



Department  
for Transport

**UWE  
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England

## **Insights from social and behavioural research at DfT during the COVID-19 pandemic**

What was learned, what influence it had, and its relevance for future transport  
resilience

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## Executive summary

1. This report summarises a project undertaken as part of an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Policy Fellowship in 2022-23. The project was designed by the Policy Fellow, Dr Caroline Bartle, together with members of the DfT Social Research and Behavioural Science teams. Its aims were:
  - a. to help embed institutional knowledge within DfT of the role of social and behavioural research during the COVID-19 pandemic;
  - b. to explore how insights gained in the pandemic might inform future transport resilience strategies.
2. Throughout the pandemic the Social and Behavioural Research team (SBR)<sup>1</sup> designed and commissioned research frequently and at speed to support government decision-making. Frequent topics were changing travel patterns, public attitudes towards ‘non-pharmaceutical interventions’ (NPIs) such as face-coverings, and the many different influences on travel behaviour at the different stages of the pandemic.
3. The evidence produced made a significant contribution to policy development in DfT. The role of behavioural science, in particular, became more prominent than it had previously been, due to the vital importance of understanding and influencing people’s behaviour in a time of crisis.
4. Major research examples include the longitudinal survey ‘[All Change?](#)’ - an important strand of DfT social research which tracked travel behaviour, attitudes and the social impact of COVID-19 in the UK; and online behavioural science experiments to test the [impact of different types of messaging](#) on travel behaviour.
5. The research provided members of the COVID Directorate, Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), Chief Analyst, the Strategy Unit and other senior colleagues in the Department with a strong evidence-base of social and behavioural science to use when briefing Ministers and engaging with other Government Departments, the Cabinet Office and 10 Downing Street. SBR also worked closely with: modal teams; the Science Cell; Science, Innovation and Technology (SciTech); Transport Appraisal and Strategic Modelling (TASM); and the Communications group (‘Comms’).
6. For the current project, headline research findings were identified during focus groups with SBR members and interviews with DfT stakeholders, held in the second half of 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> We refer to the *Social and Behavioural Research team (SBR)* when referencing activities undertaken until January 2022. For activities beyond that date we refer to the *Social Research team* and *Behavioural Science teams*, reflecting their reorganisation into two separate teams in response to the growing demand for these forms of research during the pandemic.

The stakeholders had been senior members of DfT's pandemic response. Four social and behavioural research questions led to particularly influential findings:

- a. **Case study 1** – will face coverings on public transport make people feel more safe or less safe?

Key findings

Face coverings and social distancing requirements on public transport were very important in reassuring passengers throughout the pandemic. On balance, people would feel that public transport was more safe, rather than less safe, if face-coverings were required.

- b. **Case study 2** – what role could price incentives play alongside safety measures in bringing people back to rail and bus?

Key findings

Willingness to travel by rail and bus in 2021 did not meaningfully increase when a discount was offered. The level of crowdedness was the most important factor affecting participants' decision to use public transport or not.

- c. **Case study 3** - how accurate are public perceptions of the effectiveness of ventilation on public transport?

Key findings

Public perception of the effectiveness of different types of ventilation is not always consistent with actual effectiveness. For example, effective ventilation is often associated with visibly open windows, but some air conditioning systems may be more effective although hidden from view; hence clarity of information is required.

- d. **Case study 4** – how has social and behavioural research assisted with the modelling of travel behaviour during and after the pandemic?

Key findings

A 'surge' back to public transport following lockdowns was unlikely to occur, even following the vaccination of the most vulnerable. This helped DfT analysts to model travel behaviour at key time points such as Christmas 2020, when predictions were needed of possible impacts on road traffic if COVID-19 rules were to be relaxed. The evidence has also contributed to a flexibility of approach in traffic forecasting in the light of ongoing uncertainty since the pandemic.

7. During the pandemic, SBR became well integrated as formal advisors to those leading the Department's policy response to COVID-19, although this process took time. Moving forward, both the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams now have the challenge (and opportunity) of maintaining and building their profiles within a diverse Department and in the absence of the dominant focus that was provided by the

pandemic.

8. Pandemic response and resilience in DfT are now dealt with alongside broadly analogous risks, such as flooding, ash clouds, power outages and civil nuclear accidents. Governance in response to crises currently uses a 'hub and spoke model', with expertise resting in 'business as usual' teams across DfT, and experts being brought into a specialist cell as needed. Therefore, a recommendation arising from the stakeholder interviews is that the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams be a 'spoke' in any response cell that is set up.
9. Stakeholders also stressed that understanding and predicting public behaviour in the event of disruption to the transport system - whether caused by waves of infectious disease, extreme weather, civil emergencies or a myriad of other possibilities - will remain vital. Equally important is the role of social research and behavioural science in helping to address what is arguably one of the biggest transport challenges of our times: how to bring about long-term travel behaviour change as part of policies to reduce carbon emissions from travel and transport.

## 1. Introduction

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted as never before the importance of conducting timely research in the social and behavioural sciences to inform an exceptional and rapidly changing policy environment. As the subsequent recovery began, there was an ambition in the Department for Transport to consolidate what had been learned and build this into a resilience strategy against future pandemics, as well as to understand longer-term impacts of the pandemic on travel behaviour.

This report summarises a project undertaken as part of an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Policy Fellowship in 2022-23. The project was designed by the Policy Fellow, Dr Caroline Bartle, together with members of the DfT Social Research and Behavioural Science teams, with two aims: helping to embed institutional knowledge within DfT of the role of social and behavioural research during the pandemic; and exploring how insights gained in the pandemic might inform future transport resilience strategies. In line with these aims, the project sought to answer the following questions, drawing on a mix of documentary material, focus groups with members of the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams, and interviews with a number of senior staff at DfT who had played a leading role in the Department's policy response. The section of the report corresponding to each question is shown in brackets.

### Building institutional knowledge

1. What were the key, high-level findings to emerge from research commissioned and synthesised by the Social and Behavioural Research team during the pandemic? (Sections 2 and 3)
2. How was this used as evidence within and beyond DfT? (Section 4)
3. What influence did this have within governance processes, and what were the challenges to gaining impact? (Sections 4 and 5)

### Exploring how insights from the pandemic can be built into future transport resilience

4. How can social and behavioural research best be incorporated into DfT's response to future health crises and wider transport resilience? (Section 6)
5. How can social and behavioural models and theories be used to adapt what was learned in the pandemic to addressing possible future threats? (Section 3)

#### 1.1 Structure of this report

The report is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a timeline of key decision points during the pandemic and charts the research commissioned by the Social and Behavioural Research team (SBR). Section 3 identifies high level research findings and summarises how behavioural theory might be used to translate these findings into principles with applicability beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Section 4 describes how evidence was communicated, and to whom. Case studies of four particularly impactful pieces of research are outlined in

Section 5. In Section 7 we draw conclusions as to how the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams, and the research they produce, can contribute to the Department's strategies to improve transport resilience.

## **1.2 A note on the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams at DfT**

In this report we refer to the *Social and Behavioural Research team (SBR)* when referencing activities undertaken until January 2022. For activities beyond that date we refer to the *Social Research team* and *Behavioural Science team*, reflecting their reorganisation into two separate teams in response to the growing demand for these forms of research during the pandemic. Together with the DfT Evaluation Centre of Excellence, the two teams form the Central Research Division (CRD) within the Analysis Directorate. CRD has a cross-cutting role across the Department to improve understanding of public behaviours and attitudes affecting transport, how to influence them, and to support the evaluation of transport interventions.

The terms *social research* and *behavioural science* are used in lower case in this report when referring to the research rather than the teams undertaking it. Behavioural science can broadly be distinguished from social research in that it uses evidence of people's attitudes and behaviours (from social research) to explore ways of changing behaviour, often using psychological theory. It involves generating new evidence to identify the reasons for behaviour, and proposing ways of changing behaviour as part of broader policy objectives. In practical terms, this includes commissioning research, creating novel ideas for behavioural interventions, and testing and advising on effective messaging. The department's social researchers and behavioural scientists use existing research to provide advice and develop specification for new research which is then commissioned to external contractors working under their direction.

Whilst this project focussed on work led by these central DfT teams during the pandemic, it is recognised that social researchers and behavioural scientists embedded within other teams<sup>2</sup> at DfT also played an invaluable role in building the Department's evidence base. Indeed many of the pieces of work highlighted here were designed in collaboration with other teams.

