

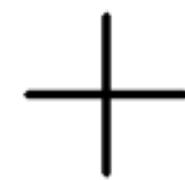
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FRAME  
WORKS UK

# An intro to framing social homes

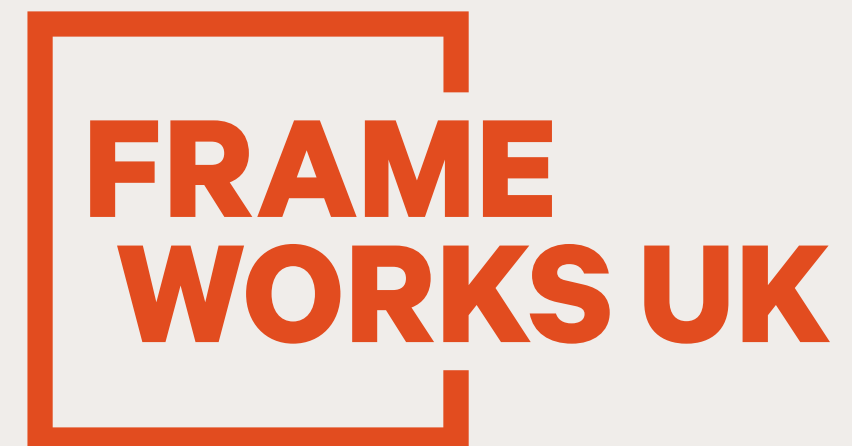
**Sophie Gordon**

Principal Communications Strategist



**Nationwide  
Foundation**

**Change the story, change  
the world.**



Impact  
on **Urban  
Health**



The Law Society

# Research base

**Talking about homes: the foundation for a decent life**, 2022, FrameWorks UK

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**Moving from concern to concrete change: how to build support for more social housing**, 2021, FrameWorks Institute

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**Communicating about housing in the UK: obstacles, openings and emerging recommendations**, 2021, FrameWorks Institute

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**How to talk about poverty in the United Kingdom**, 2018, FrameWorks Institute

---

**Reframing homelessness**, 2018, FrameWorks Institute

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**How to create more effective messages on homelessness**, 2017, FrameWorks Institute

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**A matter of life and death: explaining the wider determinants of health**, 2022, FrameWorks UK

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# Agenda

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What is framing and why does it matter?

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How people think about homes

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How to talk about social homes

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Q&A

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**What is framing  
and why does it  
matter?**



