



The Climate Action Fund Learning Signposts #13

Managing and Measuring Behaviour Change

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Managing and Measuring Behaviour Change

Who is this for?

This learning signpost is primarily intended for people involved in Climate Action Fund projects and other projects that are aiming to change behaviour in relation to climate action. It shares some of the early learning from Climate Action Fund projects that are giving this particular focus.

Introduction

Behaviour change has an important role to play in finding solutions to the climate crisis. According to a 2019 report from Imperial College London on behaviour change, public engagement and Net Zero, household consumption accounts for almost three-quarters of greenhouse gas emissions¹. So how do you go about changing people's behaviour and how do you measure it?

This learning signpost explores three Climate Action Fund projects which are aiming (and succeeding) in changing individuals' behaviour through different strategies. The projects are based in Frome, Kidlington near Oxford and Cumbria.



Figure 1 - A Green & Healthy Future for Frome, 'Cycle Together' project.



Some lessons emerging from the projects we highlight in this resource are:



Do:

- Find the motivation or reward that suits your audience; this will not always be related to climate change.
- Make facts and figures relatable to everyday life – e.g. individual cost savings, health benefits and carbon savings.
- Provide feedback and say 'thank you' as a reward for individual effort that collectively has made a big difference.
- Collect baseline data so you can make comparisons later in your project.
- Collect qualitative data – there is power in storytelling.
- Find out what elements of climate/nature people are passionate about and use this to motivate them into action using shock and awe.



Don't:

- Overwhelm people with complicated facts or the huge breadth of climate change.
- Assume you must change attitudes to change behaviour.
- Assume your plan will always lead to the behaviour change you expect.
- Give up if it doesn't work the first time – are there other interventions/behaviours or motivations that you could try?



¹ [Climate Change Committee-behaviour-change-public-engagement](#)

Project 1: A Green and Healthy Future for Frome

Green + Healthy Future

A Green and Healthy Future for Frome (GHFF) is run by a unique partnership between Edventure Frome CIC (a community enterprise school), Frome Medical Practice and Frome Town Council. The project supports a range of impactful community-led initiatives that recognise the links between climate change, people's health and socio-economic equity. The GHFF partnership aims to be a beacon for healthier, more cohesive communities, and an exemplar for systemic change towards a low-carbon future.

What the project involves

The GHFF objectives are built around the fact that the climate crisis intersects with a range of other crises in the UK, including the energy crisis, food security and wealth inequality, all which affect people's health. GHFF therefore believes 'health' is a strong potential connecting thread for building communities towards a low-carbon future and use the climate-health link as their core principle.

The partnership runs a range of community-led initiatives that require different levels of engagement and have co-benefits for health and climate. The motivation is becoming healthier or saving money; the result is a healthier person and a reduced climate footprint.

- **Healthy Homes** supports Frome residents to make their home a warm, healthy environment by providing advice on energy efficiency, insulation, bills and financial support.

- **Cycle Together** allows Frome residents to borrow an electric bike (e-bike) for four weeks, improving health whilst reducing pollution and congestion.
- **Choosing Wisely** supports patient access to low-carbon treatments and healthier life-style options as alternative prescriptions for appropriate health issues.
- **Green Community Connectors** training gives participants the opportunity to explore the climate-health win-win, to learn about the support in Frome to achieve this and how to signpost to this in the community.
- **Future Shed** is a space for supporting knowledge-sharing and networks of action for green-healthy initiatives and enterprise.



Figure 2 - A Green & Healthy Future for Frome, 'Choosing Wisely' project.

- Finally, **Storytelling** builds community engagement and wider knowledge-sharing about the overall programme and its events through multiple media.

In order to measure the impact the project had, GHFF began by collecting baseline data through a town wide survey. The Frome Futures survey captured an understanding of perceptions, attitudes and behaviours towards health, climate and the relationship between the two. To measure personal and wellbeing, they incorporated the 'Personal Wellbeing' questions used by the Office for National Statistics (known as ONS4), which enables them to compare the results to national data.

