metroSTOR Webinar

Behaviour Change for Communal Recycling

20.04.23

Guest Speaker: Livvy Drake of Sustainable Sidekicks

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Cognitive Influences

- Knowledge action gap: we think that if people know, then they'll take action, but this is not correct. Lots of people know that their behaviours aren't very good for them, but they still do them. Knowing is not enough to change behaviours.

- Cognitive influences: the brain uses a lot of energy to process complexity, to make change, and to save energy, we try as much as possible to use memories to decide what to do.

- When people are tired, or if something's difficult, they're less likely to do it, so we address this with icons. Our brain processes visual information 60,000 times faster than text, and our brains are drawn to things that are bright, moving and out of place or unexpected.

- We need to overcome uncertainty, as this is something that humans don't enjoy, and in such instances, we prefer to stay with the status quo. We need unambiguous visual cues about recycling to remove barriers in the form of frustration, if it's not easy, we won't bother.

- Many of our actions are things that we're doing habitually so we don't have to use all that energy. Habit discontinuity theory says that we need to break a habit to become conscious of our actions, such as blocking off the refuse chute for example.

- If we try and change lots of behaviours at once our brain can't automate them. Focus challenges can help us to embed habits, like plastic free July for example. Rewards, feedback and a sense of achievement helps our brains feel good, giving us a positive association with the habit.

- If we're tired, our brain reverts to the habits that are easy because it's less energy intensive. To learn new behaviours, we need space to comprehend things and downtime to process them. Someone who is worrying about how they're going to pay their bills struggles to concentrate on other things.

- We need to reduce the friction points that discourage us from a desirable behaviour, such as having bin sets in different locations, having to lift bin lids, hard to read messages and no container for food waste.

- But we can also use friction in our favour by increasing it to slow down the undesirable behaviours, such as by closing refuse chutes, making recycling apertures smaller so people can't contaminate it so readily.

- Perceived effort accounts for two thirds of how hard something is, and the longer something takes, the harder we believe it is. We can also make things sound difficult with the words we use, such as `have to', `must' and `should' as opposed to feel good words, like `easy' and `quick'.

- Our brains look for benefit, what's in it for me? If there's no perceived benefit, many people are less likely to take action, altruism for the environment isn't enough for everyone.

- Benefits don't have to be financial, social recognition can be really powerful, such as acknowledging people that have done really well with some posters. A benefit could be removing the risk of vermin and focusing on an area being made more desirable to live in.

- We get people to recognise this through feedback loops, where we reinforce the actions and the benefits, and negate the effort. People think it was worth doing because they have a feel-good factor, or they know it's been helping their community.

- To overcome barriers, we need to be thinking like our target audience, assuming that people have low motivation, low patience, hate doing anything, and are trying to complete a task as quickly as possible. We need to remove the friction from a behaviour and design a path of least resistance.

Infrastructure

- Choice architecture- the decisions we make are affected by the layout, the sequencing and the range of choices that are available. People will choose the easiest option or the most familiar, which is status quo bias. We want to make it the default option to recycle by making it as easy as possible.

- Co-locating the bins, providing compost caddies and internal storage for residents, improving bin storage areas and cleaning them and improving accessibility for people with physical challenges, as well as setting up the collection of additional materials such as food, WEEE, textiles and batteries.

Social influences

- Recycling behaviour is influenced mainly by the psychological acceptance of the norm to recycle through visual cues, seeing people putting their recycling bins out is social proof that others are doing it. Challenging in a communal recycling context but need to make the invisible, visible.

- Social norms are the rules that prescribe what people should and should not do given their social surroundings. Injunctive norms are what society in general disapproves or approves of. Descriptive norms are what others around us do. We want to know that other people around us are doing it.

- When there's lots of litter on the ground, it tells people that it's acceptable to litter, and there's what's known as a waste tipping point. To prevent this, we need to try and limit the amount of waste being seen on the floor by having regular collections and estate staff removing stuff quickly.

- To influence what is considered socially acceptable, we need to think about messengers that people will relate to, depending on the behaviour and the audience. In some scenarios authority figures are really trusted, then we've got the relatable messengers, people who look like us.

- Giving to receive, such as the way ReLondon replaced and deep cleaned many of their bin sets, setting out their commitment to the community. This is the principle of reciprocity; we want to pay back what we receive from others.

- Community engagement workshops and resident-led initiatives stimulated behaviour change, increased recycling rates and a sense of community, as well as reduced littering. Many people stated that they felt a greater pride in their local area, so were less likely to litter.

- We behave differently if we think we're being watched because we care what people think about us and how they perceive us. In the presence of images of eyes, people are more likely to pay for their drinks via an honesty box, donate to a charity bucket, recycle appropriately.

Communications

- Focus on the behaviour you want to encourage, such as, nine out of ten people use a bin. Focusing on the undesirable behaviour encourages it, such as, one out of ten people litter. Describing the behaviour we want and thanking them for doing so in anticipation will encourage that behaviour.

