



**KANTAR PUBLIC**=

Prototyping and testing  
behavioural insight informed  
communication materials about  
the Household Waste Duty of  
Care

## Executive Summary

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# Executive Summary

## About the Project:

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. For householders disposing of their waste this is limited to ensuring that whoever takes their waste is authorised to do so ('the Household Waste Duty of Care').

On 26 November 2018 the Government introduced legislation for a fixed penalty notice as a more proportionate means for addressing breaches of the Duty of Care. In advance of this, Defra commissioned Kantar Public to carry out a project using behavioural science to understand the most effective means for local authorities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to raise awareness and increase understanding and engagement with the Household Waste Duty of Care. The project involved four key stages and resulted in a range of communications principles and guidance for local authorities and NGOs. The principles and guidance were achieved through a process of developing and testing example communication materials aimed at influencing the behaviour of individuals to encourage them to comply with the Household Waste Duty of Care.

## Specific research objectives included:

- To understand current awareness and attitudes towards the Household Waste Duty of Care (addressed in stages 1 and 3 of the research)
- To use behavioural insights science and knowledge to develop a range of 'communications platforms' (the foundational creative idea or strategy to appeal to the interests of the target audience) that are likely to be effective at raising awareness, engagement with and adherence to the Duty of Care (addressed in stage 2 of the research)
- To test the communications platforms and a range of prototype materials (creative examples to bring platform to life) to understand how participants respond to the underlying behavioural insights messages (addressed in stage 3 of the research)

- To determine which elements of the prototype materials are likely to be most effective in raising awareness and increasing engagement with the Duty of Care (addressed in stage 4 of the research)
- To test and determine how the preferred messages, visuals or other elements could be adapted and via which channel (addressed in stage 4 of the research)

The four key stages of the research were:

- 1. Obtaining a greater understanding of the influences on behaviour around waste disposal:** An insight audit to understand and map the influences on behaviour around waste disposal through a rapid evidence review of available literature and telephone interviews with five local authority representatives.
- 2. Applying behavioural insight to the development of communications platforms:** Sharing this insight with creative partners at the Ogilvy Centre for Behavioural Science to develop a range of 'communications platforms' (the foundational creative idea or strategy to appeal to the interests of the target audience) which drew upon different behavioural levers to increase awareness and adherence.
- 3. Understanding awareness and testing communications platforms:** Eight discussion groups were conducted to: explore awareness of and attitudes towards the Duty of Care and waste disposal; and test communications platforms and creative prototypes (creative examples which brought the platforms to life).  
  
Discussion groups were chosen because of their potential to produce deep insight into participants' responses to the materials. However, because of the limited numbers involved it is not possible to make broad generalisations from the findings.
- 4. Generating communications principles and guidance:** Generating a range of principles as to which communications platforms and underlying behavioural levers could be most effective at raising awareness and adherence to the Duty of Care. These were then used to develop a Communications Guide (link: [http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=14401\\_Defra\\_Household\\_Waste\\_Duty\\_of\\_Care\\_FINAL\\_COMMUNICATIONS\\_GUIDE\\_19122018.pdf](http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Document.aspx?Document=14401_Defra_Household_Waste_Duty_of_Care_FINAL_COMMUNICATIONS_GUIDE_19122018.pdf))

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Stages 1 & 2 resulted in four behavioural insight informed communications platform ideas ('Behavioural Strategies', see below) that were subsequently tested in discussion groups.

Behavioural Strategy	Communications platform name
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase <b>cognitive ease</b>: make it easy to find a licensed waste carrier to prevent householders avoiding responsibility</li> <li>▪ Provide all the information needed to find licensed carriers, in a <b>salient</b> and simple way</li> <li>▪ <b>Authority Bias</b>: Identify an authoritative messenger to inform participants</li> <li>▪ Make communications <b>timely</b>: so they prompt people when they are likely to be most receptive</li> </ul>	'Make it Easy, Make it Timely'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use <b>concreteness</b> by using straightforward language to heighten perception that committing this offence can be traced</li> <li>▪ Leverage <b>consistency</b> by reminding participants that they would usually dispose of waste responsibly and not using a licensed waste carrier could result in their waste being fly-tipped</li> </ul>	'Traceable Doors'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage <b>loss aversion</b> by emphasising that using an unlicensed carrier could result in having to pay a fine <i>and</i> for removal of the waste</li> <li>▪ Emphasise the immediate loss to the individual (rather than the environment/council)</li> </ul>	'Don't Pay Twice'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasising that fly-tippers' behaviour is wrong and antisocial, especially since, in this case, householders are paying in good faith to take their rubbish away</li> <li>▪ Leverage the <b>Sapir Whorf hypothesis</b> to categorise unlicensed waste carriers that fly-tip by creating a new name for them. This hypothesis means that by assigning a word or special name to something people automatically build meaning and social norms around it</li> </ul>	'Collection Scammers'

