

University of Leeds Highly commended - promoting positive behaviours “UTravelActive Project”

Summary

UTravelActive is a pathfinder partnership project delivering a successful behaviour change programme promoting walking and cycling among students and staff at 3 HEIs in Leeds. It includes the Velocampus Leeds student bike hire and on-campus bike hub. >2000 people have changed their travel behaviour through a range of campaigns and activities alongside infrastructure improvements, with >800 extra cyclists locally on hire bikes.

Project partners

- **University of Leeds:** Delivery/Funding/Advisory/Participant/beneficiary;
- **Leeds University Union:** Participant/beneficiary
- **Leeds Metropolitan University:** Delivery/Funding/Advisory/Participant/beneficiary
- **Leeds Met Students' Union:** Participant/beneficiary
- **Leeds Trinity University College:** Delivery/Funding/Participant/beneficiary
- **Sustrans:** Delivery/Advisory
- **Leeds City Council:** Delivery/Advisory/Funding
- **NHS Leeds (PCT):** Funding/Advisory
- **Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust:** Participant/beneficiary
- **Woodrup Cycles, Leeds:** Suppliers/Advisory
- **BIG Lottery:** Funder

UTravelActive is part funded from a successful bid to the BIG lottery through Sustrans and the Travel Actively Consortium

The problem

Travel surveys identified that far fewer staff and students were cycling or walking to the University than were living within 4 miles of campus. Improvements to personal security and cycling/walking facilities on and off campus were a high priority for both staff and students. 80% of students have no access to a bicycle in Leeds.

A survey by Sport Leeds showed that about 50% of students were physically active less than three times a week and the level of activity decreased with progress of study; the reasons being lack of time, skills/experience and expense.

The approach

UTravelActive aims to promote health, well-being and sustainable living through encouraging and facilitating active travel for students, staff and local communities, coordinated across partner organisations:

- Velocampus Leeds cycle hire



Profile

- University of Leeds: 33,000 students; 7500 staff, Single campus, Urban
- Leeds Metropolitan University: 29,000 students; 3000 staff; 2 campuses; Urban/Suburban
- Leeds Trinity University College: 3000 students; 300 staff; Single campus; Suburban



- Velocampus Leeds Bike Hub: bike hire storage, service and issue; workshop & drop-in self-help maintenance; Maintenance classes; Cycle training; Advice, support, information
- Student and staff volunteers/placements/projects
- Website and networks
- Campaigns: Love Walking Love Cycling; Safety- Put yourself in my shoes; National locally
- Co-ordinated on and off campus infrastructure improvements
- Large cycling events
- Programme of themed activities
- Walk4life miles- Campus walks
- Cycling/walking maps and Travel Guides
- School and community outreach

Our goals

- To increase awareness of the benefits of cycling and walking - at both individual and organisational level
- To increase local levels of cycling and walking, normalising these locally for shorter journeys
- To make cycling accessible - in terms of affordability, perceptions, skills, road safety
- To deliver longer term sustainability, improving infrastructure to enhance the cycling and walking experience for all existing, new and future cyclists and walkers
- To effect successful partnerships, coordinating and optimising delivery to maximise outcomes and outputs

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacle/challenge	Solution
Building partnerships	Investment of time, identifying key individuals, benefits and shared priorities
Logistics, admin and limited resources e.g.space on campus/ people for effective delivery	Work closely with estates to identify dedicated space for bike hub; admin support; volunteers
Engaging diverse student/staff population	Research and understand target audience, their needs, motivations and concerns. Tailor approach accordingly; one size doesn't fit all! Be creative and make it fun. Use and build on existing networks and contacts
Perceptions of safety and security	Provide branded, security marked bikes, good quality bike locks, lights and parking. Actively promote safety and security message through provision of information, high profile campaigns, practical measures such as cycle training, bike marking, offers on lights and locks, high viz, infrastructure improvements, highways liaison. Communicate all the above to concerned parties!
The need for a strategic and sustainable business case for the future	Align benefits with strategic priorities; present wider benefits; learn from experience; seek advice; get SMT notice/support

Performance and results

- >12000 direct beneficiaries; participants improved sense of wellbeing
- >2000 people changed behaviour to walking or cycling
- Cycling increased 40%-50%; walking 5% - 7% at UoL
- In-bound cordon cycling increased by 70%; walking by >50% in 3 years
- Increased active travel and physical activity
- 800 extra cyclists over 3 yrs on hire bikes
- c.50% hirers female, >10% from BME groups
- Bike hire a catalyst for behaviour change to cycling, attracting previously non/infrequent cyclists; 60% of hirers continue cycling
- Velocampus Bike hub established
- New cycle/walking facilities on/off campus; 30% increase in cycle parking

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Green Gown Awards case study



- Walk4life campus walks: <http://www.walk4life.info/find-a-walk>
- 42 staff or student placements/projects/volunteers

Lessons learned

- The value of getting noticed!
 - Hire bikes being clearly identifiable market themselves
 - Direct engagement with senior management
 - Being championed by the Student Unions: included in LRU 'Blueprint for Improving the Student Experience'
 - Large high profile events and campaigns
 - Student participant champions: recommended UoL vice-chancellor to visited bike hub
- The value of admin support and hands-on staff
- The value of volunteers
- The value of a designated space (bike hub)
 - logistics of managing bike hire fleet and for high quality customer service
 - awareness/promotion/events
 - maintenance drop-in and classes

Further information

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