

Bicycle User Group Guide

Introduction

A Bicycle User Group (BUG) is an association of staff, who cycle or who would like to, working together to ensure good conditions exist for cyclists at their workplace.

The creation of a BUG can be seen as an opportunity for colleagues to collaborate and help shape the future of cycling within their company.

They can promote cycle commuting by sharing ideas with management for better facilities or by helping out new and potential cyclists.

Why start a BUG?

For companies and organisations, no matter the size, BUGs are a win-win for workplaces.

They provide a one stop shop for discussing cycling related issues, where employees have a stake in influencing the cycling environment.

Research has shown that those who cycle to work are healthier; roughly halving their risk of heart disease and cancer and taking fewer days off sick than their sedentary colleagues. It has also demonstrated they are likely to be more punctual in arriving to work and don't require an expensive car parking space. Having a BUG in your workplace can be a gateway to more employees commuting by bike.

Setting up a BUG

A BUG is normally organised and run by employees, however employer buy-in and support is essential to the success of the group. The focus and remit of the BUG are dependent upon the organisation and the objectives that wish to be achieved.

For example your BUG could be:

- An initiative to promote a healthier more productive work force;
- An ambition to improve cycling facilities

- To increase the numbers of regular cyclists;
- To promote cycling related events.

Initially, it is important to identify cycling enthusiasts within the organisation that wish to encourage it amongst their colleagues. Share and discuss your ideas with them first. If you don't know who they are, attach leaflets to their bicycles, put up a poster near any cycle parking, or just send out an email if possible.

At this stage, you should inform any teams within the business, who could support a BUG, of your intention to launch one. For example, a HR team could send material to colleagues who have got bikes through a cycle to work scheme, those responsible for internal communications could include material in all-staff emails, and operations could provide a meeting room to host meetings.

The next step is to formally announce the foundation of the BUG and to arrange a meeting to get things moving.

Keep your first meeting fairly short, but gather everyone's contact details and establish a plan of action and a cycling wish list.

Once you've established some achievable objectives – for example, covered cycle parking or the installation of showers – try to recruit some volunteers with useful skills.

You might have someone who can design a leaflet or create a membership card; someone else might have contacts with a local cycling group; another might have IT skills, and so on. Volunteers can help research the costs and benefits of proposals to provide evidence to senior management.

Work out who in the management structure should be the point of contact for the BUG. Meet them, perhaps offering a presentation. Do your best agree their support, timetabled action points and, ideally, a budget.

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The costs of running the BUG itself are minimal but many of the activities and aspirations will require some funding. Some of the activities such as Dr Bike events, cycle storage grants, and maps and leaflets are available from Transport for Greater Manchester.

Dependent upon the location of the business, such as a business park, it may also be feasible for BUGs to work together to provide a coordinated offer.

BUG activities

The exact nature and level of activities will vary with each group and the number of employees involved.

Activities will often include:

- Producing a regular newsletter
- Setting up a BUG website or intranet site
- Organising a Dr Bike event or cycle maintenance training
- Arranging regular lunchtime talks or presentations about cycling
- Promoting the provision and improvement of facilities at the workplace for cyclist
- Running a cyclists' information service supplying free maps, leaflets and other advice
- Operating a 'bike buddy' scheme where novice cyclists are paired with a more experienced rider who will cycle to work with them
- Producing a site map showing the location of cycle parking stands, showers, etc
- Organising a cyclists' breakfast during Bike Week
- Providing volunteers who will help mend punctures and carry out emergency repairs for fellow members of staff
- Conducting periodic cycle censuses to count the number of bikes on-site and record any changes and progress.

Support for BUGs

If you run or are thinking of starting a campaign group, Cycling UK can offer you a package of support.

Visit www.cyclinguk.org for more information.