introduce the idea of 'creative extension': these are instances where participants have demonstrated particular creativity, flexibility and confidence in their use of a frame. They highlight numerous examples of 'creative extension' being applied to Recommendation One framing, including the following visual metaphor in which The Quality of Life Foundation presented a house as a patient.

There are occasional examples that limit the effectiveness of the frame by promoting the 'dream of home ownership' over other housing tenures, thus risking reinforcing the notion that renting is temporary; but, overall, the frame is successfully employed and used effectively by organisations from each of the different participant groups across a wide range of communication types. Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics say: 'There were many examples where the first framing recommendation was implemented effectively by [participants].'

Interviews with participants add nuance to understanding participants' levels of confidence in applying the health frame, with some interviewees reporting that it was harder to find the sweet spot around positioning economic arguments. Interestingly, some interviewees felt that the recommendations said 'don't lead with economic arguments' and others felt that they say 'here's how to use them'.

'...we do...still have a bit of struggle around the economic argument...for politicians to deliver... they need to see that...from an economic point of view, this can actually be done. I completely get that....And I know that from memory, that [the] toolkit doesn't specifically say don't use the economic [framing]. [Instead] it kind of explains how you can use the economic...rather than saying stay clear completely.'

'[The framing recommendations we use are to] talk about homes, and then...not leading with economic arguments is an important one. [In reference to a specific event] it was difficult to not talk about the economic arguments in that context, because politics is so you know, they're [politicians] always talking about money, which is kind...of their strength, right?'

'...we still can't find a way to persuade Treasury and government to put their money where their mouths are. And so, yeah, I guess we keep...using the same framing techniques, but it will be interested in the impact that that has...one of the things that...we're encouraged to do through framing is not to major on the economic arguments, per se. But that is a barrier that we face at the moment.'

Recommendation Two: Explanatory metaphor

This is frequently used by all participants, with Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics finding 'a large number of examples of the frame being successfully applied in participants' communications'. Their analysis goes further to say that the frame is 'well established and used effectively'. This 'effective use' includes application of the frame in prominent positions within communications, such as the Crisis report title, 'Home is the Foundation'.

There is similarly strong evidence of participants' level of comfort in working with the foundation metaphor, with synonyms and elaborations referencing variations such as 'solid base', 'cornerstone', 'building', 'bedrock', and 'stable base'. Use of different combinations of frames – such as homes as a source of health with a critical tone, or homes at the heart with the foundation metaphor – similarly demonstrates participants' confidence in implementing the recommendations.

The 'home as a foundation' metaphor **frame is often elaborated on and participants use it flexibly**. Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics say: 'It is creatively extended, often over a paragraph or a whole communications item, and appears to be versatile and easily adjustable to an organisation's communication needs.' The following from a Crisis tweet is an example of the kind of creative variation applied to the foundation metaphor:

'Having a stable base where we can build our future.' (Crisis, 2024)

Recommendation Three: Moral responsibility

Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics report that most participants introduce the idea of collective responsibility in their communications and, in many instances, this is accompanied by a sense of moral responsibility implicit in phrases such as ‘we need’ and ‘we must’. Their observation that **this language is widespread across their sample suggests that participants are comfortable in its use.**

The language of moral responsibility is particularly prevalent in communications that are written in an individual’s voice (press release quotes, comment articles etc) but explicit references to moral responsibility frames only appear in quotes from leading public figures – such as the quote referenced in 4.1.1 from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the following from Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham:

‘Our national mission should be to give all people a good, secure home’(Burnham, 2023)

Whilst Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics find many successful examples of Recommendation Three and say that there is widespread use of implicit moral responsibility language, they find no examples of creative extension. This absence may suggest that participants feel less confident in use of the explicit language of the moral responsibility frame, or that the frame itself is less flexible, or both. More specifically, it could reflect the comment made in 4.1.1 regarding participants’ qualms about applying framing where it involves criticising government.

Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics also find that a number of longer written communications lacked collective responsibility and moral obligation and used passive and abstract language, which had the potential to undermine the collective moral responsibility frame. They cite the following use of ‘Westminster’ (instead of more explicit reference to senior government officials) as an example of the blurry and potentially unhelpful focus that is created on such occasions:

‘Considerable work is required to lift aspirations in Westminster for a much-needed commitment for England.’ (Crisis, 2023)

Whilst other factors may have impacted on creative extension of the moral responsibility frame, Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics suggest that the abstract language and passive tone that undermines the impact of the frame in longer texts (specifically reports) is more likely to be a product of report writing conventions. This report style encourages passive constructions and language that often distances individuals from actions.

Recommendation Four: Use of critical tone with explanations of solutions to show who is responsible

Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics observe that many participants highlight problems by contrasting a negative present with a positive future and some communications are using a critical tone to do this by pointing to the government's responsibility.

Their report caveats the effectiveness of some efforts to apply the critical tone by referring to the frame's 'successful partial implementation'. In these instances, participants have not covered all three aspects of this framing recommendation, which are to identify the problem with the housing system; explain how this has arisen; and highlight the government's role in providing a solution. As Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics found, some applications of recommendation three framing presented **incomplete narratives – for example, where participants fail to explain how problems arose in the first place or exactly who is responsible for addressing the solution.** There is also a tendency for participants to foreground that the housing crisis is worsening, exemplifying a fatalistic focus.

Meanwhile, the more complete critical tone narratives – with explanations of solutions and the people responsible for delivering them – tend to appear in longer texts, such as on websites and in politicians' speeches. Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics suggest that fuller explanations of solutions are often hard to deliver in short communications formats (such as tweets) and the analysis adds that participants may lack confidence in articulating fuller explanations succinctly. The following interview comment adds further depth to these explanations around the challenges faced by participants applying the frame:

'...how do we describe solutions? How do we get across efficacy? How do we do that bit in a way that makes sense....So often...a political issue [has] a political solution. And therefore..[it] has a relatively complex policy [solution].'

What this reflects, alongside what interviewees told us in section 4.1.1 about the challenges of framing in different formats, is that some formats are easier and possibly more comfortable to use particular frames in than others.

Notwithstanding the above comments, examples of creative extension in use of the critical tone frame suggest participants are otherwise confident in its use and able to apply it flexibly, often through a journey comparison to connect a negative present situation and the possibility of a positive future. Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics describe the comparison as 'relatively prevalent' and effective in challenging the notion that the situation is natural and cannot be changed. They reference the following version of the journey from a blogpost by the Nationwide Foundation as an example of this creative extension:

"Community-led housing – which Labour included in its most recent policy platform as a route to increasing housing provision." (The Nationwide Foundation, 2023)

Recommendation Five: Putting individual stories into context

Used by most participant groups, but not very often, Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics find that, when the frame is used, it is 'relatively successful'. Further, these successful examples imply participants' ability to use the frame flexibly because, as the report points out, the act of applying the frame (i.e. placing an individual story within a broader context) necessitates some form of creative extension.

Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics highlight the following from a People's Health Trust press release as an example of this contextualisation:

'In 2020, two-year old Awaab Ishak died due to exposure to black mould in his family's social rented home. His death and the many other cases of ill health linked to living conditions are avoidable.' (People's Health Trust, 2023)

Individual stories include specific examples, anonymous quotes, hypothetical scenarios and stories from news reports, with politicians often drawing on their own or their constituents' experiences.

Nevertheless, Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics suggest that the fact that frame is not used very often by participants could imply that participants are not always confident in its use and/or, it is not appropriate for all communication platforms.

Looking more broadly at the **application of all the framing recommendations**, the observation in 4.1.1 that some participants had repeatedly applied framing to a particular format (report, blog, etc.) suggests a level of both comfort and confidence in their ability to use framing in those communication environments.

Participants discussed their different levels of confidence in using the frames, and the value of the support they received. Some participants in the coaching course⁹ felt that the course had particularly helped them to think more about the audience for their work, and how to tailor their messages to that audience. Others also identified **the contribution that framing practice could make the overall coherence of their communications**, supporting different voices and staff members to use similar constructions in their material.

'...so, housing as a foundation to grow lives from...those kinds of lines...are absolutely discussed regularly and feel like mission statements in our organisation.'

After the coaching course, participants who up until the course had been less experienced with framing, were able to recognise where their colleagues were already using framing and where it was being used by other organisations who were talking about homes.

More generally, **interviewees were complimentary about the quality of the framing resources and their accessibility:**

'...the best thing I've had from a partner, I think it's because it's just so user-friendly, and practical. And also just helps. Like, for me that steep learning curve coming into the sector, it helps give me a grounding...I've not just learned 1000 different things that I'm trying to connect in my head, but instead have a framework through which they begin to make sense.'

⁹ The coaching course was an invite-only series of workshops that convened a small number of participants to extend their expertise at framing. The participants were from the depth stakeholder organisations only. Held over six sessions - five online and one in-person event - the sessions covered a range of skills to frame expertly, as well as offering guidance and support to enable the participants to share the knowledge with their colleagues.

4.2 Research Question 2: What helps or hinders organisations in their framing practice?

This section looks at outcomes under research question 2, which asks: what helps or hinders organisations to make good use of the frames and to normalise this use so that it is sustainable?

We wanted to understand what support makes a difference and what the challenges are that participants face when they want to use and embed framing. There are three outcomes under this research question, which look at: how framing becomes normalised and part of the internal culture of organisations; how participants who are framing connect with peer organisations that also use the framing; and what we know about how breadth participants have engaged with framing.

4.2.1 Outcome 3: evidence of impact

Outcome 3

**Framing becomes normalised and part of the internal culture
(i.e. narrative change is important to the organisation)**



What did we find?

- There are smaller, newer organisations using the framing, where framing reflects their world view and internal culture. This means they find it easy to embed framing, in and across their organisation.
- There are larger, older organisations with campaigning and advocacy roles using the framing. They demonstrate a significant commitment to framing, but acknowledge they need to work hard to embed across different departments and areas of their organisations.
- There are outliers using the framing: these are typically individuals within an organisation who understand framing and are practising it; but they may have varying degrees of influence available to share and encourage the rest of the organisation to engage in framing.

What has helped?

- Framing is perceived to be robust, supported by significant evidence that gives it credibility.
- The bespoke and responsive support offered through the project makes a difference, including easy access to expertise. This enables participants to ask questions, think about how framing applies in their contexts and check their framing use.
- Larger organisations have typically developed their own internal champions and processes to advocate for framing, build expertise and support other colleagues to get involved.

What are the barriers?

