Case Study

Green Commute Initiative

NHS
Hampshire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Overview

In a drive to reduce carbon emissions in line with net zero targets, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust implemented an inclusive and flexible Cycle to Work Scheme employee benefit with Green Commute Initiative. The scheme enables employees to switch to active travel for their commute whilst taking advantage of the substantial tax savings available under the scheme.

The Trust serves a population of approximately 600,000 people with a team of around 8,600 staff members working across three main hospital locations in Hampshire and West Berkshire.

NHS Climate Challenge

The NHS recognises that climate change is the biggest challenge to public health this century. The NHS makes up 4% of England's total carbon footprint, and 40% of the carbon footprint of the public sector, so there is an essential role for the NHS to play in meeting the net zero targets set under the Climate Change Act. Considerable progress has been made by the NHS to reduce its carbon footprint and an estimated 62% CO_2e reduction was achieved in 2020 (based on 1990 levels). At present, staff commuting represents 4% of the NHS national carbon footprint and the aim is to reduce this to 2% by 2045.

The Challenge For Hampshire Hospitals

Hampshire Hospitals has committed to become a sustainable organisation which is fully compliant with the NHS Net Zero 2040 plan.

The Trust aims to embed sustainability in all aspects of its work and in order to reduce its Scope 3 employee commuting emissions, it has developed smart travel arrangements for staff. In their 2021/22 submission, employee commuting emissions were calculated at 3,924 tCO_2e.

> *"A reliance on the car, busy working lives, family commitments, longer commutes and expensive public transport can make it difficult to choose sustainable modes of travel to and from our sites. By working with GCI we are pleased to provide an accessible and affordable solution to staff, enabling them to purchase good quality bikes and ebikes at a discount, which may help to support the switch to sustainable travel."*
>
> **Miranda Chubb, Sustainability Officer**

The Green Plan

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has a Green Plan which strives to incorporate sustainability into all aspects of its service provision. The plan outlines actions to take place over the next three years with ten areas of focus.

One of the focus areas is **travel and transport** with initiatives to make it easier for staff to choose active and sustainable travel options. As part of the work in this area, the Trust has developed a Travel and Transport Strategy with a roadmap to move towards a future that provides easily accessible and reliable sustainable travel and transport options. This also encompasses travel to hospital sites by the public as well as staff members.

The solution to get more people cycling

In 2020, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust appointed Green Commute Initiative to become the provider of the Cycle to Work benefit to the Trust's employees. The main attraction of switching to use GCI was the facility to have a higher scheme spend limit which is often restricted with other providers. GCI's reputation as a fair play scheme provider was a significant factor as its scheme has no 'ownership fees' enabling employees to make the maximum savings available to them.

About the scheme

The maximum spend is set at £5,000 which gives employees access to a wide range of bikes and accessories. A commuter-quality ebike will start from £2,500 whilst cargo bikes cost in the region of £4,000. Adapted cycles and trikes designed for those with mobility challenges can be costly but are also available on this scheme. The generous spend limit ensures the Trust's scheme is inclusive to all staff, giving choice to those with differing budgets, personal circumstances, and cycling requirements.

The salary sacrifice period allows for complete flexibility with employees given the option to spread payments over 12 to 60 months. Having a long period to spread payments over makes purchases more affordable and manageable as the monthly salary reduction is small. A £5,000 purchase spread over 60 months is a net pay reduction of just £57 per month.

Scheme facts:

- Started June 2020
- Offered to all 8,500 employees
- Spend: up to £5000
- Salary sacrifice period: 12–60 months
- Savings: 32–47%

Results to date

During the three years that the scheme has run, there have been more than 150 orders with an average order value of £2,200. The most popular salary sacrifice period is 12 months, followed by 24 months and then 60 months. Just under half (46%) of the bikes were ebikes and there was even a cargo bike and a tandem bike acquired through the scheme.

If we assume that the majority of the scheme participants are basic rate taxpayers, then employee savings to date are approximately £106,000. The savings will undoubtedly be higher as some staff will be higher rate taxpayers. Please note that tax band data is not collected.

