

Transport for London

Older Pedestrians and Road Safety

Research debrief

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MAYOR OF LONDON

Transport for London



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Background to the research

Background



- TfL are committed to improving the safety of older pedestrians, who account for a disproportionate level of pedestrian deaths in London.
- 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 ⁽¹⁾.
- This over-representation highlights the fact that older pedestrians are at greater risk when involved in an accident.
- TfL are considering a range of initiatives and communications activity to reduce the older pedestrian KSI figures. 2CV has conducted this research to further explore the needs and behaviours of older pedestrians in London and assist in the development of ideas.

⁽¹⁾ Source: ACCSTATS, 2009-2011

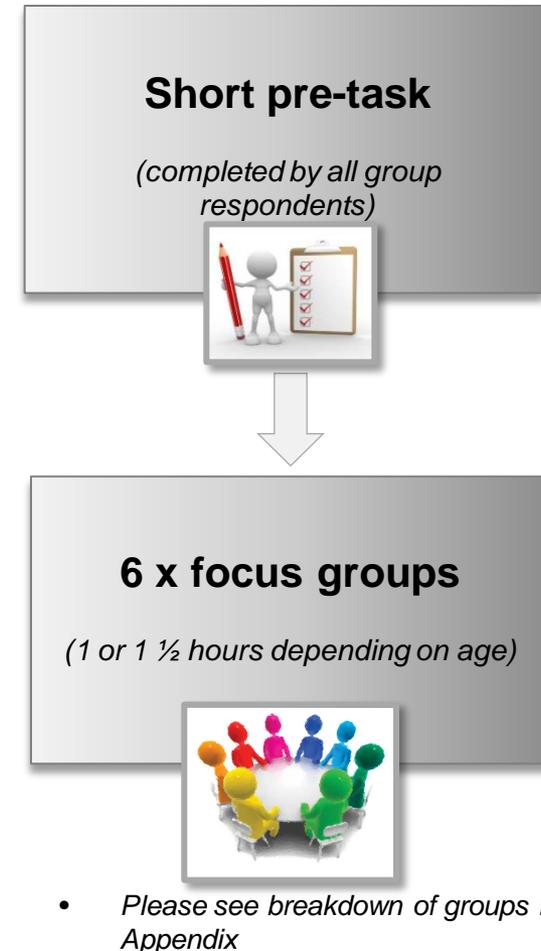
Objectives

The overall objective is to explore how to best communicate with older pedestrians, in order to help to reduce casualties

In more detail, research is required to:

- 1. Understand the views of older audiences about being pedestrians in London*
- 2. Explore attitudes to road safety in terms of how important it is to them, how at risk they feel and the factors that influence their sense of risk and vulnerability*
- 3. Explore what communications work best with this audience with regards to messaging, channel, partnerships, tone, etc*

Methodology



- 2 from the Road Death Investigation unit (1 Senior Investigating Officer; 1 Accident Reconstruction Expert)
- 3 from Age UK (Brand manager, London co-ordinator, Behaviour change expert)

Headlines from the research

Headlines from the research

- Older people do not tend to feel they are any more vulnerable than any other pedestrians, unless they have a specific reason for feeling this way
 - They tend to feel more at risk from other pedestrians and the state of the pavements than from crossing the road
 - Crossing the road is something they have done all their lives; few have changed their approach to it in any significant way despite changes in infrastructure and road use
 - Many will 'chance it' by not using formal crossings, often on busy roads; Police see this as the most dangerous behaviour

- Communications around road safety need to...
 - **Target them subtly**, as part of a wider audience or via relevant partnership organisations
 - **Tell them something new**, to capture attention and avoid patronising them
 - **Present them with objective and inarguable information**, so that they know it applies to them
 - **Be hard-hitting yet positive**, via a solution or call to action

The context of being an older pedestrian in London

Age is objective; feeling 'older' is subjective

- The experience of getting older is subtle and not necessarily top of mind or embraced
- Physical experiences are those issues most likely to make people *feel* old:
 - Sense of slowing down
 - Aches and pains
 - Health issues
 - Landmark ages (eg 80)
- Those most likely to express a strong sense of aging have typically experienced a fundamental life-change:
 - Loss of a partner
 - Major health problem/operation
 - Loss of mobility
 - Cessation of driving



