

Smart commuting toolkit

Influencing employee travel to improve your business



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More than one million people travel into central London by rail and Tube every morning

Introduction

What is smart commuting?

Cities are changing and with that, the ways people work in them. How people get to work is changing too. Smart commuting is about finding efficient and effective ways to support employees' travel. That could include avoiding very busy routes and times, getting people to travel more actively, or enabling them to work from anywhere. The interventions in this toolkit are tried and tested ways of doing this, that have proven benefits for employee health and wellbeing, business resilience and productivity.

In this sense, smart commuting is not a new idea, but it is an evolving one. In this guide you will find some examples of how smart commuting can help London businesses, and ideas on how to take forward your own smart commuting initiatives.

Why smart commuting?

The Mayor's Transport Strategy aims for 80 per cent of all trips in London to be made by sustainable modes (walking, cycling and public transport) by 2041. This target is about creating a city where Londoners are healthier and more productive. It is also about improving the public transport experience and making London a more pleasant place to live, work and study.

Smart commuting is a key opportunity for ensuring all Londoners achieve the recommended two 10-minute periods of physical activity per day. This has a number of benefits for businesses:

- Increased productivity
- Fewer sick days
- Increased business flexibility and resilience, and improved staff retention
- Mitigating parking issues
- Decreased operational costs

1m 

work-related trips in London (70 per cent) currently made by car could be made by a more sustainable mode

31% 

of adult Londoners report having walked or cycled for two 10-minute periods on the previous day

Who is smart commuting for?

Whether you're an individual business, a Business Improvement District (BID), business group, or an employee, smart commuting can transform the environment in which you work. Many initiatives can be scaled for different types of audiences as well, which the case studies highlight.

The role of BIDs and business groups

A group of businesses working together creates an opportunity to share experiences, and provide peer support. BIDs and business groups can use their collective buying power to secure good deals for shared transport services, or provide a common identity for the area to encourage people to get involved. This could be as simple as finding effective channels for promoting sustainable travel options, or something more dynamic such as a month-long active travel challenge where local businesses and employees compete against each other.

BIDs have told us that investing in walking and cycling is important for business performance. Delivering area-wide smart commuting initiatives can lead to:

- Attracting new business, staff and customers
- Securing investment and increased retail spend
- Better control of parking and traffic congestion
- Increasing vibrancy of an area and individuals' wellbeing

The role of employers

Smart commuting initiatives can help employers meet their duty of care for staff wellbeing. Evidence shows that employers are a key influencer of employee travel habits,¹ for example by having enabling policies that encourage smart commuting, reduce car use, or having a network of champions who encourage others to follow their example.

¹ Hiblin B, Taylor I and Sloman L (2016) What Works? Learning from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund 2011-2015 Report to the Department for Transport

The role of employees

Getting buy-in from the commuters themselves is essential for delivering an effective smart commuting initiative. In a 2016 TfL business engagement pilot, workplaces that had appointed champions, and invested in training, saw five times as many participants per business compared to businesses that didn't.

Employee champions are essential to:

- Provide peer support to encourage people to change or try something new
- Embed long-term cultural change
- Shape and deliver people-focused initiatives in a workplace

'If they're happy with their commute to work, they're more likely to stay. They might be happier as well, more engaged in their work, bit more productive possibly.'²

Business Manager
Employer study on promoting walking to work

2 Audrey S, Procter S (2015) Employers' views of promoting walking to work: a qualitative study, International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity

Benefits of smart commuting:

83%  

of London BIDs say walking and cycling attract more customers and nine in 10 say they create vibrant areas

73%  

of London BIDs say walking and cycling are important for attracting and retaining staff

27% 

fewer sick days are taken by employees who are physically active than their colleagues

54% 

of people who cycle to work feel happy and energised during their commute – more than any other mode

Getting started – identifying opportunities

The most successful smart commuting initiatives combine a package of measures and this guide highlights some examples of where these approaches have been used. You can choose to combine a package of measures shown in this document to have a higher impact, or identify one thing that you can deliver first as a quick win.

How to use this toolkit:

Step 1

Identify opportunities (this section) – staff survey, commuting checklist and engagement.

Step 2

Select interventions: for each area of focus choose interventions most suited to the identified opportunities. Go for a mix of different types of measures; the icons indicate what kind it is.

