



THE CHARTERED
INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS
& TRANSPORTATION

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MAKING SMARTER CHOICES

FACTSHEET 003

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THE CHARTERED INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS
& TRANSPORTATION 'SMARTER' TRAVEL GUIDE

CAR SHARING

WHAT THIS COVERS

Car sharing offers individuals and businesses the opportunity to reduce the impact of car use on the environment, reduce parking costs and lessen some of the stresses associated with travelling by car. This factsheet provides all the information you need to begin to design and operate a car sharing scheme that is right for you, from identifying the demand through to monitoring the impact, and directs you to sources of further information to ensure that you can reap the rewards of car sharing.



Used courtesy of Martin Breschinski, on behalf of TfL

THINKING SMART: THE KEY STEPS

What is car sharing?

Also known as lift sharing and ride sharing, it is the giving or receiving of a lift for a specific car journey. Whilst car sharing is most commonly promoted for the journey to work, car sharing can also improve accessibility and increase car occupancy levels for a range of leisure, sporting and education based activities.

How does car sharing work

Those interested in sharing their car journeys (or those without a car seeking a lift) register their journeys on a car sharing database, which is typically managed 'on-line' using a standard commercial product. If a registered journey 'matches' another registered journey then contact details are passed to each of the potential sharers, and they agree between themselves how best to meet up, share the costs/driving, and start sharing the journey. Simple as that.

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How to go about setting up a scheme

If you want to promote a car sharing scheme at a particular site there are a few essential ingredients. Firstly you need to consult the site users to make sure there is sufficient interest and demand (usually done through a simple travel survey). Secondly, you need to implement a car sharing matching system, which is typically a web-based database purchased as an annual licence at a relatively low cost (the annual cost for a large organisation will typically be in the order of £400 a year). Thirdly you need to develop incentives to encourage site users to register their journeys (this could range from branded coffee mugs, through to dedicated car sharing spaces and payments for shared journeys). Fourthly you need to market and promote your scheme to site users, and provide them access to the database to start registering journeys. Finally you need to maintain the momentum of the scheme and monitor it's success.

Surmounting the barriers

There are a number of barriers that most people who are trying to set up a car sharing scheme and encourage people to use it will encounter. This include concerns that it is unsafe to car share with unknown people, the inflexibility of having a regular arrangement, uncertainty of working hours and concerns about insurance and payment. All of these barriers can be surmounted, if the scheme has adequate marketing and good support from management. As a minimum any car sharing scheme should: enable potential users to filter for car sharing partners that match their own preferences (for example non-smoking); provide the opportunity for car sharers to easily cancel their arrangements if they feel uncomfortable in any way;



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FAQS

What is the difference between an open scheme and a closed scheme?

This is a common question and understanding the difference is vital to the process of setting up a car sharing scheme. An open scheme is one which anybody is eligible to join, and is generally set-up by a local authority to cover its administrative boundary. Examples of such schemes include Car Share Devon and Harrogate Car Share. Within such 'open' schemes it is generally possible to have 'closed groups'. These are usually set up by organisations for their employees. When the employees join a 'closed group' they often have the opportunity to select whether they only want to be part of the closed group (thus only have the opportunity to share with their colleagues) or the open group (and thus have access to a far wider network of potential sharers).

How will car sharing benefit my organisation?

Car sharing offers your organisation the opportunity to save money through reducing the amount of parking required, reduce localised congestion, contribute to your corporate social responsibility goals and widen your potential employee catchment. Research by the DfT has identified that successful car sharing schemes for employers can typically increase multi-occupancy car use by approximately 20%, and reduce the demand for parking spaces by around 50%.

How will car sharing benefit my employees?

Your employees will be offered the opportunity to make significant cost savings (on average, commuters that car share save themselves £1000 per year); time savings if you provide priority parking; enable people without a car to have an alternative mode of transport and provide social benefits though enabling your employees to network with their colleagues during the journey to work.

Do I have to have an online car sharing scheme?

No, although online systems generally offer the easiest way to manage the process of matching up car share partners. Other options include setting up a notice board in a staff area where people can advertise for a car share partner, using in-house databases and spreadsheets, or advising your staff of area wide car sharing schemes that they could join.

I don't think a formal car sharing scheme is for me, what are the alternatives?

There are a number of alternatives for those who don't want to set up a formal car sharing scheme. You could encourage staff to consider car sharing as an option and advise them to explore any number of available avenues including sharing with a friend or neighbour, or an existing work colleague.

DfT Making Car Sharing and Car Clubs Work, 2005
www.carplus.org.uk/car-sharing
www.liftshare.com
www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/cars

