

# OSCR Travel Plan 2021-24



## Introduction

Like many other organisations around the world in March 2020 our work was deeply impacted by the global pandemic. At that time, our immediate priority was for the health and safety of our staff. We moved swiftly to ensure the correct infrastructure was in place to support our staff to work remotely, and to allow for the continuation of our business and services for stakeholders. During this period the need for business travel was eradicated.

Meetings and events were held virtually online via Zoom and MS Teams and OSCR continues to hold the majority of meetings and events online when ever possible.

As we moved out of the pandemic in late 2021 we have continued to promote the use of MS Teams which has greatly reduced our requirement for travel. Where travel is absolutely necessary our method of travel is chosen on the basis of cost effectiveness and environmental impact. Our carbon footprint has reduced in this area.

## Background

We have actively been working to reduce our carbon emissions since 2009.

In our most recent Carbon Management Plan (CMP) 2021-22, we set ourselves a challenging target of reducing our CO2 emissions by 30%, against our 2008-09 baseline.

We have achieved significant reductions in our overall emissions by implementing a number of operational and environmental changes within the organisation and the building within which we operate. However, the focus of our current CMP is to concentrate our efforts on reducing our carbon emissions primarily from travel and transport. We aim to achieve this reduction through this Travel Plan.

## Our current transport usage

Our most commonly used modes of transport in the 2020-23 period were:

- rail: 40 journeys at a cost of £2,509.39 (which includes one overnight train journey to London)
- bus: 0
- air: 0

## Travel strategy: aims

We aim to:

- Further reduce the need for our staff to travel.
- Promote and encouraging the use of more active or sustainable modes of transportation.
- Actively work to sustain our low-level carbon emissions in terms of air travel post pandemic.
- Increase awareness of the impact of travel choices and raising general environmental awareness (not just in terms of OSCR's work).

## Actions

### 1. *Reducing the need to travel*

Staff will be reminded that physically travelling to a meeting isn't always necessary. Staff should consider all options prior to deciding to travel. Before organising or agreeing to attend a meeting OSCR staff will ask:

Do we need to meet face-to-face?

Can this be discussed over an email or phone call?

Can we use audio or video conference software for this meeting?

Virtual methods available are:

MS Teams

New enhanced Video Conferencing

Teleconferencing

Pathways (for learning purposes)

We actively promote (internal comms) these methods and how to use them and we will highlight the advantages (personal & business) of choosing to connect to meetings remotely. OSCR recently upgraded the IT equipment to facilitate better virtual and hybrid meetings to help meet this objective.

### 2. *Promoting and encouraging the use of more active or sustainable modes of transportation*

Where it has been deemed that attendance is necessary, we will look to encourage staff to:

- walk to local meetings; or
- use public transport wherever possible

We will also:

- continue to enforce the use of band A & B hire cars only. We will introduce team leader sign-off for staff requesting a car outside of the recognised bands
- select hybrid and/or electric cars where available through the Scottish Government negotiated car hire contract
- continue to travel together wherever possible (something which works very well in OSCR)
- actively work at reducing our air travel. Air travel produces the greatest carbon emissions out of all of the transport modes that we use. And the majority of our trips are to domestic destinations (usually to London) although this is very infrequent. Promote online technology as an alternative where possible and consider use of sleeper (train) where in person attendance is crucial.

We will reduce air travel by:

- encouraging staff to plan ahead and to consider all travel/other options available to them, not just flying.
- getting Chief Executive approval for all flights before any booking is undertaken
- continuing with two no fly months – a common occurrence in a number of organisations across the UK & the world. We have identified **January & March** as our two no fly months.

### *3. Increasing awareness of the impact of travel choices*

We will not only look to increase staff's understanding of our public body and reporting duties but also to raise general environmental awareness. This will take the form of updates in our newly created staff intranet site, our staff Newsletter, on our all staff Teams channel and by emails to all staff.

### *4. Setting achievable targets*

Based on SG's travel targets, we will:

- Reduce the number of business flights by 50% by Mar 2024
- Increase the use of our virtual conferencing facilities etc by 50% by Mar 2024
- Increase the use of hybrid/electric cars (if allowable within our contract) by 10% by Mar 2024.

We will revisit these targets on a yearly basis.

## **Considerations**

Although as a public body we have a duty to reduce our carbon emissions, as an employer we also have a duty of care towards our staff. The final decision on appropriate transportation modes will be influenced by the safety and wellbeing of our staff.