Types of smart commuting measures:



Reduce or restrict car use



Policy change
eg smarter working



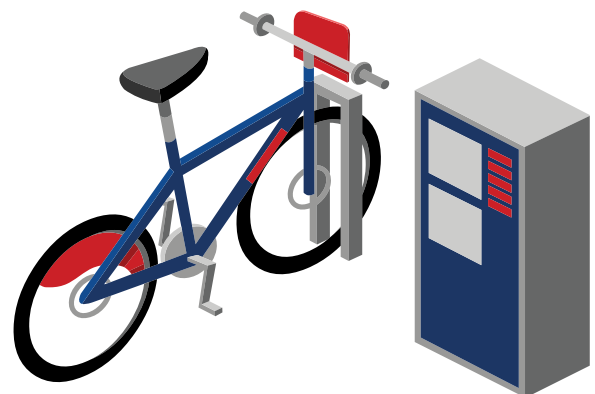
Incentivise sustainable modes



Promotion and engagement



Enhanced sustainable travel options or facilities





More than a third of car trips made by Londoners as a driver or passenger could be walked in under 25 minutes

The initiatives outlined in this toolkit can be applied to a broad range of challenges, so these tools can be useful to understand more about the greatest opportunities in your area or workplace.

Employee travel survey

Before you get started, understand how people currently travel to work to your business/area. Some large employers may have this data available, for instance if they have a travel plan. Otherwise, the employee travel survey template included in this toolkit can give you a snapshot of current travel plus opportunities for change.

Commuting checklist

It is also useful to understand what facilities are available for employees' commutes, whether that is for an individual workplace or the wider area. Use the checklist included in this toolkit to identify what the gaps and opportunities are for your location.

Consultation and engagement

The people who will know what works best are your employees! Early and frequent engagement with employees to receive their input will be valuable for ensuring it is successful. Check out TfL's 'Small change, big impact' toolkit for ways to get the community involved.

Taking action

I. Encourage walking and cycling

Individual employees can play a key role in motivating their colleagues to travel more actively, and employers and BIDs can be instrumental in enabling this by providing the right mix of opportunities to encourage people to travel by foot or cycle. Start by mapping out the role each party (employees, businesses and, potentially, BIDs) can have in helping you deliver the initiatives below.

Events and engagement

Roadshows, action weeks, and active travel challenges are good for engaging people to try a new way to travel and should be focused on encouraging walking or cycling more (not just rewarding people who already travel actively, although it is important to recognise their positive behaviour and encourage them to continue with it).

Set up or publicise locally-led walks or walking routes, particularly from public transport hubs, and walking buddy schemes or Walking Weeks. Check the GoJauntly app for any local walks for your team to do together, or encourage employees to add their own favourite routes to work and share with colleagues. Check what your local council's cycle skills team can offer.

