Cleaner Safer Greener Communities

Department for Transport

Making Car Sharing and Car Clubs Work

A Good Practice Guide

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Introduction

This guide is aimed at a wide variety of groups – employers, public agencies, site managers, community groups and many more, to provide help on the delivery of car sharing and car club schemes for specific organisations and communities.

It is the outcome of a detailed study carried out in 2004 into the effectiveness of current schemes established across the UK, and draws on the experience of over 20 case study sites. The guidance is supported by a detailed study report and full case study reports.

The approach to delivery of car sharing schemes and car clubs varies according to local circumstances. There is no one template for success; hence this guide is designed to offer practical advice to suit the needs of your particular site or community.

Fundamentally, this guide seeks to enhance existing guidance given in other best practice notes, particularly those related to travel plans. It recognises the importance of developing car sharing and car club solutions that integrate with a wider package of sustainable transport measures. As such it has been designed to offer more than just a ‘glossy promotional leaflet’ and explains some of the more detailed issues necessary for success.

Whilst the guide covers the technical areas of development for such schemes, it plays greater attention to the supporting measures that ensure scheme success, most notably management support, on-going staffing requirements, marketing, promotion and monitoring.

Car Sharing

WHAT IS CAR SHARING?

> *"Some of our employees thought car sharing is about letting other people borrow their vehicle, which obviously didn't appeal at all!"*

The term 'car sharing' as used in this guide, refers to a situation where two or more people travel by car together, for all or part of the car trip. This guide is focussed specifically upon car sharing for closed communities – i.e. for a defined group such as an employer.

In general terms, car sharing can be described as:

- *formal* – an organised scheme that puts drivers and passengers together who may not otherwise have come together to share car journeys; and
- *informal* – generally where family, friends and colleagues agree among themselves, on an ad hoc or regular basis, to share car journeys.

The information in this guide is aimed primarily at facilitating the establishment of formal car sharing schemes. However, evidence from the research clearly indicates that formal schemes lead to an increase in informal car sharing that takes place at a site: hence the outcome will be relevant to both categories.

WHY CAR SHARE?

Car sharing brings a range of benefits to both the organisation and the individual.

Car sharing: benefits for organisations

- Removes or reduces parking problems on and around the site.
- Relieves local congestion.
- Releases parking spaces for more productive and profitable use.
- Assists with staff recruitment and retention.
- Replaces the privilege of parking for some with a more equitable distribution of assets for all.
- Improves relationships with neighbours.
- Demonstrates corporate social responsibility.
- Contributes towards sustainability and environmental targets.
- Enables informal business activity among colleagues during commuting time.

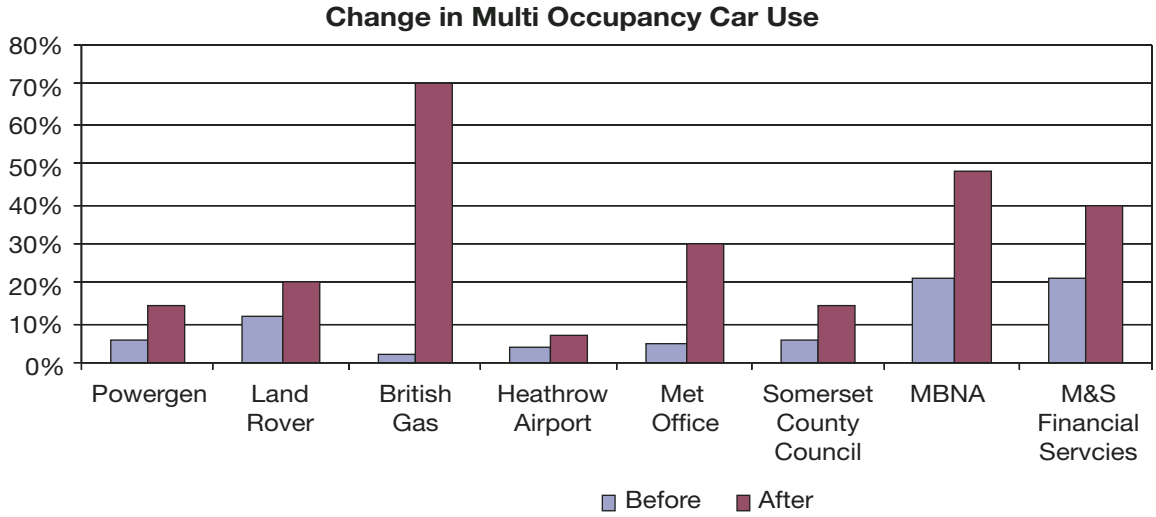
Car sharing: benefits for individuals

- Provides cost savings through reduced car use.
- Offers time savings if preferential parking for car sharers enables them to spend less time looking for a space, as well as walking to and from it.
- Reduces car parking pressures for all, including solo drivers.
- Increases travel options for those with no, or limited, car access.
- Reduces stress with less driving activity.
- Enables the opportunity to do other things during commuting time, whilst not driving.
- Provides a more sociable commute.
- Offers personal security benefits in the event of a breakdown, and for the walk to and from car parks.
- Provides a more equitable distribution of organisational perks.
- Enables staff to contribute to 'doing their bit' for the environment.

"It helps that our car share group works for the same employer, as we have common ground for conversation. I suppose the company benefits to some extent, as we often have informal business meetings while we're travelling to and from work."

Users of the Met Office car sharing scheme.

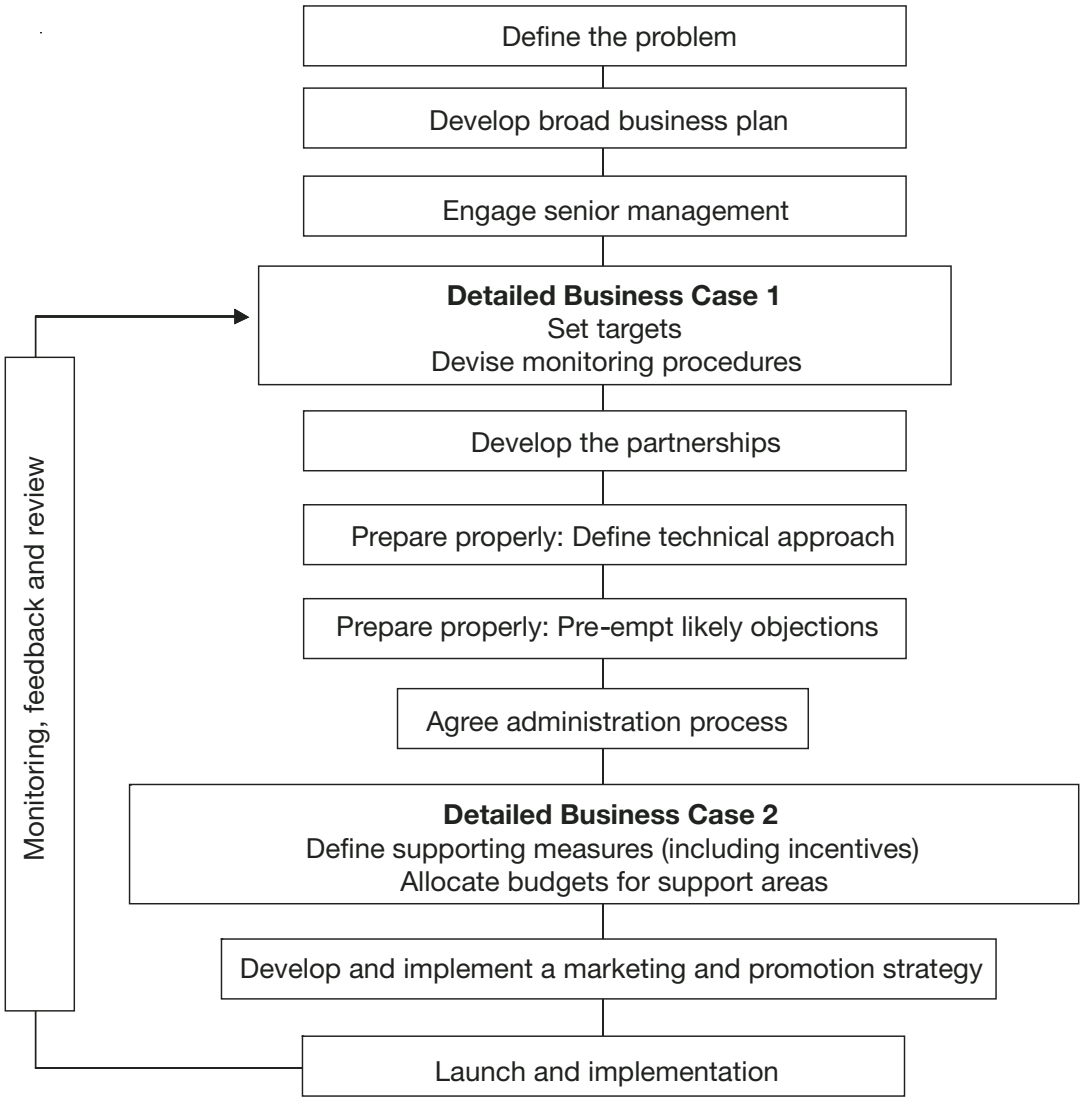
The research supporting this best practice guide demonstrates that car sharing schemes have produced significant increases in multi occupancy car use (a 21% increase on average), with no corresponding detrimental impact on other sustainable modes – a real reason to deliver effective car sharing solutions for an organisation.



One of the most notable findings is the impact on parking spaces per employee. Across all of the case study sites, the average number of spaces per employee was reduced from 0.79 to 0.42. Assuming an average running cost of £400 per space (as identified by previous DfT research in 2002, 'Making Travel Plans Work'), a site employing 2,000 staff is likely to reduce car parking costs by between £100,000 and £300,000 per annum – a powerful argument when exploring the business case for implementing an effective car sharing scheme for businesses, developers and local planning authorities. Clearly in urban areas, the cost of parking can be considerably higher, realising even greater benefits for an organisation.

THE TYPICAL CAR SHARING PROCESS

The following flow chart demonstrates one example of how to approach car sharing.