Differentiating factors

GENDER

- Men seem less inclined to consider the impact of the aging process: sense of bravado

AGE

- 65-74s only starting to accept it and often discuss older people as separate from themselves

Older people don't necessarily feel older or particularly different from those around them

Older pedestrians do not see themselves as a unique group in London

- The same journeys for many of the same reasons
- They have the same habits, good and bad, that they have always had
- They feel they have the same attitudes to safety

For some, this is borne out in their lifestyle

- Still driving
- Using transport network to cross London
- Out and about every day
- Sometimes walking fairly long distances

Others have adapted their activity levels to their ability levels

- Walking shorter distances
- Relying more on public transport (esp. buses)
- More cautious about when then go for a walk

(Applies to 'old old' group regardless of age, though more common among 75+)

Mindsets are similar to those they've always had regardless of activity levels and mobility

Reasons for walking are influenced by age

Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They have more time to make these journeys, and do so more often
Driving ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some now walk because they can no longer drive
Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many have a daily/weekly routine which includes walking
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A number ensure they walk regularly for health reasons
Pleasure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some clearly see walking as an end point in itself
Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walking represents a level of freedom and self-sufficiency which is important to many

Older pedestrians often seem more reliant on being a pedestrian; for some it is a fundamental part of their lifestyle

Older pedestrians tend to have a distinct set of concerns about being a pedestrian in London



Crossing the road rarely seen as a major concern

Road safety among this audience

Crossing the road rarely regarded as an issue in itself, though there are associated concerns

Few feel that they have changed their approach to crossing the road over the years

- Strong sense that they are just as good as they always were
- Some argue that older people are better at crossing as they;
 - Have years of experience
 - Tend to take more care
 - Focus on the job in hand
- Bad habits may also be unchanged over the years
 - Not always using crossings
 - 'Chancing it' on main roads

