



Pool bikes for business

Contents

Introduction	3
What is a pool bike scheme?	3
Who is this guide for?	3
What are the benefits of a pool bike scheme?	3
Employer Benefits	4
Financial benefits	4
Reduced travel expenses	4
Time savings and convenience.....	4
Reduced demand for car parking.....	4
Enhanced Corporate Social Responsibility	5
Staff benefits	5
Improving staff health and fitness	6
Improved staff travel options.....	6
Behavioural barriers	7
Institutional barriers	7
Personal barriers	7
Setting up a pool bike scheme	10
Step 1 Building the business case.....	11
Step 2 Internal planning	13
Step 3 Obtaining bikes, equipment and storage	17
Step 4 Launching the scheme.....	19
Ongoing management	20
Regular publicity and promotion	22
Additional help and relevant organisations	23

Introduction

Increasingly, organisations are looking to improve transport options for their employees. Changes in how employees travel to and from work, and make journeys during the working day, can save time and money for both them and their employer, and provide social and environmental benefits too.

The purpose of this document is to answer the practical questions that might arise when an organisation introduces a pool bike scheme. A range of measures are outlined within this document, which will maximise the return on investment by making the use of pool bikes a viable and sustainable transport option that is popular with its users.

Properly managed pool bike schemes can provide a positive return on investment. Those that respond positively to this challenge and encourage cycling to work will find that their corporate and social responsibility (CSR) credentials are enhanced.

What is a pool bike scheme?

A workplace pool bike scheme provides bikes and safety equipment for use by employees. Pool bikes can be used by employees for any kind of journey, but are typically used for work-related journeys. These might include trips to local meetings, travel between sites and visiting clients.

Pool bikes are generally kept in a central location and can be booked out by employees who have certified themselves as competent to cycle safely on public roads.

Who is this guide for?

Many different kinds of organisation can benefit from introducing a bike pool for employees, including private businesses, public sector bodies and universities. This guide is designed to help any organisation interested in setting up a workplace bike pool.

What are the benefits of a pool bike scheme?

A pool bike scheme can:

- Generate financial benefits for the employer
- Benefit staff through improved health, fitness and mental well being
- Help improve air quality
- Enhance CSR reputation

Employer Benefits

Financial benefits

Although the introduction of a pool bike scheme requires up front funding, it is investment that can be rapidly recouped through the savings generated.

Reduced travel expenses

Using bicycles for work trips that would otherwise be used by cars or taxis immediately reduces car mileage expenses, taxi and public transport fares, car parking charges and pool car and car club costs.

Time savings and convenience

One of the greatest benefits of cycling is the speed and convenience with which short journeys can be made. Even when cycling at a moderate pace, a journey of three miles can be made in an average of just 20 minutes. This compares well against a three-mile bus ride in Swindon which would take about the same time.

For short trips, where taxis are expensive and public transport can be indirect, a pool bike can save time and be more convenient. The cost savings generated can also be used to offset the costs of introducing the pool bike scheme, and in many instances provide a positive return.

While public transport in Swindon continues to improve, there are still some short journeys where no convenient, quick public transport link is available. Pool bikes can efficiently fill this gap and provide a door-to-door solution where the normal approach would be employees bringing their own car to work or taking a taxi.

Reduced demand for car parking

The provision of pool bikes may result in a reduction in the number of car parking spaces provided, for example if employees no longer need to bring their cars to work for business use. This can result in significant cost savings over time if spaces have to be leased or if land is freed up for more profitable use.

Pure Offices

Pure Offices on Kembrey Park in Swindon are serviced offices for small businesses. In 2014 they invested in a pool bike that could be shared between the various occupiers.

Parking is at a premium at the business park, and Pure Offices have found the pool bike enables staff to walk or get the bus to work, whilst being able to use the pool bike to visit clients during the day.

Enhanced Corporate Social Responsibility

Having a cycling ethos in an organisation will enhance its corporate social responsibility (CSR). Cycle use demonstrates the organisation's commitment to improving staff wellbeing, to cutting down on its emissions and, where cycle use replaces car use, to minimising its impact on immediate neighbours through fewer vehicle movements. An effective CSR strategy can enhance relationships with employees, customers, investors and other stakeholders such as a local authority.



