



Sustainable travel inspires smooth relocation

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) places environmental sustainability as a key priority and actively seeks to support its 37,000 students and 4,300 staff with their travel needs

Its commitment to sustainable travel was confirmed in its recent top 10 place in the 'People and Planet' ratings, which look at 151 UK universities according to their sustainable credentials. This is the third time they have been in the top 10.

A significant and ongoing challenge for the university relates to the daily commuting patterns of staff and the limited availability of car parking.

The university's recent estate consolidation culminated in the opening of the new Brooks Building, in Hulme, and the relocation of around 500 staff. Travel and access issues were particular prevalent when planning the development, during the transfer of people and following occupation.

The challenges associated with car parking, and the need to promote sustainable travel, has required a considered and ongoing commitment to travel planning measures to help staff with their journeys. The university began working with expert advisors from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) in June 2013 with a clear commitment to reduce congestion and demand for parking at its sites, lower energy consumption and minimise carbon emissions.

The university has observed a 3% reduction in single occupancy car trips across the Manchester campus in the last 12 months.

Key initiatives included:

- 'Personal Travel Planning' staff sessions with TfGM advisors, with more than 100 employees receiving advice, personalised journey plans and discounted tickets
- A series of all staff bulletins which were dedicated to promoting sustainable travel
- An interest free loan for public transport season tickets available to all staff
- Free TfGM cycle training and maintenance sessions for all staff who wish to cycle to work
- Promotion of new transport infrastructure in the Oxford Road corridor, including cross-city bus and improved cycling routes
- The subsidy of a new bus service linking key staff/student catchments with the Brooks building
- The launch of a Cycle to Work Scheme
- Use of a TfGM Sustainable Transport Grant to install cycle lockers for 38 bikes.

Andrew Taylor, Travel Plan Manager at MMU, said: "The Personal Travel Planning undertakings and support from TfGM have played a critical role in raising awareness of travel options, promoting alternatives to car based trips and giving colleagues the confidence to leave their cars at home. The wider support of the TfGM Travel Choices Team has also been invaluable in helping to engage with colleagues, delivering infrastructure improvements and understanding best practice."