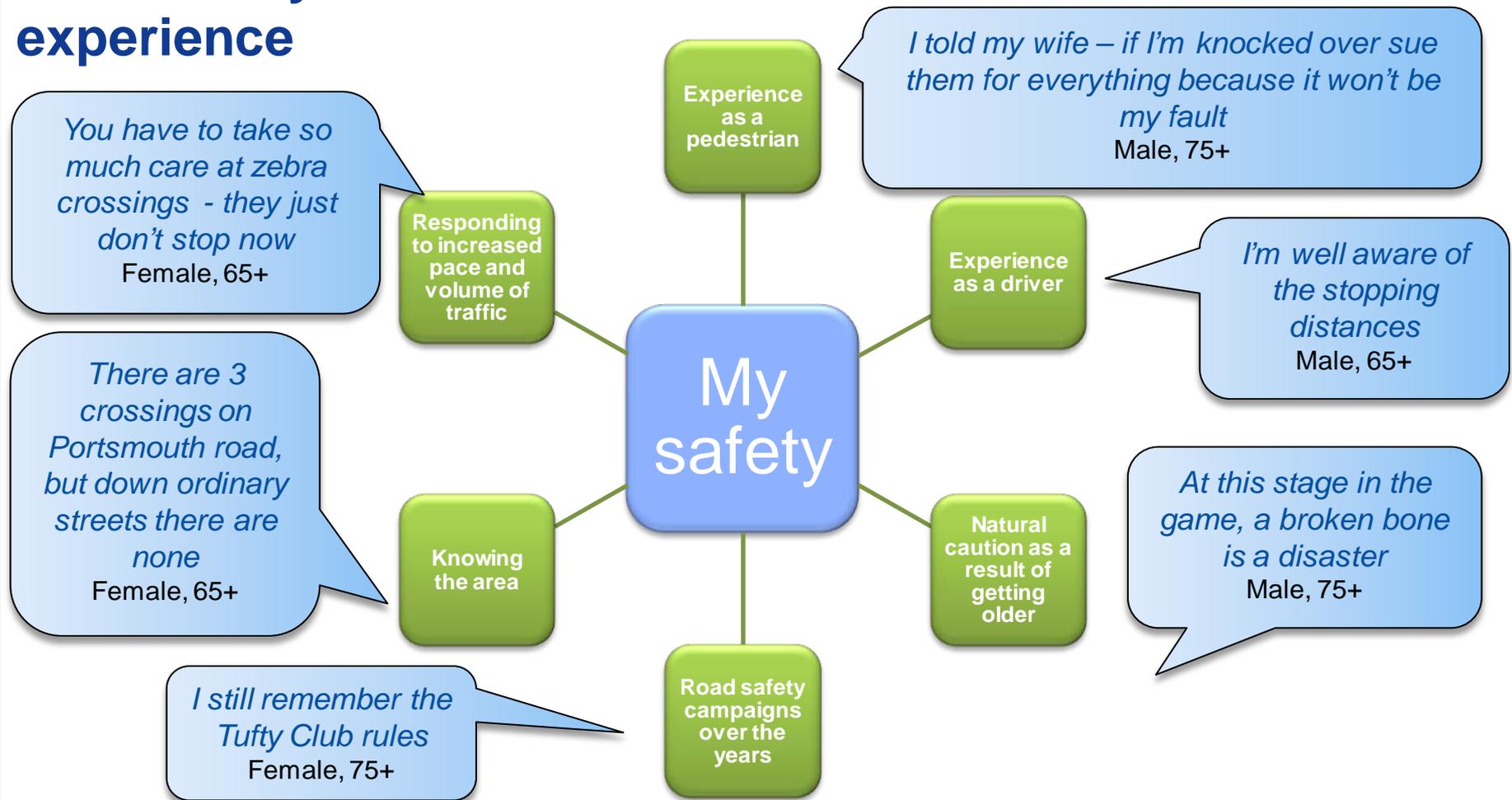
...but crossing the road has changed

- Pedestrians and traffic are far busier, more distracted and faster
- Lack of courtesy; more likely to receive abuse while waiting/crossing
- Drivers seem more dangerous and less familiar with road rules
- Far more likely to disobey ATS than they once were (esp. cyclists)
- Roads are often unmaintained
- Less time allowed at crossings

Good and bad habits remain relatively unchanged despite an increasingly competitive and combative crossing experience



Road safety seen as a matter of common sense and experience



Crossing at a formal crossing is ideal but not guaranteed

Widely regarded as the most sensible (and preferred) option

BUT

Not always possible

- Some routes will not have crossings available
- *Does not appear to be a result of not knowing where crossings are*

Not always practical

- This can involve walking 100m+ out of their way
- ...not to mention another 100m to come back

Not always safest

- Many have experienced drivers disobeying lights
- Although uncommon, this is thought to be a definite risk

- Police find it frustrating that their collision reports regularly refer to nearby crossings that could have been used
- Yet older pedestrians are arguably the least able/motivated to walk out of their way to use them

There is little/no sense of increased vulnerability due to age

‘Dashing’ and ‘darting’ are used liberally and sometimes with little consideration of mobility

Sometimes, if I want to go to a shop and it’s directly opposite, I’ll just nip across

Female, 85, Walking with a stick

Even though it’s a main road, I do prefer to dart over instead of going all the way to the crossing and all the way back

Female, 75+

There is often the suggestion of a slightly cavalier attitude to risk

I have to admit, I will chance it if it seems easier

Female, 65+

Although the risks are acknowledged, they are often downplayed and described in casual terms

I know I’m naughty – and my husband used to tell me off for it – but it’s just easier to pop over

Female, 75+

Many will discuss their crossing behaviour in the same terms they have used throughout their lives

Older people are very aware of the vulnerabilities of other pedestrians



Groups of young people are often too busy talking - they're not paying attention
Male, 75+



Boys are the worst, they're followers – one will run across and the others will blindly follow
Female, 65+



She won't be able to see much with that scarf around her face!
Female, 75+



Well she's blind and he's deaf!
Male, 65+



That's a bit risky. She could easily trip on that bag strap, and she doesn't have a spare hand to break her fall!
Male, 65+

