



**Report
of the
Newcomer Retention Group
for the
Orienteering Foundation
December 2021**

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1 Background

The Orienteering Foundation is a registered charity (number 1118793) independent of British Orienteering and that promotes and supports orienteering.

The Foundation's Trustees believed that there were many detailed issues in UK orienteering that needed thorough investigation and that there was considerable untapped expertise amongst the orienteering community.

The Foundation therefore decided to sponsor a series of projects to review some of these issues and make recommendations. The first project was to look at how orienteering newcomers were welcomed and then encouraged to become regular participants.

The reasons for choosing this project were that:

- increasing participation (and through that membership) is important for the sport's future, not least for widening the pool of volunteers to help run the sport and reduce the pressure on existing volunteers
- there seemed to have been little previously published study of the issues
- recruiting newcomers to orienteering was not particularly easy, so it was important that as many as possible were retained

1.1 Group remit

The remit given to the group to investigate was:

- Define "orienteering newcomer", and define and research the current retention rate
- Define "regular participants", and research and quantify reasons why newcomers do not become regular participants
- Identify and document examples of good practice in dealing with newcomers
- Make recommendations designed to improve retention of orienteering newcomers
- If appropriate, identify follow-up work that could be considered
- Produce a written report on the group's work and conclusions

1.2 Group membership

A call for volunteers to join what became known as the Newcomer Retention Group was made and the following group membership was established and produced this report:

Neil Cameron	NGOC	Chair
Mairi Eades	Interlopers/EUOC	
Jon Eaton	WCOC	
Ian Gamlen	COBOC/HOC	
Kay Hawke	PFO	
Ingebjørg Holmedal	OROX	
Carol Iddles	BOK	
Bertie Kingsley	OROX (until 21 Sep 2021)	

2 Report summary

The group believe that the key to retaining newcomers/beginners is that the first few experiences of orienteering were enjoyable for the beginner, and that the overall impression was of being welcomed into a friendly community.

This philosophy should run through all aspects of the club's planning: from the website (its relevance to beginners and its appearance and content), to the way beginners are identified and dealt with before, during and after their first few events.

We have identified many examples of Good Practice in implementing this philosophy and these are recorded in Section 4.

We conducted reviews of the websites of all Open Clubs to assess their content against the philosophy as objectively as we could and fed back our assessment to each club as (we hope) useful input to indicate how that website could in our opinion be improved.

With the support of Sport England and in partnership with British Orienteering we arranged three "mystery visits" to orienteering events in England identified by clubs as "newcomer friendly". During these visits and without identifying the purpose of their visit, people who had no experience of orienteering planned and booked to attend the event and then reported their experience in a detailed report. Each report was sent only to the relevant club, and any general lessons we identified are listed in Section 8.

As requested in the remit, the group is making a number of recommendations and these appear in Section 5.

We also identified some areas for future work, and these are listed in Section 7.

We would like to thank many people who assisted us with comments and input and we hope we have recorded their names in Section 10. We apologise if anyone has inadvertently been omitted.

3 Proposed definitions

Comment: the reason for having these definitions is assumed to be to propose/establish a standard that can be used when measuring retention of beginners.

Orienteering newcomer

We recommend the term “beginner” rather than “newcomer” as the former is more inclusive in our opinion. “Beginner” suggests the start of a path to greater experience, which can vary widely depending on the beginner's motivation. However, we do not see the need to change existing usage of “newcomer”, rather to start using “beginner” rather than “newcomer” where possible.

*A **beginner** is someone who, although interested in orienteering, has not yet participated in an orienteering event, or who has not yet completed sufficient events to be familiar enough with using an electronic card, an orienteering map, a compass, and following the start and finish procedures without assistance.*

It was very difficult to define “regular participant” in a meaningful or usable way: eg some clubs run relatively few events, whereas other run them weekly. In other words, participation is considerably affected by the amount of local opportunity. There was also not thought to be any easy way to record an individual's participation accurately and without inordinate effort across several clubs' local events, where, for example, a beginner was willing to travel, or lived in one club's “area” but close to another club's “area”.

If a definition was really required, and taking account of the above difficulties, a minimum of 4 events in 12 months would be suggested.

*“**Regular participant**” is an orienteer who participates at an orienteering event, activity or coaching session at least 4 times over any 12 month period.*

“**Retention rate**” is expressed by the formula:

$100 \times RP/N \%$ where:

N is the number of beginners who attend a club's events in a given period (eg a year)

RP is the number of beginners who attended a club's events in a given period who became regular participants

With this formula, a 100% retention rate would be very rare and mean that all beginners became regular participants.

