Research at the University of Brighton is using short films to enable policymakers to engage with research findings on the everyday experiences of mobility and transport.

Dr Lesley Murray joined the University of Brighton after working for Transport for London. Her research has focused on the sensory and embodied dimensions of mobilities, as these are often neglected in transport planning. “My research findings challenge policymakers to think beyond behavioural change,” Dr Murray said. Short films based on her research ask policymakers to question current assumptions on people’s mobility and their ability to adopt low carbon travel.

One film, Through Our Eyes, which focuses on children’s mobilities, attracted attention from local authority travel planners, bus companies and Transport for London. Using their own footage, it presents children’s accounts of their journey to school. Eleanor Togut, a project co-ordinator for Living Streets in West Sussex, argued: “The film that Dr Murray created as part of this research was particularly influential and I devised projects to challenge some of the views of risk-averse mothers with some very positive outcomes.” Following a presentation of her film work at the Global Challenges in Transport Leadership Programme at the University of Oxford, Dr Jennie Middleton, the Course Director, said that Dr Murray had “engaged a range of transport policymakers, practitioners and academics to her fascinating and empirically rich research on children’s independent mobility.”

Dr Murray is now turning her attention to researching how the interactions between generations impact on travel in cities, as well as taking part in a worldwide network of academics and community collaborators funded with £1.6m from the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to study ageing in relation to mobile technologies.

Photograph: Shoes hanging from the wires signify that mobilities are not just about travelling between places but involve the interconnected movements of people, objects and communications.