Behaviour Change: A Series of Practical Guides
for Policy-Makers and Practitioners

Number 1

Sustainable Resource Use in the Home

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Contents

1. Introduction to the series

Defra's 5 year strategy (*Delivering the Essentials of Life*[1]) coupled with the UK Government sustainable development strategy (*Securing the Future*[2]) set out an ambitious agenda for environmental leadership and sustainable development. Embedding these core principles relies on influencing change and making it easier for producers and consumers to behave more sustainably. This is a sizeable task, since changing behaviours is a complex matter and innovative solutions are required.

In July 2005, Defra initiated a programme of research that aimed to broaden understanding of how Government (and others) can most effectively promote pro-environmental behaviour amongst producers and consumers. Several studies were commissioned as part of this research programme, each with a remit to explore a unique aspect of pro-environmental behaviour change.

This practical guide forms part of a series of papers that aims to summarise the key findings and policy implications from these studies.

A full list of titles in this series is provided below:

Number 1:   Sustainable Resource Use in the Home

Number 2:   Targeting Specific Lifestyle Groups

Number 3:   Sustainable Development as a "Collective Choice" Problem

Number 4:   Triggering Widespread Adoption of Sustainable Practices

Number 5:   Understanding Choice

Number 6:   Sustainable Shopping and Sustainable Production

Number 7:   Enhancing Sustainability at Farm Level

Number 8:   Tackling the Waste Challenge

Number 9:   Encouraging Sustainability Amongst Small Businesses

Number 10:   Sustainable Resource Use in Business and Organisations

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[1] Defra (2004) *Delivering the essentials of life: Defra's five year strategy*, London: HMSO.
See http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/5year-strategy/index.htm.

[2] Defra (2005) *Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy*, London: HMSO.
See http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm.

This guide is informed by the findings of a recent study, entitled 'Promoting pro-environmental behaviour: existing evidence to inform better policy-making'. The project, undertaken by a consortium led by the Centre for Sustainable Development at the University of Westminster, brought together evidence from theory, policy and practice to identify lessons for how policy-makers can influence pro-environmental behaviour change among different target audiences.

The study involved:

- a review of theory relating to pro-environmental behaviour change at the level of individuals, organisations and whole systems;

- an investigation of practical interventions used to influence pro-environmental behaviour, specifically:

    – a review of the different types of policy interventions available for influencing pro-environmental behaviour, with a detailed analysis of 14 examples of specific policy instruments that have influenced pro-environmental behaviour;

    – detailed analysis and comparison of 14 practical initiatives that have achieved changes in pro-environmental behaviour;

- a synthesis of the theoretical, policy and practical approaches to changing pro-environmental behaviour that aimed to identify any general lessons, lessons about how the three approaches interact and influence each other, and recommendations for future work.

Throughout the study individual behaviour change, organisational change within businesses and other institutions, and change across whole systems of delivery were considered under the seven key areas of activity, namely:

1. Helping businesses produce more sustainably (farmers, food industry and wider industry)

2. Encouraging sustainable consumer behaviour (purchasing)

3. Encouraging sustainable resource use within the home and by businesses (design, energy, water etc.)

4. Tackling the waste challenge (reduce, reuse, recycle by households and businesses)

5. Encouraging sustainable behaviour for different sections of society (e.g. the young)

6. Helping farmers (and fishers) become more sustainable land (marine) managers

7. Sustainable procurement – using Government purchasing to influence markets

The study principally used existing data sources, including reports, theoretical papers, and information available on the Internet. This was supplemented where necessary with primary data collected through telephone interviews and email correspondence (for example, interviews with people involved in the practical case study examples and with policy-makers involved in designing specific policy instruments). The theory review was then sent out to peers to identify any inaccuracies or important omissions.

3. Key findings

The main report from the study is available on the Defra website[3] and presents detailed results from the study. Some of the overarching lessons about good practice in designing policies and supporting practical initiatives for influencing environmental behaviour are summarised below. This is followed by a summary of evidence from our study that is specifically relevant to sustainable resource use in the home.

General lessons from the study

- **Behaviours are complex and non-linear.** Each behaviour is determined by various (often inter-related) factors, many of which need addressing simultaneously to facilitate change. Thus interventions should combine multiple types of instrument in a 'package' of measures (e.g. infrastructure, fiscal measures, and information). It is suggested that interventions first address external factors (most notably infrastructure and pricing) and then internal factors (e.g. psychological or attitudinal). As well as working on multiple factors, interventions need to work on multiple levels – ultimately addressing society as a whole in order to achieve sustained change.

