Promoting cycling

Encouraging staff to cycle more has benefits for both employers and employees. With the amount of time we spend at work and our increasingly sedentary lives, it is important to integrate physical activity in and around the workplace and during our commutes.

This toolkit contains various ideas for events and activities to help you promote cycling and encourage people to take up cycling in your organisation.

Cycle confidence sessions

Devon County Council offers adults in Devon (excluding Torbay and Plymouth) a free two-hour adult cycle confidence session. The sessions can also be split into 2 sessions of 1 hour and are tailored to the needs of the individual. They can be taken at a location close to home or work.

Reasons why people book a session include:

- learning to ride a bike
- increasing their confidence; in general, or when riding on roads etc.
- improving on the cycling skills they already have
- getting back into cycling again
- getting tips on riding safely on roads, and suggestions on routes e.g. to commute to work
- getting tips for riding as a family

If you would like to organise group sessions for your staff, please contact cycletraining@devon.gov.uk.

Love to Ride cycle challenge platform

Love to Ride aims to get more people cycling by organising online cycle challenges on their website. With various cycle challenges being run throughout the year and the ability to set goals, gain badges, share pictures and stories, there is something to get involved in for everyone.

In Devon alone, 371 organisations and 7,648 individuals (at time of writing) are signed up on the Love to Ride platform. The challenges encouraged a total of 1,523 new riders to take up cycling.

If you would like to provide your staff with the opportunity to take part in regular cycle challenges to grow cycling at your workplace, you can sign up your workplace on the Love to Ride Devon website.

Find out more on www.lovetoride.net/devon.

Campaigns that promote cycling

Alongside cycle challenges, there are various events and campaigns run by different organisations to encourage people to give cycling a go. These events and campaigns are great opportunities to raise the profile of cycling at your workplace. They also provide a good setting to organise a cycling themed day or event at the office (see the next paragraphs for ideas on what activities to run).

Cycling UK is one of the leading cycling charities in the country, and are behind national campaigns including:

- Bike Week
- Big Bike Revival

- Women's festival of cycling

Cycle to work day is organised by a collective of organisations who aim to encourage more people to cycle to work.

British Cycling's Let's Ride initiative aims to connect people to cycle together. The Let's Ride website enables people to find local rides, routes, buddies and groups. They also organise events throughout the year.

Find out about other campaigns that can help you promote cycling and other sustainable modes of transport in our Travel Devon Calendar.

Cycle to work breakfast

With a cycle to work breakfast, you can offer people an incentive to ride to work that day. Next to offering food, this is also a great opportunity to talk to staff about their journeys, why they cycle to work, and what has helped them to start cycling to work. This enables you to collect stories to help you inspire and encourage others to start cycling as well and learn about routes and tips.

A cycle to work breakfast could also enable you to identify people who would like to be a buddy. These are experienced cyclists who share a similar route to someone who may not be confident enough to start cycling to work on their own. To help you match people up, you could ask people who have cycled to work to log their route on a map so others can see along which routes people already cycle to work.

Dr Bike session

The format can vary per provider, but generally a Dr Bike entails a skilled bike mechanic visiting a workplace for 2-3 hours (or however long is agreed) to perform on-the-spot basis bike checks. Employees simply book a time slot and take their bike into work. Usually the mechanic will let people know what was checked, including recommendations for any further maintenance that is needed. We recommend advertising a Dr Bike event at least one week in advance so that staff can plan to cycle to work or bring their bike in.

Dr Bikes are provided by some local bike shops but also by mechanics with a mobile workshop setup. To find a Dr Bike provider, simply have a search online or ask your local bike shop if they provide these services.

Smoothie bike

A smoothie bike is a fun way to get people peddling and promote cycling. A food blender is powered by the bike chain, making people peddle to make a smoothie of their choice.

The benefits of hiring a smoothie bike include:

- getting people involved in cycling related activities in a fun way
- draw crowds as smoothie bikes spark people's curiosity
- encourage people to get back on a bike; after a fun experience on a smoothie bike, people might be more tempted to give cycling a go

There are many smoothie bike companies available county- and nationwide. To find a provider simply have a search online.

Lunch time or evening rides

Social rides are a great way to get people interested in cycling out and about in a supportive and friendly environment. It also provides people an opportunity to meet other colleagues who cycle.

Both Cycling UK and British Cycling provide useful advice and resources on setting up cycling groups and clubs.

If people are not yet confident enough to join a social group ride, you can signpost them to our free cycle confidence sessions for adults. If you would like to organise a session for a group of people, please contact cycletraining@devon.gov.uk.

Further information and support

Want to encourage smarter travel to work at your organisation? Businesses in Exeter, Barnstaple and Newton Abbot are eligible for free business support to start travel planning, including support offers for individual members of staff. Email traveldevon@devon.gov.uk to find out more.

Active Devon is a community-focused, non-profit organisation dedicated to inspiring and supporting people in Devon to be active. They can help you get your workplace more active and support you with behaviour change campaigns, workplace challenges, programme management, design, consultancy and more. Please contact Active Devon via 01392 925 150 or hello@activedevon.org.

Please note: When following our toolkits, please also refer to the government guidance for safer travel.

This page was last updated November 2020.

URLs

- Adult cycle confidence training in Devon: https://www.traveldevon.info/cycle/cycle-training/adults/
- Love to Ride Devon: https://www.lovetoride.net/devon
- Cycling UK: https://www.cyclinguk.org/
- Bike Week https://www.cyclinguk.org/bikeweek
- Big Bike Revival: https://www.cyclinguk.org/bigbikerevival
- Women's festival of cycling: https://www.cyclinguk.org/womensfestival
- Cycle to work day: http://www.cycletoworkday.org/
- British Cycling: https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/
- Let's Ride: https://www.letsride.co.uk/
- Cycling UK guidance on cycling in groups: https://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/advice-groups
- British Cycling club resources on cycling: https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/clubs/article/20140514-Club-Resources-0