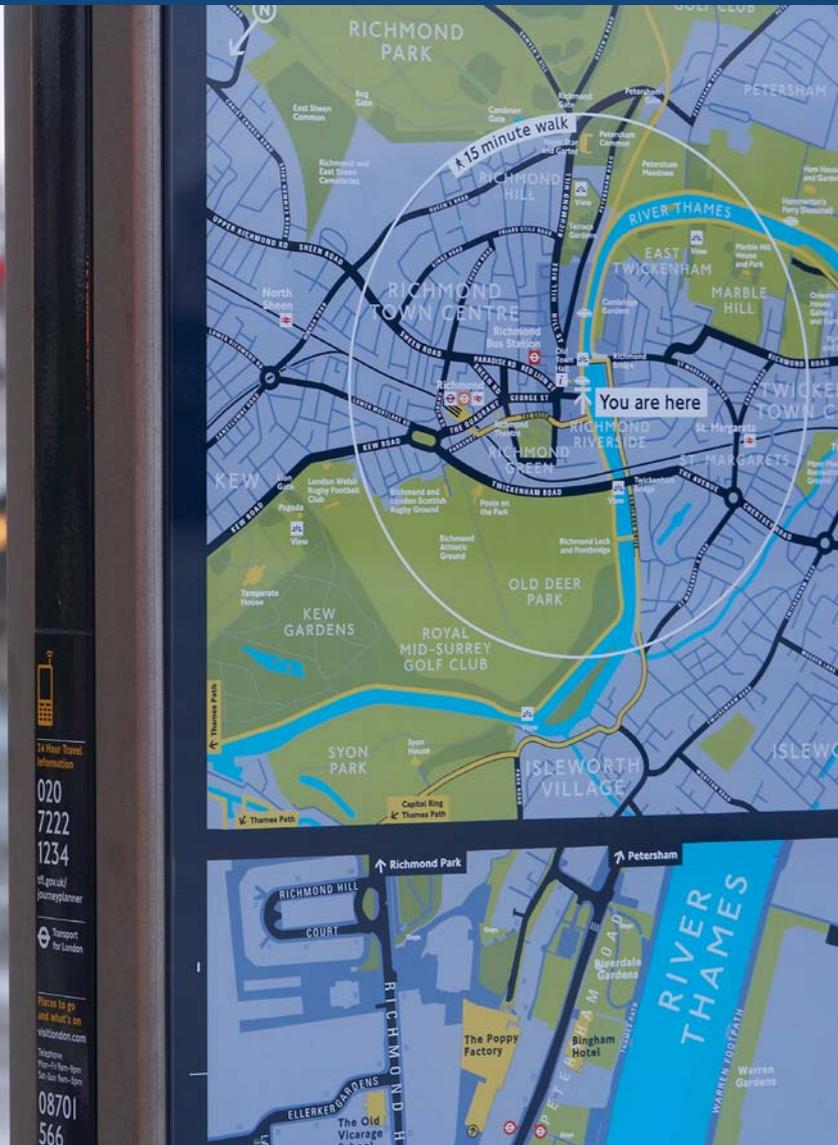


LEGIBLE LONDON

Evaluation 2013/14

Report
March 2014



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Legible London was trialled in November 2007 in the Bond Street area. Three pilots were then installed in 2009 in the South Bank & Bankside, Clear Zone, and Richmond & Twickenham.

Evaluation research undertaken before and after the pilot showed a high level of approval for the system. Legible London has since been rolled out more widely across the capital, including East London, in time for the Olympic Games.

In Autumn 2013 this study was commissioned to:

- | Measure sign usage;
- | Understand the impact of Legible London on wayfinding, through accompanied journeys; and
- | Understand the helpfulness of Legible London to users, through on street interviews.

The overall purpose of this research was to explore the extent to which Legible London is being used and helping people to find their way in Central London, Inner London and Outer London.

The results of this research provide an evidence base to further develop the coverage of Legible London across the capital.