- Improvement may be minimal, but we focus on what people have achieved, not what they haven't, such as, you recycled 25% more than you did last week. Use clear measures that people relate to, such as bags of rubbish, something that has a visual cue, rather than just Kg or tonnes.

- Actions drive beliefs, we let people experience the action, such as through an open day or buddying-up system, because once we start doing something, we then start becoming aligned with those actions.

EAST principle

- Easy- how do we make things easy for people, our communications, easy language.

- Attractive- talk about the benefits, make things colourful.

- Socially relevant- how many people in this block of flats are using their bins.

- Timely- we communicate at the moment that they need to know about this behaviour.

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Nigel Deacon

I think we should make a start. So welcome again for those who've joined in the last 30 seconds or so, great to see so many interested to learn more about behaviour change for communal recycling, the latest in our series of webinars on increasing recycling from difficult areas, especially things like blocks of flats. And I'm delighted to welcome Livvy today to take us through his programme on behaviour change for communal recycling.

And again for those who've only just joined, if you would be so kind as to pop a few details in the chat, who you are, where you're from, what sort of particular areas of recycling that you'd like to tackle, particular challenges, and we can try and pick those up as we go through. There will be a couple of, three points in fact, where we can stop for discussion and debate through the presentation, so look forward to engaging with as many as possible. So with that, Livvy, over to you. Thank you very much.

Livvy Drake

What I'm going to do is build on the session that you had a few weeks ago with Re London around their project around social housing and how they addressed recycling. So I'm going to be using examples that they shared, I'm going to be using examples from other littering and other behaviour change campaigns around communal recycling, but it is going to be much more also around the theory. So how do those things fit into the theory, and then how could you apply that theory for where you're working? So what I suggest for you, is that you have a behaviour that you're looking to address, and you keep that in mind when we do the interactive bits and you think, how could this apply to what you're doing?

And we will have some short sessions and it might be that you just type in the chat, it may be that a couple of people can come off mic, but we're thinking about solutions-focused. So rather than saying, Oh well that's not going to work, it's more like, how might we, and what is relevant? So it won't be that you adopt all of the things I suggest, it's just that you think what could work, and what could you trial?

So who am I to be here chatting to you today? So my name is Livvy Drake. My background was in event management and I was having a great time working on big events. I was working in Australia and I went to this event and saw a full solar eclipse and I thought, Wow, Mother Nature's insane and so powerful, what am I doing with all this energy to support her? So I came back to the UK and did some more not-so-fun corporate events. But then I thought, Right, I need to get into something that's going to drive change. So I started my sustainability career in events and worked on festivals and a range of different events looking at where to drive change, and a lot of it was around waste reduction and I'm engaging people with recycling.

At the same time I was like, well, why stop at sustainable events? I really care about food waste. So I've worked on food waste projects and also plastics. So I've worked with an organisation called City to Sea, who look at tackling single use plastics at source. So I now do a lot of training work with organisations on looking at ways to drive change and providing consultancy support. So I've worked on a number of different projects that have been around waste, looking at reduction, looking at community engagement and looking at recycling. So my approach to behaviour change is based on behavioural science and it's brought together lots of different models to first of all get really specific on the behaviour that we're looking to address.

So recycling on the street and recycling in a house are two completely different behaviours. Recycling in a flat, recycling in a house, as you know, are completely different behaviours. So we need to understand that. We also need to get specific on the audience, because different audiences have different motivators and barriers. We then need to understand what's driving those existing behaviours.

So this is where we carry out research to understand, is it the infrastructure? Is it people looking for the easy option? Will everyone around them think so, the social expectations, and we'll cover off some of these today. And then I want to look at what structural changes we can make, because this is one of the easier ways to drive change. If the infrastructure is there, then that often can lead to it. Then we want to look at, how does it become socially acceptable for that group that we're engaging with, and how do we communicate positively? Because positive communication, as you'll see later on, is more impactful than the negative, or kind of doom and gloom and scary things. So let's get into some of the principles.

So the first one is the knowledge action gap, and this is a really key point to make, and this is that people think, and very often environmentalists who I work with a lot, that the issue is people don't know, and if they know, then they'll take action. So this is known as the information deficit model, but this is not correct. Lots of people know that the behaviours they do aren't very good for them, but they still do them. Anyone who's a smoker on and off, smoking is not very good for you, people still do it. People know that, you know, flying isn't great for the environment, but they still do it. So knowing is not enough to change behaviours.

And in terms of recycling, in a study in Northern Ireland, they found that 63% of people said that they knowingly put plastic in the general waste bin. But they also found that knowledge did play a part in plastic recycling because of the complexity. So people didn't understand what they should put in which place. So there is an element when knowledge, we need to reduce the complexity so people can actually do things. This ties in very neatly with cognitive influences, our brain. So how does our brain impact how we approach things and what our behaviours are? So the reality is that thinking is actually very energy intensive, and the brain uses a lot of energy to make decisions to process complexity like plastics recycling, to make change.