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<sup>2</sup> In this period there were about 40-50 social researchers and behavioural scientists employed by DfT, of whom 15-20 were located in the central team and 25-30 in embedded teams. The central team in size during the pandemic, in response to the increased demand for social and behavioural research.



## 2. Social and behavioural research at key decision points during the pandemic

### 2.1 Timeline of the pandemic

Throughout the pandemic SBR designed and commissioned social and behavioural research frequently and at speed to support government decision-making. Frequent topics were changing travel patterns, public attitudes towards ‘non-pharmaceutical interventions’ (NPIs) such as face-coverings, and the many different influences on travel behaviour at the different stages of the pandemic. Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3 illustrate how studies were timed to support decision-making at key points between March 2020 and April 2022. Study titles are provided chronologically in full in Appendix 1. URLs are provided for reports which were published. As one stakeholder commented:

*“When this all hit it quickly became apparent that we didn't know anything and we needed to know a lot quickly, and I think SBR was well placed and well trusted.” (Stakeholder 4)*

At the start of the pandemic, research was quickly needed to understand attitudes to, and compliance with, mandatory travel restrictions and NPIs on public transport (such as handwashing, face-coverings and physical distancing).

As restrictions started to be lifted in summer 2020, research was needed to help predict the impacts on travel demand, and the consequent requirements from the transport system. Following the guidance issued during the first lockdown that people should avoid public transport unless absolutely necessary, attention shifted to rebuilding public confidence in the safety of public transport from an infection-risk perspective.

*“As the pandemic progressed, we became more and more interested in what would persuade people to come back onto the public transport system. (...) The SBR team were front and centre in the development of our approach to thinking about restarting the transport system and how to enable a recovery.” (Stakeholder 2)*

As international travel began to grow again, people’s willingness to self-isolate on returning to the UK needed to be understood, along with the effectiveness of different types of messaging.

Then, as Christmas 2020 approached, research was needed to help predict a possible surge in demand for transport services and in road congestion as people travelled to visit family and friends.

When the COVID-19 vaccination programme was rolled out in 2021, it became important to understand the impact of the vaccine on people’s travel behaviour – in particular, their confidence in using public transport. One concern was whether particular groups in the population (for example elderly or disabled people) remained more hesitant to use public transport than others, despite being vaccinated.

Another issue that needed to be explored from a transport perspective was the extent to which working from home was becoming a permanent feature for some types of job. Then, in late 2021, the rise of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 led to a reintroduction of restrictions, causing further uncertainty about travel demand. COVID Restrictions were lifted for the final time in early 2022, but ongoing research continued to be necessary to understand the longer-term impacts of the pandemic on travel behaviour.

## 2.2 Research examples

A major example of research commissioned by SBR was the longitudinal survey '[All Change?](#)', conducted in six waves between May 2020 and November 2021. This formed an important strand of DfT social research which tracked travel behaviour, attitudes and the social impact of COVID-19 in the UK. It was used to predict, for example: that people were unlikely to 'surge back' to public transport after lockdowns; that people would feel that public transport was more safe, rather than less safe, if face-coverings were required; and that reductions in ticket prices would not attract large numbers back to public transport whilst people remained anxious about becoming infected. These examples are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.

Behavioural science research commissioned during this period included online experiments to test the [impact of different types of messaging](#) as a way: of improving people's confidence to resume travelling by public transport (Autumn 2020); supporting the wearing of face coverings on public transport (Spring 2021); and increasing adherence to mandatory self-isolation after international travel (Summer 2021).

The need to develop policy responses quickly on the basis of the latest evidence was raised by several stakeholders in the interviews. For example, on referring to research commissioned by SBR on attitudes to mandatory face-coverings on public transport, a stakeholder who been in the COVID Directorate said:

*"There was no transferable public health example across settings. We couldn't find anything, so we needed to quite quickly turn something around and that was really helpful to support us in engaging with Ministers and the Centre"*  
(Stakeholder 1, COVID Directorate)

Also important were SBR's analyses and syntheses of evidence from other major sources, including: Transport Focus; academic studies (e.g. the COVID-19 Social Study); market research companies; other Government Departments, Visit Britain; and Public Health England. Of particular note was the COVID-19 Public Polls Tracker, produced by SBR every two weeks from April 2020 until early 2022 and disseminated across DfT.

Figure 1 Timeline of the pandemic and research commissioned by SBR, March to December 2020

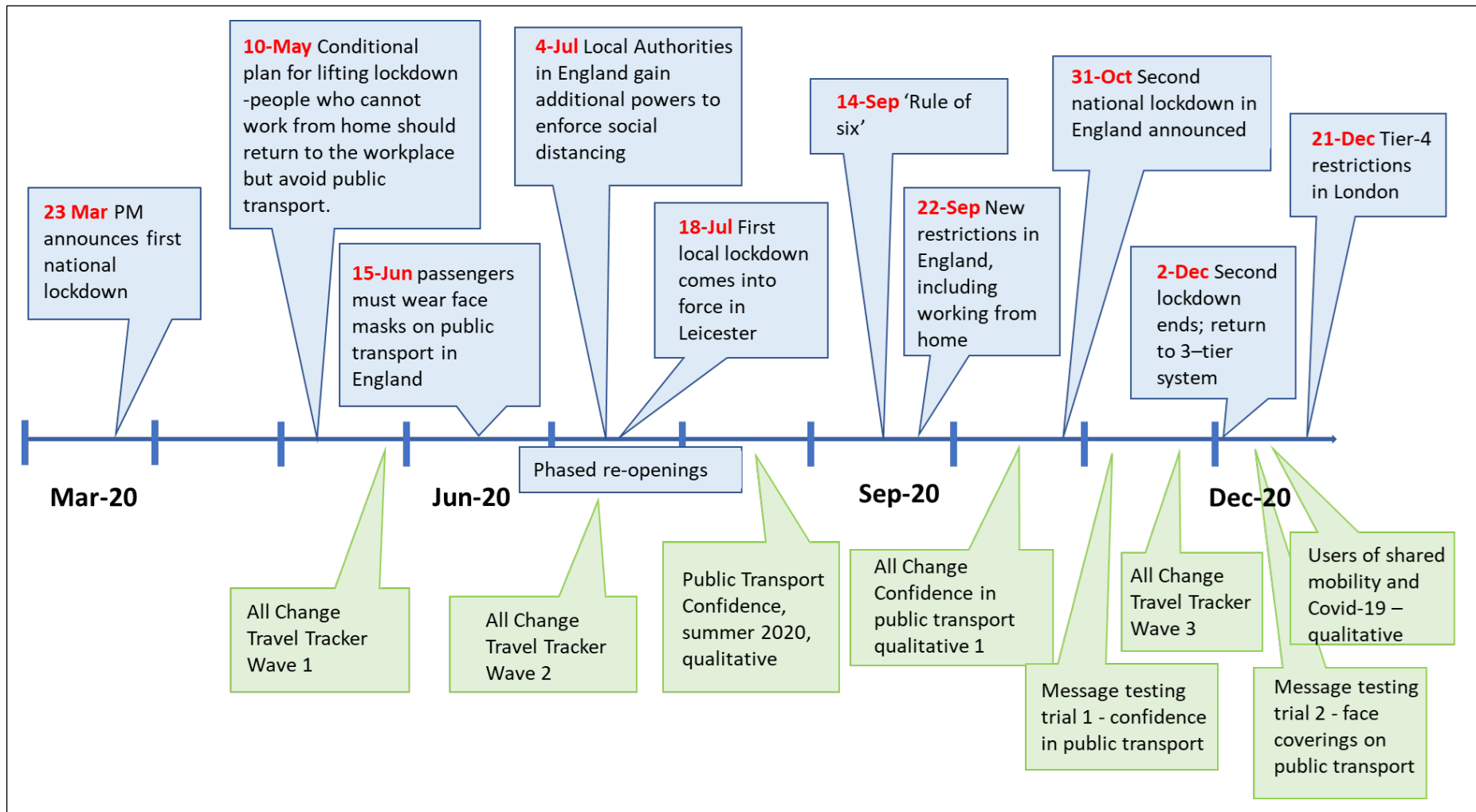


Figure 2 Timeline of the pandemic and key research commissioned by SBR, January to September 2021