The issues relevant to each of these stages are described in this best practice guide.

PRE-REQUISITES TO A SUCCESSFUL SCHEME

There is a wide range of car sharing schemes operating in a variety of contexts, and no one model provides an ideal template for all situations. However, based on experience, schemes that flourish do so under the following conditions:

1. ***Problem Definition:***
   - A tangible problem exists, such as a severe shortage of car parking, significant local congestion, and limited alternatives to travelling by car.
   - An external factor exists, such as a planning condition on a development that requires an organisation to limit the volume of cars accessing its site.
2. ***The Business Case:*** The organisation introducing the scheme has a clear understanding of the business case for promoting car sharing, including an appreciation of the full costs it currently bears for providing car parking.
3. ***Management Support:*** There is strong management support and commitment for car sharing, and managers are involved in promoting the scheme, as well as leading by example.
4. ***Travel Plan:*** Car sharing ideally should be part of a supporting travel plan as, compared to single occupancy car drivers, car sharers are more likely to use a variety of transport alternatives.
5. ***Partnerships:*** There is partnership working between the organisation(s) involved in introducing a car sharing scheme, the local authority and, if appropriate, the software provider.
6. ***Proper Preparation:*** Preparation before the scheme launch is both thorough and robust. Workable, realistic and cost-effective technical and administrative approaches are adopted, consultation with staff/unions is carried out at an early stage, and any issues raised are seen to be addressed.
7. ***Confidence of Users:*** The confidence of users is engendered from the outset.
8. ***Sufficient Resources:*** In terms of staff time and a budget, there are sufficient resources available for the development, implementation and maintenance of the scheme.
9. ***Marketing and promotion:*** An effective marketing campaign is sustained.
10. ***Incentives:*** Incentives and supporting measures are provided, which aim to address objections and deterrents to car sharing.

Occasionally a one-off catalyst can get things going, such as the fuel crisis in autumn 2000, during which a BAA car share matching database for staff based at Heathrow airport received 20,000 visits.

1. PROBLEM DEFINITION

Assessing the feasibility of car sharing

It is not uncommon for the idea of a car sharing scheme to emerge from a realisation that something needs to be done about problems of access and congestion in and around a site, coupled with the feeling that encouraging people to use means of travel other than the car will have limited impact. However, to decide what part, if any, car sharing should play in solving the problems, reliable information needs to be gathered on the viability of such a scheme. An organisation considering a car sharing scheme should initially seek to determine:

- The current means by which staff travel to/from the site, including existing levels of informal car sharing.
- Origin and destination of journeys for which car sharing will be encouraged.
- Perceptions and understanding of car sharing among site users.
- Real and perceived barriers to car sharing among site users.
- The measures and incentives that would do most to encourage car sharing.

Such information can be gathered through a combination of:

- Questionnaire surveys.
- Focus groups.
- GIS mapping of staff home postcodes.

Gathering information on existing and potential travel patterns and attitudes can help shape an effective car sharing scheme in the context of a wider travel plan. It will also provide valuable base-line data from which to monitor progress towards targets.

2. THE BUSINESS CASE

The costs of car parking

In order to develop a business case, it is paramount to get a full understanding of the costs of providing car parking, both on and off site (research by the Department of Transport in 2002 identified an average annual running cost of £300 to £500 per space). The realisation of the cost savings associated with car parking are often the greatest identifiable financial benefit. However, it is important to use these funds wisely – for example, a balanced investment providing incentives for sharing, and support for other sustainable travel initiatives that will improve overall accessibility to/from the site. It is also important to recognise the ability to expand employee numbers on site without the need for additional parking spaces – again a direct saving to the business.

Funding a car sharing scheme

Car sharing schemes are generally funded from a variety of sources. In most cases, employer based car sharing schemes are funded by the employers themselves, generally as part of a package of measures branded under their site specific travel plan. Other options can include:

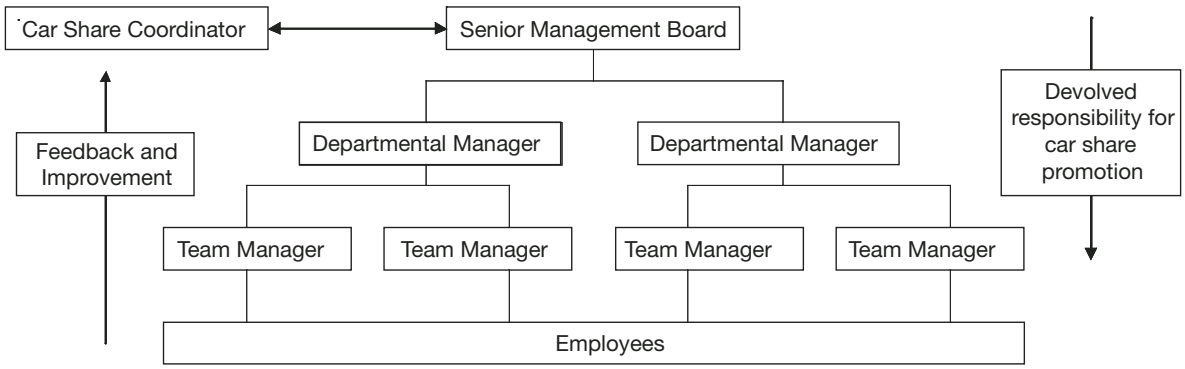
- Developer contributions relating to a Section 106 Agreement attached to planning permission for new development. The contribution usually relates to travel planning in general, rather than car sharing in particular; but site constraints, such as parking restrictions, can make car sharing a key element of the resultant travel plan.
- Businesses located on a business park can collectively meet the running costs of a car sharing scheme, or more specifically a commuter/travel centre that runs the scheme on their behalf.

Stockley Park Consortium funds Stockley Park Commuter Centre, through which staff of employers based at the park can obtain advice and assistance on finding alternatives to single occupancy commuter journeys, including help finding car sharing partners.

- Local Authorities can sometimes provide capital funding to organisations implementing car sharing schemes.

3. MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Full management support is about more than just a recognition of the benefits of car sharing. Senior managers must be seen to be leading by example, either through car sharing themselves, or through allocating sufficient incentives for sharers. In large organisations a proven model is for the car sharing coordinator to use management support to influence departmental and team managers, and engage these managers in the promotion and development of car sharing amongst the wider community.



4. TRAVEL PLAN

A travel plan sets a wider framework of sustainable transport measures, offering complementary services to support a car sharing scheme. All of the case study sites that informed this guide have active travel plans in place – in particular, a travel plan will ensure that car sharing does not have a detrimental impact on other sustainable modes (walking, cycling, public transport). Further guidance on travel planning can be found at www.transportenergy.org.uk.

Setting realistic targets and developing a monitoring programme

When setting targets for a car sharing scheme, it is worth considering the following issues:

- The 'market research', or surveys, carried out at an early stage to help determine the viability of a car sharing scheme, should, if the scheme goes ahead, provide the basis for setting realistic targets. As a guide, the average increase in multi-occupancy car use across the case study sites was 21%.
- When undertaking the initial surveys it is worth asking attitudinal questions about future travel behaviour, specifically what would encourage staff to car share, in order that targets can be established with some degree of accuracy.
- Targets for car sharing should fit within a wider travel plan, which incorporates targets for increasing other alternatives to single occupancy car journeys.
- Monitoring car sharing activity helps to establish whether targets are being met. It is also an important tool for scheme management: to assess the effectiveness of scheme promotion; to allocate sufficient priority parking; to deter abuse of the system; etc.
- In deciding what to monitor, there is an obvious appeal in measuring the success of a scheme by membership rates or the number of people on a car sharing database. This is simple to analyse, and generally easily accessible, but provides no indication of levels of actual car sharing activity. It is important, therefore, to measure scheme usage rates, by recording frequency of sharing and vehicle occupancy rates.
- To monitor car sharing levels effectively this task needs to be built into the scheme management from the outset. It can be:
  - a function of the scheme database, for example by encouraging sharers to register trips made on a daily basis. If this approach is taken then some incentive to register each trip should be instigated (for example a prize draw based on frequency of car sharing trips), and the registering of a trip each day should be as simple as possible (for example the clicking of an icon on a PC desktop).
  - done via car park access arrangements (for example through the use of smartcards and car park barrier control).

  - achieved through periodic surveys (car park counts or staff travel surveys). Whilst costly and labour intensive, they do provide a good way of directly assessing car sharing levels achieved. However, they are unlikely to reveal fine detail, such as daily or weekly fluctuations in car sharing activity.

- Once they have found compatible sharers, there is a tendency for individuals to withdraw from a car sharing database to avoid having to deal with further approaches from those who have not yet established a car sharing arrangement (or they simply do not see the benefit of remaining on the formal scheme once their car sharing arrangements are successfully operating). As the database can provide a very useful monitoring tool, scheme administrators need to provide a good reason for people to remain registered on it, and where possible, feed back information relating to car sharing usage. Continuing eligibility to incentives and supporting measures, such as priority parking, conditional on database registration is an obvious solution. Enabling individuals to remain registered as an active car sharer, but able to indicate to others on the database that they are not looking to change their current sharing arrangements at present, can be helpful in this respect.

5. PARTNERSHIPS

Local authorities do not need to be involved in a *closed community* car sharing scheme, although there are clear benefits for involving them. Local authorities can:

- provide expert advice based upon experience drawn from elsewhere/other local sites;
- introduce potential partners such as other local businesses that are developing similar solutions; and
- often provide discounted software purchase through the bulk purchase of licenses.

The primary point of contact is generally the local authority travel plan coordinator or the sustainable transport team.

If you elect to use a software provider to administer your car sharing scheme you should consider them as a partner – they can generally provide a wealth of supporting information to help you get the most out of your system, including advice on marketing and promotion, legal aspects, insurance, and how to increase uptake levels.

What support can local authorities provide?