- **Different audiences behave differently, and require targeted and/or tailored interventions.** To be effective, policy measures usually need to be highly context specific. Devolving responsibility for policy development and delivery to local bodies (Local Authorities, business and industry groups, the voluntary sector and community groups) can help to ensure their suitability and can also help to build their legitimacy. Care should be taken to ensure that the relevant skills and resources are available within these organisations to take on these additional duties.

- **The audience for a change intervention should not be regarded as a passive target.** Policy-makers need to view target audiences and other key stakeholders as 'actors' at the heart of the change process. Ideally, a total partnership working approach should be adopted in which change partners (including members of the public) are involved from the start in defining and redefining the problem through a continuous cycle of action and reflection, from which learning and innovation will result.

- **Feedback is vital to driving and sustaining change. Instead of understanding changing behaviour as a single event, it should be viewed as an ongoing process.** Policy-makers should ensure that interventions incorporate opportunities to learn from policy audiences – learning captured and fed back from the change process should influence subsequent policy. In order to facilitate this important reflective process, more effective and consistent data collection and collation is required. In future, the appropriate formal evaluation structures should be put in place at the stage of policy development.

- **Government policy needs to convey a consistent message and visibly pull in one direction.** The suite of policies emerging from government needs to avoid contradictions and inconsistencies in order to convey clear messages to target audiences and the public in general. This requirement for harmony needs to apply to all Defra policies and to those coming from the EU, and (possibly more importantly) to those being developed by other government departments. There needs to be greater collaboration and interdepartmental working to achieve this.

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[3] Visit http://www2.defra.gov.uk/research/project_data/More.asp?I=SD14002&M=KWS&V=behaviour+change&SCOPE=0

- **Individuals have the potential to act as 'change champions'.** Individuals are vital to delivering pro-environmental change, not just for themselves (on the level of individuals) but also within organisations and networks as 'agents for change' (both as managers and 'change champions'). Engaging, and nurturing, key individuals may be more effective in bringing about system-wide change than targeting the behaviour of all individuals.

- **Policy design should incorporate considerations of equity and fairness.** It is clearly important that policy-makers ensure that polices at least avoid disproportionate negative financial and environmental impacts for the most vulnerable in society and where possible reduce inequalities of outcome. Equity concerns are particularly associated with environmental taxes and charges, which can negatively impact on the competitiveness of small businesses, as well as on disadvantaged individuals. Compliance is likely to prove most problematic where policies are perceived as unfair, or poorly targeted, and where alternative options do not appear to be available.

- **Action needs to be taken now to address the pressing environmental problems we face today and in the future.** The appropriateness and relevance of policies to encourage pro-environmental behaviour should be viewed in light of these massive and important global challenges. More far-reaching, targeted and effective policy action is needed than is currently evident. Change takes time, and measures need to be put into place now to influence societal change and respond to environmental pressures.

Specific findings from the study relating to sustainable resource use in the home

Although many behaviour change theories are generic, a number of models and theories specifically relate to sustainable resource use in the home.

a) **Household energy behaviours** – a simple model of environmentally significant behaviours, developed by Paul Stern, has been applied to the case of household energy behaviours (Stern, 2000). This model shows that even in a relatively narrow field of behaviours, the factors influencing behaviour can vary widely. For example, energy saving behaviours around the home, like switching off lights, tend to be 'low consciousness' (i.e. you don't think about them much). These behaviours are likely to be heavily influenced by sub-conscious habit.

However, related behaviours such as installing loft insulation require significant effort and cost, and conscious thought. In this case the actor will need to have a more positive attitude to energy saving. The primary implication for policy-makers is that encouraging individuals to hold positive attitudes to efficient energy use will not result in them undertaking more pro-environmental energy behaviours across the board. Even if interventions are designed to target closely related behaviours, each behaviour should be understood and addressed in turn.

b) Sustainable lifestyles – ongoing research behaviours by Stewart Barr and colleagues at Exeter University (Barr et. Al., 2005) has found that:

People can be grouped into four types depending on their uptake of 40 household pro-environmental behaviours and the frequency of carrying them out. The study divides the public into four clusters of 'Environmentalists': Committed; Mainstream; Occasional; Non-environmentalists. The study shows that not only do the different clusters demostrate the different behaviours to different extents, but that the factors driving the different behaviours vary across the four clusters. Different interventions are required if each cluster is to be effectively encouraged to adopt pro-environmental behaviours.

Different behaviours can be grouped together. The main factor determining their grouping is the extent to which householders see them as habitual, rather than, for example, the type of behaviour (for example, waste, or energy saving). The study's authors suggest that behaviours can best be grouped in terms of the frequency with which actors undertake them. This finding fits closely with that discussed above – i.e. regular, habitual, low-consciousness behaviours are different in nature from consciously deliberate, occasional, behaviours.

c) Changing people's habits – Lewin's Change Theory is commonly cited in the context of changing habitual (low-consciousness) behaviours (Jackson, 2005). In this theory, habitual everyday actions need to be brought to conscious attention and clearly thought about ("unfrozen"), before they are changed and allowed to become new habits through frequent repetition ("refrozen"). This unfreezing-refreezing dynamic can be observed in practical behaviour change programmes working with individuals in small groups (for example, GAP's EcoTeams – see below). An implication may be that changing habitual behaviours requires more one to one dialogue, social interactions, and long-term engagement.