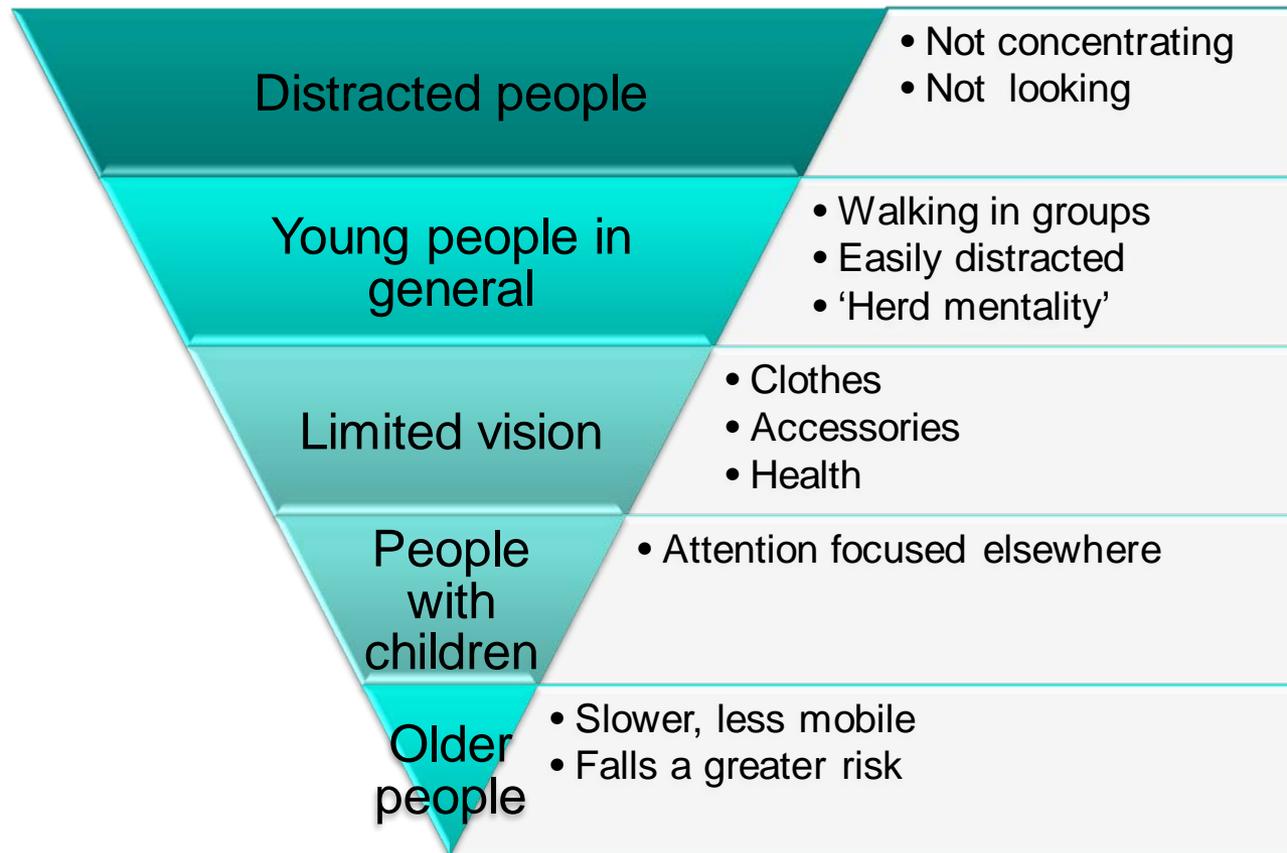


Parents with young kids tend to be distracted. In a split second the child could break free
Female, 75+



He'd be pretty safe, because he knows his limits. He probably goes on the same walk every day
Male, 65+

Older people widely see themselves as less vulnerable than many other audiences



Messaging preferences

NB: Age UK follows particular guidelines for talking to an older audience

Tone

- Positive and incorporate humour where appropriate
- Avoid stereotyping and patronising

Imagery

- Always use positive images
 - ie avoid victimhood or helplessness
 - Be realistic but avoid showing people looking fragile
- Use intergenerational images

Copy

- Clear and legible;
 - Avoid small font sizes
 - Avoid using copy over images or a strong colour

Voice-overs

- Ensure voice-overs (TV or radio) are not too fast – repeat any essential information

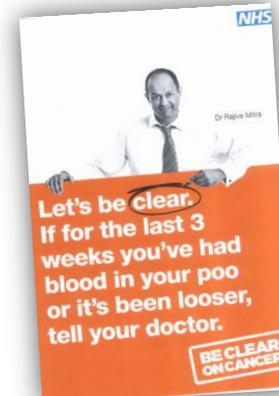
Avoid showing the negatives of aging



Intergenerational images



Clear and legible



Copy over image difficult to read



Responses from older people themselves appeared to confirm much of Age UK's approach

Preferred communications do not speak to them as ‘older people’

- When asked (in the pre-task) to identify comms that they feel are aimed at them, many are drawn to fairly mainstream examples...