This is known as our system 2 part of the brain, which is very slow, deliberate and logical. So we use this for problem solving. When we're tired, we don't use it very much and we find this is what we actually end up having to use if we actually want to navigate recycling. And our brain doesn't really want to use this energy intensive part as much as possible, so often it will, you know, it will just not bother.

So this is what's called our system 1 brain. So in order to save energy, it tries to limit the amount of system 2 and use as much as possible of system 1, which is fast, instinctive and emotional. So instead it uses memories to decide what to do. So what did I do the last time I threw something in the bin? What did I do the last time I went to the bin? So did I just check something? You know, if I had loads of big bits of cardboard, did I just put it by the side? With emotions we use, what's going to make us feel good? That's what I'm going to do. And our brain is always looking for the shortcuts, and the easy option in plastic recycling.

So there was this research done and they found that people said that, I have to infer, if I have to check locally for recycling information because it doesn't actually say, when I have individual resources depleted like I am tired, I am more likely not going to bother. So I think actually this quote is definitely written by the researcher. But the idea is that when people are tired, if it's difficult, they're less likely to do it. How do we address this? How do we make it easy for people to bother? Well, icons. So our brain processes visual information 60,000 times faster than text. So in a study where students were doing tests, if the text, the results, the information was given in images, there was an 89% better test result. So just by seeing a visual cue, we perform better. So these are some examples of bins with icons, on the bottom right was from an airport where they've actually put a Walkers crisp packet, and you know, actually the items that people are holding in their hands. So the visual cue is really, really, really visual to what people have in their hands.

We also want our messages to be salient, which means that they stand out. And this is because our brains are drawn to things that are moving, out of place, so bright and unexpected things, and presenting things in a way that we don't expect. So feet on the floor has led to people going to bins, colourful bin vinyl as used here by hubbub in Bournemouth led to increased use of these big 1100L bins just by putting a colourful sign on it. And then Bristol based Feed My Face campaign achieved a 10% reduction in food waste just by asking people to put the face and make a face on their compost caddy. And they also put a big bright sign around the bins, although this was criticised by people around because it said Slim My Waste, so there was a bit around, kind of body positive issue, so maybe not that bit, but just putting some icons on a bin. And again, another example from Bristol, colourful bins. So they've just made these bins stand out and they've made them more salient.

The other thing we want to be able to overcome is uncertainty. So this is something that humans don't enjoy. So if we don't know what's going to happen next or what the right thing is to do, it's uncomfortable for our brain, and in those instances we prefer to do nothing, so we'll stay with the status quo and carry on doing what is safe. And again, sadly, plastic recycling falls under this category. So another quote: Being faced with uncertainty for some does not result in information seeking behaviour. Rather, it causes frustration resulting in the plastic product ending up in general waste. So this adds weight to the importance of visual, unambiguous cues about the recycling of plastic packaging to remove the barriers in the form of frustration. So again, If it's not easy, I won't bother. That was the name of the study and everything kind of pushes to that.

So habits, we know that many of our actions are just habits, and these are things that we're doing habitually so we don't have to use all that energy. Steve Jobs wore the same outfit every day to save decision fatigue. So what this means is that we're not actually conscious with a lot of our actions. And in a survey, a third of Brits eat the same lunch every day, and many waste behaviours are very habitual and often unconscious.

So how do we build new habits? Well, habit discontinuity theory says that we need to break a habit to become conscious of our actions. So for example, being asked if we want to pay 5p for a plastic bag at the beginning of this made people consciously go, Do I want to do that? No, I'll carry these things. Having the chute blocked in a flat suddenly makes people conscious that they can't do that action anymore. We also need to do something one thing at a time because if we do lots of behaviours all at once, our brain can't automate them, which is what it's trying to do. And that automation can take between 21 days and a year, just depending on how regularly we're automating something. So this is where focus challenges can help us to embed things. So say things like plastic free July, or people, you know, having a focused activity on an estate where we're all doing the particular thing, so that everyone's kind of doing it at the same time. And rewards and feedback and a sense of achievement because that helps our brains feel good. And then we have a positive association with the habit and I talk about how we can achieve that later.

But what prevents the brain from building new habits? Well, here's a word of warning: tiredness. If we're tired and overworked, our brain reverts to the habits that are easy to do because it's less energy-intensive. Head space, so in order to learn new behaviours, we need space to comprehend things and downtime to process them. And it's been shown in studies that money worries will inhibit cognitive functions. So someone who is worrying about how they're going to pay their bills struggles to concentrate on other things. So again, something to consider, depending on where you're working. And again, what we're making is easy is really important.

So effort versus benefits. Why do we think that bananas get eaten before oranges in a fruit bowl at events? Anyone, idea, quickly come off of mute and suggest it?

Is it easier to peel?

Exactly. Exactly. So this plays into the idea of, the principle of least effort and friction. So the principle of least effort tells us that friction points make it harder for us to do a behaviour, so we're less likely to do it. And when we think about

recycling, this can include bin sets in different locations, having to lift the bin lids, wide apertures that anything can go in, make it easier for us to just chuck everything into the recycling and contaminate it. Hard to read messages, no container for food waste. But we can also use this in our favour, so we can increase the challenge or the friction to slow down the undesirable behaviour, e.g. closing the general chutes which ReLondon did in their project. Making the compost bin apertures smaller on a bin also was something they did because then people can't chuck a big bag in it.