Local authorities themselves can continue to do more to create the environments in which car sharing can flourish. These include:

- Setting and implementing maximum car parking standards for new developments. Car sharing becomes more attractive where demand for parking spaces exceeds supply.
- Providing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes (and potentially High Occupancy Toll lanes). This is viable only where certain criteria for congestion levels, road capacity and traffic enforcement are met.
- Insisting on travel plans as part of the planning process with built-in penalties for failing to meet modal split targets.
- Promoting the development and implementation of travel plans generally among organisations in their area, so initiatives such as car sharing become more widely known and practised, and other options become available on the occasions when car sharing is not possible.
- Leading by example with effective travel plans for their own staff, including a car sharing scheme if appropriate.
- Being a catalyst for various organisations coming together to work on a joint car sharing scheme, where this is the most viable option.
- Taking the lead in setting up county-wide schemes, which may be closed or open, often subsidising costs to member organisations.

Somerset County Council worked with a commercial car sharing provider to develop software now used to run the Somerset Car Share scheme. The scheme development, promotion and overall administration costs are met by the County. Organisations in Somerset that join the scheme pay a modest annual licence fee to the software provider.

- Promoting car sharing as a tool to increase social inclusion – providing access to car sharing schemes at Job Centres, local colleges, and community centres.
- Better use of Local Strategic Partnerships to promote and develop car sharing activity.
- Being a promoter of experimental or demonstration initiatives, or providing specific assistance to small organisations.

Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and the Chamber of Commerce fund TransACT, through which employers with between 20 and 250 staff are provided with grant aid of up to £20,000 to develop and implement a travel plan, which could include a car sharing element.

- Marketing car sharing to the general population through campaigns such as Travelwise and National Liftshare Day.

Devon County Council uses roadside repeater signs on its busier roads to promote CarShareDevon.

6. PROPER PREPARATION

Matching options

Once it has been decided that car sharing has a role to play among an organisation's travel planning measures, a fundamental requirement for the operation of such a scheme is a satisfactory way of matching users. There are five possibilities:

- The use of *secure private groups* on commercial car sharing web-sites. This can provide a quick and cost-effective way of enabling a defined group to start car sharing, using reliable technology. Many of the internet providers that offer private groups enable access to a wider network of users registered on their open networks. A limitation is that the web-sites, whilst branded with corporate identity, are not generally tailored to the specific needs of the group.
- The use of *commercial car sharing* software to offer car share matching for a defined group, such as staff at an employment site. Compared to the first option, this approach generally provides greater security and enhanced matching facilities, including 'on route' searches. However, these attributes tend to make it difficult to integrate the car sharing scheme with others (for example with other businesses in the locality), and can mean higher software costs than for those schemes using more generic internet-based software.

A number of county councils, such as Somerset, Worcestershire and Essex, have purchased commercial car sharing software for use among their own staff. To encourage wider take-up of this travel option, and increase the pool of sharers, the local authorities allow other organisations within their administrative boundaries to join their scheme as either 'open' (share with anyone) or 'closed' (share only within their organisation) groups.

- The development and application of *bespoke software* designed specifically for an individual organisation, generally using in-house IT support for development and implementation. While this can provide a tailor-made solution for a specific site, including monitoring and performance management functions, it requires an appropriately skilled and resourced IT department, so is generally appropriate only for very large or specialist IT organisations.
- Use of *spreadsheet and database programmes*, such as Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access, modified to reflect local needs. Based on commonly available and used software, this option can be cheap and simple to establish and administer, although it requires a coordinator to manage the software and ensure reliable matches (thus is staff-intensive). The results however can be impressive in terms of modal shift to multi-occupancy car use.
- The use of an *informal car sharing register*, often map based, with participants self-matching. This is simple and low cost to set up and administer; but it can lack credibility, and there is no automated means of monitoring performance or effectiveness.

Considerations in selecting a matching option

When deciding on which approach to adopt, consideration should be given to the following:

- The technical approach should be effective for the scale and location of the site (for example a site which draws upon a wide catchment area for staff will often require a sophisticated matching function that includes 'on-route' capability).
- Where software is used it needs to be sufficiently reliable to instil confidence in the scheme – it is worth challenging the software provider from the outset on the reliability of their matching capability before commissioning any particular system.
- Even computer-based systems will require some level of administrative support: to promote awareness of it, respond to user queries and problems, oversee any incentive or reward scheme associated with it, etc.
- The effectiveness of the matching capability is significantly enhanced if a geographical interface is supplied. These are generally provided by GIS (Geographical Information Systems), and link the car sharing database with a map, enabling users to clearly see the location of sharers. This not only assists in the matching process for common origins and destinations, but also enables car sharing to take place along common routes, picking up passengers as required, and can be configured to enable sharing matches with other sustainable modes (walk, cycle, public transport).

- Schemes may need to provide a variety of registration and matching options if not everyone has easy access to a computer – it is worth considering a display in reception that shows the current car sharing pools, and encourages contact to be made, or enable staff to complete a paper registration form or enter details via a telephone call to the administrator.

Source: Liftshare.com

- It is useful to ensure flexibility, for example the ability for car sharing matching facilities to be set up so they can be used for emergencies and holiday cover in addition to regular commuting journeys.

There has been considerable time and effort devoted to the technical approaches to car sharing matching systems, with many different software packages and delivery techniques in operation or planned. However, the new research has demonstrated that car sharing schemes have maximum impact when the technical approach is combined with a person – or a team at large sites – actively engaged in coordinating and administrating the matching service, and the organisation(s) concerned have a wholehearted on-going commitment to marketing and promoting car sharing.

7. CONFIDENCE

Data protection

An important issue in building and maintaining confidence in a car sharing scheme is that of ensuring that personal information provided to match users is used appropriately. Information held in a car sharing database is likely to include at least some of the following: contact details; journey origin and destination postcodes (full or part); locations en-route; journey times; availability for sharing; whether the applicant is a driver, passenger or both; and some personal preferences e.g. for a sharer of the same gender, or a non smoker. Guidelines for good practice are:

- Ensure data is used and stored strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Act (available from: http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980029.htm).
- Inform scheme applicants about what will, and will not be done with any information they provide.
- Allow individuals to stipulate how much contact information others have access to, for example restricting this to work email address or phone number if preferred.

- Recognise that people are generally more concerned about giving data to third party/outside organisations. In this respect closed systems, in which information is shared only within a defined group, are generally more attractive.

One effective way of ensuring data protection measures are adhered to, and increasing matching capabilities, was the approach developed by E.ON UK (Powergen), which ensured users submitted the first three digits of their postcode, and then asked for voluntary data on full address and/or a local landmark, such as a public house. It is this landmark that enables potential sharers to visualise whether a match is appropriate.

Addressing common objections

In deciding how best to promote a car sharing scheme, it is useful to understand common concerns and objections, in that these can subsequently be addressed through scheme administration alongside information and marketing material. There are a great variety of perceptual barriers to car sharing, all of which can be tackled. Appendix A summarises the main objections, and how they can be best overcome.

Overall, the tools most effective in overcoming perceptual barriers are personal involvement in the matching process by an administrator, and offering the opportunity to trial car sharing before committing to it.

To enable those with child escort responsibilities to participate in its car sharing scheme, GCHQ offered to collate information about parents with children at the same, or neighbouring, schools. The idea was that, having dropped their children at school and freed-up seat space, colleagues would meet up and continue their journeys to work in shared vehicles.

Supporting measures

There are a few indirect measures that can be introduced to support car sharing, the appropriateness of which will depend on site-specific considerations.

- A guaranteed ride home in the event of an emergency, paid for by the organisation. This is an important aspect to the promotion of car sharing, providing reassurances to staff who are concerned about being stranded. Despite reservations about the possible financial burden such a guarantee will place on organisations, experience shows that the cost is typically no more than £100 a year for a large organisation. It is useful to ensure that the guaranteed ride home can be instigated by sharers easily and without excessive ‘form filling’.

GCHQ has a contract with a local taxi firm to cover its emergency ride home guarantee, ensuring it is easy for sharers to get a taxi to/from work whenever they need one. This gives staff a feeling of certainty and provides recognition of employer commitment.

The official tax position is given in IR 176 (www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk), and is stated as follows:

"Employees will not have to pay tax or NICs if their employer provides alternative travel arrangements when employees cannot car share as usual due to exceptional events. For example, if an employee who normally shares a car has to go home early because of a domestic emergency, and the employer pays the cost of the journey home, the concession would apply. It does not apply if the unusual circumstances could have been anticipated and planned for.

This concession applies to a maximum of 60 journeys per employee in one tax year."

- A welcome pack, including guidelines on car sharing etiquette.
- Guidance and reassurance on the effect of car sharing on drivers' insurance. Currently, as long as the driver is making no profit from the activity, their insurance should not be affected. Indeed, insurance premiums may decrease if annual vehicle mileage is significantly reduced. Providing a sample letter for drivers to inform their insurance company of the reasons for changes in their driving activity can be helpful.
- Flexible working hours, to increase the potential for establishing workable car sharing arrangements.
- A 'canteen culture', enabling staff to associate with a wide range of colleagues, and forge car sharing partnerships informally.
- Acknowledgement and acceptance by supervisors and middle managers that car sharers need to leave 'on time' to honour pre-determined car sharing arrangements.
- A travel plan, including support for other non-car modes. Improving sustainable networks in general assists in the promotion of car sharing, as it offers alternatives should the particular car sharing arrangement be unsuitable on particular days.
- A review of business mileage policies and allowances to ensure that excess mileage is discouraged and car sharing is encouraged.
- A shuttle bus from isolated business parks to a local town centre for lunchtime shopping.

- Good on-site facilities so people do not have to travel off-site, such as catering and sports facilities, dry cleaning and cash machines.
- An accessible and confidential communication channel, such as email, through which car sharers can provide feedback on how the scheme is performing to its administrator, including any problems they are encountering.
- Prompt action on bona-fide problems and complaints that arise.

