

**Visitor road safety**

**09080**

July 2010

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## Contents

# Executive summary

# Key findings

- TfL LRSU (London Road Safety Unit) has identified tourists as being at particularly high risk of being injured as pedestrians whilst visiting London. Reasons for this include:
  - **Road regulations:** Different countries have different attitudes and conventions when it comes to crossing the road, and visitors are unlikely to adapt these when travelling abroad
  - **UK road design:** Crossing times are often underestimated, cars driving on the different side of the road
  - **The holiday mentality:** People are likely to be distracted by the scenery or sites, or consume increased levels of alcohol when they are on holiday
- There is a lack of available information on road safety, both from within the UK and other countries. Road safety is a relatively low-involvement subject, and people are therefore unlikely to actively seek out information. Most people believe they know how to cross the road safely, and there are more appealing areas worthy of investigation e.g. places of interest

## Key findings

- Tourists are particularly at risk of being injured as pedestrians whilst visiting London because there are several areas of confusion which can make them more likely to place themselves in potentially dangerous situations
- Visitors do not see any reason why they should adapt their behaviour as a pedestrian when visiting London. They behave in the same way they do at home. As a result, they are usually unfamiliar with both the written and unwritten laws of London's roads. Key sources of confusion include:
  - **Pelican crossings:** *"Do I need to press the button?"*  
*"How much time is left? I'll make a run for it!"*
  - **Other crossing points:** *"I'm never sure whether cars have to stop or not."*  
*"I'll just copy the locals. That seems to work."*
  - **Nature of traffic:** *"I keep looking the wrong way when I cross."*  
*"Traffic seems to move fast here. You don't expect it."*

## Key findings

- Many overseas visitors routinely take risks when walking around London. Risk-taking behaviour can be divided into two categories – intentional and unintentional

Intentional risk-taking	Unintentional risk-taking
<i>Deliberately taking 'minor' risks in order to save time/keep up with friends</i>	<i>Unwittingly putting themselves at risk through habit or lack of attention</i>
Crossing half way and waiting between two lanes of traffic	Taking a first step into the road without looking
Crossing between vehicles in a moving traffic flow	Herding – getting swept along with the crowd
Crossing between stationary vehicles	Talking to friends
Crossing on red	Avoiding obstructions
Walking on the other side of barriers	Taking photos

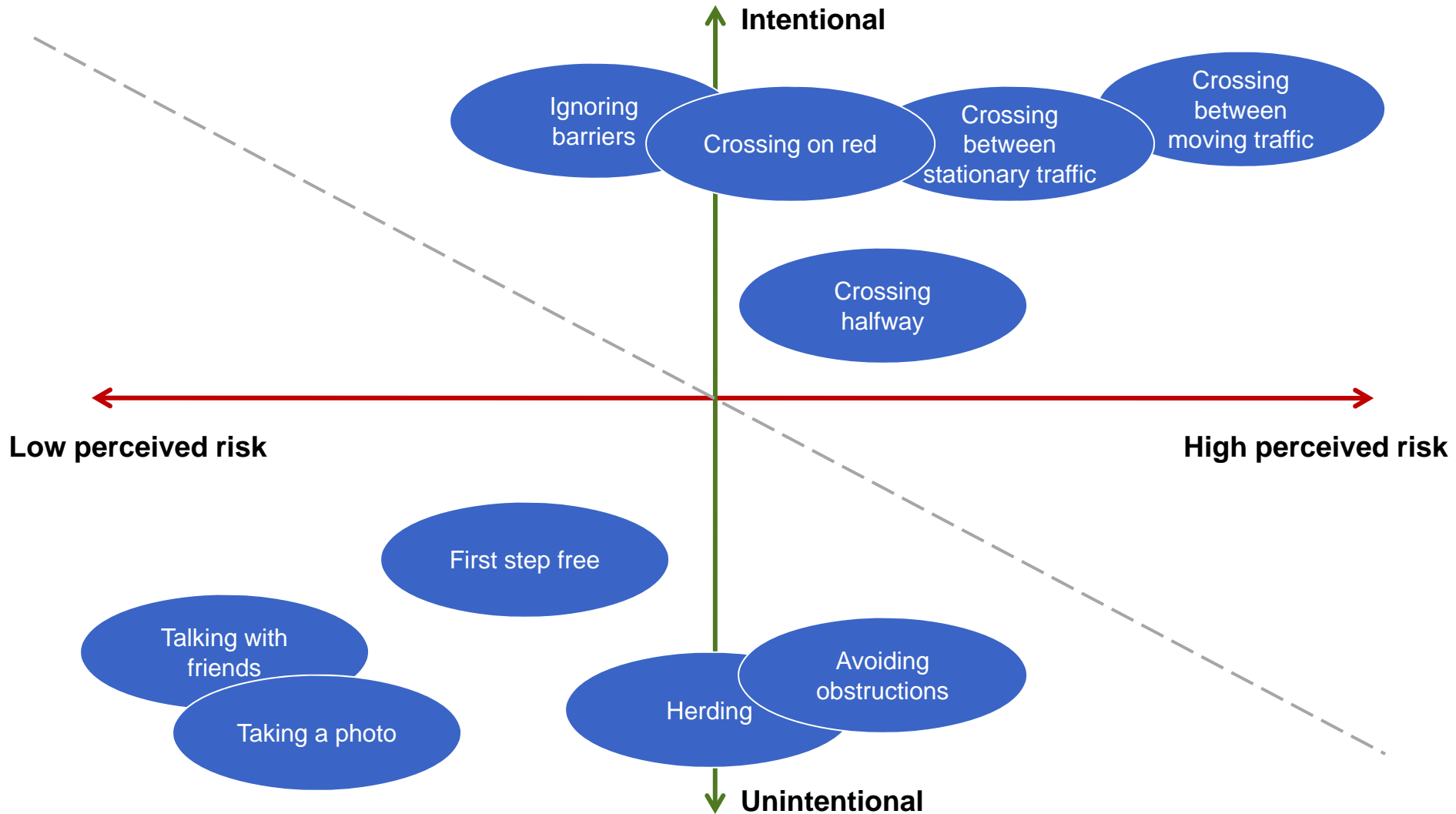
- Intentional risk-taking** behaviour is usually defined by an individual's perception of how likely an undesired consequence is, and how serious those consequences are. Clearly the consequences of being hit by a car are undesirable for most people

# Key findings

- **Intentional risk-taking** as a pedestrian is therefore more likely if people do not believe that there is a high likelihood of any undesirable consequences happening. The end result is that they perceive their behaviour as being relatively low risk. This perception can be influenced by:
  - Observing the locals jaywalking and try to copy their behaviour
  - Over-confidence in their ability as a safe pedestrian
- Another element of taking risks is the calculation as to whether the expected benefit of taking that risk outweighs any potential undesirable consequences:
  - People on a tight sightseeing schedule are likely to be in a rush and want to save time
  - People travelling in large groups often want to keep up with their friends and not be left behind
- **Unintentional risks** are taken where people do not make the connection between this behaviour and the potential for it to result in them being involved in an accident. Unintentional risks can also be taken as a result of a lack of understanding of the situation e.g. traffic is travelling in the opposite direction in the UK



# Intentional and unintentional risk-taking behaviour



# Research background

# Research background

- TfL has identified tourists as being at particularly high risk of being injured as pedestrians whilst visiting London
- The Road Safety Unit is conscious of the large number of foreign visitors that come to London each year, and in particular the large number of visitors who will be arriving in London for the Olympics in 2012.
- Synovate were asked to explore this issue in greater depth and help to identify communications messages that could be used to help increase awareness of the issue and promote greater safety