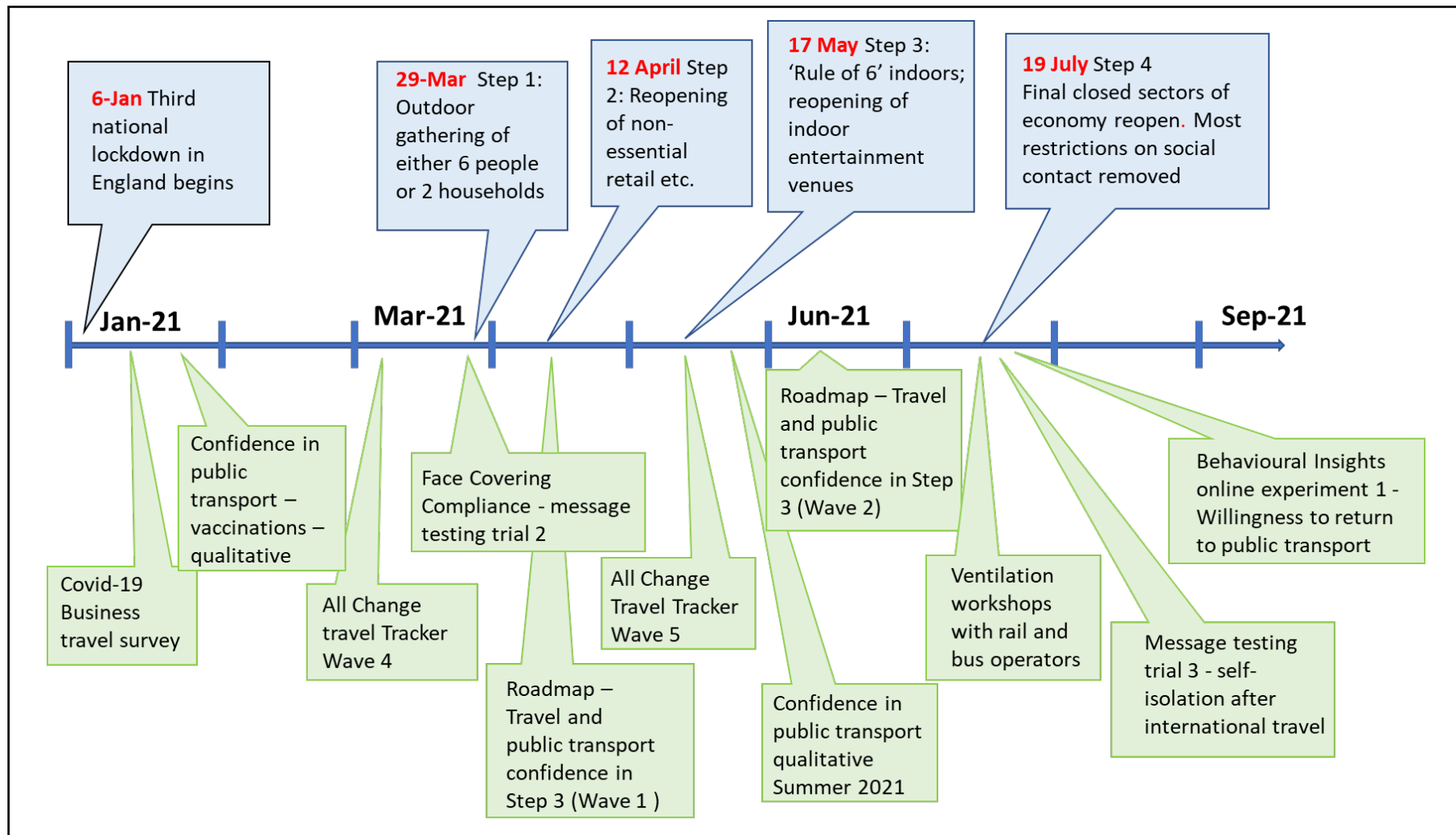
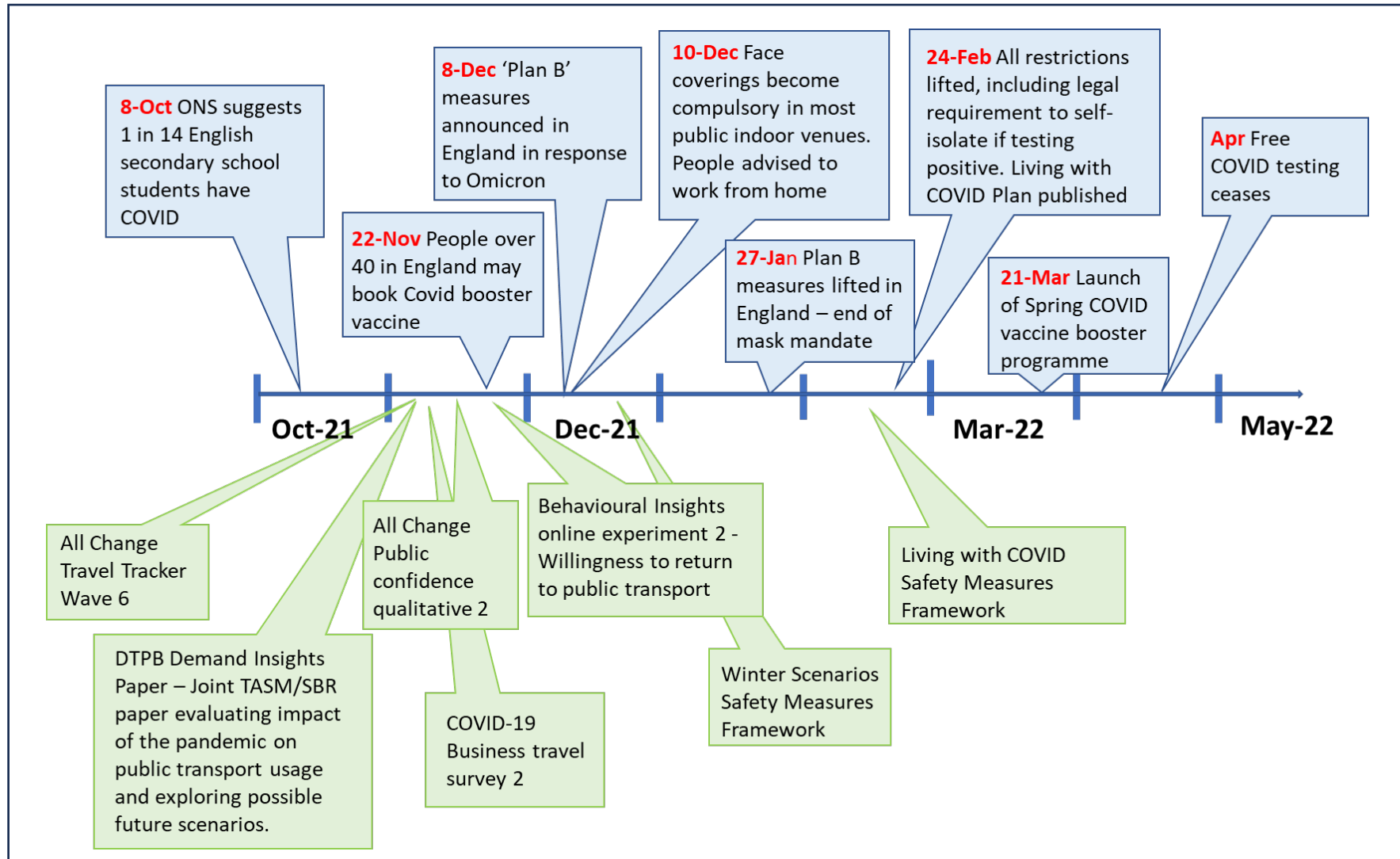


Figure 3 Timeline of the pandemic and key research commissioned by SBR, October 2021 to March 2022



### 3. Key findings from social and behavioural research at DfT during the pandemic

This section draws out some of the high-level results from the evidence compiled and studies commissioned by SBR during the pandemic. They were identified as key findings by members of the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams during two focus groups, and by DfT stakeholders who were interviewed in the second half of 2022. The stakeholders were senior members of DfT's pandemic response, including: the COVID Directorate and the later Pandemic Resilience Team; the Science, Innovation and Technology Directorate (SciTech) and the Transport Appraisal and the Strategic Modelling Division (TASM). We then suggest how behavioural models can be used to help adapt these findings to addressing possible future threats.

