

DEFRA: Household Waste 'Duty of Care' – Qualitative research

Topic Guide

Background and Aims

People and organisations involved with waste disposal and recovery activities in England and Wales are subject to duty of care requirements which are designed to ensure that waste is handled legally and responsibly. However, it is evident that many households are unaware of their responsibilities within the duty of care and, therefore, failing to comply.

The Waste Regulation and Crime Team in Defra has a responsibility for overseeing the regulatory framework which underpins this waste duty of care. It is therefore concerned to address this issue of fly-tipping and ensure householders begin to recognise and abide by their duty of care – particularly as fly-tipping is estimated to cost local authorities £60m a year. Of notable concern is a significant lack of awareness of the duty itself, which was highlighted in a recent Government consultation on the potential introduction of fixed penalty fare notices. This indicates that steps need to be taken to ensure that householders are made aware of and engage with their obligations.

This project therefore aims to provide guidance and principles for LAs and other organisations about how best to produce communications to householders which effectively raise awareness and increase understanding and engagement with the duty.

The objectives for these groups are:

- To understand current awareness and attitude towards the householder's duty of care
- To test a range of creative executions to determine which details are likely to be most effective in raising awareness and increasing engagement with the duty
- To determine how the preferred messages, visuals or other elements could be adapted and via which channel

Participant information

Moderator to hand out participant information security leaflets. This is a GDPR requirement.

Note to Moderators

Throughout these groups, the aim is to explore what drives opinions and potential behaviours (e.g. specific visual or message elements). We are also interested in how people communicate about rubbish and responsibility as much as their stated opinions about the ideas introduced.

Please note, this guide is not a script and is intended to be used flexibly, with participant responses guiding the flow of the conversation, topics covered in the order that they naturally arise and

prompts used to deepen the discussion. It does not always include follow-up questions like 'why', 'when', 'how', etc. as these are part of the researchers' repertoire and because participants' contributions will be fully explored in response to what they tell us throughout, in order to understand how and why views have arisen.

Stimulus & materials list

- Flipchart paper
- Note pads
- Pens
- Dictaphone
- Incentive sheets
- Self-completion exercise form

	Platform idea	Behavioural insight (background for moderator)	Stimulus <i>(note there will be 3 stimulus executions for each platform)</i>
1	Make it easy, make it timely	Increase cognitive ease: make it easy so people can't excuse themselves from responsibility. Authority Bias: picking an authoritative messenger to inform people / pay attention	TBC
2	Traceable Doors OR	Concreteness: using straightforward language to heighten perception that committing this offence can, and will, be traced back to you. Consistency: reminding people that they are responsible waste disposers	TBC
	Don't Pay twice	Loss aversion: emphasising using an unlicensed carrier could result in fine / immediate loss to the individual (rather than the environment/council).	TBC
3	Collection scammers	Sapir Whorf hypothesis: demonise unlicensed waste carriers by creating a new name for them. Evoke feelings of moral outrage.	TBC

Rotation schedule – to be added once stimulus confirmed

1. Introduction

(2 minutes)

- **Warm up and introduction**
 - Introduce moderator and Kantar Public – an independent social research agency
 - Research on behalf of DEFRA. They want to understand how they can encourage people to take responsibility for their rubbish.
 - The research will be used to help local authorities develop their own communications campaigns
 - Length – 90 mins
 - This is going to be a creative and interactive session and there are no right or wrong answers – interested in your views.
 - Research is voluntary – you can stop participating any time
 - The information will be used for research purposes only
 - Research is confidential and anonymous – your personal details will not be shared and your name will not appear in the reporting.
- **Recording**
 - Ask participant for permission to record, then start recording and confirm consent
 - Any questions?

2. Warm up

(5 minutes)

- **Participant introductions**
 - Name, who they live with, type of accommodation and one thing they love about where they live

3. Contextual discussion

(20 minutes)

Moderator to explore participants' local context/environment, more generally and in respect to how rubbish is managed. Then move into a discussion about awareness and attitude towards householders' duty of care.

- **Their local area / environment:**
 - How would they describe their local area / environment to a stranger?
 - What are the best / worst things about the local environment?
 - Whose responsibility is it, or should it be, to care for the local environment? Why?
- **Explore how rubbish is managed in their area:**
 - If they wanted to get rid of unwanted household items (e.g. old furniture, bedding, electricals, etc.) how would you go about this?