# Objectives

## **The research objectives were as follows:**

- to explore the mindset of tourists towards pedestrian road safety when they are visiting London
- to understand potential reasons for a poorer pedestrian road safety record amongst tourists who are visiting London
- to explore potential communications messages that could be used amongst these groups to promote road safety as a pedestrian
- to identify potential communications channels to deliver this message



# Methodology

Synovate designed a multi-stage research methodology for this study:

- **Desk research** – looking at road safety messages and resources in the UK and three other countries: Spain, USA and China
- **Observation** – visits to seven tourist hotspots to observe pedestrian behaviour (Oxford Street, Bond Street, Piccadilly, Regent Street, Greenwich, Covent Garden, Westminster)
- **Intercept depth interviews** – five minute interviews with tourists in seven locations across London (as above)
- **Accompanied journeys** – 14 one-hour interviews with non-UK nationals who have recently moved to London

## Sample profile – accompanied journeys

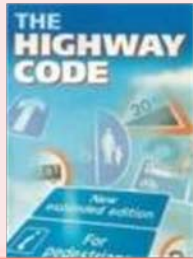
Gender	Nationality	Length of residency in London (months)	Areas covered
F	Romanian	5	Oxford St, Regent St, Bond St
M	Spanish	5	Piccadilly, Covent Garden
M	Cameroonian	4	Bond St, Oxford St, Regent St
M	Ghanaian	1	Regent St
F	Nigerian	7	Regent St, Covent Garden
F	Canadian	6	Greenwich
M	Bangladesh	5	Covent Garden
M	French	4	Westminster
F	American	9	Westminster
M	Polish	11	Covent Garden
M	Hungarian	5	Bond St, Regent St, Oxford St
F	Japanese	6	Piccadilly
M	Chinese	1	Oxford St
F	German	8	Covent Garden, Oxford St

**Context**

# Why tourists are more likely to be involved in incidents

Research has shown that overseas visitors to London are at greater risk of being involved in road traffic incidents compared to the resident population.

## Road regulations



- Visitors assume traffic will come from the wrong direction
- Different countries have different conventions
- In Berlin people wait on deserted streets for the green man
- In Cairo, people stride out into oncoming traffic

## UK road design



- Some academics argue that the UK's roads are often designed with vehicles first:
  - Pedestrian crossing times are not generous
  - Crossings often located where there is the greatest amount of traffic

## Holiday mentality



- People distracted by scenery/sites
- increased alcohol consumption of 'pleasure travellers'
- Fatigue of visitors can also have an impact. Visitors may be jet-lagged when they arrive. Busy schedules may also result in fatigue

## Road changes



- Street clutter and barriers have been removed in certain areas – Oxford Circus, and Exhibition Road in Kensington - giving pedestrians more freedom
- Pedestrians are sharing more space with traffic than ever before



## Different attitudes towards road safety

When it comes to crossing the road, there's no such thing as an international standard. Every country does it differently....

*"In Milan, traffic lights are instructions, in Rome they are suggestions, and in Naples they are decorations."*

*"We stopped to let a cyclist go by but he stopped as well, took off his hat and with an expansive gesture said "After you, Ma'am". Now that's Canadian courtesy!"*

*"To Italians, zebra crossings are just a nice bit of art on the road!"*

*"The best place is in San Francisco where timed crossings are respected by both pedestrians and motorists."*

## Different attitudes towards road safety

When it comes to crossing the road, there's no such thing as an international standard. Every country does it differently....

*"A Parisienne told me NEVER to look at the traffic when crossing the road at a crossing. If they see a pedestrian has seen them they will assume that the pedestrian will stop. By "pretending" you've not seen the car leaves the driver thinking you've not seen them and they will stop."*

*"In Cambodia, the trick is not to hesitate - set off from the curb and walk at a steady rate, regardless of approaching traffic."*

*"..Our American colleague arrived ten minutes later than us as she could not be induced to cross against a "Don't Walk" sign at any price!"*

*"You should see Nairobi! Vehicles mounting pavements to cut through-people..crossing the street takes skill and sheer guts!"*

**Information currently  
available to tourists**

# What advice is out there for pedestrians?

- There is very little information on pedestrian safety for people coming to London. Government websites often contain information, but this is specifically aimed at young children
- The majority of information aimed at tourists is from non-official sources such as blogs
  - There are many people who have visited London who have used the internet to advise fellow tourists how to be safe when walking around London
- There is a lack of information from sources one might expect to provide pedestrian road safety advice e.g. Home Office and Foreign Office websites



# Where do people look for information?

Travel blogs based on other people's real experiences of visiting London are the most trusted and personally relevant sources of information. They are looking for general travel information rather than anything related specifically to pedestrian safety.



# UK-based information – official sources

## Information Source



Metropolitan Police

## Information given

- Keep bags/cameras visible
- Don't buy tickets from 'touts'
- Stay in well lit areas at night
- Avoid isolated buses/trains
- Use licensed taxis
- Take care crossing roads

## Road safety info

- Look both ways as traffic might be coming from a different direction than you are expecting



VisitLondon.com

- The website includes a guide to 'Walking in London'
- Walking is a great way to get around London
- Stresses walking as a convenient and easy way to get around

- Cars drive on the left
- Look in both directions for oncoming traffic when crossing the road
- Always know where you're heading
- Take the same precautions you would in any major city



VisitBritain.com

- The transport/travel around Britain section provides information on trains, buses, cars, taxis, cycling, flights and cruises
- The safety and travel advice section talks about how to avoid being a victim of crime

- **No mention of pedestrian safety!**

# UK-based information – official sources

Other official sources provide information about pedestrian safety aimed only at children.

There is a clear lack of visibly available information for tourists visiting London

The screenshot shows the Department for Transport website. The header is orange with the text "Department for Transport". Below it is a blue navigation bar with "EDUCATION" and buttons for "Teachers", "Pupils", and "Parents". A breadcrumb trail reads "Home | Parents | 3-5s | Pedestrian safety". The main content area is titled "Pedestrian safety" and includes a sidebar with a table of contents and a main text area with "The facts" section.

## Department for Transport

EDUCATION Teachers Pupils Parents

Home | Parents | 3-5s | Pedestrian safety

- > 3-5s
  - > Why road safety matters
  - > How you can help your child
    - > Pedestrian safety**
    - > Be Bright, Be Seen
    - > Child car seats and safety belts
    - > What's online?
- > 6-7s
- > 7-11s
- > Home-link sheets
- > Catalogue

### Pedestrian safety

#### The facts

- Every week, on average nine children under the age of six are killed or seriously injured on Great Britain's roads.
- Almost 65% of children aged 0-5 killed or seriously injured in 2008 were on foot at the time. The other 35% were mostly travelling in cars.

But let's get one thing clear: it's still important for children to be outside. Walking is good for children's health and fitness and we support parents who encourage their children to walk as much as possible. Taking your child in the car for short journeys puts more traffic on the road and adds to the problem.

Children can be safe on the streets if we show them how. What's the best way to do this?

#### 1. Set a good example

- When you cross the road, don't take risks – your children will copy you.
- Remember to find a safe place to cross, then stop, look and listen.
- Don't use your mobile phone while crossing the road.
- Wearing bright colours or fluorescent and reflective clothing helps motorists to see you (see p7).

#### 2. Hold hands

- Always hold hands with your young child near traffic (or make sure they hold onto a buggy if you're pushing one).
- Make sure your child walks on the side of the pavement away from the traffic.
- If there is no pavement walk on the side of the road facing oncoming traffic.

