TRAVEL SURVEY REPORT

2021 – 2022

The Open University

CONTENTS

Last reviewed: **February 2022**

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1   SUMMARY

Survey sample size of 535 increased by 77% over the 2019 responses. This still represents a small number considering the number of staff employed by the University.

1.1   Scope 3 Carbon Analysis

Survey results are mixed. Negatives: Walton Hall utilisation of own vehicles are substantially higher than those of the Regions. In addition, a decline in car sharing and fewer walk to work activities have been identified. Positive: An increased utilisation of more fuel-efficient public transportation has been identified.

Contributing factors to the increased utilisation of own vehicles can be attributed to more staff living more than five miles away from their place of work reflecting an increase of 7% compared to the 2019 survey results.

A further sobering statistic reveals that three quarters of vehicles used by staff generate Scope 3 Carbon Emissions. Fifty three percent of these staff live more than five miles from their place of work.

Survey results revealed that fewer staff were driving diesel vehicles while a small increase in the use of hybrid vehicles was evident. Also clear was a move to driving vehicles with medium engine sizes and decreased use of smaller 1.4ltr and 2ltr vehicles.

Procurement policies and the use of pre-selected travel services (Click Travel) have been questioned as the services are not always best value for money or the "Greenest" option.

1.2   Ways of Working and Changes to Plans for Travelling to the Workplace

Significant changes to staff workplace and by default travel plans have been reported with a significant decline in the number of staff wishing to work four / five-day periods in the offices. These statistics are however balanced by increases in the number of staff wishing to work one / two-day periods in the office. These factors indicate the significant reductions are likely to be made to Scope 3 Carbon Emissions.

A fifth of respondents indicated that they could not be encouraged to change their mode of transport quoting issues like Covid, poor / inadequate public service availability, poor safety in the use of other modes of transport, and child-care concerns.

Respondents felt that there should be more linking up of train and bus services resulting in improved travel and convenience times.

Respondents would like to see improved flexibility over working hours so that public transport can be used during off-peak times reducing costs, reducing the risk of contracting Covid, reducing travel stresses, reducing overall number of trips required, etc.

1.3   Electric Vehicles and Alternate Modes of Transport

There remains a lot of scepticism surrounding the use of EV's with 68% of staff either not considering the purchasing an EV at all or only considering a purchase in the next 10 years. Concern was expressed that EV's need to be more sustainable and provide a greener solution.

Nearly 50%of respondents felt that EV costs were too high while 10% expressed concern regarding the use of an EV itself. A quarter of respondents expressed concern surrounding re-charging infrastructure locally or at the OU. Concern was expressed that there was insufficient information available on EV's which included battery costs, life and disposal / toxicity, battery ranges, re-charge times, second-hand markets, University charge point adequacy, more information related to available re-charge schemes, etc. Incentives like access to an EV or subsidised funding scheme were requested along with free re-charge facilities on campus.

Less than 80% of respondents were not considering changing their mode of transport (vehicles) nor their transportation methods to get to work. However, some respondents were prepared to trial the use of an EV should the facility be made available.

Respondents requested additional access to some form of university based discounted e-bike scheme. They further expressed dissatisfaction on existing local bus services which are considered inadequate and not fit for purpose.

A request was made for the lifting of access controls for e-scooters on site enabling increased on-site utilisation.

Other factors affecting the decision not to change modes of transport included poor weather conditions, low Cyclescheme financial limits, high train prices, etc.

1.4   University Facilities

Fewer respondents (10%) were aware of the existence of the Travel Advice website and its content while two thirds of respondents had never visited the website. Improved visibility of the Travel Advice website was requested, this included the provision of regular up-dates on travel changes, opportunities, and information. Comments indicated that staff induction programmes did not provide sufficient information on the available Travel information.

Three quarters of respondents were aware of the car share scheme with 632 staff participating in the scheme. Cyclescheme and their associated benefits are well known as are the availability of changing room facilities. Few respondents were aware of the existence of the bicycle maintenance station. Requests have been made for improvements to cyclist locker facilities, more security for bicycles, charge points for e-bikes and the addition of facilities within changing rooms.

Some interesting comments were provided regarding parking, some felt charging for the space could drive staff to other modes of transport. Digitalisation of parking bays was requested.

A request to open suitable local office space would enable reduced commuting activities and associated costs e.g., London.

