

Great Western Hospital, Swindon

The Great Western Hospital is located south-east of Swindon town centre and is within the jurisdiction of Swindon Borough Council.

The hospital opened in 2002 and had to implement stringent measures to repress car travel to the site from the outset.

In 2020, the trust updated their Travel Plan (TP) in relation to a planning application for a total of three modular buildings and the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) within Great Western Hospital. In addition to the planning application, the hospital launched a first board-approved Green Plan for 2021-2024, which outlines the actions and initiatives the hospital aims to deliver to address the sustainability and net zero targets.

The aims of the travel plan are in line with Central Government Policies and Guidance, and are to:

- Reduce the need to travel;
- Discourage the use of unsustainable modes of transport and enable users of the site to make travel choices that benefit themselves and their community;
- Maximise social inclusion by making the site accessible to all members of the community; and
- Raise awareness of alternative modes of transport and thus encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable travel modes.

The Objectives of the travel plan are to;

- Show its commitment to addressing the access needs of staff;
- Support the Government's environmental and sustainable development initiatives;
- Remain in harmony with, and responsive to, changes to planning and fiscal policies regarding transport;
- Ensure that a formal monitoring process is in place; and
- Maximise the efficiency of the transport and property resources.

Infrastructure

The hospital has a secure cycle compound, with covered and locked cycle parking for 100 bikes, and an integrated changing room with showers and lockers. Outside the main entrance are a further 74 covered Sheffield stands for visitors. CCTV covers all cycle parking.

From the hospital, it is possible to cycle to Swindon Town Centre in approximately 20 minutes on traffic free paths. The hospital benefits from traffic-free and on-road cycle routes providing links to the north, south and west (town centre).



For those walking to the site, good quality, street lit footways are present on the southern sides of Marlborough Road measuring between 1.0 and 1.5m along the front of the site. Signalised pedestrian crossings are integrated into the site access junction with Marlborough Road to the north of the site. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving are present at junctions in the vicinity of the site, facilitating movement for mobility impaired pedestrians. Good footways are also present throughout the hospital and all crossing benefit from dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

Bus stops are located directly outside the front entrance to the hospital, with real time information boards providing passengers with up to date information. In addition, bus timetables are available at reception for both staff and visitors.

Policies

The hospital travel plan embeds policies that both restrict parking to staff based on need, and enable sustainable travel choices. Some of the ways they have achieved this include:

- Implementing a “Green Travel Zone”, meaning that employees living inside the zone are not eligible to apply for a parking permit (with some exemptions).
- Charging for car parking and using the money collected from parking charges to maintain and make improvements to the car parks. Maintenance includes lighting, signage, security and staffing, with recent improvements including additional spaces for disabled visitors, and the introduction of the pay-on-exit barrier system.
- Encouraging car sharing, with free barrier passes for registered car share groups
- Offering employees the option to purchase a bike through the cycle to work scheme, but additionally allowing staff that take the option to apply for 10 days of free car parking to allow for days when they are unable to cycle to work.
- Offering a Travelpass scheme for annual bus passes and rail season tickets, allowing employees to spread the (reduced) cost over the year and having payments taken from salary
- Having bookable pool cars on site for business journeys
- Flexible agile working, and home working policies updated in light of the pandemic

The hospital continues their efforts to think of new ways to encourage staff and visitors to walk, cycle and get public transport to the site. Additionally, the green plan contains the following pledges:

- 90% of the NHS fleet to use ultra-low and zero emission vehicles by 2028. ▪
- Ensure all vehicles purchased or leased are ultra-low emission (ULEV) or zero emission vehicles (ZEV's) including vans under 3.5 tonnes.
- Salary sacrifice scheme for vehicles only allows for ULEVs or ZEVs.
- Maximise efficiencies in the transport of goods and services commissioned by the organisation, such as patient transport, courier services and deliveries.
- Continue to monitor air quality and maintain no-idling signs and participate in the cleaner air hospitals framework.
- Maintain a cycle-to-work lead.

Modeshift STARS accreditation

The hospital used Modeshift STARS to compile and deliver their travel plan, and achieved the green “Approved” accreditation status straight away. Just a year later, the silver level (“very good travel plan”) was achieved, which makes the hospital the first organisation in Swindon to reach this level.



Rupert Turk, Director of Estates & Facilities says, *“At Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust we are delighted to be the first business in Swindon to achieve this Silver level national accreditation. Travel planning was core to the operations when the hospital first opened and remains so today.”*