#### 3. Find safest places to cross the road

- If you can, use traffic islands, zebra crossings, pedestrian crossings, footbridges and subways (see p7-8)
- Cross where you can see clearly in all directions

The screenshot shows the Transport for London website. The header is orange with the text "Transport for London". Below it is a blue navigation bar with "Transport for London" and a "Back to Transport for London" link. The main content area is titled "Walking" and includes a sidebar with navigation links and a main text area with "The Green Cross Code" section.

## Transport for London

Back to Transport for London

- Staying street safe
- Meet the team
- Street safe games
- JRSO members

### Walking

When you walk to school, to your friend's house or anywhere at all, you must follow six simple steps before crossing the road.

These handy rules are called the **Green Cross Code**:

1. First **find a safer** place to cross, then **stop**
2. **Stand** on the pavement, near the kerb
3. **Look and listen** for traffic and **think** about what you're doing
4. **Wait until it's safe** to cross. If you are unsure, don't cross
5. **Keep looking and listening** as you cross the road
6. **Walk** straight across the road - don't run

**Make sure you learn the Green Cross Code. It could save your life!**

Walking Pelican crossings Zebra crossings Puffin crossings Toucan crossings

# UK-based information – unofficial sources

## Information Source

### Warning on Walking for Pedestrians

London is a great city for walking, as there is something interesting to see in every neighborhood. For most visitors, walking in London is fraught with danger, as we are used to looking to the left before stepping into a street or a cross walk. Remember, vehicles drive on the left rather than the right in the UK and London and the cars and buses will be on the "wrong side" of the road. Before you start to cross the street, look to the **right** for traffic. In the major tourist areas of London you will often find the warning "Look Right" painted on the street. Of course, you should always look both ways before crossing, but look right before you enter the crosswalk.

[Thereareplaces.com](http://Thereareplaces.com)

### Pedestrian Crossings

Once you have got used to the traffic driving on the left, London is a safe city to explore on foot. When planning a walk try to avoid the rush hours between 08:00 - 09:30 and 16:30 - 18:30 when the pavements and streets are very congested. Take care when crossing the road and remember that some streets are one-way only. At crossings look for the markings painted on the street which tell you from which direction you can expect the traffic to come. There are two types of pedestrian crossings in use in London.

### Zebra crossings

London's striped 'zebra crossings' are also marked by flashing amber beacons. Traffic should stop for pedestrians waiting at a zebra crossing but this is not always the case. Take care when crossing and make sure the traffic on the farther carriageway has seen you and stopped before you start to walk across.

### Push Button Crossings

Traffic will only stop at these crossings when instructed by the traffic lights. If the traffic is flowing a 'red man' is displayed on the illuminated panel on the far side of the crossing. Do not attempt to cross if the 'red man' is showing.

When you wish to cross press the button on the push-button control found beside the crossing. If it is unsafe to cross the control panel will indicate 'WAIT'. After traffic has come to a halt the illuminated panel will now display a 'green man' and an electronic bleeping will sound to indicate that it is safe to cross. After a short while the 'green man' will start to flash. This indicates that the traffic is about to move again. On newer push-button crossings all the commands are displayed on the control panels beside the crossing.

[Touruk.co.uk](http://Touruk.co.uk)

### Traffic, Driving and Crossing the road: Crossing the street: a real danger!

If you're used to cross the streets through the white stripes while watching the green lighted dummy...FORGET IT IN LONDON!. One very important thing you must learn here is the way to cross the streets safely. The most obvious problem is that you are not used to watch cars driving through the left lane so your head moves wrong in the firsts attempts to walk across. **FIRST ERROR.** And soon you discover you're not able to find the friendly white stripes, but some white letters with an arrow that tells you to watch your right or your left. That's fine but...where's now the green dummy? Nowhere! -well, perhaps sometimes but it's not necessarily so- so you don't know if you're supposed to cross or not. In these cases the best is to wait for the traffic to stop at the lines which means the traffic lights are red for them.

[Virtualtourist.com](http://Virtualtourist.com)

## Information given

- Walking is a good way to see London
- Walking in London is fraught with danger
- Traffic drives on the 'wrong side' of the road in the UK and London



## Road safety advice

- Expect cars to approach from directions you don't expect
- Look both ways before crossing the road
- Observe the 'look right/look left' on the road surface

- London is a safe city for visitors to explore on foot once they are used to traffic driving on the left



- Avoid rush hour
- Observe the 'look right/look left' markings
- Cars might not always stop at zebra crossings. Check both carriageways
- Don't cross at pelican crossings if red man shown

- London traffic is different to other countries
- Visitors must learn how to cross the road safely
- Be cautious and patient when crossing the street



- Observe the 'look right/look left' markings
- Don't rely solely on the green man. Wait for traffic to come to a complete stop





# UK-based information – unofficial sources

## Information Source

### WALKING

Our favourite method of transport in London. Follow one or more of our walks or simply wander. Cars HAVE to stop if you step onto a crossing and most will stop even if you jump out into the road. Jaywalking is not an offence, but natural selection can operate if you get too foolhardy.

It's worth remembering that London is built on a curve in the river (actually it's shaped like a banana) and simply walking in what looks like a straight line is often not the best route!

[Londontourist.org](http://Londontourist.org)

## Information given

- Walking is the best way to explore London



## Road safety info

- Cars have to stop if you step onto a crossing
- Most cars will stop anyway if you jump out in the middle of the road
- Jaywalking is not an offence

### PEDESTRIANS

#### GENERAL

1. Where there's a pavement or a footpath, ignore it. You'll find fewer pedestrians in the road and therefore be able to walk considerably faster. Don't let the vehicles try to convince you that you're not supposed to be there. You pay your taxes as well as them and have just as much right to use the road as anybody else.



#### Car? What Car? I Can't See Any Car!

2. Where no pavement exists (usually due to some contractor digging it up) once again you should walk in the road. Ignore the irritating noises coming from the impatient motorists. If there's no pavement what else do they expect you to do, cross the road and use the other one? What an extremely stupid idea. Why would you even consider wasting a few valuable minutes of your precious time.



#### Walking The Thin Yellow Line

3. Wear or carry something that will help you to be seen. Muggers have a hard enough time making a living as it is, so to make it more difficult for them would be very unhelpful of you. By wearing some light reflective clothing you'll also decrease your point value to any fanatic motorists, as you'll be a lot easier to see. This will annoy them immensely as they won't have any excuse to use in any subsequent accident investigation.

4. Don't let your children out on the road alone, especially foreign coach parties which spread themselves across the entire width of the pavement, making it totally impossible for anybody else to get passed!

The West End traffic is a very dangerous playground, but also an effective form of population control. If you're out shopping with very young children, don't forget to strap them securely into the pushchair. It'll prevent them from falling out when you use it as a battering ram to carve a passage through the mass of pedestrians blocking the pavement.

[Rosalyn.me.uk](http://Rosalyn.me.uk)

- The lack of information from official sources means that people may turn to unofficial sources instead.



