

'We have changing facilities in our building and indoor storage for bikes. There's the Bike to Work Breakfasts and cycle clinics – all very good'.

'Previously I used the car to travel to work, but after taking part in the Pedometer Challenge last year, I now try to walk when possible. This has the added benefit of not needing to find a parking space'.

'Changing from car to train has made a big difference to my commute; while the actual time taken is now longer, I can now work on the train, which makes the commute feel a lot shorter'.

'I love the train; it gives me 20 minutes each way to read and unwind every day'.

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OVERVIEW

The University is firmly committed to minimising the impact of our operations on the environment, with this being formalised in our Net Zero Plan which was adopted in 2023. Commuting to and from our Campus generates a significant amount of carbon and we have ambitious targets to reduce this over the coming years. We also recognise the importance of our staff and students being able to travel to university in a convenient, cost-efficient and healthy way.

Our long-standing commitment to supporting sustainable travel choices is encapsulated in our latest Travel Plan (adopted in 2023, and covering the period to 2028), which details measures we intend to deliver over the coming years and ambitious targets to reduce carbon from commuting.

Every two years we undertake a travel survey with staff and students to see how travel habits have changed, to assess the impact of the Travel Plan over time and to gather feedback on what more we can do to support our staff and students to travel to the university as sustainably as possible. It's also the means by which we assess the carbon impact of commuting and thus complements our broader Strategy 2030.

After a spike in the proportion of staff and students commuting by car alone in 2022, following the COVID-19 pandemic, we are pleased to report that this has started to reduce, but we still have some way to go to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Car alone	2018	2020	2022	2025
Students	1,366	1,391	1,836	2,250
Staff	1,818	1,622	2,564	2,027

Reflecting on the travel survey findings, we have updated our Continual Improvement Plan (CIP), which sets out specific actions, responsibilities and timescales for delivery of future travel planning activities. You'll find it in Appendix 1 at the back of this document.

Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey was delivered online, via a branded landing page and was promoted to staff and students by direct emails, messages on digital displays, use of the university's social media channels, posters and tent cards in common/social spaces across the campus.

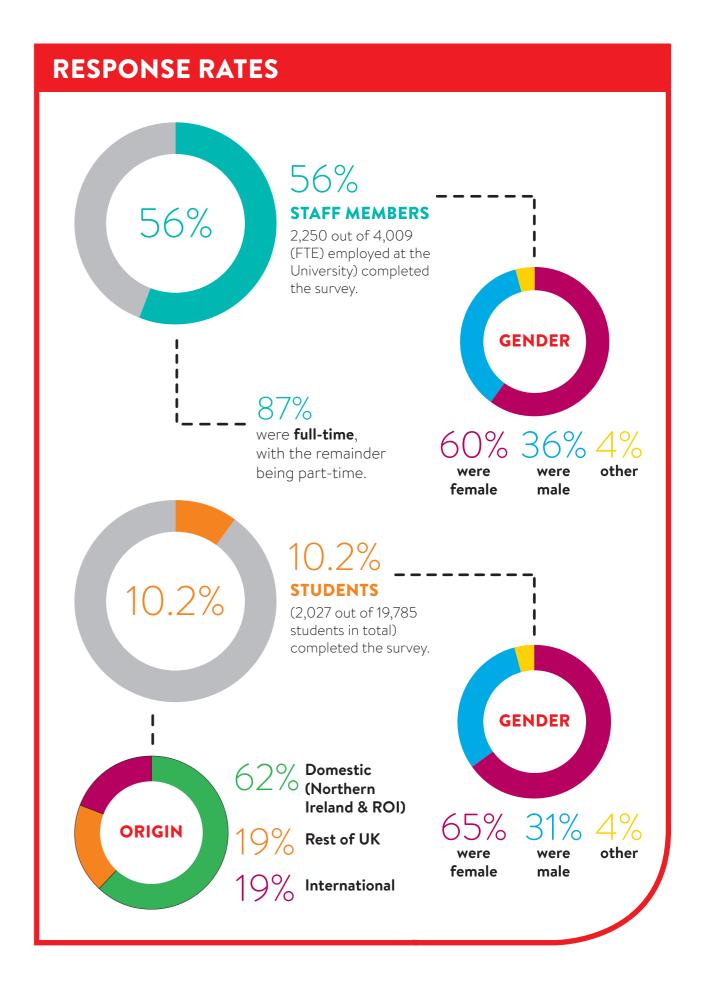
Both surveys were heavily incentivised, with staff having a chance to win an Enterprise Plus First-Class Monthly Return Ticket for Belfast to Dublin, a £40 Restaurant meal voucher for Deanes at Queen's and a £50 voucher from McConveys Cycles. The student survey prize draw included an off-peak gym membership for 3 months at PEC, two pairs of tickets to Queen's comedy show at the Mandela Hall and a £30 voucher from Freedom Cycles (Queen's Bike Hub).

Response Rates

As a result of the extensive promotion and incentives to complete the survey, over 4,000 staff and students took part, ensuring a statistically reliable sample size and providing fantastic insight on travel habits and issues.

Car alone	2018	2020	2022	2025
Students	1,366	1,391	1,836	2,250
Staff	1,818	1,622	2,564	2,027





Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025

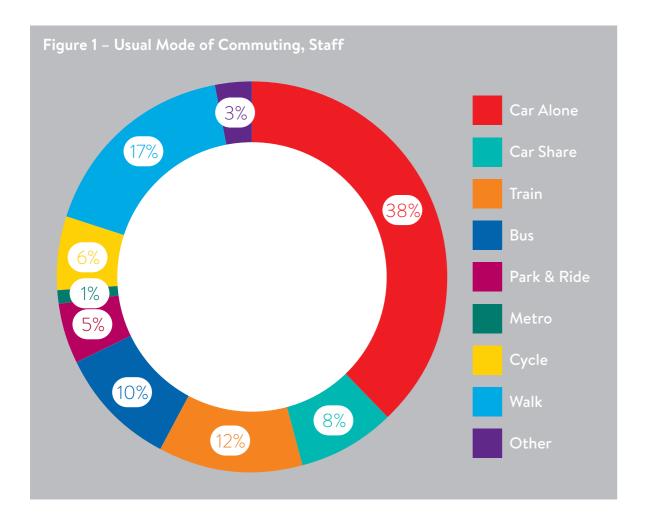
STAFF TRAVEL

The staff survey gave an insight into how travel habits have settled post-pandemic, illustrating the impact of hybrid working and providing a focus for additional measures we might introduce to support staff with their commute to the University.

STAFF TRAVEL SURVEY RESULTS

How Our Staff Travel

Figure 1 shows the usual commuting mode of respondents to the staff survey.