2   BACKGROUND

A travel survey was undertaken during 2021 in order to find out more regarding staff views on travel and the possible impact that Covid may have made on their future travel methods.

We had 535 completed returns which represents an improvement of 77% compared with our 2019 survey.

As a percentage of completed returns, Walton Hall reduced by 2.9% while Nations / SRSC increased by 2.8%.

	2021	**2019**
Nations / other	15.7%	12.9%
WH	84.3%	87.1%

Note: Assumptions and statements made have been based on data submissions only and therefore does not represent the views / responses of 100% of staff.

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3 FINDINGS / EMPLOYEE DATA RESPONSES

3.1 Staff Transport Mode Profiles

Comparison between modes of transport

A bar chart comparing transport modes between 2021 (pink) and 2019 (teal):

Mode	2021	2019
car share (35)	~7%	~9%
public transport (76)	~14%	~9%
car on own (354)	~67%	~72%
cycling (26)	~5%	~5%
motorbike (1)	~0%	~0%
dropped off (5)	~1%	~1%
walk (14)	~3%	~4%

■ 2021 ■ 2019
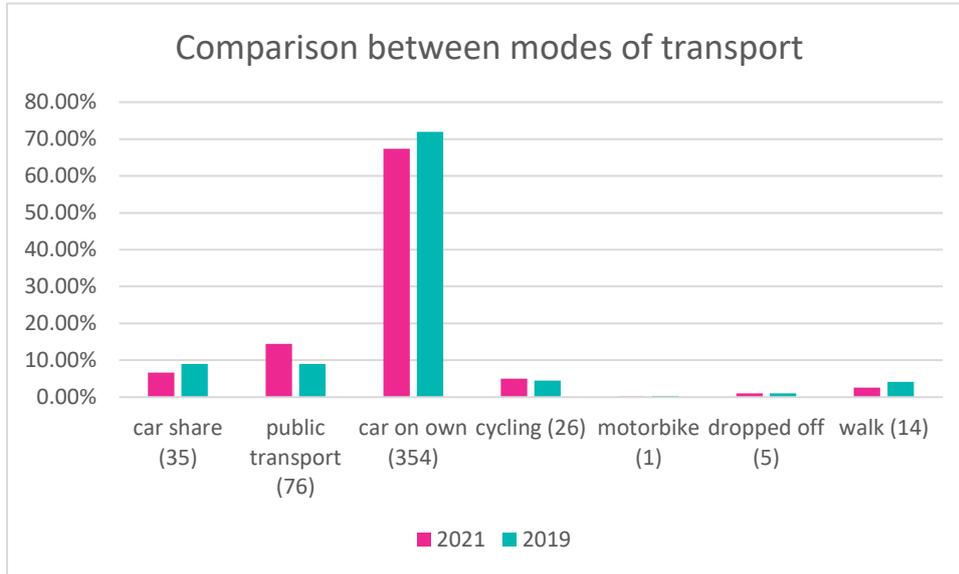
Some minor changes to overall modes of transport, these include lower use of own car utilisation and an increase in the use of public transport. These are positive trends.

Fewer staff appear to be car sharing and walking to work, these are worrying trends. It is likely that these statistics have been influenced by COVID and staff requiring changes to their work conditions which includes working from home.

Walton Hall staff utilisation of own cars is exceptionally high with 71% of staff indicating that they drive to work on their own. This compares more favourably in the Regionals where 45% drive to work in their own cars.

3.2 Staff living distances from their place of work

Comparison between 2021 and 2019

A bar chart comparing living distances between 2021 and 2019:

Year	within 5 miles	over 5 miles
2021	~24%	~76%
2019	~31%	~69%

■ within 5 miles ■ over 5 miles
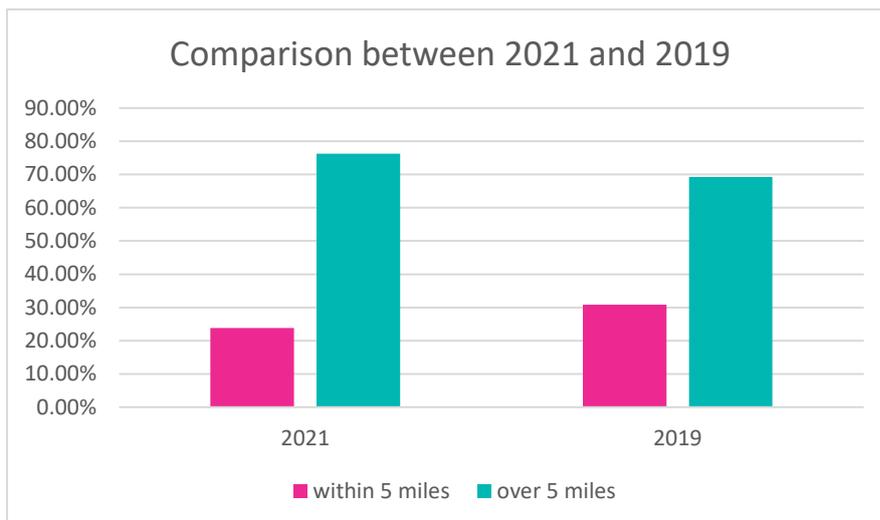
The statistical data indicates that more staff now live further away (7%) from our offices compared to the 2019 returns.

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3.3   Current modes of transport for staff living more than 5 miles from their local offices
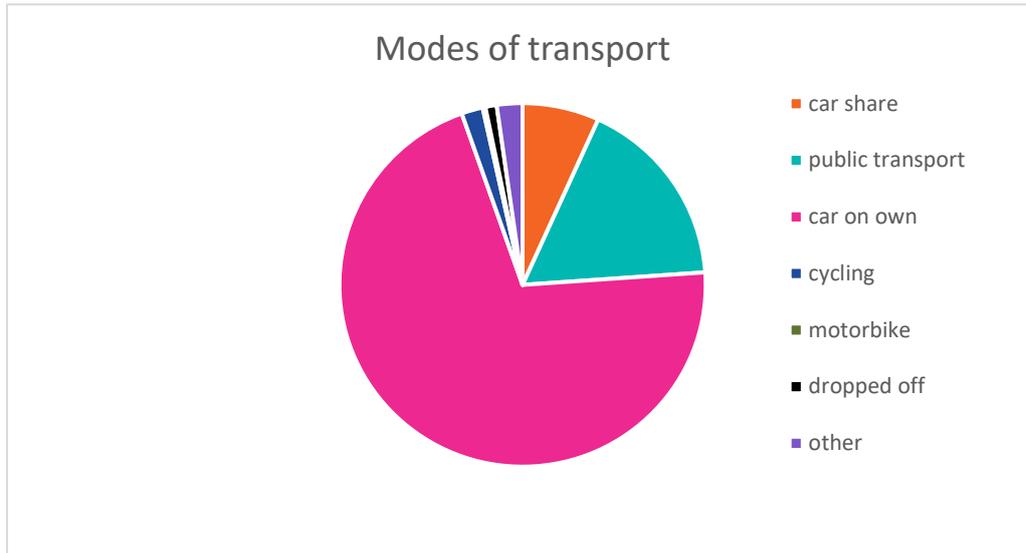
The above chart demonstrates that 73% of the vehicle transportation modes generate Scope 3* Carbon Emissions while only 1.4% of staff use bikes to get to work. Further analysis indicates that (53%) of staff are living more than 5 miles from the office and use their own cars when driving to work.

3.4   Anticipated Staff Working Patterns due to Covid and Social Distancing

A significant swing in intended working patterns have taken place when compared to the 2019 survey. The majority (49%) of staff have indicated that they wish to work from home as their main workplace. A further 33% of staff have indicated that they wish to attend site for less than 2 days a week. With the indication that a considerable reduction (81.5%) of staff will be attending site on a regular basis, Scope 3 emissions are likely to decrease significantly.