- This information can be inaccurate or dangerous
- There is a clear need for official guidance on how tourists should conduct themselves when walking around London

- Walk in the road because it's less crowded
- Pedestrians have as much right to use the roads as vehicles
- Walk in the road where the pavement is blocked by streetworks etc.
- Fight your way through the crowds in the West End

# Information Sources provided in other countries

## Information Source



Smart Traveller



## Information given

- Terrorism
- Crime
- Money and values
- Local laws
- Entry and exit
- Health issues
- Local travel



## Road safety advice

- Nothing specific to London
- Look in both directions
- Don't assume drivers will stop at zebra crossings
- Face oncoming traffic when walking on pavement



U.S. Department of State



- Entry and exit requirements
- Safety and security
- Crime
- ATM Fraud
- Traffic safety and road conditions



- Drink driving penalties
- Traffic moves on the left
- Speed limits
- Hard shoulders
- SOS phone boxes
- Towing services
- Public transport



H.K. Road Safety Council



- Drivers
- Pedestrians
- Passengers
- Motorists
- Roadworks
- Learner drivers



- Do not rush
- Cross at designated spot
- Wait for green crossing signal
- Look both ways
- Wait for traffic to stop

## Low priority for road safety information

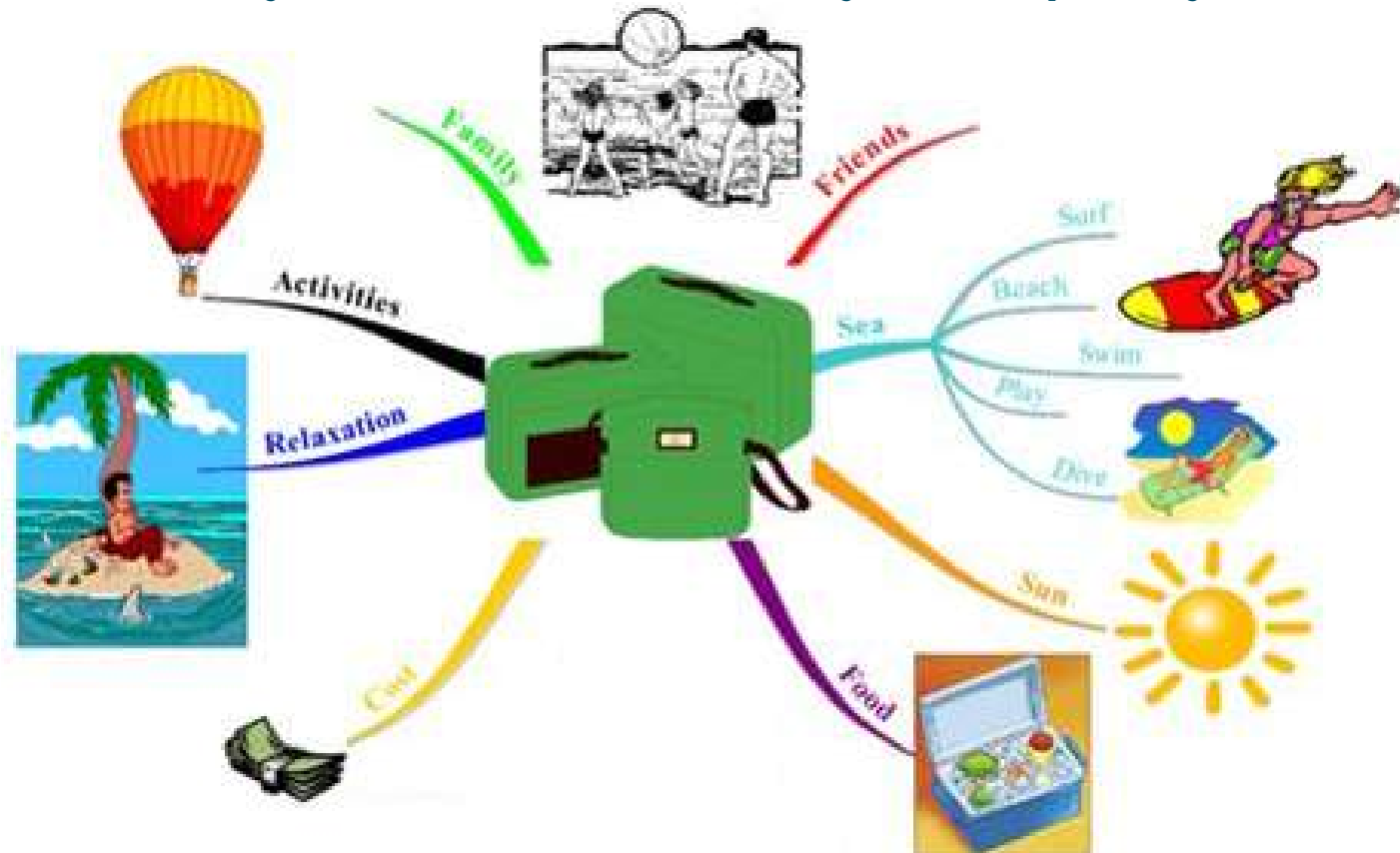
- **Many sources of travel information on London promote London as a great “walking city.”** There are so many sights to see, so much culture to experience and surprises around every corner. Furthermore, they often advise against driving in London
- **However, there does not seem to be a focus on pedestrian safety.** Many sources mention general safety in terms of avoiding being the victim of a crime, talk about how to get around the city on the tube, buses and taxis and perhaps mention road safety for drivers. Only a few sources, mostly guidebooks, mentioned pedestrian safety
- **When pedestrian safety is mentioned (in guidebooks, on websites), it is usually in the “getting around,” “travel tips,” “fast facts,” “practical information” or “planning your trip” section of that media**

**There is clearly an opportunity to do more in providing detailed and reliable pedestrian safety information to overseas visitors.**

## Low priority for road safety information

Given that there is such a low focus on pedestrian safety information for tourists, it is not surprising that overseas visitors give the subject very little attention

- ***Other holiday concerns are more likely to take priority:***



***Overseas visitors are extremely unlikely to actively seek out pedestrian safety information when planning a trip to London.***

# Main findings

## Areas of confusion

Mindset

Risk behaviours

## Why are tourists at particular risk?

Visitors to London, particularly those who are visiting for the first time, do not adapt their behaviour to a foreign city i.e. they adopt the same approach they would do in their own country.

Many unintentional risk behaviours are exhibited equally by tourists and London natives alike

But tourists' unfamiliarity with the (written and unwritten) ways of the road in London puts them at particular risk

**SO WHAT CONFUSES TOURIST PEDESTRIANS IN LONDON?.....**

## Confusion area 1 – Pelican crossings



- Pelican crossings are similar in most countries, but slight differences can cause confusion
- Some tourists don't know what to do if both they and the traffic are facing a red light, and often they take a risk and cross
- Some are initially unaware they need to press a button to change the lights
- Some tourists feel traffic lights in London give pedestrians less time to cross than in their home country e.g. France, Japan, Germany
- In America the time left for crossing is actually displayed (see right)



## Confusion area 2 – Other crossing points



- Some tourists are unfamiliar with zebra crossings and are unsure how they should be used
- Others misunderstand this type of crossing based on similar crossings in their country origin e.g. they believe it represents a suggested crossing point but does not oblige drivers to give way to pedestrians waiting to cross
- Jaywalking is very common in London and some tourists copy this behaviour, even if they are not used to doing so in their home country



## Confusion area 3 – Nature of traffic

- **Traffic coming from the ‘wrong’ direction**
  - Many visitors find themselves looking in the wrong direction for traffic when crossing the road
- **Tourists new to London are often surprised by the sheer number of buses**
  - The fact many of these are double-decker makes them particularly intimidating
- **Some tourists do not realise some roads allow two lanes of traffic in the same direction**
  - Therefore they do not always check to make sure nothing is being obscured by the vehicle nearest to them e.g. a speeding motorcycle behind a slow-moving bus
- **Tourists are sometimes surprised by cyclists weaving between traffic**
  - Sometimes they do not realise they are crossing a cycle lane