Cycling is clearly welcomed at this Swindon employer

Staff benefits

Improving staff health and fitness

Government guidance recognises the importance of increasing physical activity levels to help prevent and manage more than 20 health conditions and diseases (including cancer, coronary heart disease and diabetes) and to promote mental wellbeing. The guidance recommends that employers in organisations of all sizes should promote physical activity.

The Department of Health has recommended that adults aged between 19 and 64 – the bulk of the workforce – should do around 2.5 hours of moderate intensity exercise each week. This is best achieved in bouts of 10 minutes or more, for example 30 minutes at least five days a week.

Research suggests that, on average, cyclists live two years longer than non-cyclists and take 15 per cent fewer days off work through illness. So investing in the health of employees, by including cycling as part of a weekly or daily routine, can bring business benefits such as reduced sickness absence, increased loyalty and better staff retention.

Improved staff travel options

Pool bikes offer an immediately accessible, door-to-door travel option for work related trips. They also offer flexibility in route choice and guaranteed journey times. Where folding bikes are used they can be combined with trips using public transport or other vehicles.

Research Councils

“We have three foldable Brompton bikes that are available for staff to use. Where we are situated close to the railway station they are generally used by people who are travelling to meetings on the train.

It’s an ideal option for the more environmentally and health conscious employees, not to mention it helps to save the councils in taxi fees at the other end. We have a small group of regular users and they present a real environmental and cost saving opportunity, especially if we can get a greater up take in usage.”

Behavioural barriers

Success of a pool bike scheme depends on support and interest from staff and particularly, senior management. For many, cycling may be something they have not done since childhood and have never considered as a possible means of transport. Yet barriers can often be easily overcome.

Institutional barriers

Barrier	How it can be overcome
Perceived lack of funds for the scheme or unwillingness to allocate a budget	Put together a business case. (See page 11)
Insufficient space on or near the site for bike storage and other facilities	Consider folding bikes which can be easily stored indoors
Concerns over insurance cover and potential liabilities	Most organisations find that their insurance covers staff when engaged on business trips. (See page 16) There are also cycle-specific insurance schemes available (See contacts page 23)

Personal barriers

Barrier	How it can be overcome
Concerns over safety	Offer cycle training (see page 23) Display cycle map to show where the off-road paths are.
Insufficient ability or confidence to ride a bike	Offer cycle training (see page 23)
Lack of interest in cycling	Organise taster sessions at lunchtimes and use existing enthusiastic cyclists as a catalyst
Long established travel habits that don't include cycling, and the feeling that it is too late to make a change	Set up a bicycle user group (BUG) so that existing cyclists can support people new to cycling. Organise taster sessions at lunchtimes. Establish a cycle buddy scheme through the BUG, so experienced cyclists can encourage and advise newcomers on their journey to work
Poor health and fitness or hilly terrain, making cycling difficult or strenuous	Consider electric bikes. Organise trials before purchasing and give new users taster sessions
Worries about appearing sweaty and untidy when arriving at work	Point out cycling can be as low intensity as walking. Offer taster sessions and raise awareness of showers etc Consider electric bikes

Concerns that work clothes are unsuitable for cycling and will be damaged	Offer taster sessions with city/hybrid bikes and use existing enthusiastic cyclists as a catalyst Provide suitable jackets and over trousers, and review with users
Inconvenience of carrying accessories, such as helmets and lights, as well as other equipment needed for work	Provide panniers and rear rack. In the right conditions cyclists may also be willing to use cycle trailers or cargo bikes
The appearance of the bike, including issues of cross-bar or step-through frames	Ensure models/colours considered go with the ethos of the organisation. If unsure, ballot staff for opinions

Swindon Borough Council

Swindon Borough Council has two different types of pool bikes; short term loan for work trips and longer term loan to “try cycling” for commuting or leisure cycling.

For the short term pool, there are two ladies and two gent’s hybrid bikes, stored in their own pod on the Civic campus. Employees can sign out a bike at the reception, and use it to pedal to meetings, site visits, or even for lunch hour errands.

“We promote a range of travel choices to employees and recognise that for many journeys around the Borough, it’s as quick to nip out on a bike. The bikes are fitted with double panniers that will carry A4 files and more, and have their own locks and lights for the winter of course. Since installing the bike pod 5 years ago, the bikes have been signed out 137 times by 39 different people.”

