

Writing a successful Cycling for Work Policy

A guide for employers

30 September 2020

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Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Join us on our journey.

www.sustrans.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland).



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Writing a Successful Cycling for Work Policy

Getting off to a good start

If you're looking to attract a healthy, vibrant workforce, and give your business good environmental credentials, a good place to start is by making it easier for your staff to cycle to work and on work business. Having a good cycling policy for your workplace gives you the confidence as the employer that your staff are aware of what is expected of them whilst cycling on work business; and it gives staff the confidence that you support their travel choice.

It can be daunting to write a cycling policy from scratch. In this document, we highlight what is important and the different options for what you might want to include.

Remember to make this policy readily available. Ensure that it's shared on the staff intranet, send reminders out regularly, and let new staff know about your cycle policy really early on, to give them the opportunity to use a bike from the start .

Manager's Foreword

A message of support from senior management is extremely effective at encouraging a change in behaviour in staff, such as cycling instead of driving. If you can add a photo of the boss with their bike, that's even better.



Balfour Beatty



Managers from Balfour Beatty, Southampton, taking part in the #BossesOnBikes campaign to promote cycling

Values

You might want to show your staff the reasons why you value them cycling, and why it's important to your organisation.

If you have a policy, statement or ongoing plan for your organisation that backs up any of the statements such as your corporate social responsibility policy or climate change, then reference it here.

Below, we give you some facts you could refer to in order to back up your reasons. You can choose from those that are most important to your organisation, or summarise them all.

Health

Show you care about your employees' health and wellbeing.

Cycling is a convenient way to build exercise into your daily routine. Physical activity has been shown to greatly reduce the chances of several serious illnesses.

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph41/chapter/1-recommendations#benefits-of-walking-and-cycling>

Physical inactivity is responsible for one in six UK deaths (equal to smoking).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health>

Air pollution

Workplace travel has an immediate impact on the health of those who live closest to the workplace, and contributes to a global air quality problem. Each year in the UK, around 40,000 deaths are attributable to exposure to outdoor air pollution.

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution>

Climate Change

Transport emissions made up 27% of net domestic emissions in 2017

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/870647/tsqb-2019.pdf).

If we want to slow the onset of climate change, we need to cut emissions drastically, and workplaces all have their part to play in making that happen.

Reducing congestion

Committing to reducing car miles generated by business makes a difference to congestion. If everyone cycled to work just one day a week, congestion would be cut by ~20%.

Bicycles take a fraction of the space of a car. A typical motor vehicle lane can carry around five times the number of people cycling than driving per hour.



Save time:

Cycling can often be the fastest way to travel in urban areas.

Drivers in UK cities spend more than a day each year stuck in rush hour traffic.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-42917201>

Save money:

Cycling can save staff, business and the nation as a whole money.

UK car owners spend over £3,100 to run their cars each year:

<https://www.nimblefins.co.uk/average-cost-run-car-uk>

Cycling for the right journeys can save businesses money through reduced mileage, car usage and parking expenses, less need for land, as well as reduced absenteeism and sick days:

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/publications/health-at-work/health-at-work--economic-evidence-report>

Physical inactivity is estimated to cost the UK economy about £8.2 billion per year:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph13/chapter/2-Public-health-need-and-practice>

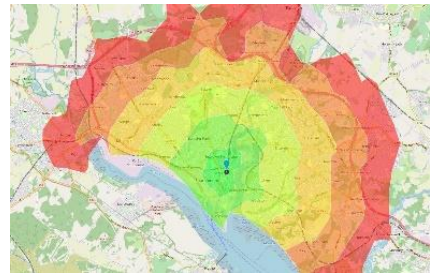
and the health problems resulting from exposure to air pollution have a high cost to people who suffer from illness and premature death, to our health services and to business. In the UK, these costs add up to more than £20 billion every year:

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution>

Useful information for people who cycle

Before your staff decide to cycle, they will need to know about the cycling facilities available at your workplace and in the surrounding area. Many of those cycling for work will need to cycle to work. Here are some things people will find useful to know about:

- How long will it take to cycle to work?
You can easily create an Isochrone map for your workplace online (e.g. at <https://maps.openrouteservice.org/>)



Example of an isochrones map

- Link to a cycle map of the area. Many councils offer these on their websites.
- Location of cycle parking and details on how to register for access, such as a swipe card or key code.
- Location of staff showers and changing facilities and how to access.
- Any storage facilities for clothing, helmet and kit and how to access.
- Details of any tools available for staff to borrow to help keep their bike maintained, such as a track pump, a lock, lights or box of useful spares.
- Details of any company pool bikes available, terms and conditions, and how to book them out.
- Any help offered by your organisation for purchasing a bike, such as a salary sacrifice scheme run by your organisation or by a third party.
- Details of local organisations offering second-hand, refurbished bicycles.