8. SUFFICIENT RESOURCES

Administration

Milton Keynes 'Open' Car Share

Whatever matching option is used, any formal car sharing scheme requires a degree of administration. The role of an administrator is likely to include the following tasks: enhancing the electronic matching system; acting in an advisory role in response to specific queries; ensuring data protection issues are adequately covered; maintaining the quality of the data contained within the system; promoting and developing the car sharing database amongst staff; monitoring effectiveness; and producing management reports on usage. The main advantages of having a scheme administrator are that they: provide 'a personal touch' to an otherwise faceless initiative; ensure 'best value' is extracted from the scheme; continually tailor the scheme to meet user needs; and provide a link for the local authority in the case of planning obligations. The benefits associated with effective delivery can justify the employment (full or part time) of a specialist for the job (the role can often be combined with the management and delivery of a wider travel plan for the site).

Options for how a scheme administrator operates include:

- For car sharing schemes that cover a wide area, an entire county for example, it is likely that the administrator will be employed by the 'primary' organisation, such as a county council, and will oversee the whole system, providing a degree of support to secondary scheme member organisations. There will still be a need for some local staff to administer effectively.
- For individual organisations, operating their car sharing scheme in isolation, it is likely that the administrator will be an appointed member of staff, working full- or part-time, depending on the size of the organisation and level of responsibility they have for other travel plan measures.

- For car sharing schemes based on a business park and involving several different employers, the administrator is likely to be an appointed staff member from a lead employer, or based in a Mobility Centre funded and managed on behalf of all the employers.

Characteristics of successful schemes are:

- They have administrators that possess a range of attributes, reflecting the need to: be knowledgeable about, and strongly committed to, the concept of car sharing; be approachable; have good communication, interpersonal, and marketing skills; are comfortable with using IT on a daily basis; and have an ability to influence those around them.
- They demonstrate strong management support for the administrator combined with a degree of autonomy and decision-making powers included in the remit of the administrator.
- The administrator has access to skills and resources from other parts of the organisation, such as the marketing department.
- An allocated (and adequate) budget is provided for the administrator, the size of which enables the objectives and targets they have set to be realistically met. Car sharing scheme budgets generally increase with: the size of the organisation; the seriousness and urgency of the problem car sharing is helping to address; and the range of incentives and support for the scheme.

Very few organisations are large or well resourced enough to employ a full-time scheme administrator. For most administrators it is one of many responsibilities. As with the budget, time allocations for the task should relate to objectives and targets. The amount of time required is likely to be a reflection, again, of company size, but also the matching system employed, together with the range of incentives and support promised to sharers – some of which are more human-resource intensive than others.

British Gas employ a team of 3 staff (some part time) to manage their car sharing activity on site. The results of this investment have been very positive, with the removal of all single occupancy vehicles from the new site.

9. MARKETING AND PROMOTION

A strong and effective marketing campaign will generally have the following 4 elements.

1. A clear message and well-defined target audience

Marketing a car sharing scheme will need to include a clear definition of what car sharing is, and indeed what it is not. An effective marketing campaign will include a strong focus on the *personal* benefits of car sharing, in particular the cost savings (which are often not evident until people start sharing), time savings where appropriate, and increased travel options.

Worcestershire County Council

2. Branding

Somerset County Council

Consistency aids recognition and reinforces messages. Effective branding can be transferred onto stationery including mouse mats, pens, rulers, keyrings, mugs, stress balls, car air fresheners, etc, with these products provided in welcome packs, for prize draws, and at promotional events. Similar to branding, slogans are another useful tool to aid the recognition of a car sharing scheme. Examples include Devon County Council's *"Seats spare, car share"* or GCHQ's *"Start the day with a pick-me-up"*.

3. A defined timetable for implementation

On-going and regular communication is vital to sustaining a car sharing scheme, not least as organisations are dynamic, continually gaining and losing individuals – and thus also members of their car sharing schemes. Schemes should keep information and its mode of delivery varied, updated and refreshed. They should feed back to staff evidence of how successful the scheme is, which, in turn, will breed further interest and success. Finally, having a clearly established strategy detailing what tasks will be undertaken, by whom, when and with what budget, ensures that marketing remains active throughout the lifetime of the scheme.

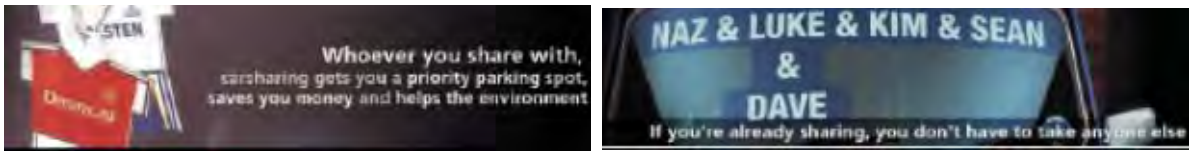
4. A range of communication tools and networks:

It is useful to distinguish between: A. general advertising; and B. individual marketing.

A. General advertising

This takes place through a variety of media. It is important for the marketing material to reflect the same corporate quality as other ad campaigns. The following are examples of those used to good effect to promote car sharing.

- Posters – generally displayed on staff notice board areas, and used to portray general information about a car sharing scheme, or inform staff of specific events and promotions. Innovative schemes include the use of 'moving billboards' that can be located at various locations around a particular site in order to capture a large market audience.



Examples of effective and appropriate advertising from the BAA Heathrow car sharing scheme

- Leaflets – used to portray a similar type of information to posters, but often with more detail. They can be distributed at general information points, such as notice boards, reception desks, staff canteen areas, or sometimes with wage slips.
- Newsletters – generally issued quarterly, the most successful approaches combine information with feedback mechanisms for staff comment or surveys. Such a newsletter can be distributed in paper or electronic format (to suit local needs of workers). Newsletters are a popular means to report progress and performance statistics, and ensure that feedback mechanisms are provided for staff.

Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford has a weekly staff newsletter, Friday Focus, which regularly features the staff car sharing scheme.

- Web sites – information is generally hosted on a specific web site dedicated to the car sharing scheme, with links via corporate home pages. Some more innovative schemes use the car sharing brand on the home page, combined with animation, to attract the eye to the car sharing campaign.
- Local TV and Radio – seen as an effective means for promoting the uptake of area-wide schemes, particularly for local authority-led initiatives.

A feature on local radio about the Norfolk car sharing scheme sponsored by the County Council significantly increased the hit rate of its Liftshare.com web-site.

- Regular road shows/coffee mornings – these are a particularly useful means of promoting car sharing, as they provide repeated opportunities for people to "come along and see what its all about", without obligation. They also offer an occasion to meet, and informally assess, potential car sharing partners. Promoters of area-wide schemes often visit the sites of all major employers in the area to make staff aware of the scheme and the benefits of car sharing for the employers and employees alike.

To assist its 4,500 staff to sort out any commuting problems resulting from a move to new premises and a 50% cut in the number of parking spaces, GCHQ appointed 'pathfinders'. These were existing staff members, with a personable approach, who took responsibility for helping a group from a particular area, or route corridor. One of their most effective approaches was coffee mornings, where the pathfinders would facilitate informal introductions between potential car sharing partners.

- Promotional events – these can have particular influence and relevance when timetabled to coincide with wider campaigns, such as National Liftshare Day. Incorporating an element of novelty can also add to the level of attention and interest they attract.
- In-car stickers – usually carrying a promotional car sharing slogan. These can be used to quickly identify vehicles that are eligible to park in reserved car sharing bays, with the added benefit that they act as a roving advertisement for car sharing among the motoring population at large.
- Marked dedicated car-sharing bays – these are most effective when located in sought-after and highly visible locations, such as near the main entrances to buildings, or outside the offices of senior management.

B. Individual marketing

Within a closed community, in particular, means of promotion may also take on a more personal and informal approach. Group e-mails, e-newsletters, presentations to colleagues and literature describing the personal benefits (including examples of financial savings) of the car sharing scheme and highlighting successes gained by individual champions, will reach more diffident staff and raise their awareness of the car sharing scheme. Employers should always provide information concerning the car sharing schemes as part of staff induction packages.

"I was drawn to car sharing by the poster and leaflet campaign. But, on their own, these messages did not do the trick. What 'converted the sale' for me was the field sales campaign, that is, when the Changing Directions travel planning team descended on my office and put the offer to me face-to-face at my desk."

User of Airport Carshare at BAA Heathrow

Other General Marketing considerations

The following are other useful issues to consider when scoping a marketing campaign.

E.ON UK (Powergen)

- Any advertising campaign should consider the sensitivities associated with sharing an individual's personal space. Specifically, avoid any implications that car sharing can act as an informal dating system, as this could easily alienate large sections of the target audience.
- Marketing the environmental impacts of car sharing will appeal to some people more than others.
- Even if participation in a car sharing scheme is compulsory, marketing is important to win acceptance.
- In generating promotional material it is advisable to involve those with wider marketing experience.
- In larger organisations a process that cascades the car sharing message throughout the organisation is the most effective, where middle managers are guided in championing the car sharing scheme amongst staff at all levels, reducing the burden on the scheme administrator.

Targets for reducing the volume of single occupancy vehicles travelling to MBNA's site at Chester Business Park are included in departmental managers' performance targets, in turn linked to their bonus scheme. So, senior staff at this banking group have every incentive to encourage their employees to car share.

- Innovative, eye-catching advertisements are proven to work best.

A particularly inspired approach was that adopted by E.ON UK (Powergen), who issued a series of 'anticipatory advertising' messages, pre-empting the launch of the car sharing scheme. This poster campaign sent 'sustainability messages' to staff prior to launch, but did not refer to the car sharing scheme directly, hence maintained an 'air of mystery'. This approach significantly increased the levels of 'chatter' amongst office staff, such that when the scheme was launched, it had already established interest (i.e. staff were keen to know what this mysterious campaign was about).

- Raising awareness about the benefits of a formal car sharing scheme based at a specific site, can lead to an increase in informal car sharing activity among colleagues, friends and families for all sorts of trip purposes.
- A high-profile launch event will raise awareness about car sharing from day one, in turn raising participation and thus confidence in the system. Clearly, the ability to achieve a high matching rate depends directly upon the number of registered users; it is therefore important to maximise this number as soon as possible in order to establish a viable scheme. Having good initial take-up of associated benefits, such as reserved parking spaces, will also help to ensure that the credibility of the scheme remains intact.

British Gas car share notice-board

10. INCENTIVES

One way of meeting, or overcoming, objections to car sharing is to underpin a formal car sharing scheme with attractive incentives, some of which are derived from the act of sharing itself, and do not need to be provided as 'extras'.

1. Financial

Financial incentives to car sharing take three general forms.

- Firstly, the direct cost savings of sharing vehicle running costs with others, for example an average car travelling 20 miles each day with 3 occupants, will save approximately £1,000 per occupant per year.
- Secondly, cash incentives to participate in a car sharing scheme, for example a daily payment for travelling by any sustainable mode (walk, cycle, public transport, car sharing).

MBNA awards points for the use of alternatives to drive alone commuting, including car sharing. One point for each trip made by an alternative mode. These are exchanged for cash when specific targets are reached: £20 for the first 30 points, thereafter £90 for every 120 points.

- Thirdly, indirect financial incentives and rewards for car sharing provided by an organisation, in the form of vouchers and discounts, etc. Examples include:
  - Free or discounted parking charges for sharers, while non-sharers pay, or pay more.
  - Discounted motoring organisation membership (e.g. E.ON UK (Powergen) and BAA Heathrow offers AA discounts and vehicle checks).
  - Gift vouchers for use in its shops to those joining the scheme.
  - Discounts in restaurants and beauty salons (e.g. Essex car share miles scheme).
  - Monthly prize draw for a store voucher (e.g. Orange holds a prize draw – each time an employee logs a car sharing journey they receive a draw entry, so the more they share, the greater their chances of winning). This has the added benefit of providing good quality monitoring data.

Considerations relating to financial incentives

- The incentive needs to be sufficiently large enough to be 'worth having' and to thus act as a genuine spur to behavioural change; but not so large as to attract claims of unfairness – from other non-motorised users, for example – nor to encourage cheating or abuse of the system.
- It should be kept as simple to manage as possible, to minimise the administrative time involved.
- Under current Inland Revenue requirements (November 2004), financial incentives are subject to tax and National Insurance contributions. It is recommended that scheme promoters contact the Inland Revenue or their financial advisors to discuss the implications at an early stage, and ensure the latest tax position is adhered to.
- Scheme users find it useful to have guidelines for typical travel payments. Information about the scheme should therefore include: a statement to the effect that financial costs of running the vehicle should be divided equally between sharers, and that no financial gain should be made by the driver; or information about typical mileage payments for sharers, depending upon vehicle size, mileage and number of sharers. As a general rule, the payments for sharing should be within the range 5-15 pence per mile. Clearly if the driving is shared equally between sharers then no financial payments are necessary.

2. Time

This incentive takes two general forms:

- Additional holiday allowances awarded as a 'thank you' to car sharers.
- Time saved searching for a parking bay, and walking to/from a vehicle where car parking is in short supply, but car sharers are guaranteed a space near to their final destination.

At Barclaycard's HQ at Northampton the priority car parking area for car sharers is seen as the prime reason most staff have joined the car sharing scheme. Car parking had been a serious problem on site with many staff complaining about the lack of car parking and about congestion on the Business Park caused by Barclaycard employees parking on the road network around the Business Park. Car sharers estimate they are able to bank an additional 5-10 minutes per day (almost five working days per year), because they can more quickly find a parking space close to the front entrance, rather than driving around the site looking for a space and finding one in the furthest car park.

3. Preferential parking

Priority parking can be used to portray a strong message to staff about the importance placed upon car sharing within the organisation. It works well when:

- There is a general shortage of parking to meet demand, but spaces are reserved for car sharers.
- Reserved parking spaces for car sharers are in a preferential location, such as near building access points.
- Car sharers are offered additional parking security measures.

McVitie's in West London's Park Royal has a secure parking compound for car sharers, which is appreciated particularly by those with high value cars and women concerned about personal security.

- The number of car parking spaces reserved for car sharers is expanded to meet demand, generally at the expense of space for single occupancy vehicles.
- Where parking space is severely restricted, and rationing is necessary even among car sharers, priority is given to cars with more than two occupants.

At British Gas on Blyth Valley Business Park in Solihull, parking is only provided for car sharers. Other than disabled, visitors and limited exceptions, single occupancy vehicles are not permitted on-site, and there is no local off-site parking availability.

To encourage car sharing, GCHQ has introduced a system of car park space sharing for virtually all staff. Each space is allocated to at least two people (based upon their suitability to share), who decide among themselves how they are going to share it – either by car sharing, or using other modes of transport on the days when they do not have parking available.

Enforcement

Where priority parking is provided for car sharers, enforcement measures may be necessary. The approach taken should be carefully tailored to meet local needs. The most important consideration is to ensure that enforcement is recognised by users and non-users such that the scheme does not become devalued through infringements. Three broad options exist:

County Hall, Worcester

- Self enforcement, where staff are involved in informally policing infringements, and feeding back information to the scheme administrator – particularly suitable for sites without a managed car park and/or with a strong sense of staff commitment to the car sharing scheme and where spaces are dedicated in prominent locations.
- Random enforcement, where checks are made on an ad-hoc basis, usually supported by some sort of permit system to be displayed on the dashboard or windscreen – particularly suitable for sites with an attended managed car park, and where concerns over staff enforcing the use of spaces have been raised.

CarShareMK issues car sharing permits to both drivers and passengers, so vehicles parked in spaces reserved for sharers should display at least two permits.

- Automatic enforcement, where physical entry to reserved parking areas is restricted to car sharers only by means of: a swipe card and barrier entry; or personnel – particularly suitable for large complex sites, with multiple car parks, and where barrier controlled car parking exists (or could exist).

The 300 space car sharing car park at Barclaycard's HQ in Northampton is staffed until 12 noon, and only vehicles with at least two occupants are permitted entry.

British Gas uses barrier and swipe card access for its car park, which is reserved solely for car sharers – an on-site security firm monitors and prevents tailgating activity.

Sites where the car park is managed by a third party provider (i.e. a specialist car park management company) may encounter specific enforcement issues. In these cases, the terms and conditions are generally specified from the outset of the contract, and hence amending them mid-term can often be difficult, particularly if there is a requirement to enforce car parking spaces, which had previously been free access. One possible solution is to provide training for car park staff to deal with conflict situations.

MONITORING AND FEEDBACK

Having successfully implemented a car sharing scheme, it is important to monitor its effectiveness in reducing the impact of single occupancy car use. This provides valuable performance data to senior management on whether the investment in car sharing is being spent wisely, and, in the case of new development, can provide important data to enable local authorities as to whether conditions associated with planning agreements are being met. As described in Section 6 above, it is important to consider the approach to monitoring at an early stage in the development process, such that baseline data can be established, that the technical approach can be agreed and budgets for monitoring activity can be secured.

Having monitored performance it is well worth the effort in conveying performance back to staff. In most cases staff will have seen the benefits first hand through reduced local congestion, and less parking pressures on site, but nevertheless, this stage of the process enables the car share coordinator to thank sharers for their contributions.

The feedback should be done in accordance with the marketing strategy, continuing to raise awareness amongst all staff. It is worth considering the use of 'related benefits', such as the amount of CO_2 saved, total reduced mileage per annum, or the average financial saving per sharer.

MULTI ORGANISATION CAR SHARING

In some cases (in particular business parks) there is the potential to widen individual employer car sharing schemes to cover groups of employers. The benefits include an increase in the number of potential sharers resulting in better matching rates, and economies of scale associated with the purchase of software to cover several employers. Issues to consider when developing this approach include:

- The requirements for *closed community* and open groups are different, particularly with regard to the requirements to first meet a sharer (open groups can be off-putting for some users, as they stress explicitly up front the need for secure and safe means of initial contact). The potential for these differences to affect confidence and uptake levels needs to be understood. For example, individuals are more reticent about sharing personal information, and personal space, with complete strangers from outside their organisation.
- Monitoring needs careful consideration, and the agreements on car park management and space allocation between employers can become complicated. One approach to address this is for a business park to allocate a common car sharing car park, although this makes it difficult to ensure that the spaces are located in a convenient location in order to make them attractive.
- Some organisations fear staff will be poached by neighbouring competitors, and are thus unwilling to facilitate car sharing between their own, and competitors staff.

OTHER HINTS AND TIPS

- Major changes to organisational arrangements are a useful opportunity to develop and launch a car sharing scheme; in particular relocation to a new site when everybody will need to review their travelling arrangements.

When the Met Office relocated from Bracknell to Exeter it wished to carry as many of its specialist staff as possible with the move, so offered a generous relocation package. However, to discourage long-distance, car-dependent, commuting, it restricted the package to those who moved to within an hour's travelling distance of the new site – for which a travel plan was a condition of planning permission. Aware that a good proportion of the Met Office staff would choose to move to attractive villages within an hour's drive of Exeter, but not well served by public transport, a central element of the travel plan was the proposal to develop a formal car sharing scheme.

- It is particularly difficult to win acceptance for car sharing among those who are used to unrestricted free car parking at the site where the scheme is being introduced – consider this carefully when scoping the scheme, and address the concerns directly through marketing and promotion of 'why sharing is being introduced', and the direct benefits to staff.
- Sites that operate shift working patterns and have limited parking – a situation facing many hospitals – must deal with the problem of an overlap in demand for parking spaces between those arriving just ahead of those finishing their working day. Car sharing can help alleviate this through reducing demands more generally, although car sharing in these circumstances will be most effective if shifts are coordinated in a way which supports staff car share patterns.
- For many individuals car sharing is not practical for every commuting journey. This should be recognised in scheme development, administration and marketing, and the provision of alternative options. Even occasional car sharers are 'doing their bit'.
- Car sharing schemes should not be restricted to car owners. Enabling non-drivers to take advantage of car sharing schemes increases their mobility options, as well as site accessibility. It also enhances the viability of the scheme for drivers, by widening the pool of potential sharers, and thus their chances of being able to take advantage of the benefits and any incentives associated with the scheme.
- Car sharing can be integrated with wider journey sharing initiatives, incorporating commuting and business journeys across all modes.
- Car sharing is just like any transport system: it requires investment in staff time, marketing, promotion, administration, and links to associated travel planning measures, in order for it to flourish.

WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION

Travel Planning: the Department for Transport website coordinates resources for travel plan support including car sharing, and can be found at:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_susttravel/documents/page/dft_susttravel_504128.hcsp

This site will be updated with relevant material relating to car sharing as it becomes available.

Car Clubs

WHAT IS A CAR CLUB?

For the purpose of this guide a 'car club' is a club that provides its members with flexible access to the 'hire' of a vehicle. Vehicles are parked in reserved parking spaces, close to homes or workplaces and can be used, and paid for, on an hourly, daily or weekly basis.

MoorCar

WHAT DOES THIS GUIDE OFFER?

In 2003, CarPlus established a toolkit aimed at defining the process of establishing a car club (see www.carplus.org.uk for further details). This is a very comprehensive resource covering all aspects of car club development. Therefore, this guidance does not seek to replicate that work, but draws upon some of the success factors that are evident in current UK schemes, and sets a framework in which car clubs can flourish in line with European experience.

Information in this guide relates to car clubs in *closed communities*, which refers to a scheme that is limited by defined boundaries. These can be geographical boundaries or, more typically, an operating unit, such as a business, public sector organisation, or academic institution. There are currently (summer 2004) around 26 car clubs established in the UK.

WHO RUNS CAR CLUBS?

Closed community car clubs in the UK are generally developed and managed by one of the following players:

- Commercial operator (e.g. Smart Moves, Streetcar, Urbigo, Whizzgo).
- Community group/partnership/not for profit organisation.
- Cooperative.
- Employer operated scheme (e.g. expansion of pool cars fleet).
- Informal residents group.
- Management group (e.g. on behalf of a housing development).

HOW DO THEY OPERATE?

While seeking to avoid duplication of the CarPlus toolkit, for context this guide provides a basic outline of how car clubs are run. We have therefore included a basic summary in Appendix B of the options available for various aspects of car club operation. The choice of technology and the operating structure are driven by the needs of the specific site and, to some extent, the resources available. Advice on the approach to be taken is generally determined through the scheme feasibility study.

One of the key issues identified by the research that supports this best practice guide is the need for a five year support plan for new start-up car clubs. This should be seen as a one off investment rather than on-going revenue support. After five years, it is anticipated that car clubs should become self-financing (or a decision can be made as to whether to continue subsidy support).

Membership and hire costs

Membership costs are determined locally based upon the financial model developed by the operator. As a general rule the following applies:

- Clubs charge a membership fee, paid annually or monthly, typically of the order of £100 per year.
- When starting up, clubs offer subsidised membership rates for a limited period, to establish a membership base.
- For vehicle use there is a two-part payment: for vehicle hire (typically £2 – £4 per hour), and for mileage (typically 15p – 20p per mile).
- Vehicle use charges generally increase with the size of vehicle.
- For smaller clubs, with only a couple of vehicles, hire charges are often structured to discourage longer hire periods, of more than a day, as this pattern of hire reduces the availability of vehicles for other club members.
- Membership and hire charges can be varied to encourage second household membership and low-user membership.
- An alternative model is to consider pricing tariffs, offering flexibility to change tariffs on a month by month basis to suit particular needs of users.

WHO USES CAR CLUBS?

Research shows that a wide variety of people join car clubs, and they generally do so because significant lifestyle changes lead to an increase, or decrease, in car use. Car clubs can allow an increase in car use, while avoiding the need to buy a vehicle. They can also enable people to dispose of their car (or second car), if their need for it declines, while providing for those journeys that can only reasonably be made by car. Transitions in life that can lead to adjustments in car use include:

- Change of house.
- Change of job.
- Retirement.
- Car too old and costly to repair again.
- Children leave home.
- Loss of a company car.

MoorCar

BENEFITS OF CAR CLUBS

Car clubs can offer a variety of benefits to individuals and society as a whole.

Benefits for individuals

Car clubs provide flexible and affordable car use, without the costs and hassles associated with car ownership. They have added appeal for those who:

- Have no, or limited, on- or off-street parking near where they live.
- Cannot afford to run a car themselves, or do not want the inconvenience of being responsible for maintaining one, but need car access for particular journeys.
- Occasionally need a second (or third) household car, but do not have the means or desire to own one.
- Have recently moved to an area, as it can provide a means of making friends and becoming integrated into the community.
- Own a vehicle, but sometimes need a different type of vehicle for a particular purpose.

Car club users develop a balanced approach to their use of transport generally, and through ‘pay as you go’ motoring, recognise more clearly the true costs of travel and can therefore compare more easily the different options available to them for each trip.

Benefits for local authorities

Because car club membership is often associated with members using cars less for some types of journeys or for journeys at some times, car clubs can help local authorities to reduce traffic volumes, reduce the amount of public land set aside for car parking, and reduce levels of congestion. It is estimated that every car club car has the potential to replace five privately-owned cars. This does not take into account the number of people who choose not to buy a car, because they have joined the car club instead.

Research has shown that car club members who give up a car are likely to reduce their mileage by around 60-70%. The average change in mileage for all car club users is a reduction of 33%. This takes into account those who join the club who did not previously own a car and those who use the car club to have access to a second car.

Research on the Edinburgh City Car Club estimated that its 17 car fleet and 215 members saved 824,670 kms a year, and that 85 members gave up a car when they joined the club.

Benefits for other transport users

A2B

Car club members are more likely to use other forms of transport compared to those who own cars and do not use car clubs. Car club members tend to be more careful about their car use: they walk, cycle and use public transport where these options are appropriate, and resort to car club use for journeys that can only reasonably be made by car. This pattern of travel activity reduces traffic volumes, and increases the demand for, and viability of, alternative transport networks – to the benefit of all transport users.

Benefits for developers

Car clubs can enable higher density residential and commercial development by reducing the number of on-site parking spaces, and maximising the available land for usable space. This can be achieved without compromising mobility, provided that a long-term commitment to the delivery of the car club can be secured.

CAR CLUB SETTINGS

Car clubs can be established in a variety of *closed community* settings, which can generally be grouped into six categories.

1. Workplace car clubs

These car clubs are managed by a commercial operator, or the employer, and make use of pool cars which are used for both business and personal journeys. A number of options are available to operate a workplace car club such as:

- An employer could make its own fleet of pool cars available to staff for out-of-hours use utilising the same administration system used for business travel bookings.
- A club could be set up and run by an independent car club operator; employers in the same area could join together to make the scheme more viable.
- A council or another employer could enrol as a corporate member of a local car club and block-book vehicles during working hours; the vehicles could be parked on site.
- A smaller company or self employed person could register as a member with a local car club and use the club's cars for business and personal use.

Edinburgh City Council has 120 members in its car pool that use 7 Edinburgh City Car Club cars on weekdays.

Workplace car clubs have many benefits for both employers and employees. Staff can benefit from a range of choices (including the car club) for their personal travel needs. Employers can enjoy a number of benefits including:

- Reduced pressure on parking at the workplace.
- A new income source from the private use of existing pool vehicles out of business hours.
- An added benefit for employees that may aid recruitment and retention.
- Increased viability of other sustainable modes.
- Tax benefits associated with the removal of company cars.

2. Rural car clubs

OurCarYourCar

In general, rural car clubs are managed by local community groups, or local transport partnerships. Most rural car clubs are the subject of extensive feasibility studies, in order to ensure that the operating conditions are viable for the car club to establish itself, beyond any initial start-up grant funding. These feasibility studies will generally explore a range of characteristics, including:

- Is there a sufficient population base within a closely defined geographic area, combined with a strong sense of community engagement and informal networks?
- Do local journeys (current and perceived future journeys) cover a range of trip types, carried out across the daytime and evening periods, i.e. they are not concentrated just on the peak?
- Are the local authority and public transport operators supportive?
- Is there a demand for, and interest in, the car club concept, i.e. is there a realistic opportunity that the scheme will be utilised?
- Are there local issues causing people to re-assess their transport arrangements?
- Are there suitable locations where car club vehicles can be parked?
- Is there a local champion who will promote and enhance the scheme?

3. Car clubs in low-car or car-free urban housing developments

There is a growing interest in low-car and car-free developments, especially housing. PPG 3 (Housing, 2000) and PPG 13 (Transport, 2001) contain key Government policy objectives that seek to reduce car dependence, make more efficient use of land and reduce the amount of parking in new development. The concept of city living has contributed to these types of developments as significant gentrification and regeneration is being planned or developed in towns and cities across the UK. These urban sites are under pressure to deliver higher housing densities and a better quality of life – car clubs provide a significant opportunity to reduce parking requirements and increase housing densities.

An example of a low car housing car club is that formed at the prestigious OneSE8 development in Deptford. The establishment of the car club enabled higher densities to be achieved while using the extra space for amenity areas, open space and landscaping. Close proximity to the Docklands Light Railway, in addition to the car club, helped to increase the viability of the scheme.

4. Car clubs in socially excluded areas

Lower income households who either run one car, are struggling financially to run a car, or have no car, are potential users of a car club. The car club would offer them access to a vehicle in order for them to reach essential facilities such as health care, shops, job interviews or social activities.

Car clubs operating in less prosperous areas have focused generally upon lower monthly membership fees, and slightly higher charges for use (mileage and hours), recognising the difficulties that low income families have in meeting monthly payments. They also enable a higher number of members per car, enabling better utilisation rates to be achieved. This reflects the fact that by paying a higher rate for usage, with low monthly charges, the incentive is very much on limiting car use to essential journeys only. Problems associated with delivering a car club under such conditions include:

- Insurance
- Low levels of license holding
- Cash economy (i.e. no bank or credit card accounts)

5. Car clubs in the further education sector

The car club concept has been developed in higher education institutes, specifically at universities. Students and some staff might welcome the chance to make some journeys by car, reducing their personal costs in comparison to the cost of a standard rail ticket for example. The main issue to resolve is the difficulty in gaining insurance for car club drivers under the age of 23.