In the past year, SBC have developed a varied pool of bikes so that staff can borrow a bike for up to 6 weeks, to see whether they would like to invest in a bike longer term. The pool contains a mountain bike, a hybrid, a colourful ladies bike with a basket, and two foldable electric bikes.

“The electric bikes have proved to be extremely popular. Many people who feel that they are too unfit, or in too poor health, for a normal bike, get on well with an electric bike. It’s not cheating, as you still need to pedal, but the motor gives you a bit of extra help on hills, or pulling away at junctions.”



Setting up a pool bike scheme

The various steps in the process of setting up a scheme will involve different people and departments at varying times. Those setting up the scheme may not even be involved in its day-to-day running.

Step 1 Building the business case

*Get senior management support and identify key contact
Undertake staff survey and site audit
Identify costs versus savings/benefits
Set-up and maintenance costs*



Step 2 Internal planning

*Select suitable bikes and equipment
Address legal matters including health and safety, and insurance
Set up systems for managing the pool*



Step 3 Obtaining bikes, equipment and storage

*Decide on whether to purchase or lease
Source suitable bikes and equipment
Provide suitable parking and security measures
Provide other facilities for cyclists*



Step 4 Launching the scheme

Publicity and promotion

Step 1 Building the business case

Senior management support and key contact

Securing senior management support is essential to making such a scheme work. Identifying a cyclist among senior staff who will champion the concept, and be seen to be using the bikes, is ideal.

It is also useful to have a member of staff, preferably one who cycles, who will act as the overall point of contact for the pool bikes and be responsible for looking after them. In many cases responsibility for the bikes passes to the facilities department and the contact could be based there.

Staff survey and site audit

Although not all organisations introducing pool bikes undertake a formal survey, it is considered to be an essential activity for constructing a business case. Survey answers should confirm the potential for a scheme and determine the number and type of bicycles required, any changes regarding facilities, or the need for training or for other resources.

Questions should collect information on:

1. How often do you make work-related trips?
2. What forms of transport do you currently use?
3. What proportion of these trips could reasonably be made by bike?
4. How much money do you spend on current trips? And how much of this do you claim back as travel expenses?
5. Do you think a bike pool is a good idea?
6. Would you be willing to use a pool bike? Why?
7. Would you use a pool bike for any other reasons e.g. commuting to and from work or for lunchtime rides?
8. Would you like training on how to use pool bikes?
9. Would you prefer particular bikes, e.g. ladies or folding bikes? Why?
10. Is there anything else that would encourage you to use a pool bike, for instance, assistance with route planning?

If a travel plan is already being prepared then these questions can be incorporated into the travel plan survey. Otherwise, a version of the questions listed above could be emailed to staff, posted on the intranet, or asked during regular team or one-to-one meetings.

At this stage it may also be helpful to check the site for existing facilities such as:

- What facilities exist on site, e.g. cycle parking, storage for accessories, lockers, changing and shower facilities; and what possibilities exist for making improvement?

- Whether the cycling infrastructure is suitable, e.g. there are good bike routes to and from the workplace, and space for bike storage on site. The local borough will be able to help with details of available cycle-friendly routes
- Existence of attractive destinations for lunchtime rides

Costs versus savings/benefits

Each organisation's circumstances will vary but the balance of expenditure against savings and benefits could look like this:

Expenditure	Savings/benefits
Capital cost/lease cost per bike	Current cost of travel expenses for business trips
Maintenance cost per bike	Value of time savings that could be made
Specific accessories, eg panniers	Value of potential health benefits to workforce
Cycle parking	Support for those already cycling through 'bike doctor' activities
Lockers	Potential savings on emissions
Changing/drying facilities / showers	Value of green ethos to the organisation
Charging points for electric bikes	
Cycle mileage	
Training	

Set-up and maintenance costs

Cycle costs vary and experience shows that buying the cheapest bikes is often not cost-effective in the long term. Typical prices for mid-range bikes and equipment are shown below. Costs are likely to vary depending on supplier, location and bike type.