- Some parts of organisations are harder to reach than others, and may find it more difficult to engage with framing.
- Some organisations and/or individual staff have a limited capacity to engage, or to influence others within their organisation.
- Staff turnover and churn means that individuals who are trained and engaged with framing may leave organisations.

This section explores how organisations engaged with and experienced the project, and what they have done to try and embed framing practice within their organisation.

4.2.1.1 How organisations engaged with and experienced the project

Before we look at how organisations embed their learning, it is important to understand how organisations came to the Talking about Homes project, including what prior knowledge of framing they had and why this framing project appealed to them. We also want to reflect on how organisations perceive their engagement with the project team and resources, and what this tells us about what helps and hinders them to engage with framing, and what the pre-conditions are for enabling them to embed and normalise framing.

Some interviewees had knowledge, and in some cases experience, of framing research and practices before they became involved in Talking about Homes. These participants included:

- Interviewees and organisations in the health space, particularly public health, who had engaged with toolkits like The Health Foundation's resources on 'How to talk about the building blocks of health'.
- Interviewees and organisations in the homelessness space, who had engaged with Crisis's framing project on homelessness.
- People with other experiences of framing in organisational-specific settings.

Meanwhile, some interviewees did not have any formal prior experience of framing, though many reported thinking carefully about how their choice of language framed their communications and some outlined internal resources (e.g. tone and language guides) that set out how the organisation wanted to talk about its work.

Interviewees and their organisations were typically already involved in communicating in some part of the housing policy discourse, and were either ready to engage with resources that might help them achieve a greater impact and/or involved in reviewing and upgrading their communications activities as an organisation.

Interviewees came to the Talking about Homes project, or had gained some awareness of it, through a range of routes. Some came:

- After a direct approach by the Nationwide Foundation/Joseph Rowntree Foundation or an invitation to the launch event of the project
- Via the Nationwide Foundation's networks, including as a grantee
- Via a third party organisation, e.g. The Health Foundation or The Oak Foundation, which was advertising a webinar or the resources.

Interviewees had engaged with the project in a number of different ways:

- Attending a webinar and accessing the toolkit. Some interviewees say they use the toolkit regularly, referring to it when drafting material or thinking about their communications strategy; others felt that they now knew how to frame, and that it was part of their practice without needing to reach for the toolkit regularly. Some organisations share it with new staff, such as including it in induction packs.
- Engaging with additional training, like the social homes workshop.
- Participating in the coaching training series, which involved a number of sessions (both online and face-to-face), providing participants with an in-depth exploration of and engagement with framing.
- Accessing bespoke support for their organisation, including training workshops and receiving input and feedback on their own communications. This direct feedback has particularly helped to make interviewees feel supported in developing their framing practice and confidence in using the frames. For those interviewees who have also had regular meetings or check-ins with the project lead, it has also helped them to reflect, make connections between framing and their day-to-day work, and extend their framing thinking and practice.¹⁰

A number of interviewees demonstrated specific knowledge of the underlying research for the Talking about Homes project. Where interviewees discussed it, **it is clear that the research has played an important role in giving the project and the framing recommendations credibility, and supporting interviewees in making the case for framing within their organisations.**

Participants in some organisations felt they were already using some of the language or phrases aligned to the framing recommendations, or more generally were thinking carefully about how they expressed things, but said the research has helped them to feel that they are on the right track.

‘I spoke to Natalie [the project lead] and she said something like [the project] had a research pool of 5,000 people or something crazy like that. And I mean to have that number of people. And that that enormous sense that like this is the right way to do it. Yeah, it has been really reassuring, and also having the kind of side-by-side comparison of like, if you say it in this way, versus if you say it in this way, and the impact that will have.’

‘Because we’re so evidence-led as an organisation, because I was able to rely on...the research behind the FrameWorks stuff [when talking to their colleagues]...I can just say, ‘Well, research has shown that that won’t land’...And people go, okay. No resistance because of that evidence base.’

‘...it’s given us the confidence to know that what we’re doing is useful...Because we’ve actually got an evidence base to know why we shouldn’t be talking about things the way we have been.’

For project participants, **the quality and type of support on offer has also been key in developing their confidence in framing.** The framing toolkit was referred to by many participants. Some had a copy on their desks or said that they regularly refer to it. Feedback on the webinars, and on speaking and awareness activities for the project that the project team have delivered (e.g. conference sessions), suggests that introductions to the toolkit and wider framing approach are well-received, that the value of framing is understood, and that those attending can see how they might engage with framing.

¹⁰ When we have been undertaking these interviews, a number of interviewees have said that they found the interview conversation valuable in a similar way, enabling them to reflect on their framing practice and on the role of framing in their strategic vision.

‘I still use the toolkit quite a lot. I refer to it because I find examples really helpful. So in there, there’s...for example, ‘this is how you could phrase this’, ‘don’t say this, say this’. I look at examples all the time.’

Some participants have also been involved in invitation-only sessions, focusing specifically on aspects of housing policy such as private renting or social housing. This element of the project has been part of the more responsive offer, which participants have appreciated:

‘...having [a webinar] on social homes right now, ahead of a general election is super timely. And that’s obviously why Natalie [Talking about Homes project lead] selected it. But a good thing...is we’ve been able to...[express] this need for kind of joining stuff up. And that’s why Natalie then was able to put in place workshop that then led to the development of that webinar on the combined issue. So, I guess it’s been the good thing, I think, for me about being [involved]...is that I can see tangibly where things are, like how we recognize we discussed together issues or challenges or common shared bits, and then we’re able to turn them into something, which is really good.’

These responsive elements have emerged in two ways: through the advisory (steering) group, as the quotation above outlines; and via a deep engagement with some organisations, supporting them with small group workshops, or larger group workshops or training designed specifically for that organisation or particular audiences (e.g. members), and input and feedback offered on specific campaigns or communications activities. This latter element has been the most bespoke, with staff from FrameWorks or the project lead sitting with organisations and working together to ensure that key communications opportunities are well-framed. **These responsive and bespoke elements of support have been a key part of building the confidence of organisations:**

‘Sophie [from FrameWorks] has reviewed bigger documents or more significant [texts]. For example, she has been heavily involved in the [specific report] stuff from the beginning...And having her able to be there and offer her advice as an expert is really useful.’

‘...whenever I was drafting stuff, I would then have a chat with Sophie [from FrameWorks] and Natalie [project lead], and they would help me use it in practice. Sophie is a fountain of knowledge and a bit of a communications guru. So, it was almost like, they almost became like consultants...which really helped us use it in practice.’

‘That FrameWorks and JRF have offered to review our narratives...So they’ve been really, really generous with their time...As part of our strategic...reviews of any of our priority campaigns, a step of that will be the development of the narrative. We use the insights gathered...and then we’ll incorporate those. And we’ve been really lucky that Sophie [from FrameWorks] has, on occasion, taken a look at it and said: ‘Have you thought about, you know, tweaking this here?’...So yeah, quite extensively [involved]...’

After a year of mobilising the frames, in 2024 Talking about Homes delivered a coaching series for a small number of participants to deepen their understanding of, and confidence in, framing. This was designed in response to an emerging need and desire from key depth participants to become better framers. The original hope of Talking about Homes was that participants would be equipped to go back into their organisations, share that learning with colleagues and support others in using the framing recommendations. All participants interviewed by DHA had some experience of framing prior to the coaching series. Most of them had either direct experience of the Talking about Homes project (having attended a webinar, bespoke training) and/or engaged with the toolkit. Some participants, however, had had only minimal engagement and had not previously applied framing in their own work. Some also had awareness of other framing projects, including Talking about Poverty (Joseph Rowntree Foundation) and Framing Homelessness (Crisis).

All the participants were from organisations that have engaged at depth with this project, and their choice of individual participants for the coaching series demonstrates strategic approaches to spreading and embedding framing in their organisations. Whilst some participants had been to webinars or experienced bespoke training, all the interviewees expressed a desire to use the coaching series to consolidate and deepen their knowledge of framing.

There is also evidence of organisations thinking carefully about which staff to put forward for the course. Choices included staff whose primary role was not communications and who would benefit from significant development of their framing practice, as well as communications-focused staff who would be able to make a significant impact using framing in their day-to-day work.

Interviewees who participated in the coaching series were seeking a more in-depth engagement with framing than webinars or training, which they had previously participated in. This expectation was fulfilled for all those we talked to:

‘It ended up being a real...dive into some of the stuff that...in an hour webinar you can only really scratch the surface...I think it was roughly sort of one a month...that was about right. It made it feel like a programme, if that makes any sense, like it wasn't just ‘here's a couple of webinars in a couple of weeks, and then off you go’. I think stretching it out over a longer period of time was beneficial.’

Participants identified the following key elements of this more extensive engagement with framing:

- Reiterating and expanding the framing recommendations, with lots of practical examples, on what helpful and unhelpful frames are;
- An opportunity to focus on some other policy areas that intersect with housing, like migration/immigration and poverty and climate change, and exploring research and examples from framing in these areas;
- Reviewing the evidence base for the framing, reminding participants what the rationale is for the recommendations;
- Well-paced delivery, and space over several sessions that allowed for questions and looping back on key themes.

Finally, a key aspect of the feedback for the coaching series - and for other elements of the programme including webinars, workshops and bespoke support - is that the main deliverers of the programme, who were FrameWorks and the project lead, have made framing accessible, and created spaces in which organisations and individuals feel supported to develop their own practice:

‘...the way in which Natalie [project lead] and Sophie [from FrameWorks] explain it all is incredibly helpful, and they are incredibly approachable throughout all of their training, their willingness to support us to use this effectively is really good.’

4.2.1.2 How organisations are embedding framing

Typically, interviewees and their organisations fall into one of three categories in terms of sharing and embedding framing across their organisations.

Firstly, there are smaller and newer organisations. They often have fairly flat staff hierarchies, and are typically progressive in their views and activities. In these organisations, a senior member of staff (including chief executives, communications directors and public affairs and policy directors) is a champion, but **they report the whole organisation engaging in framing practice.**

Crucially, what they tell us is that framing reflects their values, ethos and their general worldview, and the way in which they want to talk about themselves as an organisation. They report using framing to think about how they explain who they are as an organisation and what their purpose is, and there is some evidence of framing supporting their strategic decision-making. Framing is also reflected at an individual level, in the way that staff members think about things and talk about what they are doing. Some of these organisations are, or have been, reviewing and developing their communications functions, and framing has intersected helpfully with this work. Additionally, for some organisations, changing perceptions of housing is core to their mission, and therefore framing is identified as a critical tool in this.

‘... the very foundations that we laid in terms of how we talk about what we do, is using this framing...it’s a very natural way for our organisation to talk about things.’

