

# Understanding the site

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## 4.1 Introduction

To ensure that the travel plan is appropriate to the Trust, comprehensive information must be gathered at an early stage in the travel plan process. This information will form the basis of the plan. As a minimum the following should be undertaken:

- A site assessment (see section 4.2).
- A staff travel survey (see section 4.3).

In addition, the following may be required:

- Focus groups to support the staff travel survey information (see section 4.6).
- A patient and visitor travel survey, if the Trust wants to address travel to the site by these groups (see section 7).
- Collection of additional information about fleet vehicles if the Trust wants to address this aspect of its transport (see section 8).



## 4.2 Site assessment

A site assessment is necessary in order to fully understand the nature of the site(s) at which the travel plan is to be implemented and to collect information on:

- **Public transport provision**, for example, what bus services serve the site? Where are bus stops located?
- **Pedestrian access**, for example, how well maintained are pedestrian routes?
- **Cycling**, for example, what facilities are provided for cycle parking?
- **Vehicular access**, for example, are there any congestion problems around the site?


- **Car parking**, including car park use, car park availability and car park policy.
- **Organisational policy**, for example, are discounted public transport season tickets available? Does the Trust encourage flexible working?

The site assessment can provide useful information to inform design of staff and patient/visitor travel surveys and can also help in the identification of 'quick wins'.

A site assessment pro-forma, as used by a number of London Trusts, is provided in Appendix 4A . A separate pro-forma should be completed for each site. The pro-forma requires collection of a wide range of information and completion may take up to one day, although this will depend on the familiarity that the individual completing the pro-forma has of the site(s). For multi-site Trusts, where there are a number of much smaller sites such as GP surgeries and clinics, a shorter version of the pro-forma has been produced (see Appendix 4B .

Following completion of the site assessment you may find it helpful to produce a short working note detailing the findings and highlighting any issues raised. This can act as a useful reference document through the course of travel plan development and implementation.

**Further information about undertaking a site assessment can be found in sections 3.2 to 3.5 of *A Travel Plan Resources Pack for Employers*.**

**Central & North West London Mental Health NHS Trust (CNWL)** has over 80 sites across London. The Trust chose to develop an ‘umbrella’ travel plan with an initial focus on the 24 CNWL sites with 20 or more staff. Contact officers were identified at each of the sites, and the shortened site assessment pro-forma (see Appendix 4B ) was emailed to each of the contacts for completion. The site assessment pro-formas were then collated by the Trust’s Travel Plan Co-ordinator (the Trust’s Assistant Facilities Support Manager) in a summary spreadsheet so that at a glance it was possible to understand what facilities were provided at each of the sites, for example, which sites had covered cycle parking and which sites had locker facilities.

### 4.3 Staff travel survey

A staff travel survey is needed as an initial step in the development of a travel plan in order to understand:



- How staff travel to and from work.
- Why staff choose to travel to and from work in the way they do.
- Measures/improvements that could be introduced to improve travel options to and from work.



The initial travel survey undertaken to inform travel plan development needs to be quite detailed in order to collect all the necessary information. Subsequent surveys, undertaken to monitor progress with the travel plan, can be less detailed (see section 6.4).

**Comprehensive information about undertaking travel surveys is provided in sections 3.7 to 3.9 of *A Travel Plan Resources Pack for Employers*. Further information about issues specific to development of a travel plan in an NHS and London context is provided in Sections 4.4 and 4.5.**


### 4.4 Questionnaire design

When designing the questionnaire for the staff travel survey the following should be considered:





- The questionnaire should incorporate any relevant issues identified in the site assessment—for example, if a pool bike scheme is operated by the Trust, the survey provides a good opportunity for finding out how many members of staff are actually aware of the scheme and actions that the Trust could be taking to increase awareness and use of it.
- In London it is common for ‘multi-stage’ journeys to be made. ‘Multi-stage’ refers to journeys involving more than one mode, for instance, bus then underground, or train then bicycle. It is useful to identify the different modes used by staff in undertaking their journey, although careful wording is required to ensure the question is clear and easy to understand. An example of wording is provided in the Great Ormond Street and Guy’s & St Thomas’ questionnaires in Appendix 4C  and Appendix 4D  respectively.

