

Travel/Carbon Group Report for Management Committee

Date: 16th November 2020

Contents

Introduction	2
Methodology.....	2
International travel survey	2
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).....	2
Findings	2
Conclusions	5
Annex 1 International Air Travel Staff Survey.....	6
Annex 2 Focus Group Discussions.....	7
Annex 3 FGD thematic guidelines	8

Authors Savio, Martina; Gleave, Katherine; Guglielmo, Federica; Amegee, Jessica; Mwendera, Chikondi

Contributors Ranson, Hilary; Crossman, Susie; Wilson, Elizabeth; Roberts, Sarah; Gould, Jeremy; Stewart, Kevin (and Tagiyeva-Milne, Nara; Callaghan, David)

Summary The main part of this [report comprises 5 pages](#) which summarise the findings and suggestions received from a school-wide survey and 4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) organised by the Travel/Carbon Group (a sub-committee of the Environmental Working Group [EWG]). It also includes learnings that the Travel / Carbon Group have gathered during this process. We too provide [several attachments](#) with additional information on the processes followed.

Our approach throughout the survey, FGDs and in this report is to [promote a cultural shift and increase understanding and awareness of the impact that our work has on the environment](#). The following report therefore promotes reflective approaches, rather than limiting measures.

[We ask Management Committee to give us feedback on which action points they have agreed to take forward and clear strategic direction and support.](#)

Introduction

Climate change is impacting global health in an unprecedented way.

LSTM is a centre of research excellence on global health challenges that affect some of the most disadvantaged communities in the world and given our mission, we have an obligation to advocate for change and be a leading force in the fight against climate change in the UK and in the countries where we work in a truly collaborative, equitable, and inclusive manner.

In 2019, a Travel/Carbon Group was established as a sub-committee of the EWG, with the aim of supporting LSTM in identifying ways to reduce our carbon emissions and raising awareness among its staff and students.

Methodology

International travel survey

In July 2020, members of the Travel/Carbon group carried out a school-wide survey to investigate staff international travel throughout 2019 and gauge opinions on how LSTM as an institute could best reduce its carbon footprint.

The survey received 185 responses (~32% of staff) and brought to light different records of travel at the intersection of staff career stage, professional needs, and personal preference. Respondents also highlighted the main principles on which future change should be based on, namely equity, transparency, and leadership.

Results of the survey ([Annex 1](#)) were disseminated to all staff, and then discussed in an open meeting on 23rd September 2020.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Following on from the travel survey, the Travel/Carbon group invited LSTM staff to take part in a series of FGDs aimed at understanding staff's perspective on LSTM social and environmental responsibility with regards to reducing carbon emissions, with a particular focus on international travel. Although 28 members volunteered, time-constraints led to 21 individuals being able to participate in what became four FGDs. More information of the FGDs methodology can be found in [Annex 2](#) and [Annex 3](#).

Findings

All participants agreed on LSTM's responsibility towards a greener profile and on the possibility to improve travel policies. Discussions about feasible approaches revealed concerns about the ability to mediate between the requirements of different roles at different career stages, the logistical and financial constraints of implementing school-wide change, and the returns of such possible investments.

The initiatives outlined below represent a summary of the suggestions that resulted from this mediation and include our learnings as a Travel/Carbon Group. They have been outlined in a table format showing 3 Phases that LSTM could incorporate into their strategic plans going forward.