#### 3.1 Headline findings

Each of these 'headlines' is supported by a number of evidence sources; but specific sources are provided below as examples.

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#### Attitudes towards social-distancing and face-coverings

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- The majority of people found social distancing and the wearing of face coverings reassuring rather than off-putting. *All Change? Waves 4 and 5 surveys*
  - People wanted rules about face-coverings on transport to be 'externally consistent' with other indoor settings – e.g. shops, schools, libraries. *Confidence in public transport qualitative research – Summer 2021*
  - However, they would still accept such rules on transport, even if the rules were removed in other settings. *DfT Roadmap Survey, Travel and Public Transport confidence in Step 3 (Wave 2).*
  - People also wanted the whole transport network to be 'internally consistent'- mixed messages at stations, on vehicles and online created confusion. *Confidence in public transport qualitative research – Summer 2021*
  - The message most likely to encourage people to follow guidance on face coverings, social distancing and hand washing on public transport, was one that invoked a social norm: 'Thank you to all the passengers playing their part to keep everyone safe'. This performed consistently better (albeit non-significantly) than direct instructions such as 'Face coverings must be worn'. *Face-covering compliance – Behavioural Science message testing trial 1, November 2020*
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## Levels of concern about COVID-19

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- Attitudes and behaviour were strongly influenced by the status of the virus - how prevalent it was at any one time. *All Change surveys*
- Disabled groups experienced greater levels of anxiety about COVID-19 and needed extra support to feel confident and safe on the transport network. *Public Transport Confidence, Summer 2020*  
*Confidence in public transport, Summer 2021*

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## Compliance with rules

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- People wanted to see the scientific rationale for what they were being told to do. *Confidence in public transport, Summer 2021*
- Compliance with COVID-19 rules was highest when there were clear and consistent rules across the country. *All Change surveys*
- The behaviour of other passengers was important. Once a measure was imposed, people looked out for compliance levels and were unnerved if they saw rules flouted. *Public Transport Confidence, Summer 2020*  
*Confidence in public transport, Summer 2021*

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## The return to public transport following lockdowns

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- Vaccinations alone were not enough to encourage people in clinically vulnerable groups back to public transport in late 2020 and early 2021. *Confidence in public transport – Vaccinations (January 2021)*
- The return to domestic public transport after lockdowns would be gradual, with no ‘surge’ back’. *All Change surveys*
- Reductions in ticket prices would not attract large numbers back whilst they remained anxious about COVID-19 contagion (in 2021). *Online behavioural science experiment 1 - Willingness to return to public transport (2021)*  
*All Change, Wave 5 surveys*

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## Understanding of the role of ventilation on public transport

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- There can be a gap between people’s perceptions of effectiveness and actual effectiveness (e.g. an open window might provide more reassurance than a more effective but less visible ventilation system). *Online behavioural science experiment 1 - Willingness to return to public transport (2021)*
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The impact of a number of these findings are described in Section 5 (Case Studies). First, however, we consider how behavioural theories and models might be used to identify broad principals emerging from these findings.

### 3.2 Using behavioural theories and models to adapt findings to possible future threats

#### Protection Motivation Theory

Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers, 1975)<sup>3</sup> is one of the theories that can be used to help explain people's behavioural responses to NPIs (e.g. face-coverings), and their decisions on whether, or how, to use public transport during the pandemic. The theory assumes that behaviour is a result of decision-making processes based on assessments of both the expected consequences of the behaviour, and the value of those consequences. In simplified terms, people's motivation to protect themselves and others was a combination of:

- their appraisal of the threat posed by COVID-19 (**threat appraisal**)
- an appraisal of their ability to take protective action, and its likely efficacy (**coping appraisal**)

**Threat appraisal** combines an assessment of both:

- **Vulnerability** - the probability of catching COVID-19
- **Severity** - the severity of the consequences, e.g. how ill one might become, or how ill close social contacts might become if one infects them with COVID-19.

**Coping appraisal** combines an assessment of both:

- **Self-efficacy** – the ability to perform a protective behaviour (e.g. wear a face-covering) and
- **Response efficacy** - confidence that the given behaviour will be successful in mitigating or averting the potential harm from COVID-19, at a perceived cost that is not too high.

Two types of belief may decrease protection motivation:

- Beliefs that the **rewards** for not adopting protective behaviours are high;
- Beliefs that the **costs** of adopting them are high.

As an example, Protection Motivation Theory can help us interpret the headline findings that the majority of people found social distancing and the wearing of face coverings reassuring on public transport, and that fare discounts would not attract large numbers back whilst they remained anxious about COVID-19 contagion. The theory would suggest that if people appraise the level of threat from COVID-19 to be high (i.e. its perceived **severity** and their own perceived **vulnerability**), and if they perceive the **response efficacy** of protective measures to be high also, they are more likely to adopt protective behaviours such as social

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<sup>3</sup> Rogers, R.W., 1975. A protection motivation theory of fear appeals and attitude change. The journal of psychology, 91(1), pp.93-114.



distancing and wearing face coverings. However, they might also choose to protect themselves by avoiding public transport altogether if they have that option, even if ticket discounts are offered.

Protection Motivation Theory might therefore be useful in predicting people's willingness to take protective action in the case of other future public health threats.

### COM-B and the Behaviour Change Wheel

Whilst theories such as Protection Motivation Theory are helpful in understanding and predicting people's behaviour, behavioural science models can help us encourage people to *change* their behaviour in ways that benefit both individuals and wider society. One model that is frequently used across government is 'COM-B', which proposes that people must have capability, opportunity and motivation to change a behaviour. Capability is defined as an individual's psychological and physical capacity to undertake the activity concerned. Motivation is defined as the brain processes that direct behaviour: both conscious decision-making ('reflective motivation'); and habit and emotions ('automatic motivation'). Opportunity is defined as the factors outside the individual that prompt behaviour or make it possible. This is split into the physical opportunities provided by the physical environment, and social opportunities afforded by the cultural context which governs the way we think about things, such as the concepts represented by language (Michie S, Atkins L, West R., 2011)<sup>4</sup>.

These six conditions form the centre of a 'Behaviour Change Wheel', around which interventions and policies to address deficits in these conditions can be placed (see Figure 4). The Behaviour Change Wheel can be used, firstly, to categorise the headline findings in section 3.1 in relation to capability, opportunity and motivation. The finding that people wanted to see the scientific rationale for what they were being told to do could be related to both psychological capability and reflective motivation. In order to comply with the rules, people needed to understand both *what* the rules were (**psychological capability**) and *why* they were needed (**reflective motivation**). If people's **physical capability** to remain distanced from other passengers on public transport was limited (e.g. as social distancing rules relaxed in summer 2020), they were more likely to support mandatory face-coverings.

The red outer circle in the Behaviour Change Wheel, shown in Figure 4, suggests types of measures that can be taken to increase people's capability, opportunity and motivation to undertake the desired behaviours (for example, take protective action against infection). Using this tool, the headline findings can be extrapolated to the different categories of intervention that might be used in future. For example, the finding that the social norm-based message: 'thank you for wearing a face mask' was more effective than a direct

