

The New Forest Behavioural Toolkit

For heritage, landscape and nature conservation practitioners

Written by Dr Rachel Lilley and Mike King

Resources
FOR CHANGE

In partnership with:



Our Past, Our Future
Working together for the New Forest



In recent years behavioural science has been offering valuable insights and research to help us deal with the complex topic of humans and how we behave.

In efforts to protect the New Forest we have often acted as if everyone is the same, as if rules and regulations are the only option. Behaviour is influenced by many forces. Some are quite easy to try...

Most effective approaches to behaviour change take a five stage journey:



Why do we need a behavioural toolkit?

As populations have increased and lifestyles have changed, user impacts on the New Forest have also grown and changed. Information provision, laws and enforcement have clearly been insufficient to meet these changes.

Policy and changemakers worldwide have begun to change the way they approach human decision-making and behaviour. This transformation is often referred to as Behavioural Policy or applied behavioural insights. It has revolutionised many areas of policy and the design of behavioural interventions in the public sector – from reducing energy use to increasing pension saving, from getting patients to drink more in hospital, to improving organ donation.

The New Forest is faced with a number of behavioural challenges. A National Lottery Heritage Fund project called the 'Our Past, Our Future' Landscape Partnership (OPOF) set out to investigate new approaches. This toolkit shares the lessons learnt and guides future behavioural work.



Raising driver awareness
of animal road casualties



Commoners' livestock have right of way on the roads
© Russell Sach

What is behaviour change?

There has been a shift in understanding about how we decide and behave. Our decisions and behaviours are subject to many influences, in addition to rules, messages, and incentives; by how we feel, our relationships with others and the physical and social context. We use mental short-cuts to help us take everyday decisions. Policy interventions are often designed on the basis that we all see the world in the same way, but analysis shows us that isn't the case. The table overleaf gives some insight into what behaviour change policy is, and what it isn't.¹

¹ Adapted from: OECD (2019), Tools and Ethics for Applied Behavioural Insights: The BASIC Toolkit, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9ea76a8f-en>. Pg.19

What behaviour change IS

A problem-solving method It helps behavioural issues to be better understood, taking into account factors traditional approaches might ignore.

Experimental It encourages a culture of experimentation, empirically testing solutions and disseminating results which enable an iterative approach to making improvements.

Broad It goes beyond 'nudges' or small policy tweaks. It informs the design of a wide range of interventions.

Valuable It should be considered every time you are designing or evaluating a project or intervention. Even in cases where you may not be able to run a full experiment.

What behaviour change IS NOT

A silver bullet It does not solve all difficult challenges. Some policy issues may benefit more from traditional approaches.

Standard Replicating what works in one situation does not guarantee success in another as context matters.

Exclusive It is not limited to behavioural experts but should bring together knowledge from a diverse range of experts.

Judgemental It does not mean that humans are fundamentally irrational or harmful, but that using behavioural insights can help achieve a goal.

Stage 1 Choose the destination: Define the behaviour you want to change

Most people will start with a general problem without a clear idea of the behaviours involved. Spend time deciding exactly which problems you are targeting.

In the New Forest OPOF project two issues we wanted to address were:

- **Reducing the number of road accidents involving New Forest animals**
- **Reducing the number of animal feeding and petting incidents, both to reduce animal illness and aggression towards people.**

Our first step was to define the behaviours we were going to target. How do we do that? People often start with assumptions which prove to be incorrect.

Some *assumptions* people had about the problems were:

- **Drivers in the New Forest don't care about the Forest or the animals. Accidents are due to careless driving and 'boy racers'.**
- **It is mainly people who are not from the Forest who cause accidents.**
- **It is mainly tourists who feed and pet our animals, they don't read the signs and they don't care.**

How do you find out what is really happening?

How do you challenge these assumptions and find out what is really happening?

Investigate the problem by asking:

- What exactly is happening?
- When? How? Where?

Talk and listen to as many people as you can:

- People you meet
- Specific people, through interviews
- A set of people using surveys.

How do they see the problem? What's happening from their perspective? It can be helpful to use an **empathy map** (see resources section at the back for website).

Whatever you start out thinking about the problem, assume it is wrong and be prepared to see it in from many different angles.

Road accidents

First we researched the problem and looked at the accidents in more detail to see if there were any patterns. We noticed more accidents happened on commuter roads at specific times.

We eventually realised that our animal accidents rates reflected national (and global) trends in accident rates, notably the autumn clock-change. We organised with several local employers to go and listen to employees talking about their commuting across the Forest.