Fitting in with this idea of effort and friction is that perceived effort. So, this accounts for two thirds of how hard something is, and it's mainly in our head. So if we think, Oh, it's 10:00 at night, oh, I've got to walk to find the recycling bin, but I know the general waste is at the bottom of the stairs, sorting waste like, Oh, that's going to be hard work, it's a bit messy. And time is a signal of how difficult something is. So the longer it takes, the harder we believe it is. So if we think about cooking from scratch versus a ready meal, which doesn't involve washing up, we can see which seems easier. We can also make things sound difficult with the words we use. So things like `have to', `must' and `should' are perceived to be toxic words in behavioural science, whereas we've got these feel good words, like `easy' and `quick'. Obviously if something isn't quick, then we can't really use it. The other thing our brain is looking for is benefit. So often, people are looking for a benefit to the individual, so what's in it for me? And if there's no perceived benefit, some people can be less likely to take action. You know, altruism for the environment isn't enough for everyone. But benefits don't have to be financial. And this is where social recognition can be really powerful. So this can be in, maybe more in an office environment, badges, praising emails, office prizes, awards ceremonies. Maybe in a social housing environment, it is just acknowledging the block of flats that has done really well with some posters or some emails if those could be sent. A benefit could be removing the risk of rats, and focusing on an area being more desirable. And the way that we want to get this recognition is through feedback loops. So this is where we provide information where we reinforce the actions, the benefits, and we negate the effort. So people are like, Oh, well, it was worth doing it because I have a feel good factor, or I know it's been helping the community or I know everyone else is taking action.

So in the Waste, It's Mine, It's Yours project, which worked in about 22 social housing projects, they included newsletters, they sent articles in to national papers, and then they shared those with residents. So they knew that their actions were being shared publicly, and they had a thermometer showing how people were getting on with recycling. And they showed images of local people taking action. So when we think about overcoming these barriers, particularly in the brain, we need to be thinking like our target audience. And a behavioural scientist, Dan Ariely says that we must assume people have low motivation, low patience, hate doing anything, and are trying to complete a task as quickly as possible. So in other words, we need to remove the friction from a behaviour, and design a path of least resistance.

So what I'm going to invite you to do just for a couple of minutes, is to have a think about where and how you could remove efforts or friction, or increase it, for recycling in the area that you're considering? Or how could you create a feedback loop in the space that you're working in? And again, if you're not working anywhere specific, maybe there's a behaviour that you've got, a bugbear, you think, well, how could the local council, the social housing block, the business, the whatever, where could you activate one of these? And if you want to put some things in the chats, that will be great. And if one person or one or two people would just like to come off mute and share something succinctly, it would be great to hear from you. I can see lots of people sharing things in here. So anyone have any thoughts on how they might do this themselves? Where you could remove some friction or provide a feedback loop.

Michael Hutton
My name is Mike, I'm from Manchester City Council. I think in terms of removing effort or friction, it's just about ease of physical infrastructure, isn't it? It's about, certainly in my line of work where I deal with social housing, it's about making things as easy as possible, and as close as possible, to the problematic blocks that we've had in the past. We found just by having things like what you mentioned earlier, ease of walking to, having good signage, making sure that residents are aware that this is in place. You know, it takes a lot of work to go through it. But we've had some significant results in really problematic areas just from having physical infrastructure in place, the difference has been immense.

Livvy Drake

Perfect. And that leaves, does anyone else have anything to share or shall I carry on? Because my next section is all on infrastructure. So, Michael, great introduction there.

Larry Wolfe

My name's Larry Wolfe and I'm working with Sandwell Council on looking at improving recycling in high rise flats, and taking on board some of the issues that have been identified in the research in ReLondon in terms of best practice, and looking at and introduced a number of reverse lidded bins, but also that's backed up with a robust campaign providing lots of information about how to use the facilities. So it's basically releasing the overall improvement and the cognitive effort on behalf of individuals, but also in terms of feedback loops, performance and how the community is doing. And that makes an overall shift from looking at individual social, psychological constructs from an internal basis into external aspects which are social norms, and to see where the research tends to be going now, I was reading Tristan…

Livvy Drake

I'm going to talk about social norms later…

Larry Wolfe

Tristan Sharp's paper is a good one to read on this. Yeah.

Livvy Drake

I've seen you shared it, so thank you. And I realise I didn't share the agenda, which is Cognitive, Infrastructure, Social Norms and Communication. So that's what we're going to cover. Larry, how have you done that, those feedback loops? So it would be interesting to hear. So what have you done as part of an overall trial in terms of the feedback loops?

Larry Wolfe

We did a series of door-knocking. So the trial looks at what was the best configuration for household recycling, for the flats, for the trial area. And so we looked at a different combination of collections and switches.