A note on using behaviour change theories and models

There are many models and theories that attempt to describe environmental behaviour. Most relate to generic behaviours – for example, all pro-environmental behaviours rather than just, say, recycling glass. They also tend to average out the behaviour of many individuals to describe an average person's behaviour. Theory and practical experience show that policy changes will not affect all individuals equally and so policy-makers using these models will need to refine them in the relevant context prior to implementation.

A note on using policy tools

Policy tools can provide a powerful and effective way of influencing pro-environmental behaviour (such as, economic incentives, pricing of resources, and regulation). However, they need to be used with caution and care.

• **Complexity.** The impact of policy tools can often be complex and unpredictable, and may not have the intended effect. For example: businesses may choose to absorb the cost of environmental taxes and charges, reducing their impact on consumer behaviour (e.g. airlines could compensate for carbon tax on aviation fuel through price reductions in tourist packages); species-based quotas on fishing fleets have led to the discarding of catches, contributing to an increase in the proportion of 'at risk' species.

- **Distribution and equality of outcomes.** Policy interventions can have negative impacts on equity, for example increasing the price of a resource can impact disproportionately on people living on a low income. Interventions can also impact negatively on business competitiveness, which can impact particularly on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.

- **Value for money.** It is important to recognise the full administrative cost of policies, both to the Government and/or third parties when enforcing compliance.

- **Additionality.** Policy-makers should consider whether beneficiaries of subsidies and/or grants would have behaved in a similar way over time without the intervention.

- **Public response.** Be aware that lack of public acceptance of an intervention may serve to undermine the intervention (e.g. the Fuel Tax Escalator).

- **Scope.** Single interventions are likely to have limited impact. For example, regulation alone is unlikely to encourage longer-term change or establish new social norms. Multiple interventions are needed with, for example, regulation supported by information, fiscal and other incentives, supporting infrastructure and incentives for technical innovation.

4. Policy implications

It is widely recognised that influencing human and organisational behaviour is difficult whatever the policy arena. Our study has identified some basic principles that appear to underlie much behaviour change theory and practice, and some practical lessons that could help policy-makers wishing to encourage pro-environmental behaviours. This section presents a set of practical 'steps' that show how policy-makers and practitioners can apply these principles and lessons when trying to influence pro-environmental behaviours.

The 'steps' overlap to some extent and do not follow in strict chronological order, often needing to be applied in parallel. They do not represent a simple 'how to' or 'step by step' guide. The 'steps' are generic, being applicable regardless of the behaviour in question. In this guide we illustrate them in relation to sustainable resource use in the home.

Step 1: Scoping the task

Pro-environmental behaviours are complex, influenced by multiple factors acting on multiple levels within the context of wider systems. An early important step is to 'unpick' the specific behaviour you want to change and identify the scope of the task. What different elements make up the behaviour you are interested in? What factors could be involved in influencing it? How does the behaviour relate to its wider context?

Policy example: resource use in the home

For resource use in the home the following interlinked factors will be important:

- how individuals in the household behave (e.g. turning off lights, saving water, how much heating they use, whether they buy energy efficient appliances); and

- the context, such as the size and composition of households, the extent of insulation in the home, and the availability of energy or water efficient appliances.

These two aspects can be influenced by a range of factors including: individual habits and attitudes; social norms; socio-economic factors such as income; type of housing stock; energy and water prices; any existing initiatives to help house owners install insulation, and so on. These factors influence each other, and they are all part of a larger system.

Step 2: Developing a more detailed understanding of the behaviours in question

Once we have identified the different factors involved in a behaviour, and its wider context, we can turn to theory and lessons from practice to better understand the behaviour and how to influence it, including:

- models that have been developed or applied specifically for the behaviour in question, and any generic models that can help;

- research findings may, for example, help identify what factors are seen as significant, and at what levels, for different audience groups; and

- relevant practical case studies may help build up a more detailed understanding of the behaviours and what is likely to influence them.

