

## **Main content of the Walk to Work promoter's booklet**

### **The role of the Walk to Work promoter**

This is an important role and we are very grateful for your help. The main activities are:

- To promote walking to work amongst those employees in your workplace who are taking part in the study (the research team will provide you with a list of these employees)
- To be the recognised 'point of contact' for the Walk to Work scheme in your workplace
- To participate in training provided by the research team
- To learn about goal setting, self-monitoring and the use of websites and other tools to support and encourage employees in walking to work
- To work with participating employees to identify safe walking routes and set personal goals
- To provide advice, support, encouragement and information to participating employees about the benefits of walking to work
- To offer support to participating employees through four contacts over a 10-week period (by email, face-to-face or telephone, depending on the workplace routines and environment)
- To provide feedback to the research team by completing a research diary and, if requested, taking part in an interview to discuss your experience of the scheme

The research team will also provide you with support and encouragement through regular contacts over a 10-week period (by email or telephone depending on workplace routine and environment).

### **Factors that influence people's behaviour**

There are many factors that influence people's behaviour including their own views and experiences, their relationships with others, where they spend time, and local and national policies. To encourage people to walk to work, it is important to think about the individual, their family commitments and relationships with colleagues, their workplaces, the wider environment, and public policies and guidelines.

#### **The individual**

At the individual level it is important to:

- Give employees information about the benefits of walking to work
- Help them to identify personal barriers to walking to work and how these can be overcome
- Help them identify routes and methods to increase walking during the journey to work (either walking all the way, or combining it with public transport or 'park and walk')
- Identify and agree goals
- Offer individual support and encouragement

#### **Family, friends and colleagues**

Families, friends, neighbours and work colleagues can influence behaviour by what they say and do. If they say positive things about walking to work this will support change, and it is even more encouraging if they walk to work themselves. So, it is important to:

- Identify and address specific barriers relating to family and work routines e.g. taking children to school, carrying heavy items
- Find colleagues and friends who will encourage each other to walk to work

#### **The workplace**

Workplace policies, procedures and facilities can create an environment that encourages and supports employees in walking to work. This can be achieved by:

- Providing lockers or changing rooms for a change of shoes or clothes
- Improving washing facilities e.g. wash basins in private cubicles to enable walkers to freshen up when they arrive at work
- Flexible working hours to accommodate the 'school run' or other family responsibilities
- Providing information about the benefits of walking to work
- Creating an environment in which employees are encouraged to walk to work e.g. putting up posters about the health benefits of walking, or joining in with 'walk to work' days and activities
- Valuing the contribution that employees make when they change from car driving to walking e.g. by paying a 'mileage allowance' for walking to meetings or other workplace activities
- Offering financial assistance to walkers, similar to that offered to cyclists in some workplaces e.g. help to buy walking shoes, rucksacks or wet weather clothing
- Providing free items to reward walkers e.g. workplace umbrellas

It may not be easy for employees to change things in their workplace, but employers may be willing to make changes if they are aware that helping employees to be more active can have benefits for the workplace. These may include:

- Employees' increased concentration and mental alertness
- Reduction in late arrivals because of greater certainty over journey time
- Reduce absenteeism
- Improved public image
- Savings in car parking costs

### **The wider environment**

It is easier and more pleasant to walk in some areas than others. Good quality pavements, safe places to cross roads, well-lit streets, seeing other walkers, and having interesting shops and facilities along the way can all contribute to a 'walkable' environment. It is important to:

- Identify safe and feasible walking routes
- Identify local groups and organisations that provide information and support to enhance the walking environment

### **Public policies**

Local and central government are keen to promote walking to work because of the benefits to health and the environment. Encouragement is given through:

- Websites and resources that offer information, support and encouragement to walk to work
- Initiatives and events e.g. Walk to Work week

### **Useful websites**

- [maps.google.co.uk](http://maps.google.co.uk) - can be used as a walking route planner
- [www.livingstreets.org.uk](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk) - lots of resources to encourage walking
- [www.walk4life.info](http://www.walk4life.info) - find a walk and track your progress
- [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/10000stepschallenge.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/10000stepschallenge.aspx) - information and encouragement to increase your daily step count
- <http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/> - support to get active, stay active
- <http://traveline.info/> - sustainable travel advice
- [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) - lots of information about healthy active travel
- [www.dft.gov.uk/think](http://www.dft.gov.uk/think) - the government's road safety campaign website

### **Recruiting employees**

All employees who are taking part in the Travel to Work study are eligible to take part in the Walk to Work scheme. We will provide you with a list of these employees and a pack for each of them. The research team have also provided your employer with a booklet with ideas about how they can support walking to work.