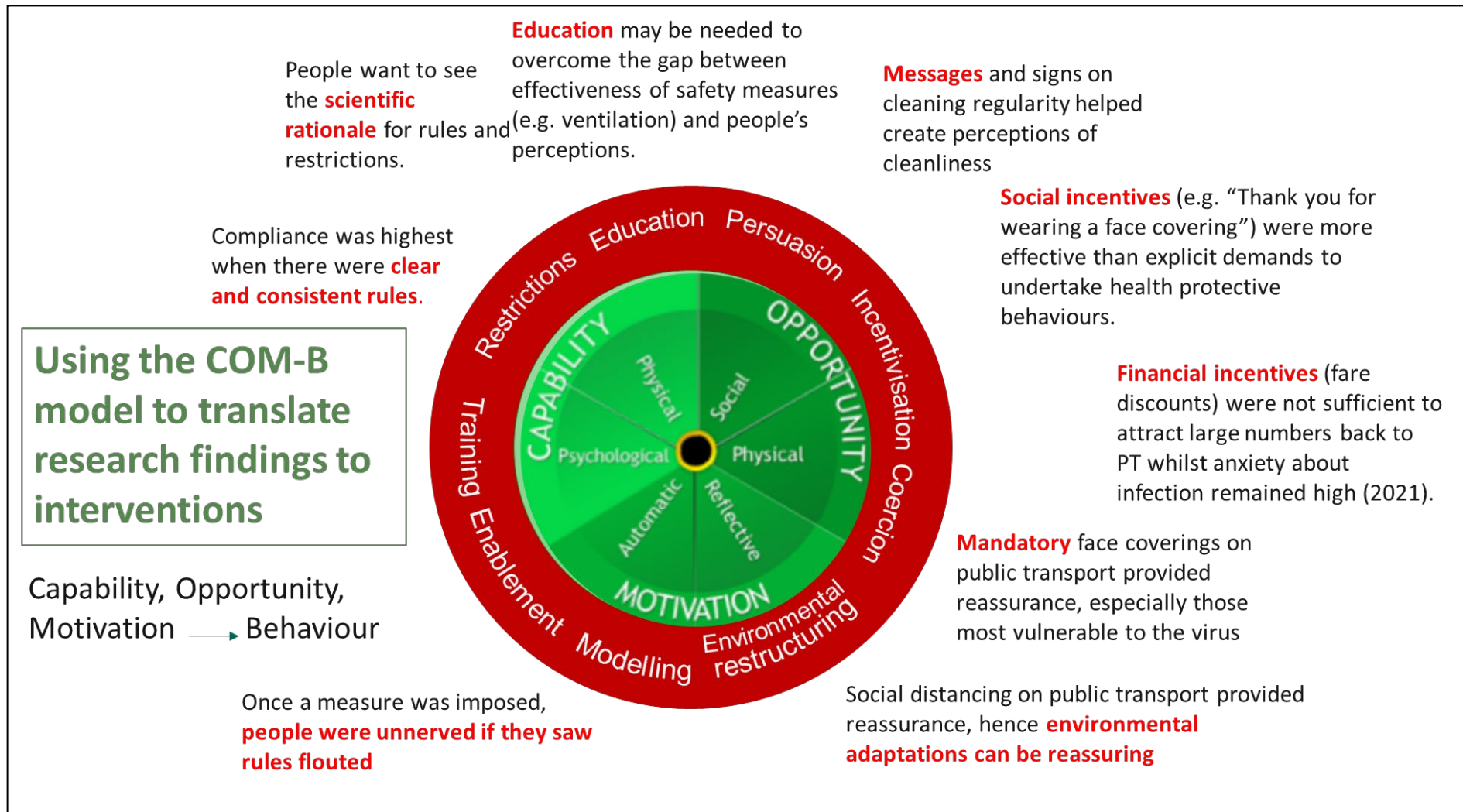
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<sup>4</sup> Michie, S., Van Stralen, M.M. and West, R., (2011). The behaviour change wheel: a new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation Science*, 6(1), pp.1-12.

instruction, suggests that social incentives such as this are one type of measure that should be used to incentivise socially desirable behaviours.

Having summarised some of the key research led by SBR during the pandemic, and identified headline findings, we now consider how this evidence was communicated and how it was used to create impact.

Figure 4 - Using the Behaviour Change Wheel (COM-B Model) to adapt research findings to interventions



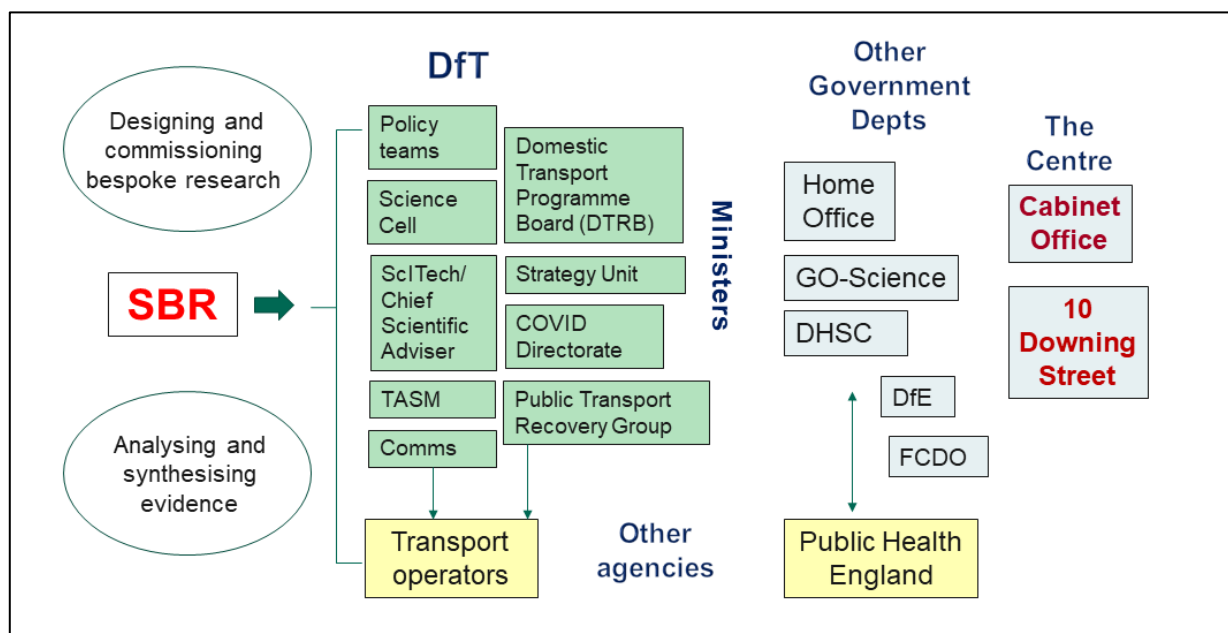
## 4. How evidence was communicated

This section outlines the channels through which SBR communicated social and behavioural research evidence to inform decision-making within DfT during the pandemic, and some of the main written formats that were used. This section also considers some of the challenges in moving from the generation of evidence to making an impact on policy and practice into ‘impact’.

### 4.1 Channels of engagement and influence

Figure 5 shows groups with whom SBR was particularly strongly engaged within DfT. Through these relationships, they ensured that the COVID Directorate, Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) and other senior colleagues could draw on a strong evidence-base of social and behavioural science when briefing Ministers and engaging with other Government Departments (OGDs) and the Centre (i.e. the Cabinet Office and 10 Downing Street).

Figure 5 Channels of engagement<sup>5</sup>



SBR was represented in senior groups in DfT such as the Domestic Transport Programme Board (DTPB). One stakeholder commented:

- <sup>5</sup> The Domestic Transport Programme Board comprised: modal teams, Comms, the Strategy Unit, Legal and SBR.
- The COVID-19 Public Transport Recovery Coordination group was led by the COVID Directorate
- SBR also provided briefings for the Fiscal Events Recovery Programme Board (FERB) and a Transport User Board
- The Government Office for Science (GO-Science) oversaw SPI-B (the Independent Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours) SPI-M-O (Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling), which were both sub-groups of SAGE.

*“It was really, really useful having SBR part of a regular discussion, as opposed to just being called in as experts now and again”. (Stakeholder 3)*

As well as the COVID Directorate and Strategy Unit, the team worked particularly closely with Policy colleagues in the modal teams, the Science Cell, Science, Innovation and Technology (SciTech), Transport Appraisal and Strategic Modelling (TASM), and the Communications group (‘Comms’). For example, SBR’s work on the impact of COVID on vulnerable groups was used by Comms when re-launching the [It's everyone's journey](#) campaign. Evidence was typically shared with transport operators by way of Comms.

The Figure also shows the main OGDs with whom social and behavioural research findings were shared via the COVID Directorate and the CSA: the Home Office, the Government Office for Science (GO-Science), the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the Department for Education (DfE) and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), as well as the Cabinet Office and Number 10.

## **4.2 Written communications**

Research reports published on the [UK government website](#) constitute the most visible form of social and behavioural research evidence commissioned by SBR during the pandemic, and the one with the broadest reach. Publications, together with some unpublished reports, are listed in Appendix 1.

Other types of written communication were produced for an internal audience within government departments and 10 Downing Street. For example, briefings synthesising evidence were frequently produced for the DfT COVID Directorate, the Science Cell, relevant Boards (e.g. the Domestic Transport Programme Board – DTPB), modal teams, other Government Departments, and the Centre. Examples include: Christmas Taskforce<sup>6</sup> briefings for the Cabinet Office and COVID Directorate (December 2020), providing updates on people’s holiday travel plans; and for Number 10 – a synthesis of evidence on attitudes towards face coverings to inform Step 4 planning (June 2021). Briefings were frequently produced for Ministers.

