

Yorkshire and Humber Planning Healthy Places  
Community of Improvement

# Transport and Health Roundtable: Post-Event Report

30th September 2023



ADPH  
Yorkshire  
and Humber



For more information contact:  
[Karen.horrocks@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.horrocks@dhsc.gov.uk)

# Introduction

- Good quality, reliable, affordable, accessible and convenient transport is essential for healthy and thriving communities. Our ability to access the services that we need, to make social connections, to work, to learn, and to study depends upon it.
- Good transport systems provide opportunities for our children and young people to thrive, whilst enabling older people to remain engaged and active. It can transform people and places, connecting us to each other and to the essentials of a good life. Our economy cannot function fairly nor prosper without it.
- Too many people across our region are excluded from the economy, and from society, because of poor transport options. This contributes to income and health inequalities; evidence shows that the lack of accessible public transport options disproportionately impacts people with disabilities, those with caring responsibilities, and those on low incomes.
- Quite simply, transport is essential for our health, our wellbeing, and our economy.

## Background

- Across the country, Local Authorities are developing local transport strategies, improving sustainable transport infrastructure, and promoting active travel (walking, cycling and wheeling) through a diverse range programmes and interventions. Given the links between health and transport, Public Health involvement presents an opportunity to influence this important determinant of health, and many Public Health teams in Yorkshire and Humber have already started.
- Whilst the evidence on how transport can impact on many areas of health and health inequalities is well known, we want to better understand how we can work in partnership, and successfully frame and translate this evidence into strategy and policy. Fortunately, there is a wealth of experience in our region already.
- This roundtable event was developed to support the Public Health community to effectively engage with and influence local transport strategy and policy. We wanted to create a safe space to share learning, to have discussions around key issues, and to reflect on areas of challenge and success in transport planning for health.

## About the event

The roundtable was held in-person on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023. It was attended by range of colleagues including those working in Public Health, Transport, and Active Travel. We would like to thank all those colleagues who helped to plan the day and who delivered presentations.

The aim of the roundtable was to provide:

1. A strong narrative around why transport is a determinant of health and how through local transport strategies we can improve health and tackle inequalities (the why);
2. A shared understanding of the key interventions/approaches to transport planning that can improve health (the what);
3. A set of principles to support places to successfully advocate for key interventions and approaches (the how).

Although the first two aims were addressed on the day, more work would be needed to develop the principles and agree the narrative.

## Key themes from our discussions

The following pages present the key themes of discussion throughout the day. These are based on the experiences and reflections of those who attended and may not always fully represent the state of transport and health in Yorkshire and Humber. Some of the tips and recommendations may need further testing in different areas, they do, however, provide a very useful picture of some of the issues and opportunities in the region and will be very useful for any Transport or Public Health colleague looking to improve health through transport.

# Key Themes: Challenges 1

---

- Poor public transport (especially buses) was described as a challenge. Inaccessible, unreliable or inconvenient public transport was seen as a barrier to switching from car use, as it does not provide a viable alternative. Services were described as “demand led”, servicing the more popular routes without meeting the needs of population e.g. rural populations, older adults, or unpaid workers.
- System and partnership challenges included local and national politics, and difficulties in building engagement with other professionals due to risk aversion, austerity, time, or resource pressures.
- Data sharing (external and internal) was also seen as a practical barrier, in addition to rising costs due to inflation.
- Funding: Time and other resources are needed to apply for funding- this puts pressure on Public Health, Transport and other partners. Competitive and short-term funding can stifle community engagement and long-term, joined-up planning.

## Key Themes: Challenges 2



- Barriers in relation to public and community perceptions included a polarisation of car-users, cyclists and pedestrians, and frustration at projects that have taken a long time, or where there has been a lack of transparency or community influence.
- There can be a loss of trust in Local Authorities due to previous projects not meeting expectations or standards, taking too long, being rushed, or watered down over time. COVID 19 was also identified as a reason for a lack of trust in authority.
- It was acknowledged that priorities can differ internally and externally. Examples include car parking, street furniture and local economic development.

# Key Themes: Ways of working 1

---

- A whole systems approach needs to be taken, this should be cohesive, and link with other plans and strategies. Ensure infrastructure and revenue funding are complementary.
- Build strong collaboration between Public Health teams and Transport teams. These need to be mutually beneficial i.e. not just focussed on Public Health outcomes. The case studies we saw on the day showed clearly how positive relationships could be built.
- Ensure Public Health is integrated into planning and decision making for transport
- Infrastructure- only ever do things to a high standard (LTN120).



## Key Themes: Ways of working 2



- Utilise a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach, and Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as a decision making tool.
- “Deep dive” into neighbourhoods and take a “Placemaking” approach- understand and consider the whole place e.g. “crime and grime”, shops, people and communities, and physical and social assets and barriers.
- Work with partners to prepare in advance for funding to be released- have your plans and priorities ready to go.
- Buses are key to mode shift and addressing inequalities- Public Health need to work with key partners on this but important to understand what influence we have.