A workplace bicycle repair station
Photo ©Helen Barrington

- Information on how to maintain your bike and where to get help with cycle maintenance. You may have a regular 'Bike Dr' visit to your workplace, your local authority might offer free or subsidised cycle maintenance events, or you may wish to list the nearest cycle shops to the workplace. Sustrans has a useful, bicycle 'M-check' video here:

<https://youtu.be/4qtx60bcNk0>

These are some of the websites you could refer to for bike maintenance help:

<https://www.parktool.com/blog/repair-help>

https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Bicycles/Maintenance_and_Repair

<http://www.bikewebsite.com/>



A Bike Dr repair stand

- Details on where to get cycle training and any incentives your workplace or local authority offers.
- Who is responsible for your staff whilst on their way to and from the workplace? This is likely to be the staff members themselves.
- Details of any additional incentives you have to promote cycle commuting, such as insurance offers, free or subsidised kit, promotional events, voucher rewards for not using a car. Speak to your local Sustrans officer for more ideas.
- Any accreditations or awards you may have related to cycling, such as Cycling UK's Cycle Friendly Employer accreditation <https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/campaigns-guide/becoming-cycle-friendly-employer> or ISO14001 accreditation where provision for cyclists has formed part of the Environment Management System in place.

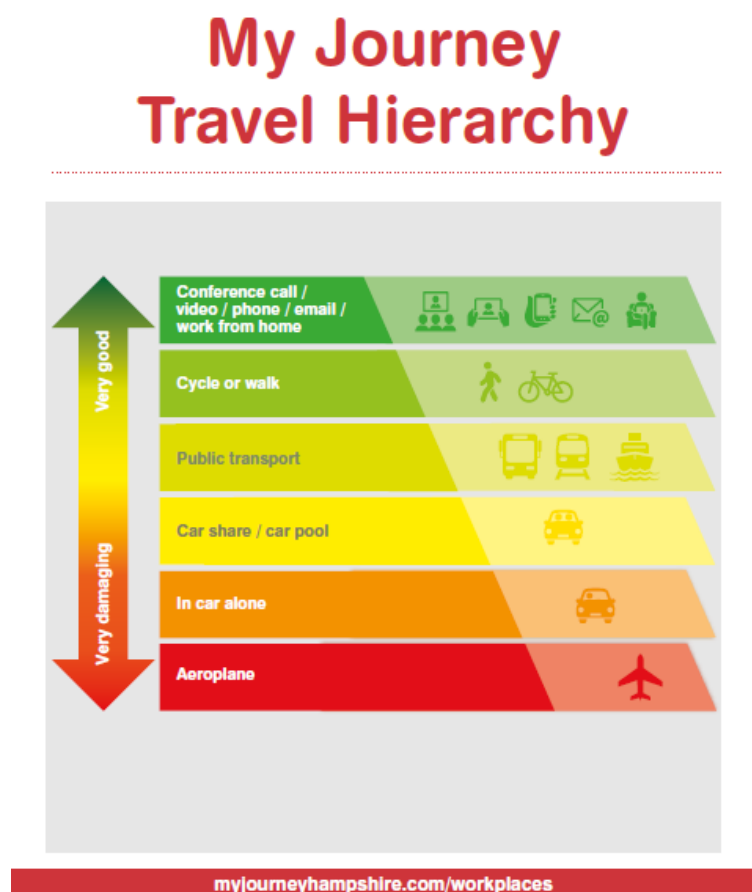
Cycling for business

Let your staff know what 'cycling for business purposes' means to your organisation. It does not usually cover private mileage or miles to and from the normal place of work.

Riding a bike is an individual activity, and staff members will be responsible for their own safety. However, the employer has an insurance obligation towards staff whilst on work business, and you may wish to implement some guidelines for staff members to follow. We have listed things you might like to consider:

Travel Hierarchy:

To enable your staff to decide which method of travel is most suitable for their journey, you could use a 'Travel Hierarchy', which lists the modes from least harmful to most harmful, such as in this example.