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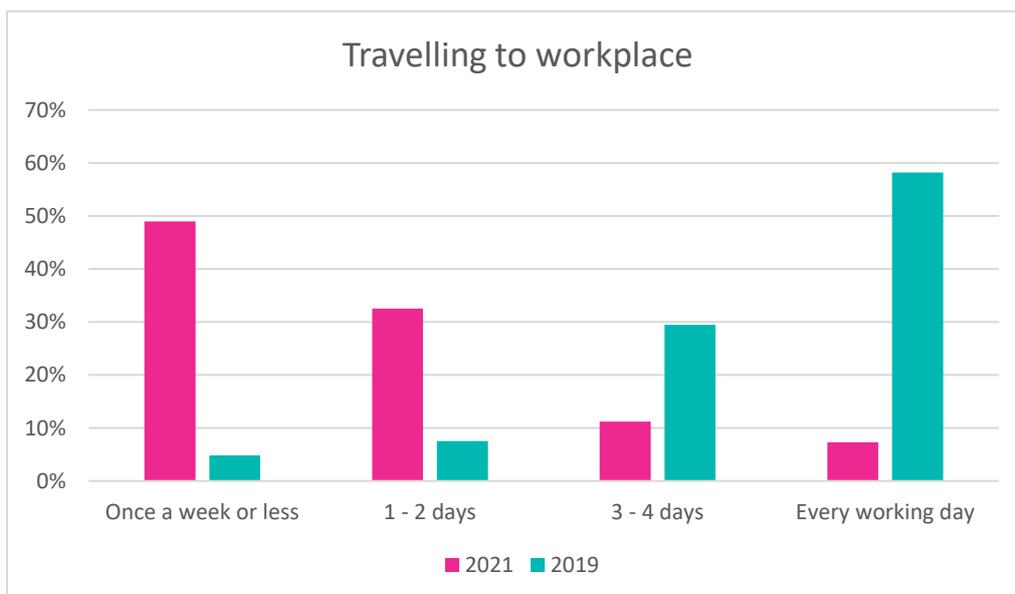
3.5 Vehicle Engine Types and Sizes

	2021	**2019**
Petrol (300)	64.0%	66.5%
Diesel (89)	18.9%	27.9%
Hybrid	4.4%	3.9%
Electric	2.1%	1.7%
n/a	10.0%	0
other	0.6%	0

A significant reduction in the utilisation of diesel vehicles has been identified with small increases reflected in Hybrid / Electric vehicles.

	2021	**2019**
up to 1.4 (122)	22.8%	57.1%
1.4 - 2 (235)	43.9%	40.2%
above 2 (5)	0.9%	2.6%

Indications are that there has been an increase in the utilisation of vehicles in the 1.4lt to 2lt engine sizes but reductions in the large 2ltr vehicles and those under 1.4ltr. It is uncertain why these changes have occurred, but it is a known fact that the second-hand car market is very lucrative so some staff may be buying up or have decided to work from home so their car will no longer be required?

3.6 Electric Vehicles

	2021
Yes, in next 5 years	31.7%
Yes, in next 10 years	31.1%
No	37.2%

63% of staff indicated that they would consider purchasing an EV in the next 10 years, while 37% were not considering an EV option. 19% of respondents stated that EV costs are too high while 10% stated that their decision not to purchase were vehicle related.

Staff aware of EV charging facilities
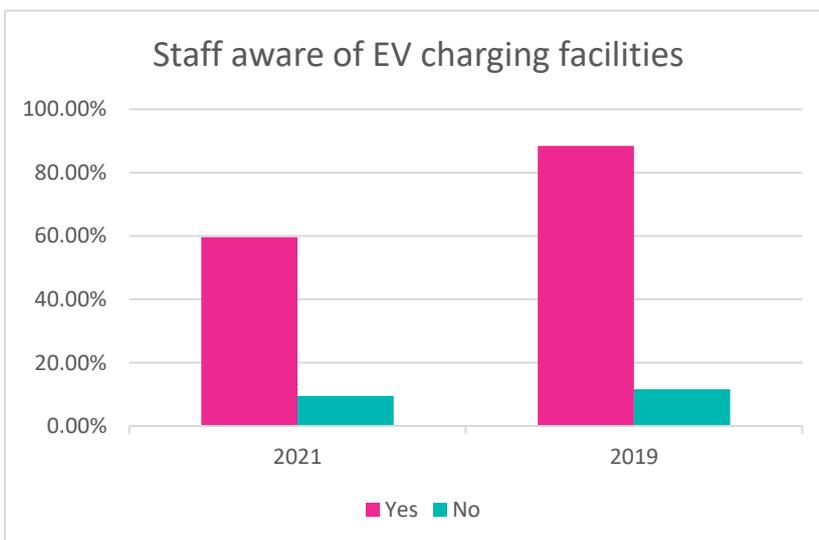
60% of Staff knew we had EV charging facilities.