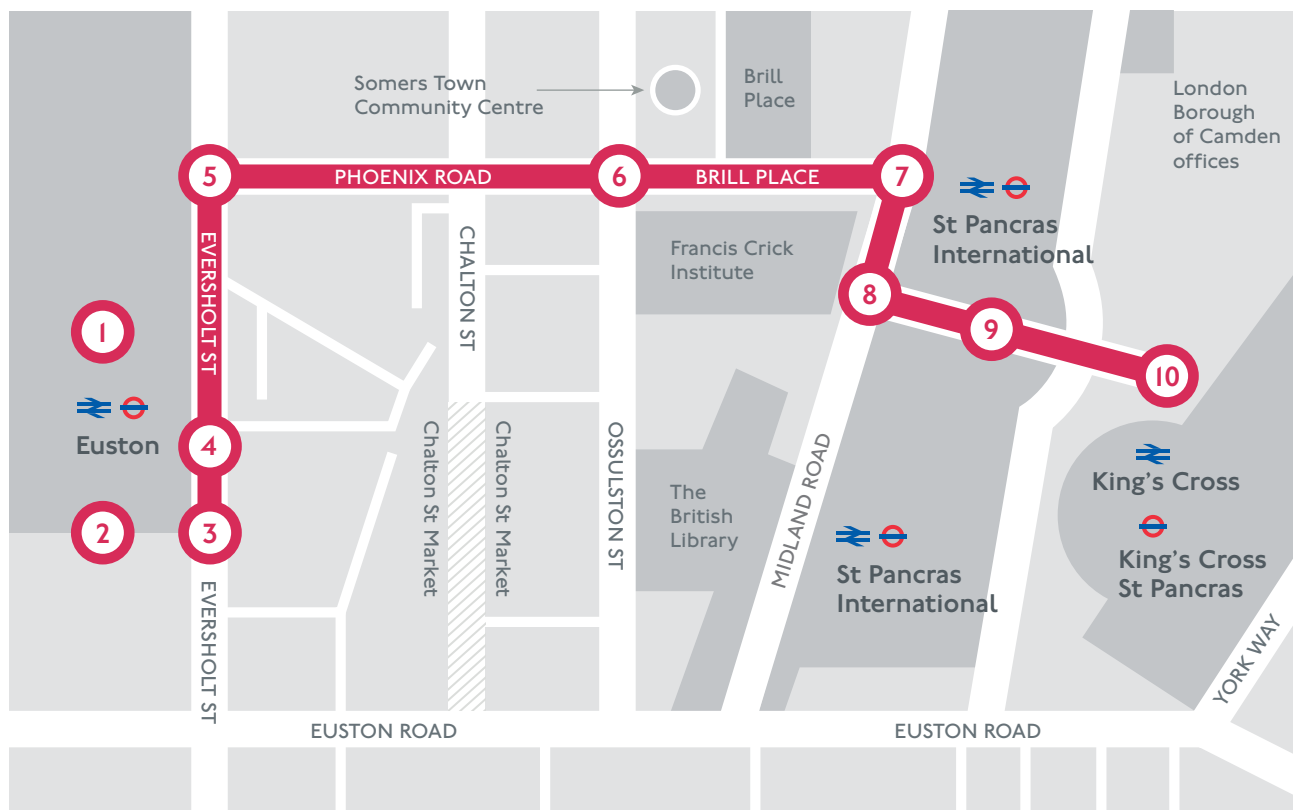
Improving facilities, such as storage and access

The lack of somewhere safe to lock a bike is a top barrier to cycling in London. Regular bike maintenance and repairs from a local bike mechanic can also help keep people cycling safely. Where there are limited alternative transport options, a free emergency ride home can be an effective way to keep people from reverting to their car.

‘I’ve seen employees become more motivated and engaged, and our walking challenge has paid off in terms of reduction in sickness and people’s will to want to come to work. In a few words? A fun, motivating, inclusive and accessible experience.’

Liz Crossley
HR Administrator
Community Health NHS Trust

The Wellbeing Walk between St Pancras and Euston



The Wellbeing Walk between St Pancras and Euston provides a good example of linking two busy stations together through the identification and promotion of a low-pollution route avoiding Euston Road. Since it launched in 2015, there has been a threefold increase in the number of people using this route. You can find more examples of low-pollution walking routes on the GLA's Clean Air Route Finder.

Shared bike schemes

Another top barrier to cycling is access to a bike: provide your own pool bikes, or join an existing bike share scheme (either a public scheme such as Santander, or setting up a private one for your employees or BID members). CoMoUK has a guide which outlines different ways of developing a workplace pool bike scheme.

Did you know?

GlaxoSmithKline pay employees £1 a day if they travel actively to their West London headquarters. Compared with the cost of providing a parking space, this incentive is a worthwhile investment. This and other initiatives saw a 25 per cent decrease in car commuting in the first five years.

Incentives

Free trials or bike loans have a proven track record of leading to long-term regular cycling, with participants often buying the bike they borrowed.³ Or you could introduce cumulative rewards, such as a monetary incentive for employees who do not drive, or who pledge to give up driving to work. Rewards could be cash, or credits that can be used in local shops, and are best when aligned to other employee rewards schemes your organisation may offer.

Incentives don't have to cost, either: joining a Cycle to Work scheme means employees benefit from tax-free bike purchase with no cost to the employer.

Bike Share User Survey 2018, CoMoUK:

59% 

are cycling more often and bike share is an important tool in helping to increase cycling trips

78% 

said bike share saves them time. It is a tool designed to offer greater convenience

14% 

switched their trip from car to bike share, an intended benefit of the bike share scheme

³ Hiblin B, Taylor I and Sloman L (2016) What Works? Learning from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund 2011-2015 Report to the Department for Transport



Half of Londoners say a lack of cycle parking is one of the main factors deterring them from cycling

2. Smart working

Flexible working policies can enable employees to find quicker and more comfortable commutes that avoid crowding and congestion, leading to better journey time reliability. This helps improve productivity and achieve better work-life balance for your employees.