# **What is framing?**

**The choices we make about what ideas we share and how we share them.**

**This includes what we emphasise, how we explain an issue, and what we leave unsaid.**



There's a 90% chance of survival following surgery



42% preference for surgery

There's a 10% chance of mortality following surgery

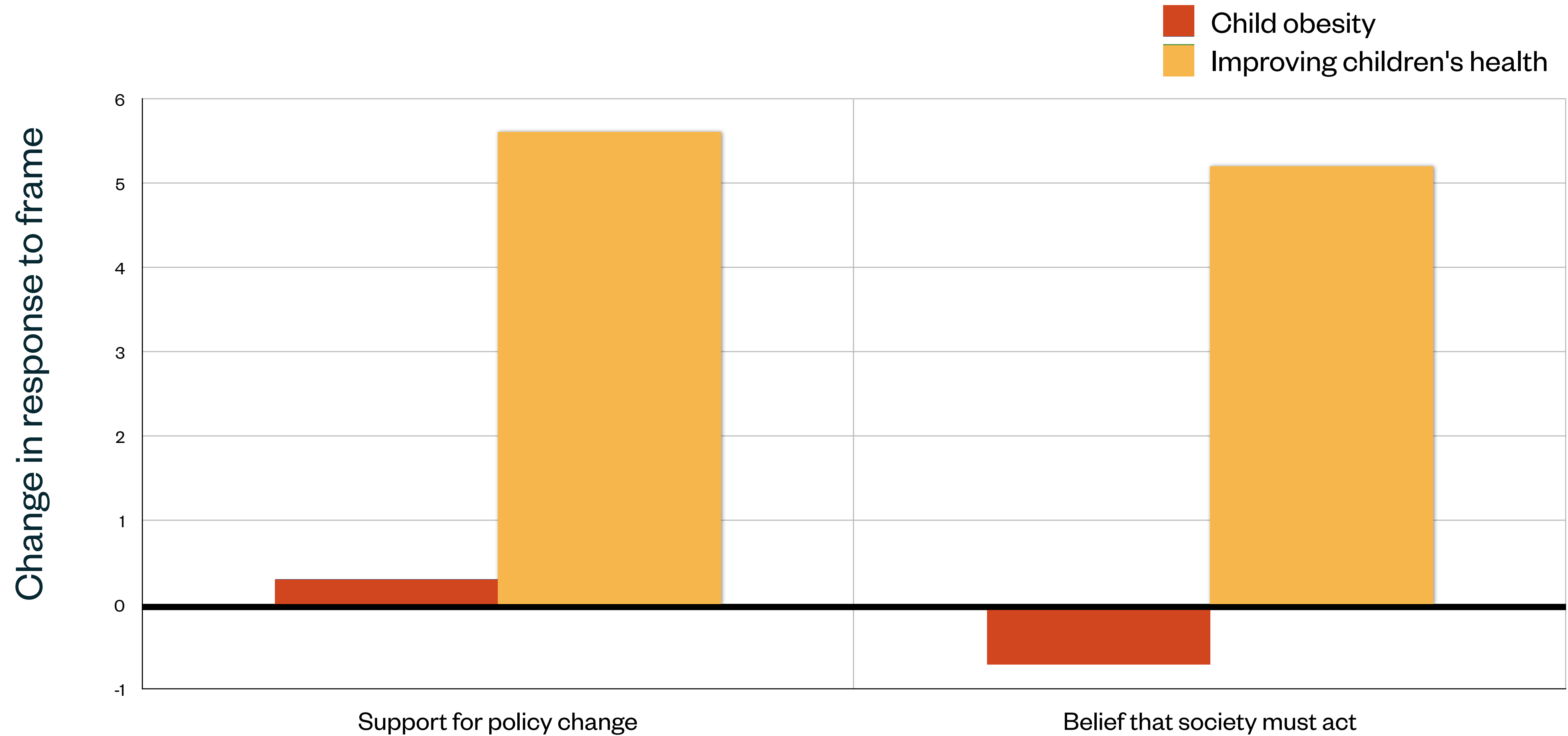


25% preference for surgery



**FRAME  
WORKS UK**

# Framing changes support



**Everything is already framed**

AAA



BBB



# Mindsets guide our thinking

- Mental shortcuts that shape how we interpret and understand the world.
- Enduring and shared across culture.
- Activated by the things we see and hear.



# Obstacles to overcome

## **Housing = A source of investment and wealth**

“The housing market”

“Getting on the property ladder”

## **Rented and social housing is seen as temporary**

“A roof over your head is sufficient...”

## **People are less clear about the positive impact of decent homes**

A decent home = neutral

## **Inequalities in the system = natural**

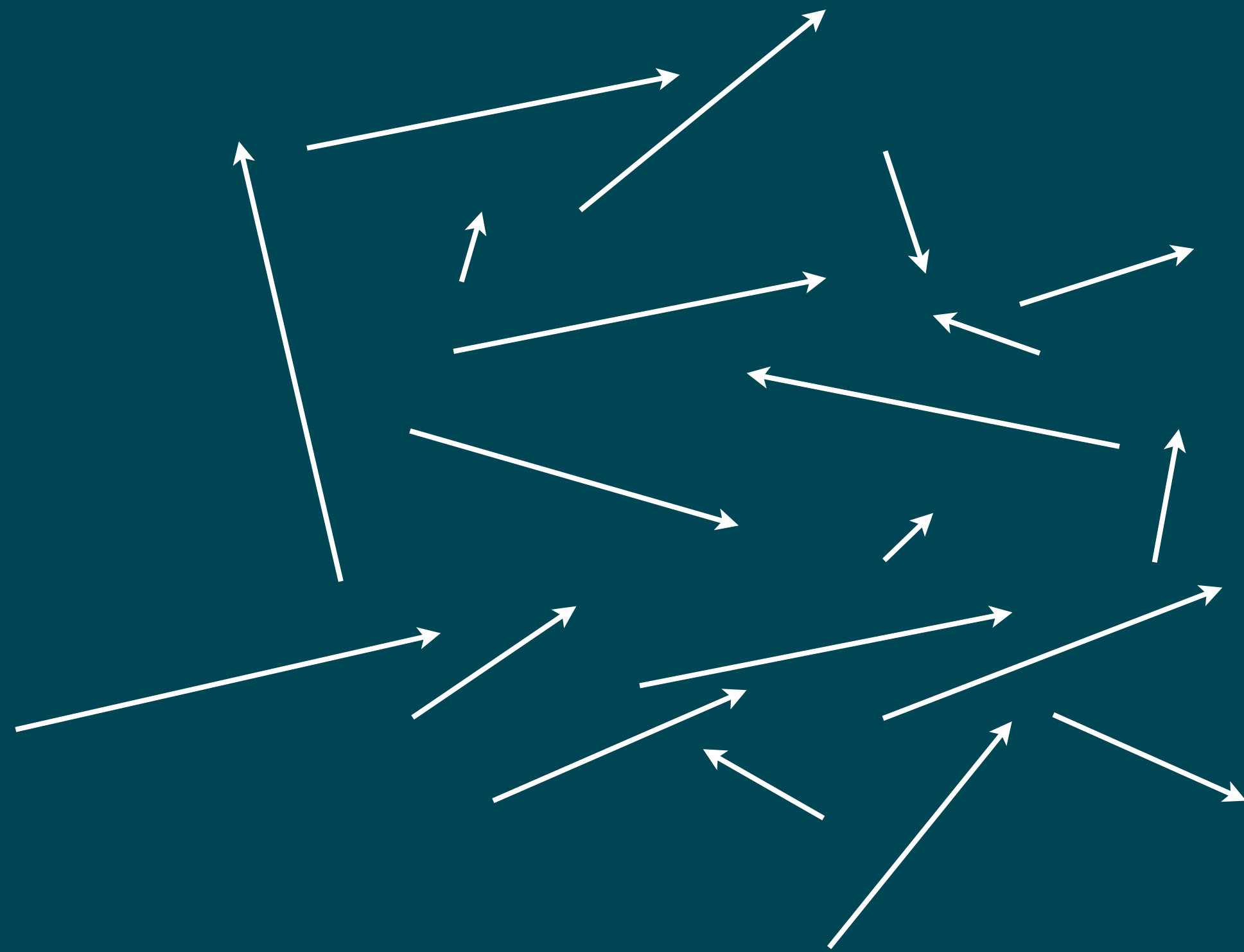
“That’s just the way it is.”

