



Bristol Climate &
Nature Partnership

CLIMATE ACTION PROGRAMME

FIVE KEY STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & BEHAVIOUR CHANGE



Employers are ideally placed to shape staff choices both in the workplace and beyond, with studies finding they are often more trusted than the government.

While most people are worried about climate change, there is a lag in the needed behaviour change. This resource explores five starting steps to help bridge this gap through engagement and behaviour change in the workplace.



With thanks to MBE Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh from The Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformation (CAST) for their expert insights which helped shape this resource.

1. Involving people

Imposing solutions on people doesn't work, people need to be involved in shaping climate action. Engagement is the first step for effective behaviour change.



Measures that are perceived as fairer are more supported.



Participatory decision-making leads to fairer and better outcomes that take into account the barriers to change.



Give staff a voice through surveys, workshops and staff fora.



Have regular staff check-ins throughout the behaviour change process.

2. Giving people information

How information is communicated will influence change:

-  Target place and time of action – e.g. put a note to turn off the light by the light switch.
-  Focus on what people care about – e.g. how climate action can help save money or improve health. Fortunately, a lot of climate actions have dual benefits!

Providing information is an important initial step to help raise awareness about what is needed to tackle climate change; however, knowledge alone is not enough to influence effective behaviour change.

3. Getting the timing right

A lot of our behaviour is habitual, and evidence shows that when strong habits are in place, people ignore information about alternative ways of doing things.

Harness moments for behaviour change when habits are weakened and routines are disrupted.

Example: implement behaviour change measures when moving office.



4. Social influence

People are strongly influenced by other people. We want to do what is perceived as 'normal' and 'right'. We are most influenced by people we care about and who are 'like us'. Work towards changing social norms by:



Utilising trusted messengers to deliver actions, such colleagues and leadership teams.



Create teams to collectively work towards emission reduction behaviours, such as green champions.



5. Changing the context of action

Influencing the context of an action is the most effective way to influence behaviour change. This can be through:



Economic measures, such as congestion charges or salary incentives.



Changing the default option to help nudge people to the desired action. E.g. increasing the amount of plant-based food options available.



Changes to the built environment to make the action easier, for example reduced car parking spaces and more bike parking.



Putting into practice

Combining interventions will bring the most success to your employee engagement, such as implementing economic measures and utilising social influence alongside knowledge sharing.



Example: changing staff travel habits

Most effective

Parking charges and restrictions saw a 24% reduction in car use compared to transport subsidies and incentives (a 10% reduction).

Moderately effective

Personalised travel planning, workplace challenges and events, mobile platforms and gamification.

Least effective

Awareness campaigns alone, information without incentives, service improvements without financial backing.



Further resources

This has been a snapshot of ways to influence effective engagement and behaviour change. Expand your knowledge with the below:



Take a deeper look at how to engage staff with climate and nature action.



Learn more about how to influence behaviour change for climate action.



Learn how to design a tailored behaviour change intervention with Public Health England's resource.



Explore this comprehensive list of behaviour change techniques.



CAST has a directory of resources and research on engagement and behaviour change.

For more Climate Action
Programme resources visit:
bit.ly/CAP-Home

With thanks to our programme
sponsors