A 50% retention rate would mean that half of beginners went on to become regular participants.

We would encourage clubs to be aware of their retention rate, be reviewing how to increase it and taking action to identify why any beginners did not go on to become regular participants and using that intelligence to inform any actions required.

4 Good practice

The group identified the following examples of good practice [GP] in dealing with newcomers/beginners:

- GP1. Displaying a poster with some orienteering basics at events to show support for beginners and potentially reduce volunteer time in explaining basics of the sport, or to use to speed up that explanation. A free take-away version could also be useful for white/yellow participants.
- GP2. Having a club website with a beginner section clearly visible on the main menu that is attractive, informative and inspiring. It should illustrate the fun, enjoyment, challenge, social opportunities and indeed excitement that comes with orienteering. For more guidance on this, see Section 9.
- GP3. Ensuring that one or more outgoing and knowledgeable people are allocated to dealing with beginners at events - setting a welcoming tone and trying to ensure that first experiences were positive.
- GP4. Having a plan of how to recognise and welcome beginners (often at e-card hire), and ensure that (as far as volunteer resources permit) the beginner is kept in contact with at the start, finish, download, after download, and especially some time in the days immediately after the event. Any capture of contact details must of course be GDPR and club privacy policy compliant and this is made very easy by some entry systems.
- GP5. Having information or flyers available at events with details of upcoming events and the club's social media details to try to build on any beginner's event involvement. Sometimes this can be achieved on the map (or the reverse of it).
- GP6. Having details of POCs and VOCs at events with encouragement to beginners to learn how to use them to gain experience – even to the extent of providing free POC/VOC maps (removing a possible barrier to their use).
- GP7. (As far as current Covid limitations permit) engaging with beginners after their runs to give social contact opportunities and informal coaching.
- GP8. Planning a series of events in a short period to encourage further attendance, perhaps making the first one or two events in the most easily accessible locations to “hook” beginners and make them more likely to continue to attend later (and perhaps less accessible) events.
- GP9. (As far as current Covid limitations permit) seeing if car-sharing would assist a beginner to attend future events and organising it if so; where appropriate, publicising public transport options.
- GP10. People come to orienteering for a very wide variety of reasons (new challenge, improving navigation, opportunity for meeting new people, fitness, love of outdoor exercise, curiosity, competition, etc). Therefore people dealing with beginners should try to explore a beginner's motivation and expectation, attempting to ensure that positive expectations are met and all the potential reasons are experienced to some degree during first orienteering experience(s). For example if a beginner enjoys meeting people and socialising, they will leave disappointed if there was little opportunity to do so. However, recognise also that the reasons for trying orienteering may be replaced by different ones after early experiences.
- GP11. Being prepared to allow a beginner to request that their name, age and/or gender be omitted from results *and ensuring that if requested, this is done*. This could sometimes be done by listing participants using first name and first letter of surname.
- GP12. To encourage beginners who are used to running longer distances but don't yet have the orienteering skills to do so, strongly advise them to run a shorter less technical course (such as orange) first, with the option of running a slightly harder course afterwards if time permits.
- GP13. Having a “buddy system” where an experienced orienteers “adopts” a beginner and offers

assistance, mentoring and encouragement over a period.

GP14. Keeping track of retention rate and using it to identify actions designed to increase it.

GP15. Organising a series of events and training sessions on a weekly or fortnightly basis can be especially beneficial in encouraging beginners as they then have a chance to learn basic skills, develop social contact with other club members, and generally get “hooked” on the sport.

GP16. Having coaching sessions available can assist beginners who will expect such opportunities. If not normally done, the club should be ready to answer a beginner who seeks coaching (eg see GP13).

5 Recommendations of the Newcomer Retention Group

The following Newcomer Retention [NR] recommendations are being made:

- NR1. That clubs communicate to their members the importance of everyone making beginners feel welcome, of assisting them to meet their expectations from orienteering, and to assist and accelerate their learning process.
- NR2. That British Orienteering accepts the proposed definitions for newcomer (ie “beginner”), retention, and retention rate, and encourages clubs to adopt them and collect relevant data in future.
- NR3. That clubs develop retention data, review how to increase it and take action to identify why any beginners did not go on to become regular participants, whilst using that intelligence to inform any actions required.
- NR4. That clubs review their website survey rating and where appropriate consider making changes to their website.
- NR5. That key common issues identified in the club website survey be publicised with encouragement to have them addressed. They are listed in Section 9.
- NR6. That clubs use the “beginner-friendly” self-audit checklist (Appendix 1) to see if they can improve how they prepare for and handle beginners.
- NR7. That clubs (as part of their risk assessment at events) ensure that newcomers are at minimum asked if they are confident from a health perspective that they are able to participate safely in the event, and told that they remain responsible for their own safety in what is an “adventure” sport.
- NR8. That clubs consider carefully their attitude to Entry On the Day (EOD). Having no EOD has benefits such as having better estimates of the number of maps required, and requiring fewer volunteers at the event dealing with entries. However beginners might be unwilling to commit to attending an event as readily as committed orienteers, and might find an unfamiliar and complex entry system difficult to navigate without help. Having a contact identified to help with using the entry system or accepting an occasional entry from a beginner by another method (eg pay on arrival if entry notified by email) could be considered. Clearly publicising the last date and time for entries is also important.

6 Methodology used by the group

Drawing on the group's considerable practical experience of events for newcomers and of dealing with newcomers at events, the initial approach taken to the remit was as follows:

- explore the group remit and exchange knowledge and experience
- issue a news item publicising the group's existence and remit, and asking for experience, data and opinions

As had been expected when the group was established, there seemed to be little data of any kind about retention of newcomers, not aided by the lack of any definition of newcomer nor any definition of when a newcomer should no longer be termed a newcomer.

During the discussions, there was a view that “newcomer” carried a nuance of exclusion and the group therefore decided that “beginner” would be a better term although “newcomer” could remain where it was already in use.

As requested in the remit, definitions of beginner, retention and retention rate were then developed and adopted, with the hope that if they were used widely some retention data could start to be collected.

The exchange of experience referred to above produced a list of actions and behaviours that typified a club that was friendly for beginners, for example having an informative and attractive website, and ensuring that beginners were identified and warmly welcomed. A checklist was produced (see Appendix 1) that a club could use to audit themselves, with the checklist structured into sections:

- before the beginner's first event (primarily the website's content and appeal)
- at the event but before the run (an attitude of welcome and friendly assistance and on-site resources)
- at the event after the run (exploring the reaction, offering friendly encouragement and giving advice on “what next?”)
- in the days after the run (making contact for a further more considered reaction and to encourage more involvement)
- [structural] ensuring that thought is given to how events and local POCs and VOCs can be scheduled and used to offer a helpful introductory experience of orienteering

Given the perceived importance of club websites, it was decided to survey all open clubs' websites using a rating system which was piloted to identify any changes needed. A version 2 rating form was then used (see Appendix 2). Each NRG member surveyed about 11 websites not in their own area to avoid familiarity. In an effort to reduce subjectivity, each survey was reviewed and sometimes modified in agreement with another NRG member.

Each club was then sent their own survey with encouragement to review their website, concentrating on where they broadly agreed with any lower ratings, and then making appropriate changes.

During the meetings we learned of and then used a “mystery visit” project that Sport England were offering Governing Bodies of sport. The project is described in Section 8 and some of the issues identified are included in the Good Practice and Recommendations sections.

The final stage in the group's work was to pull together all the ideas that had emerged or been suggested and develop them into a set of recommendations, good practice notes and suggestions for future work after the group was wound up.

7 Recommendations for future work

The NRG remit asked the group to “if appropriate, identify future work [FW] that could be considered”.

The following are the NRG recommendations for future work:

- FW1. Develop a resource bank of material introducing orienteering and that club websites can use or point to, especially to convey the fun, challenge, satisfaction and social opportunities that come with orienteering participation. This is especially challenging given the wide demographic of the potential audience.
- FW2. Produce a standard weatherproof “poster” [A3?] that clubs could display at events as a guide and reference point for beginners, saving volunteer support effort and showing efforts being made to support beginners. [Opportunity for sponsorship from orienteering equipment and/or clothing suppliers].
- FW3. Repeat the club website survey in the 2nd half of 2022 to see the scale of any improvements.
- FW4. Develop guidance on successful ways to attract beginners (so that they can be retained).

8 Mystery visits

The mystery visits project involves newcomers to a sport visiting an opportunity to try a sport, and then reporting on their experience in a structured way. The exercise is paid for by Sport England and is limited to three English clubs.

After discussing the pros and cons of getting involved with this project and to what degree clubs should be aware it was happening, it was decided to see if we could be involved. British Orienteering helped us to apply to Sport England as their partners, we made a successful application, and the three visits were made to events advertised on the British Orienteering website as “suitable for newcomers” (smiley face icon). The events were chosen by the company doing the mystery visits and it was given guidance to ensure the visits were in different Regional Associations. Clubs were unaware beforehand of the project being done for orienteering, or of the visits to their event.