SBR also contributed to specific commissions from the Centre and other Departments. Examples include: a Number 10 commission on city centre recovery (September 2020); and a Number 10 commission on the future of public transport (June 2021). A fuller list of examples is provided in Appendix 2 – Other written communications.

Through these forms of active engagement, SBR was able to ensure that members of the COVID Directorate and other senior groups in the Department were well briefed on the latest social and behavioural evidence at each stage of the pandemic. However, the focus groups and interviews with DfT stakeholders that were undertaken for this project revealed

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<sup>6</sup> the Christmas Taskforce was established by the Secretary of State in November 2020 to ensure that all was being done to avoid disruption on the transport network over the Christmas. SBR was amongst the DfT teams interpreting the emerging data to advise on where, when and on what modes there might be disruption.

a number of challenges faced by SBR in ensuring that the research was influential on policy and operations, including factors which limited the direct impact it could have on government decision-making.

### **4.3 Challenges to gaining impact**

Firstly, it took time for the importance of evidence on public attitudes and behaviours to be acknowledged alongside scientific and technical evidence when policy responses were being developed at the start of the pandemic. This meant that it also took time for SBR to establish a formal advisory role, vis-à-vis decision-making in DfT. This meant that much relied, especially at the start, on informal working relationships that needed to be refreshed frequently as staff changed roles. Secondly, the rapidly changing circumstances (for example the rapid rise of new variants and the need for a swift policy response) could mean research findings going out-of-date before studies could be completed and approved.

More broadly, the direct impact that social and behavioural research in transport could have on decision-making in the Centre was ultimately constrained by the fact that transport was just one domain of society where human behaviours needed to be anticipated, guided and, at some points, mandated during the pandemic. Behavioural interventions in transport – as in other policy areas - were driven not by transport issues *per se*, but by health policy, which in turn sought to keep up with the rapidly evolving scientific knowledge. Furthermore, political, operational and cost considerations inevitably played a strong part in decisions made by the Centre. This helps to explain, for example, why the wearing of face coverings on public transport ceased to be mandatory in summer 2021, even though research suggested that the public supported a continuation of the mandate. The influence of the research therefore lay in contributing robust evidence to inform decision making (as discussed above) rather than necessarily leading directly to a particular policy decision.

As one member of the former COVID Directorate said:

*“I think it would be impossible to say whether any one thing we did resulted in a change in decision..... But I'm quite comfortable saying that [SBR's] research supported us in basically being in as strong a position as we could have been to present a coherent, comprehensive evidence base to our ministers. And which then allowed us to engage confidently with the Centre.” (Stakeholder 1)*

Attitudes to face coverings is one of the case studies we present in the next section.

## 5. Case studies

This section presents four social and behavioural research questions which led to particularly influential findings.

### 5.1 Case study 1 – will face coverings on public transport make people feel more safe or less safe?

#### Background

In Spring 2021, when face-coverings had been compulsory on public transport for nearly a year, this law was under review along with the requirement to wear face-coverings in other settings. Policy-makers and transport operators needed to try and predict whether continuing the mandate would make people feel safer and therefore more likely to use public transport, or conversely, whether ‘singling out’ public transport when face-coverings were no longer required in other settings would make it feel less safe (thereby discouraging people from using it).

#### Key findings

- Research consistently showed that face coverings and social distancing requirements on public transport were very important in reassuring passengers.
- Although rules on wearing face coverings on public transport should ideally be consistent with other similar settings, people would accept mandatory face coverings on public transport only. They would, however, expect a clear rationale explaining why.
- On balance, people would feel that public transport was more safe, rather than less safe, if face-coverings were required.

#### Main evidence base

- All Change? Travel Tracker – Wave 4 and Wave 5 surveys, February-June 2021
- Qualitative research – confidence in using public transport – Summer 2021

#### Communication and impact

- This evidence fed into the DHSC Future of Face Coverings commission (2021). DHSC had been requested by the Cabinet Office to work up a series of options on requirements for the future policy position on the use of face coverings at Step 4 of the Roadmap<sup>7</sup>.
- In June 2021 DfT shared evidence with No.10 on: public attitudes to wearing face coverings on public transport; impact of singling out public transport on perceptions of safety; and impacts on compliance of singling out public transport for mandated face coverings.
- The evidence also fed into the COVID-19 Safety Measures Framework for operators (2022).

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<sup>7</sup> Part of the Social Distancing Review. 2021-05-10 - Future of Face Coverings - DHSC Commission OFF-SEN.

## 5.2 Case study 2 – what role could price incentives play alongside safety measures in bringing people back to rail and bus?

### Background

*“I wanted to see how rail discounts compared to safety measures because the kind of things I was feeding into were face-covering regulation documents, where SBR was helping us to provide comprehensive evidence notes to the Ministers to support decisions to feed into DHSC, to the Cabinet Office.” (Stakeholder 1, COVID Directorate)*

In Summer 2021 Cabinet Office funded the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) to complete an online trial into people’s willingness to return to public transport after Stage 4. The DfT teams engaged in the trial design were the COVID Directorate, Bus, Rail, and the Behavioural Scientists in SBR.

### Key findings

- Willingness to travel by rail and bus in 2021 did not meaningfully increase when a discount was offered.
- The level of crowdedness was the most important factor affecting participants’ decision to travel by public transport or not, followed by the wearing of face coverings by other passengers.

### Evidence base

- Online behavioural science experiment - Willingness to return to public transport (summer and 2021 and Dec 2021, BIT)
- All Change? Travel Tracker surveys

### Communication and impact

- This evidence was passed up to Ministers and DHSC to support decisions in the Cabinet Office. By adding to evidence that fare discounts would not be money well spent by the government at that point, SBR arguably helped to prevent public money from being wasted. However, care must be taken in attempting to draw direct connections. As one stakeholder said:

*“I don't think you could draw that. Unfortunately. I'd love to be able to draw that like close link, but the government was basically propping up the public transport sector during this entire time. So I think those sorts of things would likely have been marginal, maybe. (...).*

*But I do remember that research being useful at the time, not least because I think we were able to argue slightly against the grain that sometimes visible health protection action was actually helpful in terms of reassuring people.” (Stakeholder 2)*



### 5.3 Case study 3 – how accurate are public perceptions of the effectiveness of ventilation on public transport?

#### Background

In July 2021 the Behavioural Science team contributed to workshops on ventilation with public transport operators (rail and bus).

#### Key findings

- Public perception of the effectiveness of different types of ventilation is not always consistent with actual effectiveness. For example, effective ventilation is often associated with visibly open windows, but some air conditioning systems may be more effective although hidden from view; hence clarity of information is required.
- Reassuring messaging on the existence of these ventilation systems could support public confidence.

#### Evidence base

- Online behavioural science experiment 1 - Willingness to return to public transport (2021)

#### Impact

- Advice was provided to operators on how to communicate with the public on ventilation on public transport.
- The research helped the COVID Directorate to develop a toolkit for operators, including advice on messaging.

*“[It helped us] to say: look, these are the things that you can do to help reassure people. This is the sort of messaging about things works. This is the sort of (.....) evidence that tells us what people are worried about, and it also showed us some things weren't working that well.”*

*“In the toolkit, there would certainly have been something around clarity of messaging and I think that's where we picked up the ventilation points about reinforcing ventilation is good.” (Stakeholder 3)*

## 5.4 Case study 4 – how has social and behavioural research assisted with the modelling of travel behaviour during and after the pandemic?

### Background

Throughout the pandemic SBR worked closely with transport modellers in DfT (most recently TASM). Research on people's travel intentions was used in the models to help predict and plan for travel behaviour at key points (e.g. Christmas 2020).

### Key findings

- Various All Change? survey waves showed that a 'surge' back to public transport following lockdowns was unlikely to occur, even following the vaccination of the most vulnerable.
- Uncertainties have remained in the aftermath of the pandemic as to which changes in travel behaviour will become more permanent (such as the changes induced by more frequent working from home).

### Evidence base

All Change? Travel Tracker – all waves

### Communication and impact

- This evidence influenced the modelling of travel behaviour in DfT after lockdowns, including the possible impacts on road traffic if COVID-19 rules were to be relaxed over Christmas 2020.
- All Change? served as one source of data for the [National Road Transport Projections 2022](#). The insights it provided have contributed to a flexibility of approach and willingness to adjust the forecasts in the light of ongoing uncertainty.