- Messaging:** Simple, informative messages tend to be preferred
- Tone:** Clear, friendly and authoritative
- Channel:** Newspapers and magazines are particularly popular; no clear consensus though general tendency towards Mail, Express and local papers; leaflets also popular, but only if actively selected (eg in Doctor's waiting room)

Age-related communications are well received when done well, but risk various pitfalls

- Advertising aimed at older audiences often discussed negatively and dismissed
- Clichés they have tired of include;
 - Overtly-posed aspirational imagery
 - Unrealistically youthful models
 - Reinforcing sense of helplessness or incapacity
 - Dull colour schemes and visuals
- This audience is sensitive to being;
 - Patronised
 - Victimised
 - Labelled as stereotypically 'old'



Communications need to reflect reality of aging in a positive way

The most compelling examples speak to their needs and offer solutions



Upfront about age-related issues without being negative

...offering them advantages linked to their age

And are delivered by credible, well-known organisations



Imagery needs to be aspirational and/or realistic and avoid clichés

Simple, realistically aspirational imagery works well

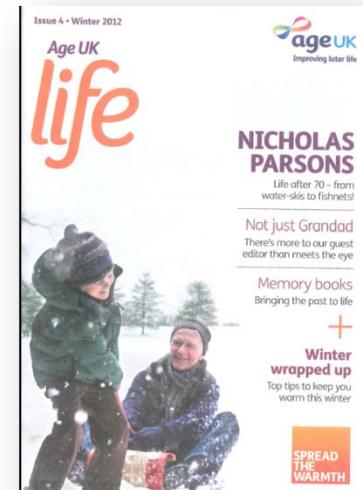


Images of older people work best if they are...



Natural and not stereotyped or obviously posed
NB: Particularly important if covering negative/sensitive subjects

Positive



Intergenerational

Existing older pedestrian leaflet was criticised

“wisdom of your years” appreciated by some, but often ignored

Bring the wisdom of your years to being safe as a pedestrian.

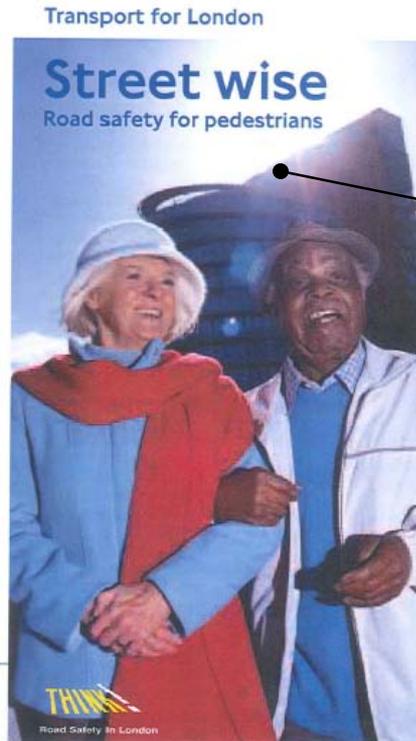
- Take care judging speed and distance
- Wear something bright, especially at night
- Cross the road at controlled crossings
- If you wear glasses, use them
- If you have a hearing aid, use it
- Always double check the traffic



...and don't put peas up your nose either! Do they think we're children?

Female, 75+

Information here and throughout is thought to be sensible yet also very basic. Leads some to feel patronised, especially with references to old-age ‘accessories’ such as glasses and hearing aids.



Images come across as artificial and overtly posed:

- Models who don't look like real people
- Overly ‘youthful’
- Happy in a very posed fashion
- Clichéd London imagery

75% recycled. 25% sustainable source

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Website
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Road safety communications

Stimulus: Message territories

Derived from police interviews

Always use a crossing when there is one to cross the road

Look out for traffic when there isn't a crossing on which to cross the road

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

HGVs may not see you – don't cross in front of them

Vehicles on main roads are going faster than you think

A short walk to a crossing is worth the extra effort

Do you know where your local crossings are?