Learning so far

Motivations

- Recognising and understanding the diverse range of factors that motivate individuals is crucial for effective motivation strategies. "For example, do they need to save money on bills?" Often an individual's motivation is not about climate change (initially).
- Those who are most likely to engage in climate issues tend to be those in a more socioeconomically privileged demographic. Therefore, there is an argument to focus more on these groups with regards to behaviour change and achieving a positive climate outcome. Moreover, more deprived communities are least responsible for emissions and should not shoulder the burden to make changes. However, it must be acknowledged that deprived communities are more vulnerable to climate and health risks and could personally benefit from making changes.

- Staff within the partnership also need motivating. Keep drip feeding the co-benefits, once they experience the change it is more likely to become standard practice.

Measuring behaviour change

- The baseline survey, Frome Futures, has, so far, been completed, in the majority, by individuals that have a primary motivation focused on caring about the climate. In order to baseline the whole community, it needs to expand its reach as far as possible by making it available through a variety of media and promotion through community groups and networks.
- The Frome Futures survey was initially planned to be repeated after one year but, on reflection, it was felt this is too short a time to measure any trends and the repeat was planned for two years (Spring 2023) instead.
- Value the qualitative as well as the quantitative. A change of the in-house evaluator changed the focus after a year from quantitative data to qualitative and it was this that allowed GHFF to see the behaviour change and the value of qualitative data.
- The ONS4 questions (four questions set by the Office for National Statistics for measuring well-being) work well in the overall Frome Futures survey but do not transfer to individual project surveys as they lose the nuance of the impact of the project.
- Be rigorous in ensuring that pre and post questions use the same wording, otherwise comparing them later becomes problematic.

Successes so far

- Repetition – repeating activities on a regular basis and repeating messages in different media builds engagement over time and leads to action.
- Green Community Connectors – follow up surveys and interviews showed the training increased people’s confidence in their knowledge of the climate-health link after completing the training. This resulted in more reported conversations (per week) about changes to lifestyle in relation to health, but not so much about climate. This reiterates the point about being led by people’s individual motivations.
- Combining many benefits results in action. For example, the Cycle Together scheme has multiple motivations (health, climate and social). A 6-month follow up to the project reported that 53% were riding their bike more often.
- Collecting qualitative data has improved the project’s storytelling approach which is resulting in a ripple effect. In July 2022, GHFF hosted a sell-out national Health and Climate Conference which led to engagement from other medical practices and a visit from the Chief Executive of the NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board to learn more about GHFF.
- Communicating combined impact through Storytelling – telling people through various media the combined impact they have had – showing that individual behaviours add up to make a difference.

Links

To find out more see:

greenhealthyfuturefrome.org or contact greenhealth@edventurefrome.org



Project 2: Waste Innovation Station Headquarters (WISH)



The project delivered by a partnership called the Cherwell Collective and aims to bring together organisations and groups to reduce waste and consumption and to lower their carbon footprint. They do this through a series of initiatives including distributing food surplus via a community larder (Cherwell Larder Marketplace), repurposing food surplus in a climate café (Climatarian Kitchen), growing food for the community and repurposing non-food items through Waste Innovation Station.

The overarching aim of WISH is to reduce food waste and consumption, the end vision is permanent behaviour change. A common behaviour change model aims to change attitudes first which ultimately leads to behaviour change (for example Theory of Planned Behaviour² or The Transtheoretical Model³). Cherwell Collective approach behaviour change from another angle. Emily Connally, Managing Director at Cherwell Collective, is a trained psychologist who specialises in behaviour change and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). She explains the problem by linking attitude change to Cognitive Dissonance Theory⁴, which theorises that often a person’s behaviour will align to their attitude, yet some attitudes and beliefs will never change, and therefore the behaviour doesn’t change.

However, by changing the behaviour first, this could result in changing attitudes, and even if it doesn’t, that doesn’t matter because the ultimate objective (changing the behaviour) has been realised.