‘...I’m just writing our Case for Support at the moment. So, I guess some of this framing would bleed into that, which is setting out what we do and why we do it. Then there’s participation, which is how do we involve...[our] supporters...in what we do? And so again, there’ll be parts of this framing which is all about...putting individual stories into the context of what we’re doing..’

Secondly, there are larger, older organisations with campaigning and advocacy roles. In these organisations, there are **individual champions for framing who sit at a mid-senior level in the organisation, often within communications or public affairs teams. They have then worked to try and support colleagues to develop their framing practice, and in some cases have found or developed champions within other departments or areas of the organisation.**

Use of framing may be uneven across the larger organisations; areas like communications, public affairs and policy may be further ahead than other areas in their confidence with framing practice. On the whole, these organisations recognise these challenges and are working hard to embed framing in the organisation:

‘I’ve probably focused my efforts on pushing it specifically towards the policy teams...I would say that probably I should be doing more of a push with some of those other departments. But that’s going to be a slower burn.’

‘I’d rather be a cheerleader than a gatekeeper...I think I’m an active encourager of people adopting it, and an active editor around the organisation, when I can get my hands on things to make sure that’s the way things are [framed].’

Participants in the coaching series came exclusively from these larger, older organisations that have engaged with Talking about Homes in a deep way. Individually, the coaching provided a real depth of engagement and has supported individuals to develop their confidence in framing.

Many participants identified that there was **work to do to embed the framing in their organisations, particularly in parts of the organisation that might be less likely to immediately understand the value of framing**. Where organisations have significant income generating/fundraising departments, for example, we heard that there was some concern about how framing might work in those contexts.

‘...my job sits within our income generation department...obviously you can appreciate, there’s a lot of pressure for us to be generating income to fund what we’re doing. And so, it’s almost a bit of a concern that by shifting focus away from the more urgent...‘donate to help’ line...by shifting away from that rhetoric that will risk losing engagement with supporters and so risk our income...’

Some recognised the need to have ambassadors for framing within the organisation and felt that this was something they were yet to do. Most felt that, at the most senior level, their organisations did buy into framing; but that there is an operational job to do to make sure that those producing communications materials had a good understanding and confidence in framing practice. Some participants in the coaching series recognised this expectation:

‘...we would do the programme, and then we would come back and be the sort of... ambassadors for [framing]...We haven’t started doing that yet.’

Overall, then, we can see that these larger organisations recognise the need to develop further champions and advocates for framing internally, and to work strategically internally to engage departments and areas of the organisation that are likely to find framing harder to engage with.

Thirdly, there has been engagement in the project from ‘outliers’. These are individuals that have engaged via breadth opportunities, such as accessing the toolkit and webinars. They **understand framing and are practising it themselves**. This understanding sometimes reflects a particular individual background (e.g. public health practitioners have a strong affinity with framing practices).

Their leverage over the rest of their organisations varies significantly, based on their role and its relationship to the wider organisation. In some cases, they may be quite senior and therefore their framing practice may be quite prominent across the organisations’ output (though this does not necessarily mean that other colleagues are confident in their own framing). In other cases, they may sit in the middle layer of a large organisation and have less purchase across the organisations’ wider communications practices.

‘So, where I do [particularly communications-related activity], I’ve tried to pick up the approach and the language, and also share it with our comms team. And then occasionally kind of prod and remind them [about framing] as well.’

‘I think within public health, probably most people, or certainly a lot of people, anyone who studied public health will have come across framing...because we’re trying to make the case for things that are preventative and upstream. And beyond that, within the [wider organisation], I think there are people...who understand framing...’

Beyond these three groups, and looking across all the different types of organisation, some interviewees were very confident in their use of the frames; some felt that they were doing some of it already and were therefore framing well; and some felt that, perhaps, they were doing it some of the time, and maybe they could do more to check and be aware of framing.

Some interviewees reported barriers to engagement with framing resources and recommendations. These included:

- Parts of an organisation not being ‘on the same page’ – this tended to be larger organisations, as described above
- Very limited capacity to engage with framing activities – this tended to be an issue with some smaller organisations, or organisations where only one part of the organisation was engaging in framing
- Identifying where knowledge and resources should sit within organisations, and who might be responsible for sharing them with others
- Staff churn, and champions or those with knowledge and understanding of framing moving on.

4.2.2 Outcome 4: evidence of impact

Outcome 4

Key advocates within organisations feel connected to their external peer network of others who are adopting the frames



What did we find?

- Participants have benefitted from sharing experiences with their peers.
- Membership organisations have shared it across their members.
- Other organisations have advocated for framing across their informal networks.
- More generally, there is a sense of framing being part of a collective endeavour, a valuable thing for the sector to do together in order to achieve greater impact.

What has helped?

- Opportunities to explore specific themes and policy areas has created tangible connections with peers (e.g. through the invite-only workshops).
- In-person opportunities and supportive facilitation have created a space in which participants feel safe and able to share their framing practice and challenges, and want to learn from their peers.
- High profile examples of framing in the public domain help organisations to know who else is framing, and feel part of a framing community.

What are the barriers?

- Location of in-person opportunities meant that some were unable to travel to take part.
- Some organisations and individuals had a limited capacity to attend sessions, even where they felt they would be useful.
- Some evidence of perceived tension between framing recommendations – which come with the idea that different organisations should use the same framing approaches – and organisations’ sense of their individual voice.

This section explores how organisations have engaged with their peers through this project, and how they understand the relationship between their framing and framing practice in the wider sector. In doing so, we want to reflect on research question 2 and understand how engagement with peers helps or hinders organisations in their own framing practice.

Much of the training and workshop activity was delivered online; however, some elements – including smaller, invitation-only workshops on specific aspects of the housing sector (e.g. social housing and private renting) and elements of the coaching series – were delivered in-person. These sessions convened participants from a number of different organisations, enabling opportunities to share experiences.

The coaching series included online and in-person sessions. **Those participants who were able to attend the in-person session felt that it enhanced their interaction with other participants from different organisations, and they found this valuable:**

‘It was really beneficial hearing from other people, hearing other people’s challenges. It was beneficial hearing other people’s examples of when they put it into practice, and how it was a fairly open and engaged group...’

‘...there was a lady from [organisation] who does very similar job to me, and it can be quite comforting to know that everybody is dealing with the same stuff...whenever she talked about what she’s dealing with, I was thinking, ‘yes, exactly for me’, you know. And that helped a little bit, actually...’

‘I did really value the in-person session because I think it encouraged other organisations to share a bit more and for us all to...learn from one another and have those group discussions.’

Similarly, those who joined other elements of the programme (e.g. the invitation-only workshops) that brought smaller groups of participants together from a range of organisations appreciated useful opportunities to explore framing practice collectively:

‘...it was really nice to kind of have some of those conversations about, yes, we’re all saying we’ve all got different angles to it. But we’ll say the same things...It’s like that drip-drip effect, people are hearing this again and again, from different organisations.’

Key to these experiences was **the combination of smaller groups, supportive facilitation and tangible context**. Both the invitation-only workshops and the coaching series looked in depth at very specific areas of the policy discourse, focusing on how framing might be applied in those contexts. We did hear that some participants were aware of opportunities like the invitation-only workshops, but were **unable to attend due to capacity issues**. Travel implications meant that not all participants could attend the in-person elements of the coaching series.

Evidence shows that the project didn’t just encourage different organisations to engage in exploring framing together. **Some organisations went further and shared framing across their own networks, both formal and informal**. In some cases, this reflects choices made by the project team in targeting membership organisations as a way to access larger relevant audiences and potential participants in framing.

‘...we’ve kept up with a good communications flow about the value of us being part of this and what the end result is for members, and have invited them to events that allow them to learn how to use the tools.’

Where networks are informal, there is some evidence of more informal sharing taking place; for example, two grant-makers had shared the project, including the resources and dates of webinars, amongst their grantees. In those cases, neither had required grantees to engage, but both had highlighted Talking about Homes as a useful resource, and there is some evidence of grantees engaging with the toolkit and webinars.

Beyond this, there is also some evidence of the project being valuable to formal networks and coalitions, helping to underpin collective work taking place in the housing sector. For example,

‘I think the [network] and the [framing] toolkit and the kind of common combination of things available to the sector mean that [the sector is] probably more aligned than...it’s ever been.’

In a broader way, **the interviews revealed that participants have benefitted from seeing framing ‘in the wild’; that is, from seeing other organisations frame their communications.** This makes participants in the project feel part of a bigger endeavour to address negative and unhelpful framing. It is also particularly valuable for smaller organisations with less communications output and reach, when they feel they are framing alongside larger organisations with louder voices.

‘I was really struck recently reading the new Church of England report that’s come out...which has some very positive framing in it.’

‘...it’s so exciting to see a Shelter campaign that is...doing such a good job of the homes framing.’

‘I’m thinking of examples of where I know members are using it - somebody like Allister [at Coastline Housing]...he does a regular vlog. And yeah, I certainly hear him using the frames within that...’

‘...you can actually see if you’ve looked at [the National Housing Federation’s] call for a long-term plan for housing... the opening...sentences that are almost...verbatim what the framework would suggest you use.’

Finally, we heard from a few participants from larger organisations that there are **sometimes challenges in navigating using framing – and the sense of collective voice that framing might create – with the desire for organisations to have an individual brand and voice.** Some interviewees were clear that there is a way to adapt framing into an organisation’s tone and brand, but that in some cases this had required some internal thinking and negotiation, and was sometimes met with resistance. In addition, we heard that departments or areas of organisations may have their own audience insights, and understanding how framing fits into this is another process that organisations have to engage in. The following quotation, for example, gives a sense of how ambassadors for framing recognise the expertise of their colleagues, and have to support them to think about how it fits into their area of work:

‘[My colleagues say] “I’m the expert in my area, and I have my research, and I know my audience”. It’s the case of [thinking about], “okay, [framing] sounds nice, but that’s a very broad level. How does it apply to me? How does it apply to my work, if I’m talking to a senior politician, or if I’m talking to someone on the street about a donation request, like, how does that apply to me?”’

Outcome 5

Some breadth participants apply the framing in some of their communications



What did we find?

- Organisations that engaged via a webinar are confidently engaging with framing where they can.
- Good and sometimes high-profile framing is found in places where there has been no direct contact between the project and the framer.
- Framing resources are being referenced more widely by initiatives and stakeholders in this area.

What has helped?

- The quality of resources and webinars mean that framing is accessible for those who have only engaged in these ‘breadth’ activities, where organisational circumstances are right.
- Word of mouth and online presence means that resources are being picked up more widely, and are seen as credible.
- There is some collective momentum across the sector to have better conversations about housing and homes.

