

Best Practice in Travel to School and Work Schemes



GO FOR IT

Approaches to Delivery and Putting Policy into Practice

The Local Transport Strategies of both Aberdeenshire Council and The Highland Council have active travel and road safety education at their core. Both Local Authorities have adopted in their Single Outcome Agreement the target to increase the number of children walking or cycling to school.

With firm commitments to support schools with travel plan development, 74% of Highland and 92% of Aberdeenshire schools are now involved in School Travel Planning (STP). Incentive schemes such as GO FOR IT are good starting points for schools who may feel daunted by travel plans; the promotion of sustainable travel opens up the topic for discussion with children and helps schools to identify barriers to modal shift.

Facing similar issues of combining large geographical areas with high number of schools in a varied mix of urban, small settlement and isolated rural settings, the challenge of meeting the needs of all with limited staff resources has meant that high achievement requires strategic partnership working.



In GO FOR IT, partnerships evolve on three levels: school, local practitioner and regional. Partnerships with schools develop along lines of respect and trust through the delivery of consistently high-quality schemes. These must be easy for schools to incorporate into their life and align to their ethos – a strong point of GO FOR IT, with its interdisciplinary core linking health promotion, road safety and Eco Schools to travel planning. Locally, partnerships with the related initiatives help to disseminate messages and share workloads while showing a clear, concerted position regarding active travel promotion. Regionally, networking and joint Local Authority working enable targeted successful projects to thrive on a virtuous circle of continuous improvement and supported delivery. This is how GO FOR IT was born...

Innovation

The GO FOR IT scheme was originally launched by The Highland Council in October 2004 to help schools maintain the momentum of “Walk to School Weeks” by providing year-round incentives for active travel. Although designed to be suitable for all schools, the scheme really took off in urban settlements, where walking to school was easier.

It's safer to go down the street, there are less car doors on the pavement so we can get through

In 2007, Aberdeenshire Council launched an expanded version of GO FOR IT that was fully inclusive to cyclists, school transport and special needs pupils. This opened up the scheme to rural schools, which are now also starting to come on board in Highland since the local re-launch in late 2008.

The concept of GO FOR IT is simple. Pupils collect a tick or stamp for every active travel trip they make to / from school, up to a maximum of 2 ticks / stamps per day. When a pupil has collected enough ticks (40 in Aberdeenshire, 50 in Highland), they earn a reward card to redeem against a sponsor-funded reward. Since GO FOR IT works on trust, pupils and parents are encouraged to be honest about their travel, giving pupils increased moral and personal responsibility.



Families can view the GO FOR IT guidance, select their rewards and keep track of new sponsors by visiting the dedicated GO FOR IT web pages at www.highland.gov.uk/goforit and www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/goforit. The 38 different rewards across both regions are linked to physical (from swimming to skiing), or educational (science or historical visits) activities. All reward cards are durable and reusable, so sponsors simply return them to the school once they have been redeemed to be earned by pupils once again.

the exclusion zones and Park and Stride sites have made a huge difference to the congestion outside the school gates

To be fully inclusive, schools are encouraged to identify Park and Stride sites that allow pupils to safely walk at least part of the way. Those unable to Park and Stride are given the opportunity to collect ticks / stamps by taking part in organised school walking activities. At one special school, where not all pupils are able to walk, GO FOR IT ticks / stamps are collected for participation in organised physical activity exercises.

pupils are really delighted with reward of leisure / sport centre passes

GO FOR IT Highland and Aberdeenshire now run in parallel, having retained their independence and particular features. While both share the same flexible, school-led approach (teachers are trained, kits provided and rewards organised) all schools are able to tailor the scheme to suit their needs. Some choose to run GO FOR IT only two terms each year, pausing in summer when walking rates tend to be higher. Others let their Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSO) or pupil councils take the initiative of writing to potential sponsors asking for prizes to raffle off for GO FOR IT cards. In some schools, pupil councils or JRSO even take on responsibilities such as issuing cards at assembly or organising the lunch-time circuits that enable all pupils to earn their cards.

children are really keen...if they don't walk to school they are keen to go on lunchtime walks

Aberdeenshire has scheduled a phased roll-out, with between 12-20 new schools starting on the scheme each year to suit the programme of Active Schools Coordinators who manage GO FOR IT on a day-to-day basis. In Highland, the approach is slightly different, with all schools eligible to take part.

easy for older pupils to do themselves and simple enough for P1/2 teacher to complete

Measurement of Results

Monitoring of progress is measured in two tiers: in both local authorities, a first travel survey after three months ensures that the scheme is progressing well. Thereafter, results are monitored as part of schools' Annual Hands-Up Travel Surveys, in September each year, to check that schools achieve long-term trends rather than short-term gains.

Qualitative feedback is also encouraged from pupils, parents and staff – either via schools or by emailing the address given on reward cards.

more aware of the issues of pollution and fitness

Evidence of Progress

Average increase in active travel due to GO FOR IT is marked in both Aberdeenshire and Highland.

Generally, though the average for schools shows an active travel increase due to STP activities, active travel in GO FOR IT schools increases much more sharply with a corresponding car-only travel drop, as shown in the graphs on the next page.

The GO FOR IT average active travel increases range from 25-35% in both Authorities; a number of schools with acute "school run" problems showed a 50% drop in car-only use while the semi-rural Oyne School, the best performer, reported a 78% drop in car-only travel due to a vast increase in Park & Stride.

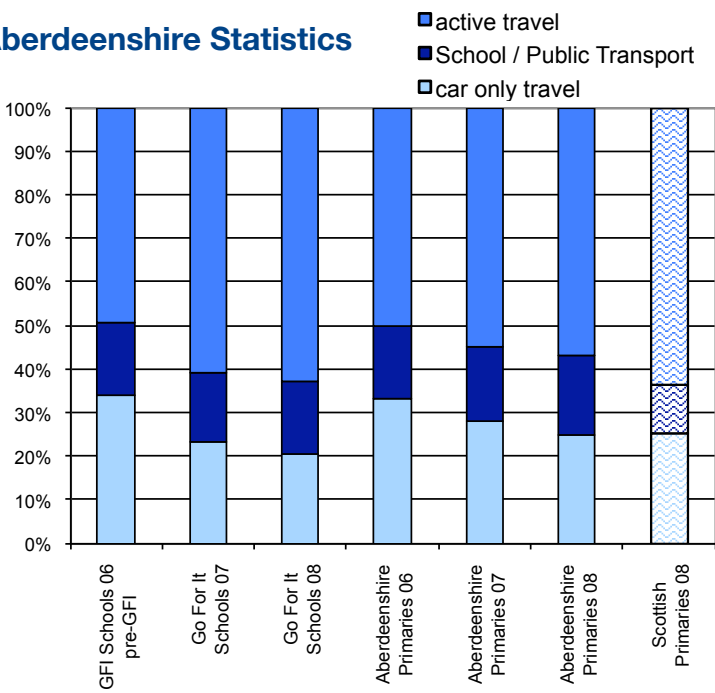
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Aberdeenshire Statistics



With around 9000 pupils in 25 Highland and 37 Aberdeenshire schools running GO FOR IT – and continued expansion in both Local Authorities, GO FOR IT will undoubtedly continue to decrease car-only use to schools in Highland and Aberdeenshire to well below the Scottish average.

Highland Statistics – Long and short term

