



Smart commuting toolkit

Reducing employer carbon emissions by improving employee and business travel options

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Introduction

What is smart commuting?

London is constantly changing, and with that the ways people work within it. How and when people get to work is changing too. Smart commuting can help employers reduce emissions by supporting employees to make more comfortable, efficient and predictable journeys to and from work. This can also benefit the productivity, resilience and culture of the employer.

Smart commuting could include avoiding busy public transport routes, introducing policies to allow commuting at quieter times, or encouraging people to travel more actively and sustainably by walking, wheeling or cycling. Wheeling refers to the use of pushchairs, scooters, wheelchairs, mobility scooters and other mobility or carrying aids. The guidance in this document shows tried and tested ways of making a difference that have proven benefits for employee and employer.

Smart commuting is not a new idea, but one that evolves in line with changing working practices. In this guide you'll find a series of ideas that you can take forward to realise the benefits of smart commuting.

Who is this guidance for?

Whether you're an individual employer or a business support group seeking to help your members improve their commuting practices, the guidance in this document can unlock significant tangible business benefits. It can be scaled, from bespoke individual circumstances to area-wide initiatives, helping commuters across London to do their part to reduce emissions.

Individual employers

Through implementing smart commuting initiatives, employers can begin to decarbonise their work-related travel and contribute to their duty of care for staff wellbeing while realising economic, productivity and talent retention benefits. They are in a critical position to influence employee travel habits, for example, through policies and facilities that allow staff to shape their commutes to meet their specific needs, or by educating and inspiring employees through internal company networks or travel champions. The ideas found in this guidance can act as a springboard for employers to implement these methods.

Business support groups and business improvement districts

Through collaboration and knowledge exchange, business support groups and business improvement districts have a brilliant opportunity to support their respective businesses in improving employee commutes. They are able to harness their collective power to deliver change at scale, shaping the identity of a geographic area or culture of a collection of workplaces. Furthermore, they represent a valuable forum in which to share experiences, ideas and techniques surrounding commuting, enhancing the potential impact and relevance of initiatives.

London business improvement districts say that initiatives to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling can lead to:

- Improved business performance
- Attracting more customers, businesses and staff
- Securing investment and retail spend
- Increasing the vibrancy of an area

£3.8bn 

Annual cost of congestion to London's economy through delays, missed deliveries and inefficient fuel usage, INRIX (2024)

63% 

of Londoners don't achieve at least 20 minutes of active travel per day. Active commuting is an effective way to achieve this as part of a routine, Transport for London

1 in 4 

More than a quarter of Londoners cycle



Smart commuting has many benefits for your employees

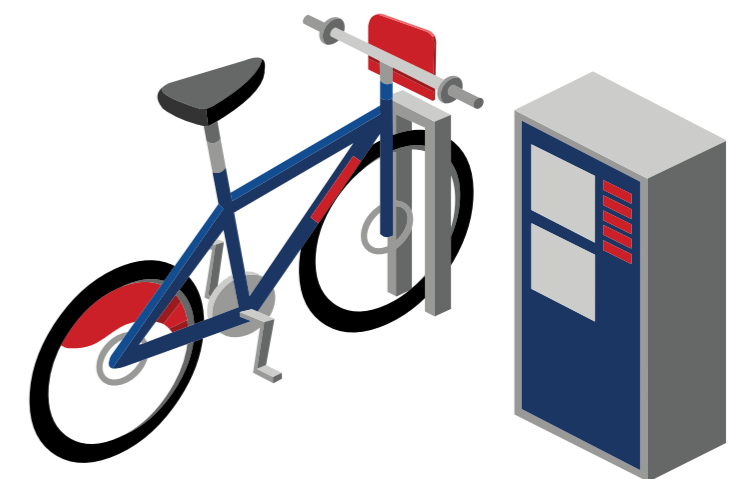
The role of employees

Smart commuting is all about supporting your employees to improve their travel to and from work, and as everyone's commute is different, different initiatives will have different impacts on different members of staff. Communicating with employees to understand what would support them and testing a range of solutions is vital in engaging your whole workforce.