Provide employees with information about the best ways to reach your location

The TfL Tube station pages have information about the busiest times at each station, which can help your employees experience a quicker and more comfortable journey – see the wellbeing option on page 16. Or, share the Walking Tube Map to encourage employees to walk part of their commute or to make short business journeys.

Personalised travel options

People appreciate tailored information that prioritises sustainable travel options. Peers are the highest impact source of trusted information, and you can facilitate this by encouraging people to share their commute journeys

either through official employee intranet channels or informally. In large organisations or with area-wide initiatives, appoint ‘travel advisers’ to provide guidance on alternative commute options and facilitate sharing similar smart commutes. This type of personalised travel planning is a highly effective way of motivating people to change the way they travel.⁴

Did you know?

TfL can provide organisations with bespoke ‘digital sign’ URLs to display live bus or river arrival information on your own screen. For more information visit: tfl.gov.uk/info-for/business-and-commercial/digital-signs

Smart working

Flexible working policies have transformed office-based workplaces’ business resilience and can lead to more efficient use of space, as well as creating better commuting experiences for employees. According to the Agile Future Forum, smart working practices can generate value equivalent to three to 13 per cent of workforce costs.⁵

4 NICE, Physical activity: walking and cycling, Public health guideline (PH41) Published date: November 2012

5 www.agilefutureforum.co.uk/agile-future-forum-findings

6 www.crossriverpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/WT_Final_electronic_pages.pdf

The London Healthy Workplace Award acts as a template for good practice and recognises London employers who invest in their employees' health and wellbeing. The scheme supports organisations of all sizes across public, private and voluntary sectors, and aligns with the Mayor's Good Work Standard. Both schemes provide a framework for supporting healthy ways of working, including commuting.

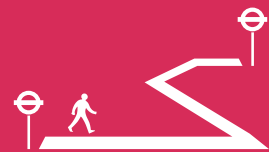
Personal deliveries toolkit

The toolkit explains how employers can encourage employees to use flexible working when they need to be home to receive a delivery. This helps reduce missed deliveries and removes vehicles from congested areas, thereby improving air quality in the local area for your staff and customers.

Did you know?

More than

100



journeys between Tube stations in central London are actually quicker when made on foot compared to other modes⁶

30%



TfL expects to consolidate its office space by 30 per cent by implementing smarter working policies

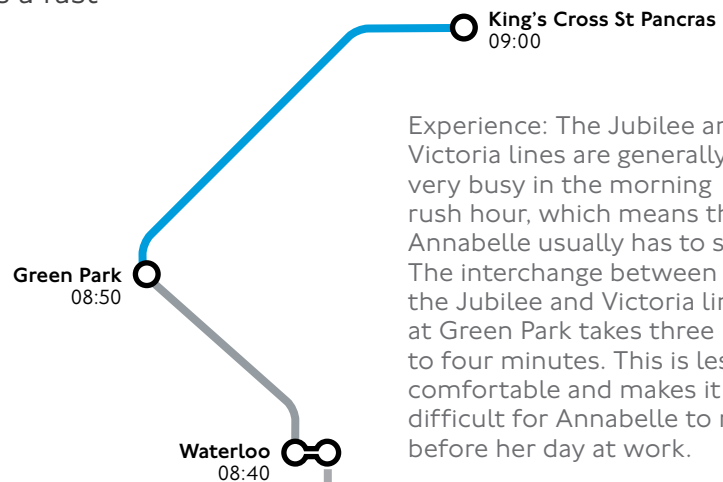


A 'wellbeing' option for your commute might not take much longer than the quickest route

Annabelle travels from home in Guildford to her office in Kings Cross, Monday to Friday. She takes the 07:54 from Guildford every day, as this is a fast service to London Waterloo.

Current commute

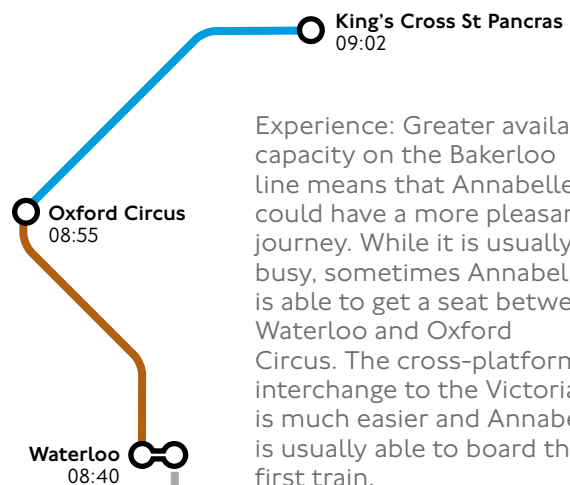
From Waterloo, Annabelle takes the Jubilee line to Green Park, where she changes on to the Victoria line to King's Cross St Pancras.