The number of visits meant that the reports could not be used with certainty to determine a typical newcomer experience but they did highlight some strengths and weaknesses that are likely to be widespread. The weaknesses were used to augment the recommendations in this report.

All three visits were regarded positively.

The main positive finding from all three visits was that the beginners were warmly welcomed with the keenness of volunteers to assist the beginner commented on favourably, together with the wide age range of participants noticed by the beginner.

The main negative finding from all three visits was that there was little or no post-event contact with the beginner, to seek feedback and to encourage further participation.

9 Beginner/newcomer sections on club websites

The beginner/newcomer section on a club website plays an important role in encouraging beginners. Its very existence illustrates the club is interested in beginners.

It is an opportunity to sell orienteering by illustrating the fun, enjoyment, challenge, social opportunities and indeed excitement that it offers. It can also help prepare a beginner for their first event, hopefully firming up their intention to register for the event and covering some orienteering basics that would save time and volunteer effort on arrival at the event.

The section should explain the basics of orienteering without jargon, be visually appealing and ideally use photos, map extracts and links to videos as well as pointers to where further information can be found. Much basic information about orienteering can be explained, enabling the beginner to get started on their course sooner after arrival (as they are usually keen to do). Direct links should ideally be included:

- to local Permanent Orienteering Courses (POCs) and Virtual Orienteering Courses (VOCs) using eg MapRun and how best to use them as a beginner;
- to upcoming local events; and
- to club contacts where queries could be answered

We therefore conducted a review of the websites of all “open” clubs affiliated to British Orienteering to see how well they met these ambitions. To increase objectivity, an NRG member used an assessment template to check what we believed were key aspects, and the assessment was then reviewed by another NRG member and any minor adjustments made. Each club was then sent the rating for their own website.

Some subjectivity undoubtedly remained and because clubs vary widely in their size, priorities and resources, and since our intention was not to criticise but to encourage them, we are not publishing a “league table”.

We recommend that all club websites should have a link to the British Orienteering Newcomer section (britishorienteering.org.uk/newcomers_guide) where the useful MDOC and Orienteering Foundation videos can be viewed. Further, some SLOW videos (slow.org.uk/british-orienteering/get-up-to-speed-videos) are also highly recommended.

We will however mention some aspects of a few club websites which we encourage clubs to have a look at for ideas.

- SLOW (slow.org.uk) for visually appealing website and newcomer section with a linked photo, map extract and explanation
- MDOC (mdoc.org.uk/documents/general/Beginners_Guide.pdf) for well-written beginner guidance presented in a nice cartoon-style frame
- DFOK (dfok.co.uk/beginners/safari3/index.html?dhtmlActivation=window [reached from its home page dfok.co.uk] for a well-structured section with attractive and informative displays of different levels of course difficulty (pages 13 to 15)
- LOC (lakeland-orienteering.org.uk/beginner-questions-answered) for a good Q & A section
- MDOC videos (youtube.com/channel/UC56QgWBRMa_KC1T1Nj9Y2ZQ)
- OD for online training (eg octavian-droobers.org/od/quiz/controlDesc3.htm) [but not all appropriate for beginners] and visual appeal
- SUFFOC (eg suffoc.co.uk/resources/new-to-o/your-first-event) for use of photos to make

text more attractive

- NGOC (ngoc.org.uk/about-orienteeing/getting-started/) for writing style
- SO (southdowns-orienteeers.org.uk/info/new-to-orienteeing/coaching) for coaching availability
- SBOC (sboc.org.uk/newcomers) for including a full O map
- goorienteeing.org.uk/permanent-orienteeing-courses for guidance about POCs
- goorienteeing.org.uk/virtual-orienteeing-courses for guidance about VOCs

Although these last two are not strictly club websites, they can be linked to from club websites.

(See also NR4 in Section 5).

We were surprised by the variability in club website content as far as beginners are concerned. Some clubs had neither an identified section for beginners nor any material explaining what orienteeing involved, whilst others had excellent material in a section easily spotted and accessed from the home page. We recognise that clubs may be limited by volunteer resources or website skills, but we believe that there is real value to be obtained by having a dedicated and highly visible section for beginners for the reasons stated at the start of this section.