## **Individualism**

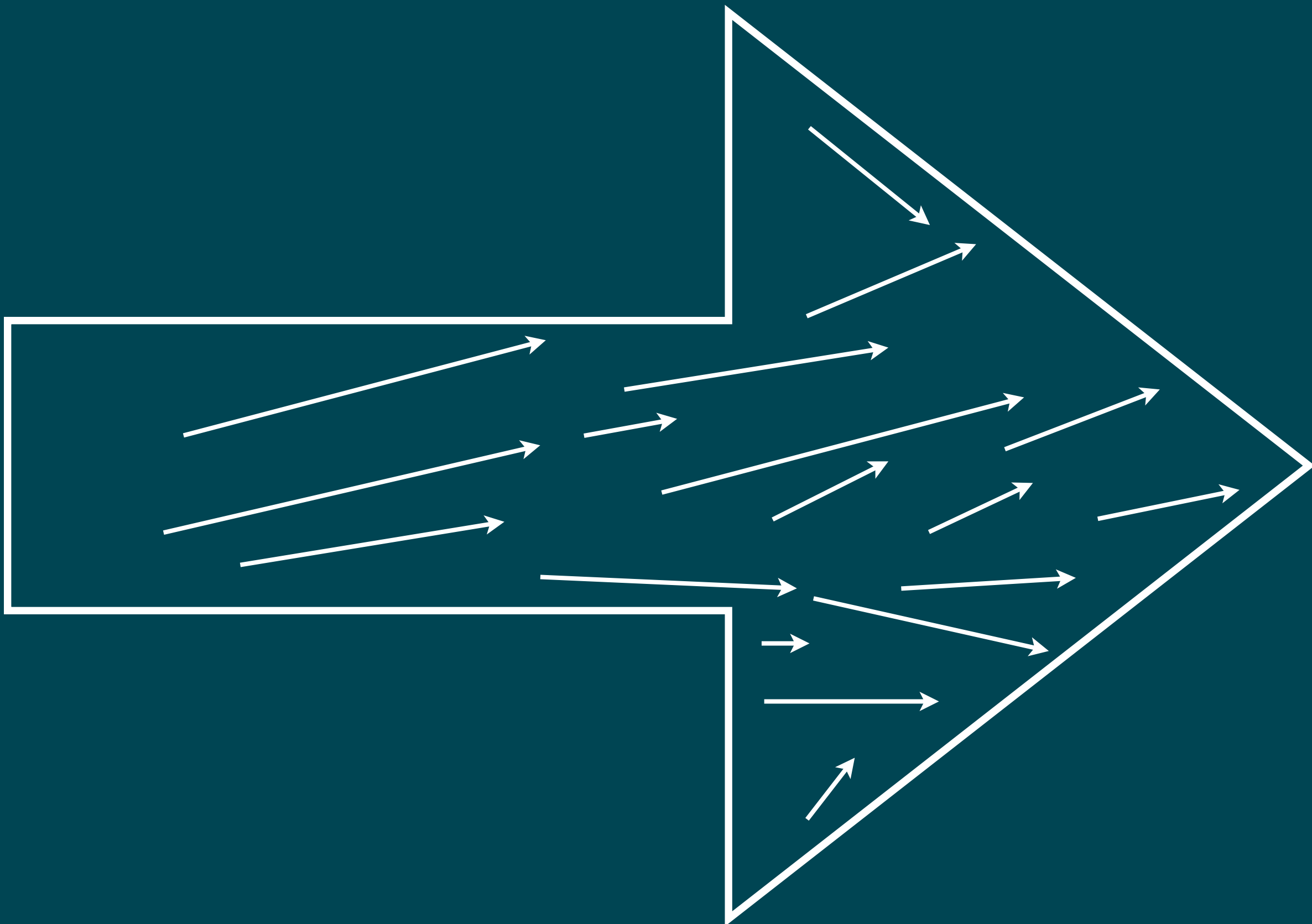
“People just need to work harder”

## **Fatalism**

“The problem is too big to solve.”







# How to talk about social homes



**We need to tell a story about  
health, not wealth.**

**With solutions and  
explanations at its heart.**

**Why “homes”?**



Every family  
should have  
a great home



WE'RE BUILDING  
THOUSANDS OF NEW  
COUNCIL HOMES  
ACROSS SOUTHWARK



[southwark.gov.uk/newhomes](http://southwark.gov.uk/newhomes)



COMING SOON  
TO STYLES HOUSE

- We're building 25 new council homes for local people
- Work is due to be completed by Summer 2025