Accidents happened more on main commuter roads than other roads. We had missed a very basic fact, more cars meant more accidents. Accidents increased in the autumn when evenings got darker, aggravated by the clock being put back, and are low in the summer (tourist) months.

This helped us to define the behaviour we wanted to change from the current habituated and over-confident driving across the New Forest to more careful driving amongst commuters, especially during the autumn and winter.

Petting and feeding

First we researched the problem:

- We spent time in local honeypot sites asking people a few questions about feeding and petting the ponies and donkeys.
- We asked others who might have seen feeding and petting in the Forest, such as New Forest rangers.
- We spent time observing in the places where it happened.
- We talked to people wherever we could such as shop keepers, and local people.
- We gathered information from newspapers, leaflets, social media and looking at how animals were being represented.

The insights gathered through this helped our understanding.

- Some people believe the animals are 'wild' and need feeding or petting.
- Tourists are often scared of the animals and do not like petting and feeding them.
- People who live in or near the Forest are more likely to feed and pet; they believe they know what they're doing. For some people this is a special part of living in the forest, an activity they do with children and grandchildren.
- The small number of donkeys in the New Forest are particularly appealing for petting.

This helped us define the behaviour we wanted to change – observed feeding and petting of the ponies and donkeys by local people – to no feeding and petting.

This would be achieved by:

- Targeting specific misunderstandings, for example, that the animals are wild when they are in fact owned.
- Addressing confusing mixed messaging such as images of people petting ponies on some promotional leaflets.
- Improving understanding of, and the relationship between, locals and tourists with commoners and commoning.
- Improving the visibility and profile of commoning in general.
- Making the harms of feeding and risks of petting more salient; that it is 'cruel not kind'.



Leaflets on grazing animals used early on in the project

Stage 2 Map the landscape: Research behaviour and audience in detail


Stage one involved defining the behaviour, including identifying audiences. Stage two involves going a little deeper, how deep depends on the size of the project, the budget and the time available. Less money may need more creativity, whilst a well-resourced project might employ professional researchers.

Information can be sourced in many ways, through desk research, surveys, observation and talking to people. Use LEAD to guide you:

- **Listen to people** (more in depth interviews, focus groups, record casual conversations)
- **Experience the system** (put yourself in their shoes; experience the process; observe the target audience in action)
- **Ask questions** (quantitative surveys and questionnaires)
- **Explore the data** (what do trends/differences say?)*

Behaviour change

There are a number of behaviour change frameworks designed to help you think through a behaviour. We have included an example of one of these frameworks in the resources section and some links to others you might like to explore. A framework, such as the ISM on the opposite page, can help you consider the multiple factors which contribute to the behaviour including environmental, social and individual. It is surprising how many factors can contribute to a problem behaviour.



I Individual elements

- Valuing connection with nature and animals
- Living for the moment; a selfie, fear of missing out
- Wanting to get to work on time
- Over-confidence in situations we face every day

S Social

- Group activities: Enjoyable; Something we do together
- Social norms: Cues from what other people do, or appear to do
- Identity: activities help us feel part of something 'traditional'

M Material

- Facilities may not support positive behaviour, eg. car parks or shops selling carrots facilitate behaviour
- Information overload: Too much or too complex signage becomes overwhelming
- Feeding and petting are low-cost leisure activities
- Driving fast saves time

* Using Behavioural Insights to Reduce Recreation Impacts on Wildlife: Guidance & Case Studies from Thames Basin Heaths and the Solent (NECR329)

Caring for New Forest Ponies

In stage one the project went some way towards defining the problems more clearly. We challenged a number of existing assumptions that were listed on page 7 such as:

- It was tourists feeding and petting animals.

Information has been used in the past to change people's petting behaviours such as the poster shown here that was designed to change people's behaviour through knowledge.

In stage two we ran some more in-depth research and were surprised with some of the results:

Driving

- Commuters obviously did care about the animals and the Forest and they really appreciated their daily drive. This countered the assumption that people didn't care.

- Regular commuters were over confident about their ability to predict the behaviour of grazing animals beside the road.
- Very few local people, surprisingly, had any idea about the habits and ownership of the animals, but they cared and were keen to learn more about commoning.
- Most commuters (incorrectly) believe straight roads are safer than bendy ones"

Petting and Feeding

- People don't intend to harm the animals; they feed them thinking it's a good thing to do.
- Feeding and petting ponies and donkeys is seen as an important part of people's experience of connecting with nature, living in, or visiting, the forest.