An example of a Travel Hierarchy ©MyJourney Southampton

Rider ability:

Is your staff member able to ride a bike safely? Some employers ask for some proof. You can request any one of the following, but remember that requesting particular training is likely to put off a large number of would-be cyclists, who would otherwise be competent. If you do choose to request training, you could offer it during work time or pay for it to make it easier for staff:

- Recognition that anyone using a bike for work purposes thereby declares themselves to be a competent cyclist
- Employee's declaration of competence
- Assessment of competence
- National Standard Level 3 cycle training certificate

The bike:

Pool bikes:

As the employer, you are likely to be responsible for the maintenance of any bicycles that are owned by the company and lent out to staff as 'pool bikes'. It is useful to share information in your cycle policy on what the maintenance schedule of any pool bikes is, and what staff should do if they find a bike with a fault. However, it is usually down to the pool bike user to check the bike over for safety before each use. Do they know how to do this? You can detail what staff need to check for in this policy.

It is advisable to have a physical or online logbook, so that you have a record of who used what bike, when, and confirmation from the rider that a safety check has been carried out before use. Any faults could be recorded in the logbook too. You can ask all users to complete a form to show they agree to the terms and conditions of the use.

It is also really important for staff to know what different pool bikes are available, and what size they are. For example, they may need a step-through frame for mobility reasons, or an extra-tall, or they could be going on a train that only accepts foldable bikes. Does the bike come with any accessories, such as a lock, helmet, hi-vis, toolkit etc? If you number the bikes, these details can easily be included in the booking system.



Travelling with a foldable bike at Pitlochry station Photo ©Sustrans

Staff's own bikes:

You have less control or responsibility over staff members' own bikes. However, you may wish to include guidance about cycle safety, such as:

“Ensure that the bike being used is in good working order by carrying out a simple visual check yourself, covering basic items (an ‘M-check’). A video on how to perform an ‘M-check’ is available here: <https://youtu.be/4qtx60bcNk0>

Ensure that the bike being used is suitable for its intended use and that it is suitable for you.”

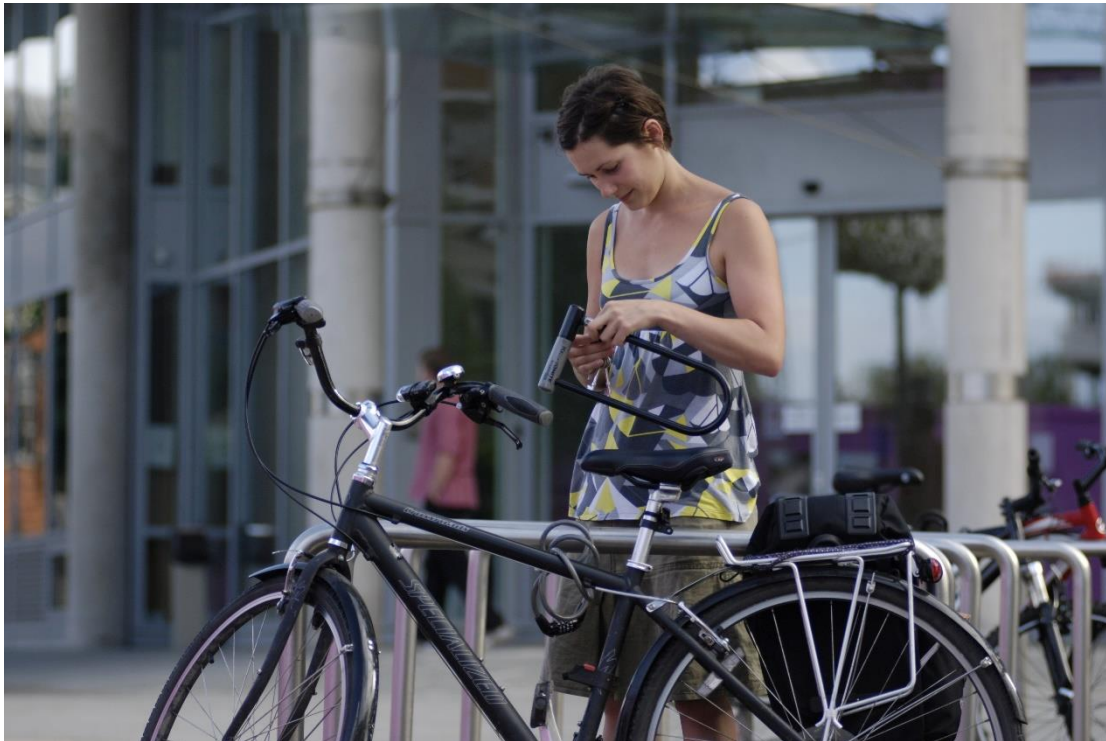
You could refer to guidance about different types of bicycles.