Policy example: resource use in the home

a) Evidence about individual household resource use behaviour

Our study identified two models that have been applied specifically to resource use in the home, and these help us significantly. The two examples, discussed in section 3, highlight that **individual household resource use behaviours fall into two main types:**

- habitual, low consciousness 'saving' actions (such as turning off lights, filling the kettle less and turning off a tap while brushing your teeth), and

- more conscious, less regular 'efficiency' measures (such as installing insulation, or buying more efficient appliances)

We can then draw from more generic behaviour change theory and models to understand how we could go about trying to influence these two different types of behaviour. For example, habit features significantly in behaviour change theories and models, as one of three key internal barriers to pro-environmental behaviour change (Jackson, 2005 – see also our main report). A key practical observation is that **rational appeals to change habitual behaviours, or the provision of information, are unlikely to work in isolation.**

Behaviours that we don't really think about are not easily accessed through appeals to our conscious mind. Instead, **changing habitual behaviours is likely to require a process of 'unfreezing and re-freezing'** – i.e. bringing the behaviours to our conscious attention, then changing them and allowing them to become habits again. This process may be **facilitated by one-to-one dialogue, group working, social interactions and long-term engagement.**

b) Evidence about the context for household resource use

Some important factors here will include:

- the physical context, such as the state of the housing stock, and the energy efficiency of appliances; and

- the socio-economic context, such as the cost of energy and social attitudes to energy saving.

Theory commonly refers to external or infrastructural factors but rarely shows how to address these in practice, except to suggest that **it may be most productive to tackle physical barriers before trying to influence individual behaviour.** A practice-based approach can also be recommended in which different combinations of measures are tried and varied until the most effective combination is found. Practical case studies may be useful here – for example, illustrating how policy approaches can help influence the types of appliances available and people's choice of appliance, or how more energy efficient housing can be developed.

Theory can help with understanding the mechanisms involved in changing the social context, for example:

- Gatersleben and Vlek's 'Needs, Opportunities and Abilities' (NOA) model shows how **individual behaviours are ultimately informed by macro-level 'societal drivers'** (for example, technology, economy or culture) – see figure 1. In turn, individuals' behaviours feed back and shape these societal drivers (Gatersleben and Vlek, 1998).

- Veronica Sharp shows how **consumers, retailers and producers all influence each other** – see figure 2. All three of these audiences, and the relationships between them need to be targeted to achieve change (Sharp, 2005).