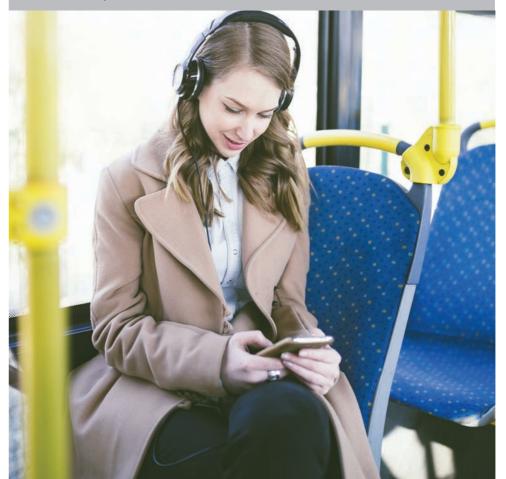


A comparison with previous survey data (Figure 2) suggests that the proportion of staff commuting by car alone had reduced since 2022, which is extremely positive. This has come about as a result of an increase in staff using Park & Ride and Metro and walking to work.

Figure 2 – Trends in Staff Commuting Mode

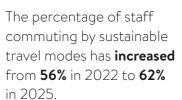
Mode	2018	2020	2022	2025
Car alone	29%	32%	44%	38%
Car share	10%	10%	8%	8%
Train	19%	19%	14%	12%
Bus	12%	14%	13%	10%
Other public transport*	0%	0%	0%	6%
Cycle	9%	7%	6%	6%
Walk	18%	18%	14%	17%
Other	3%	0%	1%	3%

* In 2025 respondents could also select Park & Ride (Metro or train)





SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL





CAR **ALONE**



The percentage of staff that commute by car alone has **reduced** from **44%** in 2022 to **38%** in 2025.



ACTIVE TRAVEL

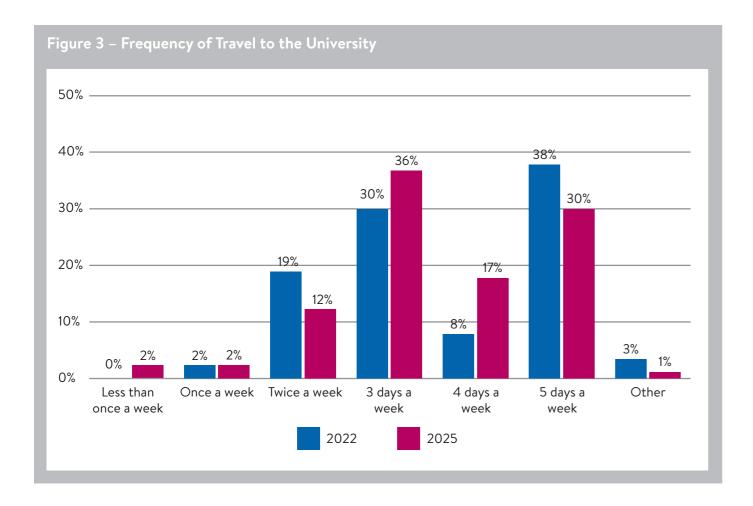


The percentage of staff that walk or cycle to work has increased from 20% in 2022 to **23%** in 2025.

Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025

Frequency of Travel

The university facilitates hybrid working for those in suitable roles. A comparison with the 2022 survey results suggests that fewer staff members are now travelling to the university two or five days a week than was the case previously; conversely, more are travelling three and four days a week (**Figure 3**).



Active Travel

Trends

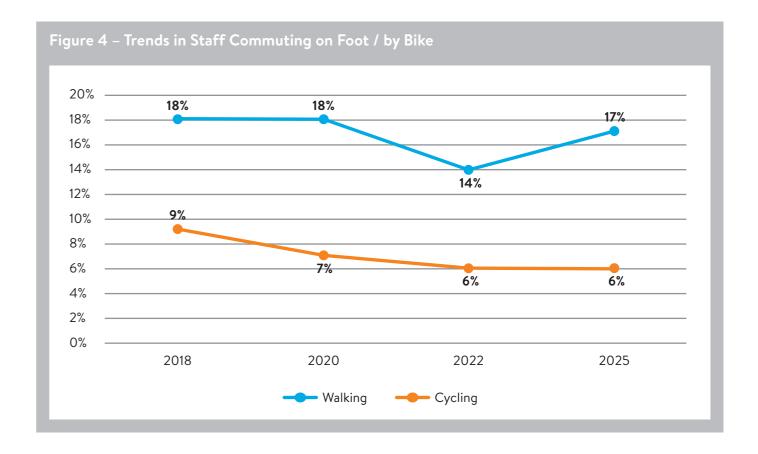
The survey results suggest a notable increase in the proportion of staff that commute to the university on foot, up from 14% in 2022 to 17% in 2025.

Extrapolating the survey data would suggest around 120 additional staff members now choose to walk to work, compared with 2022.

Cycling levels have remained consistent, with 6% of staff commuting by bike.

AROUND 120 MORE STAFF MEMBERS WALK TO WORK IN 2025, AS COMPARED WITH 2022.

30% OF MEN COMMUTE BY ACTIVE MODES, COMPARED WITH 18% OF WOMEN.



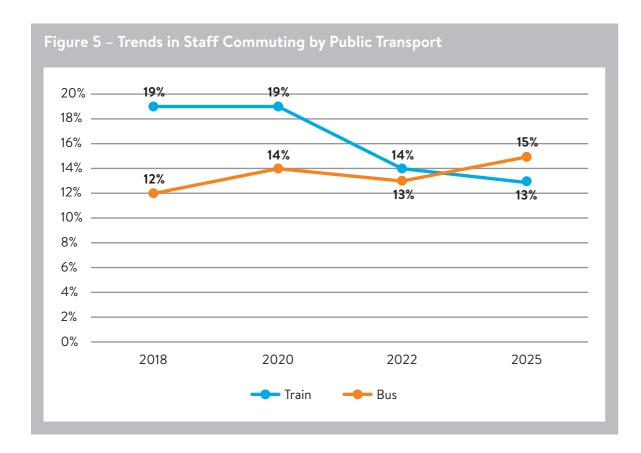
'I enjoy walking around campus/Botanic Gardens on my lunch, I would also consider walking to work from home in the summer, it is great for fitness and my mental health.'



