

Integrating car share with other sustainable transport initiatives

Ideas for employers and travel planners

Employers are a major generator of travel, especially during peak times. They have the ability to influence the travel behaviour of their employees via workplace travel plans. Car sharing can form an important part of any such travel plan, alongside other sustainable measures. This briefing is designed to encourage best practice when approaching car sharing as one of a range of sustainable transport methods.

Car share schemes match people making similar journeys to allow them to travel together for regular commuter trips or longer one off journeys. Car sharing blurs the boundaries between public and private transport, and alongside buses, trains, walking and cycling it provides a viable and inexpensive alternative to single occupancy. It is important to consider the links between car sharing and public transport and the ways in which they can complement each other.

The average car commuter drives 19 miles a day. Cutting that by half through car sharing would save 648kg of carbon dioxide over one year, the same as that absorbed by 216 trees.

Environment Agency

Benefits of car sharing

- ➔ Reduces the number of cars on the road, thereby reducing congestion and pollution
- ➔ Decreases the need for parking space
- ➔ Saves travel costs/stress for the individual
- ➔ Tackles social exclusion by enabling individuals to travel when other modes are unavailable
- ➔ Extends recruitment catchment area for employers and therefore job opportunities for the unemployed



'Due to illness, I have had to surrender my licence to the DVLA. Basically if I can't find a lift then I would have to give up my job.'

Liftshare member

Car sharing together with other sustainable transport modes

Car sharing can be an important addition to the transport modes already available. When considering launching a scheme it can be a challenge for employers and travel planners to ensure they obtain the right balance between the promotion of car sharing and other sustainable transport modes. Car sharing is often seen as a 'quick win' solution that will be easy for many employees to adopt. However, it is important to be ambitious in also encouraging a range of non-car modes in addition to car sharing. It makes sense to offer a package of solutions, rather than one single solution that may not be beneficial to everyone. There has been some debate about whether encouraging people to car share might take them away from using public transport. Research by Liftshare.com shows 67% of car share journeys were previously made by car, 7% were previously unable to make the journey, and the remaining 25% were previously using non car modes. For some of the latter group it is a temporary change to cope with train strikes or changes in personal circumstances.

In environmental terms, this reverse modal shift will have a detrimental effect as the amount of carbon and other dangerous emissions produced by a private car are proportionately more than that produced by a bus or train (when these two are reasonably full), even when the car contains more than one person. Reduced public transport patronage will also make train or bus services less financially viable to run and may put the route at risk of closure. However car share places an important role in providing access to amenities and employment where there are not other options and four people car sharing can be more efficient than a bus containing fewer than twelve people.

An amalgamation of car sharing with public transport results in van pooling. This is particularly common for those working in areas with inadequate public transport and low car ownership. The employer organises a vehicle and picks up employees at designated points along a route to work. Van poolers could pay a nominal cost towards running the vehicle. Filling a van to capacity can result in carbon as well as financial efficiencies and could also improve employee punctuality.



Striking the right balance

Car sharing and other modes should be presented as complementary to one another. The following approaches can be considered to ensure this is the case:

→ Joined up promotion

Car sharing should be presented as one of a range of sustainable options, rather than a stand-alone solution. An employer could consider distributing a newsletter to staff mentioning all transport modes in tandem e.g. referring to new facilities for cyclists or a new bus route, together with information on the progress of the car share scheme.

→ Integrating travel choices

Encourage staff to integrate car sharing with public transport e.g. those who drive to/from the railway station or a park-and-ride bus stop could car share for this part of the journey. It is important to stress that car sharing can form just one element of a journey.

→ Travel incentives

Some employers have issued reduced/free public transport tickets to staff to enable them to travel into town at lunchtime. Pool bikes or car club cars could be offered for work trips or for the same purpose.

→ Financial rewards

Financial incentives (such as vouchers, cash rewards, prize draws, extra holiday or local business discounts) given to new car sharers should also be given to those staff already using public transport, walking, cycling or indeed already car sharing. These staff are already saving the employer money by not requiring a parking space of their own.

→ Monitoring

Changes in how people travel should be monitored via follow-up questionnaires asking how car sharers previously made the journey and if they previously used public transport ask their reasons for changing. This can also help monitor the success of your travel plan by ascertaining the numbers participating. It also helps you adapt your message and methods in future.

Staff at Canterbury City Council who use green modes (including car sharing) to travel to work are granted an extra day's annual leave per year.

Transport for London 'Car Share Guide'

Further Information

- Transport for London 'Car Share Guide' available to download from www.carplus.org.uk/Resources/carplus-resources.htm
- Carplus website Carsharing pages www.carplus.org.uk/carsharing/what-is.html