# Main findings

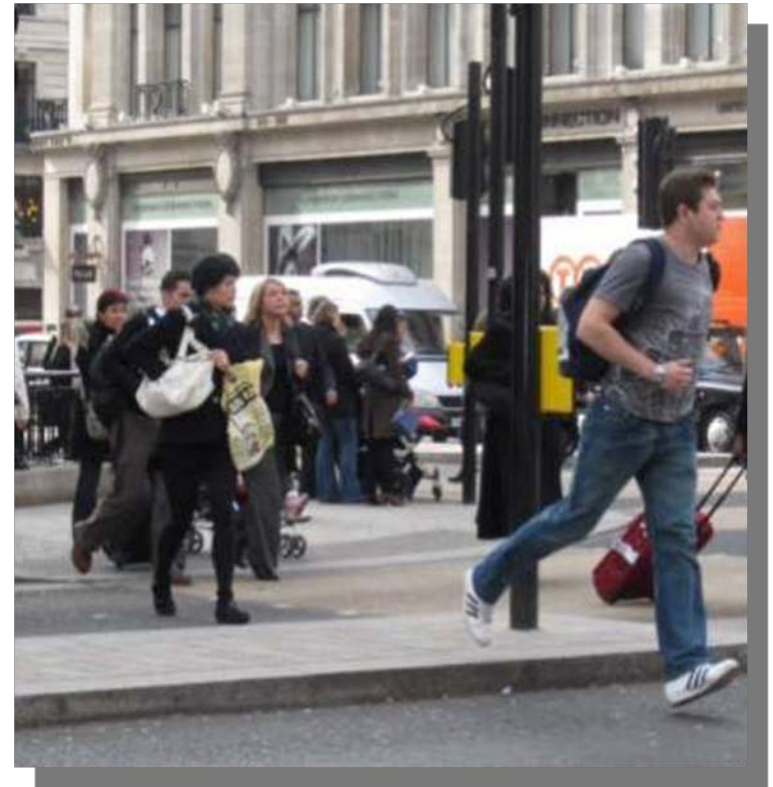
Areas of confusion

**Mindset**

Risk behaviours

# Some tourists are taken aback by London's busy streets

- Many tourists are surprised by the pace of London life
- They have the impression that everyone is in a rush, and this can make walking on busy streets quite stressful
- However, some feel London is no different from other large cities in this respect
- To cope with the speed and the crowds, tourists initially adopt a mindset of vigilance
  - They claim to be alert to the dangers around them



# Tourists have a lot to think about when they are walking around London

- Although tourists claim to appreciate the risks they face as pedestrians, their attention is often taken by other concerns:
  - **Navigation** – looking at maps/signs so as not to get lost (particularly challenging for non-English speakers)
  - **Sight-seeing** – admiring the surroundings and taking photos
  - **Taking care of other members of the party** – e.g. young children
  - **Sharing conversation** with fellow holiday-makers



Some tourists suggested that central London is actually *less* dangerous for pedestrians than other places they have been

Roads out of the city centre are more dangerous because the speed limit is higher and drivers are less on the lookout for pedestrians



Drivers in London drive quite quickly, but they respect pedestrians more than in some other cities, e.g. Paris or New York

The sheer number of people means that pedestrians have an unspoken right of way in the city centre: "One car can't knock down 200 people."

## Several other factors also affect tourists' mindset

### Alone vs in group

- Getting lost is a particular concern for solo visitors, because they can't rely on companions to lead the way
- Individuals in a group feel less onus to pay attention to their surroundings
- They tend to be more carefree and interested in sharing their experiences with their companions

### Place of origin

- London drivers seem accommodating relative to Southern European countries
- Tourists from smaller towns struggle to get used to the high traffic volumes – just as they would in other big cities
- German and Japanese tourists find it hard to adjust to a more relaxed attitude to crossing roads

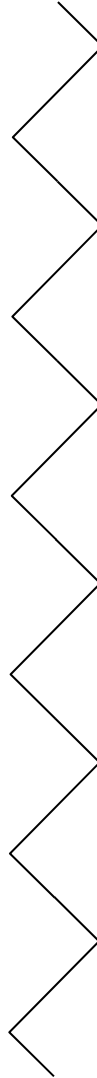
### Lifestage

- Parents of small children take most care on the roads because they want to protect their family and set a good example for them to follow
- Older people are less confident in reacting to traffic and are more likely to wait for lights to change
- Teenagers and younger adults are less intimidated by the traffic and more happy to 'improvise' on the roads

# Pedestrian mindset changes over time

## TOURISTS (BRIEF STAY)

- Conscious of not fully understanding 'the way things work', so alert to potential dangers
- Aware of their 'foreigner' status, so more likely to retain their own sense of how they should behave on the roads
- Sightseeing/relaxing so not in a hurry to get from A to B
- Struggling to navigate the city/not get lost



## RECENTLY MOVED TO LONDON

- Gradually start to adopt local behaviour – taking pride in blending in with the locals
- More likely to be in a rush – sorting out day-to day affairs rather than sightseeing
- Can become complacent/over-confident over time

# Main findings

Areas of confusion

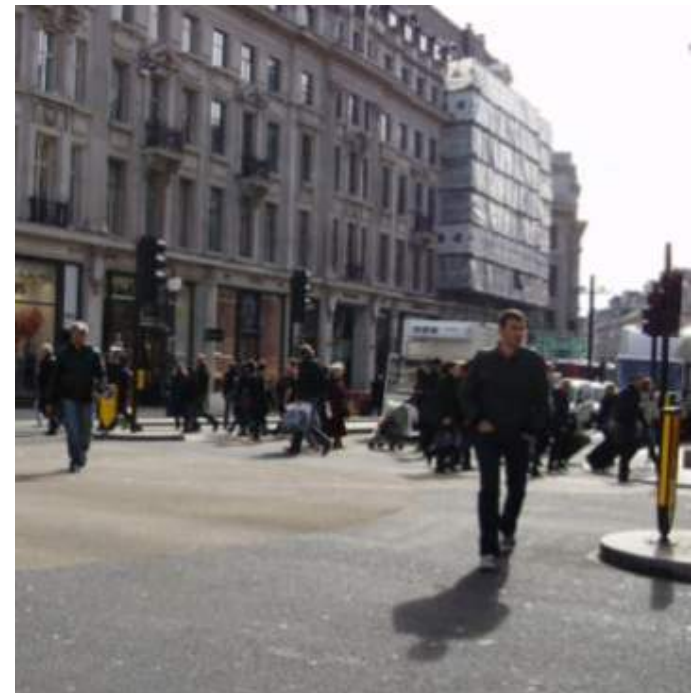
Mindset

**Risk behaviours**



# Exploring pedestrian risk behaviours

- Although tourists claim to be alert to the dangers of being a pedestrian in London, we found that many do routinely take risks when walking around the capital
- This risk-taking can be segmented into two categories:
  - **Intentional risk-taking** – deliberately taking ‘minor’ risks in order to save time/keep up with friends
  - **Unintentional risk-taking** – unwittingly putting oneself at risk through habit or lack of attention



# Intentional risk behaviours

**Tourists frequently take intentional risks on the roads, for several reasons:**

They want to keep up with their companions

They become impatient whilst waiting to cross a busy road

They observe the locals and sometimes try to copy their behaviour

They are over-confident in their belief that the roads work in the same way whichever country you are in

# Examples of intentional risk behaviours



Crossing half-way across a road and waiting between two lanes of traffic

Crossing between two vehicles in a moving flow of traffic

Crossing between stationary vehicles caught in traffic even though they are on a green light

Crossing on a red light because the traffic is being held at a red light too

Walking on the wrong side of barriers (i.e. along the edge of the road) to beat the crowds