Livvy Drake

So you go door-knocking to tell people how well they've got on?

Larry Wolfe

We do door-knocking, see what they say, what they think of the existing system and prior to the trial, sort of baseline analysis, look at what the overall tonnage is, waste composition, and we have a surgery midway, collection of those tonnages we've just gathered in the last bits of information now, after an eight week period of literally gathering data from the field, prototypes that we're testing, and then we will use that in terms of feedback to residents, in terms of how things are performed and what we are going to do. So we tried a number of interventions…

Livvy Drake

I'm going to stop you there, Larry, just because of the time, so thank you. So we're going to move on now, if anyone else has got any thoughts or ideas, please do pop it in the chat or anything you've already done, because obviously this is great for peer to peer learning.

So moving on to infrastructure, which is obviously a key aspect to reducing the friction. So in terms of infrastructure, we know that in household recycling, rather than social housing, the access to kerbside recycling, so black bins and recycling things have significantly increased recycling because it's made it really easy. In a research in Australia, they found that 16.4% of food waste went into a compost compost caddy and 3.2% in compost bins at the end of the garden. So we know again, it's making it really easy having something that gets taken away and dealt with. And this comes into something called choice architecture. So choice architecture describes how the decisions we make are affected by the layout, the sequencing, so what comes first, and the range of choices that are available. So people will choose the

easiest option or the most familiar, which is status quo bias. So people will do the thing that they know because it's safe. So what we ideally want to do is make the default option to recycle or to use a bin instead of littering. So how do we do that? We need to set things up to make them as easy as possible.

We know that choice architecture for communal waste, recycling and waste segregation is very challenging and we know that. So this is interesting, often there's limited recycling bins in proximity. There's limited space to store recycling in a flat, so that makes it harder for people to kind of, you know, store things up and have separate bins for their recycling. The condition of communal waste areas and bins can actually be unattractive for people. And often the areas are inaccessible and there may be no provision of kitchen containers or liners to put things in, people can have difficulty opening doors and lifting unhygienic bins. So in the Waste, It's mine, It's yours and the ReLondon project they made a number of infrastructure changes. So co-locating the bins, reducing the apertures on recycling and compost. So this is friction for people to put things in. Providing compost caddies, compost bins, providing internal storage for residents, improving bin storage areas and cleaning them, and improving accessibility for people with physical challenges, as well as setting up the collection of additional materials such as food waste, small WEEE, textiles and batteries.

Now thinking about the on-street location, there's been work done by Hubbub on cigarette bins and they carried out research and they found that cigarette littering outside pubs was often worse because the bins were not close by or appealing to use. So they developed these ballot bins which asked people to vote with their butts on something non-litter-related like football. So who's going to win the World Cup? And these have led to between 40 and 73% increases in cigarette usage. And they've done this also for recycling and other things. So, you know, getting people to use this for littering has also been done. And other research, this was carried out in Lambeth, found that people may stub their butt on the bin, but due to bad bin design may still litter it. So in the pilot in Lambeth they changed signage and recommended that the bin tops were cleaned and rearranged so actually it was easier for people to do it, so you can see here it says Ash it and Trash it, rather than people stubbing it on the other part of the bin.

So, where can you change the layout or sequencing of the infrastructure on your projects? And if someone who hasn't already done it, Mike has already said they've taken a lot of this and Larry's talked about that. So anyone who hasn't spoken or hasn't done anything, got any ideas of where they might change the infrastructure? Now you can either type in the chat or you can come off mute, or we'll move on to social actions. Is anyone thinking that this might be a good idea, that they're going to look at the infrastructure as a first port of call for their projects?

Ronnie Davies

Can I just speak a second? Ronnie from First Choice Homes in Oldham, we've got quite a lot of issues with the Sixties-type buildings like the flats and the high rise and what have you. We have attended some of the high rise, but we find it very hard to get people who are in the flats to recycle, and that's why we're looking into some of the London projects with the recycling baskets in the flats, where you could encourage, possibly, they only have to go down once or twice a week, rather than all the time, they've got to travel with one milk bottle. We've got to try and make it a little bit easier, like you said, with the friction and pushback, I like that kind of idea. We just gotta make it as simple as, with as little friction as possible, I like that idea.

Livvy Drake

Lovely, thanks, Ronnie, that's really helpful. So I'm going to carry on now and talk about the social influences. As Larry pointed out, this is where research is going and this is, well, there's lots of research done on it. And this for me is, sort of, the core of the three things to consider. So the social influences and the power of social norms. So in research carried out around recycling behaviours in Exeter, they found that recycling behaviour was influenced mainly by the psychological acceptance of the norm to recycle through the visual cues of kerbside bins. So what does this mean? So it means seeing other people putting their recycling bins out is social proof that others are doing it. Obviously this is more challenging in a communal recycling context where people can't see whether anyone else has been filling up the bins. But they can visually see people, you know, littering or dumping things.