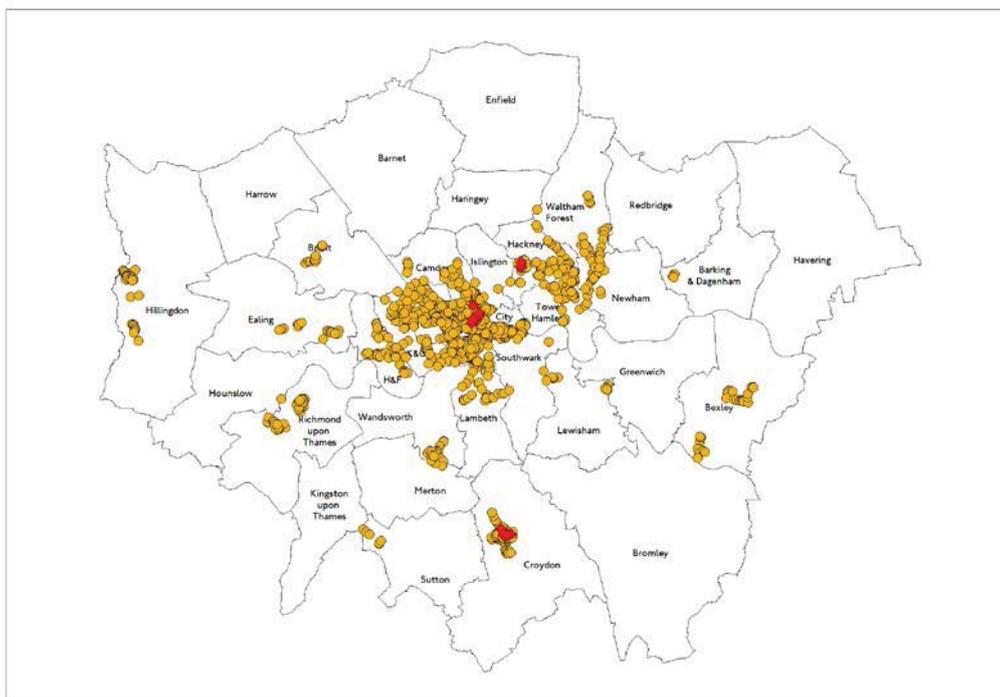


Usage of Legible London

Counts of individuals passing Legible London locations and using Legible London signs were undertaken at eight locations in Central London (Covent Garden and Russell Square), four locations in Inner London (Dalston) and six locations in Outer London (Croydon) in Autumn 2013.

Figure 1 shows the location of all Legible London signs (yellow) at the time of this study, and the signs focussed on in this study (red).

FIGURE 1 LEGIBLE LONDON LOCATIONS



The Legible London signs were used by significant numbers of pedestrians, with usage ranging from 1 an hour to over 300 an hour.

Signs in Central London recorded the highest levels of usage; the sign outside Leicester Square Underground station averaged over 300 users per hour at the weekend.

The Central London weekend survey showed that one in twenty people passing signs stopped to use them - 50% higher than on a weekday. The difference is not explained by the profile of visitors, which are similar on weekdays and weekends. Weekend visitors are, however, more likely to have more time to explore the area, and therefore require more help with wayfinding.

Signs in Inner and Outer London locations are used by a smaller proportion of pedestrians that pass by (Figure 2). This is to be expected with three quarters of those passing signs in Inner and Outer London frequent visitors (visiting the area once a week or more) who are less likely to require assistance with wayfinding. In these locations usage levels on a weekday is similar to a weekend day. By

