



Figure 1: Pyramid of modes of transport for business travel

Digital communication

With the range of video conferencing and home working, staff don't always need to leave the building at all. During the pandemic, many people have swapped the daily commute for working at home as well as digital meeting technology being widely available, so consideration should be made to make use of these digital communication options before making a journey for business meetings e.g. Teams, Jabber, Zoom.

Walking and wheeling

Travelling on foot or wheels doesn't create any carbon emissions, so this is a sustainable and green way to make a journey. Each mile walked rather than driven saves 276g of carbon dioxide (CO₂)*. As well as keeping carbon emissions low for business travel, it can also positively impact the person as walking increases health and wellbeing. Although 'wheels' mainly contributed to wheelchair users, another popular form of transport is scooting. Although it is illegal to use a private e-scooters on roads, Northampton and UON are part of the Voi scooter scheme and these scooters are road legal and can be used for short distances around the town.

Cycling

Cycling via bike or e-bike is a great option for short distances to be covered quickly. We have many dedicated cycle routes close to Waterside as well as ample parking, showers and hire schemes available. This would be great for intercampus meetings and meetings around Northampton within a 10-mile radius.

Public transport

There may be times when active travel isn't a suitable option, for example travelling a long distance or have luggage. This is where public transport can be helpful. Shared and public transport reduces traffic congestion and improves local air quality because multiple passengers can travel at once. It can also be a better use of time, allowing to check emails or prep for the meeting ahead if travelling by train. We have strong links from Northampton and stations in Wellingborough, Long Buckby and Milton Keynes. If parking is required at the station, our Park & Ride is very close to Northampton Train Station where parking is free, and it is a short 10-minute walk. This reduces parking costs that could be claimed back from the UON.

Electric vehicles and car sharing

Sometimes a private vehicle is necessary, and, on these occasions, one should consider the greenest type of vehicle– electric vehicles. These use far fewer carbon emissions than petrol and diesel equivalents and there are zero tailpipe emissions.

The UK Government has set a target to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 and electric pool cars in businesses are becoming more and more widespread. At UON we have electric chargers in our carparks, and these are non-bookable spaces that university staff can use with their work email addresses. Visitors can also use them if they pre-book via parking@northampton.ac.uk and a Pod Point profile will be set up for them.

Vehicles and car sharing

Towards the bottom of the travel hierarchy, are standard petrol and diesel cars (internal combustion engine 'ICE' vehicles). Petrol and diesel cars contribute to local air pollution, with 80% of nitrogen dioxide recorded at roadside in the UK*. Reducing dependency on this type of car can make a big difference to the environment as well as cost to employers whose staff can claim mileage from using their cars for business.

Car sharing should be strongly advised for those meetings where multiple members of staff from UON are attending. It can also be encouraged for externals coming to campus too.

Air

Air travel is the least sustainable method of transport, sitting right at the bottom of the hierarchy. A flight from Edinburgh to London, for example, emits around 159kg of CO₂ per passenger*, compared to as little as 23.5kg if the journey had been made by train.

When travelling shorter distances within the UK, trains will take passengers into the city centre, whereas flights will land and take-off from the outskirts. When you consider this along with check-in times, there often isn't much of a time benefit to flying. Air travel should only be considered for essential international travel where a meeting must be face to face such as a Conference.

**data quoted from energysavingtrust.org.uk*