So what are these social norms? Well, these are the rules that prescribe what people should and should not do given their social surroundings. So we've got injunctive norms. This is what society in general disapproves or approves of. So littering probably fits in there. Then you've got descriptive norms. So this is what others around us do. So in our community, in the street, in the workplace, the pub, the football match and the focus, the focus theory of normative conduct says that, to adopt a novel, pro-environmental behaviour such as composting, individuals should perceive it both as socially approved of, so this is the injunctive norm, so everyone else is doing it, and widely practised, so a descriptive norm. So they want to know that other people around them are actually doing it. So what we need to do is make the invisible, visible.

So what are, talking about littering, how does this play out? Well, research has shown that 18 to 34 year olds are the heaviest litterers, and for them it's a symbol of rebelling from society's rules, so those injunctive norms, and then it's part of fitting in with their peers and social circles, so the descriptive norms. And so what we need to do is think, okay, well, how do we reinforce that actually other people who are like them aren't littering? But the challenge is, there is lots of social proof of littering. So seeing the visual cues suggests it's socially acceptable. And there have been studies that have found that when there's lots of litter on the ground, it tells people that it's acceptable to litter, and there's what's known as a waste tipping point. And it's been found that if there's only one or two pieces of litter, less people are likely to litter. But when it goes to three or more pieces, littering increases, and they've tried this, they've done set up studies in different locations with different types of people, and it always tends to be the case. And I'll give you another example in a minute. And if we look here at the runners, you know, most runners when they run in their park, when they're carrying their water bottle, when they're training, don't drop their plastic bottle in the park, do they? But when they go into the run, they all drop their litter. And you can say and they can say, well, it's because of the speed and the time and blah, blah. But that's a key example of where it's perceived to be socially acceptable to do that.

So in order to prevent the waste tipping point, we need to try and limit the amount of waste being seen on the floor. And in terms of social housing, ReLondon worked on having regular collections and estate staff removing the large cardboard, so you stop this tipping point. And with the festival I've worked with, Shambala, they have their litter picking crew out at night, keeping the festival tidy because they don't want that litter tipping point to happen.

So how do we activate pro-waste behaviours and pro-waste reduction or using a bin behaviours? In experiments where people's littering actions were monitored, what they did was they set up a scenario where real people had notes put on their car, some flyer, and then they changed the conditions around to see what happened. So people were less likely to litter if the leaflet was about not littering or recycling. So again, those injunctive norms. People were less likely to drop litter in a clean environment even if they saw someone else littering, but were more likely to litter in an already-littered place. So that was a social proof of what was socially acceptable in that environment. They were least likely to litter in a littered or clean environment if they saw someone else picking up litter. So this is the social proof. So creating in these environments, modelling, or seeing other people doing the desirable behaviour, is key to help to change what is the accepted descriptive norm, and so what's socially acceptable.

And in order to do that, or in order to communicate, we need to think about who are those messengers that matter and relate to people, and they will depend on the behaviour and the audience. So in some scenarios authority figures are really trusted. So it could be experts like dentists in adverts about cleaning your teeth, managers in certain work scenarios. For many people, supermarkets and brands will really inform what they do and don't do, and this has been specifically the case around things like the plastic bags, that people look to the supermarkets to cue what was acceptable for them. And then we've got the relatable messengers, so people who look like us or are relatable to us. So this could be our family, it could be influencers, it could be our friends. And in the trust pilots, every year there is a survey done on trust and they find that generally, if you look here, we can see people in my local community, 62% are trusted nearly as much as national health authorities. So this is obviously around our pandemic times, but people are much more trusted and they're kind of up there with the CEO. And if you're working in an organisation, co-workers are

trusted as much nearly as scientists. So people that we relate to are really important. So for your projects, it's thinking, who are those relatable messengers that you can activate? And I'm sorry if you're a council, you might not be the right messengers for recycling messages for it to cut through.

So what about giving to receive? So ReLondon replaced and deep cleaned many of their bin sets and in this way they're setting out their commitment to the community. And this fits with a couple of concepts, one being reciprocity. So we want to pay back what we receive from others. So that idea of giving to receiving does actually work psychologically. And the concept of organisational support theory, so perceived organisational support increases people's commitment to an organisation and support for their initiatives. And this is particularly in a work environment where people, if they know that the organisation cares about them, then they're more likely to get on board with doing things. But we know from the Waste, It's Mine, It's Yours campaign project, that actually the work that was done in those environments increased community pride. And what they did was a lot of community engagement workshops and resident-led initiatives. So the residents said what they wanted and they helped lead on them. And these interventions stimulated behaviour changes, including recycling rates up by up to 50%, waste reduction, so up to 0.4 kilos per flat, and a sense of community, as well as reduced littering. Many people stated that they felt a greater pride in their local area, and if there's greater pride then less people are likely to litter, etc. etc.

