

London Cycling Campaign Best Workplace Cycling Initiative – Newham University Hospital NHS Trust

In September 2005, Newham University Hospital NHS Trust (NUHT) launched the Well @ Work project¹, which aims to support its staff in adopting healthier lifestyles. Part of the project aims to get more people cycling, both in terms of to and from work and also during leisure time. A baseline questionnaire was administered to staff between November 2005 and March 2006. A total of 739 questionnaires were returned, which equates to a response rate of 34%. The results showed that 4% of respondents (30 staff members) cycled to and from work, with an average journey of between 29 and 37 minutes. If applied to all staff, this figure would suggest that 87 members of staff cycle to and from work.

In addition, 28% of respondents indicated that they would be interested in cycling to work. The next question asked what the Trust could do to help individuals cycle to work; 46% were interested in cycle training, 59% were interested in more information on cycling routes, 81% wanted safe and secure storage at work and 51% wanted bicycle maintenance workshops. Almost two thirds (63%) said that cheaper bicycles would encourage them to cycle to work and 4 out of 5 employees (85%) wanted showers and changing facilities at work. The project team considered the results and implemented the following interventions:

Discounted Bicycles – the Trust offers individuals a number of ways of helping staff to purchase bicycles, including a ride to work scheme (in conjunction with Evans Cycles) and various discounts at local cycle shops.

Cycle Maintenance Workshops and Training – both during 2006 and from March 2007 onwards, the project has commissioned Cycle Training UK to run on-site cycle maintenance workshops for staff at lunchtime on the first Monday of every month. These have proved highly popular, with staff liking the convenience of the workshops. These workshops have also been attended by the local crime prevention officers, who have offered to postcode bicycles and provided general security advice.

In addition to this, an event was held to show staff how to maintain their own bicycles and the Trust, in conjunction with the Bicycle User Group (BUG), is planning to hold a workshop in the coming months to train members of the BUG up to be mechanics themselves.

Cycle Lessons - The Trust actively promotes the cycle lessons provided free by the London School of Cycling and funded by the London Borough of Newham Council. These are available at three levels, namely beginner, comfort and advanced.

Safe Storage - The Trust currently has 30 BykeBins, 20 Sheffield stands and two locked shelters, both of which can accommodate eight bicycles, on site. These facilities are used on a daily basis (see attached photos). Additional funding has been secured from Transport for London during the current year, which has been sent on additional BykeBins.

Information on Routes - Information on routes is available from the BUG, including TfL maps of the local area and a service where staff can have their best route to and from work calculated for them.

Pool Bikes – the Trust has a fledgling pool bike scheme, with two bikes available for staff to use to travel to off-site meetings. If demand is deemed sufficient, additional bikes will be purchased.

Showering and Changing Facilities – the Trust has a number of showers throughout the site which staff can use and will shortly be increasing this provision when some additional showers are refurbished.

Bike Tools – the Trust has purchased a central store of tools which can be used to repair bicycles that have developed problems during an individual's commute to work. This also includes a number of puncture repair kits and spare inner tubes of different sizes.

Team Pedometer Challenges – as part of the Well @ Work project a number of team pedometer challenges have been implemented aimed at encouraging the amount of physical activity people do. Previously, cyclists have been disadvantaged as their time spent cycling has not been able to be counted as part of any pedometer challenge. However, the project has used the method created by Miller et al (2006) to convert time spent cycling to steps, allowing cyclists to compete in the challenges fairly.

Library Materials – the staff library in the Hospital has recently created a Well @ Work section, which includes TfL maps of the local area (free to take) and books on cycling and maintenance (free to loan).

Other Information

The Trust's BUG re-formed in January 2007 and has met every two months since. The membership of the group, which aims to represent the views of cyclists to the Trust management, continues to grow and has representation from most areas of the organisation. A group of employees from the Trust who live in the local Borough are members of the Newham Cycling Campaign, and work with the group to organise various trips and events.

The project was evaluated in May/June 2007, and the results showed that the number of staff cycling to work had increased from 4.2% at baseline (2005) to 8.6% in 2007 ($p < 0.01$). In addition, walking to work increased from 44.3% to 52.6% ($p < 0.05$).

Supporting Photos

Cycle Maintenance Workshops



On Site Storage



NUHT Team for the BHF London to Brighton Cycle



Testimonial from Ray Walker, Cancer Development Manager, NUHT

I cycle 4 miles to work at Newham University Hospital. The Trust has provided me with a secure cycle bin in which I have been able to store my bike. This was available to me within my induction period and is within easy reach of my work station. I have also benefited from maintenance workshops held over the last 12 months and will soon be able to buy a new bike through the ride2work scheme. My employer has publicised this widely and made the arrangement to set the salary sacrifice up easy. The Bicycle Users Group is also an invaluable local resource for exchanging London route issues and other news of shared interest. Overall, Newham University Hospital is a very cycle friendly place to work.

¹ The Well @ Work Project – Background Information

Well @ Work was a 2-year national project led by the British Heart Foundation with funding from Active England (Sport England and Big Lottery Fund's joint awards programme) and the Department of Health. The project was one of the Government's 2004 Public Health White Paper commitments and was set up in 2005 to test the effectiveness of health promoting interventions in the workplace, relating to physical activity and other lifestyle behaviours such as diet and smoking. There were nine regional projects encompassing a variety of workplaces from the public, private and voluntary and community sector.

Newham NHS was selected as the project for the London region in conjunction with St Mary's College, Twickenham, who were awarded £100,000 to run the initiative. The project ran from September 2005 through to August 2007 with the objectives of getting people to become more active and eat a healthier diet and promoting smoking cessation.

Loughborough University carried out the national evaluation of the project and developed an evaluation framework and toolkit to assess the impact and outcomes of the project and the process of implementation. Each intervention was evaluated using a variety of methods.

Membership of the NUHT Bicycle User Group

Dr. Phil Moss (chair) – Consultant (Accident and Emergency Department)
Dr. Bill Coode – Consultant (Accident and Emergency Department)
Dr. Jo Morris – Research and Development Manager
Dr. Adam Feather – Consultant (Care of the Elderly)
Dr. Alan Naftalin – Consultant (Gynaecology and Obstetrics)
Paul Bremner – Purchasing and Systems Manager
Carol Mooney – Cancer Service Improvement Facilitator
Emma Small – Lead Nurse for Blood Transfusion and IV Access
David Bays – Critical Care Technician
Jo Stones – ESR Project Lead / System Manager
Lee Matthews – Buyer / Ward Inventory Clerk
Martin Outram – Distribution Officer
Roger Honey – Assistant Director of Finance
Dr. Ruth Freedman – House Officer (Care of the Elderly)
Simon Stewart – Information Governance Officer
Therese Chapman – Consultant Midwife

References

Miller, R., Brown, W. and Tudor-Locke, C. (2006). But What About Swimming and Cycling? How to “Count” Non-Ambulatory Activity When Using Pedometers to Assess Physical Activity. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, **3** (3), 257 - 266