Consider offering cycle maintenance training for staff, and/or hiring a regular bicycle check-up (Bike Dr) service by a local bike repair shop.

As insurance and security of staff's own bicycles logically falls to the individual, you could say:

"We are not responsible for your bicycle. We recommend that you insure your own bicycle. See the 'Insurance' section in this document. We also recommend the use of a Gold Standard D-lock when your bike is parked. See Sustrans' blog on bike security for tips on keeping your bike secure: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/get-active/2019/everyday-walking-and-cycling/bike-security-advice/> Video here: <https://youtu.be/6yMBibs85Ds>"

You can support staff in keeping their bikes safe by providing secure cycle parking at your workplace and offering discounts on bicycle insurance or Gold standard D-locks.



Locking a bike with a D-lock Photo ©Sustrans

Planning:

Planning a safe route depends on good knowledge of the local area or prior research. However, avoid insisting on prohibitive or onerous measures, such as line manager pre-approval for journeys, unless deemed absolutely necessary. It is not much different to someone driving a car to a meeting. We have some pre-written guidance notes that you might like to use:

- Plan your route in advance. There are lots of free cycle journey planning sites, ☐ if you wish to plan online, such as <https://www.komoot.com/plan>, <https://www.cyclinguk.org/journey-planner>, <https://www.cyclestreets.net/journey/>, <https://www.bikemap.net/> and many more.
- Consider the location, time of day, and nature of your journey and if there are ☐ any concerns about travelling alone.
- Take quieter routes, avoiding heavy traffic, where possible. The shortest ☐ and/or easiest route may not be the safest.



A quiet route in London Photo ©Sustrans

- Avoid planning your route via obstacles, such as steps or barriers that would require you to lift your bike. ☐
- Allow ample time to reach your destination. ☐
- Avoid routes over ungated train crossings where possible. If your route takes you across a level crossing, you must read these instructions by Network Rail: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/safety-in-the-community/level-crossing-safety/level-crossings-for-cyclists/> ☐
- If unforeseen circumstances arise during the ride that mean you need to change your route, re-plan as best you can and assess the route as you go. You can turn back at any time if you feel it is unsafe. ☐
- Check the weather forecast if you are going out for more than a couple of hours, and choose an alternative, safer way to travel if the weather would make the journey too hazardous. ☐

Different organisations will have different opinions on how much time should be taken for cycle journeys. You might wish to keep things open to reasonable interpretation:

“The use of cycles must be appropriate for the length of journey being undertaken.”

What to wear and kit:

Your organisation (and your insurers) may feel certain personal protective equipment is necessary for people to cycle for work. Remember that the higher the cost of the kit and the more demands you make, the more barriers there are to people cycling. Be mindful of religious dress, particular hairstyles or other factors that might prevent some people from being able to wear certain kit, such as helmets.



Choosing to wear a helmet in Bristol Photo ©Sustrans

This list covers everything we think is important. You can choose and edit what is right for your organisation:

- Wearing of an approved cycle helmet (complying with EN1078) is recommended, particularly when riding on busy roads or slippery surfaces. ☐
- You should avoid dark/dull coloured clothing or wear a hi-visibility top during the daylight hours and it is recommended that it has reflective markings on if riding after dark. ☐
- Ensure that your clothing doesn't interfere with the mechanics of the bicycle, e.g. loose fabric, straps, shoelaces etc. ☐

- Cycling safely requires that you remain alert to dangers. In order to avoid any unnecessary distractions, do not wear headphones or operate telephones / GPS devices etc. when riding. ☐
- Where papers or equipment is to be carried, the cycle must be fitted with the means to do this safely. Lightweight backpacks are permissible; panniers or baskets are recommended. (If this is something that your staff are likely to encounter for business, you could include guidance on 'Carrying loads'.) ☐
- Ensure you have enough food and drink with you, particularly if you are likely to be in remote areas. ☐
- Take lights if you anticipate riding outside daylight hours and spare batteries if the journey is long. ☐
- Take a mobile phone to call for help if you are likely to be away from immediate assistance, i.e. houses, shops etc ☐
- Take a tool kit, pump and spare inner tube if you feel able to repair a puncture yourself. ☐
- Take a map or GPS device /phone if you are unfamiliar with the area. ☐
- Take sun cream if you will need protection from the sun. ☐