We also know that the social influences come from our perception of whether we're being watched. So we behave differently if we think we're being watched because we care what people think about us and how they perceive us. And in the presence of images of eyes, people are more likely to pay for their drinks via an honesty box, donate to a charity bucket, recycle appropriately, and they're less likely to steal, litter, and we also know that the images of graffiti babies on shop shutters have reduced graffiti. And this plays into the concept, it's known as the broken glass principle. So if glass is already broken, people, it's called the broken window principle I think, so if more windows are broken, people will carry on breaking them. But with the baby's eyes, there's a perception that, you know, people don't want to deface a baby, the eyes, people are being watched. And you can see at the bottom right, there's a line saying, you are being watched. And this was used in a communications campaign, which I'll talk about more in a moment. And again, just by having a sign saying you were being watched, this reduced littering in Looe in Cornwall.

So how can we model behaviours and normalise recycling behaviours in our communal situation? So can, from anything that I've shared there, could you think of something that you might consider adopting like eyes, like focusing on individuals, other individuals or modelling and social norming behaviours? Any thoughts of how you might approach this? Thanks. So anyone think they might start putting eyes on their buildings? Is that possible? Okay. Well, I'm going to carry on because I know Nigel wants to say a couple of words at the end.

So finally I'm going to talk about communications, and how we can bring all of these concepts that I shared into your communications. So first of all, these norms that I talked about, So describing what others do will reduce littering. So this sign says nine out of ten people use a bin. This reduced littering in Looe in Cornwall. Focusing on the undesirable behaviour, what do you think happens if we say one out of ten people litter? Do more people litter or less people litter? Come off mic If anyone's got a comment, Do we think it will increase?

More people will litter because it looks like there's only one person doing a demonstration.

So yes, this is saying one out of ten people litter, but just by saying one out of ten people litter, this increased littering, because we're talking about the undesirable behaviour. So in Bournemouth they had lots of projects going on at the same time and one of them, they had the colourful bins by Hubbub. Then another one they had this campaign which said Sort your **it out. littering, **it looks ugly. They had some drones and they were monitoring littering and where these signs were, often there was more litter in those areas, whereas the nice colourful bins reduced littering. Describing what to do is also a way of reducing littering. So it just says this is what the behaviour we want people to do, and this increased bin usage in Looe and Cornwall. Equally, Thank you for taking your rubbish home, reduced verge

littering in Dorset, and this was from the monitoring, they had less complaints from 84 down to 7. So how do you communicate when people aren't really doing that great, and it's like, well, you're only incrementally kind of improving? Well, we focus on what they have achieved, not what they haven't. So we don't start saying, Oh, well, these people are better than you. We say, You recycle 25% more than you did last week, versus, You recycle 10% less than other communities. So we also want to use clear and concrete communication and things that people relate to, like, you know, don't talk about tonnes or metric something, or kind of something, some council talk, talk about bags of rubbish, you know, numbers of plastic bottles, something that has a visual cue.

We also know that actions drive beliefs, and neuroscientist Kris De Meyer says, rather than giving people a menu of actions, give them a cooking lesson. What does this mean? What this means is exactly what re London did. They gave people a tea bag as part of their communications with the premise that people would then use it and compost it afterwards. So we let people experience the action, and this could be through an open day. It could be, you know, buddying-up systems, it could be lots of ways, because what happens is that once we start doing something, we then start becoming aligned with those actions. Like, you know, hey, I'm a cyclist. I'm going to, you know, do particular types of things. Cyclists do this, I do that. So we become the thing that we start to do.

So I know I've covered a lot of things in this short time, but what I am going to give to you as a passing comment, is the EAST principle. Now this comes from the behavioural insights team, and you'll get all these slides with all this content on it. So easy, how do we make things easy for people so we can kind of, our communications, we're talking about easy language. So the positive, how do we make things attractive to people? So we want to make things, talk about the benefits, we want to make things colourful. We want to make it socially relevant, so we talk about how many people in this block of flats are using their bins. And we do it timely, so we communicate at the moment that they need to know about this behaviour, so we have got the stickers about composting on the general waste bin where someone's about to put their compost, so we're doing things in a way that's relevant.

And I'm not sure we're going to have time for questions, but I know that Nigel said, If you pop things in the chat and it hasn't been answered, we can respond to you separately or we can send out the answers to the questions. And I'm just going to pass over to Nigel now just to say a few words.

Nigel Deacon

Thank you, Livvy, that's fantastic and I find it incredibly interesting, a lot of the things that we perhaps learned the hard way, the things that we've worked out and the hard way, the way to do things, we find, Hey, there is actually some science behind that. So really interesting. And just to reinforce maybe what you're saying about infrastructure and the opportunities to reduce effort, the things that you do want to happen and increase the friction around the things that you don't want to happen. I think most of these you've covered already decommissioning chutes, making the refuse and the recycling equally accessible, so having them co-located, making it really easy for people to interact with the facilities so they haven't got to open up doors, go inside a dark bin room, they haven't got to lift lids. Having clear consistent messaging, using colours and symbols rather than text and actually using the way that the facilities are designed, with larger openings for refuse, smaller openings for recycling, to actually persuade people to go the direction you want them to.