Bicycle (outright purchase)	Full size £400+	Folding £500+	Electric £1000+
Bicycle (leased or hired per annum): May include other services, such as maintenance	£300	£375	£750
Safety: Helmet, lights, Hi Vis jacket, leg/arm bands	£80		
Security: Locks, security devices	£40+		
Accessories: Pannier rack, pannier bags, baskets	£80+		
Practical items: Pump, puncture kit, tools	£30		
Maintenance per bike (may be included in bike purchase/lease)	£80 per annum		
Insurance	10 per cent+ of bike cost		
Cycle parking (excludes installation): Single Sheffield stand Covered storage shelter (for 10 bikes)	Variable		
Lockers – per unit (excludes installation)	£150		
Other Changing/drying facilities/showers	Variable		
Cycle mileage (if providing an allowance to staff) HMRC approved amount for mileage allowance payments – for business mileage	20p per mile		
Cycle training	£25-50 per person (but often subsidised or free)		



Step 2 Internal planning

Bike and equipment selection

Factors to consider when choosing bikes:

Number

The number of bikes could be calculated from analysing the number distance and nature of journeys being made by all employees. Experience shows that levels of use vary in most organisations with a number of core users who will take a bike out regularly and other individuals borrowing bikes occasionally. Predictably, use is highest in the summer, with between 10 and 15 trips made per month per bike. This level can be expected to drop considerably in the winter. These patterns of use have led some organisations to reduce the number of bikes held within their pools during this time.

Type of bike

Consider the profile of potential users – male/female/height. Also consider the type of use – carrying equipment / the need to travel on public transport, parking / storage availability both on site and at destination sites. Electric bicycles provide a practical solution in overcoming the physical effort barriers to travel by bike and can encourage the use of cycling for some daytime business trips. They enable the rider to adopt a level of effort that they feel is appropriate. Alongside the commercial benefits, the use of electric bikes will assist with corporate social responsibility objectives and will visibly demonstrate a proactive approach to improving local air quality and reducing carbon and other emissions.

The styles suitable for pool bikes are shown below:

Hybrid and city	Hybrid and city bikes have an upright sitting position and offer improved sightlines. These normally come with a rack on the back and mudguards, and are ideal for getting around in the city. The use of step-through (women's) city bikes can overcome the need to worry about whether they will be used by men or women so long as the seat pillar is easily adjustable.
Folding	Ideal for mixed mode travel, or where storage space is at a premium. Easily adjusted to allow for different users. Can be carried into buildings to minimise theft. The organisation may have to train employees to be able to fold and unfold the bikes.
Electric	Ideal for hillier areas, where it is necessary to carry small but heavy parcels or for those less physically able to ride a normal bike.
Trailer and cargo	Increasingly popular for domestic use, these offer the ability to transport bulky or heavier loads.
Specialist	Tricycles and other specialist bikes can meet the needs of people with mobility impairments, such as difficulties with balance.
Mountain	Suitable for casual riding off-road, for example around parks and bumpy towpaths. May be too high a specification for normal pool use. Mountain bikes can be arduous to ride on tarmac, and are generally not suitable for pool bikes.

Equipment requirements for cyclists will vary. Typically, organisations supply locks, lights and hi-visibility waistcoats for each bike, as well as adjustable helmets for staff who want to wear one. Keeping spare sets of keys and other equipment is always a good idea.

Lights and reflectors

All bikes should have the correct reflectors and front (white) and rear (red) lights. It is a legal requirement that lights are used when cycling at night. For more information on the legal requirements, see the cycling section in the Highway Code at www.direct.gov.uk

Most organisations provide lights. Even when bikes are intended for use in daylight, lights are useful when days are shorter, in an emergency, or in bad weather.

Helmets

There is no legal or health and safety requirement for cyclists to wear safety equipment (such as helmets or high-visibility vests) while cycling, whether for personal reasons or while at work. Ideally, where helmets are provided they should be available in a range of sizes so that employees can choose one that fits with only minor adjustment. In some instances users of pool bikes choose to buy their own helmets with the cost reimbursed by the employer once regular use for work purposes has been established.

It should be noted that the material inside helmets is designed to crush on impact, so damage to a helmet may not always be visible externally. After any impact, including dropping, a helmet should be replaced. However, helmets should also be inspected when the bikes are checked to look for signs of damage, that they are clean, and remain hygienic. Where a helmet is likely to be used by more than one person arrangements need to be made for cleaning the lining before and after each use.