What are the barriers?

- The potential reliance on individuals in breadth organisations.
- We know very little about how non-participants (or unknown participants) have accessed framing resources, or are perhaps reflecting the framing they hear from others.

This section explores what we know about how organisations that have had a limited involvement in the project have engaged with framing. In doing so, we want to bring together what we know about what helps or hinders breadth organisations in engaging with the framing resources, and in utilising them to frame their own communications.

Both the sample in the content analysis undertaken by Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics, and DHA interviews were able to explore how those who have only had a ‘breadth engagement’ with the project – i.e. only received the toolkit and perhaps attended a webinar or two – have put their learning into practice. We were able to interview some participants who had engaged in this way, and heard that **the toolkit and webinars have succeeded in making framing accessible to organisations:**

‘...I don’t feel like we’ve particularly needed support with [framing]. It felt quite clear.’

‘...[we have engaged with] the last webinar and the report and the report [toolkit] itself. And then my director took some of the learnings from the report to present to our team at our away day in the January...we went through the...key findings and discussed which ones we thought we wanted to apply and which ones we thought were less relevant to us. That was it.’

‘...it’s just really well set out...the toolkit’s...easy to follow. And then things like the webinars, sort of consolidate all of that.’

We noted earlier **the importance of individuals who ‘get’ framing; what the quotes above also tacitly suggest is that the value of a set of organisational circumstances in which those individuals are able to get on and apply their learning.** We don’t know much about why some organisations may have engaged with the toolkit and webinars, but may not have been able to move forward with framing; this group of participants is the hardest for us to gather feedback from or evidence on, because their engagement with the project has been, in direct terms, minimal. Section 5.3 includes some data on the reach of webinars, in terms of types of organisation, and suggests a wider potential pool of organisations in existence that might be interested in framing.

Beyond the ‘breadth participants’ that we know about, **there is also evidence in the Future Narratives Lab and Illume Linguistics report of framing from sources where the project has no direct contact.** This includes, for example, politicians using framing in speeches. In these instances, we don’t know if they (and their speech-writers) are reflecting framing they have heard and read in framed communications coming from the sector, e.g. in advocacy from organisations who are consciously framing; or whether speech-writers and others may be accessing the toolkit; or whether they are coincidentally using particularly languages and framing.

Additionally, we can see that **the toolkit and resources are being recognised and referred to in the sector,** beyond direct connections made by project activities or the project team. For example, the Radix Housing Commission, looking at England’s housing shortage, included the toolkit in its ‘reading list’ for commission members. This reflects more generally the evidence that there are conversations happening in which the project and its resources are discussed or recommended. DHA heard from interviewees that they are in networks (both informal and formal) in which they discuss and share the resources.



4.3 Research Question 3: What are participants' perceptions of the impact of framing?

This section addresses research question 3: what are participants' perceptions of the impact of their use of the frames on policy discourse.

We wanted to learn what evidence or indicators there might be that the framing has improved the discourse on housing policy, including whether participants feel that framing helps them to tell better stories. One outcome sits beneath this research question looking at what we know about whether there is a growing and sustainable appetite and awareness for framing amongst participants in the project, and wider stakeholders in the housing space.

4.3.1 Outcome 6: evidence of impact

Outcome 6

Participants and wider stakeholders in the housing space demonstrate a growing appetite and awareness for engaging with framing as a practice



What did we find?

- There are depth and breadth participants who feel that framing helps them communicate better, and they are keen to go further with their framing practice.
- Looking at those who attend the webinars, there is evidence of wide interest in framing across the sector. We know it is converted into practice in the outliers we can see, and there may be others we haven't identified who are using framing.
- There is some limited evidence – anecdotal and in hard data – of audiences responding well to framed material, and differently or better than they would respond to communications that have not used the Talking about Homes framing recommendations.

What has helped?

- High profile examples of framing in the sector have helped other framing practitioners feel that framing has impact.
- The bespoke and responsive support elements of the project have built confidence in using framing, and in the impact it can have.
- Participants and wider stakeholders strongly feel that the perceptions and understanding of policy-makers, politicians and the public in relation to challenges in the housing sector need to be addressed, in order for there to be real change.

What are the barriers?

- Some organisations – usually the larger campaigning ones – gather insights about their audiences in a range of ways. These insights are sometimes seen as being in conflict with the insights that underpin framing, leaving organisations to navigate between these various understandings of what audiences need or are ready to hear. The Talking about Homes framing recommendations may be complementary, but are an added layer of understanding to incorporate.
- Wider factors are significant in the housing policy discourse: the media, politicians, other voices competing to influence the discourse.

This section explores what participants think the value and impact of framing is, what evidence we have about a wider interest in framing, and what we know about the way framing is received.

4.3.1.1 Why participants value framing

Our interviews included organisations that were ‘depth participants’ (those that had had a substantial intervention, including bespoke elements of support) and ‘breadth participants’ (those that had engaged via the toolkit and webinars). On the whole, participants had a similar sense of why framing was valuable to them. They told us that:

- **Framing helps to make complicated or unfamiliar things relatable**, on a human level; it’s ‘tapping into the emotion’ and giving a sense of why things are really important.
- **Framing supports and impacts on strategic thinking**, particularly for campaigning and communications-oriented organisations, and for those newer organisations that are telling the world who they are and what their purpose is.
- **Framing is giving individuals confidence that they are communicating well**, whether in writing or in person via interviews; helping them to reframe the terms of the argument, giving them core themes, and in some cases useful stock phrases.
- **Framing has permeated internal culture for some organisations**, and so it’s ‘just how we talk now’.
- **Framing is helping some organisations shift the kinds of conversations they have with key stakeholders.**

As noted earlier in this report, **much of the confidence in engaging with framing reflects what we have heard about the quality of the training, support and resources that the project made available to participants.** The quotation below sets out a good example of how framing can be valuable in supporting conversations within organisations, and giving confidence to parts of organisations that, ultimately, have to make the case for better housing and homes solutions to the public and wider stakeholders:

‘...the feedback has been really, really positive from [local politicians]. They certainly found the framing, very, very useful, because many [local politicians] don’t have any professional background in either housing or health... they’re coming at it from a lay person’s perspective. So that use of really, really relatable framing where people can connect with it, without necessarily knowing the evidence base or being bombarded with statistics or evidence, [means] they can just, at a human level, understand.’

In addition, **participants feel that framing is building a shared language and approach across the sector and something of an industry consensus for how we talk about housing.** For example, the Shelter ‘Made in social housing’ campaign, National Housing Federation’s General Election communications and the Church of England’s Homes for All/English Housing Strategy work were all recognised by interviewees outside those organisations as having been ‘framed’.

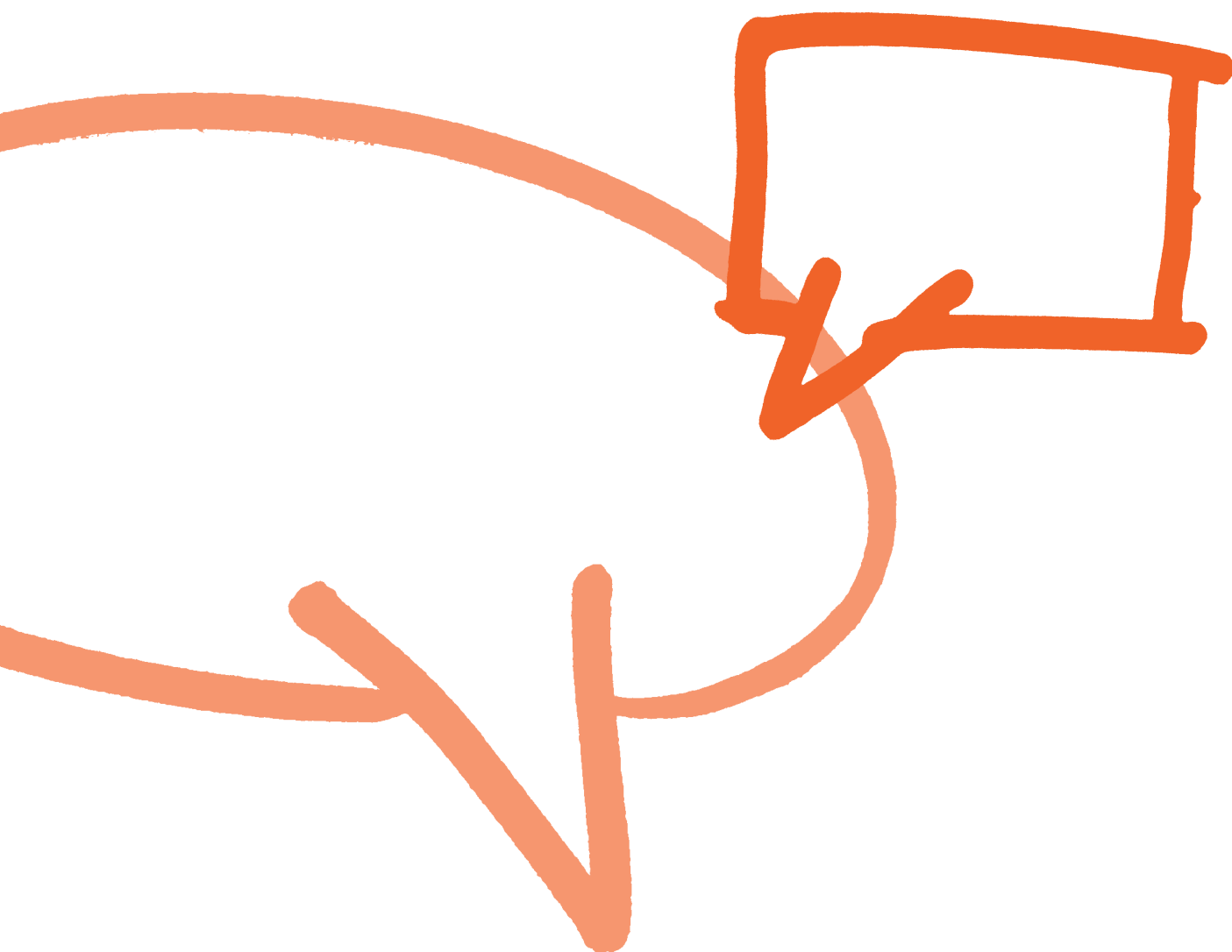
‘...what I found really helpful was because all of the housing bodies were using it [the framing recommendations], there...became a bit more of a level of consistency with how we talked about things across the sector.’