- Who would they contact?
- How would they find out about them?
- Is it clear where this waste is taken or where it ends up?
- How much involvement does the local authority have in this process?
- Are there any issues with this process?
- **Awareness and views of fly-tipping**
 - Do they know what 'fly-tipping' means?
 - What images does this bring to mind?
 - Is it an issue in your area?
 - Who do they think is responsible?
- **Explore awareness of householder's duty of care (5 mins)**
 - Spontaneous: how many people have heard of this? (hands up)
 - What do they think it means?

Moderator read out description of the duty of care: 'The householders duty of care is the requirement that people must check that the carrier they have used to dispose of their waste is authorised and not fly-tipping.'

- Spontaneous: what are their thoughts after hearing the description?

Moderator to explain that government are thinking of introducing Fixed Penalty Notices of £200 to members of the public that do not comply with their duty of care to try and reduce incidences of fly-tipping:

- Spontaneous reactions: what are their thoughts on this?
- Does it seem a fair / reasonable course of action?
- How do they think this might be enforced?

4. Reactions to platforms

(50 - 65 minutes)

Order of platforms tested will be rotated. Materials/stimulus packs for each are to be shown/handed out one by one. N.B. More time will be spent discussing the first execution within the platform before discussing how they work across different executions.

Moderator to explain the following points before starting:

- We will now be showing a range of possible campaign ideas or materials which could be rolled out across local authorities to encourage people to take responsibility for their waste.
- These are works in progress and not necessarily what would be used in final communication. We would like feedback on these materials – including views on how they can be improved.

Moderator: Individual self-completion exercise: after introducing the first idea, ask participants to write down their initial impressions before starting group discussion.

4.1 Platform 1, 2 and 3:

Moderator: For the first platform, explore responses to two executions, then show message on its own, then show message and all executions together.

For other platforms, show message on its own, then collect responses to one execution, then message and all executions together.

For each execution and for message explore:

Communications testing principle	Questions (Always probe for what is driving responses)
Spontaneous reaction / Appeal / Saliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial thoughts ▪ What does it bring to mind ▪ Would they notice / pay attention to this? Likes / dislikes – why?
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the main message(s)? How would they put this in their own words? ▪ What is it encouraging them to do? ▪ Anything difficult to understand/unclear? ▪ Who do they think is delivering the message? Why?
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who they think this is aimed at? ▪ How relevant is this to them? Why/why not?
Emotional engagement and tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How would they describe the tone? ▪ How does it make them feel? Why? ▪ If they were describing this to a friend, what would they say?
Standout / Cut through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would they be likely to pay attention to it? Why/Why not? ▪ How similar/different from other campaigns?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would they be likely to change their behaviour/take any action as a result of seeing this? In what way(s)?

- **Moderator:** Show message and all executions then discuss platform as a whole **Spontaneous thoughts**
 - How would they describe the overall platform?
 - What do they think it is trying to do?
 - What works well / now so well?
- **Where would they most expect to see this? (e.g. on social media, posters, leaflets)?**

- When would they want to receive this message? Why then? How do they think the channel impacts on how they view / receive the message?
- **To what extent does this platform make them:**
 - Feel confident that they would now check whether a waste carrier was licensed?
 - Fully understand their responsibility towards their rubbish?
 - Pay attention to the duty / now think it is an issue to be supported?
 - Want to look for further information on the subject?
 - Share knowledge / talk about it with others?
- **Do any executions work particularly well?**
 - Why these? What about them?
- **Improvements / modifications:**
 - What changes or improvements could be made to the message to ensure the above?
 - What changes or improvements could be made to the executions to ensure the above? (Probe: content, length, tone, visuals)

4.2 Evaluation of all ideas: (10 – 15 mins)

Moderator – now discuss all platforms together.

If the answers to the below do not fall out spontaneously then probe as to why not.

- **Ranking platform messages in terms of most / least likely to make them:**
 - Feel confident that they would now check whether a waste carrier was licensed?
 - Fully understand their responsibility towards their rubbish?
 - Pay attention to the duty / now think it is an issue to be supported?
 - Want to look for further information on the subject?
 - Share knowledge / talk about it with others?
- **Repeating the above for executions**
- **Optimisation and Sum-up**
 - Would they combine any of the platforms / elements of them? (Probe: content, tone, length, tone, specific visuals)
 - What final changes or improvements could be made to the selected idea/s
 - What format and channel should this be communicated through?

5. Final reflections

(5 minutes)

- Final thoughts and views on the platforms

- Whether they will now take any action as a result of seeing the materials [refer to flipchart list]
- Anything else they would like to discuss/share
- Confirm incentive process - £40 either as an online (PERKS) voucher or as a PayPal payment as arranged with recruiter

Thank and close