Hi-visibility waistcoats or jackets

Encourage staff to be seen, by wearing hi-visibility and reflective clothing. There is a range of hi-visibility jackets and reflective tabards and ankle strips available. If these are purchased bearing the organisation's name, this is another means of enhancing CSR. Most of the case study organisations in this document supply hi-visibility waistcoats as essential PPE for riding bikes.

Baskets or panniers

The use of panniers is generally considered safer than the rider carrying a rucksack on their back. Their provision can overcome reluctance to cycle on the grounds that people have too much to carry or a rucksack making them hot.

Locks

A good quality lock reduces the risk of theft. Bike suppliers can advise on ways to ensure that the wheels and components cannot be removed easily. Folding bikes rarely require a lock as they can be carried into a building. Users should be instructed to follow this practice, as poorly secured folding bikes are popular items for theft. Many locks have a logo and security grading issued by Sold Secure (www.soldsecure.com). Some insurers insist on a Sold Secure lock being used (two locks of different types are always better than one).

Legal matters - Health and safety, and insurance

Health and safety

Use of pool bikes by employees should be covered by an organisation's health and safety procedures and policies. Bikes must be maintained in a roadworthy condition and appropriate training and instructions for use must be available.

Insurance

In addition to bike insurance, public liability insurance protects against third party claims for injury or damage to other persons or property. In view of this, it is normal for an organisation to limit the use of its pool bike scheme to its own staff, even if employees from another organisation are based at its site. Many organisations will already understand this issue based on their responsibilities towards users of car pools and employee use of their own vehicles for business purposes.

Systems for managing the bike pool

Detail regarding ongoing management is covered in step 4, but thought is needed at the planning stage on the key operational requirements. These are:

1. Ensuring user safety
2. Providing a booking process that is as smooth and simple as possible
3. Maintaining the bikes in a roadworthy condition

Ideally there should be a nominated individual who is responsible for the overall scheme and who is the main point of contact if concerns arise.

User safety

People who use the pool bikes must be capable of riding safely. There should be a requirement for all users to sign a form to self-certify that they are competent to ride a bike on public roads with other traffic and understand the Highway Code and how it applies to cyclists. However, it should be noted that disclaimers do not absolve from liability in terms of providing roadworthy equipment.

Training should be freely available at all levels. Not all users will be familiar with electric bikes whose characteristics, mostly weight and speed, differ from normal bikes. In these circumstances it should be the practice to allow familiarity sessions in work time so that staff are used to them and their handling and performance. Training or induction sessions should not only explain the characteristics of the bikes and how to alter them to fit individuals, but also cover how to check the bike is roadworthy before use.

Booking systems

The degree of sophistication of the booking system depends on the size of the organisation, size of the bike pool and level of demand. A paper-based system is often adequate and is frequently managed by reception staff. Electronic systems, such as those commonly used for booking rooms in a shared electronic calendar, are also used. Before being able to use a pool bike most organisations require their staff to register. A fairly formal system is described below:

- Member of staff registers and supplies their contact details

- Short induction for new user – ensures confident with using the bikes (especially electric ones), and the booking out and returns process. User signs disclaimer form.
- Registered pool bike user receives card/formal acknowledgement.
- Registered pool bike user can now book bikes at any time.

Most organisations operate a ‘first come, first served’ system with a simple form to record the details of use. This form can also be used to record distances cycled and suggestions for improvements.

Loan periods

Most schemes require the borrower to return the bike on the same day. The reason being that insurance cover is for business use only. If bikes are available for other uses, such as shopping or leisure during the lunch hour, social rides or as part of a get-you-home service for those who cycle to work, these aspects should be agreed with the insurer.

Mileage rates

The approved Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) mileage allowance for cycle mileage is 20p per mile, when undertaken for business using the employee’s own bike. Some employers pay more than 20p, but the mileage payment then becomes taxable. There is no requirement to pay expenses for pool bike use, since the employer owns and maintains the bike.

David Starbuck Ltd

“We are a small business where employees have to visit clients regularly. In order to save money on petrol or taxi fares, we decided to get a couple of electric bikes to get around on. The bikes are used for commuting as well as work related visits, and are being used by staff that cannot use ordinary bikes due to health issues.

The only cost to the organisation is charging up the batteries, and the bikes have proved to be both efficient and popular!”