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3.7 Incentives to purchase an electric vehicle

Staff were asked what would incentivise them to purchase an electric vehicle or why they would not buy one.

- 47% of staff commented on the cost of EV's being too high.
- 24% of staff stated that the re-charge infrastructure was inadequate / unavailable either in their local areas or at the University.
- 12% of staff commented that they were not happy with or do not know enough about vehicle driving distance ranges.
- 6% of staff commented on the uncertainty around battery life periods and the associated time that it takes to re-charge them.
- 5% of staff requested access to an EV Scheme.
- 2% of staff requested access to a car allowance / grant / discount / finance scheme. 2% of staff commented on the OU's charging stating that it should be either free or subsidised / installed in regions / more charging capacity and reliability required at Walton Hall.
- 2% of staff would like to participate in a second-hand vehicle market which at present is not available.

3.8 General staff comments regarding EV's

3.81 EV Information

Being provided more information regarding operational costs for the EV. More knowledge about whether an EV will suit the lifestyle of the family, independence is required. Being provided cash incentives for old car. Disabled EV specification inadequate. EV is not a reliable vehicle. A need to learn to drive an electric vehicle. OU EV community are unfriendly. Having the right make and model of EV available to purchase. Stick with a hybrid self-charging vehicle. A purchase would be dependent on circumstances.

3.8.1 Re-charging

Being able to recharge for free in the office. Open the University's closed scheme to country wide. More understanding around the charge schemes and how they work.

## 3.8.2 Batteries

Better and lower cost battery disposal schemes are needed. Lower battery replacement costs are needed. Being provided with more information regarding battery utilisation and re-charge times. More information regarding battery disposal infrastructure as toxic chemicals are used.

3.8.3 Other

EV's are not a green enough option. Technology needs to be sustainable and green.

3.9 Car Share Scheme Awareness

2021

- Yes ■ No
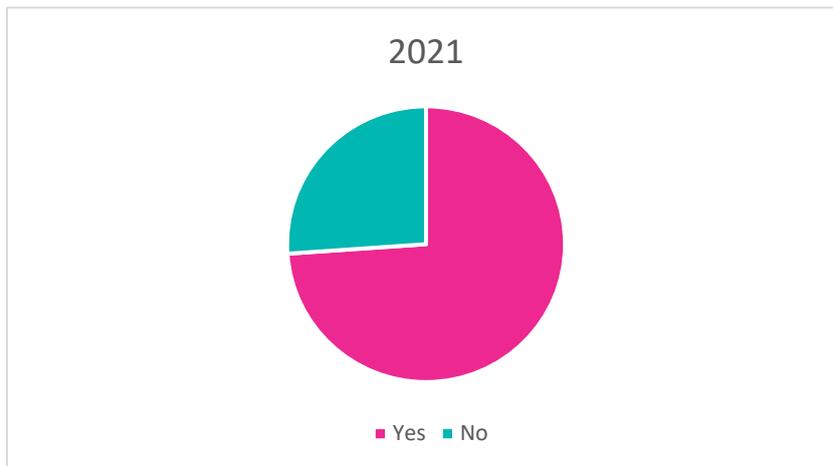
74% of staff are aware of the existence of the car share scheme. At present WH has a free scheme with a membership base of 632. Covid has significantly impacted on the expansion of this scheme. Ways of Working initiatives are likely to further impact on this scheme with fewer staff coming to site on a regular basis.

3.10 Alternative modes of transport

	WH (449)	Nations/ SRSC (46)	Other (38)
Bike	31	5	1
E-bike	23	3	2
E-scooter	6	0	1
None	368	36	30
n/a (blanks)	21	2	4

Overall, 81% of staff are not considering the purchase of any mode of the "other" transportation be it a bike, an e-bike or an e-scooter. 7% of staff are considering the purchase of a bike. 5% are considering the purchase of an e-bike. 2% of staff are considering the purchase of an e-scooter.

