

## Sky says "on yer bike" in IAM cycling move

*Sky leads the way in the IAM's cycle training initiative with a bike week for employees at Sky's Isleworth HQ*

Thousands of Sky's West London employees stand to be the first to benefit from a ground-breaking new cycle training initiative from the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists), the UK's leading advanced driver training organisation.

Better known for the now-famous Advanced Driving Test, the Sky cycle programme is a radical departure for the IAM, which until now has only dealt with motorised vehicles throughout its 50-year history.

By using the IAM's road safety know-how, Sky hopes to offer both current and would-be cyclists alike access to a wealth of insight and practical advice around cycling to and from work. This advice will be offered at Sky's Isleworth HQ during next week's Bike Week (18 June - 22 June).

Sky staff will be offered all the guidance and support they need to start peddling, such as advice on how to adjust bikes for better comfort, access to portable showers, secure bike pods and even Dr Bike clinics on the premises to deal with punctures and repairs. As a bonus Sky will also be offering all staff cyclists free massages and breakfast for the week.

Ben Stimson, Director of Responsibility and Reputation at Sky, said: "Offering staff incentives for environmentally friendly action and better choice in how they travel to work is an important part of our wider transport plans. We are looking forward to working with the IAM to help provide support to those staff who would like to cycle more. The new initiative, part of our Bigger Picture programme, reinforces Sky's commitment to reducing its organisational carbon footprint, a commitment which runs to the heart of our business."

The cycling initiative stands to benefit both employees and employers alike in terms of well-being and reduced congestion and localised pollution. Encouraging cycling is also a constructive way of supporting corporate initiatives around reducing carbon emissions. Sky has been a CarbonNeutral company since 2006, the first major media company in the world to achieve this status, and its Bigger Picture programme has helped both staff and customers in finding practical ways to reduce their individual carbon footprints.

The IAM estimates that over 80 per cent of cyclists are in fact car license holders - yet only a tiny percentage build cycling into their daily commute or travel plan.

Research has shown that a workforce that regularly cycles to work will be fit and healthy, said IAM Cycling Manager Duncan Pickering.

Our partners Cycle Training UK point out that cyclists can be relied upon to be more alert and productive than their less active counterparts, which is certainly one of the benefits, he said.

But it has to be said that there are safety concerns - and that is where we come in. Cyclists are very vulnerable on the road and they need to learn certain key skills to ensure that they get to the office and back again in one piece, he said. "We have taken a holistic approach, because the back office support is just as essential. A willingness to encourage cycling through management planning is what can make all the difference."

Our hazard awareness training is possibly the single biggest initiative. A would-be cyclist these days has to learn vital defensive riding techniques to stay safe on the road.

The best management in the world though cannot force somebody to get on their bike, said Duncan. "You could say that the battle for hearts and minds starts in the saddle area! We are not seeking to get everybody to cycle all the time. That would be impractical. But once, twice or more a week, leaving the car and taking the bike can make a difference."

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