Step 3 Obtaining bikes, equipment and storage

Bike suppliers

Buying bikes

Visiting local cycle shops and internet searches are the best ways to find out where to buy or lease bikes. Buying bikes can be cost effective if the organisation keeps them for a couple of years with moderate levels of use. However, as bikes age, maintenance costs can increase. Regular maintenance costs should be taken into account when comparing purchasing with leasing.

Bikes bought through a local cycle shop may make it easier to arrange ongoing maintenance as it will be more convenient to visit a nearby retailer if there are problems. The supplier will also be keen to engage with an organisation if it is also involved in activities such as Bike Doctor sessions.

Bikes may be purchased through providers that only operate online and could appear cheaper but they may require building and will certainly need checking by a competent person. It may be possible to arrange bike assembly, safety checks and maintenance with a local bike shop or supplier, but the cost may cancel out any savings made by not buying locally.

Leasing bikes

When leasing bikes for a pool bike scheme, a package including regular maintenance, call-out for repairs, periodic replacement with new bikes and even third party liability and theft insurance can be negotiated. This simple solution has the benefits of regular checks, which helps meet an organisation's health and safety obligations and avoids having bikes out of service for maintenance reasons.

As with bike purchase, leasing from a local cycle shop which is also engaged in supporting cycling to work by means of a Bike Doctor scheme, will help strengthen the relationship.

Buying equipment

The bike supplier will usually be able to provide both advice and equipment, and it may be possible to negotiate prices for a complete package of bike plus accessories.

Parking options

Bikes should always be locked to a secure, immovable object when not in use and arrangements should be made for cycle parking.

Indoor cycle parking

Storing bikes securely indoors will help prolong their life and reduce the likelihood of theft. A folding bike may be chosen where there is limited space and other options are not secure. As an alternative, if space permits, bikes may be kept in lockers which can be added to if demand grows.

Outdoor cycle parking

The stand recommended the most is the Sheffield stand (an inverted U-shape) which may be bolted down or concreted in position. These are simple in design, easy to install, use a minimum of space and allow two bikes to be locked to each stand.

Other facilities for cyclists

The scope of facilities that can be provided will depend on the space and budget available, but could include lockers for storing cycling accessories or a change of clothes, showers, a changing room, an area for drying wet gear, or an iron and ironing board.



Step 4 Launching the scheme

To give the scheme as much publicity as possible a launch event or series of events can be organised. The launch can be linked to a local or national cycling event, such as Bike Week (usually in June), or be specifically focused on using the bikes with 'how to' sessions. Rather than just publicising the scheme once it should be the subject of year-round promotion with particular emphasis in the spring when weather conditions improve and days are longer.

Ongoing management

A pool bike scheme should not take much time to administer. However, a nominated individual should be the main point of contact and have an overall view of the scheme and the maintenance schedule for each bike. Estates and Facilities departments usually manage pool bike schemes.

Requirements for managing a pool bike scheme once it has been established will include:

- Maintaining user (staff) safety
- Maintaining the booking system
- Monitoring use and impact of use
- Regular publicity and promotion

Maintaining user safety

Each bike should be clearly identifiable and a maintenance schedule set up for it. This should reflect the anticipated level of use of the bikes and can be revised once a pattern of use has been established. Bikes may need to be serviced more regularly in the summer when use is likely to be higher. Some suggestions are provided in the table below but individual needs will differ. Bikes should always be checked for safety before being used.

Level of use (miles cycled / month)	Frequency of maintenance
<50	Every three months*
51 - 150	Every two months
150+	Monthly
* Even with little use tyres will go down and moving parts need lubrication	

Individual responsibility

Staff should always check the bike is safe before taking it out. They should ensure the brakes work, tyres are not flat and there are no other obvious problems. If a problem emerges during use, the borrower should report it in a written log on their return.

If the bike is found to be faulty for whatever reason it should not be ridden and all problems should be reported to a designated contact person within the organisation so the fault can be recorded and dealt with quickly. It is important that faults are fixed quickly as staff will quickly dismiss the scheme if the bikes are often out of use. If a bike malfunctions while on a journey, staff should be instructed not to ride and, if necessary, lock it securely for retrieval later.

Bike mechanic sessions

Bike mechanic or Bike Doctor sessions can be held periodically for bikes belonging to staff as well as for the pool bikes. They can perform maintenance and safety checks and highlight problems too large for staff to fix. The providers can also train members of staff in basic bike maintenance so that routine checks can be undertaken internally.