Transport for London (TfL) research conducted in 2022 has shown that while employees are often keen to make their commutes more comfortable, efficient and reliable, changing embedded routines can be challenging. That's why employees need support and encouragement from their employers to try new options. When both parties have a shared enthusiasm a positive cycle of evolving staff travel initiatives can result, where employees enjoy a better commute and their employer sees the benefits of a more engaged workforce that feel heard and cared for.

'Businesses have the opportunity to reset the relationship with the office, including how their people choose to get there. Active commuting not only helps individuals and businesses reduce their carbon footprint, but are also proven to have an overall positive impact on individual wellbeing.'

Rob Harris, Chair of the British Council for Office Research Committee



How can smart commuting benefit your business?

Supporting your employees to improve their commutes has the potential to significantly improve a range of measures beyond the commute itself.

Benefit	Evidence
Increased productivity and business performance	Encouraging active commuting not only improves the physical health of employees, but also enhances their job performance, contributing to economic benefits to employers
Contributing to your corporate social responsibility targets	Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions are made up of all indirect emissions, apart from those associated with purchased energy, that occur in the value chain of an organisation. On average commuting makes up 10 to 15 per cent of scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions
Healthier employees and fewer sick days	Active commuting is associated with approximately a 9 per cent decreased risk of cardiovascular disease and a 30 per cent decreased risk of type 2 diabetes
Mitigating parking issues	10 to 20 bicycles can typically be stored in the space required for one vehicle
Happier employees with improved wellbeing contributing to improved staff retention	Employees who walk or wheel to work, or travel by public transport report higher leisure time satisfaction and better mental health than those who drive
Financial savings for employees	57 per cent of bike share users agree that bike sharing saves them money
A workplace culture of care	74 per cent of employees report they are more effective at their job when they feel heard



On an average weekday 1.2 million work-related trips are made across London by train, London Underground and bus

Taking action

The most effective way to help your employees improve their commutes is to support a variety of smart commuting initiatives. This guide sets out four areas for action, with each containing scalable and adaptable measures that can transform people's journeys to and from work. You could choose to combine a series of these to have a higher impact, or identify one thing that could be delivered first as a quick win.

Four areas for action:

- Encouraging public transport use
- Better commuting
- Encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling
- Making more trips without a car

'A third of car trips made by Londoners as a driver or passenger could be walked in under 25 minutes.'

Transport for London, 2018

Bringing employees along with you

Bringing your employees along in the process of introducing smart commuting initiatives is crucial to their success. Your employees know their commutes better than anyone else, so their observations will be important in implementing the most impactful solutions. You could gather insights informally through discussions and peer-to-peer networks, or through more formal methods such as forums, surveys or interviews.

Additionally, building a sense of ownership in schemes among staff can boost engagement and openness to change. Trialling initiatives with a small number of employees is a quick way to test what works and what doesn't. When introducing initiatives, it is worth considering different variables that may influence their success in order to maximise their impact. For example, a walking, wheeling or cycling scheme implemented in the spring or early summer is more likely to bring widespread and longer lasting change than one introduced in autumn or winter.

Smart commuting is not a static, one-off event, but rather a dynamic and evolving endeavour. Ongoing knowledge sharing is a critical step in assessing existing initiatives, exploring new ideas, and ensuring that all employees are up to speed on the options available to them.



Supporting smart commuting initiatives helps your employees make changes

Encouraging public transport use

The fundamentals of travelling to work via the Tube, bus, train, tram or River Bus

Travelling via public transport can provide freedom, efficiency and flexibility to employees. TfL are continuously improving London's public transport, for example, introducing the Bus Hopper Fare, where for the price of a single trip, unlimited journeys are allowed on London Buses and trams within one hour of starting your first journey, Superloop bus services and the Elizabeth line that offers fast, comfortable and air conditioned travel.

