Personalised Travel Plans in the Workplace: the Importance of Social Context

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Workplaces are facing the challenge of sustainable auditing and reducing areas of land dedicated to car parking. Providing personalised travel plans (PTPs) enables employees to evaluate the full range of alternatives to the car for their journey to work, and can support a behavioural change agenda within workplace travel plans. However, the uptake and effectiveness of such a service may be strongly influenced by the social and organisational context of individual workplaces.

This case-study explored the process of user involvement in the development and piloting, within three workplaces, of an innovative, web-based tool which generates PTPs for employees .The innovation, 'myPTP', was developed by *Lift*share with support from the Ordnance Survey Geovation Challenge in 2011. A series of interviews were held over nine months with the innovators, travel plan coordinators at three pilot organisations, and eight users (employees receiving a PTP), with additional data obtained through a user survey.

A qualitative thematic analysis of the interviews showed that attitudes to the tool were strongly influenced by a range of contextual factors in each of the three organisations, and by individuals' roles within them. Travel planners saw myPTP from the perspective of a corporate strategy to reduce CO_2 emissions – in some cases as a 'carrot' to balance the 'stick' of higher parking charges. Among some employees, this made it a focal point for resentment about matters which had little to do with the tool itself. However, staff who were involved in change management saw myPTP as an effective tool for helping employees, often championing its diffusion into workplace practice and acting as 'early adopters'. This case-study may offer innovators and organisations going through the travel plan process with several good practice points, and highlights the importance of contextual effects in the design and implementation of transport innovations.

296 words