4. Policy implications

Figure 1: 'The Needs-Opportunities-Abilities model of consumer behaviour', reproduced from Gatersleben & Vlek (1998)
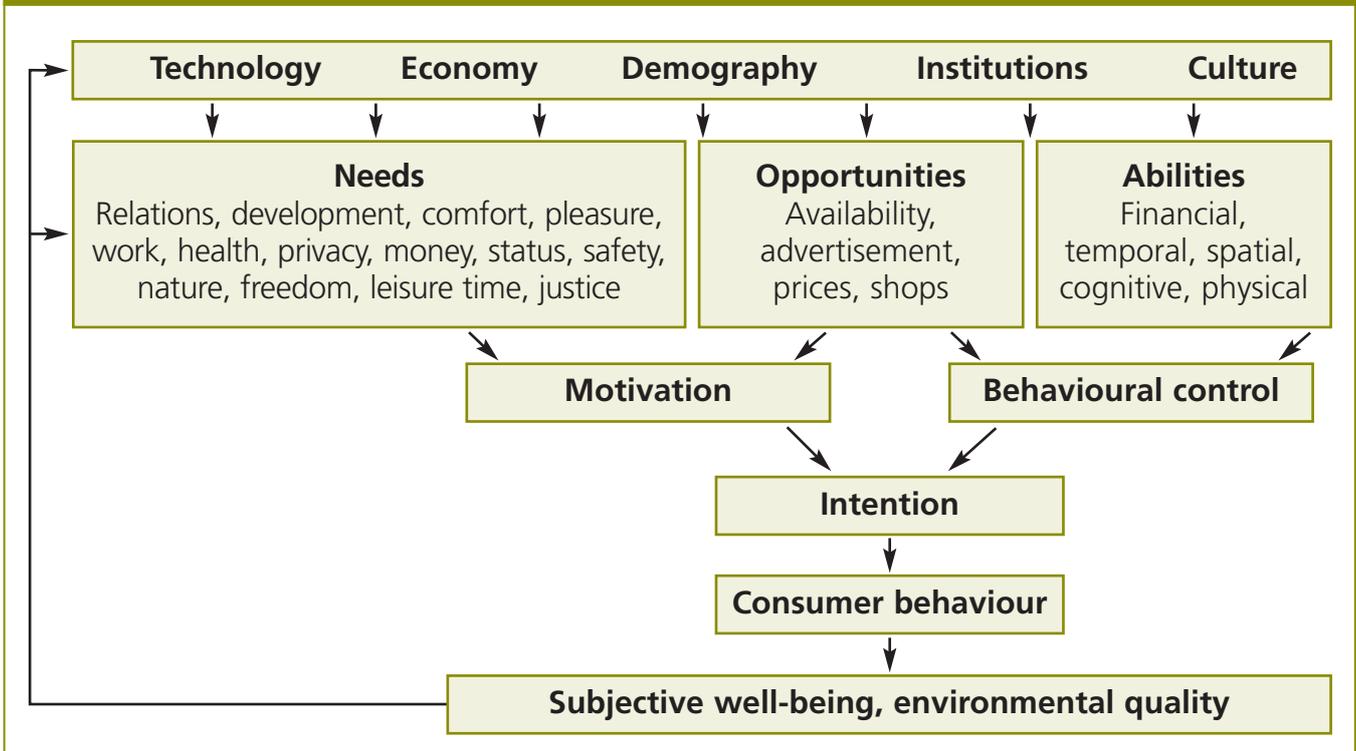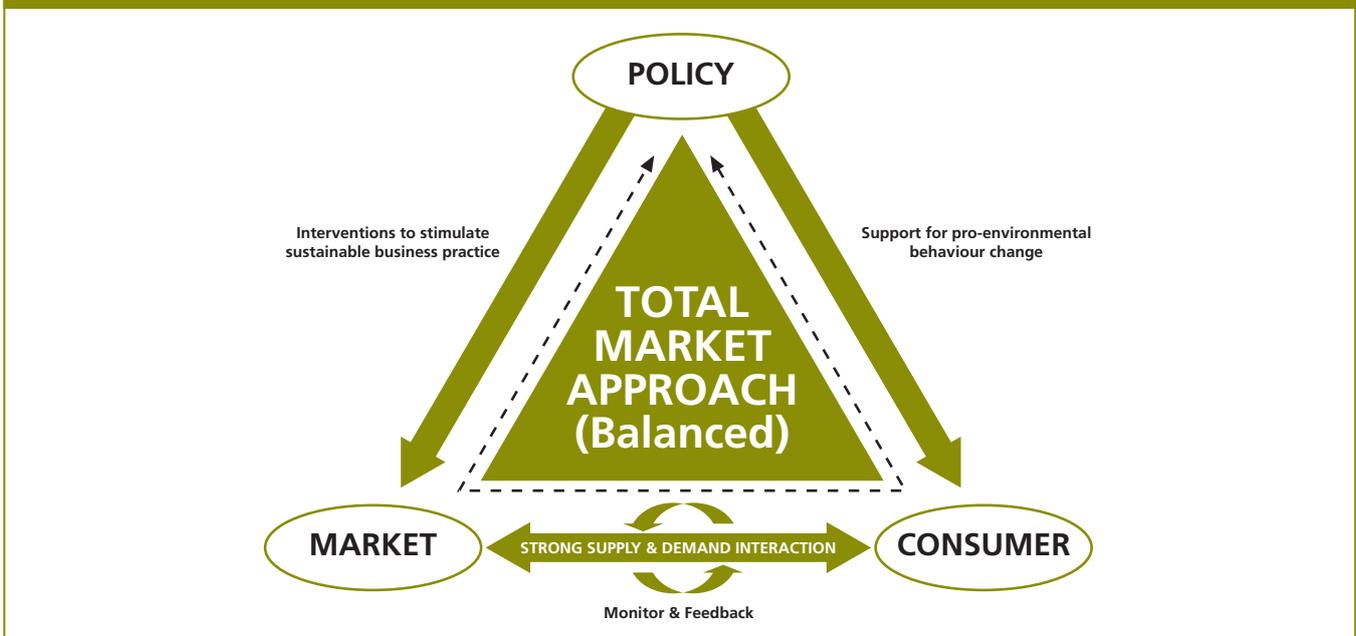

Figure 2: 'Interdependence of policy, market and consumer relationships – Balanced Approach', reproduced from Sharp (2005)

Both of these examples reinforce the conclusion **that interventions need to work on more than one level (i.e. on the individual level, organisational level and wider societal level), and take into account the dynamics between the different levels in a system.**

Step 3: Developing a package of interventions to achieve change

It is important to **take a whole system, outward-looking, approach to influencing an environmental behaviour. 'Single sphere' interventions are unlikely to be effective,** especially in achieving significant lasting change. However, you will be unable to undertake all possible measures, and any policy intervention will be practically limited.

The most effective approach is to **develop a package of focused interventions that influence enough key factors for a behaviour to achieve change.** Fundamental to this is a good understanding of the behaviour, its wider context and the factors that influence it. The other 'steps' discussed below will also be important.

Policy example: resource use in the home

In the case of resource use in the home, we have established that we need to look at changing:

- the habits which drive low-consciousness 'saving' behaviours by individuals;

- the attitudes which shape less regular 'efficiency' measures by individuals;

- the physical context for resource use in the home; and

- the socio-economic context.

