

FRONTLINE WORKER SURVEY 2022



December early findings

Our sixth annual UK-wide survey of
frontline workers supporting people
experiencing homelessness



**Frontline
Network**

About the survey

The Frontline Worker Survey is conducted by St Martin-in-the-fields Charity each year. It amplifies the voices of frontline staff across the UK who support people experiencing homelessness, helping to inform policy and practice to end homelessness.

Responses to the Frontline Worker Survey 2022 were gathered between 21st November and 12th December 2022. In total 1,182 frontline workers from across the four nations responded to the survey: including 915 people based in England, 107 in Scotland, 90 in Wales and 31 in Northern Ireland. Please note, not every participant

completed every survey question, Additional notes on methodology will be published alongside the full findings.

We define a frontline worker as anyone directly supporting people experiencing homelessness. This includes those working in the public, statutory and voluntary sectors. Frontline staff responding to this survey work in roles such as outreach, housing, social work, and probation. We also accept responses from volunteers who directly support people experiencing homelessness, these individuals made up a small proportion of respondents (1.1%).

Summary of findings

The initial data from the survey has shown three clear trends from the responses of frontline workers. These can be categorised as:

1

The majority of frontline workers are seeing an increase in need at their homelessness services.

78%

saw the demand for their service increase in the last 12 months

42%

said access to appropriate accommodation had decreased in the last 12 months

2

Staff reported significant issues when it came to accessing accommodation for people facing homelessness.

3

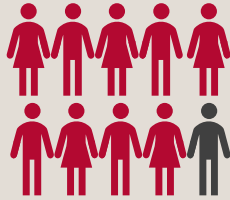
Frontline workers themselves are also being significantly affected by the rising cost of living.

32%

said they were struggling to pay housing costs

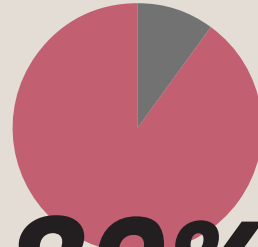
1. An increase in need

Frontline workers were supporting people who had recently experienced increased living costs (e.g. energy, food), and of those:



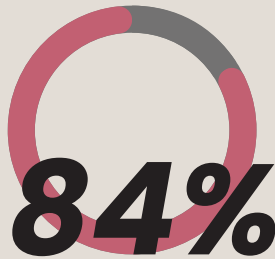
90%

were supporting people
who were at risk of
going hungry



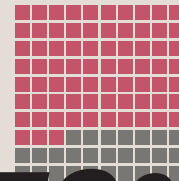
89%

were supporting people
who were at risk of
building up rent arrears



84%

were supporting people
who were at risk of
eviction



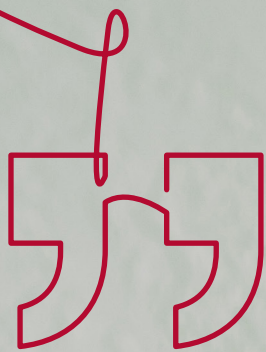
73%

were supporting people
who were at risk of
sleeping rough

Quotes from surveyed frontline workers:

Many are going cold. In some circumstances, that could be critical for health.

The impact of cost of living and lack of affordable housing is devastating.



"If you were getting by before, you are now struggling, if you were struggling before, you are now in crisis."

2. Issues accessing accommodation

91%

found obtaining specialist accommodation for people they supported 'very difficult' or 'difficult'

90%

found obtaining private rented accommodation for people they supported 'very difficult' or 'difficult'

83%

found obtaining social housing for people they supported 'very difficult' or 'difficult'

Quotes from surveyed frontline workers:

”

I have clients working 35 hours a week, with references who can't get a bedsit 40 minutes outside of the city, it's terrifying as there is nothing more they can do.

Temporary accommodation is often not fit for purpose or completely uproots families from the area in which they have made and established local area connections.

There is a chronic lack of social housing and affordable private rental accommodation. The LHA rate is nowhere near the market rental values here.*

*Local Housing Allowance



"There is so little accommodation in this area across the board that when options do become available, competition is so high that people fall between the cracks."

3. Frontline workers struggling

Whilst undertaking this important work to support people experiencing homelessness, frontline workers themselves are also being significantly affected by the rising cost of living:

81%

stated that they were **cutting back** on leisure activities to save money

64%

stated that fuel costs related to their work were putting an **extra strain** on their personal finances

41%

said that they were **struggling to pay bills**

28%

said that they were **taking on additional paid work** to help cover their costs

12%

stated that they were worried about **becoming homeless themselves**

7%

said that they were **using foodbanks**

Quotes from surveyed frontline workers:

”

My mileage costs don't cover my petrol, it's eating into my actual wages, I am poorer in my job.

I am limiting myself to putting heating on for an hour a day at night, and sitting with many layers and a blanket – I am cold at home, but cannot do anything about that.

I work Monday-Friday as a support worker, and work two 12-hour security shifts on the weekends to be able to afford to live.

“

Thank you to everyone who took part in the 2022 Frontline Worker Survey. We will be sharing more of the findings in early 2023.

To receive updates from the Frontline Network, subscribe to our newsletter. In the meantime, the complete 2021 Survey findings can be found on the Frontline Network's website.



frontlinenetwork.org.uk

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