The commonest problems (apart from no beginner section at all) were:

- section not found easily (a beginner might give up if it wasn't obvious, and some good material was difficult to find or labelled in a way that didn't suggest it was intended for beginners)
- failure to make the section visually appealing, instead using long textual paragraphs without photos or map extracts, and failure to make it motivating with carefully written content
- failure to include Permanent Orienteering Courses (POCs) or Virtual Orienteering Courses (VOCs) [MapRun etc] within the beginner section with an explanation of why they are especially relevant to beginners. Good POC and VOC sections without pointing beginners at them and saying why are a wasted opportunity.
- failure to include map extracts showing some simple legs and perhaps route choices to give beginners a better understanding of what the sport was about

10 Acknowledgements

The NRG would like to acknowledge with thanks input received from:

- C Blanchard
- R Denney
- A Evans
- E Nicholas
- H Wheelwright

In addition we would like to thank Rayan Sammut (England Development Officer for British Orienteering) for assisting us with liaison with Sport England regarding the “Mystery Visit” exercise.

We would particularly like to acknowledge the support received from Sport England in working with us and financing the “Mystery Visit” work, and to the company “Right Directions” for carrying them out.

Three appendices follow, the first two are referred to in the main body of the report, and the third describes a behavioural model that has relevance to orienteering beginners.

Appendix 1 – Beginner-friendly self-audit checklist

1. Before a beginner attends an event

- Do you have an easily available beginner section on your website with information on what to expect at an event and how to start orienteering? This may include links to another website (such as British Orienteering) for more information
- Does the beginner section excite and enthuse a beginner with no jargon, and liberal use of photos, map segments, and videos (or links to these)?
- Are all your upcoming (local and regional) events clearly listed on your website with all the information necessary to sign up/enter/find the event?
- Have you considered adding the very accurate What3Words address (what3words.com) of the car parking to other info such as directions, OS grid reference, Streetmap, Google maps, postcode?

2. Interacting with a beginner *at an event, but before the run*

- Is registration at your events always clearly signposted?
- Is the route to the start clearly signposted (remembering that a newcomer may not know the norms of how this is done)?
- Do you have posters on display at your events with some information on the basics of orienteering [eg use of e-card; map colours, legend and scale; kites, and control numbers and descriptions]?
- Are your volunteers trained to welcome and be helpful to beginners?
- Have the whole club been encouraged to interact positively with beginners when the opportunity arises?
- If you have the capacity, have you considered a welcome team or person whose role is to identify and welcome beginners?
- Does someone help each beginner by checking they know what to do and helping them get through the start process?

3. Interacting with a beginner *at an event, but after the run*

- How will your download know who is a beginner? (or some other way to foster discussion of the beginner's experience and get feedback)
- Will someone remind the beginner about future events and supply information on relevant POCs and VOCs? This can include giving out free POC or VOC maps to eliminate a hurdle to trying again
- Have you considered taking a photo of each newcomer and (with their permission) putting it on the club's social media, perhaps with a quote from the newcomer? This could encourage the newcomer to start to interact with the club's social media and other club members

4. Interacting with a beginner *after an event*

- Does someone contact each beginner in the days immediately after the event they came to? Purpose: to get feedback, encourage and motivate future attendance

5. Structural considerations for dealing with beginners

- Do you have white, yellow, orange, and/or red courses at your events?
- Do you have a clear list/map of the regional permanent and/or virtual orienteering courses and how to access them?
- Is there a strategy always to have from time to time a series of activities and events suitable for beginners?

Appendix 2 – Club website survey rating

Aspect	Question	Possible points	Score	Notes
Exists	Is there a newcomer/beginner section?	No-0, Yes-10		
Easy-to-find	Is the section easy to find?	0 to 5, where 5 is very easy		
Appeal of content	Is the section visually appealing?	0 to 5 where 5 is very appealing		
Concept	Navigation across terrain using only map and compass to a series of marked points	0 to 10 where 10 is description is concise, accurate and clear, and 0 is missing		
Target audiences	All ages mentioned?	No-0, Yes-5		
	Walk, jog or run mentioned?	No-0, Yes-5		
Getting started	Equipment and clothing described?	No-0, Yes-5		
	Map legends and colours <i>basics</i> covered?	0 to 5 based on conciseness and key aspects		
Where and when next event?	Quality of guidance to find details of future events and how to enter and get to them	0 to 10		
POCs and VOCs	Are POCs and VOCs mentioned and explained in the newcomer section, including relevance to beginners	0 to 5		
	Where to get POC info clear?	0 to 5		
Images	Photos	No-0, Yes-5		
	Map extracts	No-0, Yes-5		
	Videos or pointers to them	No-0, Yes-5		
Contact	Details of whom to contact if questions (em)	0 to 5		
Other aspects	Is a sense of adventure, challenge, excitement, enjoyment created?	0 to 10		
MAX score		100		

Appendix 3 – COM-B behavioural model

COM-B model

A behaviour model called “COM-B” and the associated “Behaviour Change Wheel” was drawn to the Group's attention and a summary appears at the end of this Appendix. The Group felt it was worth mentioning the model in this report as it gave anyone interested in the issue of retaining newcomers a model that could be used to understand or anticipate beginner reaction to their early orienteering experiences.

We acknowledge the work of the UCL authors of this study.

One example would be where the report says “*The perception of not having the capability to carry out a particular behaviour would negatively impact their motivation to do so. In order to change this, the individual needs to be given the physical and psychological capabilities they think they need*”.

So, if a beginner had a bad first experience - eg taking a very long time to do an orange course for simple reasons (such as the common first-timer mistake of considerably overrunning the distance involved due to the unexpectedly large scale of the map) – it could leave a beginner with a perceived lack of capability, lowering their motivation to return, even although the lack of capability could be easily rectified.

A second example would be a beginner's concern about being able to run on other than paths/tracks (or fear of injury if you did). This would be perceived as a lack of capability, lowering motivation to try anything above yellow or orange [or even potentially try orienteering at all].

There are other examples where the social opportunity was important (eg being there as a beginner on your own, with no “social support”).

COM-B model explanation to go here [will be added by joining two PDFs when all else is complete]

A guide on

The COM-B Model of Behaviour.

Introduction.

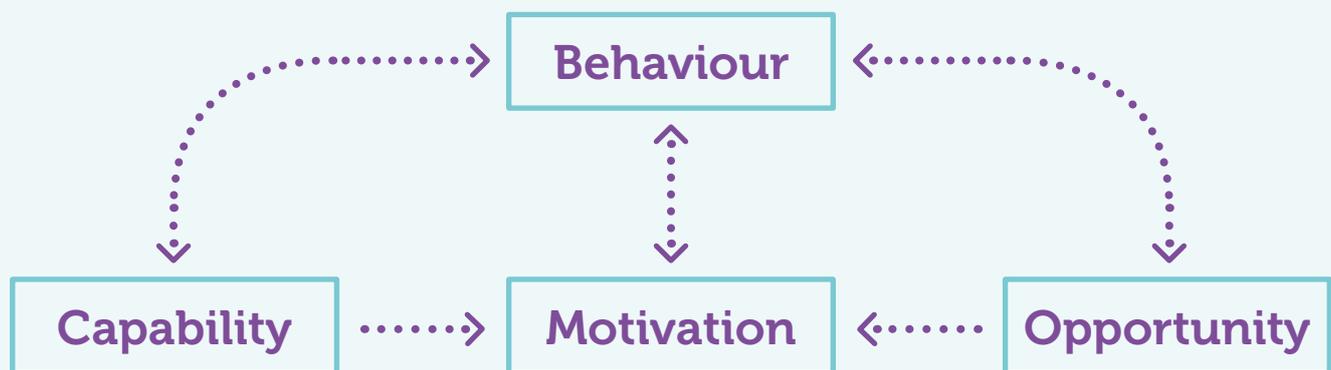
There are a number of models of behaviour, each one designed to help us better understand what drives behaviour and how decisions are made. Having this knowledge is key when trying to facilitate behaviour change. If we do not understand behaviour, how can we know what it takes to change it?

The COM-B model provides insight into three components, which it suggests play a pivotal role in producing, and therefore changing, behaviour. Below we explain what this model is, its three components and how it can change behaviour.

The COM-B Model.

The COM-B model proposes that there are **three components** to any behaviour (B): Capability (C), Opportunity (O) and Motivation (M). **In order to perform a particular behaviour**, one must feel they are both psychologically and physically able to do so (C), have the social and physical opportunity for the behaviour (O), and want or need to carry out the behaviour more than other competing behaviours (M). As each of these components interact, interventions must target **one or more** of these in order to deliver and maintain effective behaviour change.

Fig.1:
The COM-B Model.



As can be seen in **figure 1 (see above)**, capability and opportunity influence motivation, and not only do all three influence behaviour change but are also **influenced by the change which occurs**. For example, the opportunity component may be targeted to encourage someone who is inactive to be active, i.e. providing social and physical opportunity through free, group exercise sessions. If this individual initially thought that they did not have the appropriate skills to take part in an activity (capability) but were still provided with the opportunities to attend a class, then by going to this class they

reinforce the idea that they do have the capabilities required. This suggests that this is an interactional model, and that by changing behaviour we are also impacting on determinants of behaviour, which allows for long-term behaviour change.

Each component of the COM-B model can be broken down into further components, which are as follows:

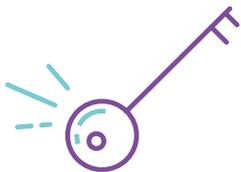
Capability:



Capability refers to whether we have the knowledge, skills and abilities required to engage in a particular behaviour. **Its two components are:**

- Psychological Capability: our knowledge/psychological strength, skills or stamina
- Physical Capability: our physical strength, skill or stamina

Opportunity:



In the context of this model, opportunity refers to the external factors which make the execution of a particular behaviour possible. **Its two components are:**

- Physical Opportunity: opportunities provided by the environment, such as time, location and resource
- Social Opportunity: opportunities as a result of social factors, such as cultural norms and social cues

Motivation:



Motivation refers to the internal processes which influence our decision making and behaviours. **Its two components are:**

- Reflective Motivation: reflective processes, such as making plans and evaluating things that have already happened
- Automatic Motivation: automatic processes, such as our desires, impulses and inhibitions

Putting COM-B into Practice.

According to the model, one or more of its components must be changed in order to facilitate **effective and long-standing behaviour change**. By changing both perceived capabilities and opportunities, we can influence a person's motivation for executing a particular behaviour and therefore encourage behaviour change. If this change is powerful enough, it will impact on their determinants of behaviour and lead them to favour the new behaviour over other competing behaviours, therefore reinforcing long-term behaviour change.

Below we have provided an example of how the COM-B model can be utilised for behaviour change. This example involves encouraging an inactive person to be active.

Capability.

The inactive individual may not think they have what they consider to be the appropriate physical skills (physical capability) or knowledge of exercise techniques (psychological capability) to take part in physical activity. This perception of not having the capability to carry out a particular behaviour would negatively impact their motivation to do so. In order to change this, the individual needs to be given the physical and psychological capabilities they think they need to engage in physical activity – they may already have these capabilities, so it may be a case of helping them to realise this.

When considering psychological capability, workshops or training sessions can help an individual develop their knowledge or skills in a particular area. In this case, a personal trainer or training app could show them what exercises they will benefit from and how to complete these. With regards to physical capability, individuals need to be reminded that there are classes available for all skill levels, and that strength, stamina and skill will improve over time.

Opportunity.

The perceived cost and time constraints on an individual (physical opportunity) alongside the lack of a companion (social opportunity) may be barriers to their participation in physical activity. In order to overcome these barriers, individuals need to be shown what opportunities are already available or, alternatively, opportunities need to be provided which encourage individuals to take part in physical activity.

An individual may already be aware of the opportunities available but feel unable to utilise these. This could be due to monetary issues (physical opportunity) or because it may not be something that any of their friends take part in (social opportunity). Providing free exercise classes which encourage people to attend with a group of friends may override these barriers, making physical activity seem more feasible and opportune for the individual.

Motivation.

With regards to motivation, an individual's lack of capability and opportunity may result in their 'need' to be physically active being overshadowed by their 'want' to relax and remain inactive; being inactive is likely to be a behaviour that they have high capability and opportunity for. However, if the above changes are made to the individual's perceptions of capability and opportunity, then their motivation to carry out the behaviour may be increased.

Based on this assumption, the key to behaviour change would be to establish physical activity as something the individual not only 'needs' but also 'wants' to do. This can be done by encouraging the individual to consider the long-term benefits of physical exercise (reflective motivation) and use these benefits to make physical activity seem the more desirable option as opposed to inactivity (automatic motivation). Framing physical activity as something they both need and want could motivate them to execute the behaviour, and override the competing behaviour of remaining inactive.

Behaviour.