One of the main reasons **framing is viewed as being valuable for organisations is the shared view about the state of housing policy discourse. Most interviewees feel that there is some consensus across different political parties and perspectives that the housing system has problems, and that there is a housing crisis.** Interviewees were less convinced that housing is really seen as a priority by government and opposition; it is worth noting that our interviews took place both in the run up to, and immediately after, the 2024 General Election.

‘I think people are actually a lot more clued up about, not just homelessness as in rough sleeping, but the impacts of living in really poor-quality housing as well. Whether that is feeding through to policy-makers, I’m...sceptical.’

‘...there was a lot [of] coverage [of the issue of mould] in social housing]. [It] cut through to a mainstream audience. Yeah, in a negative way for housing associations. But you know, that’s...a terrible thing to have happened. How much [of] that has [had impact] beyond the... policy and housing [sector]? I’m not so sure. What’s changed?’

This sense **that there is still work to do to ensure a collective understanding of the nature of the problem(s) in housing and homes, and what solutions are possible**, was expressed by most of our interviewees; though some felt more positive than others that progress had been made towards a better collective understanding of the issue – amongst policy-makers, politicians, and the public. More than ever, participants expressed the need to keep addressing issues of understanding and perception about homes and housing amongst policy-makers, politicians, and the public, in order to be able to move forward with meaningful actions.



4.3.1.2 What we know about who is interested in framing

We know quite a lot about the experiences of interviewees, reflecting those organisations that engaged in depth with the project; however, we have only been able to find out about the experiences of a very small proportion of those who engaged via the toolkit and webinars only, because their direct engagement has been limited and our routes to knowing who they are and gaining feedback are therefore also limited. We do have some data, however, that gives us a sense of what the wider appetite and awareness for engaging with framing as a practice is from stakeholders in the housing space beyond these interviewees.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation hosts the web resources from the Talking about Homes project. DHA looked at data on views and users for three of these resources to get a sense of what can be understood about the appetite for and awareness of framing in housing policy. The toolkit is the primary resource for this project, and has been available online for longer than other resources we analysed. In the period¹¹ we looked at:

- The toolkit was viewed online 7,492 times, by 4,564 unique users. In addition, 1,100 hard copies were distributed.
- The toolkit was downloaded 3,630 times:
 - By 1,806 users prior to December 2023
 - By 1,048 users since December 2023
- The biggest single group of users (a third) were based in London.
- There is clear evidence that users were motivated to access the website by having attended webinars, or from seeing social media relating to an animated video that was launched in May 2024; following these activities, there are clear peaks in website viewing figures.
- Users came to the toolkit via Google searches for ‘framing’ and ‘how to talk about homes’, and sometimes via the housing topic or other links and navigation on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation’s website. This suggests that most users knew what they were looking for, and were already aware of and interested in framing.

Other resource data examined the guides related to specific aspects of framing housing policy: ‘How to grow support for social homes’¹² and ‘How to talk about private renting’.¹³

These resources are newer, and more specific than the main toolkit. In the period for which data is available, we can see that:

1. For the resource ‘How to grow support for building social homes’:
 - 1,043 website views from 611 users.
 - 136 users accessed the supporting PDF and 300 hard copies were distributed.
 - There is evidence that users accessed the resource in a number of different ways, via the toolkit or searching directly for resources on social housing.
2. For the resource ‘How to talk about private renting’:
 - 789 website views from 463 users
 - 64 users accessed the supporting PDF and 120 hard copies were distributed.
 - Again, evidence of users accessing it via a range of routes.

¹¹ In the period 28th February 2023 (when the toolkit went live) to 2nd December 2024.

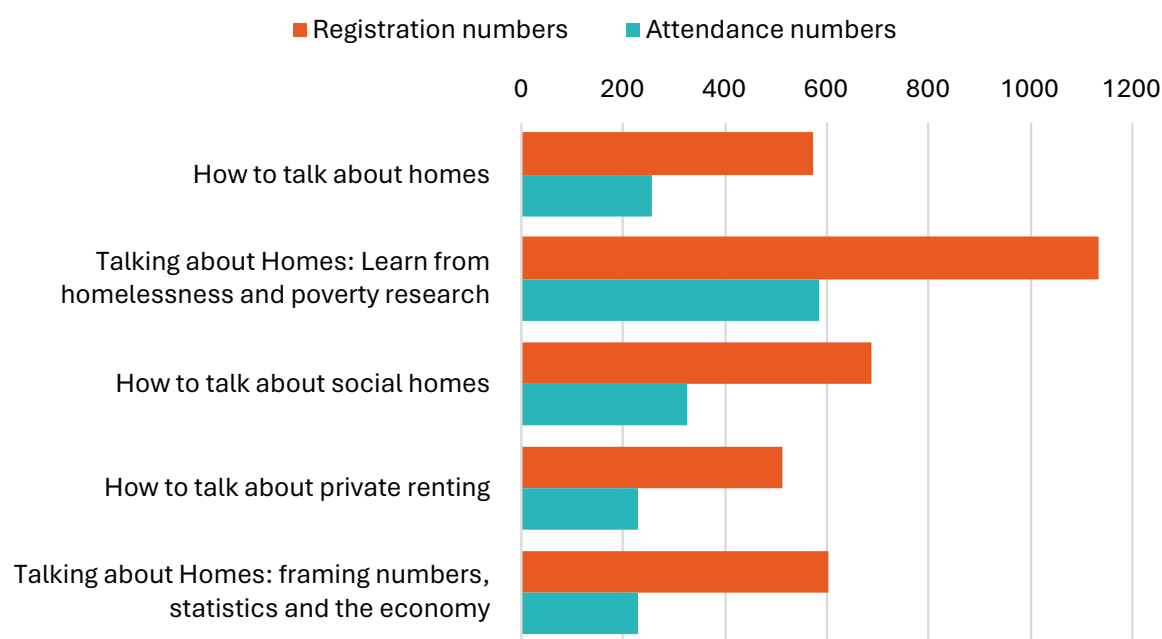
¹² For which data relates to the period 31st January 2024 to 2nd December 2024.

¹³ For which data relates to the period 27th June 2024 to 2nd December 2024.

Both resources gained significant views following specific webinars, social media promotions and direct mail sharing.

Six open webinars have been run throughout the course of the project, between May 2023 and December 2024; there is data on those who registered for and attended five of them. The webinars covered a range of topics - from a general introduction to the framing recommendations, to how to talk about social homes and private renting, to framing numbers and the economy. In total, there were 1,624 attendances at webinars, by 1,386 people. Most people attended one webinar, but 201 people attended more than one. A significantly larger number of people registered for webinars, which indicates a wider potential interest in framing practice for talking about homes. The figure below shows how many registrations and attendances there were for each webinar.

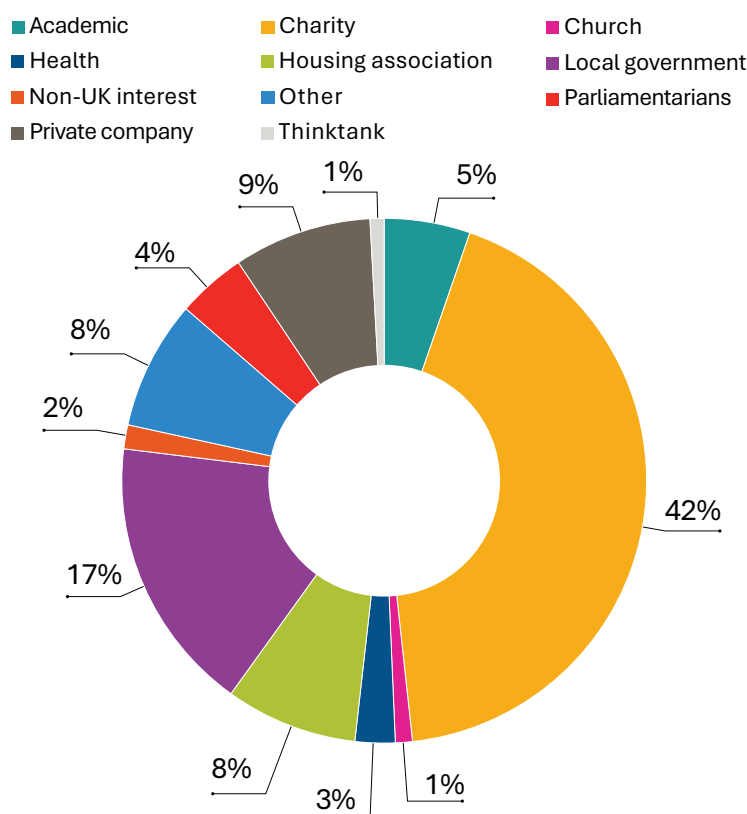
Figure 2: Registration and attendance numbers by webinar



The majority of registrations (60%) came via emails that Joseph Rowntree Foundation sent out, using its contacts database. A further 20% came via the Joseph Rowntree Foundation website. 13% of registrations came through direct emails from the project manager, reflecting the range of contacts and interest that developed through the project. Both the Nationwide Foundation and FrameWorks were also able to drive some registrations via their contacts and/or social media.

Looking at webinar attendances, just under half of people came from the charity sector; a further 17% came from local government.

Figure 3: Attendances by organisation type



Amongst those working in the charity sector, half worked in housing or homelessness focused charities. 20% worked in poverty/money/energy/legal advice charities, and 13% in beneficiary-focused charities (e.g. focusing on children, or other specific groups). Amongst the charities from which attendees came, just under a third specifically work in one English region. There is some evidence of reach into Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – amongst charities and those in local government – but the significant majority of attendances were from organisations based in, and focused upon, England.

8% of attendances came from those based in housing associations. The Chartered Institute of Housing partnered with the Talking about Homes project to host and deliver some webinars about framing directly for its members, which will have included those working in housing associations. These webinars received positive feedback, and 165 individuals attended the Chartered Institute of Housing's November 2024 series of framing webinars. This data suggests a significant potential appetite and interest in framing from housing associations and other housing professionals; and that using conduit organisations – in this case the Chartered Institute of Housing – allows the project to reach these audiences.

There were webinar attendances from 136 different local government organisations, from urban and rural areas, large cities and small towns. Different levels of local government are reflected in district, borough and city councils, county councils, unitary authorities, London boroughs and metropolitan boroughs, and combined authorities. 91 organisations were represented by an individual member of staff attending one webinar; the other 45 either attended more than one webinar, or sent more than one member of staff. Calderdale Council engaged significantly, with 19 attendances, the Greater London Authority with 10. 19 other local government organisations made at least three attendances.

