

Active travel in the workplace

Planning for an active workforce

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What's right for your organisation?



The first thing you will need to do is to find out about walking and cycling routes in your local area.

This section provides a range of ideas for promoting active travel (walking and cycling) within your organisation. These are divided into the following sections:

- Getting started
- Providing information
- Active travel friendly policies
- Equipment

Getting started

Promote existing walking and cycling routes

The first thing you will need to do is to find out about local walking and cycling routes in your area. Are there designated walking and cycle paths from your premises to any of the main areas where your staff live? These will be the important routes to promote, and will help you establish a target group for your initiatives.

A travel survey will help you identify where most staff are travelling from (see *A step-by-step guide*), and you can identify routes by looking on the Sustrans website. If there are good existing routes, free from sections of very busy, high speed road, your initiatives will be at a great advantage. You can promote these on your intranet, or by producing route map booklets and posters. Ideally seek to incorporate existing cycle parking and shower facilities.

If you feel there are currently no safe routes to your workplace, you might consider:

- contacting your local authority and Sustrans, to check if any local route development projects are planned, including traffic calming or other traffic management strategies to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists
- starting a partnership with other local organisations to promote the improvement of walking and cycling conditions and infrastructure in your area.

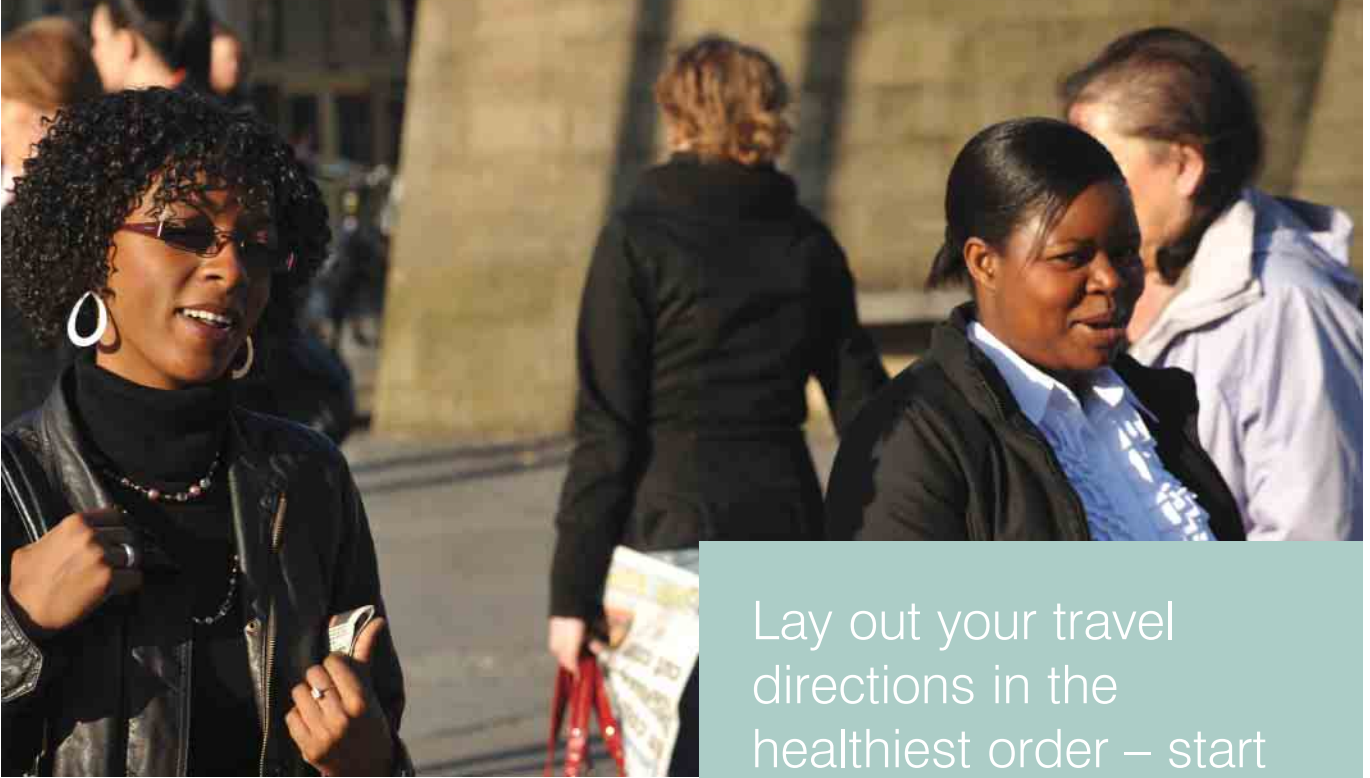
Set up a buddying scheme

Another advantage of active travel is that it can also be a sociable activity. A buddying scheme allows people who live nearby to identify each other and either walk or cycle to work together. This is especially useful where there is a traffic-free route that may feel less secure on dark evenings during the winter months.

Start a lunchtime walking or cycling group

Not all staff will live close enough to work to commute actively. Even those who do may be more likely to take this step if they have the chance to start enjoying walking or cycling during their lunch break. Producing simple area maps of pleasant walk and cycle routes around your workplace can help promote these lunchtime activities.





Lay out your travel directions in the healthiest order – start with walking and cycling, then public transport and finally car travel.

Providing information

Produce active travel directions for staff and visitors

Producing active travel directions to your premises for your website, literature or in staff induction packs will encourage both new staff and visitors to travel more actively.