In order to achieve significant change we should **consider influencing all of these different aspects together, and each one is likely to require more than one intervention.**

Overall, therefore, we are likely to need **a programme of interventions designed to work with specific groups of 'actors', for example, individuals, developers, landlords and wider society and interactively across these different levels of behaviour.** Each one of these audiences is likely to need a package of measures (see Box 1). For example, we may want to provide: information and awareness raising activities for individuals; programmes to help individual house owners improve the energy efficiency of their home; and practical projects that work with individuals to change their sub-conscious habitual behaviours.
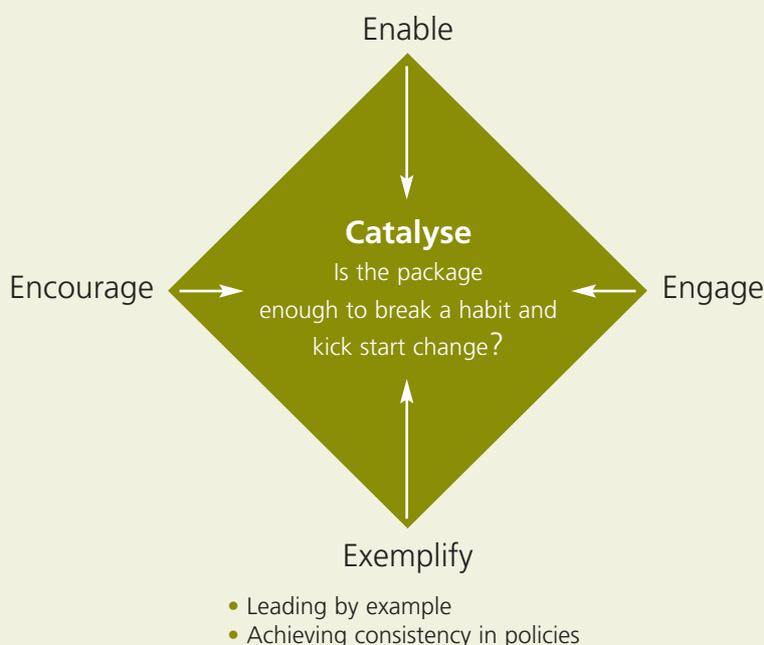
Box 1 – The UK Government Sustainable Development 'Diamond Model': helping you develop a package of measures

The 'Diamond Model' (also known as the '4 E's' model) is a model that provides a framework for thinking about the different approaches policy-makers can take to influence a behaviour, and how to balance these to produce an effective package of interventions which "catalyse" change. The model suggests using a mix of interventions to Enable, Engage, Exemplify and Encourage (HM Government, 2005).

Approach evolves as attitudes and behaviours change over time

- Remove barriers
- Give information
- Provide facilities
- Provide variable alternatives
- Educate/train/provide/skills
- Provide capacity

Enable

- Tax system
- Expenditure – grants
- Reward scheme
- Recognition/social pressure – league tables
- Penalties, fines & enforcement action

Encourage

Catalyse
Is the package enough to break a habit and kick start change?

Engage

- Community action
- Co-production
- Deliberative fora
- Personal contacts /enthusiasts
- Media campaigns /opinion formers
- Use networks

Exemplify

- Leading by example
- Achieving consistency in policies

Step 4: Engaging the target audience

A key early stage in any attempt to influence environmental behaviour is to **engage the audience that you are trying to influence.** Working with actors and stakeholders in a particular area of change is seen as essential in theory at all levels, and emerged as a strong theme in our review of policy tools and practice case studies. In short, your target audience understands the factors that influence their own behaviour, the constraints they face and the practical context within which they are acting better than anyone. Engaging people or organisations early in the policy development process also helps give them ownership of the challenge and means they are less likely to feel threatened by, or hostile to, change.

Policy example: resource use in the home

We may want to engage individual householders in order to understand better the factors that influence their resource use behaviours at home, and draw on their expertise about their own circumstances to co-design appropriate interventions. It is important to remember that different households will behave differently depending on their circumstances, lifestyles, etc. Interventions to influence the energy efficiency of housing stock are likely to be most effective if developed together with delivery stakeholders such as developers, landlords and homeowners.

Step 5: Identifying the tools and approaches available to influence change

Consideration should be given to the tools and approaches that could be effective for the behaviour(s) and audience you are targeting. You should consider:

- the range of policy tools available and whether any have been applied in similar circumstances. The UK Government Sustainable Development 'Diamond Model' may also help here (see Box 1 above);

- the strengths, weaknesses and pitfalls of policy interventions, as discussed in section 3 above;

- what has worked in similar situations – practical case studies may prove helpful; and

- whether relevant theories can be applied.