On the ride:

When cycling for work, it can be tempting to rush or 'cut corners' to get make a meeting on time, especially if staff members feel they need to justify their choice of transport. Your policy should give them the confidence that you support them cycling for work purposes, and that you have considered their safety and wish them to do the same. Here are some things you could include:

- Do not cycle on roads/tracks you do not feel comfortable with. ☐
- Where possible, avoid using routes that require frequent crossing of tram tracks, road gullies, cattle grids etc. If this is unavoidable then consider using a bike with thicker tyres and ride with feet unclipped from pedals. Whenever possible, cross them at right angles to avoid tyre slipping and make use of designated crossing points. ☐
- Remain alert to how the weather will impact on your riding style. ☐
- Be prepared to get off and push if the situation warrants it. ☐
- Be careful of other users on traffic-free paths. Take particular care around horses and other animals. Give a timely warning and be prepared to slow down or stop to let them pass. ☐



Cyclist passing horses on the National Cycle Network Photo ©Sustrans

- Be careful if riding near water. Keep a safe distance from the edge and watch out for anglers. ☐
- Lift bikes carefully over barriers, up and down steps etc. to avoid strain injuries. Use lifts or wheeling ramps where possible. ☐
- On roads follow the Highway Code. (see also Franklin J – Cyclecraft for advanced riding) ☐
- If you are tired, take it easy, take a break and aim to remain alert. ☐
- Remember you are riding on business. Do not race or attempt an unreasonable pace or distance. ☐
- Find an alternative route or return with a colleague on another occasion if necessary should you have any concerns for your personal safety or security, particularly after dark. ☐
- If your phone rings, either ignore it or find a safe place to stop and take the call. ☐
- Remember that if weather or route conditions make the journey too hazardous, you should seriously consider not riding and to choose an alternative way to travel. ☐

Covid-19:

During the Covid-19 global health pandemic, the UK Government advises people to 'walk and cycle if you can' to reduce pressure on public transport and the road network:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#walking-and-cycling>

Everyone must adhere to the latest Government guidelines related to the Covid-19 virus outbreak. Follow Government advice for cycling during the crisis:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#walking-and-cycling>

Cycle mileage:

Employees are entitled to 20p per mile tax-free for miles cycled for work purposes on their own bicycle. (<https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual/eim31240>) This should be treated in just the same way as you would for miles driven in private cars. If you don't offer this as a company, employees should be made aware of their opportunity to claim directly via HMRC: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees>

Insurance:

Staff on work business should be insured for third party and personal protection by your organisation's Liability Policies, and this should cover journeying for work (but doesn't include the commute). Individuals' bicycles are not covered as standard. Some organisations offer free or discounted bike insurance for their staff, as an incentive to cycle for work. You may wish to encourage staff to take out insurance for their commuting and leisure cycling too, but this should not be a limiting factor, and is not a legal requirement.

Here are some well-known organisations that offer different types of insurance alone or as part of a bigger package. There are many more. We do not take responsibility for the quality of service or cover from any of these insurers.

Cycling UK: <https://shop.cyclinguk.org/>
British Cycling: <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/>
Wiggle: <https://cycleinsurance.wiggle.co.uk/>
CyclePlan: <https://www.cycleplan.co.uk>

It is sometimes possible for people insure bicycles under their household contents insurance. They will need to check the small print to make sure it covers the bicycle for the necessary uses and locations.

Involve your Health and Safety Department in the writing of your document. It is also advisable to check that your insurers are happy with your policy wording. Different insurers treat cycling for business differently to others, so it's worth looking for one that is welcoming of the activity.

Contacting your organisation about cycling:

If a staff member has a question or a suggestion about cycling, it makes a huge difference to have someone to speak to about it. Communication about cycling could range from a regularly checked suggestions box/inbox to an active Bicycle User Group with senior manager support or a 'cycling champion'. Being able to give advice, signpost someone, or fix a fault, could mean the difference between having a bicycle in the bike shed or another car in the carpark.

Include up-to-date contact details in your policy.

"At [name of workplace], we like to hear from our staff about how to improve the experience of cycling to and for work. Please contact your Active Travel Champion with your comments and suggestions:

Name: [name of champion]

*Email address: [*****@*****.***]*

*Phone number: [***** *****]"*