3.10 Since Covid, have staff considered changing their mode or transport to work?

2021

- Yes ■ No
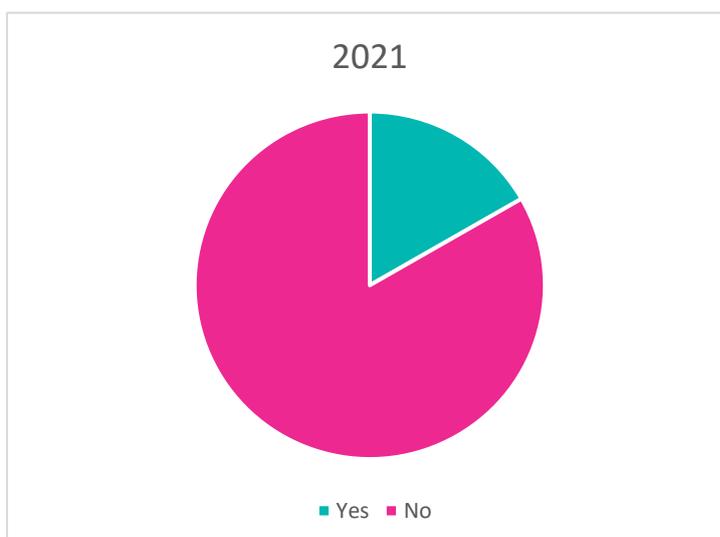
The majority of staff 83% are not considering changing their mode of transport when coming to work.

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3.11 Staff awareness of Cyclescheme

	2021
Yes	79.7%
No	20.3%

Most staff are aware of the scheme and financial benefits which it offers

3.12 Are staff aware of our facilities when cycling to work?

	2021
Shower	87.8%
Bike Shelters	96.2%
Maintenance Stations	18.9%
Bike pumps	23.4%

The majority of staff are aware of the facilities available when cycling to work. Some recommendations have been made to improve facilities which include making lock-up areas more secure, providing lockers for equipment, providing additional equipment like hair dryers, etc.

3.13 Staff considerations for changing their mode of transport

75% of staff did not respond to this question. 5% of staff are not considering a change in the mode of transport, 8% would consider moving to cycling while 5% would consider starting to use a car as a new mode of transport.

3.14 What considerations would encourage staff to leave cars at home and change modes of transport?

Indication is that 18% of staff would not change their mode of transport quoting issues like Covid, location and access to public services unavailable, safety in the use of different transport modes and childcare responsibilities. At least 21% of staff commented that public transport facilities and services are inadequate or do not run efficiently enough for them to change their mode of transport. Other reasons for not changing the modes of transport included costs, cycle scheme accessibility, a lack of facilities, security concerns, charge point limitations for e-bikes, e-bike discounts not existent, weather, time and convenience issues, etc. 5% of staff feel that more link up is required between Train and bus services. There is a mixed bag of comments here indicating that some joined up thinking on the supply and availability of services need to be reviewed and considered.

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3.15 Are staff aware of the Travel Advice website?

Awareness of Travel Advice website
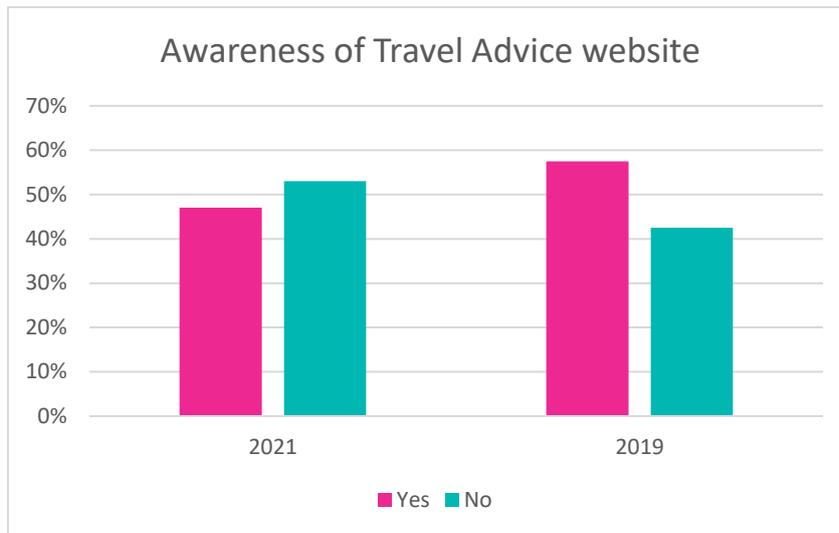
Fewer staff 47% are aware of the existence of the Travel Advice website when compared to the last survey and 61% of the participants have never visited the site.