## 6. Embedding social and behavioural research into future transport resilience

In this final section we consider how social and behavioural research could best be embedded into DfT's response to future health crises and wider transport resilience. This is drawn from the recommendations made by the stakeholders who were interviewed.

This report has sought to show how the range and volume of work undertaken by SBR during the pandemic made a significant contribution to the policy development in DfT. The role of behavioural science in particular became more prominent than it had previously been, due to the vital importance of understanding and influencing people's behaviour in a time of crisis. As one interviewee said:

*"There would probably never be a better test case for showing the value of behavioural science than COVID." (Stakeholder 4)*

SBR also became well integrated as formal advisors to those leading the Department's policy response to COVID-19. Moving forward, both the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams now have the challenge (and opportunity) of maintaining and building their profiles within a diverse Department and in the absence of the dominant focus that was provided by the pandemic.

*"I think the risk with an expert team is it floats slightly different from policy, and during the pandemic there was a way in, and a strong demand and signal from policymakers to get insights from the social and behaviour research team and in the absence of crisis, that is inevitably going to be more difficult to do." (Stakeholder 2)*

### 6.1 Resilience to future crises

Pandemic response and resilience in DfT are now dealt with alongside broadly analogous risks, such as flooding, ash clouds, power outages and civil nuclear accidents. Governance in response to crises currently uses a 'hub and spoke model', with expertise resting in 'business as usual' teams across DfT, and experts being brought into a specialist cell as needed. For example, the Transport Security and Operations Centre (TSOC) is the current hub for short-term crises, and assembles 'spokes' from appropriate teams as needed. Therefore, one recommendation for the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams is that they should ensure they are a 'spoke' in any response cell that is set up. A strong working relationship with the Catastrophic Planning and Risks Team (CPaR) in TSOC is likely to be important here.

More broadly, this makes it incumbent on the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams to maintain a strong profile across the Department so that they are 'front of mind' when response cells are set up. Another important relationship that was identified was working with the Science Resilience team in SciTech on resilience planning, to ensure that the strides made in integrating the natural science with social and behavioural science

during in the pandemic are not lost. It was noted that the Chief Scientific Advisor needs to be briefed on both in a seamless way.

*“And so there's lots to be learned from the COVID experience about kind of forming that project team immediately. So I think it took us a while to know who is the project team and getting the scientists, the analysts and the social and behavioural people working closely together to make sure that there was a seamless evidence base.” (Stakeholder 4)*

## **6.2 Wider future impact**

Beyond the domain of transport resilience, it was noted that awareness of the two teams' wider expertise may need to be frequently refreshed across the Department as new staff join. Behavioural Science may need to do this even more than Social Research, with the role of 'behavioural insights' being a little less widely understood.

*“Generally your typical DfT policy-maker would be very, very interested in behavioural insights but probably doesn't quite know how to access them or what work is happening or how to plug into that sort of thing. (Stakeholder 2)*

Also important is ensuring that social and behavioural approaches continue to be well integrated with economics and modelling, as was successfully accomplished in the pandemic (e.g. Case Study 4).

In terms of creating longer term impact, it was noted that above all, social and behavioural research has a key role in understanding and encouraging behaviour change to more sustainable modes of transport in the context of the government's Net Zero carbon targets. Unlike policies on COVID-19, which were driven by health rather than transport imperatives, transport is at the heart of carbon reduction policies. This creates opportunities for DfT teams to have more direct impact on central government decisions than was perhaps possible in the case of COVID. The use of behavioural theory is another strength that allows robustly tested behavioural principals to be applied quickly to new policy challenges.

## **6.3 A final note: advice from members of the Social Research and Behavioural Sciences teams to their future counterparts**

Finally, members of Social Research and Behavioural Sciences who had been in post during the pandemic were asked to impart one piece of informal advice to other analysts in the event of a future pandemic or similar crisis. The advice fell mainly into the following two categories:

### The value of being able to respond quickly to requests from internal clients

- Call-off contracts are crucial to ensuring there is a quick commissioning route for new research. This means that research can be commissioned quickly from existing suppliers, rather than each new piece of work needing to go to out to tender.

- Request quick feedback from suppliers as they conduct the fieldwork (e.g. headline findings so far), rather than waiting until the full dataset has been collected.
- Where focus groups are being used to collect data, attend some of them as an observer, in order to gain early insights into the findings. Invite policy colleagues to observe also.

#### Relationship-building

- Build relationships with senior policy colleagues so they know what evidence Social Research and Behavioural Science can contribute.
- Build trust with your suppliers so that they are prepared to give you information informally and 'off the record'.
- Nurture links with the Cabinet Office
- Ensure that you are keeping in touch with everyone who is working on, or interested in, similar topics.

Finally, the value of being proactive was stressed; for example taking the initiative to identify research needs and build collaborations (*"Don't wait for permission to work on projects – be proactive"*).

## 7. Conclusion

This report has sought to summarise and create a record of some of the main findings of research carried out by the Social and Behavioural Research team at DfT during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to capture some of the influence this research had on transport policies and practice. It thus aims to contribute to ‘institutional memory’ in the Department of the role of social and behavioural research during those unusual times - memories that can easily be lost as time passes, staff move to new posts, and policy agendas change.

A number of research findings had particular resonance. Studies found consistently, for example, that face coverings and social distancing requirements on public transport were very important in reassuring passengers. On balance, people would feel that public transport was more safe, rather than less safe, if face-coverings were required. Another important finding was that a ‘surge’ back to public transport after the lifting of lockdowns was unlikely to occur, even following the vaccination of the most vulnerable.

Although no longer the concern that it was, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to leave a legacy on the UK transport system in terms of ongoing concern in some parts of the population about catching infections on public transport (with new research being commissioned by the Behavioural Science team on this topic in autumn 2023).

We have offered suggestions as to how behavioural models and theories might be used to interpret some of the main research findings during the pandemic, and might offer a framework to help inform policy should similar circumstances arise in the future. The models and principles introduced here are not definitive, but are offered as illustrative examples of how these and other models might be used.

This report has also sought to articulate views of some of the senior officials who led the Department's response to the pandemic, as to how the Social Research and Behavioural Science teams should maintain and build on the role they played. This involves, for example, ensuring that social and behavioural research remains ‘front of mind’ across DfT in relation to issues of transport resilience - something that is not always easy for a central team in a large and diverse Department that some described as having a tendency to be ‘siloes’.

It was stressed by interviewees that understanding and predicting public behaviour in the event of disruption to the transport system - whether caused by waves of infectious disease, extreme weather, civil emergencies or a myriad of other possibilities - will remain vital. Equally important is the role of social research and behavioural science in helping to address what is arguably one of the biggest transport challenges of our times: how to bring about long-term travel behaviour change as part of policies to reduce carbon emissions from travel and transport.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## Glossary

Comms	Communications group
COVID-O	COVID Operations group
CPaR	Catastrophic Planning and Risks Team
CSA	Chief Scientific Adviser
DfE	Department for Education
DfT	Department for Transport
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
DTPB	Domestic Transport Programme Board
ExCo	Executive Committee (of DfT)
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FERB	Fiscal Events Recovery Programme Board
GO-Science	Government Office for Science
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
NPI	Non-Pharmaceutical Intervention
OGDs	Other Government Departments
SciTech	Science, Innovation and Technology (team within DfT)
SBR	Social and Behavioural Research (team within DfT)
StratCo	Strategy Committee (of DfT)
TASM	Transport Appraisal and Strategic Modelling (team within DfT)
TSOC	Transport Security Operations Centre (of DfT)



