



## Case Study

### Travel

### Co-wheels Car Club, Community Interest Company

## Innovation in Tackling NHS Grey Fleet Mileage

The Co-wheels are a national social enterprise travel service working to support NHS and public sector organisations to undertake staff travel in more sustainable ways. The model of service was developed through an NHS project which was subject to an academic study undertaken by the University of the West of England Faculty of Society & Transport.

The Co-wheels project has been trialled by Derbyshire Community Health Services NHS Trust, Nottinghamshire Health Care NHS Trust and Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust.

#### What was the issue / problem being addressed?

NHS business travel is a major issue. Over 90% is conducted in 'grey fleet' (staff-owned cars). This travel creates significant damage to public health and the environment. It also puts significant strain on estate and service delivery.

#### What action was taken to overcome the issue?

The Co-wheels fleet model was created as a social enterprise to offer alternative ways of providing staff travel. As a national car club, Co-wheels is able to integrate fleet solutions with community car club operations in 40 UK locations.

Co-wheels supplies Trusts with electric, hybrid and low emission cars

as well as electric bikes. Resources are managed via an on-line, telematics booking service.

The telematic control allows cars to be accessed without keys. This allows the same car to function as a pool car in the day and a car club car out of hours. Staff and the general public can hire the cars which creates revenue.

**Mark Armstrong-Read**  
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*"Feedback from staff has been extremely positive and there are numerous wider benefits apart from the environmental benefits, including improved safety and availability of these cars to members of the public outside working hours through the Co-wheels car club website."*



### What was the impact / result?

Co-wheels now provide the telematics managed fleet solution to over 20 NHS Trusts and local authorities. The service is able to deliver a number of benefits including:

- Cost saving
- Emissions reduction
- Easing of parking pressure
- Popular with staff
- Sharing of resources
- Removal of corporate responsibility for insurance

A report by the Energy Saving Trust concluded that the Co-wheels service had saved Aberdeen City Council £40,000.

Often NHS staff will own a car primarily in order to operate as a community worker. The service has allowed a large number of NHS staff to sell a car or not purchase a replacement.

It provides a solution at work and allows access for private journeys out of hours.

### Lessons learnt / success factors

Car clubs are a great example of cooperative consumerism. This notion is becoming increasingly popular in the world as it becomes clear that resources need to be shared. The Co-wheels social enterprise model allows a way of creating corporate benefits for Trusts while at the same time creating a wider community benefit.

### Scaling up

Co-wheels are expanding the operation across the UK and is one of the fastest growing companies in the social enterprise sector. It now has the experience and scale to take on large contracts with organisations who are interested in making radical change. A project has been funded by the Technology Strategy Board to further enhance the service for NHS Trusts.



## For further information on this project please contact:

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