
#BinTheButt Campaign in Manchester

Evaluation Report

November 2018



INTRODUCTION

Background

This year, with funding from the People's Postcode Lottery, Keep Britain Tidy has been able to invest in developing a new national campaign to focus on the important issue of cigarette litter. In addition to being a priority litter issue for local authorities, there are wider impacts which make this a key issue which we have chosen to focus on. These include the fact that cigarette butts can easily wash into storm drains and can eventually end up in our seas, becoming marine litter and causing wider environmental damage. The extent of this damage is only now beginning to be understood, for example, with new studies demonstrating that micro-plastics used in cigarette filters leach into the water, injuring or killing marine life.

Informed by the results of a nationally representative survey with smokers and the general public, our national #BinTheButt campaign was launched on the 29 August, in partnership with Manchester City Council. The launch event saw 40 large cigarette butts installed in St Peter's Square as a striking visual reminder of the waste produced by smoking. Campaigners from Keep Britain Tidy and Manchester City Council engaged with smokers encouraging them to bin their butts whilst offering portable ashtrays.

To identify the local impacts of the campaign, we conducted attitude and awareness surveys, before and after the campaign was launched. This report outlines the key findings.

Campaign artwork

The campaign consisted of two different creatives. The Flicking Blue Murder creative was displayed on an Ad-van at the launch event on 29th August, on Clear Channel digital advertising display boards at key sites across the city and was used by Keep Britain Tidy in press releases and on social media. The Street to Sea creative was used by Manchester City Council on other digital advertising space and on their social media channels. The creatives are shown below.



Aim and objectives

The aim of the campaign was to reduce cigarette litter by raising awareness among smokers that whether they put their butts down drains or throw them in the gutter they are, in fact, polluting our oceans. This evaluation will identify and explore the impact on smokers' disposal behaviours and their awareness of the campaign and its key messages.

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation of the local impacts of the campaign is informed by:

- 205 x 10 minute on-street public perceptions surveys with smokers at target locations (100 pre and 105 post campaign surveys), over different times of day and days of the week.

Seven locations for targeting the perceptions surveys were identified:

- Albert Square
- Outside Victoria train station
- Outside the Printworks
- Exchange Square
- Piccadilly Gardens
- St Ann's Square
- St Peter's Square

The research framework was developed by Keep Britain Tidy and carried out by a market research agency in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

RESULTS

Acceptability of littering cigarette butts

The level of unacceptability for cigarette littering behaviours increased post campaign:

- Around three quarters (77%) initially thought that it was unacceptable for smokers to dispose of a cigarette on the street, rising to 93% post campaign;
- 77% felt that flicking a cigarette butt into the gutter was unacceptable, which increased to 87% post campaign;
- 70% thought putting a cigarette butt down the drain was unacceptable, rising to 84% post campaign.

The proportion of smokers that considered dropping a cigarette on the street as a littering behaviour increased from 84% pre campaign to 95% post campaign.

Awareness of the consequences

Awareness that cigarettes that dropped in the street can get blown or washed into drains increased from 28% pre campaign to 37% post campaign. Awareness that cigarette butts which get into the sea can release chemicals harming or killing marine life

also increased; 43% agreed with the statement pre campaign, increasing to 57% post campaign.

Littering behaviour

Smokers were asked about the last time they had performed three different cigarette littering behaviours. The proportion of smokers admitting to the behaviours within the last month decreased after the campaign:

- In the pre-campaign survey, 58% of smokers admitted to disposing of cigarette butts in the streets within the last month. This decreased to 45% in the post campaign survey.
- 43% admitted to dropping a cigarette down the the drain within the last month, which decreased to 36%.
- 38% admitted to flicking a cigarette into the gutter within the last month, which dropped to 33%.

Impacts of the campaign

Smokers were shown the campaign and without being prompted were asked what they thought the campaign was trying to tell people. Smokers understood the key messages of the campaign with around a third each citing that cigarette butts dropped in the street can end in the sea (34%) and cigarette butts contain micro-plastics and/or chemicals (32%). Around a quarter each cited cigarette butts contain micro-plastics and/or chemicals that poison marine life (27%), cigarette butts that end in the sea can poison marine life (27%) and bin your cigarette butts (23%), as being the key campaign messages.

The campaign received some great feedback. Almost nine in 10 smokers each felt that the campaign was aimed at people like them (88%), that the campaign has made them more aware of the negative impacts of dropping cigarette butts in the street (87%) and that it would make them think twice about what they do with their cigarette butts when they have finished smoking (85%).

Eight in 10 felt it made them more concerned about the effects of dropping or leaving cigarette butts on the ground, now they knew that they may end up in the sea, releasing toxins that may kill or harm marine life (80%).

Around two-thirds each felt the campaign made them think the council was doing something to tackle the problem of cigarette litter (66%) and that it made them think something is being done to improve the cleanliness of the area (63%).

83% of those who didn't already bin their butt said the campaign was likely to encourage them to use a bin.

CONCLUSION

The campaign was well received and was successful in raising awareness among smokers that cigarettes dropped on the street and/or directly down drains can end up in our seas where they can poison marine life. The campaign increased the level of unacceptability for cigarette littering behaviours and for 8 in 10 of those smokers who didn't already do the right thing, the campaign was likely to encourage them to bin their butt. Since the launch, the #BinTheButt campaign has been made available as a packaged campaign solution for local authorities and other land managers to help them stamp out cigarette litter.