Public Transport

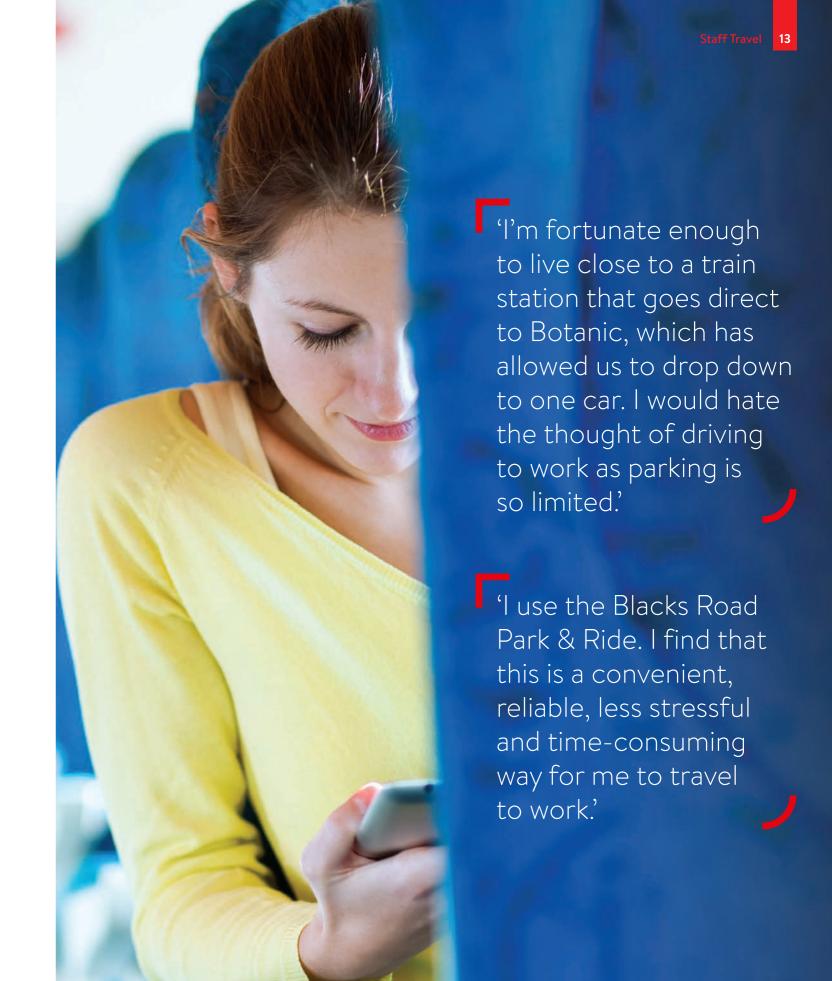
Trends

There has been a slight increase in public transport use, up from 27% to 28%. For the first time in 2025 we captured data from those people who use park and ride (or park at a train station); which more accurately reflecting total travel patterns.



THERE HAS BEEN AN OVERALL INCREASE IN STAFF COMMUTING BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT SINCE 2022.

FEMALE STAFF MEMBERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO COMMUTE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, THAN THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS.

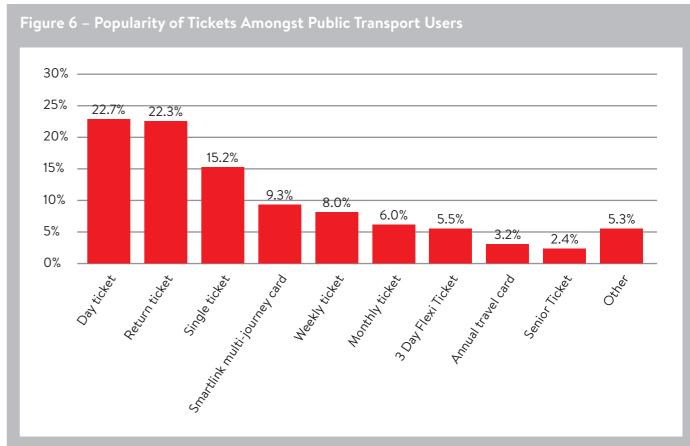




Ticketing

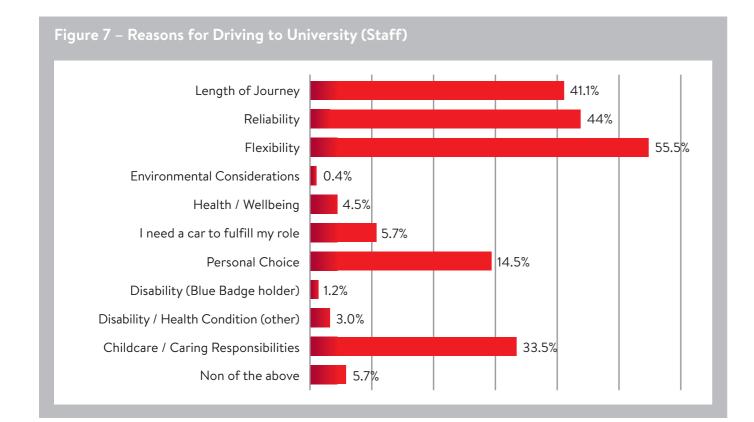
The pandemic has had a notable impact on the types of tickets purchased by staff members that commute by public transport (Figure 6). Monthly and annual tickets were purchased by nearly half of staff travelling to work by public transport in 2022, compared with just 9% in 2025.

Conversely, single, return and day tickets have become much more popular, collectively accounting for 60%of staff members. This results from many staff members now having hybrid working arrangements, which mean season tickets are no longer the most cost-effective option.



Car Users

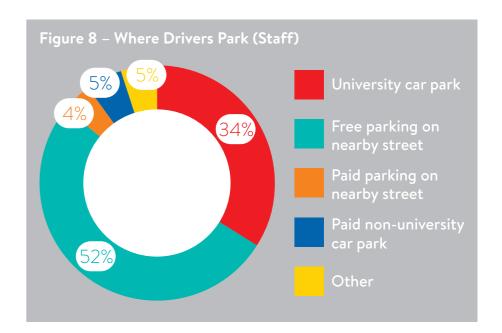
For some staff members, travelling by car is the only realistic option for their commute. It is important to recognise the reasons for this and to identify ways in which we can continue to support this group.



10% OF STAFF
CURRENTLY DRIVE
AN ELECTRIC OR
HYBRID VEHICLE TO
WORK; 23% OF THOSE
THAT DON'T ALREADY
DO SO INTEND TO
SWITCH IN THE NEXT
FIVE YEARS.

Encouragingly, **58%** of those that currently drive to work alone would consider car sharing, given the right incentives.

Over half of car drivers park on streets around the university, for free. Around a third park on campus (**Figure 8**). This is a key challenege for the University in it's efforts to reduce carbon due to the lack of control over the local parking options.



'I drive part of the way and then walk for 20minutes. Parking is difficult around work, so driving and walking works for me.'

'I am so pleased that Queen's have an electric charging point for use if required as I drive an electric car.'



18 Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025 Staff Travel

47% OF STAFF MEMBERS SOMETIMES USE

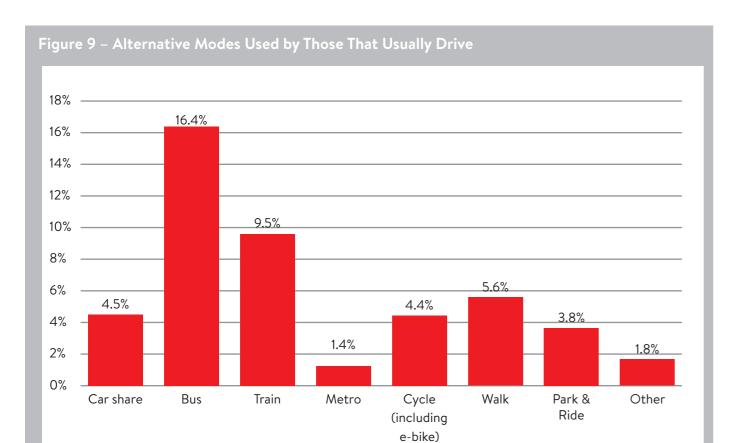
AN ALTERNATIVE

THEIR COMMUTE.