Policy example: resource use in the home

Our study includes the following three examples relevant to influencing the key factors identified above (see Boxes 2, 3 and 4).

Box 2 – GAP Ecoteams: changing habits to save energy

Ecoteams is a project run by the environmental charity Global Action Plan (GAP) that uses the context of a group to support and encourage individuals to make changes to their environmental behaviour. Ecoteams bring together a small number of individuals or households (usually 6-8) for a four-month programme. The groups discuss different aspects of household environmental impact (including water, electricity and gas use), and ways of changing behaviours, at monthly meetings. The process of discussing these often low-consciousness habitual household behaviours can act to 'unfreeze' them, or bring them to conscious attention. Individuals are then encouraged to consciously try and change so new, more pro-environmental, behaviours become habitual. Individuals monitor aspects of their household's environmental impact, and feed progress back to the group.

Box 3 – Energy Efficiency Advice Centres: supporting less regular, conscious, energy efficiency actions by individuals

52 Energy Efficiency Advice Centres in the UK work to promote and support household energy efficiency. Developed by the Energy Saving Trust (EST), the Centres offer a range of services including: training for practitioners who interact with householders (e.g. health visitors); presentations to schools and community groups; media work to raise public awareness; and services to help householders improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Services for householders include a home energy check list; a free help line; information and advice on grants and other financial help; advice on choosing energy providers and energy efficient appliances; advice on water conservation and renewable energy. The Advice Centres also target the supply-side of the domestic energy market, undertaking partnership building with organisations such as retailers and installers.

Box 4 – BedZED: changing the physical context for resource use in the home

BedZED is an environmentally friendly, energy-efficient, development of 100 housing and work units in South London, designed not to add any net increase in carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. It is the first large-scale development of this kind in the UK. The development provides environmentally friendly infrastructure that by default reduces people's environmental impact from everyday household activities such as heating and water use. Although this approach positively influences aspects of resource use by households, it could miss out on more fundamental change as individuals are not necessarily engaged with thinking about their energy use. Providing infrastructure alone runs the risk of a 'rebound effect' – increased efficiency could be undermined if individuals simply redirect their consumption using the savings that result. For example, residents could keep their homes warmer or spend their savings on driving more (WWF/SEI, 2005). BedZED attempts to counter this problem by offering opportunities for more active environmental behaviour change, for example recycling facilities and a car share scheme, and by actively promoting the idea of sustainable living through an information centre and training.

Step 6: Tailoring approaches to specific circumstances

A key finding from the study was that **even seemingly closely related behaviours are likely to work in different ways** – pro-environmental behaviours are extremely context – and audience-specific. Therefore, for each specific intervention it will be necessary to specify exactly which behaviours, (or aspects of a behaviour), you want to target, who an intervention will be aimed at, and the context in which this is to be done. Each intervention will need adapting and refining in practice, if possible with input from the target audience. Even where you are applying models that have been developed for specific behaviours, or interventions that have been successfully used before, the different context and audience need to be taken into account each time (see Box 5).

Policy example: resource use in the home

If, for example, you decided to develop a new advice centre to influence conscious investment in energy efficiency measures by individuals, you would need to:

i)   choose exactly which segment of the population you wanted to target (for example, low income or middle class consumers);

ii)   identify the spatial level of intervention (for example inner city or rural); and

iii) engage the specific audience that you decided on to find out more about what kinds of interventions are most likely to be appropriate for them.

Relevant findings from our study include:

- **social marketing principles could provide a useful framework for targeting specific audiences and behaviours.** For example, they offer a staged approach to developing change interventions, and a technique of subdividing target audiences (French and Blair Stevens, 2005);

- a number of our practical case studies illustrate how it is important to tailor interventions to specific audiences and situations, with substantial investment often being needed to engage different audiences and develop approaches appropriate to the specific context – a single model cannot be successfully 'parachuted in' each time. Whilst not focused specifically on the home, Box 5 details a practice example from our study demonstrating that a systematic approach at different levels may be required;

- **some individuals or organisations are more important than others in spreading change.** For instance, on the individual level, formal and informal 'champions' encourage other people, and the organisations in which they work, to adopt more environmentally-friendly behaviours. Engaging and nurturing key individuals or organisations may be more effective in bringing about system-wide change than targeting the behaviour of all individuals or organisations.

Box 5 – The Sustainable Hospital Food project: tailoring an approach to different situations

The Sustainable Hospital Food Project demonstrates a tailored approach to delivering a behaviour change intervention in different situations. The project was designed to increase the amount of local, seasonal and organic food used in four London hospitals. The project was delivered by dedicated project staff who carried out intensive hands-on work to develop a suitable, tailored, approach with each hospital, working closely with hospital caterers and procurement managers as well as producers, suppliers, wholesalers, patients and staff. After detailed research into how food was procured in the four hospitals, the main focus for the project workers was to act as 'go-betweens' to identify potential suppliers who could meet the hospitals' needs for produce and then work to get their produce to the hospitals. In addition, the project staff carried out other tailored work in each hospital such as: work with hospital dieticians to redesign the hospital menus; training for hospital caterers and small suppliers; promotional events; and monitoring progress and impact.