Lay out your travel directions in the healthiest order – start with walking and cycling, then public transport (there is usually a walk at each end of the journey) and finally car travel including car sharing/pooling opportunities. The following is a useful checklist for producing travel guidance:

General

- statement encouraging active travel
- brief description of location of your premises
- address, including postcode, telephone and email.

Travelling within the area

- description of the location, eg. 'in the city centre' or 'in a country setting 3 miles from town'
- street map and/or description of walking route from train or bus station, parking or town centre if within 2 miles, or further if it's a nice walk
- distance from nearest bus stops; bus route numbers and frequency
- distance from National Cycle Network, other cycle route or railway station if within 5 miles; cycle route map if available
- cycle parking and showering and changing facilities information
- taxi phone numbers.

Getting to the area

- information on train and bus connections to the area, as appropriate
- National Rail Enquiries details
- directions for park and ride where facilities are available
- directions for park and stride where possible (is there a place people could park that would allow them a 10 to 30 minute walk to your premises?)
- directions and map if required for car travel to premises and car parking information
- air travel information if required, with public transport directions to premises.

Useful information for travel guidance:

Sustrans (www.sustrans.org.uk) provides online maps and information on cycle routes and cycle parking. Our publication *How to produce active travel directions for your visitors and staff* is also available online - just enter the first part of the title into the 'Search' box on the Sustrans page

Traveline (www.traveline.org.uk) offers UK-wide information on all buses and trains, with personalised door-to-door journey planning.

National Rail Enquiries (www.nationalrail.co.uk) provides information on train times and fares.

The Department for Transport resource *The essential guide to travel planning* is available at www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/work

A flexible approach to the time allowed for staff to travel within work time will make it easier for staff to walk and cycle.



Active travel friendly policies

Introduce the Cycle to Work Scheme

The Government supported Cyclescheme offers discounts for staff on cycle purchase, through a salary sacrifice system. Savings of up to 40% on the retail cost of a bike are typical and there are a range of organisations set up to implement the scheme. See www.cyclescheme.co.uk for more information.

Offer competitive cycle mileage

The high car mileage rates offered by many employers can act as a disincentive to active travel modes. One way to counter this is to introduce cycle mileage – this acknowledges the cost of maintaining a bicycle, and also offers a financial incentive to cycle. The maximum tax-free amount currently available for cycle mileage is 20p per mile. There is no theoretical maximum limit to the allowance however, which means you could offer the same allowance for cycling as for car mileage.