Your first task as the Walk to Work promoter will be to distribute the packs to all the employees on the list. Each pack contains a booklet '**Taking one step at a time**', together with a free pedometer for those who would like to try counting the number of steps they take.

Not all the employees who are taking part in the Travel to Work study (i.e. giving us information about their journeys to work) will be able to change the way they travel to work. However, please give all of them a pack. Your first contact with employees on the list will be to explain the scheme and ask if they would like to try increasing the amount of walking they do during their journey to work. The way you contact them is up to you and your employer. For some it may be sensible to have a larger group session, but for others it may be better on a one-to-one basis. You can decide this between you.

When you know which employees would like to try increasing the amount that they walk during the journey to work, your role is to offer support and encouragement to them through four contacts over the next 10 weeks. Some people may be happy with an email but others may prefer a longer chat. Again, you can decide this depending on the routines of your workplace and the people involved.

The research team will also contact you around four times during the 10-week period to see how you are getting on and to give you some support in your role as Walk to Work promoter.

## **The Walk to Work promoter's booklet: keeping a diary**

Throughout the booklet, we describe the purpose of each of the four contacts with employees and refer you to the relevant pages in the 'Taking one step at a time' booklet. We have also given you a page a week to record your thoughts and experiences. We would like you to tell us about:

- Support you have offered to walkers. For example: you had a chat with someone over lunch about a better route to avoid busy traffic, or: you texted someone to say "Well done" after several weeks of walking to work
- Issues raised by walkers about their journey to work. For example: reasons why someone felt they had to give up walking, or someone else telling you that they find it is easier to get to work on time if they walk
- Issues in the workplace. For example: a busy week when you just didn't have time to speak with anyone about walking to work, or; your employer arranging lockers for employees who walk to work and need somewhere to store a change of shoes

The information you give will be useful to help us understand if it is really possible to ask Walk to Work promoters in the workplace to encourage other people to walk to work.

### **Contact 1 – Getting Started**

Your first contact with participating employees will focus on:

- An overview of the 'Taking one step at a time' booklet
- Focussing on the benefits of walking to work
- Identifying barriers and thinking of possible solutions
- Setting goals for the short, intermediate and long-term
- Distributing pedometers to those who would like to use them
- Encouraging employees to keep a record in their booklet

Participants may already know of a suitable route to walk to work but, if they don't, you can help them to identify a route using a website such as [maps.google.co.uk](http://maps.google.co.uk) or a local A-Z street atlas.

### **Contact 2 - Support and encouragement**

After two weeks, we would like you to contact participating employees to check how they are getting on. During this second contact, we would like you to focus on the issue of support. You will need to judge whether some of the employees need extra support to reach their goals for walking to work. Support means giving assistance, encouragement, guidance and motivation to a person. The chances of people walking to work may be enhanced if they get support from family, friends or colleagues. Walking with a friend or colleague can make it a sociable activity, or perhaps make people feel safer. Some issues to consider are:

- Is it possible to put the walkers in touch with each other to give extra support and encouragement? Perhaps in email group or an informal chat over a coffee break?
- Do you need to give some one-to-one encouragement?
- Could you set up a 'buddying' scheme to enable people who live nearby to identify each other and walk to work together?
- It may be a good idea to go back to the list of benefits and barriers now that some employees have made a start in walking to work.
- Are there any simple measures the employer can take to create a supportive walking environment e.g. posters about walking in the staff canteen, free umbrellas for walkers?
- Are the walkers making use of websites that give information and support to walkers?

### **Contact 3 - Review of goals**

At about the half way point (week 5 or 6) it may be a good idea to review the employee's goals. Look back over their short, intermediate and long-term goals and refine them to better suit their capability and how they are currently getting on.

### **Contact 4 - Follow-up**

If an employee feels that they have not kept up the walking to work as originally planned due to some setback then it is a good idea to acknowledge this. Sometimes it takes a few attempts to find out what works and what doesn't. There may be an opportunity to encourage them to try again. Other people may be doing really well so this is a chance to give some praise and encouragement to keep going.

**Walk to Work promoter's booklet: sample diary page**

**Week 1.**

Week commencing: .....

Number of employees contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

Total time spent offering support to walkers: \_\_\_\_\_ hours \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

Support offered to walkers:

Issues raised by walkers:

Issues in the workplace: