

When I worked as a Social Worker for local Councils in London, it was the norm to walk, cycle or travel by public transport to meetings and home visits.

At the office I was based in, there were about 200 staff but only 10 car spaces were provided on site. There were no fleet cars and the surrounding area was all permit parking for residents. You either chose to drive and park a long way from the office, or you walked and used public transport.

Our office was serviced by 4 buses. With priority bus lanes on most roads, it often meant catching the bus was a quicker alternative to driving. All staff were used to maximising their travelling time by grouping together visits in the same location. We were provided with laptops so we could work on trains when we were visiting areas outside of London.

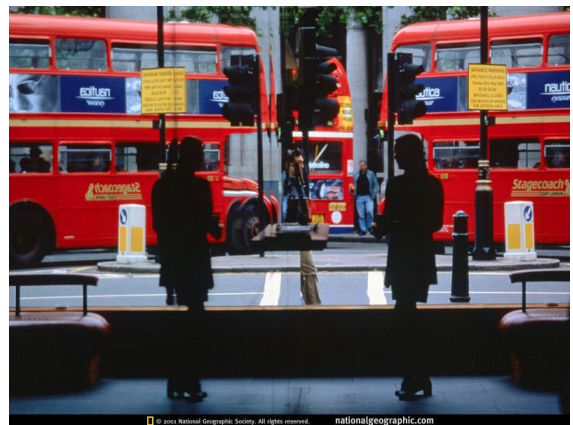


Photo by National Geographic

In Glasgow, the Council I worked for provided incentives for staff to use sustainable transport. I purchased a monthly MetCard (which I used for both work and personal travel) and they reimbursed 75% of the cost each month. Both cities had far more adverse weather than Melbourne, with snow in winter and changeable weather in the summer. Melbourne has the perfect climate. It is a city that is far easier and more pleasant to walk and catch public transport!

Now that I'm back in Melbourne, I work with schools to encourage students to walk, cycle, scooter or public transport. I walk to the schools that I visit, catch the bus or train, or travel with a colleague when I have too much to carry. School staff and parents are always amazed that I don't drive to my school visits. I think it's important to show that these forms of transport are viable alternatives to car based travel all of the time.