# Key Themes: Communication



- Think about how communication can address cultural norms in areas where car use is the default.
- When planning communication, understand where people are going, and why.
- Think wider than communicating statistics and quantitative Public Health evidence- utilise relatable stories, pictures and visions for an area. Provide different points of view e.g. a child's eye view.
- Be transparent about any trade-offs.
- Understand and utilise diverse perspectives, for example, how would a place designed for women or children look like?

# Key Themes: Messaging suggestions



- The current system/environment is relatively new, it has not always been this way and it can be designed differently.
- Transport systems can be supportive of health.
- This is about increasing choice by giving more viable options to people.
- Many of us use cars but also want to be able to walk, cycle and use public transport- it doesn't have to be one or the other.

# Key Themes: Framing 1



- Consider framing messages for different audiences, rather than solely health-framed only, or one-size-fits-all, for example, communicating the fuel cost of the school run.
- Frame transport as a comprehensive determinant of health, rather than just focussing on active travel being “good for you”. Use more holistic approaches that shows the multiple factors, positive and negative that shape health e.g. clean air, deaths on the road or social interaction. Focus on the benefits to communities.

## Key Themes: Framing 2

---

- Use long term, generational framing to enable people to see past short-term barriers e.g. “what would you like the neighbourhood to be like in 50 –100 years?” or “what was your street like 40-50 years ago, was it better?”
- Address misconceptions about infrastructure usage if they come up- people might say no one is using the new cycle lane, but the monitoring data may say differently. Beware of “myth busting” which could backfire.
- Inclusive communication- ensure communication considers the diversity of communities and addresses communication and access barriers such as language and structural discrimination.

# Key Themes: Behavioural Science



- Understand how ideas and social norms spread through communities and networks.
- Utilise behavioural science and insight e.g. Sheffield Hallam's Behavioural Insights work (2022).
- Utilise existing theory for example, the COM-B framework to analyse issues and gain insight.
- Avoid individual behaviour change campaigns and interventions that don't consider the barriers and facilitators that different groups of people face or the quality of transport infrastructure in place.

# Key Themes: Working with Communities 1



- Consider community development approaches such as Appreciative Inquiry – this is a good way to stimulate conversation and gain deep understanding. Don't skip or rush this part!
- Engage early and pursue meaningful involvement that gives over as much power as possible to the community members. Consider how the voice of communities can be strengthened, rather than watered down, as the project progresses through each prioritisation and decision-making stage.
- Understand how to incorporate the voices of diverse communities. Issues of power, equality and voice need to be addressed through long-term, meaningful engagement. Important to remember- if people aren't already engaged (potentially because of discrimination, lack of trust, inconsistency, low "community capital") they probably won't easily engage with a transport intervention.

# Key Themes: Working with communities



- Work better with community representatives, including Elected Members. There are challenges in relation to this, but also opportunities to engage better with them and understand concerns.
- Find, engage with, and support local champions and representatives, but be aware that it's not only the loudest voice you should listen to.
- Build community engagement and trust over the long term; show honesty and integrity. Work with trusted Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.
- Consider the role of creativity and art for visioning and engaging.
- Ensure that the focus is on both walking and wheeling, rather than just cycling- this is more inclusive.



## Recommendations and next steps

- Use [Minding the Gap](#) newsletter to promote work taking place across the region.
- Case Studies collection: Intelligence, Infrastructure and Behaviour Change.
- Pull together LCWIPs, policies and strategies in one place.
- Need to better understand what communication, messages and framing work best.
- Consider training needs in region in relation to transport and health.

# Further reading and links shared on the day

Attendees on the day shared useful resources and reading (inclusion is not necessarily endorsement)

- [Planning Healthy Places Community of Improvement](#)
- [Minding the Gap](#)
- [Dr Ian Walker, Motornormativity](#)
- [Caroline Criado Perez, Invisible Women](#)

## Further reading and links shared on the day

Resources from encouraging active travel across the Yorkshire and Humber region

Arden, M., Thorneloe, R., Jordan, C., Clarke, E., Lamb, M., Wilcockson, H., Howie, I., Reed, E., Brenner, G., Gould, B., Green, K., Temperton, C., Whittaker, E., Everson, R., Thompson, C., Iles, A., Knowles, N. (2022). *Using Behaviour Change Techniques to encourage active travel across the Yorkshire and Humber region. A Behavioural Insights report commissioned by the Local Government Association.* Available online: [Using behaviour change techniques to encourage active travel \(local.gov.uk\)](#)

- [Video introduction to the COM-B model of behaviour and the behaviour change wheel \(BCW\)](#) | Sheffield Hallam University
- [Video introduction to the EAST \(easy, attractive, social and timely\) framework and 'nudges'](#) | Sheffield Hallam University