TRAVEL MODE FOR

Alternative Modes

Amongst those that usually drive alone, the most popular alternative is bus, followed by train (Figure 9). Encouraging these behaviours more often can have a significant impact on overall mode share and bring about sizable carbon savings.



WHAT CHALLENGES DO WE FACE?

We wanted to better understand any barriers to staff members travelling by sustainable transport options.

Staff members that walk raised concerns over personal safety, commonly requesting improved lighting and security presence on campus and on key routes to it.

For those that cycle, the lack of formal, cohesive cycle routes to/from the university was repeatedly raised. Bike security on campus was also a concern.

Amongst public transport users, feedback centred on lack of direct services to the uUniversity (and the resultant impact on journey time) and the cost of tickets, as compared with driving. Service reliability, delays and cancellations were also frequently raised as an issue.

Car users overwhelmingly raised car parking as an issue, with one of the most common responses highlighting how the current system is inequitable and requires an overhaul. Caring responsibilities were also highlighted as an issue.

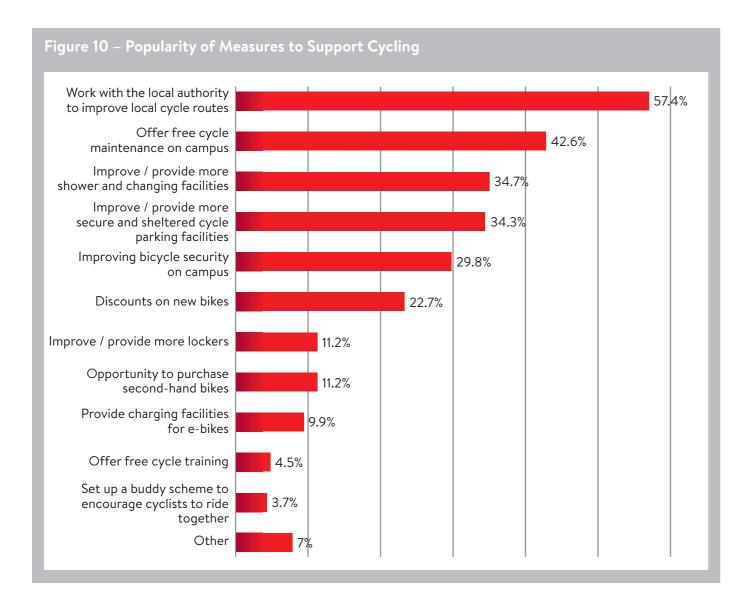
'I'd love to cycle. The only reason I don't is because the lack of cycle paths in Belfast makes it absolutely terrifying to take a bike anywhere near the roads, even though it would take me all of 10 minutes to get to work.'

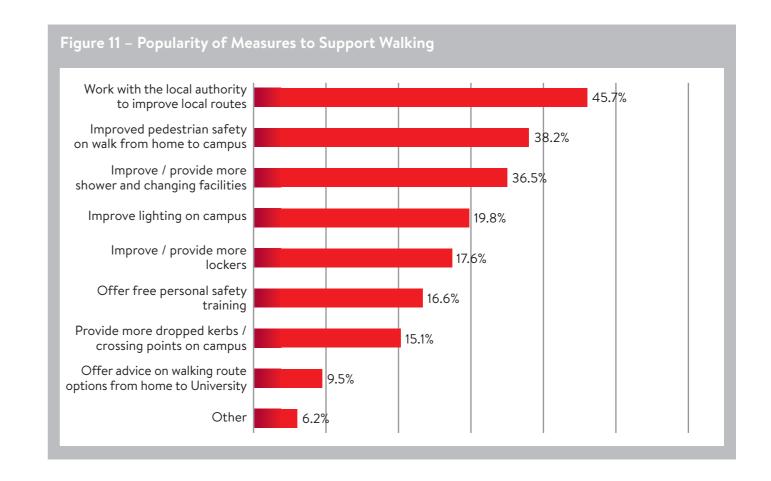
'I would prefer to take public transport, but it is very costly and less reliable compared to driving.' 20 Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025 Staff Travel

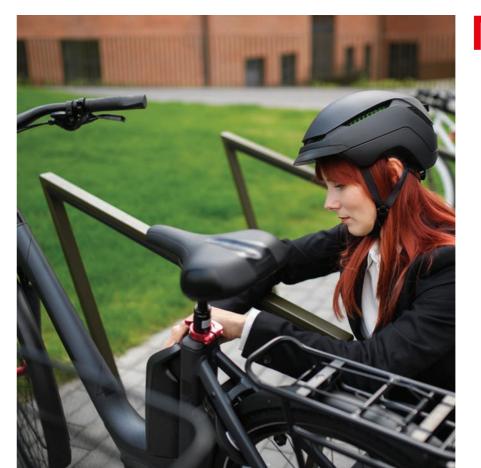
WHAT MORE CAN WE DO?

For Active Travellers

The survey asked respondents to confirm the measures they would most like to see delivered to support them with their commute by bike or on foot (Figure 10 and 11). The feedback is useful in ensuring we target resources where they are likely to have greatest impact.



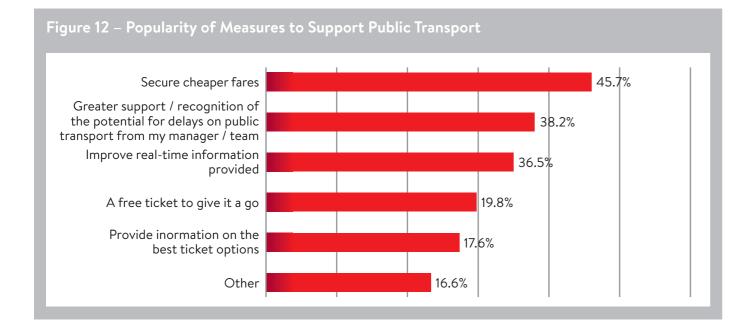




'The support from Queen's has helped me move from relying on my car to travelling by a bike.'

For Public Transport Users

We also sought to determine the popularity of measures to encourage public transport use, helping us to prioritise the actions we take in this area (**Figure 12**).







STUDENT TRAVEL

The survey gave us an understanding of the travel patterns of our current students; we've been able to compare the data with previous survey results, in order to understand trends over time. The results are also useful in aiding our understanding of what more we might do to support our students travelling to campus.

Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025
Student Travel

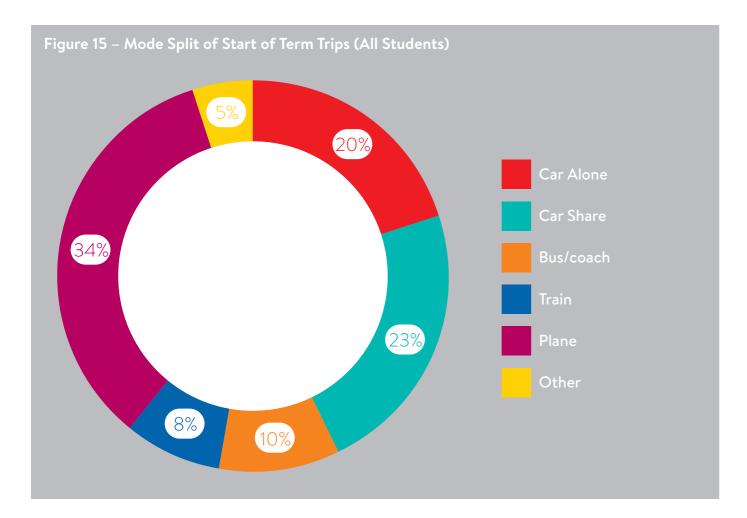
STUDENT TRAVEL SURVEY RESULTS

How Our Students Travel

At the Start of Term

Whilst the focus of out Travel Plan is on term-time commuting trips, it is important to also recognise the environmental impact of other student trips, particularly those at the start and end of the academic terms / year.

Figure 15 summarises the mode split of these trips for all students. The data suggests that student's from Northern Ireland are much more likely to travel by car to Belfast at the start of term (37%), as compared with all students (20%).

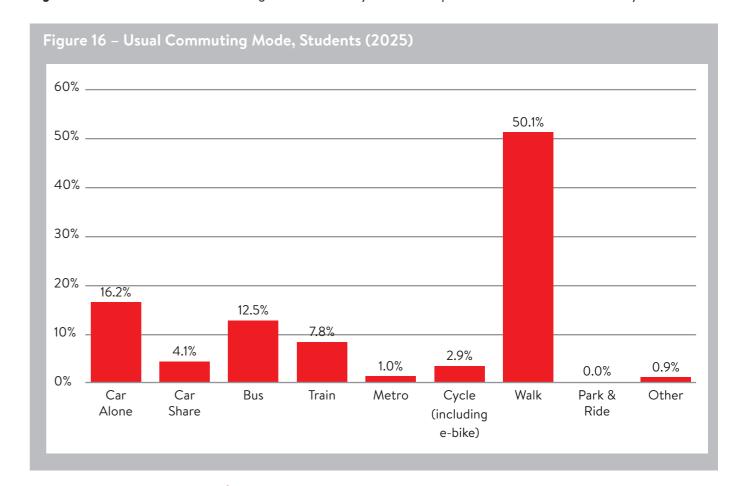


38%

OF STUDENTS THAT LIVE AT A DIFFERENT ADDRESS OUT OF TERM TIME, TRAVEL TO/FROM THAT ADDRESS EVERY WEEK DURING TERM TIME.

During Term Time

Figure 16 shows the usual commuting mode on a daily basis of respondents to the student survey.





28 Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025 Student Travel

Figure 17 – Trends in Usual Commuting Mode

Mode	2018	2020	2022	2025
Car alone	13%	12%	17%	16%
Car share	6%	5%	3%	4%
Train	13%	12%	14%	8%
Bus	12%	13%	14%	13%
Park & Ride	0%	0%	0%	5%
Metro	0%	0%	0%	1%
Cycle	4%	3%	3%	3%
Walk	52%	55%	48%	50%
Other	0%	0%	1%	0%

62%



SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The percentage of students commuting by sustainable travel has **increased** from **83%** in 2022 to **84%** in 2025.

38%



CAR ALONE

The percentage of students that commute by car alone has **reduced** from **17%** in 2022 to **16%** in 2025.

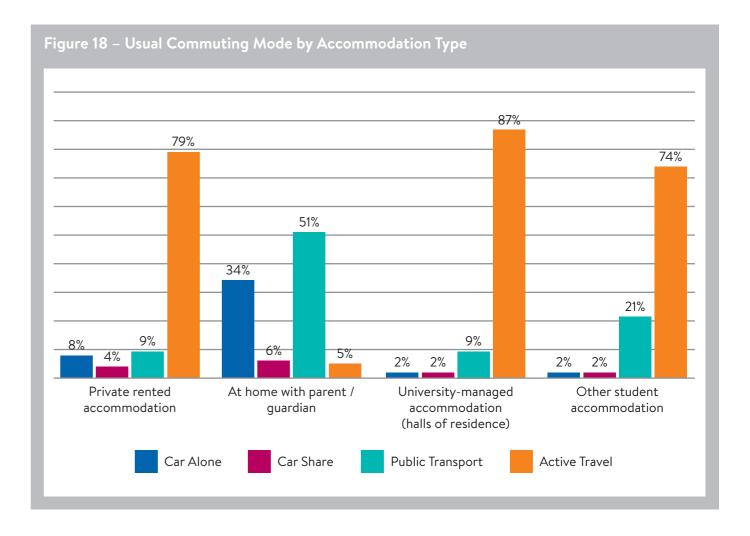
23%



ACTIVE TRAVEL

The percentage of students that walk or cycle to work has **increased** from **51%** in 2022 to **53%** in 2025.

Where students live during term time has the biggest impact on choice of commuting mode (**Figure 18**). Student car drivers tend to be those that live at a family or parental home during term time.



34%

OF STUDENTS THAT LIVE IN A FAMILY OR PARENTAL HOME DURING TERM TIME COMMUTE BY CAR ALONE, COMPARED WITH JUST 2% OF STUDENTS THAT LIVE IN UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION.

Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025
Student Travel

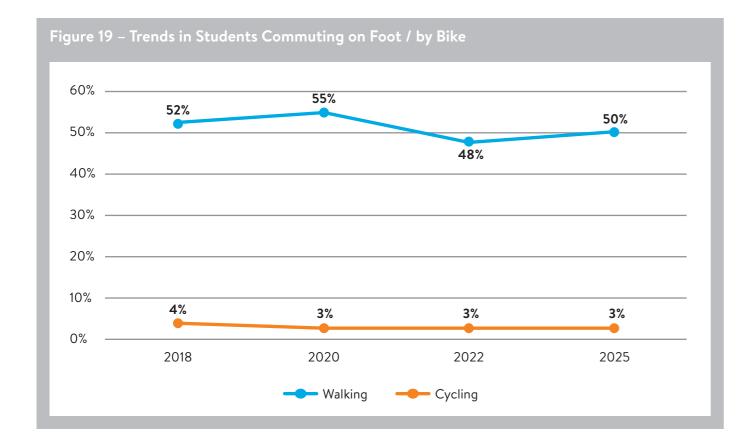
Active Travel

Levels of commuting by bike amongst students has remained consistent in recent years, at around 3%.