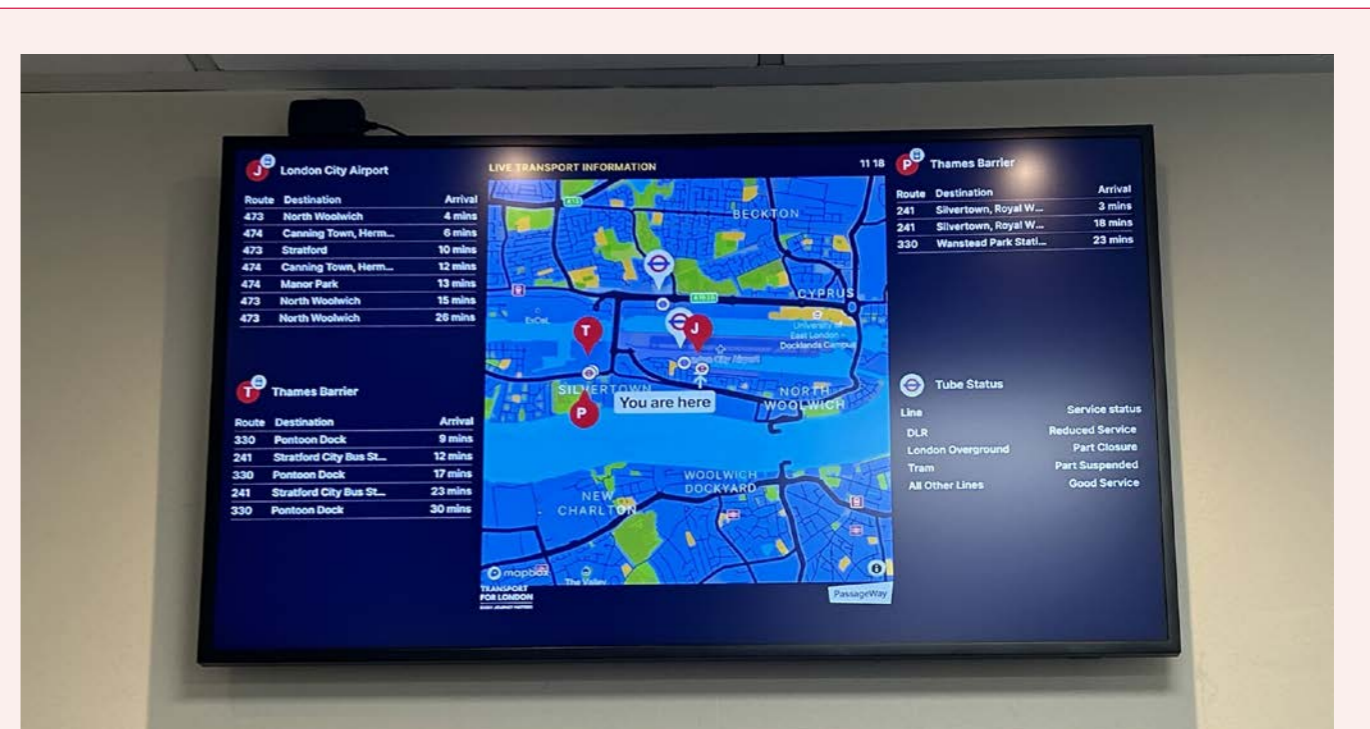
A 2019 study found that those who commute by public transport had higher leisure time satisfaction and better mental health than those who drive. This is likely to benefit employers through reduced sick leave and a happier and more engaged workforce. To realise these benefits, you could help employees to find the most suitable routes for their journeys to and from work, or inform them of fares and potential discounts that are available.

