

**Press release**

15 November 2010

Can we influence behaviour by offering incentives?

Walk 21 Conference

Intelligent Health has today (15 November 2010) presented its paper to the Walk 21 Conference in The Hague on the use of incentivisation to influence behaviour change among London secondary school children for road safety, sustainability and health.

The study assessed the impact of two walk to school schemes installed by Transport for London and Intelligent Health in London, UK from 2009 to 2010.

The scheme titled 'Step2Get' offered children shopping and cinema vouchers to encourage them to walk to school. Their walks were monitored using the latest technology and their results were stored online where they could keep a check on how often they had walked, how many vouchers they had accrued and how their year group compared with others.

Dr William Bird, who presented the paper to the conference, said: "The use of new technology combined with rewards has helped children at secondary school to change their mode of travel from bus and car to walking.

"The system can also be used to re-route children away from dangerous junctions to safer crossing points. The use of incentivisation is a promising and new area of work that needs further trials."

The study

A series of battery operated receivers containing NFC mobile technology (CredX[®]), were attached to sign posts along the walk route. Each child was issued with an RFID card at the start of term which they swiped on the receivers as they walked to school. This verified a completed walk. The data was collected by the receiver and transmitted by GPRS to a central database and displayed on the child's own website. When they completed a certain number of walks they redeemed a reward that included cinema tickets or shop vouchers. The Step2Get website allowed the child to see how they were progressing and how their form is doing compared to other forms.

Surveys at a key bus stop in Wimbledon showed that the average dwell time between 0750 am and 0820 am fell by 62% from 115 secs before the trial to 72 secs during the trial; The number of pick ups during the same morning period fell by 57% from 398 to 149; Out of the 287 children who registered for the scheme 130 (45%) said they would switch to walking from other means of transport.

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Notes to editors

For more information about Intelligent Health and Step2Get visit www.intelligenthealth.co.uk



Biography - *Dr William Bird*

Dr William Bird MBE, has pioneered the research and promotion of physical activity, the natural environment and sustainability as a health benefit for over 15 years. Author of several research papers and invited as a keynote speaker on physical activity around the world, he has influenced current thinking on the benefits of outdoor physical activity.