The project lead and FrameWorks have also undertaken a number of speaking or awareness-raising activities at conferences, seminars and other events hosted by stakeholders across the housing sector. This included presenting and sharing the material at 30 external events, from conferences to network meetings to workshops with grantees. These sessions were attended by more than 1,500 people. Audiences for these sessions included: local authorities, housing providers/associations (including senior leaders, governance and communications staff), communications specialists, public health professionals, government officials from Wales and England, councillors and others involved in homes and housing.

Informal feedback from these speaker sessions, and formal feedback gathered via surveys from webinars and other activities, suggests **significant appetite for, and interest in, framing across key stakeholders in housing**. Engagement from the charitable sector has been particularly strong and this has been well-reflected in the depth and breadth participants whom we can identify as practising framing in their communications. Areas where there may be potential to grow framing includes local authorities and housing associations. In addition, some interest from government officials in key departments suggests curiosity from policy-makers about the role of narrative in policy development and discourse.

4.3.1.3 What participants feel is the impact of framing

Further, **whilst we know a limited amount about the impacts of framing on audiences, participants feel it is making a difference**. Some interviewees have had direct feedback about material that they've written, applying the framing recommendations, telling them that it has been impactful:

'We wrote a...'this is what we are', very brief one sentence, which was very much based on the framing thing, and we use that at the beginning of every presentation now. And you do see people nodding, yeah, yeah. And it captures people's attention...'

'...the engagement, I've had more, since I think I frame it that way, it's been like, wow, that was really powerful. And that...understanding [of] the whole thing in the round, not just the...pulling on the heartstrings...or how awful these families living in this situation, which is obviously definitely there. But yeah, I've had some really good feedback. And from quite high up people. One of the things that I wrote on temporary accommodation had messages on LinkedIn, from people that really know their stuff on this. And they were like, 'I read your article. And I thought it was great. And I just wanted to let you know', and I thought, Wow, that's pretty amazing.'

There is also some limited data from campaigning organisations that have used framing and are able to compare data on engagement between recent campaigns that used the Talking about Homes framing recommendations and previous campaigns that were framed differently, without the insights: one depth participant reported seeing a meaningful uplift in engagement numbers in the Talking about Homes framing in comparison to their previous campaigns.

When thinking about how framing is received by audiences, one of the challenges mentioned by a couple of larger organisations – and already noted in this report – was alternative audience insights, e.g. research commissioned specifically by individual departments or areas of an organisation. In these cases, departments or those commissioning the new insights wanted to be able to make use of it. This material does not necessarily contradict the research that forms the basis for the Talking about Homes framing recommendations, but what we did hear was that **organisations were not always sure how to navigate between different sources of audience insight**. Sometimes, navigating between the framing recommendations and audience insights specific to a particular activity or department could lead to conflict about which data should take precedence. On the whole, interviewees felt that this could be resolved.

This report has already **discussed the challenges of framing in a media context, where journalists may be framing stories in their own way**. This was felt by some interviewees to be a substantial, ongoing challenge to achieving narrative change in homes and housing discourse. However, some interviewees also felt that some journalists were engaging with questions of framing too:

‘We’ve been talking to journalists about that, and finding a receptive ear... and to change the way that journalists talk about people living in supported housing, and involve them in engaging with people with lived experience, so that they are using those voices to tell the story. I think there are journalists that have been open to our positive messaging...’

4.3.1.4 Participants’ aspirations for framing and narrative change

Finally, having heard that organisations value framing, and feel it makes a difference, we asked them about their aspirations for narrative change and framing practice in their organisations. Comments from interviewees and initiatives like the Homes for All partnership and Renters’ Reform Coalition demonstrate that there is increasing momentum around the need to create and align better conversations about housing and homes. Interviewees feel that there is more agreement – amongst policy-makers, politicians, and the public – now than three or four years ago that there is a housing crisis; but that there is work to do to create a shared understanding of the reasons for, and potential solutions to, this crisis.

Most participants want to see more organisations and people in the sector (and beyond) speaking with the same language, sharing narratives and working towards a shared understanding. Several participants talked about moving away from the terminology of ‘housing’ being about the market and economics, particularly in the media. In addition, they often saw this as trying to move away from fatalism about the housing crisis, and towards a sense that there are meaningful solutions.

‘...the revolution needs to be sexy...And that’s very valid...you want to make it something people want to engage with. And housing isn’t always that sort of thing, because it just feels so scary and daunting...So framing does play a huge role in [helping with] that.’

‘I’d love to get away from conversations about [the housing] market [in the] long term as well. And in fact, just generally making the conversation a bit more accessible, would be useful, because I think one of the reasons [the conversation about housing is inaccessible is] that it’s all about market and economics and all this....a lot of it is...just completely inaccessible for the public. Makes it feel like it’s a phenomenon of thing that is over there and has nothing to do with us.’

Some larger organisations wanted to see framing really normalised, so that it was just part of how they work rather than something that needed explaining internally.

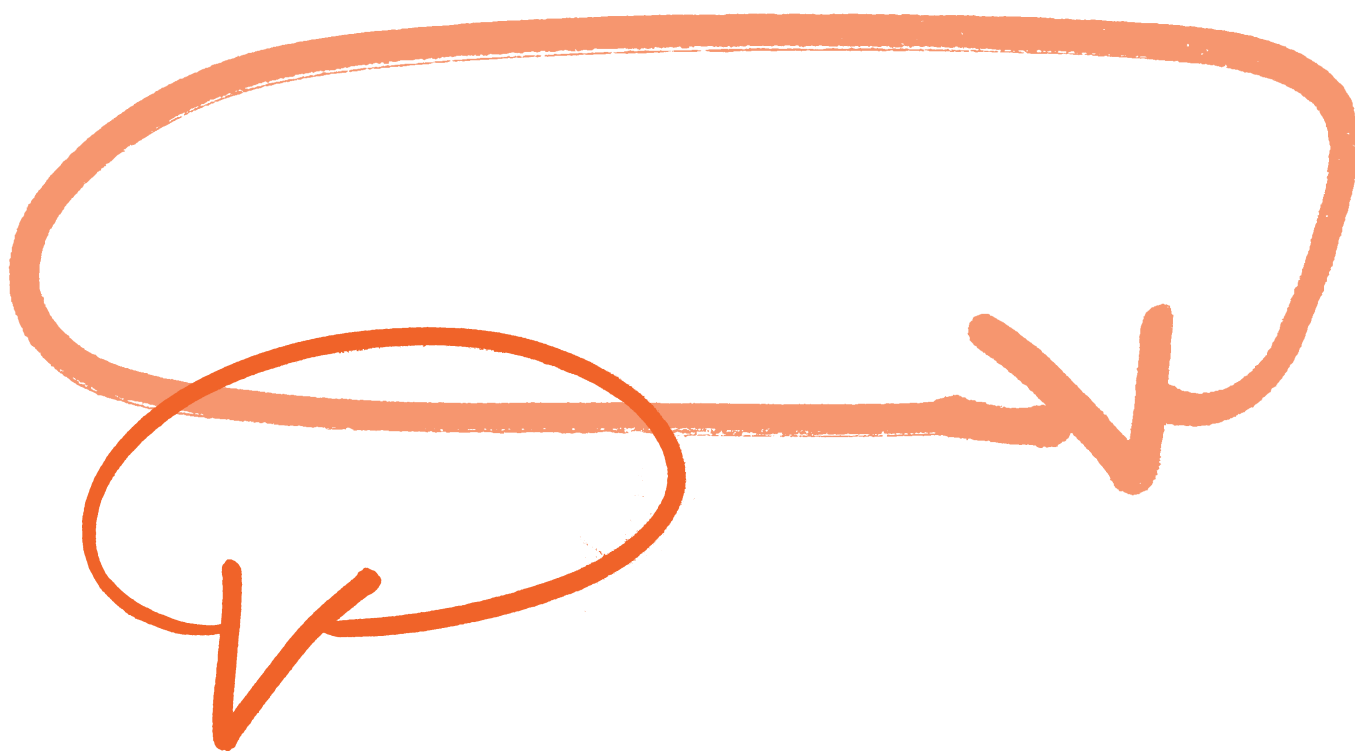
‘...I guess [our ambition would be] not having to explain to people [within the organisation] why [framing is important and we’re using it]. So, it’s actually become such a normal part of our work. Obviously, if it’s someone who is an entry-level job person, you might have to explain why. But, generally speaking, everyone [in the organisation] just gets it. And everyone can actually explain that to the people that they are recruiting...Everyone has that confidence that they can at least...actually explain why we have to think about how we frame...’

There was also some **evidence of ambition for a more collective approach to narrative change and, ultimately, policy change:**

‘...we haven’t actually had conversations with others [in the sector] about the right thing.... And even [at] things like the [specific housing] coalition, we talk...about...what policy interventions we’d like to see. And we tried to talk with one voice, but that’s a little separate from the kind of day to day.’

‘I think larger change looks like everyone...using the same frames and using the things that we know work to change minds and move people. And then I think, in practice, that looks like politicians being challenged on these issues in ways that speak back to the frame...And then I guess, I think a big thing for me would be that people would start feeling a bit less fatalistic about the housing crisis. A big part of our role is to highlight what’s happening. The ‘what’s happening’ is the...crisis side of things, but big progress would be to really make strides in advocating for solutions.’

Participants in the project have demonstrated ambitions for using framing to achieve narrative change in the housing policy discourse, both within their own organisations and communications practice, and more widely (and in some cases collectively) across the sector.



5

Conclusions



5. Conclusions

This report has examined evidence to explore how this project has contributed towards the overarching research questions and the six main outcomes from the theory of change. These conclusions analyse what this means for progress towards the destination statement set out in the theory of change, and brings together the main headlines against the outcomes and research questions.

The conclusions go on to identify some other key, overarching learning from the project, which cuts across the different outcomes.

Finally, this section reflects on what participants told us they needed in order to continue framing, and how the learning from this evaluation can help with the next phase of the project.

5.1 Evaluation against the theory of change

This project produced a **destination** statement, as part of the theory of change. That statement is:

Frames are adopted, normalised and used by voices that are pushing for change

Looking across the findings against individual outcomes, we have evidence that:

1

Those organisations that participated in Talking about Homes at depth are using the frames widely and are applying them with skill. They are using framing to shape their voice at key moments, such as in campaigns and in General Election advocacy. These organisations engaged with a significant programme of bespoke and invitation-only opportunities, and they were accessed by substantial numbers of staff. They are exploring and already enacting ways in which framing practice can be embedded and sustained within their organisations.