## Appendix 1 – Chronological list of reports

Title	Date	URL
All Change? Travel Tracker – Wave 1 report	June 2020	<a href="https://publishing.service.gov.uk">All change? Travel tracker (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>
All Change? Travel Tracker – Wave 2 report	July-August 2020	<a href="#">DfT-All-change-travel-tracker-wave_2-report.odt (live.com)</a>
Public Transport Confidence, Summer 2020	February 2021 (publication date)	<a href="#">DfT-Ipsos-MORI-TRL-Public-Transport-Confidence-February-2021-FINAL.odt (live.com)</a>
All Change? Travel Tracker – autumn 2020 qualitative report	October 2020	<a href="#">DfT-All-Change-Travel-Tracker-Qualitative-Report.odt (live.com)</a>
Face-covering compliance - Behavioural Science message testing trial	November 2020	<a href="#">Message-testing- COVID-19- full-report</a> (Kantar)
Confidence in Public Transport - Behavioural Science message testing trial	December 2020	<a href="#">Message-testing- COVID-19- full-report</a> (Kantar)
Shared Mobility: user attitudes during COVID-19	December 2020	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shared-mobility-user-attitudes">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shared-mobility-user-attitudes</a>
Business travel during COVID-19: a survey of UK businesses	January 2021	<a href="#">business-travel-during-covid-19-a-survey-of-uk-businesses.odt (live.com)</a>
Confidence in public transport - Vaccinations	January 2021	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-and-confidence-in-travel">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-and-confidence-in-travel</a>
All Change? Travel Tracker – Wave 3 report	March 2021	<a href="#">DfT-All-Change-Travel-Tracker-Wave-3-Report.odt (live.com)</a>
All Change? Travel Tracker – Wave 4 report	February-March 2021	<a href="#">DfT-all-change-travel-tracker-wave-4-report.odt (live.com)</a>

All Change? Travel Tracker – Wave 5 report	May-June 2021	<a href="#">all-change-travel-tracker-wave-5-report.odt (live.com)</a>
Behavioural Insights Team online experiment 1 - Willingness to return to public transport	July 2021	Unpublished
Self-isolation after international travel - Behavioural Science message testing trial	July 2021	<a href="#">Message-testing- COVID-19- full-report</a> (Kantar)
Confidence in public transport research – Summer 2021 (Ipsos Mori, TRL)	Summer 2021	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/confidence-in-using-public-transport-during-coronavirus-covid-19">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/confidence-in-using-public-transport-during-coronavirus-covid-19</a>
All Change? Travel Tracker – Wave 6 report	November 2021	<a href="#">All Change? longitudinal travel tracker (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>
All Change? Travel Tracker – autumn 2021 qualitative report	February 2022 (publication date)	<a href="#">All change? Part 2, Qualitative report Autumn 2021 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>
Behavioural Insights Team online experiment 2 - Willingness to return to public transport	November 2021	Unpublished
COVID-19: business travel survey December 2021	December 2021	<a href="#">COVID-19 business travel survey - December 2021 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>

## Appendix 2 – Other written communications

This table provides examples of briefings which SBR either led or contributed towards. This is an excerpt from the complete list of briefings and submissions compiled by SBR in 2022 for the COVID-19 Public Inquiry team.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Policy Area</b>	<b>Decision / Discussion</b>	<b>Commissioned or proposed by:</b>
28/04/2020	Cross Cutting	<b>Behavioural Science</b> – initial contribution to COVID policy response	SBR; DfT COVID Directorate
08/09/2020	Recovery	<b>No.10 commission on City Centre Recovery</b>	No.10, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
December 2020	Confidence/demand	<b>Christmas travel 2020</b> – survey looking at people’s Christmas expected/intended travel behaviour before bubbles were cancelled	DfT COVID Directorate
December 2020	Demand	<b>Christmas Taskforce briefings</b> - updates on people’s holiday plans and travel intentions over the holiday period based on survey data from Transport Focus, CO, AA and RAC	Cabinet Office and DfT COVID Directorate
Feb 2021 / July 2021	Disproportionately impacted groups (DIGs)	<b>Disproportionately impacted groups /disability data audit</b>  The data audit was one of the three actions/projects the DfT completed in response to a COVID-Operations request to look at the impact of COVID-19 on DIGs.	COVID-Operations
01/04/2021 and 25/03/2021	Social Distancing	<b>Cross-Government review:</b> Will changes to social distancing advice impact compliance or buy-in to wider public behaviours and compliance needed to control the virus?	COVID-Operations + Other Government Departments
April 2021	Confidence	Roadmap – Travel and Public transport confidence in Step 3 (Wave 1 )	
May 2021	Confidence	<b>Summary of SBR evidence for modal teams toolkit:</b> Confidence using public transport - social and behavioural research evidence	Modal teams

May 2021	Levelling up	<b>N.10 commission</b> for social research evidence on potential impacts of C19 on <b>Levelling Up agenda</b>	No.10
June 2021	Confidence	Roadmap – Travel and Public Transport confidence in Step 3 (Wave 2)	
10/05/2021	Face Coverings	OFF-SENS: <b>Future of Face Coverings - DHSC Commission</b> - DHSC were commissioned by the Cabinet Office to work up a series of options on the requirements for face coverings at Step 4 of the Roadmap and beyond.	Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Cabinet Office
26/05/2021	Confidence	<b>DTPB discussion</b> on are we doing enough to address the <b>needs of different groups?</b>	Domestic Transport Programme Board (DTPB)
June 2021	Cross-cutting	<b>Number 10 commission on Future of Public Transport</b> - If, when and how to encourage people back onto public transport (to support economic recovery and stabilise the financial position of operators) – SBR contribution focussing on public attitudes to Public Transport.	No.10
9/06/2021	Recovery	<b>DTPB – Behavioural Science - potential for surge in Public Transport demand</b> post-stage 4 unlock	DTPB
09/06/2021	Confidence / demand	<b>Reshuffle briefing</b> - Summary of the latest social and behavioural research on public transport confidence and/or demand.	No.10, Secretary of State and Transport Ministers
22/06/2021	Face Coverings	<b>For Number 10</b> - Synthesis of evidence on <b>attitudes towards face coverings</b> to inform Step 4 planning	No. 10
23/06/2021	Ventilation	<b>DTPB ventilation on the Public Transport network</b> – some SBR evidence included in policy paper	DTPB
July 2021	Recovery / mode-shift	<b>DTPB discussion on car-led recovery</b> - is there any evidence that car recovery is happening to the detriment of other modes	DTPB

08/07/2021	Face Coverings / social distancing	<b>DHSC Equality Impact Assessment</b> on concerning ending the legal requirement to wear a face covering on public transport in England, ending social distancing guidance	DHSC
12/07/2021	Cross-cutting user priorities	<b>Transport User Board</b> overview of current evidence on what matters to transport users, how COVID has changed this, and how the future might be different.	Transport User Board
16/08/2021	Cross-cutting	<b>Annex for submission to SoS</b> detailing <b>end of Restart phase</b>	Secretary of State
03/09/2021	Face Coverings	<b>Cabinet Office September Review</b> - evidence on face coverings to inform Autumn planning decisions	Cabinet Office
11/10/2021	Face coverings / confidence / demand	<b>Winter planning briefing</b> – summaries evidence on confidence in different safety measures on public transport	
14/10/2021	Cross-cutting: confidence, demand, recovery	<b>FERB recovery discussion</b> of key findings from our work looking at restart that may have longer term implications for our policies over the next 3-5 years.	Fiscal Events Recovery Programme Board (FERB)
17/11/2021	Cross-cutting: confidence, demand, recovery	Domestic Transport Programme Board (DTPB) discussion on synthesis <b>of evidence on the impact of the pandemic on public transport</b> – confidence, demand, recovery.	DTPB
24/11/2021	Face coverings	<b>Science Cell</b> discussion – <b>does messaging on face coverings deter PT use?</b>	Science Cell
24/11/2021	Face coverings and other NPIs	<b>Winter Scenarios - Safety Measures Framework</b> – inputting SBR evidence into policy framework, to inform operators’ decision-making	
13/12/2021	Cross-cutting: confidence, demand, recovery	<b>FERB TASM/SBR transport recovery update</b> - discussion of evidence on the impact of the pandemic on public transport – confidence, demand, recovery.	FERB

05/01/2022	Cross-cutting:	<b>Evidence briefing for Minister Harrison, dinner discussion</b> hosted by the Industry and Parliament trust: Post-COVID: The Future of Personal Mobility	Transport Minister
19/01/2022	Cross-cutting: confidence, demand, recovery	<b>DTPB TASM/SBR update</b> on latest evidence on public transport usage, confidence and return to workplace	DTPB
25/02/2022	Safety measures	<b>Living with COVID Safety Measures Framework</b> – summary of evidence on safety measures to provide operators with information to make decisions on measures to support confidence and ultimately encouraging people back onto the network	
31/03/2022	Cross-cutting: confidence, demand, recovery	<b>COVID transport usage recovery statistics</b> – slide pack capturing a cross-modal view of COVID recovery in more depth than the daily usage statistics circulated on a weekly basis	