# Examples of unintentional risk behaviours



Taking a first step into the road without looking

Herding – getting swept along with the crowd

Talking with friends and not paying attention to traffic

Stepping out into the road to avoid obstructions on the pavement

Taking a photo and not paying attention to traffic



## Unintentional risk behaviour 1 – ‘First step free’

Some pedestrians have a tendency to step out into the road and *then* look around to check it is safe to cross



## Unintentional risk behaviour 2 – ‘Herding’

Those walking at the back of a group often follow those in front as they cross the road, without checking for traffic for themselves. Some respondents admit to not even realising they have stepped onto a road because they are just following the crowd e.g. when walking along a crowded Oxford Street



## Unintentional risk behaviour 3 – ‘Talking with friends’

Tourists often put themselves at risk because they are engrossed in conversation and not paying attention to the roads and vehicles around them



## Unintentional risk behaviour 4 – ‘Avoiding obstructions’

Obstructions such as road works can force pedestrians to move away from the pavement, and the noise can make them less aware of oncoming traffic



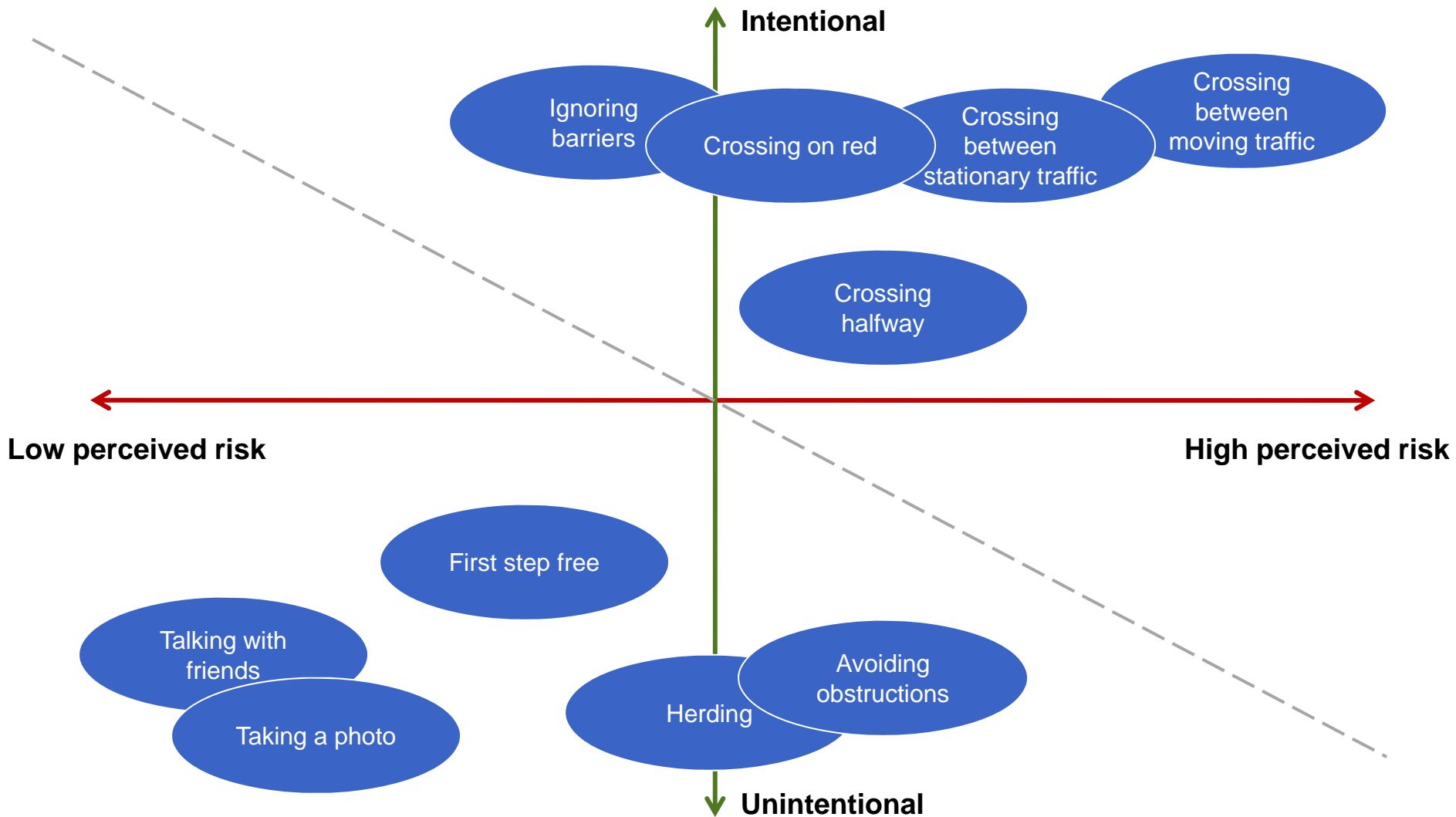


## Unintentional risk behaviour 5 – ‘Taking a photo’

Tourists often like to record their experiences by taking photos and videos – sometimes losing awareness of the roads and traffic around them



# Intentional risk behaviours are perceived to be far more dangerous than unintentional ones



# Conclusions

## Conclusions (1)

- Currently there is very little pedestrian road safety information available to overseas visitors to London. Although crossing the road is relatively low-involvement – both at home and abroad, most visitors say that they would find information and advice related to pedestrian safety useful. Any communications will need to take into account the fact that crossing the road is relatively low-involvement and that people are unlikely to actively seek out information
  - The sources which people are likely to expect to provide them with this type of information rarely do so (both from within the UK and outside)
  - Instead they are far more focused on providing information on safe driving, places to visit, crime and modes of transport for getting around London. While many of these recommend walking as an excellent way to explore London, they provide very little in terms of doing it safely.
  - Official government websites provide pedestrian safety information, but this is targeted at children in general, rather than highlighting the specific issues that overseas tourists are likely to be faced with
  - As a result, there is a danger that people will instead turn to unofficial information sources such as blogs. We have found that these can be inaccurate and provide people with dangerous advice

## Conclusions (2)

- Many tourists claim they are taken aback by the pace and dynamism of London when they first arrive
- Although this can make them vigilant as they consciously attempt to adapt to the city, sometimes this is not possible because of other distractions (e.g. seeing the sights, talking to friends)
- There are several factors which can affect the mindset of tourists as they walk around London
  - Lifestage – younger tourists tend to take more risks than older people and parents with children
  - Alone vs in a group – those in groups tend to pay less attention to the traffic around them
  - Place of origin – those from certain other countries can struggle to adapt to London roads
  - Length of time spent in the city – spending longer in London can lead to a more relaxed mindset but also to complacency

## Conclusions (3)

- There are several factors which can cause overseas visitors to take risks when walking around London. There are some key areas of the road system which can result in confusion, and result in risk-taking behaviour, be it intentional or unintentional. The main sources of confusion are:

### **Pelican crossings:**

- Slight differences in crossings in different countries
- Unaware of the need to press the button
- Uncertainty over who has the right of way
- Shorter time to cross than they expect

### **Other crossing points:**

- Tourists are unfamiliar with zebra crossings
- Uncertainty over who has the right of way

### **Nature of traffic:**

- Coming from the other direction
- Surprise at the sheer volume of traffic and the speed it is travelling
- Cyclists weaving through traffic and not stopping at signals or crossings

## Conclusions (4)

- Tourist pedestrians take both intentional and unintentional risks when walking around London:

<b>Intentional risk-taking</b>	<b>Unintentional risk-taking</b>
<i>Deliberately taking 'minor' risks in order to save time/keep up with friends</i>	<i>Unwittingly putting themselves at risk through habit or lack of attention</i>
Crossing half way and waiting between two lanes of traffic	Taking a first step into the road without looking
Crossing between vehicles in a moving traffic flow	Herding – getting swept along with the crowd
Crossing between stationary vehicles	Talking to friends
Crossing on red	Avoiding obstructions
Walking on the other side of barriers	Taking photos

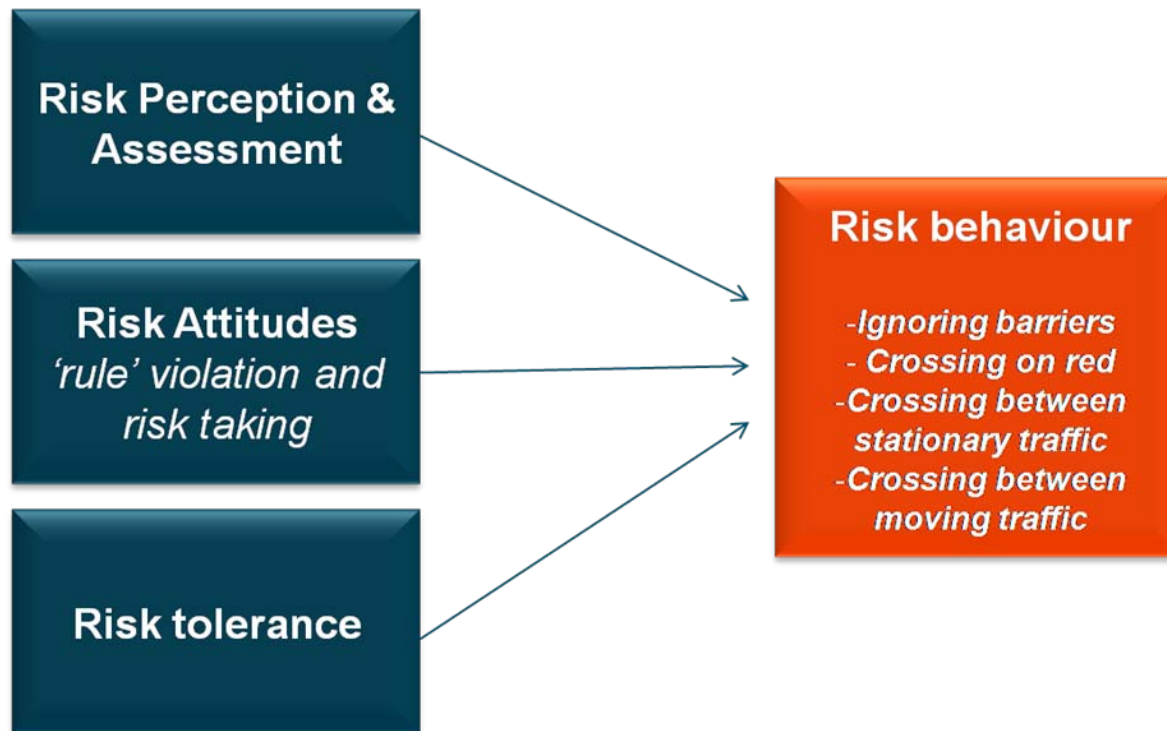
## Conclusions (5)

- In general it is the intentional risks, such as crossing between two moving vehicles, which they perceive to be dangerous
  - The unintentional risks they take, such as walking at the back of a large group, are considered relatively trivial in comparison
- Although London natives exhibit many of the same risk behaviours, tourists are at greater risk because of their unfamiliarity with certain aspects of the traffic system in London
  - Confusion around road crossing points and conventions, as well as sometimes complicated road systems can lead to tourists suddenly finding themselves 'out of their depth' when walking in central London



## Conclusions (6) – Why do people take risks?

Life is full of risks. Every day people make decisions where the outcome matters but the nature of the outcome is uncertain. As pedestrians, people take actions – whether consciously or unconsciously – where they cannot possibly fully comprehend the outcome of their actions. People have developed habits and strategies that enable their pedestrian lives to flow freely.

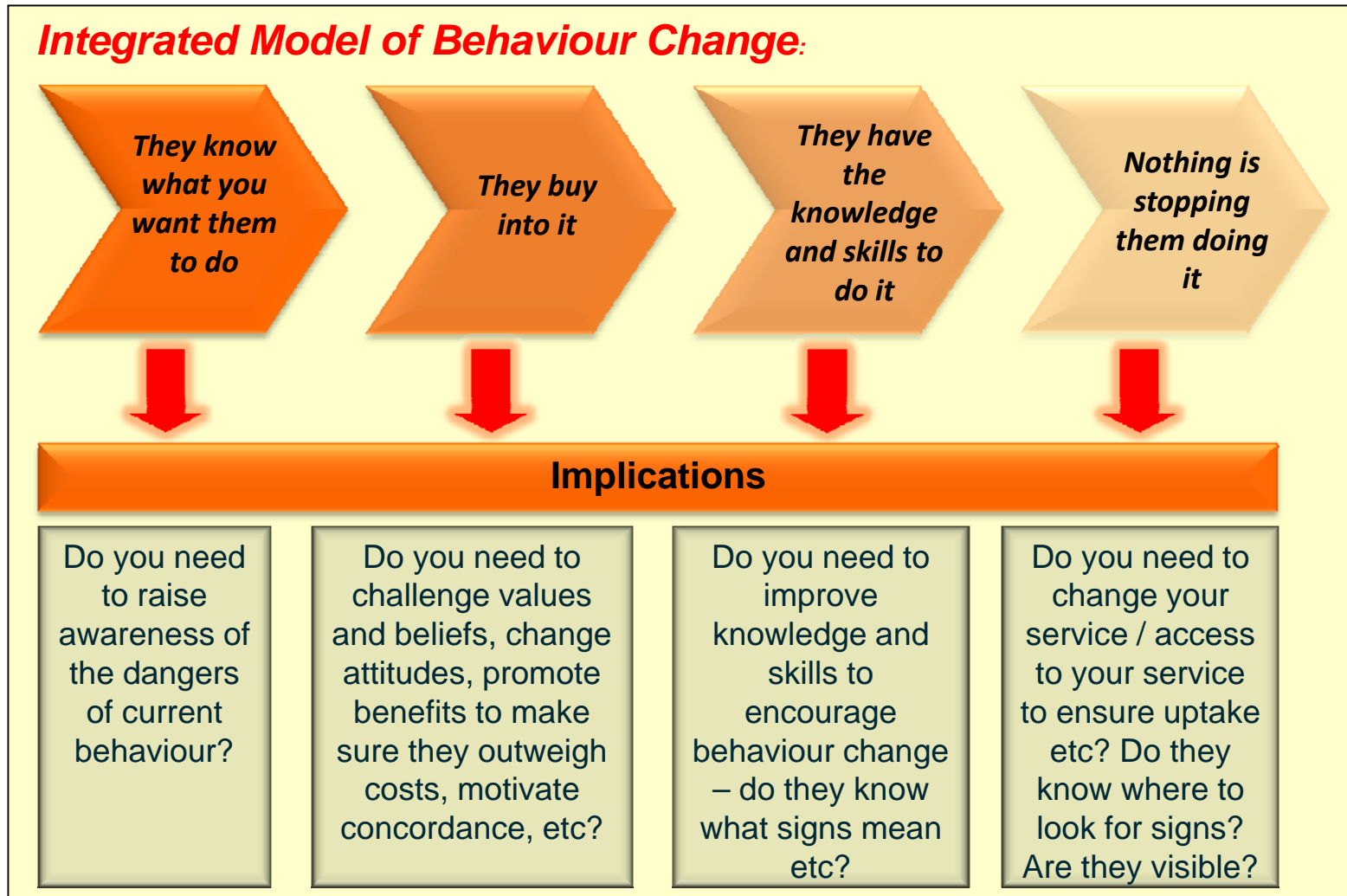


## Conclusions (7) – Why do people take risks?

- As we have seen, people's approach to managing risks as pedestrians are determined by a complex interplay of conscious and subconscious factors. Decisions are balancing the likelihood of a positive desired outcome (e.g. I get across the road more quickly) and the avoidance of an unwelcome negative outcome (e.g. getting hit by a car)
- Risk-taking attitude can properly be understood as a combination of
  - The sources and nature of uncertainty,
  - The degree to which something matters
- Any communications will need to be mindful of the fact that different things matter to different people to varying degrees, and in different circumstances (the perception of risk is situational and dependent on context). A risk perceived by one person may be perceived as normal to others

## Conclusions (8) – A model for behaviour change

We envisage that TfL's strategy for improving visitor pedestrian safety will use behaviour change theory to structure its approach.



