


# Lower Mileage; Lower Carbon; Lower Costs: provision of a range of business travel options

2009

 **University**  
University of Cumbria

**Country**  
United Kingdom

**Location**   
Urban centre

**Size**   
5,000-10,000

**Mobility Organizational Structure**   
*Mobility manager*

## Summary

Providing a range of business travel options so that our staff would review how they make business trips, with a view to travelling less and adapting to less intensive ways of travelling, in particular relying less on the use of private vehicles.

## Aims

Reduce the impacts resulting from travel and our use of transport, specifically our:

- Environmental impact.
- Health and safety risks.
- Financial costs.

## Stakeholders

- Senior management from Facilities Management, Health and Safety.
- Finance and HR in the University.
- Virgin Trains.
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car and other travel providers.

## Background

The University of Cumbria operates across the north west of England. Our main campuses are in Ambleside, Carlisle and Lancaster. We also have gateway operations in Barrow, Workington and London. Most of our campuses are in edge of town / city centre locations and as a result benefit from good transport links.

For six years the University of Cumbria has been pursuing a programme of work to reduce the impacts resulting from travel and our use of transport. Central to this was the introduction of a Travel Hierarchy. This hierarchy requires staff to evaluate the reasons for their travel and whether they could do it in a way that has lower impacts, ideally not travelling at all. The least favoured travel option under the hierarchy is the use of private vehicles ('grey' fleet).

Private vehicles tend to have poorer environmental performance than hire / leased alternatives. They also pose higher corporate safety risks as their maintenance is arranged by their individual owners. From a financial point of view, the University of Cumbria was reimbursing staff for use of their own vehicles at the HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) upper limit of 45p per mile: this was acting as an incentive for staff to use their own vehicles for business journeys.

Accordingly, senior management, particularly from Facilities Management (as the home of sustainability and fleet management within the University), Health and Safety, Finance and Human Resources in the University identified the use of grey fleet as a key target for reduction in order to reduce the risk profile of the University in a number of ways:

"Within HR, we strongly support driving the cultural change through our organisation to reduce travel. We recognise both the environmental importance and benefits to staff in terms of work/life balance and health & safety. It gives the additional advantage of reducing cost and with the ever increasing quality of technology; video conferencing is both greener and safer." Gail Best, Deputy HR Director.

"The Finance and Planning Service worked with Human Resources and Facilities Management to consider the best approach to car travel taking into account feedback on business needs, our approach to sustainability and cost. Crucially, the senior managers responsible for these areas jointly oversaw this work." Andrew Heron, Deputy Director, Finance.



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### Description

A range of attractive alternatives to private car use had to be put in place before specific action on grey fleet could be started. The actions are summarised below. Once these had been established (over a period of four years), three changes aimed specifically at reducing the impacts of our use of grey fleet were introduced:

- Reduction in mileage rate payable from 45p per mile to 30p per mile.
- Obligation for staff who commute by car to deduct their home to work mileage from their claim (not for staff who don't drive to work; nor does this obligation apply for business journeys being made by non-car modes).
- Obligation for staff to maximize car sharing for all their business journeys by car, e.g. by registering the journeys on [cumbriaunicarshare.com](http://cumbriaunicarshare.com)

In terms of our expectation of success, we based this on surveys of travel habits within our University and on third party case studies. Within a workplace where reasonable alternatives to private cars are available, case studies showed

that whilst there would be some transfer of journeys to other modes (especially hire vehicles), this would be outweighed by the number of journeys no longer made and would result in a net reduction in cost and emissions when taken across the University. The scale of the likely net change could not be easily assessed in advance so a mid-range target of £75,000 for the first year was adopted. The results turned out to be more positive than this and, at the time of writing, use of grey fleet is still declining although at a lesser rate.

In relation to the implementation of the wider programme of travel actions that have been put in place to support our reduction in use of grey fleet vehicles, this table illustrates the costs and benefits (actions that relate specifically to commuting journeys are relevant because staff who reduce their reliance on cars for commuting are less likely to rely on their car for business trips):