Having fallen from a high of 55% in 2020 to 48% in 2022, the portion of students commuting on foot has increased in 2025, to 50%.

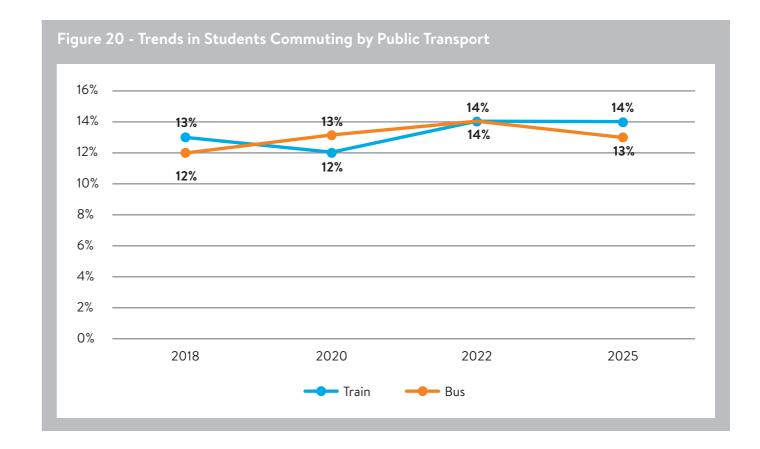
Extrapolating the survey results, it is estimated that some 400 more students walk to University in 2025, than in 2022.

400 MORE STUDENTS NOW COMMUTE TO THE UNIVERSITY BY WALKING, AS COMPARED WITH 2022.



Public Transport

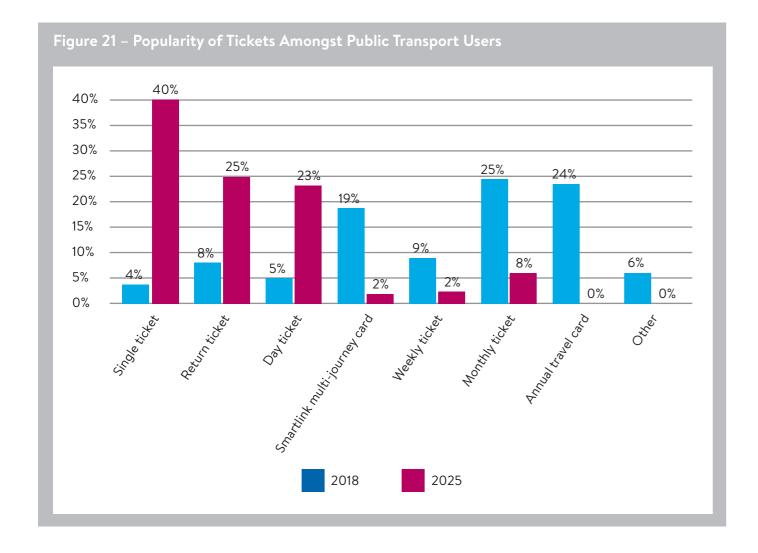
Overall, the proportion of students that commute by public transport has reduced marginally, from 28% in 2022 to 27% in 2025.





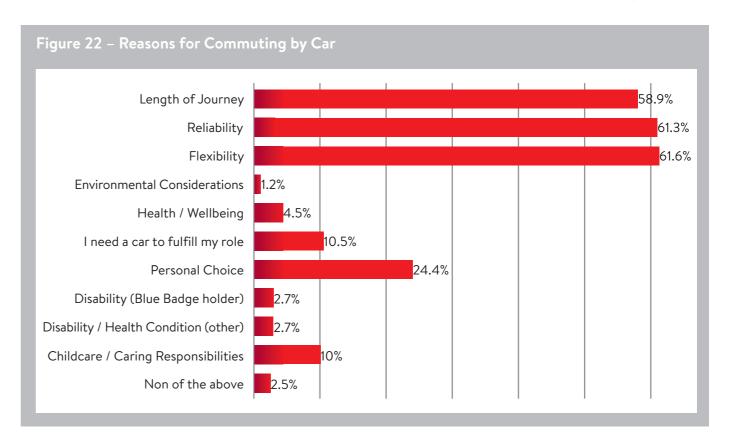
5% OF STUDENTS NOW COMMUTE BY PARK & RIDE TO UNIVERSITY. Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025 Student Travel

The survey results confirm the popularity of specific public transport ticket types amongst current students and compares this with data from 2018 (pre-pandemic). Figure 21 shows how ticket purchasing habits have changed in recent years; in 2018 just 17% of student public transport users were choosing single, return or day tickets. In 2025 this has increased to 88%.



Car Users

Focusing on those students that travel to University by car, Figure 22 confirms the reasons for mode choice. Flexibility and reliability were the most popular reasons for driving to campus, followed by length of journey.



Car Parking

FThe survey sought to confirm where students park when travelling to campus. Fifty-seven percent park onstreet for free in the local area; this compares with over three quarters in 2018 (prior to pay and display charges being introduced on some local streets).

As with staff, students commonly raised the lack of parking on and around campus as an issue. Many suggested that they simply don't have a viable public transport option as an alternative to driving.

OF STUDENTS WHO SUGGESTED THEY DRIVE TO UNIVERSITY BECAUSE OF THE LENGTH OF THEIR JOURNEY LIVE WITHIN 10KM OF CAMPUS.



What Challenges Do We Face? 35

WHAT CHALLENGES DO WE FACE?

We wanted to understand what barriers to sustainable transport options students encounter.

Students that walk raised concerns over personal safety and lack of crossings on key routes to campus.

For those that cycle the lack of formal, cohesive cycle routes to/ from the university was repeatedly raised, with many suggesting they don't feel safe cycling in Belfast. Lack of end-of-journey facilities for students was also a concern.

Amongst public transport users feedback repeatedly mentioned lack of direct services to the university (and availability of public transport more generally, for those living in rural areas / further afield). The cost of tickets was also a focus, with many mentioning the age restrictions for the YLink card.