Cycle training for staff

Training sessions are available for all levels of cyclists. It can even deal with specific journeys through a bike-buddy scheme organised through the BUG. The relevant standard for most work-related journeys should be Level 2 or 3 of the National Standard for Cycle Training, known as Bikeability. It is recommended that employers encourage staff to undertake cycle training and direct them to qualified trainers.

Maintaining the booking system

Once established, this is straightforward. Administration is often undertaken by reception staff who will hold the necessary keys as well as the cycle log. If staff are only available during office hours and there is a demand for returning bikes after-hours a 'key drop' box can be installed.

Monitoring use and impact of use

The simplest monitoring tool will be analysis of the pool bike booking records. These should show the level of use and what the bikes are being used for. Depending on the requirements of the booking system it could also show distance travelled or destinations, from which financial, time and emissions savings can be calculated. Since users are unlikely to be able to judge their trip distances accurately, they can be helped in this respect by keeping a map with the booking out forms. This can be marked with concentric rings giving crow-fly distances from the premises. While this may not accurately represent true distances it will, at least, give an indication of how far they have gone (there and back).

If the organisation has a Business Travel Strategy, the regular follow-up surveys carried out will help identify the level of use of the pool bike scheme if appropriate questions are asked. Results can then help to establish whether additional or fewer bikes are needed, whether further publicity is required and whether there are other factors that would help to encourage greater use. These surveys can also be used to

track whether an organisation's approach to its CSR and improvements in air quality are being positively received.

Ensuring the scheme is integrated in the organisation

The scheme needs to be integrated into the organisation's policies. This can be achieved through:

- Welcome packs and induction for new recruits
- Inclusion in Business Travel Strategy (travel plan)
- Inclusion in annual reviews – awareness raising only
- Inclusion in annual reviews – with targets for use where appropriate

Regular publicity and promotion

Promotion for the pool bikes to increase take-up of the scheme can be undertaken alongside other general cycling promotions, such as:

- The creation of a BUG
- Bike breakfasts (which can now be offered tax-free as part of a 'cycle to work' day)
- Bike Doctor maintenance sessions
- Participation in local or national cycling events
- Lunchtime/after-work rides, perhaps with a health or history focus
- Provision of good cycle maps

Regular reminders could include:

- Email promotions
- Items on the intranet
- Articles in staff newsletters
- A charity event

Promotion of the pool bikes can centre around usage, such as trialling journeys between work destinations, lunchtime leisure or commuting to and from work.

St Joseph's Catholic College

"Our pool bikes are quite new, but already we have staff members using them for meetings. Our ladies pool bike has a block booking for the next four weeks to enable a member of staff to commute to work pending a house move.

One lady who used the bike last week said "It is so much better than driving – it's quicker and I did not have to worry about trying to find a parking space. It was really nice to be out in the fresh air!"

Additional help and relevant organisations

There is a wealth of readily available information on cycling. The organisations listed below may be useful in seeking background information, advice and can provide links to other useful information. Also, contact your local authority to see how they can help.

Swindon Borough council

The Travel Plan Officer at your local council will be able to provide advice on a wide range of subjects. Email: transportplanning@swindon.gov.uk

What for	Who	Website
Cycle to Work Scheme (advice)	Department for transport	www.dft.gov.uk
Cycle providers	Local retailers and online	www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/cycle/cycle-shops.aspx
A network working together to promote healthy and sustainable transport.	ACT Travelwise Association	www.acttravelwise.org
Tax advice	HMRC	www.hmrc.gov.uk
Health & Safety advice	HSE	www.hse.gov.uk
Cycle to work guarantee	DfT	www.cycletoworkguarantee.org.uk
Independent travel planning advice	ACT TravelWise	www.acttravelwise.org
Insurance - Business	Existing insurer or broker	Online
Insurance - Personal	Various providers	There are various providers that will cover cycle theft, personal accident and liability. Compare providers and quotes at http://www.money.co.uk/bicycle-insurance.htm
Bike Doctor and cycle maintenance provider	Local cycle shop or other	www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/cycle/cycle-shops.aspx
Promotion	Bike Week	www.bikeweek.org.uk
Cycle training	Commercial providers	www.cyclingnow.co.uk
Local campaign issues and support groups	Swindon BUG (Bicycle Users group)	www.cycleswindon.org.uk