Provide employees with information about different ways to reach the workplace

Highlighting a range of public transport options gives your employees the freedom and knowledge to choose what works best for them. This helps to make public transport more accessible and appealing. You can use the [London tube and rail map](#) and [bus routes map](#) to identify the nearest public transport stops to your workplace. Also, if you're near the River Thames the [Uber Boat by Thames Clippers](#) could be an attractive option.

Share tools with employees for personalised routing

Circulating tools and resources among your employees that allow them to generate public transport routes from their front door to the workplace can showcase the efficiency and flexibility of public transport. Presented with options, your employees can compare aspects such as time, cost, comfort and sustainability to identify the best journey for them. The [TfL Journey planner](#) and [TfL Go](#) app both have filters for different transport modes, and allow the user to prioritise different aspects, such as step-free access, minimising walking, and avoiding changes.



Get your business a bespoke 'digital sign'

TfL can provide organisations with bespoke 'digital sign' links that display live bus and/or river service arrivals in their locale on their own screens. Placing these in your

workplace can help your employees plan their public transport journeys. Find out more information on TfL's [Travel guidance for businesses](#) webpage.



Supporting disabled commuters to use public transport increases travel confidence

Help your employees identify if they qualify for any travel discounts

Sharing information on fares and discounts with your employees can support them in making savings on their commute. Using pay as you go with contactless or an Oyster card is usually the cheapest way to travel on London's public transport for hybrid workers, as it automatically applies TfL's daily and weekly caps which limit how much you pay for all your journeys in one day or week. For those commuting more regularly a Travelcard season ticket may be more suitable. Creating an online account and accessing it through TfL Go can help employees to track their travel history, top up their Oyster card, and expense any business travel fares, if applicable.

TfL offers a range of free and discounted travel concessions that may suit your employees. These include concessions for Londoners aged 60 and over, those aged between 16 and 30 with a suitable railcard, people with disabilities, and apprentices in the first year of their apprenticeship. A full list of discounts and other fares information can be found on TfL's [Travel guidance for businesses](#) webpage.

Setup a season ticket loan scheme to help your employees save money

A season ticket loan is a benefit that you can offer your workforce that allows them to spread the cost of a public transport season ticket over a period of time using an interest-free loan. The employee then pays back the loan in instalments taken from each payslip. This scheme can support employees in adopting public transport as a commute by making it more affordable. You can find more information online, including by visiting the [UK Government's Public Transport Expenses and Benefits](#) webpage.

Support disabled employees to commute by sustainable modes

TfL provides a number of services to help disabled employees plan and make journeys that are accessible for them. [TfL's Accessible Travel in London leaflet](#) provides information on how to plan an accessible journey, the support that is available from staff at stations and on buses, priority seating and assisted transport services. Additionally, there are accessibility champions available in TfL's contact centre, who can provide employees with tailored accessibility advice for their commutes. To find out more visit TfL's [Contact us about accessibility](#) webpage.

Better commuting

How to maximise the attractiveness of public transport commuting

Making small tweaks to public transport journeys could have a big impact on their speed, cost or comfort. This can lead to better commutes for your employees, helping to reduce stress and improve productivity in the workplace. To achieve these results, you could promote knowledge sharing among employees, allow staff to work at different times or from different locations.

Encourage employees to share commuting knowledge

People trust their peer network, so conversations between colleagues can be a powerful tool to inspire employees to try something new. Establishing physical and digital forums and networks where staff can share their commuting 'hacks' keeps smart commuting front and centre in the workplace and acts as a conduit for fresh ideas. This approach taps into the intelligence and experience of your entire workforce, multiplying the knowledge that can be shared and lead to more informed and deliberate travel choices. These spaces could be managed by 'travel champions', members of staff who are interested in supporting others to improve their commutes.



TfL's top tips for better commuting

The TfL [Travel guidance for businesses](#) webpage contains a wealth of resources to help your business improve its travel within London. The page includes videos of TfL's top tips for better commuting. Sharing this with your employees could help them to achieve some quick wins during their commutes.