Cranfield University, in Bedfordshire, operates a car club. Whilst Cranfield possesses particular circumstances that may have led to the success of the scheme (located within an isolated rural community and a high proportion of mature students) it demonstrates a successful model that could be replicated at similar sites. Cranfield has had a champion within the academic staff throughout its existence.

6. Informal car clubs

Car club arrangements do not necessarily need to be arranged on a formal basis. It is possible to set up car clubs with friends, neighbours or colleagues using cars already owned by members of the group or purchasing a car together. Some groups may even advertise for people unknown to the current members to join the club. ‘Informal’ arrangements such as those detailed above are often more flexible in nature as the car club can be shaped around members’ needs.

HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL CAR CLUB

Experience to date from existing car clubs, suggests there are seven key ingredients in creating a successful scheme. Their role and relative importance is summarised below.

1. The role of the champion/coordinator

This is a fundamental determinate of success. Car clubs that have committed, visionary champions/coordinators, with full support of the car club promoting organisation, are likely to be the most successful. Successful champions and coordinators need a blend of skills that enable them to capture and maintain new members. Unlike many areas of transport delivery, this is often a hands-on role, with many clubs deploying direct marketing techniques, knocking on doors, and handing out leaflets in the streets. Providing support and guidance to these champions and coordinators, in order to ensure their efforts and enthusiasm are channelled into effective delivery mechanisms, should be a priority.

2. A strong brand and marketing campaign

A2B

A high quality, diverse and visual marketing campaign is essential to success, and will include a mix of the following delivery mechanisms:

- Posters distributed amongst the catchment group, either within an organisation or a wider community area.
- Leaflets distributed to staff and residents.
- Roadshows and community events, for example open day promotions.
- Press, radio, TV – this is a particularly effective communication process for car clubs. Car clubs are generally positively reported by journalists, who are keen to report on new and innovative ideas.
- Individual marketing (to staff or residents).
- Newspaper advertisements.
- Branding of vehicles and car club parking bays.

Car clubs are a relatively new concept in the UK and, like any new product launch, require extensive marketing to raise overall awareness.

Our Car Your Car, based in Colne Valley, has produced professional material which clearly demonstrates the advantages of membership to a broad spectrum of users. Interestingly, their market research demonstrated that there is no predetermined catchment market, but that car clubs can appeal to any sector of society.

Moorcar, in Ashburton, Devon, promotes itself very much as a local community resource. This is reflected in its publicity material which uses images that are clearly identifiable as local scenes. Even the 'M' in the club name is stylised to look like the peaks of Dartmoor.

3. A critical mass of initial users

Car clubs generally take time to establish themselves. Lead-in time can be between 9 and 18 months. Once established and ready for operation, some individuals that expressed strong interest during the feasibility stage, may not ultimately join, either because they have moved out of the *closed community*, or their circumstances have changed in the meantime. In many cases, potential users will seek assurance that the scheme is operating effectively before they commit financially to it – after all, membership of a car club is promoted as a 'change of lifestyle', hence it is unreasonable to expect users to adopt this immediately.

4. Dedicated parking spaces adequately enforced

OurCarYourCar

The importance of on-street spaces cannot be underestimated both for open and closed schemes; not least because they provide a very visible image of the presence of a car club, and demonstrate direct benefits for potential users.

The provision of dedicated parking spaces is a major incentive for the uptake of community car clubs, particularly in urban areas. *Closed community* schemes that exist in areas with tight residential parking controls and limited parking availability have a greater persuasive argument for membership than those without. As a result, they can attract higher membership levels.

The provision of on-street car club parking spaces are the subject of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). At present, the process generally takes from three to six months, allowing for consultation and the level of objections (if any) received. However, there have been instances where the time taken is considerably longer. In order to reduce costs (which can decrease from typically £2,000 to between £1,000 and £1,500 per space, or even less in some cases), it is particularly effective for designated car club bays to be put through as part of a Controlled Parking Zone.

Several councils now have experience of implementing TROs for car clubs, including Bristol, Ealing, Edinburgh, and Kensington & Chelsea. The Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers (IHIE) is currently investigating the possibility of producing a design guide for car club parking.

Off-street parking for car club vehicles is also a matter for councils when it involves the planning process. Car club parking bays need to be stipulated and designated in low-car housing and low-car mixed developments, sometimes as part of a Planning Agreement. One example of this trend can be found at the Grand Union Village site in west London, currently being built by Bryant Homes and with the first homes already occupied.

5. Funding

Funding is a major issue for all car club developments. The availability of secure funding enhances the chance of long-term success, while schemes that develop on low or inadequate budgets will generally fail to establish themselves in the long term, or will take much longer to become viable. It is important that feasibility studies provide a realistic, rather than overly optimistic, estimate of the expected scheme take-up rate and resulting revenue stream.

The difficulty in establishing an immediate critical mass of initial users causes a financial dilemma for car club operators and developers. There is a need to ensure that vehicles are available from 'Day 1', with vehicle acquisition and operating costs accruing from that point. Utilisation of the vehicles, and hence financial return, is likely to take time to build up as members join the scheme, get comfortable with its use, and possibly dispose of their (second) car. In most cases, some level of external funding is required to establish and support the scheme in the early days.

Car clubs, especially in well-chosen urban locations, require investment to get them started, not continuing revenue support. The funding gap between the overall costs and the revenue from users needs to be met by a one-off investment lasting from 30 to 60 months after start-up. Thereafter, the car club should be self-financing.

BedZED

Pump-priming for rural schemes to date has generally been provided by Countryside Agency grants over a three year period. In some cases, this has been sufficient to get membership levels to the point where the scheme can operate on a self-financing basis, whereas some schemes will require up to five years to test fully whether sustainability can be achieved. There are no examples of schemes in rural areas that have become both self financing, and paid back the initial investment. Hence, in order for the market for rural car clubs to grow, it is likely that support funding will be required in the long-term – although the degree of funding is likely to be small, and less than most other rural transport services.

For employer car clubs or car club cars used during office hours as car pool vehicles, the situation is somewhat different, as in many cases, the opportunity can arise as a result of an existing vehicle fleet that can be converted for use as car club vehicles, or the fleet expenditure can be used to buy in car pool vehicles from the local car club (as is already happening at Edinburgh City Car Club). Combined with a ready-made target audience for car club membership, this means that the finances become much more attractive. In these cases, there is a need for better, and more, information to fleet managers on the possibilities that are available to them.

6. Effective partnerships

One of the key issues associated with car clubs is the move towards a more sustainable lifestyle, utilising public transport, car sharing, walking, cycling and the car club in a responsible and effective manner. Thus, an important consideration for the development of car clubs is the standard of provision and choice of other sustainable modes of transport. Car clubs are not a stand-alone solution: they work best in areas where there are good quality alternatives to the private car: good local facilities, regular and reliable public transport links and safe pleasant cycleways and walkways. It is essential to have all relevant information, timetables etc. within easy access. Typical partners involved in effective schemes include:

- Public transport operators.
- Retailers (offering discounts for members).
- Taxi companies.
- Car rental companies.

7. Provision of a suitable number of vehicles

This is a very basic requirement of any car club, and directly affects whether the club can meet user needs. Car club users will only support the scheme if they feel that a vehicle will be available for them, when they need it.

However, despite concerns about vehicle availability, the experience of existing car club users shows that only on very few occasions do they experience difficulty in accessing a vehicle. In these circumstances, they either:

- Rent a car (often at a discount secured by the car club).
- Take a taxi (again, often at a discount secured by the car club).
- Use public transport.
- Arrange a lift with friend/colleague.
- Use a vehicle from the open car club scheme, if one exists.
- Do not take the trip at all, or delay to a more suitable time when a car club vehicle is available.

The key issue is being able to establish a balance between the need to achieve high vehicle utilisation rates, and high numbers of members per car club car, with the ability to service users needs effectively. For this reason car clubs are more effective when the travel demands of users are diverse (possibly covering a mix of employment, residential and leisure uses), spread across the entire 24-hour day.

INCREASING THE VIABILITY OF CAR CLUBS

The following sections outline the measures that can be taken by a range of agencies in order to create the environments in which car clubs can flourish.

Local authorities can:

- Include support for car clubs in Local Transport Plans by way of funding physical infrastructure (such as on or off street parking bays) as part of a capital expenditure programme, on the basis that car clubs seek to become self financing, typically after 5 years and hence do not require on-going revenue support.
- Consider car club cars for use as staff pool cars wherever possible.
- Review their TRO processes, to ensure that the provision of reserved car club only on-street parking bays can be put in place in a more timely and cost effective manner.
- In rural areas consider whether there is a sound case for funding car club development (i.e. a car club coordinator/promoter with some ‘gap’ funds to cover the start-up deficit, when member revenues do not cover car costs), and where it is feasible to establish car clubs that meet wider social (rather than just environmental) objectives.
- Recognise situations where it may be economically and practically more advantageous to subsidise car club services rather than commissioning socially necessary public transport in the same area or neighbourhood (note: this needs to be considered carefully within the context of local social inclusion objectives for the provision of local transport, not least as car clubs do little for those that cannot drive).
- Assist car clubs with publicity, marketing and the launch.
- Publish guidance for developers on car-free and low-car housing.
- Require car clubs to be included in planning agreements/conditions, when granting planning permission for appropriate residential developments.

Car club service providers can:

- Develop effective marketing and public awareness strategies to gain coverage in local and national media.

- Generate marketing information with local distinctiveness that will appeal to the local community.
- Develop funding, operational and marketing strategies that take account of the fact that car clubs take time to become established, and that many people join only when they reach a point of significant change in their lives which prompts a reassessment of car ownership/use. This is particularly true in rural areas: research for the Countryside Agency revealed that 77% of rural car club members join at a point of change in their lives.
- Provide accessible information on the major cost of running a car and the proportion of household income spent on personal car ownership, to ensure people have the information to make more rational travel choices.
- Establish links with local estate agents and ask them to include car club availability on their information sheets, use car club cars to take clients to view new homes etc.
- Promote and develop the inter-operability of car club schemes.

The car industry and car clubs:

Vehicle Manufacturers can...

- Address the relatively high cost of the in-car technology required for efficient car club operation. The first in-car remote access control system for car clubs to be fitted in the UK was for Budget's Edinburgh City Car Club operation. At the time, it cost over £2,000 per vehicle. The current cost of fitting the Drive-IT system is in the region of £1,000 per car. Although the cost is coming down over time, it remains a barrier to entry into the car club market. Car manufacturers could significantly reduce the capital cost of the introduction of car clubs by supplying cars already fitted with the relevant electronic equipment for remote access to the immobiliser and engine management system. Besides benefiting car clubs, this could have other applications as well.

Vehicle Rental Companies can...

- Respond to the fact that a car club does not want its vehicles clocking up hundreds of miles a day, nor does it want one member to book out a car for many days at a time. A car club needs to have a good relationship with an appropriate car rental company (i.e. one that is within reach of the car club's members, geographically and financially). For longer journeys and longer hire periods, car club members must be able to quickly and easily acquire a rental car from the car club's rental partner, with a minimum of fuss and at a competitive rate.

Insurance Companies can ...

- Recognise that the insurance arrangements for car clubs are generally cumbersome, taking too much time to process. They also generally restrict cover to those between 23 – 70 years of age. Younger and older drivers could well be key segments of the car club market, as they generally have lower car ownership levels compared to the rest of the driving population. These restrictions are already beginning to change and some insurers are becoming more flexible to car club insurance.
- Further explore the concept of 'pay-as-you-drive' motor insurance, as a further disincentive to unnecessary car use. This is likely to utilise GPS tracking and mobile phone technology to transmit data from a "black box" fitted inside cars. Real-time vehicle data collected through the system could allow monthly insurance payments to be calculated based on how often, when and where the vehicle is used.

Public transport operators can:

- Consider car clubs as part of a bus quality partnership.
- Consider inter-operability issues when developing smartcard applications (i.e making sure that smartcards for public transport payments can be used by car club members to also access car club vehicles).
- Consider car clubs as a viable addition to the public transport network.
- Consider joint marketing of car clubs.
- Consider the commercial benefits of offering discounts to car club users (and vice versa).

Employers' human resources and personnel departments can:

- Redress employment practices and terms and conditions of employment that can act against the use of car clubs by employees, such as:
- A requirement for an essential car user to undertake a minimum amount of business travel by car in order to retain 'essential' status.
- A requirement that essential car users bring their cars to work every day, rather than when it is essential.
- Travel expenses reimbursement processes that do not allow claims to be made for car club use.

Information and communications technology developers can:

- Further develop information and communications technologies that will enable car clubs to run more cost-efficiently and flexibly. Particular areas for development include ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) that will:
  - Minimise the car club operator's transaction costs for both bookings and invoices.
  - Maximise the ability of the car club to mirror as closely as possible the traditional car paradigm of spontaneous travel, by allowing members to make bookings from within the car on a speculative basis.
  - Allow inter-operability between different car club operations in different geographical areas.

More generally, the ability to use the same smart card as a catch-all 'electronic purse' for all public transport, parking, car club, taxi and other travel arrangements will help make car club membership more attractive.

Developers can:

- Consider car clubs as a means of achieving higher density development, reducing parking space allocations, and increasing usable live/work space.
- Work with car club operators to create the right urban environments in which long term car club delivery can be established alongside new development.

WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION

CarPlus: a not-for-profit organisation that works with local authorities, communities and partners to support and promote the development of car clubs (www.carplus.org.uk). Partners and funders include Department for Transport, Sustrans, Countryside Agency, Vauxhall Motors Ltd and the Trans-national European Commission Interreg III Community Initiative. CarPlus offers a variety of services:

- Support and technical assistance to set up a car club (in particular a 'Car Club Toolkit', which details all of the stages necessary to develop and implement an effective scheme)
- Discounted car club services, including leasing and insurance
- Marketing materials, including a video, displays and leaflets
- A network linking interested parties and sharing information.

Appendix A
Car Sharing: Common Objections and Possible Solutions

Objection	Possible solution
Fear of sharing with strangers	• Provide personal 'matching session', undertaken in an informal environment with no pressure to share with any particular user (e.g. a coffee morning), enabling potential sharers to get to know each other prior to sharing their journeys together. • Use corporate databases, including staff photographs, to familiarise potential sharers with the person identified as a suitable match. • Employ/use a car share coordinator to offer personal advice, support and assistance, and providing general background to the individuals involved. • Offer 'one week trial' car sharing incentives, with no obligation to continue. • Organise car sharing groups, where possible, within team or common area environments. • Use case study examples in marketing material to demonstrate where friendships had been established as a result of strangers car sharing.

Individuals don't believe they will find a suitable match	• Use marketing material that demonstrates less obvious sharing partnerships. • Issue maps showing the home postcodes of all staff (anonymously), to demonstrate where the potential lies. • Encourage users to register with open groups if they cannot find a match within the closed community. • Streamline the registration process such that it is very quick and easy to register.
The gender of the car sharing partner, in particular a reluctance amongst women to share with (unknown) men	• Address as part of the registration process by asking about sharing preferences. • Use case studies and photographs of successful single sex car sharing groups in publicity and marketing material.
Personal safety and security issues	• Reassure potential sharers, through publicity material and the scheme administrator, that all users are members of the closed group, and hence have already been considered appropriate for employment with the particular site. • Promote the fact that all agreed sharings are registered and recorded. • Stress the security benefits of having company in the event of an emergency, such as a breakdown.
Smoking	• Include preferences in matching criteria. • Use marketing material and codes of practice to ensure potential sharers are aware that such preferences are an important consideration. • Have trial periods after which sharers can elect to be removed from the scheme, or select alternative partners.

Concern over safety of cars parked on street, all day, when driving to meet sharers at a common location	• As a first choice attempt to find pairings within walking distance, or suggest driver 'picks-up' for on-route matches. • Meet at the home of one of the sharers, and park the car on the drive, or outside the property – which can also add to the perception of security at the home itself, as it gives potential intruders the impression that it is occupied.
Concern over poor driving/ speeding	• Offer the flexibility to change partners conveniently, with 'no questions asked'. • Provide an opportunity to feedback concerns confidentially to the scheme administrator.
Concern over being stranded at work/home/ arriving late/leaving meetings early	• Make clear the stated provision of an emergency ride home (free, and easy to administer for staff). • Provide a corporate culture that supports car sharing (i.e. an acceptance that staff will leave on time to meet car sharing partners). • Allow flexitime working, so that car sharers can bank work time if they are kept waiting for a car sharing partner. • Offer the flexibility to change car sharing partners if the arrangement continues to cause problems in this respect.
Misunder-standings about car insurance	• Issue standard letters to be sent to insurance companies that they are part of a formal car sharing scheme. • Reassure staff that they will not have to pay more for insurance, and indeed are likely to pay less if mileage is reduced. • Ensure the issue of car insurance is covered in marketing material.
Uncertainty over sharing payment of travel costs	• Address through the publication of general guidance stating that the financial costs of running the vehicle should be divided between sharers, but that no financial gain can be made; or stating typical mileage payments for sharers, depending upon vehicle size, mileage and number of sharers. As a general rule, payments should be within the range 5-15 pence per mile, shared across all sharers of a vehicle).

Concerns over the taste of music played or radio choice	• Offer week trials/cooling off periods to test compatibility. • Offer free text input for general comments in the registration process that enables sharers to inform partners about their music preferences. • Ensure a flexible approach to sharing that enables users to change partners easily.
Needing to have access to the internet	• Invite those without internet access to register through colleagues, or have details input directly by the administrator (from information provided on a paper based registration form).
Confidentiality issues	• Ask only for mandatory data that adheres strictly to data protection criteria. • Ask for voluntary information, if the user is comfortable, to enhance the matching capability. • Stress the security checks that are done on the system to ensure data is not passed to third parties.
Cultural factors – independence, and associated lack of convenience, flexibility and reliability	• Focus on the personal benefits of car sharing, particularly financial, together with any incentives provided for car sharers.

Appendix B
Car Clubs: Typical Operating Characteristics

Booking system

Car clubs generally provide several options for booking vehicles, to maximise their accessibility for people with different forms of ICT at their disposal:

- Internet/intranet booking, using own computer or one available for public access, such as in a library
- Telephone booking
- Paper booking form completed by the operator on request
- Paper booking form completed by the user
- In-car, using smartcard and mobile telephony

Location of vehicles

The cars are located at car stations, specially marked car parking locations that can be on-street or off-street. These parking areas are reserved for car club vehicles only. Typical locations (closed and open communities) include:

- Residential neighbourhoods
- Rail station car parks
- Pub car parks
- Supermarket car parks
- District shopping centre car parks
- Town/village centre car parks

Vehicle access system

A car club will usually use one of the following:

- Smartcard access with the keys in the car
- Keys kept by a designated person, such as a receptionist
- Keys kept in a secure, wall-mounted box, adjacent to the car

Fuelling

- Fuel card kept in the car
- Fuel costs reclaimed by staff (on production of valid VAT receipt)
- Fuel costs reclaimed by users (on production of valid VAT receipt)

Hire periods

- Minimum hire period is usually one hour
- Further increments can be as little as 15 minutes, but are generally measured in 30 minute periods

Invoicing system

This is either:

- Fully automated, or
- Manually produced based on paper based journey log

Payment Methods

- Standing order with monthly cheques for use (paid in arrears)
- Direct Debit
- Credit Card

Daily/weekly vehicle checks and cleaning

- Managed by the operator
- Undertaken by the coordinating group
- Agreed informally between members

Vehicle acquisition and operation

- Most car club vehicles are leased, and are serviced by the leasing company
- Car clubs ensure their cars have emergency breakdown cover for users
- Leased vehicles are generally replaced every two to three years, maintaining their appeal
- Vehicles are generally leased against an agreed annual mileage limit, with penalties for excess mileage.

Insurance

- Users have to take up the insurance of the car club operator, hence strict rules of compliance for entry apply.

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