

Building behavioural insights capacity to improve health outcomes

Work with the Behavioural Insights Team

Dr. Craig Johnson, Senior Advisor in Health and Wellbeing
craig.johnson@bi.team





The Behavioural Insights Team

Who we are

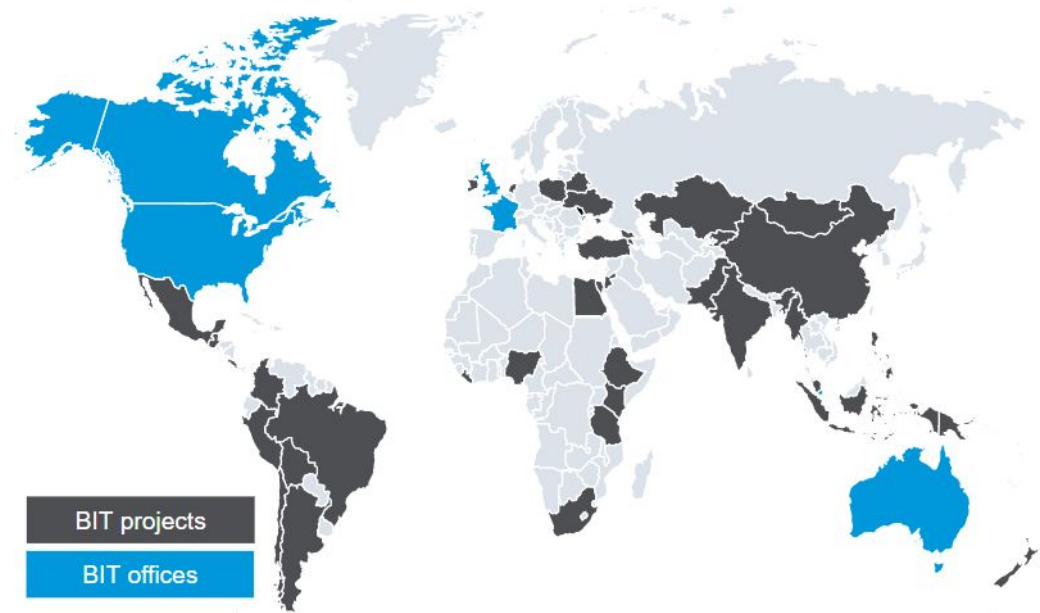
We are the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT)

We exist to improve people's lives and improve communities.

We work in partnership with governments, businesses, foundations and charities, to tackle major social problems - from climate change to inequality.

Founded in 2010, we were the world's first government institution dedicated to the application of behavioural science. Over the last decade we've been at the forefront of this field, and of evidence-based policy more generally.

BIT has grown from a seven-person unit at the heart of the UK government to a global social purpose company partnering with governments, local authorities, businesses, and charities. We have a track record of success across many policy areas, including healthcare and public health.



What do we do?

We are recognised globally as the **leading institution** integrating behavioural science to improve social and environmental outcomes.

We work at a local, national and international level to understand what works (and what does not work) in policies and programmes. We try to improve understanding of why citizens behave the way they do, and how organisations can make it easier for social and environmental outcomes to be achieved.

For a local authority or organisation, that could mean better understanding what works to improve physical activity, or housing access, or various other challenges. Whatever the challenge, underpinning our approach is a dedication to robust behavioural science and rigorous research skills, blended with a pragmatic attitude to achieving real world impacts.