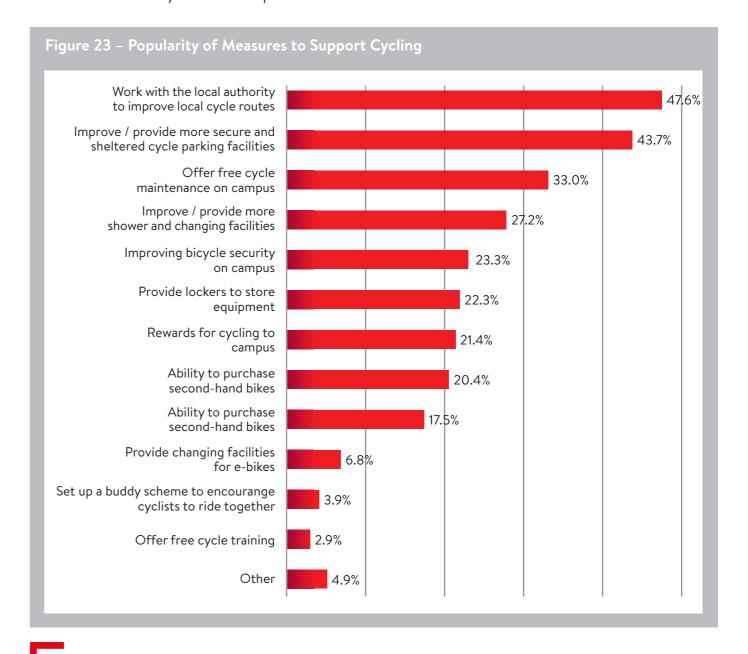
Car users reiterated the comments from staff regarding the lack of available car parking, with many suggesting they need to arrive early to find a space.

"I would like to use public transport to get to campus, however, I live rurally and there are very limited options for me."

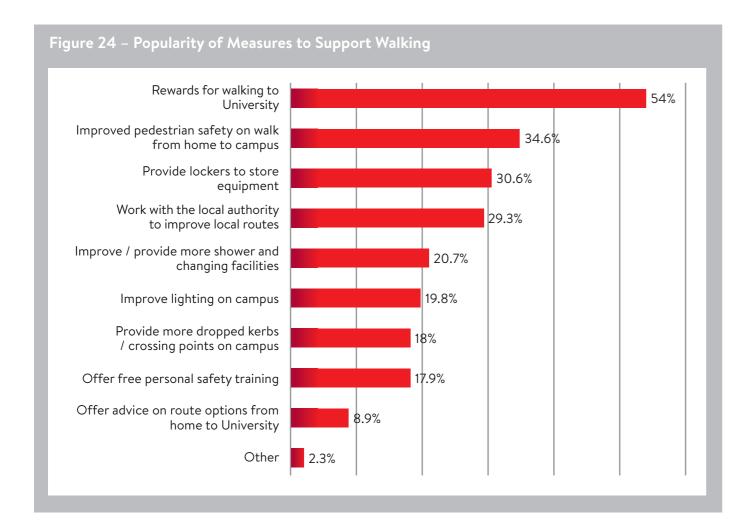
WHAT MORE CAN WE DO?

For Active Travellers

The survey asked respondents to confirm the measures they would most like to see delivered to support them with their commute by bike or on foot (Figure 23 and 24). The feedback is useful in ensuring we prioritise initiatives that are likely to be most impactful.



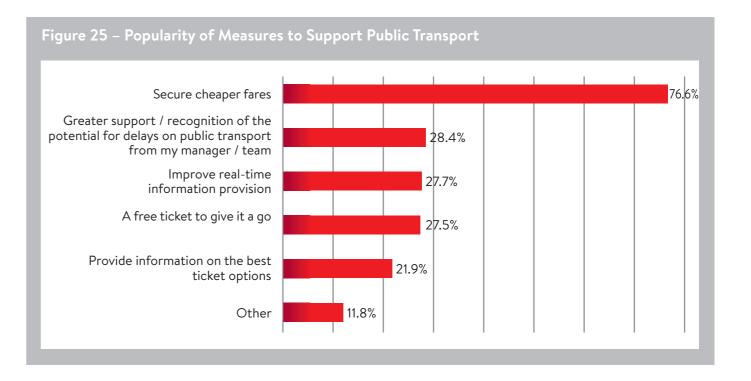
'I love cycling to university. It is far quicker than driving in peak traffic times.'



'I love to walk to the university, especially on a sunny day.'

For Public Transport Users

We also wanted to understand the popularity of measures to encourage public transport use, allowing us to prioritise our efforts to increase the proportion of students commuting by bus and train (Figure 25).



'The combination of driving to Cairnshill P&R then taking the bus from there is a convenient way to travel to and from Queen's.'

'The train is the most convenient option for me as it is always difficult to find parking close to campus.'

PROGRESS TOWARDS **OUR TARGETS** & OBJECTIVES

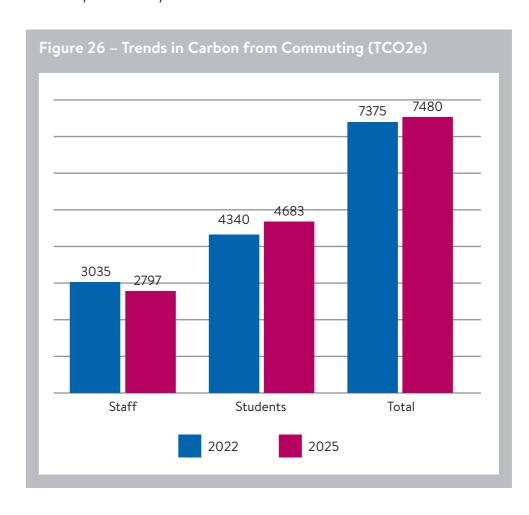
THE KEY MEASURE OF THE SUCCESS OF OUR TRAVEL PLAN IS PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR STRETCHING TARGETS.

Our Targets

Staff and students commuting accounts for 8% of total emissions generated by the University. The purpose of our Travel Plan is to reduce the impact of University-related traffic on the environment and local community by encouraging staff, students and visitors to travel by sustainable travel modes.

The current iteration of our Travel Plan sets a target to reduce carbon emissions from commuting for the first time. We are targeting a reduction in carbon emissions of 25% by 2028 (from a 2023 baseline).

The good news is that carbon from staff commuting has fallen by 8% since 2022. Conversely, carbon from students commuting has increased 8%, meaning a modest overall increase in total commuting-related carbon emissions (~1%). The increase in carbon from student day to day travel is directly related to increases in the avergae distance travelled, with more students living at their permenant home all year around and commuting in to campus on a daily basis.