- Given that many NHS staff work shifts, it is also useful to understand how travel patterns vary according to different shift patterns. Again, an example of wording is provided in the Great Ormond Street and Guy’s & St Thomas’ questionnaires in Appendix 4C  and Appendix 4D .
- The layout of the questionnaire should be clear and questions should be ordered logically with unambiguous wording.
- The questionnaire should not be too long—between four and six sides is generally acceptable for the initial travel survey. Subsequent surveys can be shorter.
- Open-ended questions take more time to complete than closed, tick-box questions—so keep open-ended questions to a minimum.

- The questionnaire should include a brief introduction stating why the survey is taking place and how the completed forms should be returned. A contact name and details should be provided in case staff have any queries about the survey.
- It is a good idea to undertake a pilot survey amongst 4 or 5 staff to make sure the questionnaire ‘works’.

The following questionnaires are appended to this Guide  as examples of surveys undertaken by Trusts. The questionnaires may be used as a template, although questions should be tailored to the specific circumstances and needs of each individual Trust.

**Further examples of staff travel questionnaires are provided in Appendix 3B of *A Travel Plan Resources Pack for Employers*.**

Appendix 4C 	Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust	An example of a six-sided, word processed questionnaire used by a single site Acute Trust.
Appendix 4D 	Guy’s & St Thomas’ Hospital NHS Trust	An example of a six sided, desk-top published questionnaire used by an Acute Trust operating across two sites.
Appendix 4E 	Barnet Primary Care Trust	An example of a four-sided word processed questionnaire used by a multi-site Primary Care Trust.
Appendix 4F 	Central & North West London Mental Health NHS Trust	An example of a six-sided word processed questionnaire used by a multi-site Mental Health Trust.

#### 4.5 Maximising the survey response rate

The 'response rate' is the percentage of people who return a completed survey form:

$$\frac{\text{Number of completed forms}}{\text{Number of forms distributed}} \times 100\%$$

There are a number of ways to maximise the response rate of the survey:

- Demonstration of senior management support for the survey will help to raise its profile. This could take the form of a covering letter/paragraph to accompany the survey, endorsed by senior managers. Alternatively, an email could be sent to all senior managers asking them to support the survey and encourage completion of the questionnaire by their staff.
- Choice of timing for questionnaire distribution can greatly affect survey response rates. The staff travel survey should be timed to avoid school holidays when a large number of people may be on annual leave.
- Staff should be allowed approximately two weeks to complete the questionnaire, from time of distribution to survey return. A reminder should be sent out two or three days before return to encourage completion of the questionnaire. This could take the form of an email to staff, reminders from senior managers or posters sited around the hospital.

#### **Prior to dissemination of the travel survey at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust, the following message was emailed to senior managers, including the Executive Board:**


Dear All,

The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust is developing a travel plan, which aims to improve the travel options available to staff, patients and visitors. Your views are important and therefore a staff questionnaire will be issued to all individuals who work on the Stanmore and Bolsover Street sites towards the end of next week. The questionnaire should take no longer than ten minutes to complete. Evans Cycles are sponsoring the survey and all responses will be entered into a prize draw to win £200 of Gift Vouchers from Evans Cycles.

Please do encourage all staff to take part. Your responses will be used to encourage London Buses to improve services to the Stanmore site and will enable us to plan a more pro-active Shuttle Bus timetable.

Many Thanks,

Jeremy Sharp  
*Asistant Director of Facilities*

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- It is recommended that an opportunity to enter a prize draw is offered to those people who return their questionnaires within the deadline.
  - The **method** of distribution can affect response rate significantly. The most appropriate way will depend on the nature of individual Trusts and their sites. Possible methods and their pros and cons are indicated in Appendix 4G .