To date, the Trust has saved more than £45,000 through reduced employer NIC.

Typical HHFT employee savings:

- Average bike cost £2,200
- Net pay reduction £125 x 12 months
- Total savings £700 (32%)

Traditional
80

Ebike
69

Cargo
1

Tandem
1

Ebikes; the future of commuting

Ebikes are popular with those new to cycling or wanting to improve their physical fitness. They are also great for improving confidence and giving extra help when getting away from junctions or traffic lights. The e-assist from the battery can help you go further, faster, with less effort. The other great thing is that you don't get hot and sweaty so you can wear your normal work attire for the journey.

Cargo bikes
the car replacement for short journeys

The cargo bike in action

In 2022, Trust employee, Jennifer Barker was looking to make a change to her commute and used the Cycle to Work Scheme to get an electric cargo bike; the Urban Arrow.

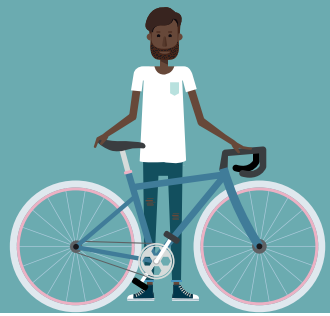
Prior to making the switch, Jennifer used to either drive or take public transport to get to work. In her quest to improve fitness and reduce her carbon footprint, Jennifer made a decision to start cycling to work. Jennifer is a busy working mother and needed to consider how to get her children to school – an electric cargo bike seemed to be the obvious solution. Using the bike for both her commute and the school run means Jennifer uses the bike several times a day for about 40 minutes in total. A fantastic way to introduce exercise into her daily routine.

"The bike has changed the way I live my life. Instead of dreading the commute to work and thinking about how to park the car in a busy urban environment, I pop the three kids in the front and we breeze along past the traffic. Everywhere we go people smile and ask about the bike. There is no way we would have been able to afford a one-off payment so the Cycle to Work Scheme has been life changing for us. GCI was really flexible and easy to use, I would 100% recommend the scheme for people who are interested in changing their lives for the better".

Active travel achievements with the Trust

The Trust's sustainability team has been working hard to bring down emissions and to achieve the goals set out in the Green Plan. This has included working with a range of partners to improve the available options and to support the uptake of sustainable travel. To date, the Trust has introduced the following:

- ✓ All permanent members of staff have access to the Cycle to Work Scheme with GCI. The scheme is actively promoted via the Trust's numerous communications channels including social, newsletters and intranet.
- ✓ Visits from a Bike Doctor to provide staff with free bike maintenance checks.
- ✓ Purchase of a bike pool of eight ebikes for all employees to try free of charge either on short- or long-term use.
- ✓ Free use of the park and ride at Winchester Hospital.
- ✓ A Cycling and Active Travel Group has been established which is run by employees to support colleagues who use active travel for their commute and to encourage more people to do so.
- ✓ Access to shower and changing facilities is available at some sites with more planned.
- ✓ Secure cycle parking has been installed with further spaces in the pipeline.
- ✓ Business travel has been reduced by utilising video conferencing and offering regular shuttle bus service between two sites.
- ✓ Secured assistance from Sustrans to develop and implement the Green Travel Plan.
- ✓ Reduced patient travel through digital care redesign.
- ✓ Some hospital locations have access to segregated cycle paths within the local community.
- ✓ Supporting flexible and remote working.



About Green Commute Initiative

Green Commute Initiative (GCI) is an innovative and award-winning Cycle to Work Scheme provider and pioneered the no-limits scheme model which was adopted by the DfT. Established in 2016, GCI is a not-for-profit social enterprise with a fair play ethos.

Crown Commercial Service Supplier

NHS Shared Business Services FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT SUPPLIER

Citation ISO Certification — Information security management — ISO 27001: 2013 — REGISTERED
Certificate No:353682020

Citation ISO Certification — Quality management — ISO 9001: 2015 — REGISTERED
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