

Walking and cycling quality audits

Information for National Health Service (NHS) sites

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Walking and cycling quality audits at NHS sites

1. Introduction

As part of the sustainable travel plan, it is good practise to include a 'quality audit'. This is best completed along side a general site audit, as tasks involve not only observing key facilities on site, but also noting how these can be improved. Such improvements can have a direct impact on the uptake of Active Travel (walking and cycling, and integrating these with public transport), and increase success rate of related interventions, such as provision of bike stands and shower facilities. Key areas to audit should include road junctions, green/ open spaces, main walking/ cycling routes (including the routes people prefer to take, regardless of signing), and public transport interchanges, such as bus stops.

A quality audit can identify low cost, and cost-free quick wins as well as opportunities for funded programmes that will improve the safety and enjoyment of all site users. These audits can therefore inform the design and implementation process of travel plans, and support findings from the staff/ visitor/ patient surveys.

This document has been developed to provide a broad overview of a cycling and walking audit. In order to carry out an area specific audit you may wish to make use of the audit Tools or software available on the internet or employ consultants. See Section 10 for further information.

The quality audit should include some or all of the following (Please note that a focus is placed on walking and cycling audits. Further reading for all audits can be found at the end of the document):

2. Walking audit

This audit reviews the quality of the paths and pedestrianised areas on your site. This also includes ensuring your site is accessible to ALL users. Key factors to observe include:

- **surface quality**- *Analyse paths, observing trip hazards, uneven surfaces, etc*
- **lighting**- *Is adequate lighting provided, and switched on at the appropriate times?*
- **conflict with traffic**- *Are crossings located in safe places for cars and pedestrians, and adequately signed for all user types?*
- **pedestrian facilities**- *Availability and proximity of benches, signing, undercover areas, etc.*
- **obstructions**- *Are objects/ path design causing obstructions? E.g. bollards, appropriate kerbs at crossings or desire line pathways?*
- **cleaning**- *Is the path clean and free of litter?*
- **drainage**- *Are pathways free of hazards such as water/ice/ road debris?*

3. Cycle audit

Do the cycle routes on site encourage people to cycle to work/ visit the site?

- **coherence**- *Does the cycle network have a consistent design standard throughout its length? i.e. red painted lanes, standard signs, signs in place, etc.*
- **directness**- *Are signed routes as direct as possible and on a route favoured by cyclists?*
- **attractiveness**- *Are routes well lit and signed within surroundings that are aesthetically pleasing?*
- **safety**- *Have routes been designed so as to reduce the risk of collisions with other road users and pedestrians? Can the Local Authority assist in improving safety for cyclists on approach roads to site?*
- **comfort**- *Do routes have smooth well maintained surfacing and gentle gradients, and features that avoid complicated manoeuvres and sudden interruptions?*

4. Public transport audit

Does the environment provided for public transport users (bus, train and taxi) encourage people to use the services? Is there provision for:

- **adverse weather**- *Are shelters provided? Are contact points provided? What are the procedures for extreme weather conditions?*
- **emergency contacts**- *Are emergency contact points available at shelters? Are these locations clearly signed?*
- **bus/ train times**- *Is real-time travel information provided at each stop/ shelter? Are hardcopy time timetables also provided for planning journeys?*
- **adequate lighting**- *Are pathways to the shelters/stops well lit, throughout the whole year?*
- **safe areas**- *Has personal safety been taken into account in the positioning of the stops? Are pedestrians protected from unsafe situations?*
- **clear signage**- *Are signs for e.g. reception area and bus destination displayed clearly for all?*
- **provision of a visually attractive environment?** *An objective query; what measures could be undertaken to increase the attractiveness of the environment? e.g. public art instalment, increasing foliage, etc .*

5. Audit of visual quality

How can you improve the visual impact of your site to make it more appealing to people who walk and cycle through (both for transport and work/ visiting purposes)?

6. Review of how the streets are used by the workplace 'community'

Do you know where the key desire lines (most frequently used and easiest routes) are across your site? Can these be mapped, and then used to inform the programme of improvements?

7. Road safety audit (including a risk assessment)

Are pedestrians and cyclists safe on your site? How can the main crossings, paths and junctions be improved to maintain traffic flow but also ensure safety for all?

8. Access audit

Are access points to the site beneficial for all site users; car, pedestrians, public transport users and cyclists? i.e. could opening up an entrance at the rear of the site encourage more people to walk or cycle? Is the nearest public transport hub within easy walking distance of a site entrance?

9. Interventions

Following a quality audit, the following solutions may be suitable options for improving the active travel environment (this is not an exhaustive list):

- basic destination signing (including destination, distance and times) and legibility features (i.e. ensure all road and path users are made aware of others) for both walking and cycling
- the improvement and upgrading of cycle parking. This may include covered storage, which is in a more visible, easily accessible, secure position, and under CC TV surveillance.
- working in partnership with the site or Trust 'Health and Wellbeing group' to develop schemes such as 'Green Gyms' or 'Grounds for Health', which may provide the opportunity for staff to spend time in the outdoors e.g. gardening- improving the local environment, and increasing physical activity. This will also contribute towards Corporate Health Standard assessments, whilst also improving the visual impact of the site
- install 'Infopoints' around the site at key transport hubs
- the recommendation of coloured surfacing to both increase awareness of cyclists and provide the perception of a wider traffic calmed zone
- increased number of access points into site
- development of maps to indicate walking/ cycling/ public transport facilities and pathways
- the provision of advisory cycle lanes on local roads.

10. Further reading/ Bibliography

Healthier worksite initiative: Audit Tool- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention:
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/hwi/toolkits/walkability/Walkability_Audit_Tool.pdf

Guidelines for Cycle Audit and Cycle Review (2005)- Department for Transport:
www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/tal/cyclefacilities/cycleauditandreview?page=1

Manual for Streets (2007)- Department for Transport
www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets/

Design manual for roads and bridges; Non-motorised user audits (2005) Standards for Highways: www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/dmrb/vol5/section2/hd4205.pdf