Cherwell Collective changes the behaviour of individuals by offering a ‘reward’ or a motivation that suits them. For example, when working with vulnerable individuals (financially, medically, and socially) – the ‘rewards’ almost never have anything to do with climate change. Instead, they are about social connection and cost saving (through distributing surplus). The individuals take part in the workshops or visit the café because it’s something to do or will save them money.

² [Theory of Planned Behaviour, Social Change](#)

³ [Transtheoretical Model, Very Well Mind, 2022](#)

⁴ [Cognitive Dissonance Theory, Simply Psychology](#)

Learning so far

Motivations

- Some people will never change their attitudes but with the right motivation they could still change their behaviour. “This has been the hardest thing for staff and volunteers to accept. They are so passionate about climate change and they want people to have a similar attitude.”
- It is important to thank people as a reward. For example – “Thank you for helping us reduce food waste in our community; we saved £9,000 of salmon.” This helps to ensure that people leave with a good feeling for ‘shopping surplus’.
- **Cherwell Collective** have learnt how to keep messages motivational, “Climate change messages can get depressing for people - so we have people who are trained in turning that into a motivation for individual climate change. We have those talking points in our pocket for when people feel despair.”
- Social connections and cost-savings are the main motivations for engagement.
- Anecdotally, they’ve seen that food waste is a greater motivator than any other waste. “Because people have felt hunger, they then feel disgusted by the scale of waste and worry about people with no food.”
- Changing the behaviour of businesses is challenging. “There is no infrastructure because there is no money in it! It’s very difficult to monetise.” **Cherwell Collective** have therefore created the infrastructure required to motivate businesses – for example, using refrigerated vans when they are not in-use to distribute surplus food.

Measuring behaviour change

- Collecting baseline information allows the project to follow individual journeys. “When we work with people who are not climate aware or climate literate, this is when we see the most impact.”
- Evaluating the food growing element is difficult due to seasonality, people only grow food for 6 months of the year so during an 18-month pilot it has been difficult to model. “We have learnt that connectedness to nature, rather than reducing waste as we theorised, has actually reduced consumption, mainly due to the food growing but we need to measure this over a longer period.”
- Surveys have limitations. Of the 200,000 sent out by email, only 150 were completed and they were mainly from older women. To effectively get more responses, you need to work in partnership, for example with a local authority.

“Even better would be a national and centralised climate change survey, but we are not there yet.”



Successes so far

- Using ‘shock and awe’ in the project’s mass distribution events. “At Christmas and New Year, we held a mass food distribution event with 2,000 people and 30 tonnes of food. Initially people came for the spectacle, they wanted to know what was going on, but the feedback is people did reduce their consumption for this time of year and then they used our recipes for any leftovers, reducing their waste.”
- Scaling the cost of food in the café to be the equivalent of the carbon cost of the dish. The information forces people to consider their consumption decisions. However, they are never unaffordable, and the café have a ‘pay what you can’ option or ‘fill up your karma cup’ where you can pay for someone else’s meal if you wish. A campaign in January 2023 in four different community cafes, saw a 200% increase in vegan choices (because they were cheaper) and in the whole week only six people chose the beef dish (usually 20-30 people a day).
- Carbon quizzes – pub-style quizzes but about climate change. “People carry the information with them much longer when they need to think about and answer a question, rather than just being told a fact.”
- ‘Quick and dirty’ data collection methods and finding what people will commit to doing over time to get an objective measure. “For example, asking people to take a photo of their bin each week and upload it and then tracking the results over time. We need to find the thing that people are willing to do.”

Link

To find out more see:
cherwellcollective.com



Project 3: Zero Carbon Cumbria: For the People By The People

For the People By The People Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) is a charity working across Cumbria to enable individuals, communities, businesses and local authorities to reduce the county's carbon footprint and bring about a more sustainable way of life. CAfS and 10 partner organisations, are delivering a five-year Zero Carbon Cumbria project which includes a wide-range of activities, from community led delivery to strategic and influencing work.

The next page shows an illustrative Story of Change which shows how the project aims to engage with audiences, then increase knowledge and skills, change attitudes and motivate, all of which then leads to behaviour change. In this way, CAfS and the other delivery partners are aiming to change daily behaviours and decisions which will lead to new social norms, emission reductions and a range of other benefits. These co-benefits are when the individual or organisation realises a benefit as well as the benefits to the environment.



