

Walking

Introduction

Walking, along with cycling, are the least carbon intensive modes of transport. It is also free to do and has many benefits for the participants and for employers. Walking is good for improving both physical and mental health, and does not contribute to local road traffic or car parking demand.

A lot of people see walking as a mode that they would like to try and incorporate into their commute, but are put off by perceived barriers such as the distance they live from work, the time taken, and the potential dangers involved in walking home at night. A good provision of facilities for walkers and promotion of the mode can help break down these barriers.

It is important to note to employees that walking can perfectly complement other modes of travel. Even getting off the bus one stop earlier and walking the rest can have positive effects.

30 mins of moderate physical exercise a day recommended, and a 15 minute walk to and from work can help to achieve this.

It would be worth speaking to your local council to see what schemes they may have in place to support sustainable travel.

Why you Should Promote Walking at your Workplace

Working patterns are increasing becoming more and more sedentary, which is having a negative effect on employees' health and wellbeing. One way of combating this is to encourage activity before, during, and after work. Walking can lead to better physical and mental health, increased productivity, and financial savings for both employers and employees.

Encouraging walking is not necessarily just about improving pavements around your site. It is also very important to promote the mode to employees and offer incentives to try and help more people successfully change their travel habits.

There are several resources available to help businesses promote walking (and cycling) in Hampshire. These include maps with walking information for selected locations in the county, and are available on the My Journey website. It would also be possible for businesses to create their own maps with journey time information for their specific location.

Staff can plan their commute from A to B using the My Journey web based journey planning tool. Simply enter the start point and destination, and select your chosen travel modes.

myjourney.com/journeyplanner/



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Hard Measures

Physical 'Hard' measures tend to involve improvements to facilities and the local walking network. Improving the pavements around your site, ensuring they are well signposted, and making all entrances and exits secure and well-lit are several ways of improving walking at your site.

Car parks should also include pedestrian crossings, and it is beneficial to include adequate showering and changing facilities on your site for those who commute by active modes, especially if you are planning on promoting running as well.

Soft Measures and Promotions

'Soft' measures and promotion are a good way of convincing people to try walking, if only temporarily. The easiest way to achieve this is to distribute information on walking. Literature on the health benefits of walking, and information on walking to and from your site can be provided to staff on company websites or intranets, and to new starters as part of the induction process.

There are also several financial incentives that could help promote walking. Negotiating with a local outdoors store to secure a discount on walking equipment (like trainers, umbrellas, and high visibility clothing) would be beneficial to new and existing walkers. Alternatively, equipment could be offered to staff through an interest-free salary sacrifice loan.

It would also be possible to offer financial rewards to walkers in lieu of providing them with a parking space, or allocate points based on how often staff walk that can be exchanged for credit at a local outdoors store or even for extra holiday allowance.

Events and promotions are run regularly at a national level to promote walking and sustainable travel in general. May is National Walking Month, which provides a good opportunity to focus your promotions in conjunction with the national campaign. It is also easy to start organising your own events and walking challenges with incentives for those who participate.

Events like this can include workplace walking competitions to see who has walked the greatest distance or most often, or to see how long it takes your office to cumulatively walk a set distance. Offering pedometers to your staff so that they can track how far they are walking is a great way to compliment this.

Organising around walking is also useful. Regular active travel breakfasts, where staff that use those modes arrive at work early to share breakfast and catch up, can be good at promoting walking within the office. Lunchtime also offers a great opportunity to go for relaxing walks or challenging runs, which is beneficial for employee health and wellbeing.

Providing for those who are not confident walking alone can be achieved through the provision of personal alarms or a walking bus system, and walking groups are great at helping walkers meet and boost confidence, as well as giving them a voice to help secure improvements for themselves.



Links

<https://myjourneyhampshire.com/walk>

<http://walkit.com>

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk>



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