Experience: The Jubilee and Victoria lines are generally very busy in the morning rush hour, which means that Annabelle usually has to stand. The interchange between the Jubilee and Victoria lines at Green Park takes three to four minutes. This is less comfortable and makes it difficult for Annabelle to relax before her day at work.

Wellbeing option

By taking the Bakerloo line and changing at Oxford Circus, Annabelle's journey time from Waterloo to King's Cross St Pancras would be similar to travelling via Green Park, perhaps taking a minute or so longer.



Experience: Greater available capacity on the Bakerloo line means that Annabelle could have a more pleasant journey. While it is usually busy, sometimes Annabelle is able to get a seat between Waterloo and Oxford Circus. The cross-platform interchange to the Victoria line is much easier and Annabelle is usually able to board the first train.



People using public transport typically do between eight and 15 minutes of active travel a day, compared to less than one minute for those using a car

3. Manage car use



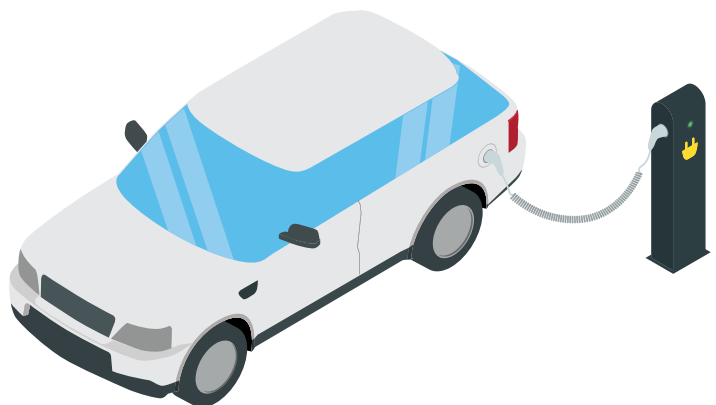
While reducing car use can have a strong benefit for air quality and the local area, employers will see the biggest benefit, particularly if employees use their personal vehicle for work – known as grey fleet. Area-wide initiatives can play a role here too, by creating a local incentive to encourage people to switch to low or zero emission modes.

Policy changes

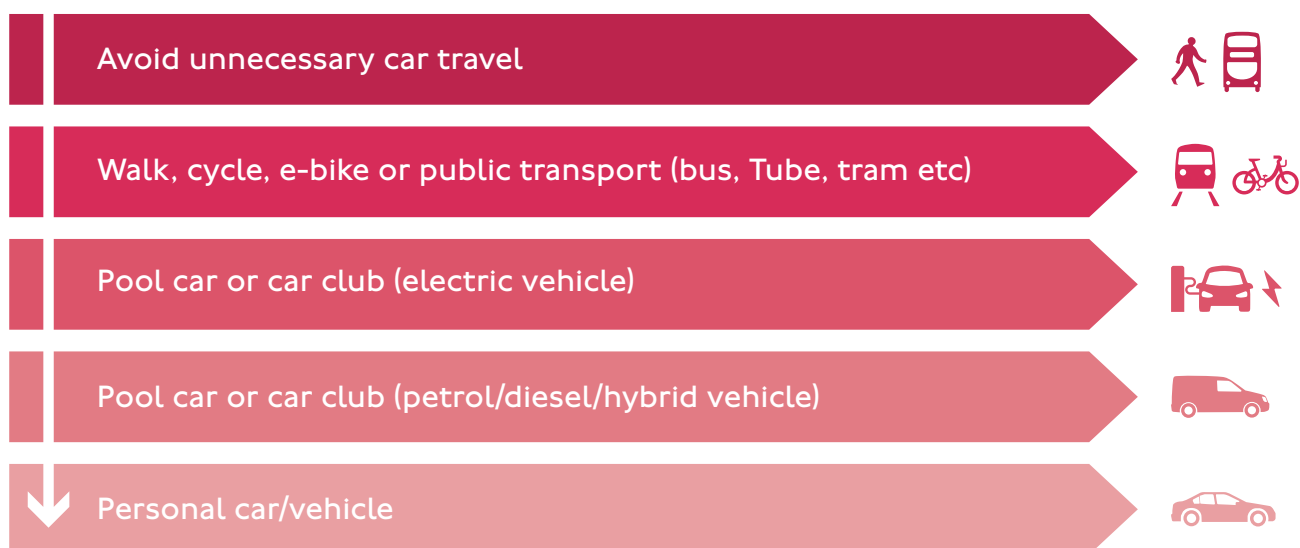
Employers can exercise great influence on how and when their staff travel to work by introducing a travel hierarchy (see image) which specifies that all options must be considered before using a personal vehicle. Offer viable alternatives such as corporate bike or car share membership. Energy Saving Trust offer free 'grey fleet' audits and have a toolkit which businesses can use to reduce the amount of work-related trips employees make with a personal vehicle. You can also offer salary sacrifice schemes such as season ticket loans and Cycle to Work as an employee benefit.

