

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Edge Hill College of Higher Education - Travel planning at a rural campus

Edge Hill's campus is on the edge of Ormskirk, in semi-rural West Lancashire. It has only a few residences, so most students commute in daily from Lancashire and Merseyside. Public transport links have been poor, with students and staff having first to get to Ormskirk, and then from there to the campus by irregular connections. The result has been high levels of congestion, both on campus and in the town itself.

This situation has been changed by the College's Green Travel Plan, and £500,000 of investment and subsidy that has accompanied it. The Plan itself was based on thorough research, involving a staff and student survey and predictive modelling of travel patterns over the next 5 years - which showed that the problems would get worse without action. The main elements of the plan have been improving pedestrian safety around the campus entrance, and a new "edgeline" bus service. This circulates between the campus, town centre and bus stations at frequent intervals - every 15 minutes on weekdays - and also extends to nearby Southport at the start and finish of the working days. The service is free to staff and students who do not have a parking permit. The bus has also been wrapped in vinyl posters so that it can act as a marketing tool to local people. Other features of the Plan include a stricter parking permit system; provision of secure cycle storage and showers; discounts on cross Lancashire/Merseyside bus tickets for students; and a car sharing scheme.

The Travel Plan's co-ordinator, Dr. John Hindley, identifies three key factors in making the Plan successful - "senior management support, a strong partnership with Lancashire County Council, and a substantial spend on marketing. This hasn't just been to current staff and students - we've tried to get the message over to prospective students too, so that they use non-car based transport right from the start."



Dr. John Hindley with edgeline's 100,000th passenger

Judges' Comments on Transport (continued)

Edge Hill College of Higher Education shows that car travel can be reduced even on semi-rural campuses. This is the result of their considerable investment in, and effective marketing of, car alternatives such as the new edgeline bus service. The Plan has also been based on an impressive degree of research, and is notable for targeting future as well as current students.