

# RESEARCH SUMMARY

<b>Title</b>	Older Pedestrians and Road Safety – Strategic Development Research		
<b>Objective</b>	To explore how to best communicate with older pedestrians in order to help reduce casualties		
<b>Date</b>	17/04/2013	<b>Agency</b>	2CV
<b>Methodology</b>	5x expert interviews, 6x 1 hour accompanied journey and depths, 4x 1.5 hour and 2x 1 hour focus groups with short pre-task		

## Abstract

Addressing older pedestrian safety is high on the agenda for TfL. Pedestrian casualties aged 60 years and over represented 14% of all pedestrian casualties of known age, however fatalities in this group represented 45% of all fatal pedestrian casualties of known age. TfL want to understand the best approach to communicate with this audience about pedestrian safety in terms of message, tone and channels. Overall people aged 65+ do not feel any more vulnerable than other pedestrians, believe they are fully informed about road safety and think they are probably more cautious than other pedestrians. Therefore communications that address road safety should target them subtly, tell them something new, present objective and inarguable information and be hard hitting, yet positive.

## Key findings

Older pedestrians do not see themselves as a unique group in London nor as particularly 'old' or vulnerable, unless they have a specific reason for feeling this way (eg slowing down, health issues, landmark age, etc). Whilst their attitude to crossing the road is probably more cautious, any less safe habits they may have are largely unchanged, and they often believe that their general attentiveness makes them *less* vulnerable compared to other road users.

Older pedestrians tend to have a distinct set of concerns about being a pedestrian in London, including security, other pedestrians, obstacles (eg bins, cars) and the state of the pavement. Crossing the road is rarely seen as a major concern; for most it is a matter of common sense and experience. Using a formal crossing is ideal, however it is not always guaranteed, for three reasons: they are not always available, it's not always practical (eg walking 100m in the wrong direction to a crossing), and it is not always safe (subways are widely avoided).

For maximum impact a message needs to meet three key criteria;

- Interesting and useful information: tell them something new or reframe what they know in an engaging way
- Objective and inarguable: they easily reject messages that conflict with individual experiences
- Positive solution / call-to-action

The three message territories offering new or interesting information are most engaging: '*Pedestrians are three times more likely to be killed if they do not use a crossing to cross the road*', '*Pedestrians are three times safer using a crossing than not using one*' and '*HGVs may not see you – don't cross in front of them*'. 'Common sense' messages ('*Look out for traffic when there isn't a crossing on which to cross the road*') are rejected for being patronising and offering nothing new. On balance messages that offer solutions (eg *three times safer*) are more motivating than those that evoke fear (eg *three times more likely to be killed*), and speak to the more cautious nature of many older pedestrians.

This audience is relatively advertising-savvy and does not define itself as 'old', so they can reject communications that seem to single out older people as a 'problem group' or adopt clichés such as overtly posed images, unrealistic models or reinforcing helplessness. Potential levers that may help this audience engage with pedestrian safety messages include acknowledging key concerns (eg fear of falls, perceived lack of courtesy on the roads, a sense they are more aware than other pedestrians), and using other behaviour as a comparator (eg road safety with grandchildren, their own driving). A number of factors should be considered to ensure the message is comprehensible, engaging and motivating:

- **Tone:** Clear, friendly and informative
- **Imagery:** Aspirational and/or realistic (intergenerational images work well).
- **Copy:** Clear and legible
- **Partnerships:** Credible, well-known organisations (eg Age UK and NHS) that have 'permission' to speak to them are potentially the most effective route in
- **Channels:** Leaflets in GP waiting rooms, bus stop ads (in-the-moment), Freedom Pass

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