Figure 4 – Zero Carbon Cumbria – Climate Champions

Figure 5 – ZCC – Simplified Story of Change



Learning so far

Motivations

- There is a lot of competition for people's time and attention. The cost-of-living crisis is at the forefront for a lot of people at the moment. It's therefore important to highlight the range of benefits to help catch attention.
- It is important to view a situation from the point of view of the person you are trying to influence – start with the benefits to **them** first.
- Storytelling and case studies can be helpful in conveying the co-benefits. This has also worked in businesses where an individual wants to influence change within an organisation. Showing how other people/organisations are doing something and the benefits they are realising as a result can help influence organisational behaviours and decision making.

- People are influenced by what other people are doing (for example recycling and solar panels are becoming social norms, where once they were much less common).
- Having climate champions from the local community speaking at local events has a strong influence on their peers. This reflects the importance of such influence in behaviour change models such as the ISM (Individual Social Material) model⁵.
- Don't overwhelm people with all the things they could possibly change. Identify two to three things that are willing and able to change and focus on these.
- Recontacting people after a few months helps to reinforce the behaviour and where it might have waned, the follow up could encourage them to take it up again.

Successes so far



- Engagement led by local sustainability groups such as Art Gene, Sustainable Carlisle and PACT is an effective way to encourage behaviour change within local communities.
- Liaising with the supply chain on behalf of householders has helped to address some of the challenges of being in a remote and rural location. For example, people do not want to install renewables if they can't access an installer or someone to give ongoing support. Therefore, CAFs work with local suppliers, technicians, plumbers, builders etc., to provide knowledge and training that creates a more robust supply chain for climate friendly options.
- Co-designing policies with communities means they commit to making changes that are manageable and actionable.
- Following Carbon Literacy training, participants make carbon pledges to change something at work and at home. Asking delegates to articulate their pledges as part of the accreditation process will encourage them to action the behaviour.
- Finding manageable changes that are not too difficult to make and where people see the benefit is key.

About the Climate Action Fund

The Climate Action Fund is a ten-year £100 million fund supporting communities across the UK to take action on climate change.

About The National Lottery Community Fund

We are the largest non-statutory community funder in the UK – community is at the heart of our purpose, vision and name. We support activities that create resilient communities that are more inclusive and environmentally sustainable and that will strengthen society and improve lives across the UK. We're proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and to work closely with government to distribute vital grants and funding from key Government programmes and initiatives. As well as responding to what communities tell us is important to them, our funding is focused on four key missions, supporting communities to:

1. **Come together**
2. **Be environmentally sustainable**
3. **Help children and young people thrive**
4. **Enable people to live healthier lives.**

Thanks to the support of National Lottery players, we distribute around £500 million a year through 10,000+ grants and plan to invest over £4 billion of funding into communities by 2030. We're privileged to be able to work with the smallest of local groups right up to UK-wide charities, enabling people and communities to bring their ambitions to life.

National Lottery players raise over £30 million each week for good causes throughout the UK. Since The National Lottery began in 1994, £47 billion has been raised and more than 670,000 individual grants have been made across the UK – the equivalent of around 240 National Lottery grants in every UK postcode district.

Link

To find out more see: cafs.org.uk/

Other resources produced by The National Lottery Community Fund

The Climate Action Fund learning partners have previously run a workshop on '[Creating a Story of Change and Measuring Behaviour Change](#)'

The National Lottery Community Fund have written about behaviour change as one of their key initiatives: [The role of behaviour change in mobilising community action on climate change](#)

Acknowledgements:

We are grateful to the following for their help in compiling this resource:

- Charlotte Carson, Community and Sustainability Lead, Frome Medical Practice
- Emily Connally, Managing Director, Cherwell Collective CIC
- John Forbes, Project Manager, Zero Carbon Cumbria, Cumbria Action for Sustainability



www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk



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BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
Produced 2022 Published 2023