## Conclusions (9) – Understanding risk attitude

To understand how to encourage buy in, we need to think again about people's attitudes towards risk-taking. Risk has two sides to it – likelihood and impact.

***Likelihood:*** If an uncertain event is very unlikely then people are likely to be less inclined to adapt their behaviour.

***Impact:*** The consequences of the event might be very significant i.e. they get killed!

If a number of people were faced with the same decision about whether to cross the road at a precise moment, different choice would inevitably be made, driven by the perception by each individual of the underlying risks and the degree to which they mattered.

To encourage a reappraisal of current behaviour, likelihood and impact both need to be perceived as significant. Different individuals or groups are currently likely to perceive both likelihood and consequences differently, leading to different decisions. To encourage consistent behaviour amongst different visitor groups, interventions will need to be attitudinally and culturally relevant.

# Recommendations

# What should be the aim of pedestrian safety communications?

**Road safety communications need to:**

**Dissuade** pedestrians from taking **intentional** risks on the roads

**Educate** tourists about the **unintentional** risks they take on a regular basis

- Any communications will need to take into account the fact that crossing the road is relatively low-involvement – both in people's home countries and when travelling abroad.
  - Comms will need to be positioned in a way that cuts through this lack of involvement
  - In order to be relevant comms will also need to be presented in a way that people don't just think it's only telling them things they already know

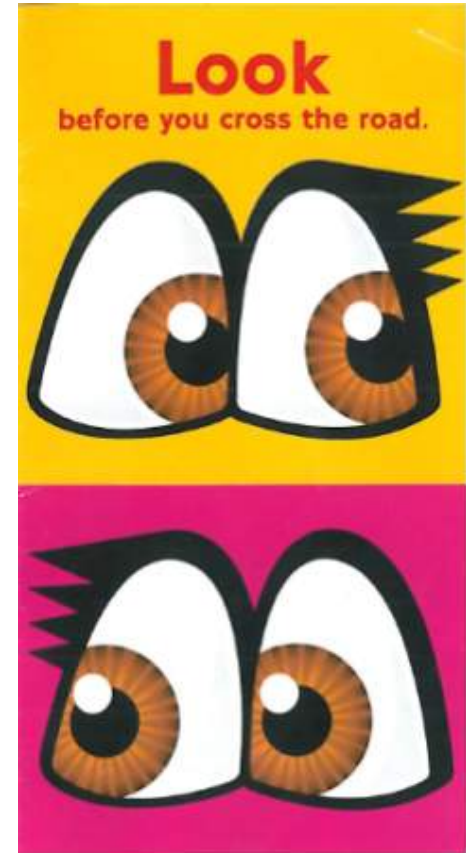
Ideally, road safety advice should be communicated both *during* and *before* a tourist's stay in London

### Before tourists arrive...

- Posters in UK airports/ international rail stations
- Leaflets provided by travel agents in local market
- Road safety information provided when purchasing flight tickets/visas

### Once tourists are in London...

- Road safety advice on existing map posters (on street and in tube/rail stations)
- Signs on the road itself are used, but more signs at eye-level could be better e.g. at designated crossing points
- Not everyone speaks English so pictures can make message clearer



# Appendix



# Regent's Street

## Dangerous behaviour observed

- Crossing in between stationary traffic, especially buses. Impossible to see whether anything is coming up on the inside
- Crossing away from designated crossing. Using the “central reservation” as a safe-haven
- People window shopping rather than paying attention to where they are going

## Risks to pedestrian safety

- Lots of side streets. People unsure where traffic might come from

## Helping pedestrian safety

- Look left / look right signs on the road surface are often observed. Arrows seem to aid comprehension



# Oxford Circus

## Dangerous behaviour observed

- Running across crossings when lights are about to change
- Cars not stopping when pedestrians expect them to
- Crossing in between stationary traffic

## Risks to pedestrian safety

- People fighting against natural flow of crowd when they get out of the station. Stepping out onto the road to get through
- Non-visitors are in a hurry and often come into contact with slower-moving tourists. It feels stressful
- Not everyone understands the new crossing. Stress response leads people to cross when it's not safe



# Piccadilly

## Dangerous behaviour observed

- People crossing without knowing whether it's safe – herd and stress response
- People walking around in large groups often results in a herd response
- Running across pedestrian crossings
- Walking around street works – walking the wrong side of barriers
- Crowded and people struggling to find their way around. Fighting their way against the natural flow of the crowd. Often stepping onto the road

## Risks to pedestrian safety

- People unsure over the flow of traffic – what direction it is allowed to travel in
- Signal controls blocked by street works
- Visibility blocked by street works taking place on pedestrian crossings and around traffic lights



# Covent Garden

## Dangerous behaviour observed

- Chatting with friends and window shopping
- People not crossing at the crossing

## Risks to pedestrian safety

- Pedestrians paying less attention to roads when walking through pedestrianised areas
- Lack of signage means people are disorientated when emerging from the station
- Narrow streets e.g. Floral Street with delivery vans parked means that people step out into the road to get passed
- Lack of crossings at Bow Road. People crossing anywhere.

## Helping pedestrian safety

- Cars driving slowly. Expect to stop for pedestrians
- Zebra crossing opposite LU station



# Westminster

## Dangerous behaviour observed

- People walking along taking photographs. Inadvertently stepping into the road to get that 'perfect shot'
- Extremely hazardous jaywalking across four lanes of traffic
- People stepping out onto the road to get around street performers
- Crowds forming by souvenir and refreshment stands. Often spilling out on the road

## Risks to pedestrian safety

- Fast-moving traffic. Drivers treat it as a mini race track. They often try to get in the lead before the road goes down to two lanes on Westminster Bridge
- Obscured view of traffic going from Parliament Square into Whitehall
- Wide crossings and people not knowing how long they have left before traffic starts moving again



# Greenwich

## Dangerous behaviour observed

- Coming out of the DLR station and crossing the road without looking
- Lots of people crossing away from the designated crossing – there is no crossing directly opposite the station
- On market days crowds are significantly heavier. Herding is common and traffic does not seem to be accommodating to pedestrians

## Risks to pedestrian safety

- People walking in the road to avoid street works
- Difficult to appreciate which direction traffic is flowing

## Helping pedestrian safety

- Clear signage allows people to navigate easily and results in co-ordinated flow of pedestrians



## Quality Assurance

- This work was undertaken in accordance with the standards laid out in ISO 20252.
  - Ensuring a consistent quality of work to the highest standards in the industry and annual inspection by external assessors.
- Over 6,000 market researchers globally.
- Membership of all key MR bodies.