	Type	Responsible / Lead	Timeline	
PHASE 1 COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION & AWARENESS RAISING	1.1 Sensitisation at department level (including professional services) through a series of presentations:			
	1.1.1 Presentation to share information on the process followed by the Travel/Carbon Group which led to the survey and FGDs to highlight the importance of this exercise.	Travel/Carbon Group		
	1.1.2 Presentation of quarterly breakdowns of CO ₂ emission and carbon usage at department level using data and facts retrieved from Key Travel. This should provide CO ₂ use associated with travel for each Dept. We can then introduce a ranking – maybe noting departments that show biggest annual reduction.	Person nominated by HoD		
	1.2 Raise awareness on CO₂ emissions for staff at LSTM via talks and training:			
	1.2.1 Invite external experts on climate change as speakers to the LSTM Seminars Series	LSTM Comms		
	1.3 Change current practices and procedures:			
	1.3.1 Update the current mandatory justification for travel embedded in the OnTrack Risk assessment to capture the carbon aspect of the trip, so that members of staff complete it before every journey.	Estates/IT	Short-term (1 year)	
	1.3.2 Ask Key Travel to automatically provide data on CO ₂ emissions for every trip booked, we suggest to add the number of trees that would need to be planted to offset a flight on the first page of each booking which is sent to us. It is easier to see impact if expressed as number of trees, for example.	Procurement		
	1.3.3 Introduce travel checklists and simple guidelines/recommendations when organising travels (e.g. choose fewer stopovers, prefer airlines which use fuel-efficient planes).	TBC (perhaps selected project-based Admin & dept secretaries)		
	1.3.4 Update International Travel Policy adding carbon information: increase awareness around different carbon emissions resulting from economy Vs business class flights with a goal to reduce business flights by 50% year on year.	Estates		
	1.4 Work with teams writing research proposals			
	1.4.1 Ensure that provisions for costs to support partners in getting better online connection are added (e.g. including internet dongles and	RMS pre-award		

	<p>infrastructure for in-country partners to support the development of adequate facilities as a capacity strengthening initiative).</p> <p>1.5 Sign up to existing round table networks / groups at other universities to see what other HEIs are doing (e.g. https://businessroundtable.ac/user/register).</p>	KE Manager	
<p>PHASE 2</p> <p>BEHAVIOURAL / CULTURAL CHANGE</p>	<p>2.1 Explore offsetting strategies: e.g., planting trees, tidal farm</p> <p>2.2 Collection of data on LSTM current emissions and report on them regularly (e.g. part of our LSTM Annual Report) <i>*linked to 1.1.2</i></p> <p>2.3 Setting reduction goals/emission targets at LSTM. Set up a system for sharing information and lessons-learnt (also from similar institutions, such as LSHTM) <i>*linked to 1.5</i></p> <p>2.4 Appointment of a dedicated Environmental Officer</p> <p>2.5 Liaise with other institutions on the Liverpool University Campus to advocate for better roads for bicycles.</p> <p>2.6 Introduce a Personal Activity Dashboard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dashboard accessible only to individual staff members, their line managers, and senior managers up the scale— where data on CO₂ emissions are made readily available to the travelling individual. This self-monitoring approach would strengthen awareness while avoiding a generalised approach that might negatively affect the necessities of staff and minimising the risk of shaming and prejudice. 	<p>Estates</p> <p>Procurement</p> <p>Procurement KE Manager</p> <p>Management Committee</p> <p>BUG</p> <p>Procurement IT Strategic Operations</p>	Mid-term (2-3 years)
<p>PHASE 3</p> <p>SUSTAINABILITY</p>	<p>3.1 Green / Environmental Strategy or Policy at school level which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper understanding of all LSTM's emissions, i.e. does not just cover international travel only, but looks at all areas of our business • Move towards a carbon neutral approach • Increase number of staff in-country/capacity strengthening.¹ 	SMG	Long-term (3+ years)

¹ During our survey and FGDs, capacity-strengthening has been identified as one of the key activities to be put in place. This is also a key activity identified in the Paris Agreement (source: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/what-is-the-paris-agreement>).

Conclusions

The staff at LSTM considers the [institution's responsibility towards a greener approach in line with LSTM's mission and values](#), and within its role as a global health institution.

Working across the world, with public and private partners, places [LSTM in the position to lead by example](#), beginning to implement [neutral and low-cost adjustments to its existing policies](#) and [encouraging staff and students](#) to embrace a perspective on the future that can be shared with our collaborators around the globe.

We ask MC to give us feedback on which action points they have agreed to take forward and a clear strategic direction and support.