#### Examples of prizes offered by Trusts as part of their staff travel survey prize draw:

**Guy's & St Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust** offered a voucher for a bike, kindly donated by 'On Your Bike', a local cycle dealer.

**Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust** offered a two night stay in a four star hotel, with free First Class rail travel for two to any destination in the UK. The Trustees of Great Ormond Street kindly donated this prize.

**Central & North West London Mental Health NHS Trust** sent questionnaires to all staff. The Trust therefore decided that it would offer a number of small travel-themed prizes to give staff at more than one site the chance of winning a prize. Prizes offered by the Trust were:

- A £100 voucher for Evans Cycle shops—kindly donated by Evans.
- A Docklands Light Rail 'Rail and River Rover' Family Pass (£25)—kindly donated by Docklands Light Railways.
- 'The Original Tour' Family bus pass, a sight seeing trip around London (£60).
- A river cruise experience for two, which included a 40 minute cruise followed by a trip on the London Eye (£43).
- A voucher worth £30 for Milletts outdoor equipment store.



#### 4.6 Collecting additional information if the survey response rate is poor

If the survey response is particularly poor, the travel survey will need to be supplemented with additional data/information. It is particularly important that there is confidence that the mode split<sup>1</sup> figures in the initial travel survey are accurate as this will form the baseline data against which future progress with the travel plan will be monitored. An easy way of collecting accurate mode split data, without the need to send out a second questionnaire, is to undertake a 'snapshot survey' at selected building entrances (see section 6.4).

Focus groups can be used to collect additional attitudinal information, such as views on different measures to encourage sustainable travel. Focus groups enable travel and transport issues to be explored in depth with small groups of staff.


**For more information about running a focus group see Appendix 3C of *A Travel Plan Resources Pack for Employers*.**

<sup>1</sup> Mode split refers to the proportion of travel undertaken to a given destination by different forms of transport, such as walking, cycling, public transport, etc.

#### 4.7 Survey analysis and reporting

Survey results should be reported clearly and concisely and should include an overview of:

- Survey response rate.
- Respondent profile, for example, gender of respondents, age profile, job type etc. It is then useful to establish whether the respondents are representative of the overall make-up of staff at the hospital.
- Mode split for travel to work—where journey stage information is collected (see section 4.4) this should be based upon the mode by which most time was spent travelling. Where a Trust has multiple sites, it can be useful to provide a breakdown of mode split by individual sites.
- Reasons for use of the car.
- Measures that would encourage travel by different modes. Where a Trust has multiple sites, this should be broken down by site.

An example of a 'typical' analysis undertaken as part of a travel survey is provided in Appendix 4H .

**For information about how survey data can be assessed using electronic (GIS) mapping techniques, see section 3.10 and 4.5 of *A Travel Plan Resources Pack for Employers*.**

**For more detailed information about survey analysis see section 3.7.8 of *A Travel Plan Resources Pack for Employers*.**

It is important that the survey results are reported back to staff, for instance, through the staff newsletter or through staff meetings (see Section 10 for further ideas).

#### 4.8 Using other data sources to understand the site

To further understand a Trust's site(s), information from the site assessment and travel surveys could be supplemented with additional data, subject to data protection, for example:

- **Information from other surveys carried out amongst staff/patients**—which could help to identify the priority given to transport issues compared to other Trust issues.
- **Payroll information**—home location data for all staff, not only those responding to surveys so that, for example, suitability and provision of public transport serving the site can be assessed.
- **Estates information**—for example, parking permit databases. Through GIS mapping, it is possible to plot the home locations of staff who hold a parking permit and to establish whether they could actually access their place of work easily by public transport.
- **Financial records**—claims for business mileage to establish how much is being spent for travel in the course of work, and how this breaks down across different modes.
- **Aggregated patient activity records**—data on in-patient and out-patient activity can identify when peaks in demand for travel to the hospital are likely to occur.