2

Framing is confidently and creatively used in the communications of organisations that increased their engagement in the project as time went on. Typically, they initially participated through engagement with webinars and the toolkit, and subsequently demonstrated significant interest, leading to deeper engagement with the project team and elements of bespoke and tailored opportunities.

3

Where organisations have engaged in the project via the toolkit and webinars only – i.e. the lightest touch engagement – there are some organisations and individuals that have confidently gone on to apply framing in key communications. There is some evidence of them looking for opportunities to share framing across their organisations. Attendance at webinars and other open events suggests a wider potential pool of framers. This is the group we know least about (limiting our ability to draw conclusions about them), and there may be more framing practice taking place that we are not aware of.

Beneath this progress towards the overall destination, there is evidence across the research questions and outcomes of significant impact, and learning about how framing interventions work.

Research Question 1: What does good use of frames in communications look like in the field?

There is strong evidence that depth participants in this project are using their frames across a wide range of formats. There are several examples of framing being used in significant communications moments and campaigns by depth participants, and there is evidence of high profile and capable framing by non-participants.

Participants are broadly comfortable applying the frames, though some recommendations are used more often than others and there are areas in which framing practice could be further developed, for example in setting out solutions to housing problems. There are lots of successful examples of framing, including examples where participants are flexible and creative in their framing.

The quality of the resources and learning opportunities provided by the project has helped participants to develop their framing practice with confidence.

Research Question 2: What helps or hinders organisations to make good use of the frames and to normalise this use so that it is sustainable?

We found that organisations engage with framing in a variety of ways, and that organisational context is key to the way they engage with and seek to normalise framing. Larger organisations have often developed effective internal champions to engage with framing and support the spread of framing knowledge and practice across their organisations, particularly where parts of organisations are harder to reach than others. The perceived robustness of framing as a practice, underpinned by the FrameWorks' research, and the bespoke and responsive elements offered by the project, has helped organisations to engage, develop their practice and feel supported in using the framing. Limited capacity amongst individual staff members and within small organisations can create a barrier to engaging in the way that participants would like to, and issues like staff churn can create challenges in ensuring that framing knowledge and practice sustains.

Participants have enjoyed and valued engaging with their peers from other organisations through the project. Activities that focus on tangible policy areas and offer in-person engagement have been particularly valuable in enabling participants to share their framing challenges and experiences, though time commitment and location have limited some participants' involvement. The project sought engagement with the wider sector via membership networks and this has been a successful route to reaching relevant audiences, and has helped organisations to feel that framing can support their collective work to address how homes and housing are understood. It has been important for participants to see examples of high profile well-framed communications in the public domain, making them feel connected to others in the sector who are using the framing recommendations.

The key resources of the toolkit and webinar are high quality and accessible. These resources have enabled some breadth participants to apply framing in their own communications. We can see that the project and its resources have been referenced and advertised by other voices in the sector, and that this has helped to build awareness of the project and give it credibility. Where we can see framing being used in places the project has not knowingly intervened, this suggests that framing has a wider potential impact beyond known and directly engaged participants.

Research Question 3: What are participants' perceptions of the impact of their use of the frames on policy discourse?

Participants, both depth and breadth, feel that framing helps them communicate better, and there is some limited evidence (due to the way in which we can collect data) of audiences responding well to framed material. Framing gives participants confidence that they are addressing key issues of understanding and perceptions about decent and affordable homes, which they feel it is crucial to do in order to achieve real change in the narrative. We can see significant engagement in framing from different parts of the housing sector, and this suggests potential for a wider group of organisations and voices who may already be framing, or for whom framing is relevant.

5.2 Other key learning

Beyond the analysis of evidence against the outcomes and research questions, we have identified four key learning points that cut across the outcomes and research questions.

The first of these is that the project originally anticipated engagement by organisations at three different levels and identified target organisations or types of organisations at each level. As the project has progressed, **some participating organisations went further with their framing practice than expected**. A number of organisations engaged more with framing, or were able to practice framing more confidently than might have been expected. There were only one or two instances where the project had anticipated there might be more engagement (or, perhaps, greater depth in engagement) than resulted.

The enthusiasm from some key larger organisations not originally anticipated as 'depth participants' means that they have engaged very deeply with the project. What's more, some of these organisations have helped the project to reach more audiences and have developed significant ambitions for both their own framing practice and that of others in their area of influence.

Some of the smaller organisations that had a 'breadth' engagement, via just the toolkit and webinars, are framing confidently and well. Whilst we think this is, in part, dependent on finding individuals who 'get it' in those organisations, and the existence of fertile organisational conditions for framing (particularly amongst newer, smaller organisations), many of these organisations do not need significant, additional help to frame. The quality of the available resources and training via the webinars means that they have been able to access the support they need, and are capably and independently getting on with it.

The second learning point is the **value of the partnership between the funders, the Nationwide Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Foundation to participating organisations**. The way in which the project has positioned itself towards the sector has two main beneficial elements.

One of these relates to use of an advisory group, which at the early research phase involved some sector stakeholders, and clearly positioned the project as listening, and responding to, the sector. This has helped the perception that the project is a gift to the sector: it isn't being imposed upon it, but is offered in the genuine spirit of facilitation. The project has also been responsive in other ways; in its bespoke engagement with depth participants, which has been seen as meeting the specific individual needs of those participants, and in its wider engagement with other participants who were interested in framing and looked for opportunities within their own organisations and networks for sharing the learning.

The other beneficial aspect of the project's positioning relates to the participants' perceptions of the Nationwide Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the partners and co-funders behind the initiative, and the impact that these perceptions had on the way the project and framing recommendations were viewed by the sector. Interviewees felt that the funders played a very particular role in convening the sector, and in creating a space for this kind of sharing and potential collaboration.

This convening power doesn't sit within the sector; large charities, who might have the resources to do so, are sometimes viewed as being in competition with each other. By comparison, Joseph Rowntree Foundation is seen as a strong, credible voice and source of intelligence on poverty and all its aspects, and as having that convening and facilitative power. The Nationwide Foundation is viewed as a supportive, generous and engaged grant-maker, which already helps grantees to connect to one another and provides signposting and routes to other resources and activities (like Talking about Homes).

The third learning point is that, for all the different ambitions across participant organisations (reflecting their own purpose, activities and internal structures), **there is a shared sense that perceptions of homes and housing held by policy-makers, politicians and the public need to be addressed in order for policy and practical change to be achieved.** When we asked interviewees whether they thought there had been changes in the homes and housing policy discourse in the last two years, most felt that there was a growing public consensus that there is a housing crisis; but, on the whole, **most also felt that there was no common understanding across policy-makers, politicians and the public of the reasons for the crisis**, or what the right solutions might be. Organisations want to address this gap in understanding, and see framing as one of the tools through which they can do so.

When they are framing, interviewees feel that they are addressing some of the gaps in that understanding, and presenting problems in a way that allows them to then put forward meaningful, long-term solutions. **Framing is helping by placing value on the 'right' things (homes, health not wealth, etc), engaging audiences in important questions about why housing isn't working for everyone at the moment, and helping to set out some real alternatives, whilst allowing organisations to be realistic about what is required to achieve them.** There are some participants in the project who felt that collective work on setting out problems and solutions could go beyond using a shared language (framing), with the sector potentially working together to set out the solutions it would like to see.

The fourth learning point is that **participants in the project recognise that framing is a practice.** In other words, they understand that they need to work at consistently applying their framing, embed it across their organisations, refresh their practice, and think regularly about how it fits into other insights and agendas that might influence how they talk about homes. It also means that they understand that the context in which they are framing is important, that it doesn't stand still and, that, as it changes, it brings new framing challenges.

5.3 Learning for Phase 2

This report takes a mid-point review of the mobilisation of the framing recommendations. At the end of this phase of the project, it is important to think about what we have learnt, and what this means for phase two of the project's mobilisation. We asked participants to tell us what they thought they needed in order to continue framing, and we have looked over the wider learning from the project to identify some key opportunities. The following areas should be key considerations for the next phase of this project:

Things to be continued

- Training to be available for new staff in relevant organisations, and for those organisations which are new to framing.
- Ongoing support and training opportunities to refresh and deepen the practice of staff who have already engaged with the project.
- High quality, bespoke support to key organisations so they can capably frame their campaigns and messages.
- Light-touch opportunities for practitioners of framing to engage with peers, e.g. spaces are facilitated in which organisations feel comfortable to talk about their framing practice and any challenges they face.

Things to be extended or refreshed

- Consider how the project helps to make the case for narrative change, including making it easier for individuals and organisations to make the case for framing to internal and external stakeholders.
- Showcasing and celebrating real-life examples of framing as part of the resources.
- Expanding the mobilisation of the framing recommendations to explaining key policy areas that intersect with housing and homes, which may attract new relevant audiences.

Things to be further explored

- Extend the project's reach amongst stakeholder groups, including local authorities and housing associations.
- Intervening where key opportunities in the policy discourse occur to maximise the opportunity to spread and embed framing, e.g. around election periods.
- Explore supporting collective cross-organisational voices to frame their shared messages and utilise the project's convening role in these housing ecosystems.

Things that organisations who want to frame well need to do

- Organisations wanting to become, or to remain, capable framers recognise they have an ongoing responsibility to do the internal work of embedding framing.

This list of key considerations reflects what we heard from participants about what is required for them to sustain their framing. Firstly, organisations told us they needed **support to continue to embed framing practice in their organisation and make it sustainable**. On the whole, larger organisations recognised that there was work they needed to do internally, as well as needing some ongoing external support.

‘...what we didn’t have a chance to do was take an embedding approach to it and really help teams to understand how to use it effectively in their areas of work...what I was doing was more feeding that in ad hoc, where I could do to teams when they were crafting columns or when they were coming up with ideas...So, I’d be inclined to say that if you were to ask teams across the organisation now, there probably wouldn’t be a great level of confidence in using them.’

‘...I think really embedding it in how an organisation communicates does mean that it needs a bit more than just a few people [trained] to coach.’

Interviewees told us that:

- It needs to be embedded in the culture of organisations, through internal training, resources, and onboarding practices.
- It needs to be extended beyond individual champions within organisations, and teams within organisations need to develop ownership of it.

Several interviewees suggested that, from time to time, they might need to **deepen or refresh their practice**. They saw this predominantly as something that could be achieved by online or in-person sessions with others; the invitation-only sessions on specific topics had already helped some individuals feel that they were deepening their understanding of framing. Similarly, when we asked participants in the coaching series what else they felt they might need to continue in their framing practice, some felt that the prospect of a check-in or update might be valuable, both for their own practice and to support them in being champions for framing in their organisations:

‘...a check-in or a wash-up session...might be interesting.’