## Understanding current awareness and attitudes

As well as testing the communications platforms at **stage 3**, there was a contextual discussion in the groups which explored awareness of the Household Waste Duty of Care and attitudes towards fly-tipping and waste disposal. The findings are outlined below.

### Current awareness of the Household Waste Duty of Care:

- Across the groups participants tended to have **low levels of awareness** of the Duty of Care and the requirement that third parties disposing of household waste ("waste carriers") must be licensed.
- Some participants **questioned the fairness** of the duty, particularly why they should be held responsible for another's wrong-doing – especially when they were not aware of the rules and regulations around waste disposal.
- This confusion was exacerbated by **low levels of awareness of waste disposal regulations and procedures** more generally.
- Participants **questioned what was considered as 'household waste'**, highlighting that communications would need to show what is meant by household waste and use everyday language to define this.

### Current attitudes towards fly-tipping and waste disposal:

- Participants that had disposed of household waste **expressed some indignation about the cost of council removal services** which were deemed to be relatively expensive in comparison to private carriers and to have increased in price.
- Most participants across the groups **expressed their dislike for fly-tipping** and viewed it as an anti-social act. However, for some, this was an issue which could be **'out of sight, out of mind'**.
- Participants **struggled to make the link** between their own household waste disposal and the act of fly-tipping and recognised that this link would need to be made explicit.
- There was a sense that most unlicensed waste carriers were **just trying to make a living, rather than profiting from fly-tipping people's household waste**.

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## Using the insight from stage 3 to develop principles for the communications guide (stage 4)

The testing of the communications platforms at stage 3 of the research resulted in a set of insights to help shape communications on the Household Waste Duty of Care. We generated principles for communications from these insights and structured them into the Behavioural Insight Team's 'EAST Framework'\*.

We selected the EAST model for the toolkit as it is grounded in behavioural science. From our experience it is a user-friendly framework and provides an effective structure to frame guidance for stakeholder groups.

	Insight from the research	Communications principles
EASY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants preferred messaging which suggested the process was simple, easy and required little additional effort</li> <li>Participants responded positively to messaging aimed at raising awareness of their responsibilities within the Duty of Care and what they need to do to fulfil these. They also liked messaging which clarified what 'household waste' is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead with a very explicit call to action</li> <li>Provide all the information needed to find licensed waste carriers, in a salient and simple way</li> <li>Increase cognitive ease by making it easy to find a licensed waste carrier</li> <li>Where possible use layperson's terms and avoid jargon or sector specific language</li> </ul>
ATTRACTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants preferred communications which framed a loss to the individual by using a concerned tone, rather than punitive tone</li> <li>Participants responded positively to imagery which clearly linked household rubbish with fly-tipping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure messaging is educational, rather than punitive towards the individual</li> <li>Personalise issue and galvanise interest by making content local</li> <li>Where relevant use imagery to communicate key messages</li> </ul>
SOCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants responded positively to messaging which clearly drew attention to the anti-social behaviour of the fly-tipper and the impact on the local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frame duty as a collaborative effort between local authorities and members of the public</li> <li>Draw attention to the unacceptable and anti-social behaviour</li> <li>Create social networks and devise a campaigning element – such as by creating a shared hashtag</li> <li>Encourage coordination of communications regarding fly-tipping and waste disposal</li> </ul>
TIMELY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants recognised that they would be unlikely to pay attention to communications unless it felt relevant to them at the time</li> <li>Participants recognised that messaging about the Duty of Care would need to clearly make the link to other communications about waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate message at points in time and in locations when and where participants would be most receptive to receiving this message</li> <li>Where possible, launch campaigns alongside other communications pieces about waste / fly-tipping, such as via articles in local newspapers</li> </ul>

\* <https://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/publications/east-four-simple-ways-to-apply-behavioural-insights/>