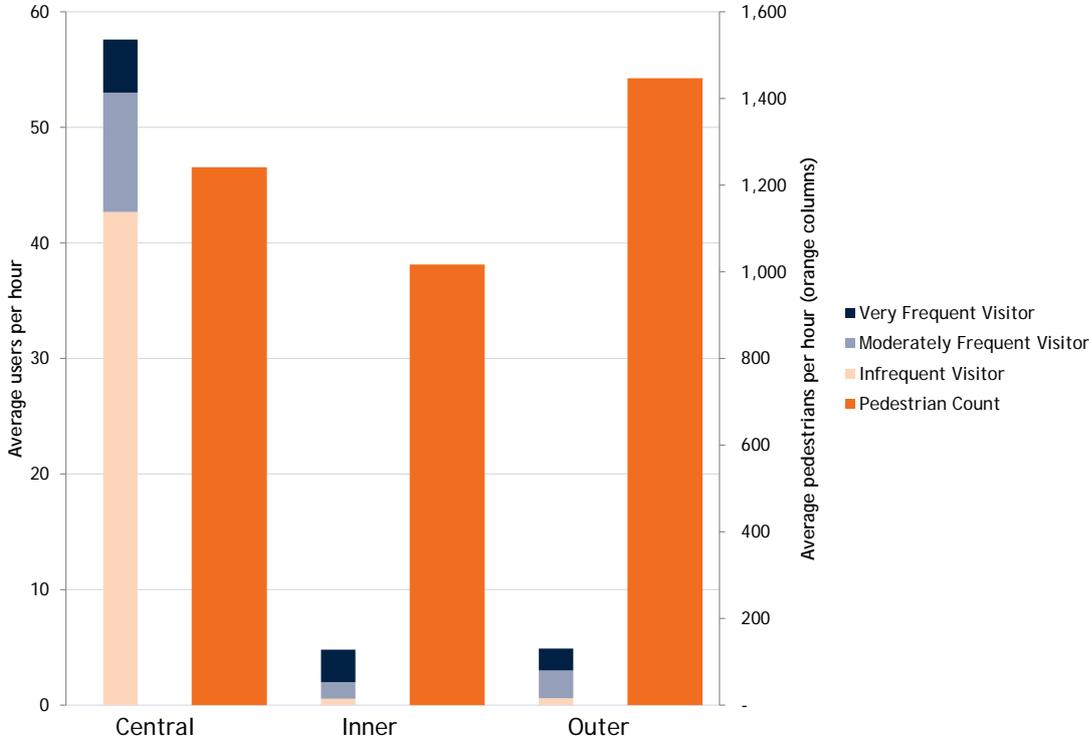
contrast, less than one quarter of passing pedestrians in Central London are frequent visitors.

The key drivers of usage, aside from the footfall, are the familiarity of pedestrians with the area (with a high proportion of tourists in the survey), and the complexity of the pedestrian routes in the area.

A third of users in Central London glance at the signs (usage of less than 10 seconds). The remaining two thirds of users spend up to a minute using the signs. This demonstrates that users are generally able to quickly and easily find the information they required.

Outside of Central London users are more likely to glance at signs (4 out of 10 users look for less than ten seconds). This is likely to be due the complexity and density of Central London compared to other locations.

FIGURE 2 AVERAGE HOURLY PEDESTRIAN COUNT AND USAGE PER SITE



Accompanied Journeys

Twelve accompanied journeys were carried out with individuals across Central, Inner and Outer London locations where Legible London is in place. The research was designed to seek information or opinions about awareness of the scheme, usage of the scheme, the design and mapping, impact on walking and usage of other information sources after an accompanied walk to a predefined destination.

The majority of people use Legible London in combination with other visual cues such as street signs and other sources of wayfinding such as paper maps and smartphone mapping. Legible London is found to be particularly useful for providing initial orientation and instilling more confidence at the start of a journey - such as when emerging from a station.

Those who are aware of Legible London are more likely to use the system as their sole source, or main source of information. This shows a high level of trust that users place in Legible London scheme.

In Outer London some people were surprised to see Legible London signs or noted that it was not possible to rely on the scheme being available in every neighbourhood. This suggests that a more extensive coverage outside of Central London would provide a consistency which users could rely on.

Legible London has the potential to improve the experience of walking in London, above and beyond wayfinding and encouraging walking through improving confidence and providing a clearer picture of the geography of London.

The following quotes are comments from Accompanied Journey participants, and provide an insight into usage and opinion about the scheme.

Encouraging walking

"It's good for visitors who might be inclined to jump on the Tube to get from A to B because they don't realise how close two places are."

"Doing this walk made me realise that the distance between Holborn and Leicester Square isn't that great - it's shrunk the city for me. I often don't realise how close things actually are..."





"[The Legible London signs] make walking easier and less stressful - like when you are exiting a Tube station or feel you need further guidance on the way."

"[The scheme] stops you from taking the Tube for short distances because you can see how to get from A to B. But that only really applies for short distances - up to ten minutes' walk."