What I can see, I think, is that there's a lot more opportunity for us to actually move into the messaging space. So getting those signs at high level, as close to eye level as possible, making them much more prominent, having the bins coloured, having it so that you can see them if you're approaching from a different direction. There's so many things that we can do, I think, working with you, and we're going to be building a toolkit, picking up a lot of these points to make it much easier for all councils and social landlords, etc, to implement these things in their own estates and properties. So that's it for me, Livvy, thank you.

Livvy Drake

Okay, lovely. So you will get these, I'll stop sharing now because we have got probably 5 minutes for questions or comments. Anybody else that would like to jump in and say anything? Any questions, queries? Anyone who hasn't spoken yet, first of all.

Larry Wolfe

I have spoken before, but just taking the example of the norms, injunctive and descriptive, and the younger sort of demographic on littering, I think, does it morph into more like a collective and a sociological construct driving the behaviour, where the individuals become a group and to detract from this, the type of normal in that group, depending how strong is, you get into what is known as groupthink and challenging that groupthink? So it's very difficult, in changing that norm, and you can apply this to almost everything, if you bring into the environment, say something which is relatable and positive to that group, then I guess you run the risk of, does it actually improve the overall behaviour or be perceived as a gimmick? So there's those sorts of things to take into consideration. So bringing in celebrities, which people think are cool, can sort of be a double edged sword. So yeah, I just want to throw that one in.

Livvy Drake

Yeah, thank you for that, Larry. And I think there's something also about thinking where you can have the most impact. And do you want to work with a very hard-to-reach group or do you want to work with a majority where you can drive change and present what is the social norm? So yeah, it's thinking about, is someone, you know, at that age, 16-18, you know, is putting a lot of resources there going to really be the best use of time and energy when you can work on keeping the environment, you know, cleaner or working with more people. So and yeah, celebrities are actually shown not to really work with young people, because they don't believe they're like them. So it's generally influencers or people like them, and certainly in scenarios, and my example would come from festivals, and this is not exactly politically correct, but in kind of rock festivals in Germany, they've had young, attractive females going around doing the litter picking and suddenly groups of men who were surrounded by piles of beer cans are very, very amenable and very keen to help.

And another example from festivals. So Shambala, we did something called, on the campsites again, and we did target the hard to reach, so the young people who are there to have a very good time with their mates, and surround their kind of campsite with all their litter, was we would go and say, okay, there's a team and they go, Right, okay, we're going to do a one minute clear up in this area. So anyone who participates, you'll get a limited edition exclusive, it was a Shambala medallion type thing, it was a little wood thing. And they actually, and so and it would just take one person to get started, and that one person then will be celebrated. And so that's kind of what you need, that one person in the group to change the norm. So, but with the types of scenarios were working on it might not be practical.

Stacy Townend

I can just just interject there, sorry, Stacy from Kirklees Council, we have a video where we show, we used to show to schoolchildren about a trip around our recycling plant and our waste to energy plant, and years gone by it was always a puppet that we used for that scenario. But recently we changed that and we actually had a young schoolgirl that we redid the video in, and that was more well-received by the schools when we showed that in our schools educational program, because the children then saw a peer of their own age going around the recycling plant and saying, you know, we don't put, you know, potatoes and food waste in this green recycling bin, we don't want greasy pizza boxes in there and nappies and things like that. And the schools have actually got better feedback from that video using a child. I mean, this child is really good, to be fair, she's really brilliant on eco stuff and she's really keen and everything, so she was a good focal point because it's a peer of their own age bracket, the children will actually listen to her more than when we stand at the front of the school and talk about recycling. Show them the video, they're like, they ask more questions about that than they will to us directly if we were just talking to them. So it's curating that audience that we need to do, and we're learning that slowly as we go along now that we need to change some of those attitudes that way. Thank you.

Livvy Drake

I can't see you because I've missed so many people. What was your name again?

Stacy Townend

It's Stacey Townend of Kirklees Council.

Livvy Drake

Brilliant. That's such a great example. So, yeah, thank you. And there's, I mean, again, research has shown that people, and there's a series, an American series about taking action for the environment and where they saw famous people doing an action day that didn't move them, but where they saw everyday people, you know, changing their lifestyles, that was really much more empowering and much more believable and then motivating. So people said they're more likely to take action, or they did take action, from seeing people like them doing it. So yeah, we kind of think of gimmicks and, you know, celebrities, but no, we want to see people like us.

So that is time. I don't know, any other last comments or are we going to let everyone finish for lunch and get back to their work? If you do have any questions that haven't been answered, please pop them in the chat and you'll have my contact details as well. And do please also connect on LinkedIn and everything else so we can carry on these discussions. I'm always sharing content around behaviour change, quite often about waste. I look in bins a lot like probably all of you do, take photographs of bad bins, good bins and things and despair at others. So yes, and it was lovely to have your participation.

Nigel Deacon

Thank you, Livvy. Yes, hugely insightful. We really appreciate that, and we will be sharing the recording and transcript and also working on a toolkit together to share with everyone. Thank you so much, everybody, for joining. Thank you. Have a great day.

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