'It has been amazing working with the Zero Emissions Network [in Hackney] to understand clearly the huge benefits of switching to an all-electric business vehicle. I'm now in the final stages of buying my very own – the cost saving alone we calculated at £4.5k per year versus the diesel equivalent.'

Max
Owner, Secret Smokehouse



Smart commuting travel hierarchy



Did you know?

Croydon Council reduced business vehicle miles by 42% by implementing a Grey Fleet Reduction Policy and a number of complementary measures, including corporate bike and car share.

Car parking reductions

Reallocating space to prioritise people who travel sustainably is a cornerstone of London's Healthy Streets approach. Either reduce the number of car parking spaces available, or prioritise those who car share or do not drive every day to encourage people to try to commute differently at least some of the time.

Switch to a zero emissions fleet

For small business owners, switching to a cargo bike or an electric van can provide enormous cost and time savings to the business, as well as improving employee health and wellbeing, and air quality in the local area. You may be able to apply for funding for an electric cargo bike from the Department for Transport. TfL are currently operating a scrappage scheme for businesses operating within the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ).

Further information

Table of tools in the smart commuting toolkit

Getting started	
Employee travel survey template	Published as part of this toolkit
Smart commuting checklist	Published as part of this toolkit
Small change, big impact toolkit	tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/healthy-streets
Encourage walking and cycling	
Walking workplaces resources (Living Streets)	www.livingstreets.org.uk/policy-and-resources/resources?c=7642&q=
Bike share guidance (CoMoUK)	https://como.org.uk/archive_news/pool-bike-guidancenovsmnl6/
Walking and cycling economic benefits summary pack	tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/economic-benefits-of-walking-and-cycling
Cycle to Work (gov.uk)	www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-to-work-scheme-implementation-guidance
GoJauntly app (external)	www.gojauntly.com
Cycle skills	tfl.gov.uk/modes/cycling/cycling-in-london/cycle-skills
Wellbeing Walk (Urban Partners)	https://urbanpartners.london/wellbeing-walk/
GLA Clean Air Route Finder	www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/pollution-and-air-quality/clean-air-route-finder

Personal deliveries toolkit	tfl.gov.uk/info-for/deliveries-in-london/delivering-efficiently/deliveries-toolkits#on-this-page-2
Walking Tube Map	tfl.gov.uk/modes/walking
Tube station pages – busiest times	tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/stations-stops-and-piers/
Live Bus Arrivals digital signs	tfl.gov.uk/info-for/business-and-commercial/digital-signs
Wellbeing commute case study	Page 16 in this toolkit
London Healthy Workplace Award	www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/london-healthy-workplace-award
Mayor's Good Work Standard	www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/business-and-economy/supporting-business/what-mayors-good-work-standard
Grey fleet toolkit (Energy Saving Trust)	www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/transport/fleet/fleet-management-toolkit/manage-business-travel-and-grey-fleet-use
Season ticket loans (gov.uk)	www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-public-transport
Department for Transport e-cargo bike grants	www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-boost-for-green-last-mile-delivery-bikes
Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) scrappage scheme	tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/scrappage-scheme
Travel hierarchy	Page 19 in this toolkit

Further information and guidance

Visit **tfl.gov.uk** for more
information and advice on
smart commuting

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July 2019

PUB19_030