Stimulus: Facts and statistics from desk research

Accident stats

Around 60% of all pedestrian casualties involve a car. The most common collision occurs when a pedestrian does not use a formal crossing and approaches the road from the same side as the oncoming vehicle

Accidents that involve a pedestrian being struck by a vehicle which is turning or reversing is much higher amongst people aged 65+

The majority of 65+ pedestrians killed or seriously injured occurred where there was no crossing within 50 meters

Vulnerability

Incidences of severe trauma increase significantly with age, starting at 7.4% in the paediatric group and increasing to 23.7% amongst those aged 65+

Although they represent the smallest number of pedestrian casualties, pedestrians aged 75+ have the highest risk of death following an accident

Eyesight / mobility

People aged 65+ are less able to notice movement or to track objects moving at high speed, which affects reaction to vehicles as they start to move as well as the ability to follow the path of fast-moving vehicles

Between the ages of 60 and 80, the amount of light needed for detection after the eyes have become fully adapted to darkness more than doubles

Most pedestrians who are struck by cars do not see the vehicle that hits them at all, and many report that they looked but did not see it

Experiences / strategies

Pedestrians aged 65+ spend more time looking at the ground on the approach to and while crossing the road and less time studying the traffic

While pedestrians aged 65+ spent more time deciding when to cross the road, they were more likely to find themselves caught in traffic

Road safety messages need to tell people something new

'Common sense' messages can be rejected for saying nothing new; they also risk patronising the audience

Always use a crossing when there is one to cross the road

Look out for traffic when there isn't a crossing on which to cross the road

...yet those that build on such messages with new or interesting information can be 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

HGVs may not see you – don't cross in front of them

On balance, solutions are more motivating than fear

Pedestrians are three times more likely to be killed if they do not use a crossing to cross the road

Significant impact because...

- Many feel that they need scaring out of their current attitudes
- It reinforces what they already know
- The statistic is unsurprising yet still shocking
- It is a motivating reason to use a crossing where possible

Pedestrians are three times safer using a crossing than not using one

More powerful in some ways...

- It positions marked crossings as a solution to a recognisable problem
- The fear factor is implied rather than explicitly stated
- 'Three times safer' speaks to the more cautious nature of many older people without singling them out

Statistics and facts can be a powerful way of engaging this audience

MORE ENGAGING

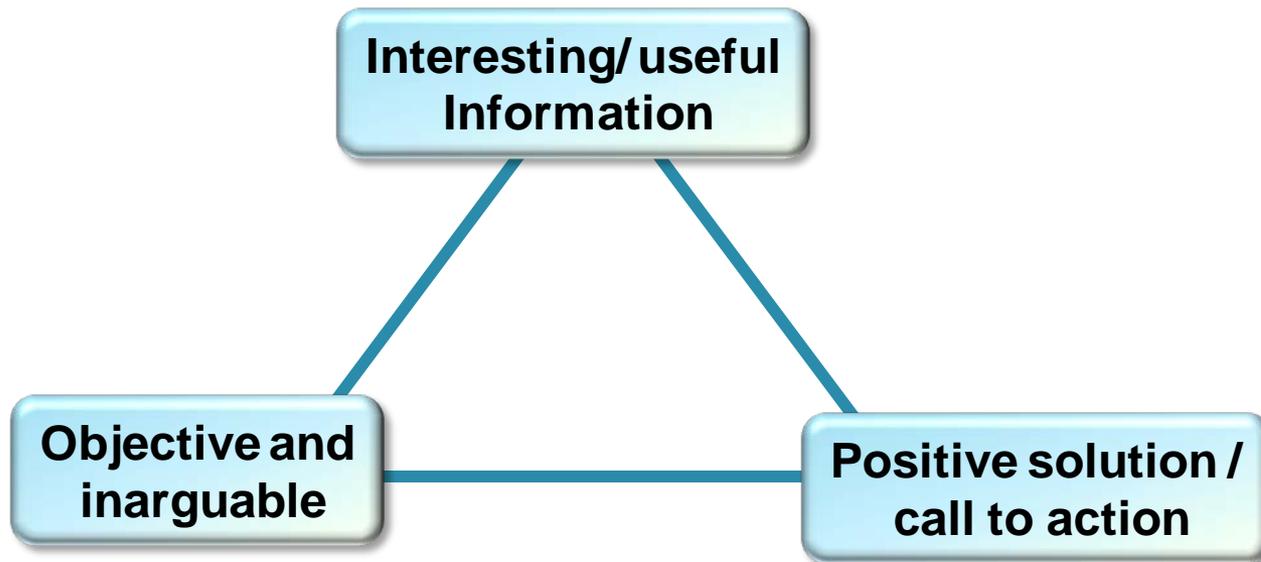
- Shedding new light on or reframing what they already know
 - *Collisions are most common when pedestrians do not use marked crossings*
- Age related without alienating
 - *Over 75s represent the smallest number of collisions, but the highest risk of death*
- Objective and inarguable
 - *Risk of severe trauma increases significantly with age*
- Surprising
 - *Accidents involving a pedestrian struck by a vehicle that is turning or reversing are far higher among 65+*

