

case study: lancaster university

Lancaster University is situated 2.5 miles south of Lancaster City centre and is the top university in North-West England. Sited on its own 1km long campus, the University has 11,000 students of which 40% live off-campus and over 2,500 staff. Lancaster is a Cycling Demonstration Town with good cycle links between the campus and the city.

the problem

The University was looking to expand but was already having difficulties in accommodating car parking demands from staff and students. The University adopted its Travel Plan in 2004 in which it made a commitment to reduce sole occupancy car use amongst students and staff, and increase numbers travelling by sustainable modes of transport.

the solution

The University introduced a very restrictive car parking policy for its students in 2006. This meant that students living on or close to campus did not generally qualify for a car parking permit.

The University also implemented a package of incentives to travel by other means. Having a full time travel coordinator in post ensured that time can be spent on arranging and implementing these initiatives, including:

- Additional cycle parking across the campus, with further secure cycle parking compounds (in locked units) allocated solely for the use of students.
- Improvements to shower and changing facilities in some campus buildings.
- New sign-posted University cycle route to the city centre via the towpath beside the Lancaster Canal.
- Initiatives and freebies such as Cycle Challenge Events, Mass cycle rides to campus on University Cycle Days, Free 'Dr. Bike' services, police post-coding of bicycles and cycling promotional stands around the campus.
- Sale of cheap used reconditioned bicycles on campus to students through 'GreenLancaster'.

the outcomes

The proportion of students cycling and walking to Lancaster University has almost doubled in less than two years.

- 10% of students living off-campus now cycle to the University, up from just over 5% in 21 months.
- Student car use dropped by 4.8% between February 2006 and November 2007.

The proportion of staff cycling to work is one of the highest in Lancashire at just over 13% and fewer students and staff are now driving to the campus. 30% of postgraduate research students cycle as their main mode of travel.