‘...I would still find...regular touch points [valuable], and but also...[I want to be] thinking about my role and what we do in the future; my team and what we want to do in the future; [and] ways in which you can explain this to people, our supporters and others.’

Another area project participants discussed was the way that the **project resources might be refreshed, enhanced and animated**. Interviewees told us that:

- The resources may need to be refreshed and adapted for a number of different potential audiences. We heard about the following areas in which participants would benefit from adjusted or augmented materials:
 - In organisations where homes and housing may not be the only area of focus, and mid-level staff who are interested in framing need to explain and advocate for framing to a range of colleagues (who may be very busy and limited in their capacity to engage).
 - In organisations where staff or groups are not in communications and public affairs roles, but in public-facing roles (e.g. in housing associations, those supporting public consultation around services and planning, or in the case of community groups leading their own social housing initiatives). Some interviewees feel that the current format of the resources speaks well to those in professional communications and policy roles, but may connect less well with those in some other roles.
- They wondered if the suite of resources would require refreshing or adding to at some point, reflecting perhaps which frames work well or are hard to use, or any broader changes in the context in which framing takes place.

- Seeing real-life examples of framing was helpful. Some interviewees wanted a better understanding of what has worked well with particular audiences.

Some interviewees are particularly in need of **support to explore how framing might work in specific policy contexts**. Specific areas include:

- The intersection between housing policy and migration. Interviewees are finding this narrative a difficult area to navigate. Some interviewees feel that framing research and recommendations in this area would be helpful.
- More generally, the way in which housing intersects with environment, health and a number of other systemic challenges.
- Specific challenges within housing policy: participants in the sessions on social housing and private renting had appreciated the focus that these sessions offered, and there was general interest in more opportunities to consider framing in specific contexts.
- Ways of addressing complexities, particularly in terms of solutions.

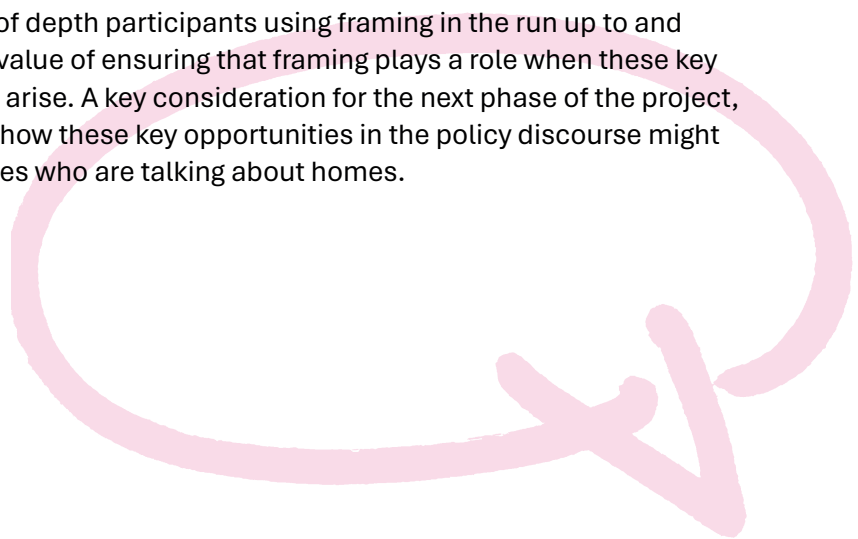
Finally, there is a **desire to continue to connect with peers across the sector, and to build a collective momentum in using framing as one tool (amongst others) to affect change**.

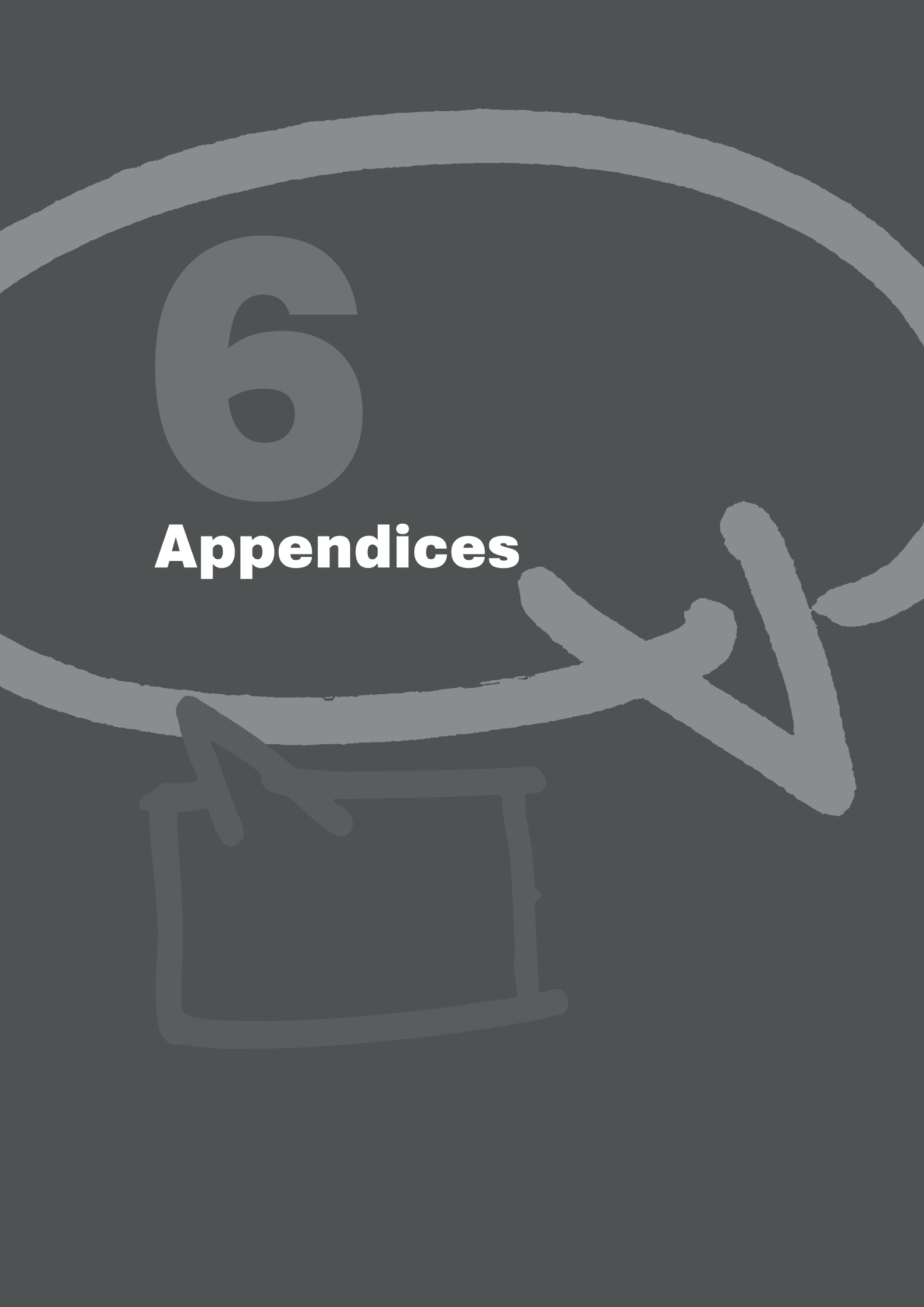
Interviewees were interested in engaging with peers who are using the framing recommendations. At a practical level, there is interest in learning from each other about what does and doesn't work, and in exploring some specific framing challenges together.

At a more ambitious level, some interviewees were interested in exploring ways in which different organisations interested in narrative change might connect and explore that together. For some, there was the suggestion that the sector needs to move beyond a shared language to actually work up some agreed policy positions, which may be beyond the scope of this project. There is also some interest in exploring the relationship between narrative change and policy change, and developing a shared conversation about this.

Looking more widely at what data on participation in the project tells us, registration and attendance data on the webinars suggests significant potential interest from local authorities, organisations like housing associations and the charity sector. In the next phase, it would be valuable to think about what could be done to further engage different kinds of organisations in framing, and convert more of them from awareness of framing to practising framing.

We can also see, in the experiences of depth participants using framing in the run up to and aftermath of a General Election, the value of ensuring that framing plays a role when these key opportunities in the policy discourse arise. A key consideration for the next phase of the project, therefore, should be to explore what how these key opportunities in the policy discourse might provide ways into new groups of voices who are talking about homes.





6

Appendices

6. Appendices

6.1 List of interviewees

Organisation	Name	Job title
Chartered Institute of Housing	Rachel Martin	Head of Communications
Chartered Institute of Housing	Emma Elston	Digital Content Manager
Chartered Institute of Housing	Matthew Scott	Senior Policy and Practice Officer
Chartered Institute of Housing	Hannah Keilloh	Policy and Practice Officer
Church of England	Jonathan Tame	Advisor on Housing and Community
Citizens Advice Newcastle	Nell Fabian	Volunteer
Cornwall Coastline Housing	Allister Young	Chief Executive
Crisis	Ruth Stone	Strategic Communications Project Manager
Crisis	Sarah Rowe	Senior Policy Officer
Crisis	Rosie Perkins	Campaigns Manager
Cwmpas	Kathryn Griffiths	Community-Led Housing Co-ordinator
FrameWorks	Sophie Gordon	Principal Communications Strategist
Generation Rent	Ben Twomey	Chief Executive
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Naomi Southwell	Media Officer
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Darren Baxter	Principal Policy Adviser - Housing and Land
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Husna Mortuza	Associate Director for Public Engagement
National Housing Federation	Claudia Esseen-Jayes	Communications and Digital Manager
The Nationwide Foundation	Amy Kuczynski	Communications Manager
The Nationwide Foundation	Samantha Stewart	Head of Programmes
People's Health Trust	Catherine Rennie	Communications and Public Affairs Manager
PlaceShapers	Joanna Charlton	Communications Lead
QOLF	Emma Cooke	Head of External Affairs
Shelter	Emma Heath	Head of Brand, Planning, Insight and Evaluation
Shelter	Nick Martin	Head of Planning and Project Management
Shelter	Tom Warren	Head, Digital Campaigns
Shelter	Vanessa Vaughan	Social Media Community Manager
Somerset Council	Alice Munro	Consultant in Public Health
TPAS Cymru	Eleanor Speer	Engagement and Communications Officer
Trust for London	Susie Dye	Grants Manager
Trust for London	Johanna Cronin	Head of Communications
We Can Make	Athlyn Cathcart-Keays	Communications Lead

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