Key Actions	Benefits and Costs
Development of video conferencing, desktop webcams and Skype for Business to reduce travel.	Significant reductions in travel have been achieved by our adoption of these technologies.
Long term partnership with Virgin Trains (VT) to allow free first class upgrades for University staff on business journeys.	Our Green Gown Award submission in 2012 identified cost savings on car use that arose from greater use of rail. No specific costs other than normal ticket prices – partnership with VT.
Developed close working relationship with Enterprise, our car hire provider and IAM to provide driver training to high mileage drivers	Provision of training to staff to enhance their confidence in using hybrid vehicles (in January 2016 the University introduced its first electric vehicle). Reduction in vehicle size (since elimination of leased car fleet) used for business journeys of approximately 75%. University of Cumbria and Enterprise featured as the case study in the EST publication "Understand how daily rental vehicles can benefit your business".
Complete rewriting of our parking policy and arrangements to focus this on the needs of staff, students but in particular to give preference to less polluting and shared vehicles	Increase in car sharing amongst staff and students. On one campus in 2015-16 academic year 15% of all permits sold were car sharers' permits
New financial support (interest free loans) for staff travelling by public transport	Modest take-up but important to offer this. Minor monetary opportunity/cost but no debt recovery action required to date
Bike purchase scheme for staff and bicycle loan schemes for staff and students (our bike fleet is continuing to grow and currently stands at 68);	Saving of approximately £2k per annum from employer's National Insurance cost. Approximately 10% of all staff have taken advantage of our Cycle to Work scheme over the last five years. At the time of writing, almost all our bicycle fleet has been loaned out this term.
Experimental public bus service between our Lancaster and Ambleside campuses, including provision of Stagecoach passes for some of our students	2015-16: 63 students provided with 'Stagecoach' passes for Cumbria and Lancaster, encouraging them not to bring a car to University. Public bus service available to staff for business trips between these campuses
Implemented a trial of Personal Travel Plans (PTPs) for all staff holders of parking permits at our biggest campus	200 Personal Travel Plans issued to staff at one campus. Evaluation survey showed 5% stated an intention to change their commuting habits. PTPs being offered to potential students with accessibility issues.

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### Student engagement

The focus of our project is on business travel by staff, but students have been engaged in our travel reduction and sustainable travel programme as follows:

- Parking: in 2015-16 students purchased 39 car share and zero VED parking permits (7% of all student permits issued);
- Travel fairs and roadshows: students have been involved in running these and promoting travel initiatives as part of the University of Cumbria Students' Union Green Impact programme;
- Bikes: our bike loan scheme (£50 for a bike, lock and lights for a year for a student in our accommodation) is now oversubscribed (74 bookings for 68 bikes) for 2016-17 and our cycling support for students will be an integral part of our Activities Fairs in the next few weeks.
- Bus: We have surveyed students using our bus service. This provided positive results: of those who responded, 91% said that they were aware that their pass entitled them to 24-7 access to all Stagecoach buses in our region. This demonstrated that our information campaign had worked well. 85% said that they had used the pass on buses other than getting to and from campus.



### Indicators

- Financial burden of grey fleet mileage.
- Mileage.
- CO2e tonnes.
- People involved.



### Results

- The University has reduced the financial burden of grey fleet mileage reimbursement from £275,000 (2012-13 academic year) to £106,000 (2014-15). Mileage claimed has reduced from 611,000 to 353,000. Grey fleet CO2e has reduced from 191 tonnes to 108 tonnes (43%).
- We are delighted that the use of grey fleet has continued to decline. Comparing the first ten months of 2015-16 with the same period for 2014-15, grey fleet mileage has declined from 282,000 to 252,000 and cost of reimbursement has dropped from £84,000 to £77,000k.
- Approximately 400 staff have been involved via changes to how they make their business journeys (this is approximately 40% of our total staff). Approximately 200 students have been directly involved in our travel roadshows, bus service and bike loan scheme.



### Expense

- Cost of driver training: £3k pa.
- Annual cost of public bus service- Stagecoach passes £43k.
- Cost of Personal Travel Plans: £2k.



### Financing

Costs have been met from the University's car parking budget. Our parking policy contains this commitment:

"The University does not levy car parking charges in order to generate a surplus for wider use in the University. After deducting all costs of providing car parking facilities, any net surplus will be used to facilitate and promote measures that reduce the need to travel and means of transport other than single occupant private cars. These measures are set out in the University's Travel Plan."

We calculate the full costs involved in providing and managing parking and then use the surplus in accordance with this policy.

## Findings

- Since winning the Green Gown Award for Carbon Reduction in 2012 we have demonstrated that continued reductions in business travel and emissions can be achieved by renewing, refreshing and updating measures encouraging behavioural change.
- This project has been successful in part because it has not required specific funding. One of the core aims of senior management, aside from other identified risks, was to make a substantial reduction to travel-related costs.
- A number of the grey fleet measures that we have pursued are relatively simple to adopt as long as there is management commitment. We believe there remains considerable scope in all sectors to reduce grey fleet usage and its associated emissions.
- Key words: Good partnership working; replicability; innovation; low cost initiatives.

## Pictures

Location	Permit type	Prices
All campuses	Salary Band 1 - Up to £10,500	£50.50
All campuses	Salary Band 2 - £10,500 - £15,000	£107.40
All campuses	Salary Band 3 - £15,000 - £25,000	£132.40
All campuses	Salary Band 4 - £25,000 - £35,000	£164.20
All campuses	Salary Band 5 - £35,000 - £42,000	£197.90
All campuses	Salary Band 6 - Over £42,000	£232.10
All campuses	Car Share	£41.00
All campuses	12-week permits	£43.70
All campuses	Zero VED permit	50% discount on any of the above permit prices
Williamson Park		£54.60

Fig. 1. Screenshots of Parking Policy on the University of Cumbria's website

Fig. 2. Screenshot of bike rental system on the University of Cumbria's website

## Links

<http://www.cumbria.ac.uk/about/organisation/professional-services/facilities-management/travel/>

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