If you already have a progressive policy on cycle mileage, why not think about introducing 'a shoe leather allowance'? Offering an allowance for pedestrian mileage would compensate employees for additional wear and tear on their shoes, and would also present a very strong endorsement from your organisation of the promotion of active travel. The current stance on this from HM Revenue and Customs is that a walking allowance would not be subject to the same tax-free benefits as bicycle, car or motorbike allowances. Why not help to influence Government policy by being one of the first organisations to introduce this?

Allow flexible working times

Flexible working hours, for instance allowing staff to combine cycling with catching the train if they live further away, will help to encourage active travel. Adapting your dress code to encourage staff to be more active without necessarily having to change their clothes, will also help.

A flexible approach to the time allowed for staff to travel within work time will make it easier for staff to walk and cycle. Remember that the benefits gained (being alert upon arrival, in addition to the other health benefits) will outweigh any extra time taken.

Provide incentives

There is really no limit to the imagination when it comes to encouraging people to travel more actively, and you can tailor incentives to your organisation. Many organisations have had success with walk and bike breakfasts and events tied to Walk to Work Week and Bike Week. Another incentive-based option is to review the costs of your parking, and offer a financial incentive to those who do not use it. Also consider working towards pricing car parking higher than average public transport fares to encourage more walking, cycling and public transport use. For the latter, larger companies can aim to negotiate staff discounts with local public transport providers, emphasising the volume of employees providing daily custom to the company.

Equipment

Install cycle storage

Providing conveniently located and secure cycle storage is an important starting point for any active travel scheme. Employees will be more inclined to bring their own bike to work if there is somewhere easily accessible, secure and dry for them to store it.

Storage of bicycles in a visible location – such as close to a main entrance where natural surveillance is high – affords security and acts as a form of promotion for others to start cycling. Remember that up to six bicycles can be stored in the space it takes to park one car!

The traditional Sheffield Stand (see photo) is suitable for most locations and a covered shelter is a worthwhile addition where storage is outdoors. Storage should allow cyclists to lock the frame of their bike and not just the front wheel.

Install or upgrade showering and changing facilities

Some people may want to shower and change after walking or cycling to work particularly if coming from further away, and so provision of these facilities is important. Not all organisations will have space, but where possible they can be very beneficial.

There is no minimum ratio of showering and changing facilities recommended for different staffing levels. For organisations with up to 100 staff, it should be sufficient to provide female and male changing areas (including lockers and a clothes drying area) with one shower each. For larger organisations, additional showers may be needed per extra two hundred staff, but this should be demand led.



Start a pool bike scheme

Many organisations are now choosing to provide a pool of bicycles for their staff to use for work-related journeys, leisure activities at lunch, and even to cycle to and from work or for use at weekends. Pool bikes can be especially useful for staff who live too far from work to commute actively, but might use a bike for meetings or at lunchtime. It also works well in conjunction with a Cyclescheme (see page 4), as staff are able to try out a pool bike before buying their own at a discount. The main considerations when choosing to invest in a pool bike fleet include:

Type of bike

A hybrid style bike is usually the most suitable for a pool bike scheme, complete with pannier rack and other accessories. Folding bikes are a good investment if staff are likely to combine public transport with walking or cycling and may need to transport the bike in a vehicle some of the time.

Who will use the bikes, and when?

Many pool bike schemes allow their staff to take the bikes home overnight or keep the bikes for weeks at a time. This creates a sense of ownership and a basis for long lasting behavioural change in favour of active travel. The location of your offices and the frequency with which staff go to local site visits or meetings, will determine whether the bikes are used much for work purposes. Allowing the bikes to be used for commuting will almost certainly increase the impact of the scheme.



Some people will want to shower and change after walking or cycling to work, and so provision of these facilities is important.



Who will maintain the bikes?

Ensuring that you have several staff trained in basic bike maintenance and safety checks will vastly improve the sustainability of your scheme. In a one-day training course, it is easy to learn enough to repair simple things like punctures, adjust brakes and seat height, as well as identifying more complex jobs that will require professional attention.

How will you implement the scheme?

You will need a system in place for booking the bikes – existing schemes have found that electronic systems work best (for example using an Outlook calendar). You will also need systems for logging faults on bikes, and recording which have had a safety check before use.

Have you got the support of your health and safety representative?

This can be a stumbling block for many pool bike schemes, partly due to a large amount of misinformation about the perceived risks of cycling. Health and safety red tape does not have to be a barrier. The bottom line here is that you have a

system in place. The standard approach towards health and safety in pool bike use is that employees sign a disclaimer before use, and that they are covered by their organisation's third party insurance in much the same way as they would be for using a pool car. There are a number of examples of successful pool bike schemes in the *Case studies* section of this toolkit.

Further Information

This guide is part of the Active Travel Workplace Toolkit. The toolkit and additional resources are available online at www.activetravel.org.uk/toolkit, including more detailed information on cycle storage and pool bike schemes. You can contact Active Travel via email: activetravel@sustrans.org.uk

Other useful information, including help with route planning, is available at www.sustrans.org.uk

Case studies

A growing number of UK employers are investing in active travel initiatives and experiencing the benefits of a healthier and happier workforce. The following case studies are intended to provide ideas and help you benefit from existing experience.



“Health is a key factor in motivating staff to change their travel habits. We will continue therefore to emphasise the health aspects of our travel planning work, as well as maximising the role of walking and cycling in the council’s emerging Healthy Working Lives Strategy.”

Jonathan Padmore, Transport Planning Team Leader, Stirling Council

Stirling Council: encouraging sustainable travel choices

Location

Stirling

Number of employees

Stirling Council employs 4,430 members of staff and serves a community of over 86,000 residents.

Action taken

Soft measures:

- Create a Travel Officer post and move this to be top bullet in Future plans
- a Personal Travel Plan pilot is being undertaken with 35 members of staff to inform the further development of travel plan measures
- a sustainable travel guide, with useful information on all aspects of walking, cycling, using public transport and car-sharing within the Stirling area is available on the staff intranet
- working towards Cycling Scotland’s Cycle Friendly Employer Award
- bike mileage allowance at 20p per mile
- lunchtime power and leisure walks are provided
- Cycle to Work Scheme implemented.

Hard measures:

- 8 pool bikes and accessories purchased
- existing cycle parking facilities are fully utilised leading to the installation of a new lockable cycle compound for 20 bikes
- new clothes lockers to encourage staff to walk and cycle.

Benefits

Measures in place:

- make sustainable travel to / from and whilst at work more accessible
- allow staff who may never have thought about cycling to give it a go
- will lead to a healthier, fitter workforce

Organisational barriers overcome

Barriers were initially encountered around the funding and administration of the Cycle to Work Scheme.

Funding

Funds set aside in the Council budget and funding received from the Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership.

Future plans

Subject to investigation and approval by the project steering group it is hoped to:

- create a travel officer post
- roll out the Personal Travel Plan programme to all staff
- include the sustainable travel guide in staff induction packs
- make electronic copies of the travel guide available on the Council’s public website
- extend promotion and awareness campaigns
- review car parking arrangements
- offer cycle commuter training to staff.

Contact details

Isla Campbell, Transport Planning Officer, Stirling Council
campbelli@stirling.gov.uk 01786 442 454



“B&Q is committed to promoting alternative modes of transport and a healthier way of living to all staff. I am proud to be part of a company that takes environmental and health issues seriously and encourages staff to do the same.”

Monica Simmons, Awards & Travel Plans Co-ordinator, B&Q

B&Q: embedding travel plans in company policy

Location

Head offices: Chandlers Ford, Hampshire;
Stores: 331 stores across the UK and Republic of Ireland

Number of employees

B&Q employs approximately 34,000 staff nationwide, 28% of whom are over 50 years of age.