THE AVERAGE STAFF MEMBER GENERATES 534KG PER YEAR FROM COMMUTING TO **UNIVERSITY IN 2025, COMPARED WITH 757KG PER YEAR IN 2022.**



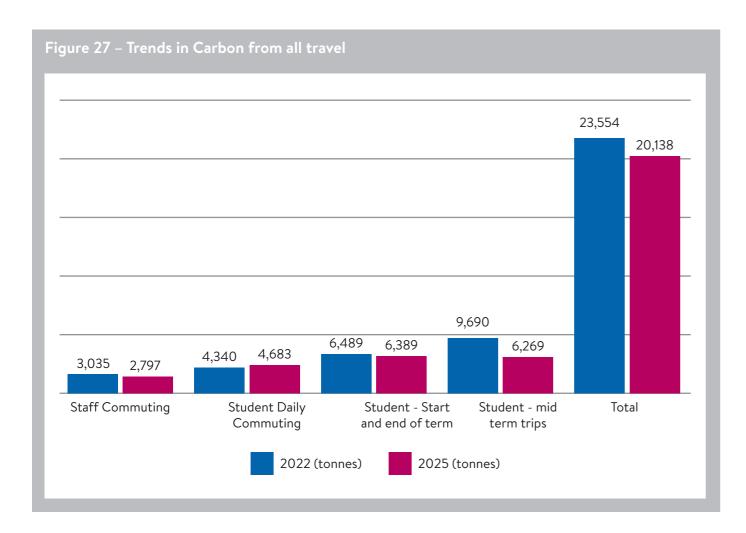
THE 16% OF STUDENTS THAT **COMMUTE BY** CAR, GENERATE

OF ALL STUDENT COMMUTING **EMISSIONS.**

THE 38% OF STAFF THAT **COMMUTE BY** CAR, GENERATE

COMMUTING **EMISSIONS.**

Day to day commuting is only part of the story when it comes to carbon from travel; given Queen's location we also generate a lot of travel related carbon from trips by students to their permanent/family home. Whilst, as would be expected, the start and end of term trips have remained consistent, we've seen a significant drop in trips home during term (a key aim of our Travel Plan) which results in an overall reduction in carbon from travel.



OVERALL CARBON FROM TRAVEL IS **DOWN BY 3,416** TONNES CO2E -THATS A

14.5% **DECREASE**

MOVING FORWARDS

The findings of the survey have been used to inform our future activities; progress towards specific actions set out in our Travel Plan and initiatives to be delivered over the next 12 months reported in our Continual Improvement Plan (CIP).



Staff and Student Travel Survey 2025

Continual Improvement Programme

APPENDIX 1

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The following tables outline the range of measures which will be delivered over the travel plan period.

Each measure is classified against our key priority areas -

- PA1 Measures where the University can be proactive to support sustainable travel choices
- PA2 Policy and/or procedure changes to reduce travel (business or commuting) by unsustainable modes of transport
- PA3 Measures where the University can be reactive to the concerns of staff and students and lobby key external stakeholders for improvements.

Some of the measures are ongoing, some are going to be strengthened and others are new commitments for this travel plan period; illustrating the University's ongoing commitment to sustainable travel and reducing the carbon impact of travel.

Area	Priority Level	Initiative	Detail	Priority / Status
Active Travel	PA1	Ongoing Promotional Campaigns	To encourage and support travel by active modes of travel (walking and cycling) across the Travel Plan period.	High / Ongoing
	PA1	On Campus Facilities and Enhancements	Ongoing programme to review and where appropriate provide additional cycle rack and secure storage facilities.	High / Ongoing
	PA2	Financial Support	Ongoing delivery and promotion of Cycle to Work Initiative to encourage and support staff.	High / Ongoing
	PA1	Information Provision	Update local and city-wide cycle maps, campus guides and promotion of key online information sources.	High / Ongoing
	PA1	Maintenance and Support -	Work with a local provider to increase access to e-bikes, maintenance, support and low cost bikes for all.	Medium / 2026
	PA1 and PA2	Training	Delivery of 1-2-1 (bike buddy scheme) and group training opportunities to increase confidence in cycling as a practical mode of transport for the regular commute.	High / Ongoing
	PA3	External Lobbying	An audit of the local highway network highlighted concerns regarding accessibility by cycle. The Travel Plan Coordinator will work with localstakeholders to lobby for improvements and provide data on local travel needs/patterns.	High / 2026
Public Transport	PA3	External Lobbying and Stakeholder Engagement	Working with Translink to highlight opportunities to encourage public transport use.	High / Ongoing
	PA1	Ongoing Promotional Campaigns and Events	Work with Translink to promote travel opportunities and ticket options.	High / Ongoing
Sustainable Car Use	PA1	Promotion of Car Sharing	Promote the benefits of car sharing and illustrate the existing opportunities to create additional matches.	Medium / Ongoing
	PA2	Car Park Management	Continued delivery of car park management policy to support the aims of the travel plan programme including generating revenue for sustainable travel initiatives.	High / Ongoing

44 Continual Improvement Programme 45

Area	Priority Level	Initiative	Detail	Priority / Status
EV and Emerging Technologies	PA1 and PA2	Support for Electric Car Use	Develop a strategy to support EV charging on campus in a sustainable and equitable way. This will include -	Low / 2027
			 An assessment of existing and future demand and the development of an EV charging strategy; 	
			 Consideration of business models to deliver additional charging infrastructure; 	
			 EV charging provision to support any plans to convert University fleet vehicles to EV power. 	
			 User policy and consideration of reasonable charges to use EV points on campus. 	
	PA2	Accommodating micro mobility	 Consider provision of charging facilities for e-bikes; 	Low / Ongoing
		travel options	 Consider extending the financial limit on the Cycle to Work Initiative to support the purchase of e-bikes. 	
Information and Engagement	PA1	Information and Support	Relaunch travel plan programme with bespoke materials, online information and mode specific guides to campus	High / Ongoing
	PA1	Information and Support	Develop a proactive journey planning tool for students prior to arrival at University - highlighting the options to get to Belfast by sustainable modes of transport and encouraging students wherever possible to avoid flying and driving for mid-term trips home.	High / Ongoing
	PA1 and PA2	Engagement and Cooperation	Bike and PT User Groups - Delivering ongoing consultation events with the cycling and PT commuting community to identify local 'champions' and further improve communications.	Low / Ongoing
	PA3	Engagement and Cooperation	Work with key internal and external stakeholders to encourage and support students to remain in Belfast (as much as possible) through the academic year.	High / Ongoing

Area	Priority Level	Initiative	Detail	Priority / Status
Business Travel	PA2	Business Travel Policy	Consulting on and developing a new business travel policy which will focus on reducing business travel impact and setting targets for business related emissions in line with the Net Zero Plan.	High / COMPLETED
	PA1 and PA2	Collecting Data	Work with travel partners and key stakeholders to capture pre-trip carbon impact and post-trip data on carbon emissions.	High / COMPLETED
	PA1	Awareness Raising	Highlighting the environmental impacts of business travel and encourage staff to consider how to travel/whether a journey is necessary, particularly in respect of international/air travel.	High / Ongoing
Monitoring Progress	PA2	Biennial Surveying	We will complete a full travel survey of staff and students in 2024, 2026 and 2028 to assess progress against carbon reduction and mode share targets.	High / Ongoing
	PA2	Business Travel Monitoring	As part of the development of the Business Travel Policy we will undertake annual assessment of business travel bookings to monitor carbon emissions.	High / Ongoing



Why not take advantage of some of the great initiatives we have in place for our staff and students. Whether you already walk, cycle, use public transport or car share or are considering giving it a try, we have a whole range of measures in place to assist you.

So, why not take a look and see whether you could make your journey to Queen's more cost effective, convenient or environmentally friendly.

For more information on any of the initiatives visit: www.qub.ac.uk/sustainabletravel

Or contact: transport@qub.ac.uk



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