

# Cycle Friendly Employers' Information Sheet

## Becoming a Cycle Friendly Employer

**"...part of the solution rather than part of the problem."**

Hewlett-Packard, Boots and the Bodyshop are just three of the employers who are taking steps to become cycle friendly. As part of a package of measures to help employees reduce staff car trips to and from work, known as Green Commuter Plans, these initiatives can bring real benefits for employers: Simon Forsyth, Hewlett-Packard's

Environmental Specialist explains his company's interest:

*"We are making efforts to minimise the effects of almost continuous traffic congestion on our people and our businesses. Cycle commuting is a great way to cut traffic congestion and pollution, reduce your sense of stress and improve your health. By promoting cycle commuting we are trying, in short, to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem."*



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## Journeys to Work – contributing to traffic congestion

**But why should companies be concerned about the way their employees travel to work?**

One reason is financial. The Confederation of British Industry estimates that congestion costs the UK economy somewhere between £15 and £20 billion each year. And congestion

looks set to grow as traffic volumes are expected to double by 2025.

As well as undermining the competitiveness and vitality of industry, the growth in motor traffic brings with it associated dangers of increased environmental pollution, road accidents and lower quality of life for those who live on or near busy roads with their noise and fumes.

By cutting back on unnecessary car journeys, companies can play their part in reducing the harmful affects of motor traffic. And the startling statistic that one fifth of the traffic on our

roads is generated by people travelling to and from work, emphasises that employers can make a difference.

In 1996 The Boots Company recognised this potential and launched its Green Commuter Plan for staff at its head office in Nottingham. Boots aim to cut employee commuter trips by 10% by 2000 and by a further 10% by 2005 through encouraging their staff to think about car sharing, cycling, walking and using public transport as alternatives to driving to work.

*Gordon Davies, Head of Facilities Management at Boots* sees this as a natural extension of his company's philosophy:

*"Boots are a health care company. Through our range of products and services we aim to promote good health, and this starts on our doorstep by encouraging our employees to get to work by healthy means."*



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*In congested cities cycling delivers short, predictable journey times*

# Technical

## GUIDELINES

Sustrans guidelines for the selection of cycle routes highlight five criteria to consider:

**SAFETY** - a route which minimises perceived and actual danger (eg from motor traffic by avoiding heavily trafficked roads and using cycle paths) and gives a feeling of safety.

**COHERENCE** - the route should be continuous and provide cycle friendly links into popular destinations. Cycle paths that suddenly stop leaving you at a busy junction can be very unnerving.



Example of changing area in the workplace.

**DIRECT** - commuter cyclists in particular want to get to their destination as quickly as possible. In designing routes for cyclists the aim should be to provide a shorter and quicker route than the equivalent one for motorists to encourage people to cycle.

**ATTRACTIVE** - cyclists are much closer to their surroundings than motorists and will enjoy attractively landscaped and well lit routes. Sustrans has used seats, sculpture and drinking fountains on some cycle paths to make them fun as well as practical.

**COMFORTABLE** - cycle paths should be smooth, well maintained with gentle gradients and flush kerbs and, where possible, well away from the noise and fumes of busy roads.

# Doing Our Bit

Top of the list for many companies is the feeling of "being part of the solution". Samantha Towle, Head of Environmental Audit for the Body Shop reiterates this point:

*"For the Body Shop being environmentally responsible is an integral part of our ethos. Being a cycle friendly employer is a practical way of putting this policy into practice by encouraging our staff to contribute less to pollution - and the feeling of "doing our bit" can be a great morale boost."*

## Encouraging your employees to switch from car driving to cycling brings other benefits:

- A healthier workforce - cycling four miles a day halves the risk of coronary heart disease and regular cyclists enjoy a fitness level equivalent to being ten years younger.
- Cyclists are more likely to arrive at work on time - cycle journey times can be quicker and more predictable than other means. A five mile journey can be comfortably cycled by an adult in 30 minutes. To quote a commuter cyclist: "There are days when the traffic is so bad that only things moving are on two wheels".
- Cycling is an excellent stress reliever & cyclists take fewer sick days than non-cyclists.
- Save on car parking space - you can fit 12 - 16 bikes in the space taken by one car.
- It's cheaper than providing a company car
- Cycle friendly policies can raise the profile of the business through good PR - the media are attracted by employees on bike' type stories.



## So - what's involved in becoming a more cycle friendly employer - and how much will it cost?

Listed below are some suggestions on ways to become cycle friendly. These ideas may provide a helpful starting point - but every situation is different and you will quickly develop your own. Many of them can be put into action very cost effectively.

