

Implementing an incentives scheme in your workplace

Incentives encourage people to change or maintain behaviour through reward and recognition. Incentives can be a powerful tool in changing workplace culture and encouraging active travel choices.

It can be hard for people to take that first step in changing the way they travel. Often, just providing people with information isn't enough for them to make a change. Offering incentives helps value and normalise active travel and provides rewards to work towards, which can be a great encouragement for those wanting to try something new.

We know that people value being recognised and rewarded. Incentives can make a real difference by:

- Gaining attention and increasing engagement
- Giving people a tangible reason to try something new
- Showing that your workplace values active travel and is committed to making change
- Attracting and retaining quality employees
- Rewarding actions long-term so they become habits.

There are many different types of incentives, and it's important you choose what's right for your workplace.

Types of incentives

Recognition

Thanking people, and appreciating their efforts and the contribution they are making is easy and low cost and yet it can be an important motivator. This is a great way to get started.

This could involve:

- Active travel awards (recognise people who made a large change, travelled by active transport most often, who had the longest active journey)
- Certificates (these could be presented as part of awards, or at a staff meeting)



- Acknowledgment and thanks from the Executive (at awards presentation, at a staff meeting, on the intranet)
- Profiling stories (on the intranet, e-news, posters).

Rewards

Who doesn't love being rewarded? We know that people are more likely to achieve results when they have committed to a goal which will be rewarded. Rewards can take many forms, including financial and non-financial benefits. Rewards scheme can be ongoing, or run occasionally (e.g. as an annual 12 week challenge).

Here are examples of ways that rewards for active commuting could be provided in a workplace:

- Breakfast or morning tea events for all staff commuting actively or the team with the most people making active trips in a workplace challenge
- A points system where employees record how they commute and earn points that can be redeemed as gift cards or vouchers (e.g. for a bike shop, sports store or a café or retail chain), or given as donations to charity
- SmartRider cards with credit as an incentive for staff to try commuting by public transport
- Prizes like merchandise items (e.g. water bottle, bag, bike pump) or gift cards for participation in a workplace challenge or another event
- Time, for example the 15 for 15 Policy which gives staff fifteen minutes of work time to shower and change as a reward for their active commute
- Cycling and walking discounts – either a subsidy by the employer, or a discounted negotiated at a bike store at no cost to the organisation
- Ongoing subsidy of active commuting through a travel allowance or adding value to staff SmartRider cards. See [here](#) for more detail about how to implement a travel allowance in your workplace.

Top Tips

- Ideally, incentives build people's internal motivation and capacity for ongoing active travel, after they have achieved their recognition or reward, or the incentive scheme ends. When designing your incentives scheme, it's important to consider how the incentive will encourage and enable people to continue with their new behaviour in an ongoing way.
- Financial incentives may be subject to fringe benefits tax. This varies depending on the value of the benefit and how it is provided, and on the type of organisation. It is worth checking with your finance team to find if there are any fringe benefits tax implications for your planned incentives.
- Incentives can be useful where motivation is the barrier to participation. If there are other barriers, like lack of facilities (e.g. bicycle parking at workplace), then it can be better to address these before introducing incentives.

- Consult staff to shape your incentives. Be careful not to build unrealistic expectations but do listen out for what matters to them and what positive or negative effects different incentives may have. Consultation could include chatting with employees or running a focus group.

Success story: MBS Environmental's FAT Rewards Scheme



MBS Environmental's FAT (Frequent Alternative Traveller) Rewards Scheme rewards participants through a system that allocates numbers of points for cycling, walking, public transport and carpooling. Staff are able to redeem points for donations to charity (matched by MBS), sport or bike store credit, or SmartRider credit. This scheme has been ongoing since 2013 and over 75% of staff have participated.