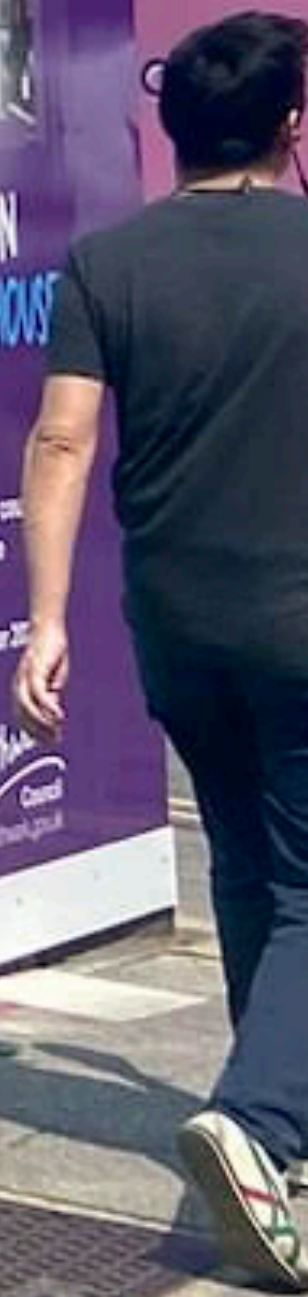


ON  
HOUSE

council

2025

OUND  
OUND





# When telling any story, we need to answer these questions

**What's this about and why does it matter?**

**How does this work, and if it's not working, why not?**

**What can we do about it?**

## Question 1

**What are social homes and why do they matter?**



**What to do**

**Connect social homes with our  
health and wellbeing**

# How to do it

- Connect health and social homes, early and consistently
- Talk about mental as well as physical health
- Give examples of positive impact too

## An example

Social homes offer more secure tenancies than private renting. This allows families to put down roots and plan for the future, **instead of living with the constant stress** of uncertainty.



# Inadequate housing threatens health and well-being, says NIGEL CRISP

Compulsory minimum standards needed to address the link between poor housing and poor health in the UK, writes Lord Nigel Crisp.

By LORD NIGEL CRISP  
22:01, Sat, Jun 10, 2023 | UPDATED: 10:03, Sun, Jun 11, 2023



10



Call for action (Image: Getty)

It's a constant anxiety. I wake up every morning, and think, 'I need to move. Where on earth am I going to move to?'

Over 125,000 children live in temporary accommodation.  
6 in 10 parents say it is harming their children's health.

## Millions in poor housing in England suffer ill-health due to legal delays, says Shelter

Exclusive: Campaigners concerned that opposition from Tory MPs is delaying legal protections for renters



'I'm mentally strong but those six months broke me': Dave Lockyer said the stress of looking for a new home after being evicted was 'unbelievable'. Photograph: Teri Pengilly/The Guardian



### The problem

But there is a big problem with the way most homes are planned for and built in the UK: we don't spend enough time thinking about the long term health and wellbeing impacts of the homes and neighbourhoods we build.

This has led to too many people having to live in poor quality, unaffordable homes often in disconnected places, with knock-on effects on both their mental and physical health.



**What to do**

**Use an explanatory metaphor**

Housing is the **foundation** of people's lives. And just like **foundations** need to be **sturdy and strong to support** a building, people need homes they can afford so they can **build a good base** for their lives.

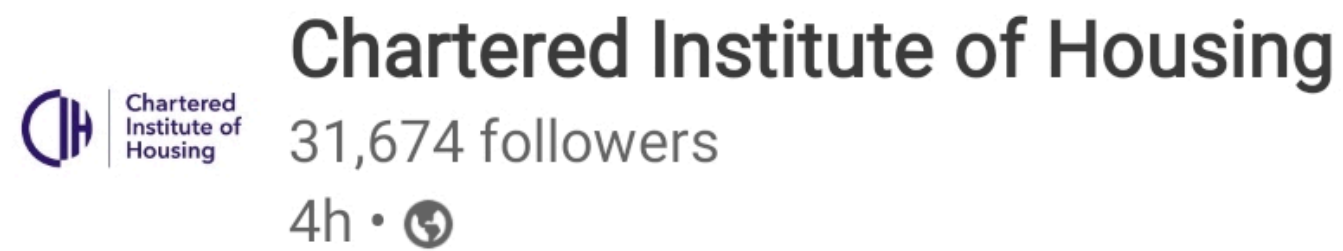
# The 'Foundation' metaphor

- Makes a complex idea concrete and immediate
- In this case, showing that homes are essential for a decent life
- Opens up thinking about quality and positive impact





A safe, stable home provides a foundation that's essential for everything else.