Make the most of flexible and hybrid working opportunities

Flexible and hybrid working policies are a great enabler of smart commuting. If it is possible within your business, staggered or flexible working hours can allow staff to commute outside the busiest times and days, making their journey more pleasant. It could also mean they could travel off-peak, saving them money. More information can be found on the TfL [Tube and rail fares](#) webpage.

Having less pressure to arrive at fixed times, employees could explore new routes in pursuit of an improved journey. London's public transport often provides a range of possible routes from A to B, and sometimes those that are only slightly slower than the fastest can be considerably more comfortable. Tools such as the TfL Journey planner and the TfL Go app can be used to compare different routes.

20% 

fewer customers travel on the Tube between 07:30 and 08:00 and 16 per cent fewer between 08:30 and 09:00, compared to between 08:00 and 08:30 (2024)

28% 

fewer customers travel during the morning peak on the Tube on Fridays and 15 per cent fewer on Mondays, compared to Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (2024)

Support employees to integrate walking, wheeling and cycling in their public transport journeys

Nearly all public transport journeys in London already include walking, wheeling or cycling at the beginning or end of the trip, however, supporting your employees to integrate active travel with their public transport journeys more creatively could lead to further health and business benefits. Circulating the TfL Walking Tube Map among your staff may highlight parts of their Tube journey where walking to the next stop could be more comfortable or faster. Encouraging a similar approach with Santander Cycles has even more potential due to the increased efficiency and speed of cycling compared to walking or wheeling. You can use the [Santander Cycles map](#) to pinpoint relevant docking stations.



‘There is no minimum threshold that needs to be reached before physical activity becomes beneficial.’

World Health Organisation (2022)¹



The Santander Cycles fleet contains 2,000 e-bikes

¹ Walking and cycling: latest evidence to support policy-making and practice. p.35

Encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling

How to boost walking, wheeling and cycling for the benefit of your business

Walking, wheeling and cycling, collectively named active travel, has the potential to transform your employees' commutes, making them more flexible, reliable, sustainable and enjoyable, as well as healthier, faster and more straightforward. This has a multitude of positive implications for your business in the form of higher productivity, fewer sick days and sharper performance. Employees who walk, wheel or cycle to work report higher job, life and leisure time satisfaction than those who drive. Effective supporting measures from employers and business improvement districts can help staff to transition to active travel. Some of the ideas below could help you to achieve this.

Provide resources, demos and training to aid staff confidence

Many people struggle with a lack of confidence when it comes to active travel, especially with cycling. However this often dissipates as someone travels actively more regularly. You can support staff in becoming more confident through a variety of means. This could include sharing resources such as walking app [Go Jauntly](#), which allows users to generate 'green routes' from A to B that are quieter and less polluted, or TfL's [Cycleways](#) webpage, which contains detailed maps of many TfL cycleways. Also, cycle routing on the [TfL Journey planner](#) generates three different route options to cater for different confidence levels: fast, moderate and easy.

Equally an employer could play an active role in organising demonstration walks, wheels or rides near the workplace to boost confidence. Often people feel safer and more motivated among their peer group, and living the experience themselves can help to alleviate preconceived fears. Most London boroughs offer free 'on the street' cycle training to anyone who lives or works within them. Visit the [TfL Cycle skills](#) webpage to find the training available for your specific borough.

Introduce schemes to incentivise active travel

Fifty per cent of Londoners that are open to cycling state that they have nowhere secure to store a bike at home. Bike share offers a solution to this barrier, especially e-bike share due to its longer potential journey distance and lower effort threshold. To support your employees you could setup a Santander Cycles business account through TfL's [Travel guidance for businesses](#) webpage. There are a number of discounts available for Santander Cycles subscriptions. These include discounts for those with a Disabled Person's or Older Person's Freedom Pass, and those who have graduated university in the last 5 years. You could also establish a pool bike scheme for your business or business improvement district. CoMoUK has a [Workplace Pool Bikes guide](#) which can help you get started.

