

Transforming travel in a Community Trust

Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT) is a leading Community Trust in the South of England, carrying out more than 9,000 patient interventions a day, 90% of which are in patients' homes. Travel is therefore an essential part of its daily work.

Sussex Community NHS
Foundation Trust

Travel, transport and access



What was the issue being addressed?

The Trust was travelling almost six million business miles each year representing a cost of £3 million.

What action was taken to overcome the issue?

The Trust created a Business Travel Plan outlining the process and resources needed to tackle this huge financial and environmental cost. It starts with the basics such as the travel hierarchy and drills down to the detailed initiatives and how these were to be implemented and communicated.

One of the main initiatives was the launch of a Travel Bureau to assist staff and managers to reduce their business mileage and to review their essential journeys..

Staff can book one of 15 low emission pool cars (14 hybrid, 1 electric), which enables them to travel to work on foot, by bike or on public transport whilst still having a vehicle available for work. The Bureau also offers a booking service for bus and rail tickets, interest free season ticket loans, maps and cycle ways, and even a route-planning service which has proved useful for clinical staff who need to visit patients in a new area.

The Trust worked with local authorities to update cycling facilities at key sites and

introduced its first electric bike enabling staff to visit patients across Brighton and Hove. This avoids traffic and parking issues and patients love seeing staff arrive on a bike!

The Trust are also dedicated to reducing owned and leased carbon emissions to ensure they are operating the cleanest fleet the budgets permit. They have replaced diesel cars with 3-cylinder petrol variants and rewritten the lease car policy to include an upper carbon limit (130g/km) with incentivised rates available for vehicles under 100 g/km.

What was the impact?

As a result of the various Travel Bureau initiatives the Trust managed to shave nearly a million miles (949,500) from its business mileage within a year of launch – equating to £500,000 and 60 tonnes CO₂e saved - without impacting on the high quality care that the Trust provides.

They have achieved an absolute carbon reduction across the whole fleet of 19% since 2011/12 and average carbon emissions per vehicle – including commercial vehicles – is now only 121.9 g/km.

“I have completely changed the way I work over the last 6 months and no longer drive my car to work. I catch the train and walk from the station, it is much more enjoyable than driving – no parking issues and I get all of the health benefits. If I need a car I use a fleet car, it’s easy to arrange and always a friendly service... thank you!”

**Andrea Richardson, Specialist Practitioner,
Occupational Health**

Lessons learned / success factors?

Key to success was the message that people were on hand to support our staff rather than interfering with their essential work. Less time behind the wheel means more time with patients. Health and well-being of staff has been improved by enabling them to choose more sustainable travel options.

Creative communications – many people work remotely and some access the Trust’s network sporadically, if at all. The team used a spread of emails, noticeboard, roadshows and team meetings to get the message right through the organisation.



£500k
saved

Scaling up

This has shown the extent to which a dedicated campaign can transform travel within an organisation. SCFT is just one of around 20 Community Trusts and whilst in each case the geography and demographics will change, the principles remain; this could easily apply to Mental Health Trusts too as their travel requirement is similar. If 10 similar Trusts took part it could eradicate a further 300 tonnes CO₂e and generate savings of £5 million.

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