

NHS New build and refurbishment

Building active travel in from the start

This document aims to support the design and build of inspirational walking and cycling (active travel) facilities in NHS refurbishment and new build projects. The intended audience for this document are:

- NHS Estates/ Facilities/ Transport Managers;
- Framework contractors/ Project Managers;
- and
- Designers/ Planners.

Once incorporated in the design, and built into the fabric of the site, these facilities improve an individual's opportunity to travel actively, provide options for site users to reduce their travel costs, improve physical and mental health and reduce car parking demand at NHS sites.

Case study

Cardiff Royal Infirmary (CRI) is under-going a large scale refurbishment programme and Sustrans has supported Cardiff and Vale University Health Board staff in reviewing and delivering the opportunities for site users to walk and cycle to site with ease and more often.

"Sustrans were very helpful in assisting with the review of existing access arrangements to the new Health and Wellbeing Centre and suggested further improvements as part of the redevelopment which will make access by foot and bicycle easier for the local community. We hope that the final design, when implemented, will encourage the use of a wide mix of travel modes to the site to reflect the changing transport profile developing within Cardiff City Centre" (CRI Project Manager)

Following the review, it is intended that covered cycle storage will be provided outside the on-site doctors surgeries and main building entrances.

Additionally, an awareness raising campaign to increase the use of facilities currently on site, has included provision of posters to show location of cycle storage areas, site specific 'Active Travel' maps highlighting all the local walking and cycling routes, sustainable travel instructions for site users and free, Dr Bike sessions for staff.

Background information

The NHS generates a million patient trips a day, and has been estimated to be responsible for 5% of all journeys made in the UK (1). Additionally, in 2001, staff patients and visitors travelled almost 25 billion km's for NHS related purposes, of which 83% were by car or van (2).



There is a growing pressure on the NHS to address transport issues, initially by reducing the need for travel and also by improving accessibility, through well designed and well linked walking, cycling, car-sharing and public transport facilities and routes.

It is imperative that walking and cycling facilities, routes and links are designed into the building programme at the earliest possible opportunity as retrofitting is more costly and difficult to achieve.

BREEAM requirements

The Welsh Government requires that all new health care buildings seeking Outline Business Case (OBC) approval commit to achieving a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) 'Excellent' rating and all refurbishment projects commit to achieving a 'Very Good' rating. Sustrans suggests that the 'Travel and Transport' section of the assessment is delivered at all sites.

(1) Department of Transport, Press Notice September 1996
'Transport Secretary urges hospitals to reduce reliance on the car'

(2) Best Foot Forward Ltd, 2004 Material Health: A mass balance and ecological footprint analysis of the NHS in England and Wales

Wider sustainability agenda

Well designed and delivered active travel facilities increases the opportunity for active travel to hospital sites, and enables wider, long term Health Board travel and transport issues to be addressed. For example, Health Boards are required to submit Sustainable Travel Action Plans and associated annual monitoring reports to the Welsh Government and also to report on the costs of NHS travel activities and mileage through the Estates and Facilities Performance Management System. Additionally, the Corporate Health Standard (All Health Boards are required to reach Platinum level by 2012) aims to improve the health and well-being of NHS staff in a number of key areas. One of which is 'physical activity', and active travel is a key component of this.

Enabling and promoting active travel through site design is imperative to increasing numbers of staff who walk and cycle on a daily basis and supporting the wider NHS travel and transport, and health and well-being objectives.



Supporting documents

BREEAM Healthcare www.breeam.org

Sustrans Active travel workplace toolkit

www.activetravelcymru.org.uk/toolkit

Corporate Health Standard

<http://tinyurl.com/662a6qv>

Sustrans information sheets and resources

www.sustrans.org.uk/resources/designandconstruction

www.sustrans.org.uk/resources/publications/information-sheets

Active travel best practice

When reviewing the BREEAM requirements for building design, in order to achieve 'Excellent' or 'Very Good', it is important to consider how the site links to the wider travel environment. Considerations include:

- Create links to the already established local and national cycle network and walking routes.
- Maximise 'permeability' of the site by pedestrians and cyclists, and provide alternative and convenient site entrances and exits, other than the main car routes. Provide entrances which link well to nearby residential areas and local cycle routes.
- Provide well lit and clearly signed routes on site that inform walkers and cyclists of destinations both on and leading onto site. Consider how you can ensure the ease of access to site for site users without a car, or language barriers.
- Ensure cycle and walking routes to the surrounding residential areas are well designed.
- Many local residents will work on site and easy walking and cycling access means they will leave their cars at home, and reduce car parking demand onsite.
- Once on site, are the cycle and pedestrian routes safe to use and clearly designated? Can all areas be safely and easily accessed on foot and bike?
- Well positioned cycle shelters, lockers, showering and drying facilities are key to encouraging use. Covered shelters, close to the main entrances and within easy access to most wards will encourage greatest travel behaviour change. The more visible the facilities, the better.
- Consider providing maps near the cycle storage or site entrances to show locations of lockers, showers, local active travel routes, bus stops, shops and leisure facilities.

Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day.

It's time we all began making smarter travel choices.

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