This report provides an overview of [suggestions that could be implemented at different stages](#) and iteratively updated with [little to no disruptions to the work of LSTM's staff](#), with important rewards if centrally applied. The Travel/Carbon group and the Environmental Working Group remain [open to discuss](#) the best ways to seamlessly [transition towards greener policies](#) in the awareness that climate change is a phenomenon that can no longer be ignored and whose consequences falls under the remit of the school.

Annex 1 | International Air Travel Staff Survey



International Air
Travel Survey_quickr

Annex 2 | Focus Group Discussions

Introduction

The FGDs were conducted between October 19th and 26th on Microsoft Teams, opening with a brief exercise: the participants were presented with overview data of LSTM travel for 2018/19 ('normal' year) and 2019/20 ('reduced travel' year) and asked to use virtual post-it notes to write down their ideas on three main themes—LSTM Responsibility, Risks of Reducing Air Travel, and Possible solutions. The post-it notes were then used as prompts in addition to the FGD thematic guideline (see [Annex 3](#)). The discussions were audio-recorded for accuracy. The data collected during the discussions were triangulated with the survey results, the post-it notes the participants wrote, and with the notes collected by the note-takers.

Jessica Amegee, Chikondi Mwendera, and Federica Guglielmo designed and moderated the FGDs; Katherine Gleave and Martina Savio acted as note-takers.

Ethical considerations

We applied for and received an exemption from the LSTM Research Ethics Committee (protocol 20-076). To promote an inclusive a safe space for discussion, we structured the FGDs to prevent pairing individuals with their line managers and encouraged participants to let us know of any other potential conflict of interest they may have with other colleagues. For reasons of confidentiality, the recordings were made through external devices, to prevent the Microsoft Teams application from saving the recordings on the shared cloud space and making them available to individuals outside the participants. The post-it notes were recorded anonymously.

Key Travel – statistics for LSTM as a whole

Years 2018/2019 ('normal year') and 2019/2020 ('reduced travel year')

	2018/2019	2019/2020
Tickets issued	2429	1246
Miles travelled	14,105,665	6,199,544
Tonnes of CO ₂	3837	1645

2018/2019 miles travelled equates to:

- 59 trips to the moon
- How many trees would we need to plant to offset a year? (based on MLW's calculations)
 - 1 tree absorbs 0.121 tonnes of CO₂ in 20 years
 - LSTM would need to plant 31,710 trees to soak up all the CO₂ from 1 year, but this will take 20 years

Annex 3 | FGD thematic guidelines

Focus group discussion (up to 90 minutes)

We begin with a virtual room exercise. Each group of participants, separately, will have access to a white board in which they could write, list, and score their (1) opinions concerning responsibility/necessity for policy change; (2) suggestions for CO₂ reduction related to international air travel; (3) issues with implementation. We will give them 10-15 minutes to do this and then use their work as a starting point for discussion.

Topics from survey — Staff

- 1) Based on your experience, what considerations do you make when planning air travel?
- 2) How do you think that could be improved?
- 3) Among the propositions made in the survey, online meetings were a popular one. How do you think this could be integrated in the current practices?
 - i) How about quotas? How about having to provide a reason for trips beyond a certain number?
 - ii) How about charging CO₂ emissions on grants/funders? On overheads?
[Beware: the main counterarguments are the need for networking (especially for ERC); the risk of penalising marginalised groups; the fact that by budgeting for CO₂, we are not really curbing the problem.]
- 4) How do you feel about positive initiatives (i.e. initiatives that increase our use of green energy vs reduction of CO₂ footprint), such as solar panels or relying on suppliers of green energy?
 - i) Would this be sufficient?
- 5) How do you feel about different circumstances applying to different branches of LSTM (MLW)?
- 6) Anything else we should consider?

Figure 1. Participants' notes from FGD 1, 19/10/2020 – part 1.



Figure 2. Participants' notes from FGD 1, 19/10/2020 – part 2.



Figure 1. Participants' notes from FGD 2, 26/10/2020.



Figure 2. Participants' notes from FGD 3, 26/10/2020.



Figure 3. Participants' notes from FGD 4, 30/10/2020