Action taken

Since 2002, B&Q has been actively implementing travel plans across head office sites and in new stores. Each travel plan store has a dedicated staff member in place to promote travel plans. Travel surveys are undertaken and evaluated and incentives are offered to encourage alternative modes of transport. The company also has a central travel co-ordinator to support stores and implement travel plans across head office sites. Examples of activities at head offices include staff pool bikes, shower and locker facilities, car share schemes and promotion of sustainable transport events each year such as Bike Week.

Benefits

Throughout head office sites and travel plan stores there has been an overall increase in staff members using alternative modes of transport whether it be walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing or even making use of pool bikes between sites or for recreation.

Organisational barriers overcome

Various barriers have been encountered since 2002, including staff being unaware of public transport times and local cycle paths, staff working shifts and generally a lack of enthusiasm towards changing transport modes. The company has found that by providing detailed information to staff, having set procedures in place and providing incentives staff are more likely to consider alternative modes of transport.

Funding

No external funding is used.

Future plans

Continuation of the current programme for new stores with the aim to increase awareness of travel plans, alternative modes of transport and sustainable transport events. B&Q is also planning on rolling out a basic travel plan programme to non-travel plan stores.

Contact details

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B&Q Awards & Travel Plans Co-ordinator
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02380 257 945

Cobalt Business Park: helping a large working community get active

Location

Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside

Number of employees

Currently approximately 9,000 staff, with the potential to increase to 20,000 once the site is fully developed. Employers include Orange, Proctor and Gamble, North Tyneside Council head office, and Jobcentre Plus. A dedicated on-site travel centre provides staff with support in choosing more sustainable travel solutions. Two full-time travel co-ordinators offer personalised travel planning and provide support to employers in delivering workplace travel plans. Through Sustrans' Get Moving North Tyneside! project, a part-time active travel co-ordinator delivers a range of walking and cycling initiatives.

Action taken

Soft measures:

- travel surveys completed in 2005 and 2008 with smaller surveys undertaken annually (on a needs basis to establish trends)
- adult cycle training available from male and female instructors; regular 'Cycle MOT' sessions
- weekly lunchtime walk groups
- cycle buddy system and regular guided rides to / from work from 4 local town centres
- volunteer training to establish active travel 'champions' within organisations based on the site
- whole site activities such as 'Workout' offering health advice and blood pressure checks with a walk, plus active travel roadshow events giving information and inspiration to travel by foot and bike
- personalised travel planning for staff who would like to walk or cycle.

Hard measures:

- 10 pool bikes are available for staff to loan free of charge

Benefits

By planning activities to allow staff on different shift patterns to take part, the number of staff cycling to work has increased and organisations based on the site are beginning to offer better facilities for cyclists.

Organisational barriers overcome

Provision of cycle training for staff who are nervous about cycling has been very popular among women. New cyclists and walkers are also encouraged by the buddy systems and information that can be provided by the travel centre.

Funding

Big Lottery Well-being fund, with cash contributions from Cobalt Business Park and North Tyneside Council.

Future plans

- train volunteer mechanics who can offer advice and support to staff with bike issues at work
- with support from developers and the local council improve the surrounding infrastructure making it even more attractive to cyclists and walkers
- offer more adult cycle training opportunities to give staff the confidence to cycle.

Contact details

Emma Spence, Active Travel Co-ordinator North Tyneside
getmoving@sustrans.org.uk 07824 813054

“I used to be a car addict and regularly complained about the lack of car parking and congestion here. Starting in the walk group made me realise that I was being silly sitting in my car for 20 minutes when the walk only takes 30.”

Cobalt Business Park Employee



Leeds University: delivering more sustainable ways of conducting the University's transport activities

Location

Leeds University

Number of employees

Leeds University employs 8,000 members of staff. It is also host to 30,500 students, and several hundred visitors daily.