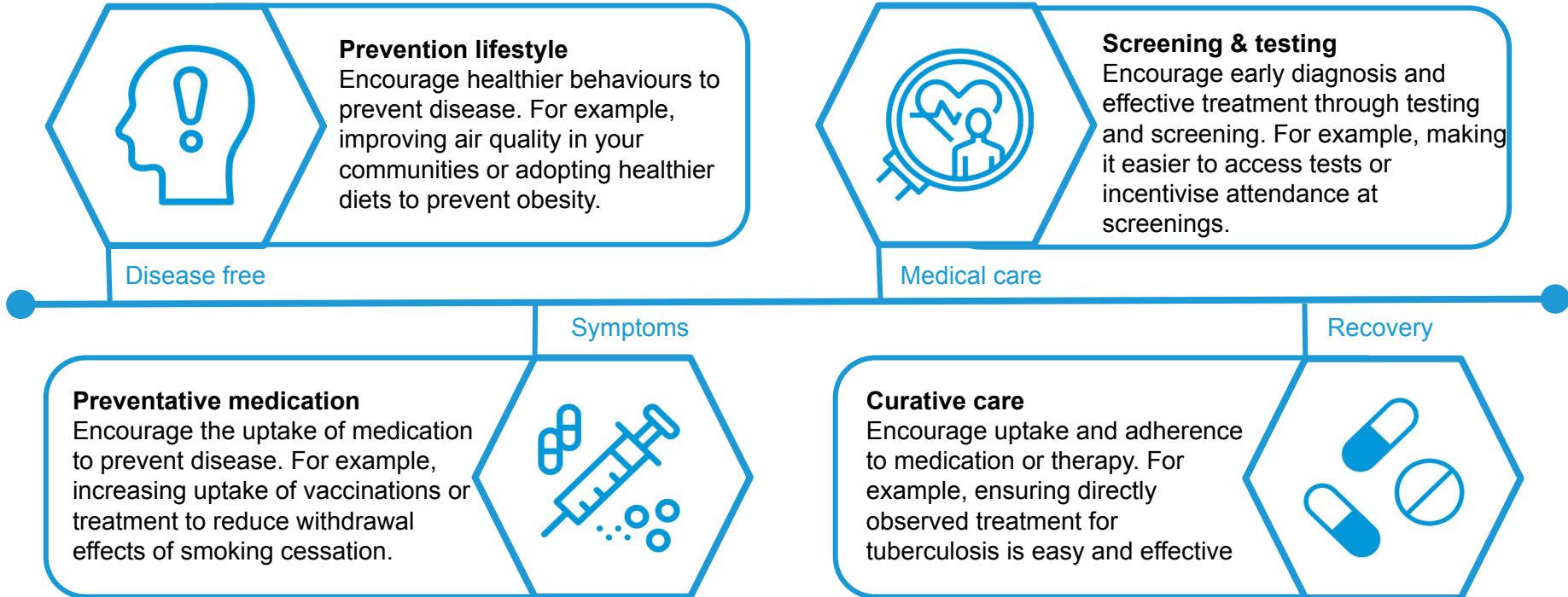
We have run over 900 trials, generating **high-quality evidence** on the effectiveness of our interventions. An independent academic analysis in the US found that BIT's low-cost interventions improved outcomes by an average of 10% compared to business as usual (DellaVigna & Linos, 2020).





How can behavioural science improve health outcomes?

Our behaviour can be highly influential on our health, both in terms of **preventing ill health to start with** and **ensuring we access and use treatment options available** to us. We consider behaviour particularly important in **four key stages** of disease progression:



The challenge: delivering on local health and wellbeing targets

Local authorities have lots of challenges for policy design and implementation

Direct responsibilities

- Social care
- Sexual health
- Substance misuse
- Housing and homelessness

Overarching commitments

- To improve the health outcomes of individuals and communities
- Air quality
- Wellbeing and sustainability

Challenges of funding and time, and work is often fragmented

- Many good behavioural insights projects may have been delivered, but typically in isolation and modest in scale

Limited behavioural insights and research expertise

- In-house expertise to develop solutions, or run evaluations to learn what works, is limited, while much of the high-quality research that does exist (e.g. from universities) is not directly translatable to LA delivery





The solution: capacity building within local authorities

A capacity building project that embeds behavioural insight in your team

- We support you to build a behavioural insights function and capacity in your organisation
- Greater ability and capacity to test what works, to improve outcomes, save money and do things better
- Upskilling your policy teams, co-producing interventions and testing ideas
- Demonstrate the value of behavioural insights to senior leadership so that there is (sustainable) demand for it in your organisation
- Formal capacity building through workshops and training; informal capacity building through projects, trials and presentations



We offer a wide range of research, behavioural science and capacity-building services (1)

Interventions to improve policy design and implementation

Using behavioural science to develop innovative and impactful interventions is central to most of our work - and this is deeply relevant to local authority policy, campaigns, and services.



For example: we helped to reduce sugar consumption in Liverpool by changing the signage in hospital stores. The signs reduced high-sugar drink purchases by 7.3% while maintaining overall sales

Behavioural science to tackle new challenges

We love delving deep into the application of behavioural science to new challenges, and remain at the cutting edge - whether that's improving attendance to screening, social care financing, or increasing physical activity.



For example: we developed and tested interventions in Greater Manchester to increase bowel cancer screening rates by 8%-10% using small changes to messaging.

Field experiments and impact evaluations

Empiricism is central to what we do, and we are recognised experts in running impact evaluations. We love a methodological challenge, and the real world is full of them. We have become recognised experts in bringing rigour to hard-to-measure problems.