For employees who are interested in purchasing their own bike but not yet ready to commit, point them in the direction of the [Try Before You Bike](#) scheme by Peddle My Wheels. This allows people to hire a bike, then decide whether to purchase it with the hire fees taken off the price, or return it. Your business could also join a [Cycle to Work](#) scheme, which allows your employees to benefit from tax-free cycle and cycling accessory purchases without any cost to the business.

Encouraging your employees to travel actively through financial incentives such as rewards or discounts on active travel-related products or services is a great way

to boost adoption. These are most effective when aligned to other employee benefit offers, and they could be enhanced during events or challenges for further impact.

Organise events and challenges to engage employees

Setting up events, action weeks and active travel challenges are a great way to engage employees to try a new way to travel. They can also be tied into regional or national schemes, for example Cycle to Work Day or National Walking Month. Focus should be placed on encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling more, not just rewarding those who already travel actively.



CoMoUK Annual Bike Share Report 2023

69% 

of bike share users cycled more frequently after joining a bike share scheme

80% 

of bike share users agree that bike share provides them with mental health benefits

86% 

of bike share users agree that bike share makes their trips quicker

Offer facilities for those walking, wheeling and cycling

Providing facilities at your workplace to make walking, wheeling and cycling convenient and comfortable is critical to support employees in trying active travel. In-demand facilities include showers, changing areas, lockers and spaces to dry wet clothes. 64 per cent of Londoners that are open to cycling state that there is not enough cycle parking at their destination. Ensuring there is adequate secure cycle storage for your business, including space for all types of cycles, such as bicycles, adapted cycles and cargo cycles can be helpful. If entering your workplace by cycle is as convenient as walking or wheeling, it can play a significant role in making active travel a visible and appealing option to your employees.

Go Jauntly green route example between Edgware Road and Marble Arch

This route between Edgware Road station and Marble Arch station provides a good example of linking two busy stations together through the identification of a low-pollution route avoiding Edgware Road. You can find more examples of greener walking routes using the Go Jauntly app.



Route roads:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Edgware Road station | 5 Crawford Place | 9 George Street |
| 2 Chapel Street | 6 Seymour Place | 10 Great Cumberland Place |
| 3 Transept Street | 7 Montagu Place | 11 Marble Arch |
| 4 Homer Street | 8 Bryanston Square | |

Making more trips without a car

Reducing car trips to the workplace to realise the benefits of sustainable commuting

With congestion already costing London's economy £3.8 billion per year, encouraging commuting methods that take up less road space is critical to managing travel around London. While replacing car use with more sustainable modes carries London-wide improvements in social equality and air quality, your business can also benefit directly from a healthier, more engaged and more productive workforce. Visit TfL's [Travel guidance for businesses](#) webpage to find case studies of other organisations that have supported their staff to reduce car commuting.

30x  

Bicycle traffic is estimated 30 times more spatially efficient than driving²

Why switch out of the car?

A 2019 study found that people who drive to and from work have lower job and life satisfaction, as well as worse mental health, than those who take public transport or walk, wheel or cycle. By supporting and encouraging your employees to switch out of the car, you can realise the multitude of business benefits detailed in this guidance. To achieve this it is important to work with employees to understand what incentives would encourage them to try alternative modes to the car, as well as understanding the barriers and challenges they may face in doing so. This promotes change as a positive opportunity rather than an obstruction to existing routines and can help limit resistance.

The [Sustainable Travel Hierarchy](#) is a diagram that outlines the sustainability of different transport modes. It can be a useful tool when considering which initiatives to introduce within your business. For example, while promoting electric vehicles is more sustainable than promoting internal combustion

engine vehicles, a more impactful option would be to encourage public transport. [Chapter 7 of Greenhouse Gas Protocol's Technical Guidance for Calculating Scope 3 Emissions](#) outlines a straightforward technique to calculate your greenhouse gas emissions from employee travel, and compare the implications of switching to different modes.