📣 Decent and affordable homes make our lives better - providing the safe and secure foundation we all need. But shortages and unequal access mean too many people (often the most vulnerable) are forced to live in overcrowded, insecure and poor-quality homes. We're all paying the price.

“Without a safe home, we don’t have **the foundations to thrive.**”

“When we live in a safe, secure and affordable home, it supports our health and wellbeing and provides us with **the solid base we need to thrive in life.**”

**We all need a stable home as a foundation for a decent life.  
Yet most people living in temporary accommodation  
have been there for a year or more.**

Shelter, Still Living in Limbo report

**What to do**

**Build understanding of what  
social homes are**

## For example

Social homes are **provided by either local councils or housing associations** (not-for-profit organisations that own, let, and manage rented housing). They are **designed to be more affordable** than private renting and **provide a more secure, long-term foundation** for people's lives.

## Question 2

**How do social homes work?  
What's not working, and why?**

**What to do**

**Explain how social homes  
prevent poverty and hardship**

# **Explaining vs asserting**

# When we don't explain

“Social homes prevent poverty and hardship.”

**Think:** “So does working harder”



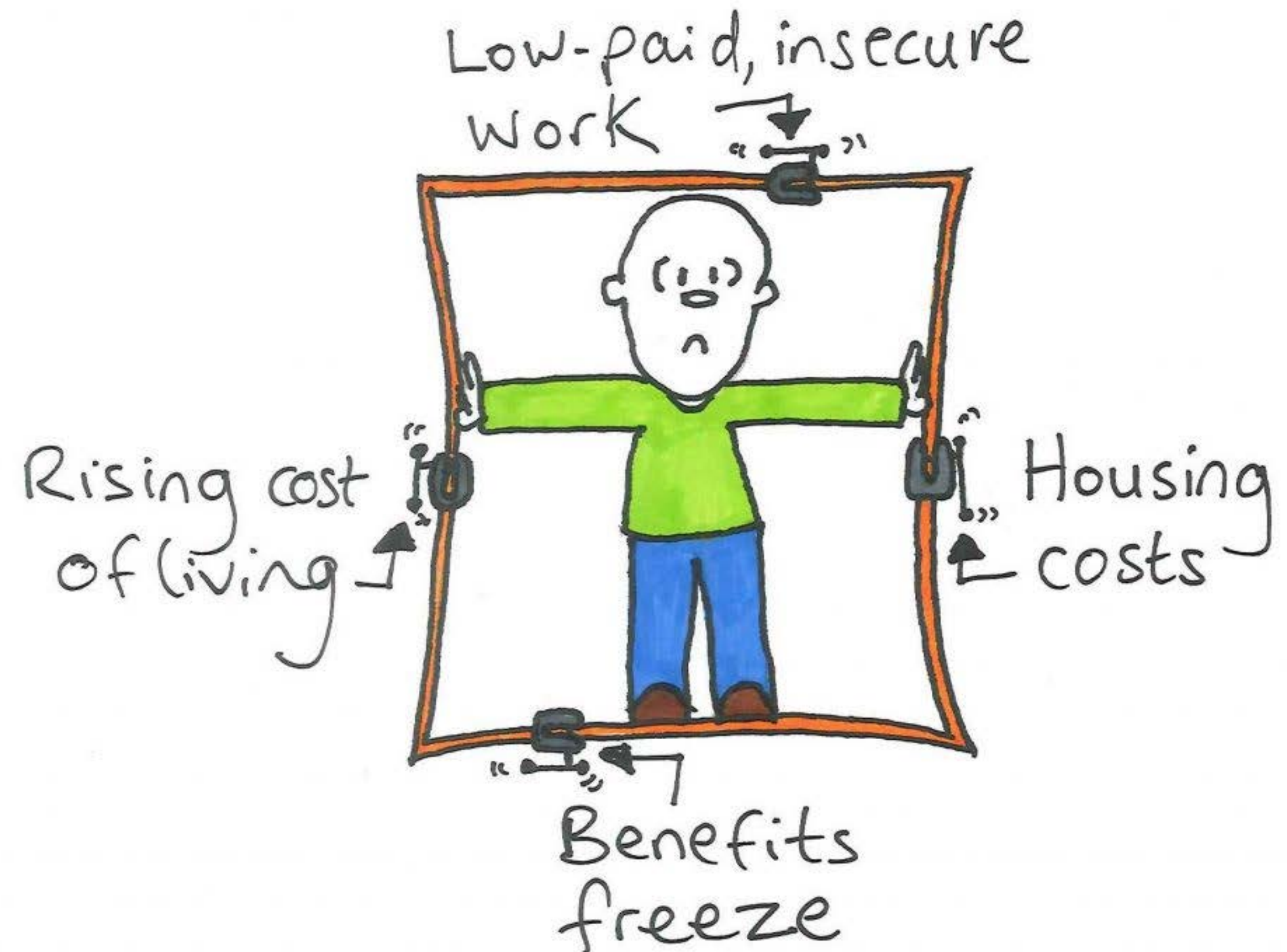
# When we explain

Social homes can prevent people from becoming trapped in poverty, **because** they are the only type of housing where rents are linked to local incomes. **So**, this helps to keep rent affordable and stops people's incomes from being squeezed.

**Solution:** Building more social homes would relieve this pressure for many more people.

# The 'restricts and restrains' metaphor

- Helps to show how people can get locked in poverty
- Shows how poverty restricts options and opportunities
- Can be used to talk about solutions



‘Social homes help to **release people from the constraints** of poverty.’

