

# Active travel in the workplace

A step-by-step guide

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JOIN THE MOVEMENT



Encourage your staff to walk and cycle for the benefit of their health, the environment and your organisation as a whole



### What is active travel?

The most common forms of active travel are walking and cycling, which are convenient and accessible ways to travel short distances, for example when commuting to work.

Being active for health does not have to mean going to the gym five times a week or training for a marathon. Active travel is an easy and accessible way for people to build physical activity into their daily routine.

### Why promote active travel?

There is increasing evidence that employees who are active in their daily lives have improved physical and mental health, and a lower risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes and some cancers. This has beneficial outcomes for their employer including:

- lower sickness absence rates
- higher staff morale
- increased productivity rates
- improved staff retention.

Increasing active travel within your workforce can also help you achieve the Corporate Health Standard and can form part of your travel plan. This step-by-step guide is designed to get you started with promoting active travel to your staff.

## >>>> Step 1

### Know your target audience

One of the most important aspects of promoting active travel at work is to understand the current travel behaviour and activity levels of your staff. Having answers to the following questions will give you a strong basis to start from, and will help you identify a target audience.

- How does your workforce currently travel to work?
- How far away from work do most people live? (This will identify what proportion live within a reasonable distance for walking or cycling)
- What levels of physical activity are your staff currently undertaking?
- What barriers do staff currently face and what do they feel could encourage them to travel more actively?
- How often and how far do staff travel for work related meetings?
- Is there potential to build active travel into lunchtime activities?

The Sports Council for Wales can provide you with a questionnaire designed specifically for the workplace. See [www.sports-council-wales.org.uk](http://www.sports-council-wales.org.uk) for more details.

## >>>> Step 2

### Design your scheme

Once you have analysed your travel survey you will need to choose the initiatives you would like to implement. The *What's right for your organisation?* booklet included in this toolkit is designed to help with this stage. Remember to match the initiatives to the information you gathered in the survey, for example if your office is only a few miles from the station, will staff want to use folding bikes in combination with the train?

## >>>> Step 3

### Get the support of management

One of the key factors in the success of any active travel programme is the support of key management staff.

This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- make sure you have thoroughly researched and familiarised yourself with the initiatives you wish to promote
- identify key members of staff who can help take the programme forward, and establish how much time will be required from them
- know how you are going to promote the scheme to participants
- outline any costs associated with the scheme and highlight sources of external funding
- build a strong business case for your scheme, including a cost-benefit analysis.

The Sustrans information sheet '*Active travel and healthy workplaces*' included in this toolkit provides a lot of the background needed for you to present your case to management.

## >>>> Step 4

### Implement your scheme

Once you have analysed your travel survey and chosen the initiatives you would like to implement, consider:

- Funding – there may be a grant available to support your scheme, for example from the Sports Council for Wales. Can your organisation offer match funding?
- Sustainability – setting up a steering group to oversee the scheme should ensure that it maintains momentum
- Ownership – making sure that staff are actively involved in developing your scheme will create a sense of ownership over the initiatives.

## >>>> Step 5

### Promote to staff

You can promote the scheme to staff using the intranet, posters, staff newsletters, word of mouth and a range of other means. The following benefits will help promote active travel to staff:

- *Improved physical health:* being active on a daily basis has been shown to reduce the incidence of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer, and can also help weight loss
- *Improved mental health and well being:* regular exercise can help alleviate stress, improve alertness and help with sleeping well.
- *Save money:* walking and cycling to work avoid the costs associated with driving or using public transport and could save you the cost of gym membership!
- *Avoid congestion:* leaving the car at home helps avoid tiresome traffic queues, and problems finding a parking space.

## >>>> Step 6

### Review and feedback

This is an important stage in the process as it allows you to monitor progress and assess the success of your scheme. Sustrans Cymru can advise on how to monitor your initiatives, and on the best way to collect data on participation levels.

Regular evaluation will allow you to report back to senior management on the success you have had, and to highlight the benefits to the organisation.

You can also use success stories as a means of promotion. Make a point of celebrating every success!

**Now that you have completed the process you are ready to begin with a new cycle of promotion, but this time you won't have to start by convincing senior management, because they are already on board!**

**This guide is part of the Active travel workplace toolkit, which is also available online at [www.activetravelcymru.org.uk/toolkit](http://www.activetravelcymru.org.uk/toolkit)**

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

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, working on practical projects so people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment.

Sustrans' work is supported by many partners, local authorities and other organisations together with the personal donations of approximately 40,000 supporters.

To find out more about Sustrans or to become a Sustrans Supporter visit [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) or call 0845 113 00 65.

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