Introduce a car club to inspire a shift away from private car use

Car clubs offer an alternative model to private car ownership for your employees, allowing them to benefit from access to a car when necessary while also realising the advantages of other more sustainable transport modes. Specific benefits of car clubs can be found on CoMoUK's [Shared Cars](#) webpage. Car club schemes have the potential to reduce car ownership, inspiring a shift away from private car use to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport instead. Furthermore, by selecting electric or hybrid vehicles for your car club fleet you could reduce your organisation's greenhouse gas emissions.

'A shift to less carbon intensive modes of transportation such as public transport and active travel will not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, but also deliver significant health and wellbeing benefits to the individual and wider society.'

NHS (2023)³

² World Health Organisation (2022). Walking and cycling: latest evidence to support policy-making and practice, page 35

³ NHS Net Zero Travel and Transport Strategy, page 10

Promote car sharing among employees

Car sharing may be an option to reduce your business's Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions and help your employees make their commutes less polluting. This is when colleagues travel to and from work in the same car, meaning less emissions are produced per passenger. While this solution is more sustainable than driving individually, some of the health, wellbeing, work performance or cost benefits of other more sustainable modes may not be seen. Visit CoMoUK's [Shared rides](#) webpage for more information.

Implement an electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme

If switching out of the car for their commute isn't an option, you could help employees purchase a more sustainable vehicle through an electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme. This allows your employees to pay for an electric vehicle using a portion of their salary before tax is deducted, saving them money and reducing the upfront cost of an electric car. Compared to active travel and public transport, this initiative only carries carbon reduction benefits if employees who currently travel by petrol or diesel vehicle replace their car with an electric vehicle, and not any employee health, wellbeing or performance advantages.

2.5x 

Compared to pedestrians and cyclists, drivers tend to be exposed to the highest pollution concentrations, at around 2.5 times that of background concentrations



Electric car charging facilities can encourage employees to switch to sustainable vehicles

Further information

Table of resources in this guidance

Resource	Link
TfL Travel guidance for businesses webpage	tfl.gov.uk/info-for/business-and-advertisers/travel-guidance-for-businesses
London Tube and rail map	tfl.gov.uk/maps
London bus routes map	tfl.gov.uk/maps/bus
Uber Boat by Thames Clippers	thamesclippers.com/plan-your-journey/route-map
TfL Journey planner	tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey
TfL Go app (iOS)	apps.apple.com/gb/app/tfl-go-live-tube-bus-rail/id1419541638
TfL Go app (Android)	play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.gov.tfl.gotfl
UK Government Public Transport Expenses and Benefits	https://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-public-transport
TfL Transport accessibility	tfl.gov.uk/transport-accessibility/
TfL Top Tips for Better Journeys to Work video	youtu.be/pMgAV4Cljig
Santander Cycles Map	santandercycles.tfl.gov.uk/map

Resource	Link
Taking cycles on public transport	tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/cycles-on-public-transport
Go Jauntly (iOS)	apps.apple.com/gb/app/go-jauntly-walks-nature/id1150399087
Go Jauntly (Android)	play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.gojauntly.app
TfL Cycleways	tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/routes-and-maps/cycleways
Cycle skills courses and training	tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/cycle-skills
CoMoUK Workplace Pool Bikes guide	como.org.uk/documents/workplace-pool-bikes
Peddle My Wheels Try Before You Bike scheme	peddlemywheels.com/products
Cycle to Work scheme	gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-to-work-scheme-implementation-guidance
Greenhouse Gas Protocol commuting emissions calculator	https://ghgprotocol.org/scope-3-calculation-guidance-2
CoMoUK Shared cars	como.org.uk/shared-cars/overview-and-benefits
CoMoUK Shared rides	como.org.uk/shared-rides/overview-and-benefits

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