### 1. Raise the issue

- Talk to your current cycling employees - they will have a good grasp of the situation at your site(s) and ideas for ways to attract more cyclists.
- Carry out a survey of current travel-to-work patterns among your employees to work out what might encourage some employees to switch from using a car.
- Draw up a Green Commuter Plan - a package of measures, including targets to aim for.
- Adopt a policy of welcoming cyclists - and promote its existence.
- Include information on cycling to work in new employee packs.
- Host a cyclist's breakfast on National Cycle Week - and invite senior staff to lead by example.
- Promote a cycle to work day of the week - Friday can be a good day, particularly when associated with a 'casual dress' day.

### 2. Provide secure cycle parking for staff and visitors.

- Broadly speaking there are three types of cycle parking: racks (such as the simple U-bend "Sheffield Stand"); individual lockers and lockable cycle sheds or cages. See below for suggestions of further sources of information on installing cycle parking.
- Ideally the cycle parking should be in a prominent place which is at least as convenient as the car parking.
- It should be well signed, close to well used entrances and accessible along safe, well lit paths.

Bike shed for staff at Hewlett Packard, Bristol.

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### 3. Provide advice on commuter routes

- The route you might use to drive to work isn't necessarily the best route for you to use if you are cycling. Providing new cyclists with help in choosing their routes to cycle to work will help them gain confidence.
- Consider setting up a 'buddy' service for new cyclists where they are paired with more experienced cyclists for their first few journeys to work.
- Produce a map showing the best routes in to your site by bike.
- Your local authority cycling officer should be able to tell you about new and existing cycle routes.
- Consider the needs of cyclists if planning changes to site lay out or thinking of moving to new premises: how accessible will the new site be for cyclists?

### 4. Provide changing facilities

- Intrepid cyclists will change in the toilet, but changing facilities are welcomed by most. Showers can be useful for cyclists who are commuting a long way.

*"Cycling is a key element of a truly integrated transport strategy. I hope all employers will take steps to improve facilities for cyclists at the workplace."*

Dr Gavin Strang, Transport Minister

### 5. Offer incentives

- Pay a bicycle allowance for using a bike for business trips which covers the actual cost of cycling (calculated at 15p/mile) or, better still, that matches the rate you pay for the smallest cc car: Leicestershire County Council pay 23.8p for business use.
- Offer interest free cycle purchase loans
- Offer a cash payment for employees who are willing to give up their car park passes.

### 6. Set up a BUG (Bike Users Group)

- BUGs can be a good forum for cyclists to exchange information and to consult with managers on providing good facilities for cyclists. A guide on setting up BUGs is available from Project Bike in Bristol tel: 0117 930 0032.

## The National Cycling Strategy:

### TOWARDS QUADRUPLING THE LEVEL OF CYCLING BY 2012

Launched in 1996, the National Cycling Strategy brings cycling to the centre of transport policy and planning. It is the result of experts, cyclists and the Department of Transport coming together and sets out an action plan under four key elements:

- Making travel 'sustainable';
- Improving cycle security;
- Promoting cycling and changing attitudes;
- Ensuring that traffic planning integrates cycling into the way the road system is designed and managed.

Major employers can contribute - and are contributing - in a big way to the first three of these action points. Theft and vandalism of bikes is a major concern to cyclists. Already local authorities are helping to tackle this through programmes of on-street parking provision. Also ways of improving cycle registration and recovery by linking to the Police National Computer are being looked into.



A National Cycle Forum has been set up to encourage implementation of the NCS through both the private and public sectors and one of its Working Groups looked specifically at cycle security, resulting in a guide to 'Approved Security Products';

Southampton City Council has carried out a review of design, construction and installation of cycle parking equipment which is now available.

For further advice on parking consult the CTC's

useful technical references on layout, installation and suppliers and approach your local authority - the Planning or Technical Services Department - who may be able to help.

Cycle Friendly Employers is published by Sustrans, the civil engineering charity co-ordinating the development of the National Cycle Network.



Commuters using advanced stop lines in York.

**SUSTRANS** would like to thank you for taking the time to read this guide. It is only through the active support and co-operation of the widest possible cross-section of society - individuals and companies, private and public sector organisations - that a more sustainable transport future for the next millennium can be created.