"You can see how long it will take to walk - often it is shorter than you think."

"When you take the Tube it abstracts the city. Walking - with the help of the signs - helps link it up. Seeing

everything all on one map - the Tube stops, tram lines and landmarks - really helps link up the whole city, rather than just seeing it as a broken up collection of Tube stops."



A comfort factor

"I'm a lot happier knowing that they [Legible London signs] are there - in case my phone died or something."

"I would assume that I would have to rely on my smartphone [without knowing that Legible London signs were around], or ask for directions - I would feel reticent about having to do that."

"Sometimes the Legible London maps give you more detail than Google Maps and sometimes Google tells you if you're in the wrong place if you have a poor signal."

"They helped me in Croydon when I first moved there and didn't know my way around."

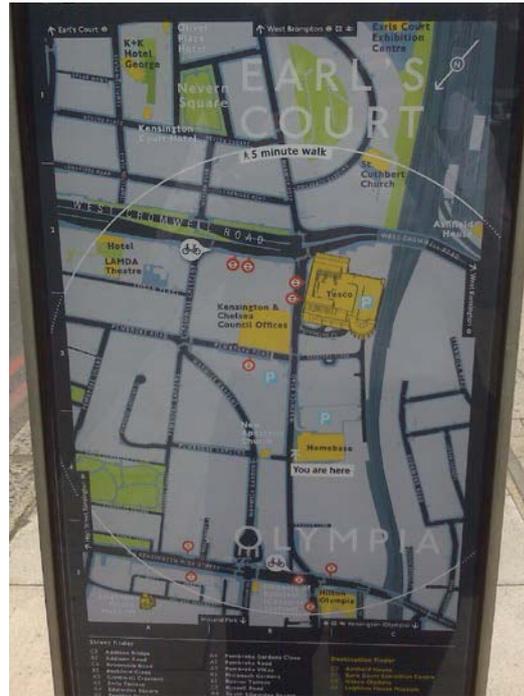
Map detail

"I really like the 5 minute and 15 minute radii...the maps give me a sense of scale."

"After looking at two maps I saw the perspective had changed. It's helpful but I think it could throw you, especially if you are used to reading traditional maps that are north oriented."

"I see the Odeon is on there - perhaps they paid for that!"

"I find it easy to use."



Geographical inconsistency

"I wouldn't know where to expect to see [a Legible London sign] as they are spaced incomprehensibly to me. I am not looking out for them."

"I have been surprised to see [the Legible London signs] further out of London...in the suburbs."

"[The Legible London signs] are not in every neighbourhood so you can't rely on them to always be there."

Interviews

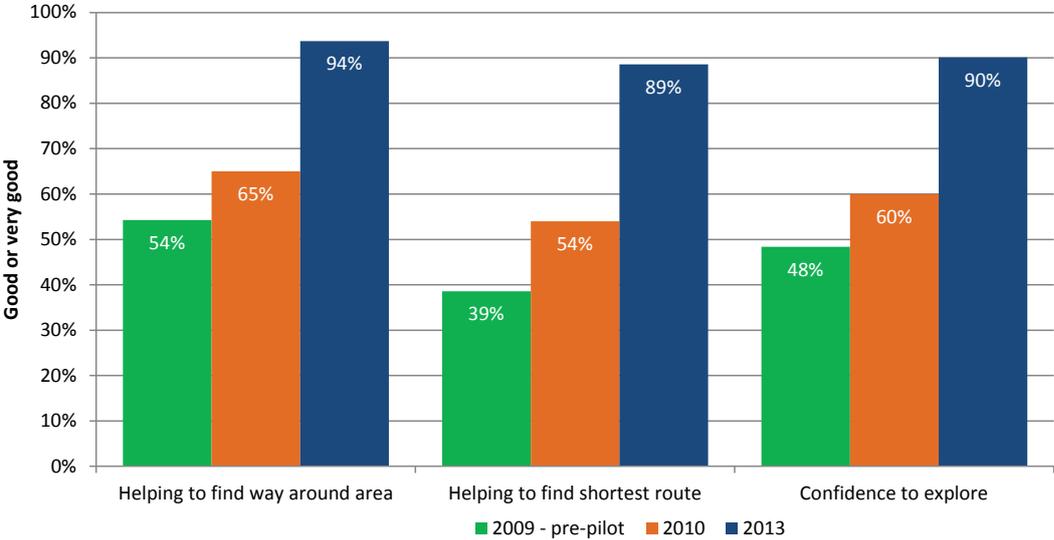
Over 600 face to face interviews were carried out with individuals in Central, Inner and Outer London locations where Legible London is in place. The research, carried out in Autumn 2013 was designed to understand awareness of and attitudes towards the scheme, its effect on behaviour change, modal shift and wayfinding.

The proportion of people aware of Legible London in Central London has increased from 52% in 2010 to 82% in 2013. This demonstrates a high level of awareness of the scheme. With more than half of respondents in Central London from outside the UK and a third of respondents tourists the scheme has a high level of recognition amongst visitors.

The ratings for local signage have improved dramatically since the introduction and expansion of Legible London in Central London, as can be seen in Figure 3. This demonstrates the value of the scheme against the three key indicators of signage quality: improving confidence to explore, helping to find the shortest route and helping wayfinding around the area.



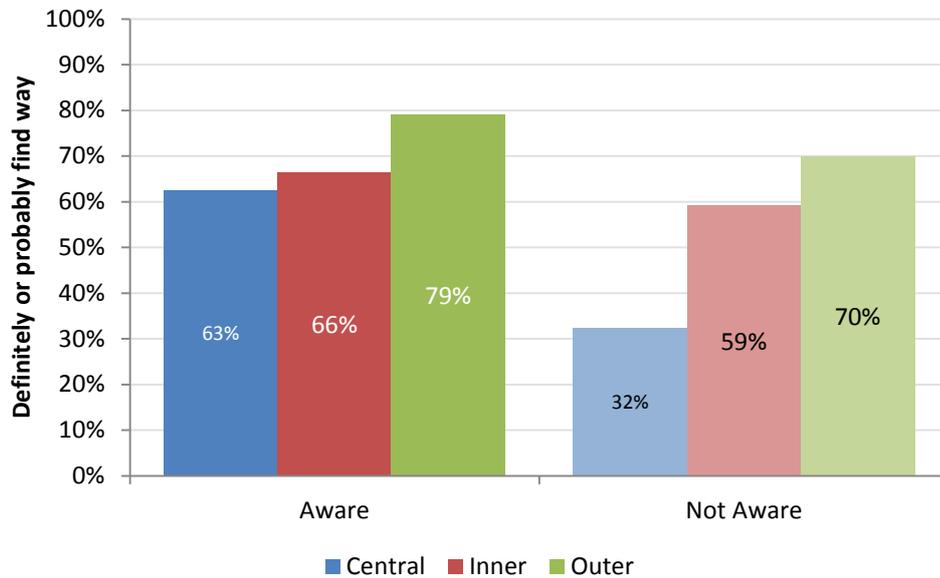
FIGURE 3 RATINGS OF LOCAL SIGNAGE IN CENTRAL LONDON OVER TIME



In Central London, those who are aware of Legible London walk more within the scheme area. Nearly 8 out of 10 respondents who are aware of Legible London walk within the area, compared to 7 out of 10 respondents who are not aware of the scheme.

Wayfinding confidence is higher for people who were aware of Legible London than people who are not aware of the scheme. This is the case in all three areas and demonstrates the benefit of Legible London in improving wayfinding uncertainty. Figure 4 clearly demonstrates the benefit of the scheme for wayfinding to a specific landmark.

FIGURE 4 WAYFINDING TO A SPECIFIC LANDMARK



Summary

Legible London is a very successful and popular scheme, based on the results of the survey:

- | Usage of Legible London is high in Central London and among those who are new to an area.
- | The three key indicators of signage quality - helping wayfinding around the area, helping to find the shortest route and giving confidence to explore - against which Legible London is measured have increased consistently over the course of the scheme’s roll out.
- | There is a lot of positive feedback about the signs showing that people like them and use them.
- | There are still some areas for improvement, especially in raising awareness of the extent of the scheme to the public.
- | Across Central London, Inner London and Outer London nine out of ten respondents were keen to see more Legible London signs introduced.