‘Social homes **unlock opportunities** for people to...’

‘Social homes can help to **loosen poverty’s grip.**’

‘Having the solid foundation of a social home is essential for people who are **struggling under the weight of poverty**. An affordable place to call home **relieves the pressure on** people’s lives, and on their mental health too.’

**What to do**

**Show how supply and quality  
have been undermined**

# How to do it

- Break it down and focus on one aspect of the problem at a time
- Name who is responsible
- Explain how the problem has come about
- Point to what can be done about it



## For example

Since the 80s, **successive governments** have largely relied on private developers to take responsibility for building social homes. But social housing providers of all kinds have **lacked access to the resources and powers needed** to come close to meeting our need. **We need our new government to step up** and start taking responsibility again.

### Question 3

**What can we do about the shortage of social homes?**

**What to do**

**Get specific about solutions – in  
the short and long term**

# How to do it

- Talk explicitly about the fact that ***we can change this***
- Give people **concrete solutions** – mention them often and early
- Talk about what can be done **right now**, and what needs to be put in place **long term**

# Watch out

## Don't overdo crisis messages

- Likely to trigger fatalism
- Balance this out in tone and content (2:1 ratio)
- Make sure solutions aren't buried (or missing!)





## For example

We urgently need our government to **step up and invest in our health** by building more social homes. From the Second World War up to 1980, we were building an average of around 126,000 social homes every year. Last year, there were only 7,528 new social homes. **We've done it before, and we can do it again** – but we need our government to act now and put in place a long-term plan for increasing the number of social homes.