Step 7: Understanding your circle of influence and working with others

As discussed above, it is necessary to recognise that you will be unable to do everything. As part of developing a package of interventions that you feel will deliver change, you need to consider what is within your power (or resources – including time, money and manpower) to influence.

Key tools for extending your influence are likely to include partnership and devolving responsibility. Policy-makers may be well placed to take an overview role. Even if you are unable to exert an influence at all the points that may be desirable to influence a pro-environmental behaviour, if you understand the full picture, you may be able to work with or support others who can help fill in the gaps.

For example:

- our review of policy tools included a finding about the value of devolving delivery of behaviour change initiatives to local organisations that may have a better understanding of local audiences and contexts, and represent a more accessible point of engagement than central Government;

- our investigation of practical case studies included a review of the ways in which policy-makers can support others to develop behaviour change initiatives;

- if you have worked collaboratively with the change 'actors' and other interested parties throughout the process of designing the interventions, you will be well placed to identify delivery partners.

Policy example: resource use in the home

Defra will not be able to directly deliver initiatives to influence individual behaviours, infrastructure and the social context all on its own. A successful package of interventions will inevitably involve influencing practitioners indirectly and devolving delivery. A clear overview of what is needed; combined with clever use of policy tools available could mobilise change without the need for extensive direct intervention. For example:

- Energy Efficiency Advice Centres are independent but were developed by the Energy Saving Trust, itself set up and part-funded by Government;

- the Private Landlord Energy Award Scheme (PLEASE) provides grants and loans to landlords to help them improve the energy efficiency of their properties. The scheme is run by a partnership of 11 local authorities with initial funding from an Energy Saving Trust grant. The initiative has been developed by the local authorities to help them meet their requirements under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995; and

- WWF has developed a league table of UK power companies based on their commitment to cutting CO_2 emissions. The project used current UK energy policy as a reference point.

Step 8: Setting up a process to achieve change

Change is better understood as an ongoing looped process rather than a linear one with a clear end-point. Any changes that are achieved, or naturally changing circumstances, will themselves change the behaviour in question. In a simple example, promoting energy issues could change social attitudes to energy saving. In turn this may lead to legislation or changes in fuel costs which will then further change household energy behaviours.

Interventions need to take these dynamic aspects of behaviour into account and should aim to achieve change on an ongoing basis, not at a concrete end point. A flexible approach with monitoring, evaluation and feedback that can influence an initiative is likely to be most successful.

Monitoring, evaluation and feedback should be built in from the start, and involve delivery partners and the target audience who we are trying to influence.

Step 9: Putting the task in a wider context

Ultimately we are concerned with influencing pro-environmental behaviours in order to address pressing, massive global environmental threats such as global warming. Given this wider picture, it is essential that interventions and policies as a whole work in the same direction – think beyond the specific behaviour and intervention you are working on. Are there any other policy areas where clashes or synergies may occur? Look beyond the UK to include European and global environmental policy.

Policy example: resource use in the home

For example, what other policies from different areas might impact on household energy behaviour? Examples could include building and appliance regulations, and energy market deregulation. What are the implications for social exclusion and fuel poverty, or the political problems with pricing of fuel?

In summary:

- **Unpick and Understand** the behaviour(s) you want to influence: what different elements are involved?, how do the behaviours work?, and what could influence them?;

- **Pick and Mix** interventions that can interact to achieve change (taking care to avoid common pitfalls);

- **Talk and Listen** to the people or organisations you want to change;

- **Tailor** each intervention to the specific audience, behaviour and circumstances;

- **Know your strengths and involve others** – your direct impact will be limited, but you can influence and engage others to help out;

- **Keep it up, and keep learning** – design an ongoing process to change behaviours over time, with constant feedback;

- **Bigger picture** – remember why you are doing it and make sure everything pulls in the same direction.

5. Supplementary information

References

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Further information

- BedZed – www.bedzed.org.uk

- Energy Savings Trust – Energy Efficiency Advice Centres – www.est.org.uk/

- GAP Ecoteams – http://www.globalactionplan.org.uk/index.cfm?TERTIARY_ID=0&PRIMARY_ID=33&SECONDARY_ID=43

- WWF Ranking Power initiative – http://worldwildlife.org/climate/publications/rankingpower.pdf

- The Sustainable Hospital Food project – http://www.sustainweb.org/hospital_index.asp

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