We are grateful to Bristol City Council, Hewlett Packard and Yeovil Cycle Challenge Project for their sponsorship which has made this leaflet possible. Companies interested in other sponsorship opportunities associated with the network are invited to contact our Corporate Fundraiser at:

Sustrans, 35 King Street, Bristol, BS1 4DZ  
Tel: 0117 926 8893 Fax: 0117 929 4173

The National Cycle Network is a £400m project to revolutionise cycling in the UK by creating a linked network of 10,000 miles of high quality cycle route through the heart of most major towns and cities in the UK. Over 400 local

authorities are working in partnership with Sustrans, the civil engineering charity with more than 20 years of experience in constructing safe routes for cyclists, walkers and people in wheelchairs, to create the network.

For details of National Cycle Network routes near you contact your local authority cycling officer, write to Sustrans, 35 King St, Bristol BS1 4DZ, or visit the Sustrans web site at: [www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk](http://www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk)

## SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

**YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY CYCLING OFFICER** - many local authorities are actively trying to encourage more people to cycle more often and some are involved in implementing plans for improved cycle routes. A Cycling Officer, or someone with responsibility for cycling, will be a good central point of advice about local cycling routes, events and helpful contacts and may welcome suggestions for additional routes which employers would find useful.

**ACTIVE FOR LIFE** - 6 out of 10 men and 7 out of 10 women are not physically active enough to benefit their health. Active for Life is a three year campaign launched in 1996 by the Health Education Authority to encourage adults in England to become more active more often as part of everyday life.

"The workplace offers the potential to reach 22 million employees. Work and physical activity are both important - so why not combine the two and reap the benefits all round?". Campaign Pack available.

Health Education Authority, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9TX.  
Hotline: 020 7413 2637

**THE CTC** - provides information and services to over 40,000 members. Send for an information sheet on cycle parking. Also publish "Cycle Friendly Infrastructure: Guidelines for Planning and Design" (£15) which includes comprehensive advice on providing facilities for cyclists.

CTC  
69 Meadrow, Godalming, Surrey  
Tel: 01483 417217 Fax: 01483 426994  
e-mail: [cycling@ctc.org.uk](mailto:cycling@ctc.org.uk) Website: [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk)

**THE LONDON CYCLING CAMPAIGN** - the largest urban cycling campaign group in the UK. Publish an excellent guide for cycle friendly guide for employers and employees called "Get Cycle Friendly". Also available is Cycle Parking Equipment and Installation Standard guide with details of suppliers in the London area.

London Cycling Campaign,  
228 Great Guildford Business Square,  
30 Great Guildford Street, London, SE1 0HS Tel: 020 7928 7220 Fax: 020 7928 2318 e-mail: [c.lloyd@unl.ac.uk](mailto:c.lloyd@unl.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.lcc.org.uk/lcc/](http://www.lcc.org.uk/lcc/)

**THE BICYCLE ASSOCIATION** - trade organisation for bike manufacturers. Produce a set of free, informative leaflets ideal for novice cyclists including: Cycle Commuting, Britain By Cycle, Where to Cycle, Choosing a Bike, Helmets, Lighting etc. Please write with an SAE.

Bicycle Association, Starley House, Eaton Road, Coventry, CV1 2FH  
Tel: 01203 553838 Fax: 01203 22836

**TRANSPORT 2000** - a national environmental transport campaign which publishes a number of useful documents including "Changing Journeys to Work" (£30), a guide to setting up Green Commuter Plans which is packed with useful ideas and practical advice for employers.

Transport 2000, Walkden House,  
10 Melton Street, London NW1 2EJ  
Tel: 020 7388 8386 Fax 0171 3882481  
e-mail: [transport2000@+2.demon.co.uk](mailto:transport2000@+2.demon.co.uk)

**SUSTRANS** - the civil engineering charity co-ordinating the creation of the National Cycle Network. Contact for information about local plans for NCN routes. Publish "The National Cycle Network: Guidelines and Practical Details" (£29.50) which provides detailed advice about creating a high quality cycle route as part of the National Cycle Network.

Sustrans, 35 King Street, Bristol, BS1 4DZ Tel: 0117 929 0888 Fax: 0117 929 4173  
Website: [www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk](http://www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk)



Cycle friendly push button control

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**TRAVELWISE** - launched in Hertfordshire in 1994, TravelWise is a partnership of over 40 local authorities working to develop positive solutions to traffic congestion. A quarterly newsletter "Changing Tracks" contains useful information about local initiatives and contacts. To obtain a copy ask your local authority for details or contact Sustrans for a list of participating local authorities.

**Sustrans**  
ROUTES FOR PEOPLE

For further copies of this or other factsheets please call

**INFORMATION LINE**

**0117 929 0888**

Monday - Friday 8.30am - 5.30pm

Saturdays 10am - 2pm

(March to September)

or visit

[www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk](http://www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk)

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