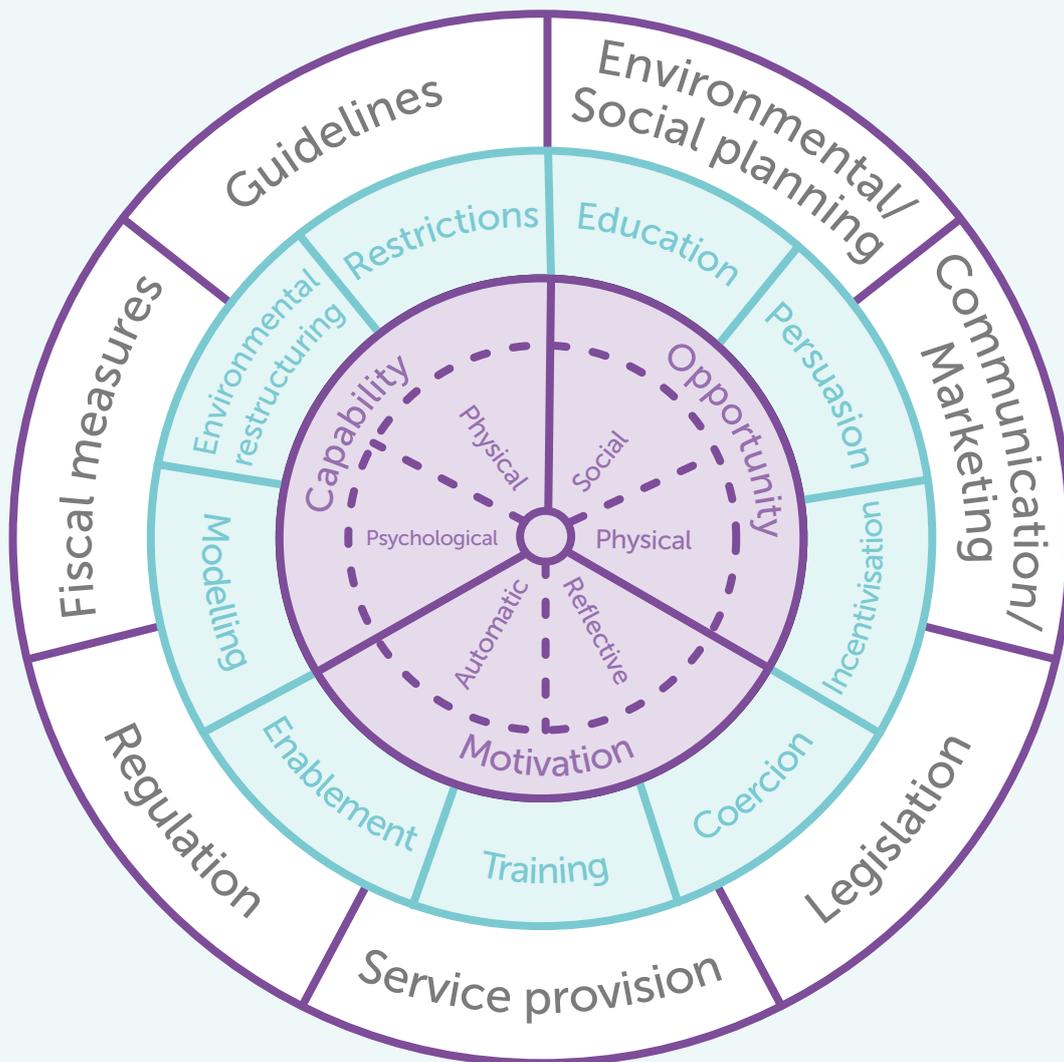
If the above interventions are successful, the individual's behaviour will change and they will be more physically active. By engaging in physical activity, the individual may improve their skills and knowledge of exercise (capability) and begin to see the activity as a normal part of their routine (opportunity). Alongside this, they may experience a range of health and social benefits as a result of being physically active, making it something they see as a positive and therefore desirable activity (motivation).

This shows how successful behaviour change can link into maintaining the new behaviour, as it is not just the behaviour that is changed but also its determinants. These changed determinants may then go on to have an impact on other behaviours, making behaviour change even more widespread.

The Behaviour Change Wheel.

The Behaviour Change Wheel (BCW) model was adapted from the COM-B and is another tool that can be utilized to encourage behaviour change. It uses the initial three components of capability, opportunity and motivation to provide seven **'policy categories'** and nine **'intervention functions'**, which can be used to develop effective behaviour change interventions (see figure 2). The **policy categories facilitate the interventions**, allowing them to be used to encourage change in one of the three main areas of the COM-B model.

Fig.2:
The BCW.



Conclusion.

The COM-B model is an appropriate starting point for any social marketing campaign, as it provides insight into the determinants of behaviour and how changes to these can encourage changes in behaviour. Once this model has been used to understand **what** needs to be altered to facilitate behaviour change, it would be beneficial to use the BCW model to understand **how** this may be possible.

The Behaviour Change Wheel (BCW) and COM-B model was developed from 19 frameworks of behaviour change identified in a systematic literature review by UCL, Centre for Behaviour Change:
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