We don't sell carrots

or any other food



to feed to ponies

Feeding ponies and donkeys is BAD for them:

• It keeps them away from grazing the natural grass which is best for them

• It encourages them to hang around humans and where they are in danger from cars

• It makes them greedy for human food - including picnics

Feeding ponies and donkeys is BAD for people, too:

• It makes some ponies and donkeys pushy and aggressive, so they are a risk to people - especially small children

So, please don't feed our ponies ANYTHING!

Poster produced by the Shared Forest project: shared_forest@btinternet.com

Supported by



The National Lottery



Our Past, Our Future

Working together for the New Forest

The aggressive headlines dominate. The explanation of 'why' is lost. More positive alternatives are usually more engaging.

It is not attractive. We are more likely to look at things if they are striking. Good design matters.

It directly counters people's lived experience, their own historical behaviour and what they have seen others doing.

Information overload. Attention is limited, there is too much writing here. Clear and simple messages are more effective

- The animals are viewed as part of the visitor experience, provided by the New Forest, not as part of the area's ecology or as the property of anyone in particular.
- People did not understand or know much about the commoners' lives. They were either seen slightly negatively (as NIMBYs or killjoys), or as invisible.

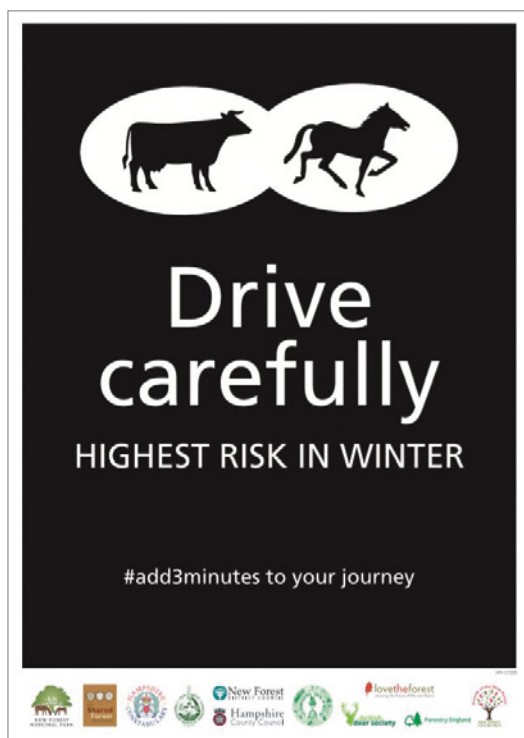
Stage 3 Design and test the route: Test one or more interventions

Stage three involves designing and testing interventions.

You can use the behaviour change models listed in the resources section to help you do this. One framework we think is really simple and helpful is the **EAST Model**.

Ask yourself; if you applied the EAST principles to your intervention what would it look like? Would you design it differently?

For more information on EAST download the full guide [here](#).



New seasonal poster following EAST framework

EAST is a simple framework

The four principles to make clear messaging are:

E

Easy

Make the message or desired behaviour simple. Avoid complexity. An image is often better than words. Are we making doing the right thing the easiest option? What is the default choice?

A

Attractive

People are more likely to respond to appealing messages. How can we make Forest-friendly behaviour the most attractive option, even fun?

S

Social

What do others do (or should do)? Use the power of social norms, group behaviours, or identities to spread positive behaviours or reduce harmful ones. What do most people, people like me, do?

T

Timely

Often good messages are given at the wrong time. Prompt people when the information is most relevant to their decisions. Do they make a plan before leaving home, or take a decision in the moment?

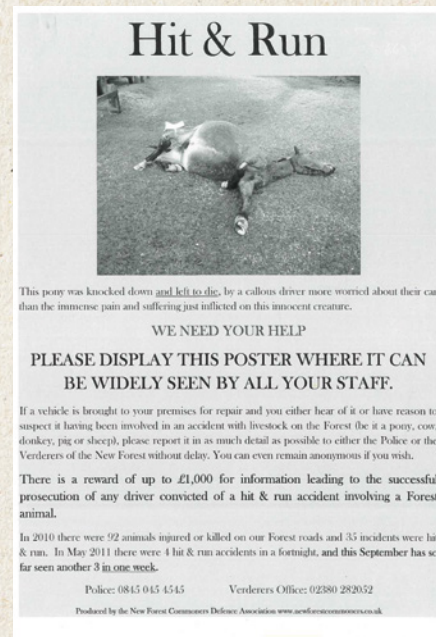
Applying EAST

One insight was that more accidents happen in autumn as the nights draw in, starting with the clock change. Our interviews revealed that commuters hugely overestimated the impact of very small delays, perhaps due to a driver in front driving slowly. A local journalist found that driving at 30mph on a busy commuter route compared

to the standard 40mph limit added only three minutes to their journey across the Forest.