For example: we improved air quality in Merton by working with the London Borough of Merton and the LGA to encourage drivers to switch off their engines at a level crossing. We estimate now that 2,000 fewer drivers will idle each month.

We offer a wide range of research, behavioural science and capacity-building services (2)

Training & capacity building

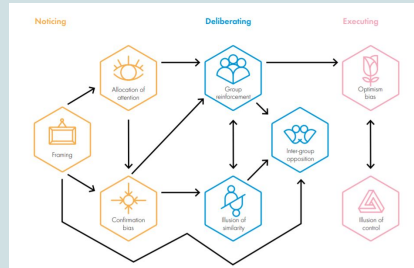
From 1-hour webinars to multi-year capacity- and institution-building support, we can help your organisation embed behavioural science and research skills to achieve your environmental and social objectives



For example: we work with local authorities, combined authorities, devolved administrations and states to provide coaching, individual talks and multi-session workshops, all aiming to embed behavioural insights and good practice.

Consumer & citizen primary & secondary research

Designing effective interventions requires a deep understanding of the context, consumer needs, and barriers to change. We undertake surveys, interviews, focus groups, data analysis, evidence reviews and more to understand our audiences.



For example: We have run hundreds of focus groups, interviews, surveys, and evidence reviews covering a wide range of issues to support health outcomes across the UK.

Online experiments and A/B tests

Running tests online can be far quicker, cheaper and in some case more precise than in the field. It's an ideal approach for testing and comparing communications or campaign materials (A/B tests), but also more sophisticated techniques such as willingness-to-pay studies or simulated purchase environments or even auctions.



For example: we developed a simulated food delivery platform, and found three interventions which reduced the calorie content of participants' baskets.

We want to focus on behaviours which have impact, and where local authorities have strong levers to make a difference

Levers of influence:

Local authorities have direct influence through their service delivery and policy remit, on key issues in health, social care and housing

Channels of influence:

Even where local authorities have limited policy-making powers, they can still either directly (e.g. through comms), or in collaboration (working with GPs, housing providers and transport) influence a wider range of resident and business behaviours.

High impact:

Issues which have a meaningful impact on health outcomes, but also issues which attract a lot of public concern (e.g. air quality)



EXAMPLES

Health behaviours:

- Physical activity
- Diet
- Attendance and screening in health settings
- Air quality
- Mental health

Social care behaviours

- Supporting unpaid carers
- Revenue collection
- Employee wellbeing
- Co-working and integration with health

Housing behaviours

- Supporting homeless citizens
- Revenue collection and payments
- Repairs and maintenance

Governance behaviours

- Revenue collection
- Procurement choices

Next steps

Next steps: cost

The cost of any project will depend on the individual circumstances, as they could range from a short lecture session to a multi-year research project. Below gives some ballpark examples of costings for different strands of work. Please contact us for more information.

- An **introductory talk to behavioural insights** with a targeted discussion of implementation in your organisation: from **£2,000**
- A **capacity building project**, including behavioural insights workshops, reports of findings, knowledge sharing and mentoring: from **£30,000**
- A research project analysing the **barriers and enablers** to a particular behavioural problem: from **£40,000**
- A **rapid online randomised controlled trial**, which recruits a sample of people to test interventions to a policy challenge: from **£50,000**
- A **deep-dive into a policy problem**, exploring the barriers and enablers, conducting primary research, developing interventions which are then trialled and tested: from **£80,000**

Next steps: how to contract BIT

Low Value Purchase System DPS (LVPS) is available to any UK public body or charity. Suppliers can be appointed through direct award or mini-competition for contracts up to a maximum value of £122,976 ex VAT. There are a range of categories, including one dedicated to research. This DPS expires in 2025. Further guidance can be found [here](#).

The Research and Insights DPS RM6126 is the current version of the Research Marketplace DPS (RM6018). As a DPS, procurement will differ from the former BI framework as suppliers can join at any time; currently there are [250+](#). Customers can select the areas of work that they wish to commission to produce a shortlist of suppliers which then take part in a mini-competition. More information can be found [here](#). This DPS expires in 2025.

Professional Services procurement platforms such as [Constellia](#) and [Bloom](#) are alternative procurement routes. These options allow for direct awards (as well as mini competitions), and procurement can be expedited. They are used by over 200 UK public bodies including many councils, police forces, DCMS and HMRC. Buyers have to be signed up to either Constellia or Bloom to procure services through their platforms.



THE
**BEHAVIOURAL
INSIGHTS
TEAM**

Get in touch:

Dr Craig Johnson

craig.johnson@bi.team