LESS ENGAGING

- Age-related but subjective
 - *Over 65s are less able to track objects moving at high speed*
- Overly scientific or abstract
 - *Between 60-80 the amount of light needed after darkness more than doubles*
- Confusing
 - *Most pedestrians struck by cars did not see the vehicle that hit them*
- **NB:** Engaging, but liable to divert attention to other matters
 - *Majority of 65+ KSIs occurred where there was no crossing within 50m*

For maximum impact with this audience, a message needs to meet three key criteria

It needs to tell them something new, or reframe what they already know in an engaging way



If it conflicts with individual experience it can be rejected too easily

It needs to give people an idea of what to do, rather than simply provide information

Barriers to road safety messaging

- **Road safety is common sense**
 - There is a risk of patronising people by telling them what they already know
- **Older pedestrians aren't the only people crossing the road**
 - They don't want to feel that they are being singled out for special information and are sensitive to other audiences thinking they are less able
- **Older pedestrians aren't perceived as the problem**
 - Many assume that drivers and certain other pedestrians are the key cause of collisions
- **Personal experience is difficult to argue with**
 - People feel that they know what they are doing, and that this is based on many years' experience
- **It is too easy to be negative**
 - Road safety discussions can all too easily focus on the repercussions of a collision, which seems likely to be a turn-off for some

Potential levers to work with

- **Falls/broken bones**
 - The impact of falling is inarguable and increasingly a worry as people get older; most will be open to communications aiming to prevent such a situation
 - Ideally this needs to be evidence-based to avoid patronising/victimising older people
- **Grandchildren**
 - Many say they always abide by the rules when out with children
 - There may be value in encouraging them to consider why they would act differently on their own
- **Acknowledging the sense of heightened awareness they feel they have**
 - Rather than challenging this, it may be useful to embrace it and point out what they may have already observed
 - *(eg the way other pedestrians cross at unmarked crossings, regardless of traffic)*
- **Empathy with concerns over courtesy and rule-breaking**
 - Communications that share their concerns over the perceived attitudes of road users are likely to be well received, especially if they offer a solution
- **Using driving as a comparator**
 - Talking to them as drivers, or as people who understand driving, may encourage some to engage more with road safety messages

Appropriate partnerships may contribute to stand out, credibility and engagement

- Provenance of information on road safety regarded as important:



- May deal with the after effects of a collision, so clearly appropriate
- Used to receiving information relating to various aspects of lifestyle
- Liable to turn to posters, leaflets in such settings whilst waiting
- A familiar source of information for some
- Clearly targeting older people on relevant issues; have 'permission' to do so
- 'Age Concern' still referred to by some (esp. men) so can be seen as focused on 'old old', deprived and immobile
- Saga perceived by some as sending 'too many' communications
- Makes sense given their involvement in London's transport
- Many outer Londoners didn't consider themselves to live 'in London' and therefore struggled to see the relevance to TfL
- Little sense of adding legitimacy or credibility
- Dial-a-ride rarely thought relevant to walking (focus on immobility assumed)
- More polarising as a potential partner
- Clearly focused on order and safety on the roads
- ...but some have poor perceptions of effectiveness and there is an inherent link with the negative aspects of road safety

Channels need to conform to certain key requirements

Ensure that they do not feel singled out

- Most assume mainstream media will be most appropriate for this reason
- **Partnerships** with relevant organisations will be a subtler, less obvious means of targeting them