The **#add3minutes** slogan was born – directly addressing the frustration experienced when drivers slow around livestock, in terms that matter to them.

Car stickers were used to build new social norms stating 'I go slow for ponies', high profile local businesses added the stickers to their fleets.



Old poster on animal casualties



New winter road signs

This sticker, used on vehicles, is:

EASY to understand, an image and only a few carefully picked words. It is free, as is group and business membership of the scheme.

ATTRACTIVE: A simple and striking design. The rosette offers an 'accreditation' message businesses are encouraged to use in marketing.



SOCIAL: It is about creating social norms and cultures. Some of the highest profile local businesses with vehicle fleets were targeted initially, helping build a social norm and create an element of competition (fear of missing out).

TIMELY: It can be stuck onto vehicles so people will see it at the most relevant time, when they're driving. If their speed is being limited by a carefully driven vehicle in front, the sticker explains why. Campaign partners developed a communications calendar, prioritising the use of hashtags when most appropriate.

The 'new' campaigns are not the last word. This is an ongoing process of testing and adapting. None are perfect – yet!

The #add3minutes campaign is:

- **Easy:** The action is simple, add three minutes to your journey to look after the animals. Commuters can plan their regular journey ahead. The poster is easy to read, using images to communicate what it is about, with minimum words. In the second winter the wording on the road signs (shown on page 18) was improved by making it reflective.
- **Attractive:** Appealing to the driver's self-interest to avoid an accident and to care for the livestock. The message of appropriate behaviour is prominent. To most people three minutes is not a big sacrifice. The campaign communicated the increased pleasure of an extra three minutes on a journey that commuters reported enjoying.
- **Social:** Of the few words in the post the hashtag is prominent, and is widely used by all partners and supporters to build a 'social norm' of concern. The slogan is intentionally cryptic, making people think about the meaning.



Challenging over-confidence

- **Timely:** This campaign runs only in the seasons when accidents peak, avoiding the risk that people become numb to it or overestimate the scale of accidents to the point they become an

unavoidable 'fact of life'. Data show people are slow to adapt to changing daylight conditions when the clock changes; a timely nudge accelerates this adaptation.



The "effigies" campaign – we used host organisations, giving this campaign a clear social element

This campaign was supplemented with the use of a set of wooden effigies depicting each type of New Forest livestock, signed with the number of deaths the preceding year and moved

to different community sites. Seasonal use, displaying numbers, and regularly moving them were all tactics aimed at gaining attention when it matters most.

In this example the message was delivered in a very different way using the EAST framework and the results of our research:

EASY: The first poster is not easy to read, the message of "control" is lost. The second poster uses dog walkers' own words to gain attention. The desired behaviour is much more practical.

ATTRACTIVE: As well as being better designed, the second poster is more attractive, with positive advice on how to 'get to safety' in a dangerous situation.



TIMELY: The desired action is one of advance preparation; remembering to take a dog lead, look ahead for cattle and vary your route. This communication is therefore not a physical poster, but for use online reaching people at home.



SOCIAL: The message uses the 'so you think you know the New Forest?', appealing to the identity of being a 'local' (the vast majority of dog walkers), also using the #KeepYourDistance hashtag already in extensive use.

Stage 4 Determine how far you have travelled: Evaluate the interventions

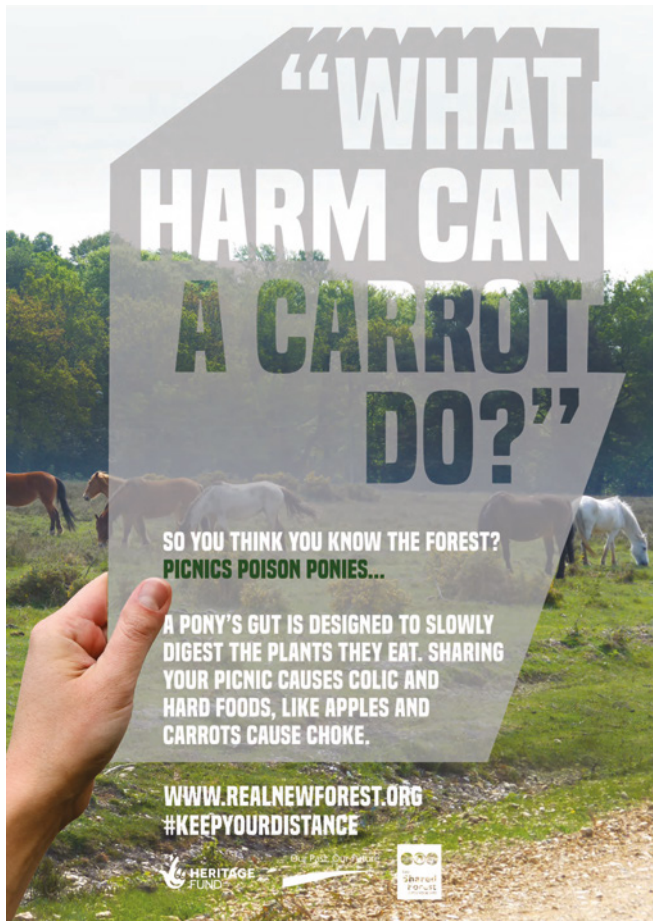
Understanding how your behaviour change intervention is progressing, and capturing the learning, is a vital part of the journey. This will help to refine the interventions going forward.

