



Department
for Transport

bActive Charm Research: DfT response

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Increasing interest in behaviour across government

DfT Behavioural Insights Toolkit

- Building on existing knowledge of behavioural insights and combining it with specific evidence on transport, DfT published a **Behavioural Insights Toolkit** in 2011 which aims to help develop and deliver more effective transport initiatives.
- Takes users through a step-by-step process to help them take account of behavioural insights when developing policy and delivery initiatives:

Understanding what you are trying to achieve

What do theories/evidence say about what influences travel behaviour?
Which behaviours am I interested in, and why?

Understanding how to achieve your objectives

What behavioural insights can I use to achieve policy objectives?
Is my organisation best placed to influence behaviour? Who else can help?

Getting feedback on whether your initiatives work

How do I know if my initiative has been successful?



Segmentation is key – one size does not fit all

Car owning segments (at least one vehicle in household)



- 1 Older, less mobile car owners** (9% of population)
- Older, all have mobility difficulties
 - Transport behaviour shaped by lack of mobility
 - Travel less than all other car owning segments
 - Heavily reliant on the car to get around



- 2 Less affluent urban young families** (21% of population)
- Lower travel needs, desire to own larger/faster car but behaviour constrained by relatively low income
 - Relatively less reliant on the car than other car owning groups
 - Less well educated, more ambivalent about climate change



- 3 Less affluent older sceptics** (12% of population)
- Older, very few have mobility difficulties; less affluent.
 - Lower travel needs, related to lower incomes and life-stage
 - Low level of education, more sceptical about climate change



- 4 Affluent empty nesters** (9% of population)
- Older, largely retired, affluent, well educated
 - Average levels of car travel; drive less than younger affluent segments
 - Mostly likely segment to buy cars brand new
 - Pro-environmental but more sceptical about climate change specifically



- 5 Educated suburban families** (17% of population)
- Working age, higher income, well educated, many have children
 - Travel and drive a lot; most likely segment to travel by plane
 - Positive about cycling, but distances and safety are barriers
 - Concerned about climate change but have high travel needs



- 6 Town and rural heavy car use** (13% of population)
- Working age, higher income but less well educated
 - Most 'rural' segment, but also living in urban areas
 - Highest levels of car ownership and car travel; own largest cars
 - Speed/performance and style/design important in car buying

Non-car owning segments (no vehicle in household)



- 7 Elderly without cars** (6% of population)
- Oldest segment, high level of mobility difficulties
 - Very low travel needs, do not travel long distances
 - Reliant on lifts from others and public transport to get around



- 8 Young urbanites without cars** (7% of population)
- Younger, well educated, big city-dwellers (many in London)
 - Heavily reliant on walking and public transport to get around
 - Transport behaviour results from location and life-stage, may change



- 9 Urban low income without cars** (5% of population)
- Younger, low income, low education, high levels of unemployment
 - Low travel needs, reliant on walking and public transport
 - Aspire to car ownership but cannot afford a car

- The 'Climate Change and Transport Choices' segmentation model splits the adult (age 16 plus) population of England into nine groups or segments defined by their travel behaviour, attitudes, demographics and circumstances
- Provides a rich understanding of how and why transport behaviour and attitudes vary
- Commissioned for climate change policy, but has **far wider potential** to inform transport policy and delivery, given its wide scope, including:
 - Car ownership, purchasing and use
 - Public transport use
 - Cycling and walking
 - Commuting and business travel

Thoughts on the CHARM bActive findings

- Encouraging – suggestion that feedback ‘works’ for some groups for at least a six-week period
- BUT – wider evidence suggests caution needed in terms of assuming similar impacts:
 - Among the wider population (e.g. women, older age groups, rural-dwellers)
 - Over a longer period of time (than six weeks)



Factors which influence travel choices

Collective objective

factors:

‘Hard facts’ which relate to things bigger than the individual person, e.g. journey distances, availability of transport infrastructure / services, the weather, traffic volumes / speed, vehicle prices, fuel prices, ticket prices

Collective subjective

factors:

Perceptions which are held at a group rather than an individual level, e.g. group cultures, social/cultural norms, cultural values, trust in organisations / services

Individual objective

factors:

‘Hard facts’ which relate to a specific individual, e.g. personal capabilities / skills, resource constraints / income, knowledge / understanding / awareness, habit

Individual subjective

factors:

Perceptions which relate to the individual person, e.g. personal norms, perceptions of identity and status, perceptions of costs, perceptions of safety / risk

Key factors influencing travel choices

- Car ownership
- Income and (type of) employment
- Age / life-stage
- Location (city centre vs. other urban vs. rural)
- Gender
- **Implication:** we cannot assume that findings that hold true for one group will hold true for others



What about long-term impacts?

- Habits can maintain changes – but life events (e.g. moving house) may disrupt habits
- Longitudinal research is necessary to understand long-term impacts and establish causality
- DfT has contributed towards the UK household panel study *Understanding Society* – a world-leading longitudinal study of 100,000 individuals / 40,000 households



- The bActive study has shown an app can increase levels of walking
- But key questions remain:
 - How generalisable are the findings?
 - How long does the impact last?
- Further research could help:
 - With other groups (e.g. women, older age groups, rural dwellers)
 - Over time to measure long-term impacts and (potentially disruptive) influence of life-events



- DfT Behavioural Insights Toolkit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behavioural-insights-toolkit>
- Climate Change and Transport Choices segmentation study: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/climate-change-and-transport-choices-segmentation-study-final-report>
- Understanding Society: <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/>
- Evaluation guidance (Magenta Book): http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data_magentabook_index.htm