



## **Express Engineering, Team Valley, Gateshead**

Express Engineering is one of the UK's leading precision engineering companies and were required to produce a Travel Plan in order to expand the business into a vacant property behind their current building.

The Travel Plan is managed through their established Environmental Team which manages their ISO 14001. Express Engineering already has activities linked with travel planning, e.g. a good communication system for passing information to staff, a cycle club, regular telephone conferences, canteen and vending machines on site, and clear policies on the use of company and private cars for business .

With no history of formal travel planning there were many opportunities to incorporate new measures into Express Engineering's way of working. The production of a Travel Guide (available for staff, visitors and new recruits); cycle and motorcycle storage; a link with a local cycle shop for Bike Doctor events. There is currently some informal car sharing, which is being formalised using the Car Share scheme on the teamvalleylinks.com website. To encourage this the company has set aside 'Car Share only' parking spaces within the site. Future initiatives which are being looked at include Corporate Ticketing in order that staff can enjoy cheaper public transport, along with a Salary Sacrifice scheme through which employees can purchase a bike at reduced cost.

## **A large site: Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside**

The developers of Britain's largest business park, Cobalt, in North Tyneside, recognised from the outset that accessibility would be a key factor in attracting investment. This view led to the creation of an on-site travel centre with its own dedicated Travel Team.

The travel team have been particularly successful in stimulating the development of a comprehensive public transport network, including the flagship 'Cobalt Clipper'; a bus service linking the park to central Newcastle and South-East Northumberland every 15 minutes throughout the day.

Other initiatives include a dedicated car-share network, staff cycle pool, reduced price public transport tickets and personalised travel advice. As well as promoting travel initiatives, the Cobalt team have been particularly successful in engaging staff in the 'Cobalt Community'. Social events such as lunchtime health walks, as well as loyalty cards and promotions for local businesses have helped to engage staff that would not otherwise have contemplated getting in touch with the team.

## **A medium site: EDF Energy, Sunderland**

EDF Energy is a major employer on Doxford International Business Park in Sunderland. In EDF's case, it was substantial parking problems that provided the impetus for implementing a travel plan.

With the site car park massively over-subscribed, EDF staff began parking in neighbouring streets and on grass verges, causing havoc for local residents and even blocking bus services. But with increasing parking provision being an expensive, unrealistic and undesirable option, EDF instead turned to travel planning to find the solution.

As Doxford International was already served by an efficient public transport network, actions in the travel plan were focussed on car-sharing and car-park management. A dedicated car-share network was set-up so that staff who found it difficult to access the public transport network would still be able to make a smarter travel choice.

Once this alternative was in place the company could then begin its strategy of car-park management. The strategy saw spaces allocated on the basis of need, rather than the first-come first-served policy that existed previously. Space availability is now severely limited, except for car-sharers or those with mobility impairments. The principle also extends to visitors, who are

actively discouraged from driving to the site and are required to reserve parking bays in advance.

The system is administered by two 'Green Receptionists', who also offer public-transport tickets at discounted rates through the corporate travel scheme. The result at EDF has been fantastic, with 700 of the 1550 staff now car-sharing, and many of the remainder using public transport, walking or cycling! Additionally, EDF's parking problems have been comprehensively solved, without adding a single extra bay!

### **A small site: Optima Legal, Newcastle**

Optima Legal (previously Mckeags law Firm) provide an excellent example of a smaller organisation recently embarking on the process of travel planning. The firm committed to implement a Workplace Travel Plan as a condition of them gaining planning permission for their new offices in Newcastle City Centre.

The office's position means that it is already well-served by an extensive and efficient public transport network so much of the firm's early effort has been focussed on promoting this option to their staff. Part of this promotion has been the implementation of tools such as a loan scheme for Metro tickets. This scheme involves the company purchasing an annual Metro ticket on an employee's behalf, who then pays the cost back through monthly contributions straight from their wages.

Optima hope to roll-out this facility to other transport operators over the coming months to increase the number of staff using public transport even further from the current level of 69%. However, recognising that public transport will not be a feasible option in all circumstances, the company is also promoting car sharing as a more efficient option for motorists that currently drive alone. That said, this figure is already fairly low, with a significant number of commuters arriving on foot or by bike!