The University employs a full-time sustainability officer with responsibility for the implementation of the university's travel plan, focusing on increasing travel choice for staff, students and visitors. In addition, the *UTravelActive* project, a partnership between the University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds City Council, Leeds PCT and Sustrans, delivers a range of walking and cycling initiatives on campus aimed at promoting active travel among staff, students and the local community.

Action taken

Soft measures:

- development of university-wide travel plan
- production of detailed travel information
- presentations at staff inductions
- events such as cycle breakfasts, staff and student fairs
- regular cycle maintenance skills sessions on campus
- travel surveys conducted
- staff Cycle to Work Scheme implemented.

Hard measures:

- introduction of new parking charges and structures
- provision of new cycle storage and showers.

Benefits

Promoting healthy active travel choices to staff, students and visitors reduces congestion and demand for car parking spaces enhancing recruitment, retention and the University's environmental performance.

Organisational barriers overcome

- hierarchy within the university
- space issues on campus
- financial constraints.

Funding

UTravelActive funded through the Big Lottery with matched funding from University of Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds City Council and Leeds Primary Care Trust.

Future plans

- further improvements in infrastructure both on and off campus including secure storage and access
- social cycle rides and walks
- community outreach.

Contact details

Steffi Hasse, Sustainability Officer
s.hasse@leeds.ac.uk
0113 343 5793

“Walking or cycling to university is one of the easiest ways for staff and students to achieve the daily recommended 30 minutes of activity to benefit their health. But it can also be much quicker than driving and journey times don't vary with traffic.”

Lisa Brannan, Leeds *UTravelActive* Project Manager

Singleton Hospital: a success story for active travel

“Investing money on walking and cycling infrastructure and staff facilities at Singleton has increased the number of people actively commuting to work. We consider this investment excellent value for money and are keen to make similar improvements at our other sites.”

Joanna Davies, Deputy Director of Planning, ABMU NHS Trust West



Location

Swansea

Number of employees

3,000 staff are employed at Singleton Hospital.

Action taken

- travel plan co-ordinator employed, partly as a result of severe parking congestion at the hospital
- travel behaviour survey undertaken: 106 key staff identified as living within 2 miles, working office hours and travelling by car. Home postcodes used to identify alternative routes available to commuters, by public transport or the accessibility of the National Cycle Network
- staff locker room refurbished, with drying rooms and new lockers
- cycle storage with CCTV
- 5 pool bikes and accessories purchased
- local route signage
- targeted information campaign to encourage staff to try out walking and cycling.

Benefits

Since implementation of these improvements the number of staff at Singleton Hospital who cycle to work has increased from 2 to 40. The number of people regularly walking to work and taking part in lunchtime activities such as jogging has also increased. This contributes to the Trust's targets on increasing physical activity amongst its staff, and has helped with the implementation of their new travel plan.

Organisational barriers overcome

Many of the staff at Singleton work shifts, so the scheme was initially targeted at those working office hours. Many people were not aware of local walking and cycling routes, so the scheme included raising awareness of routes and journey times on foot and by bike.

Funding

£28,000 funding from the Sports Council for Wales, plus staff time.

Future Plans

There are plans to roll out similar schemes across the Trust, including Morriston Hospital.

Contact Details

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01792 286092



Your workplace toolkit

This guide is part of the Active Travel Workplace Toolkit, which is also available online at www.activetravel.org.uk/toolkit

An additional set of online-only resources are available to download:



- Pool bike schemes – Choosing the right bikes



- Pool bike schemes – The pool bike user process



- Pool bike schemes – Training, maintenance and storage



- Pool bike schemes – Cycle safety issues and insurance



- Active commuting – Walking to work



- Active commuting – Overcoming personal barriers

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity.

Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. We work on practical, innovative solutions to the transport challenges facing us all..

Sustrans **Active Travel** works with policy-makers and practitioners to promote walking and cycling as health-enhancing physical activity.

To find out more visit www.sustrans.org.uk or call 0845 113 00 65
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Photography: Sustrans staff and Nick Turner (p10 & 11)

Supported by:

