

Newcastle University Carbon Reduction

Newcastle University Go Smarter to Work

Section 1 About the project

Summary

Outstanding progress in reducing staff single person car commuter journeys from 40% to 16.5% was achieved through consistent university wide effort over a decade. Hundreds of parking spaces have made way for landscaping and development to create a campus environment for excellent student experience. Increased cycling support, discounted public transport, pay and display parking and improved video and teleconferencing facilities provide flexible and low carbon travel solutions for all.

Project partners

Go Smarter To Work

Section 2 The results

The problem

In 2004, almost half of University staff were driving to work which was creating pressure on parking space on campus and increasing congestion in Newcastle City Centre. As part of the University's strategic vision for growth, there was a requirement to increase the number of buildings on campus and decrease the amount of allocated parking and a subsequent shift in staff behavior.

The approach

Our collaborative approach connecting staff, students and research groups has improved sustainable travel infrastructure and achieved a transformation in commuter behaviour. Our Coherent Campus initiative is a key driver enabling significant campus improvements through a funded programme to enhance the campus environment.

Our goals

Increase the use of sustainable travel modes among staff, decrease use of cars and raise awareness more widely of sustainability across the University.



Profile

- 22,874 students
- 5,429 staff
- HEI
- Urban

Category supported by



Finalist's case study

Obstacles and solutions

Changing habits	This was overcome by utilising 'try before you buy' initiatives, offering sustainable travel focused training/workshops and providing opportunities for face to face engagement with staff.
Introducing unpopular measures e.g. parking strategy	Clear and consistent communication regarding changes to parking policy, as was ensuring there was a point of contact for further information.
Challenging staff perceptions of commute	Communicating the results of the travel survey allows members of staff to see progress with sustainability has been made. Surveys used as a tool to overcome misconceptions regarding commuting e.g. time of journeys/proximity to public transport. Go Smarter to Work initiative help to driver the behaviour change through delivery of personalised travel plans and bespoke journey packs including incentives e.g. public transport taster tickets/ cycle maps/ efficient driving course. Staff/student feedback used to inform decision-making used to update the University Travel Plan. Feedback is valued and acted upon.

Performance and results

Reduction in staff single person car commuter journeys from 40% to 16.5%, with estimated annual carbon savings of 350 tCO₂e. Increased engagement with sustainable travel initiatives – 15% of staff now engaged with Go Smarter to Work.

Section 3 The future

Lessons learned

Consistency and persistence – regular engagement and continuous improvement of facilities is key. Regular travel surveys provide valuable data on progress as well as a tool for further engagement.

Top level support - Having the commitment and buy in from senior managers at the University is vital for facilitating culture change across the University. Not wishing to relax having achieved such progress, our Executive Board has adopted a parking strategy of continued reduction of staff car parking on campus (except for some essential, visitor and disabled car parking).

Enthusiasm and effort- positive messaging and the combined efforts of staff across the University drive the achievement of continuous improvement.

Sharing our project

Communication across the University through our Environmental Co-ordinator Network, Health Advocate Network, Bicycle User Group and Green Impact teams; supported by regular web and social media updates. Face-to-face engagement through breakfast events, focus groups, cycle events, bike maintenance workshops, Nordic walking sessions and pedometer competitions. Wider local communication at local travel partnership.



Finalist's case study

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

We have engaged with staff over the last decade to change travel behaviours, the results have been fantastic, benefiting both the University and the wider community. As a civic university, we are proud of the progress we have made – having our institution shortlisted in this category recognises and celebrates these achievements. It has also provided a valuable additional communication tool for further increasing awareness on campus.

Further information

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