This stage is designed to help evaluators systematically assess the project and interventions:

- Have you identified the right behaviour/s and the correct audience/s?
- Have you successfully diagnosed barriers (social, environmental, psychological) to adopting a desired behaviour?
- Design and implement an appropriate behaviour change pilot to test the intervention;
- Monitor and evaluate behaviour change to ensure mid-course corrections are made and project design improved.

Stage 5 Revise the route and repeat: Tweak intervention and roll out again

Once you have run your test intervention and evaluated it, you can make adaptations.



Challenging assumptions on feeding

Revise and re-run

Once the campaign materials for the driving initiative had been developed they were tested and evaluated. Findings from research were incorporated into a question and answer leaflet, which was then 'road-tested' at local events.

Visiting a local college we found that, whilst many

of our earlier findings had been right, the focus on time in #add3minutes was less salient to young drivers. For them concerns for damage to their cars and increases in their insurance premium may dominate behavioural decisions and this was incorporated into future materials.



Quiz: Making information social

The stages of effective behaviour change

Stage	Stage 1 Choose the destination: Define the behaviour you want to change	Stage 2 Map the landscape: Research the behaviour and audience in detail	Stage 3 Design and test the route: Test one or more interventions	Stage 4 Determine how far you have travelled: Evaluate the interventions	Stage 5 Revise the route and repeat: Tweak intervention and roll out again
What you are doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do initial research Be specific Think of the audience, see the behaviour from their perspective 	<p>Gather evidence that challenges assumptions about behaviour through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to people (interviews, focus groups) Experiencing the system (put yourself in their shoes) Asking questions (quantitative surveys and questionnaires) Exploring the data (what does it tell us?) Using behaviour change frameworks listed in the resources section overleaf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set realistic goals Target your audience Know available resources; time, money, expertise, support Decide on intervention(s) based on research and resources Monitor progress 	<p>Capture learning by developing an evaluation framework that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring progress Understanding impact, including the drivers and barriers to making this happen Reflecting on, and recording lessons learnt 	<p>Based on evaluation, tweak and adjust your intervention and roll it out again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to reflect on what is working and what needs refinement – a continuous process Take time to design and test improvements Return to earlier stages and fill in gaps identified in the research Adjust intervention and try again, if appropriate scale it up
Achievements & outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process to find behaviour Process to find audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move from assumptions and anecdotes to more factual evidence-based understanding of the behaviour Increased understanding of when/ where/ how the behaviour happens Identify a number of potential interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test intervention(s) designed based on research from Stages 1 and 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative and qualitative evidence of behaviours changed Improvements identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervention adapted based on evaluation and research Evidence of behaviours shifting
Progress indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified correct audience Identified specific behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of barriers and incentives Literature and similar projects reviewed Behavioural determinants identified, eg. social norms, messengers, infrastructure etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An active intervention with evaluation methods in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An initial evaluation which can be used to inform adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievements listed plus any additional unexpected outcomes which help develop/inform the project

Behaviour Change Models

ISM model (page 13)

Video: Using the ISM model

The East framework (page 17)

Video: Using the EAST framework

The Mindspace framework

Fehr's Behavioural Change Matrix

The COM-B Model

Video: Com-B Model

Tools and Ethics for Applied Behavioural Insights: The BASIC Toolkit

Empathy Maps: Useful for helping you think about your audience. Google 'empathy map' and get lots of templates. Or try: mindtools.com/pages/article/empathy-mapping.htm

Promoting persuasion in protected areas

General resources

Behavioural Insights Team – lots of examples of behaviour change projects developed and delivered by the team.

UCL – Centre for behaviour change, include lots of resources.

Behaviour Economics Guide, a free guide produced every year with lots of interesting articles.

Inudgeyou, interesting case studies and information.



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