3.16 General Comments or observations on improving travel advice / information responses

Staff were asked for general observations or improvements which could be made regarding travel advice / information. They responded as follows:

3.16.1 Bus Services

Improved bus services would encourage increased utilisation. Out of hour and the overall timetable for bus services need to be improved. Public services for rural areas introduced. Consideration could be given to charging for onsite parking encouraging the use of bus services. Advertising the newly introduced MK Connect service.

3.16.2 Parking

Parking in Edinburgh should be provided for disabled staff members. Digitised parking information reflecting open spaces at WH.

3.16.3 E-scooters

Access travel from MK Central to WH using e-scooters and access on site for these scooters along with parking facilities. Change the legal status of e-scooters.

3.16.4 Weather Communication

Text messages on weather conditions on-site.

3.16.5 Cyclescheme

Increase the limit for the purchase of e-bikes.

3.16.6 Rail Services

Reduction in Train service costs.

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3.16.7 Car Share scheme

Encourage high usage of car share scheme.

3.16.8 Websites

Add a tab to university file share options. Make Travel Advice more visible on OU Life. Make finding Travel Advice easier. Provide greater Travel Advice visibility. Include travel advice information within Inside Track reports. Add road closure information for local areas to the website.

3.16.9 New Staff Inductions

Include a briefing process for all new starters, possibly make it mandatory reading.

3.16.10   Working Hours and Conditions

Provide the working flexibility for staff so that: public transport can be better utilised thereby avoiding COVID situations / less stress of travel / reduced distances of travel / WFH / travel to office during off peak hours, etc. Encourage more home working and on-line meetings which reduces the need for travelling long distances and exposure to COVID. Hybrid working conditions introduced.

3.16.11   Procurement of Travel Services

Being less restrictive on supplier selection when purchasing travel (academics) – does not necessarily select the greenest or most economic option.

3.16.12   EV Scheme

Co-ordinate free EV car trials with EV Experience Centre in MK.

3.16.13   Office Facilities

Re-open a London office so travel to MK can be reduced.

4 ACTIVITIES MOVING FORWARD

Twenty-nine activities have been identified as a result of the survey results. Significant attention is required for the following:

4.1 University driven initiatives
- EV schemes including company vehicle schemes, company car / subsidised loan schemes, car allowances, EV salary sacrifice scheme, etc. Encourage EV schemes available commercially in the Financial Markets.
- Review current cycle and e-bike limits on Cyclescheme annually.

4.2 Estates driven activities
- The provision of improved bus services and service routes.
- Consider company sharing or the procurement of alternate bus routes for staff.
- Drive an increase utilisation of the car share scheme.
- Investigate Government subsidies for rapid charging facilities.

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- Re-enforce flexible ways of working initiatives being undertaken across the OU.
- Estates Strategy to review and consider parking for disabled.
- Bike facilities to be improved including parking for e-bikes, charge facilities and lockers.
- Access to EV test driving opportunities to be documented and made available for all staff to take advantage of.
- Approach our Cyclescheme supplier to attract discounted bicycles for our employees.

4.3 Other actions underway

- Consider opening other mini office suites for staff operation in areas such as London.
- Review travel procurement so it is better value for money and Greener.
- Link on latest weather up-dates to be added to the Travel Website.
- Discounted rail services information to be shared on Travel Advice Yammer Group and our website. SmartGo Group to be approached to provide more information related to discounted train services.
- E-scooter / e-bike availability to travel to site from the train station to be reviewed and published on the website. Scooters will need to be left off campus as GPS systems will not work on site.
- Communication strategy on Travel Advice information in the planning. Advice to include advertising our facilities and where they can be found.
- Communication strategy for the Cyclescheme, its benefits and processes to be further developed and implemented. New staff to be targeted as part of induction processes.
- Heat map review - Map possible bus service routes with a view to engaging with local service providers to encourage implementation of services through or close to the OU.
- EV charge booking system being developed in Resource Scheduler / Planon.
- Re-engage with Car Scheme for returning to site employees.
- Engage with SmartGo team to review available travel services across MK.
- Review facilities for cyclists to improve their experience – lockers, hair dryers, security, etc.

4.4 Completed / on-going actions

- Increased visibility of Travel Website implemented along with the creation of a Travel Advice Yammer group.

5 Key

*Scope 3 Carbon Emission – Carbon generated by staff, suppliers our other organisations who have been engaged by the University to perform works or services.

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