# When telling any story, we need to answer these questions

**What's this about and why does it matter?**

**Connect social homes with our health + wellbeing**

**Build understanding of what social homes are and the 'foundation' they provide**

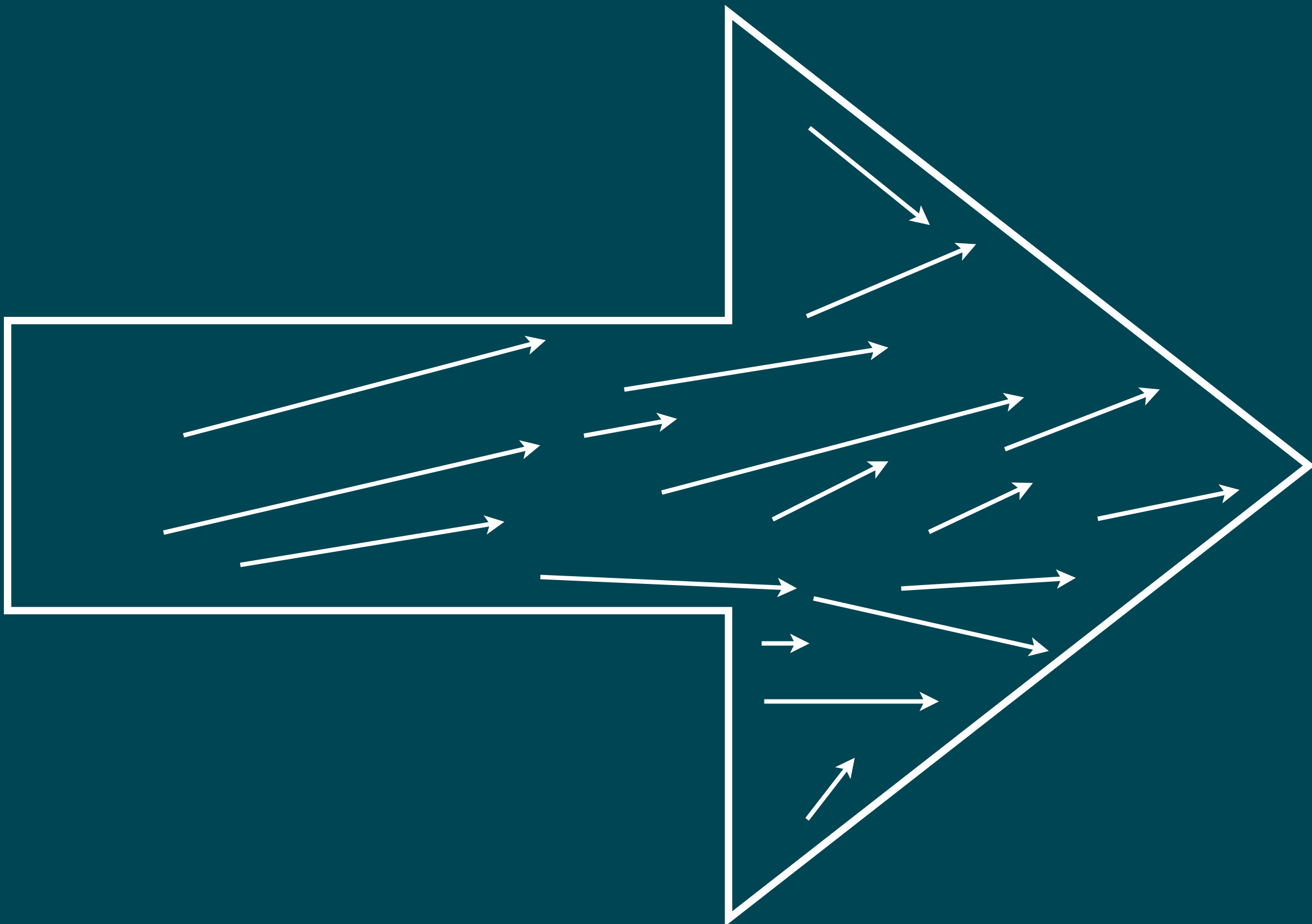
**How does this work, and if it's not working, why not?**

**Explain how social homes prevent poverty and hardship**

**Show how supply and quality have been undermined**

**What can we do about it?**

**Get specific about solutions – in the short and long term**



# Thank you

**[frameworksuk.org](https://frameworksuk.org)**

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**Thank you**  
**Any questions?**

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