Avoid being too intrusive

- Email and direct mail are rejected by most for feeling invasive or for 'flooding' them
- **Newspapers** and **magazines** preferred because they can choose whether or not to read them

Engage with them when they are most receptive

- General acknowledgement that they are sometimes looking for something to read in certain circumstances
- Doctor/medical appointments are particularly seen as a point when they are actively looking for **leaflets**

Reach them when they need it most: in the moment

- Commonly thought that advertising where the behaviours take place would make sense
- **Bus-stop posters** seen as a sensible location

Localised channels *theoretically* a good idea

- Seems sensible to feature highly localised messages in their areas
- Yet not all read **local papers** and a number reject **local commercial radio** stations

Summary and Recommendations

Summary

- Communications on road safety need to take into account the following:
 - Older pedestrians do not believe that they are that different to, or any more vulnerable than, other pedestrians
 - Their concerns about safety as a pedestrian tend to focus far more on the experience of walking on the pavement, and related obstacles, than crossing the road
 - Their attitude to crossing the road is probably more cautious than might be expected of others, yet in terms of bad habits, largely unchanged

- Older people in general do not want to be communicated with as *old people*
 - They are relatively ad-savvy and are aware of the stereotypes and clichés that proliferate
 - They are also sensitive to being patronised
 - It seems likely that a road safety campaign aimed exclusively at older people is likely to fall foul of both of these issues

- Crossing at marked crossings is clearly an important behaviour to change but it is entrenched and there are various practical obstacles, not least the fact that it is physically more arduous to do so
- Watching out for reversing vehicles could be another behaviour to address, but it may be worth exploring further whether this is definitely an issue among this audience

Recommendations (1)

- Targeting older people needs to be achieved...
 - **by addressing all pedestrians:** so they do not feel singled out
 - **by stealth:** through partnerships with age/health or other appropriate organisations
 - **by appealing to their unique concerns:** the hectic pace of London's streets, a perceived drop in courtesy, the prevalence of obstacles on the pavements and security in general

- They do not reject road safety messages outright, but to engage with them they will need...
 - Other pedestrians to be (ostensibly) targeted before them
 - A clear, compelling reason to consider and change their behaviour
 - To hear something beyond the familiar 'green cross code' messages
 - Ideally something new
 - ...and based on facts/evidence
 - To be presented with a persuasive argument that cannot be responded to subjectively

Recommendations (2)

Messages

- Behaviour change (eg using marked crossings) will ideally be part of a larger drive to change the behaviour of all pedestrians
- Should reframe existing common sense knowledge, be based upon objective facts and provide a positive solution
- Potential message areas (apart from crossing the road at unmarked crossings) include;
 - Crossing in front of HGVs
 - Crossing in front of static traffic
 - Safe crossing at *marked* crossings
 - Compelling reasons for walking further to a crossing, and how to mitigate this

Partners

- Both Age UK and NHS are credible and appropriate partners to work with

Channels

- Leaflets in GP waiting rooms
- Bus stop ads

Appendix

Methodology & sample

5 x expert interviews

2 x Policing/accidents

3 x Communications and Aging

6 x accompanied journeys

Depth	Age	Gender	SEG	Location
1	65-74	Male	BC1	Kingston
2	65-74	Female	C2DE	Harrow
3	75+	Male	BC1	Harrow
4	75+	Female	C2DE	Kingston
5	75+	Female	C2DE	Richmond
6	75+	Female	BC1	Richmond

6 x co-creation groups*

Group	Age	Gender	SEG	Location
1	65-74	Male	C2DE	Kingston
2	65-74	Female	BC1	Richmond
3	75+	Female	BC1	Kingston
4	75+	Female	C2DE	Harrow
5	75+	Male	C2DE	Richmond
6	75+	Female	BC1	Harrow

* 65-74 groups (1 ½ hour); 75+ groups (1 hour)

Additional criteria:

- Separate groups by gender, female skew to reflect longer life expectancy
- 50/50 split of BC1/C2DE based on previous occupation
- Mix of 'old-old' and 'young-old' in each group based on attitude and activity levels
- Sample will include some people who have mobility, visual or hearing impairments
- Overall sample will include a small number of people who also drive a car
- Research conducted by 2CV in March 2013