

Equality Impact Assessment

Business Travel Policy

October 2025

1. Executive Summary

Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to assess the equality impact of the new Business Travel Policy. This report provides the background to the policy, a summary of its potential impacts and outlines amendments to the policy to mitigate the negative impacts that have been identified.

It is ESS' legal duty under the [public sector equality duty](#) to consider how the organisation promotes equality through its policies. Alongside this legal duty, ESS also seeks to actively advance equality more generally across our work. This EQIA evaluates the positive and negative impacts of the policy on individuals with protected characteristics (equality groups) as defined in the [Equality Act 2010](#).

ESS has also voluntarily chosen to consider the [Fairer Scotland Duty](#) in its work. ESS does this by integrating considerations of socio-economic disadvantage into its EQIA process.

The EQIA process is instrumental in ensuring that policies do not result in discrimination or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics. Additionally, EQIAs can assist in advancing equality of opportunity and help foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having completed the EQIA process, ESS is satisfied that no unlawful discrimination will arise from the implementation of this policy.

2. Summary of the policy

This is a new, internal policy. The Business Travel Policy ties into our [Sustainability Plan](#), where we have committed to meeting net zero by 2045. Travel related emissions were estimated to be over half of our overall emissions in 2023/24.

Two of the objectives of the Sustainability Plan were to encourage staff to use greener modes of transport when commuting to and from the office, for business meetings and in their daily life. Additionally, to explore avenues to assist staff in making sustainable choices when travelling from work.

The Business Travel Policy looks at business travel (journeys an employee makes in the performance of their duties which is outside of their regular commute) and provides a procedure for staff to use more sustainable methods of transport. It is also closely tied to the organisation's Travel and Subsistence Policy.

3. What is the aim of the policy?

- encourage and assist staff members to use more sustainable modes of transport when undertaking business travel
- reduce ESS' emissions related to travel and contribute to our 2045 net zero target

- to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff members

4. Who is delivering the policy

The policy was written by the Corporate Services and Communications Team.

The responsibility of following the policy lies with all ESS staff members who are booking business travel and line managers who are responsible for approving travel.

5. Who may be impacted by the policy?

The policy will affect ESS staff members.

6. Evidence

6.1 Summary of evidence gathered

To support the framing discussion and during further research we used a range of sources to inform our analysis. For example, we referred to data from public bodies and charities.

We identified that there was a data gap for marriage and civil partnership that we were unable to fill.

We consider that the evidence we have used is robust and reliable, given it is from reputable sources and is from within the last 15 years. Most of the evidence is from the last five years.

6.2 Summary of engagement

An initial framing exercise was undertaken by six ESS team members from the Corporate Services and Communications department.

Following the framing exercise, discussions took place with several staff members with a range of protected characteristics.

Further discussions then took place with a Board member and a member of staff from another department who have both undertaken business travel.

7. Impacts

7.1 Summary of impacts identified

The framing exercise identified that there were opportunities for positive impact across most equality groups, except for marriage and civil partnership (where a data gap was identified).

These potential positive impacts relate to the inclusion of information related to:

promotion of the employee passport; addition of a statement highlighting the policies flexibility and focus on safety and wellbeing; and highlighting services available to ESS staff such as adaptable bikes on the cycle to work scheme.

The EQIA found no impact on socio-economic disadvantage since business travel costs are covered by the travel and subsistence policy. The ability to book travel through corporate travel management and ePC cards means that staff members are not required to wait for expenses claims to be processed.

From the initial framing exercise and the subsequent evidence gathered it was concluded that the policy could potentially have negative impacts on staff members with the protected characteristics of: age; disability; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; race; and religion or belief.

These negative impacts primarily relate to sustainable transport often being less accessible for those with a disability, of an older age, or who are pregnant. Additionally,

the EQIA highlighted safety concerns could arise from travelling by public transport across many of the equality groups.

7.2 Summary of actions taken

The EQIA recommended several amendments to the policy:

Updated wording:

- statement at start of policy underlining that wellbeing and the safety of staff is the main priority
- section explaining that the policy is flexible and barriers are recognised
- statement on concerns around travel arrangements being discussed with line managers
- link to staff passport added to policy

Information on sustainable transport options:

- cycle maps added to policy
- information on cycle to work scheme and adaptable bikes added
- bus and train tickets can be purchased by other suppliers aside from CTM
- travel can be booked outside of core hours with managers approval

Updates to related policies:

- Travel and Subsistence Policy linked to Business Travel Policy

- travel approval form created
- Guidance for Accessible Meetings updated to state all meetings should have a hybrid option

These have now all been actioned.

7.3 Legal implications

Having completed the EQIA process, ESS is satisfied that no unlawful discrimination will arise from the implementation of this policy.

7.4 Review

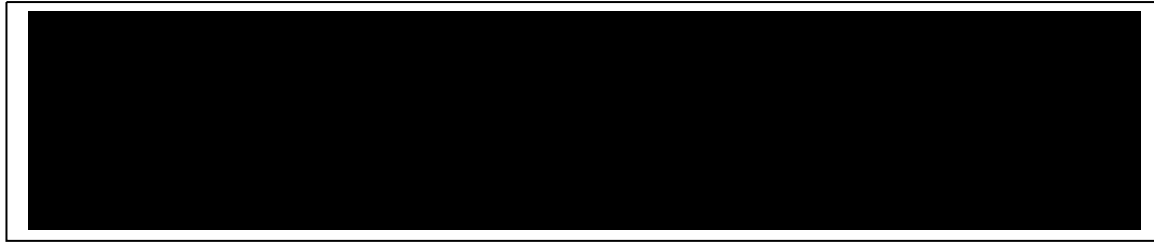
The policy is due to be reviewed by the Corporate Services and Communications Team every three years and a further EQIA will be undertaken at that stage if required. Any associated impacts will also be considered on an ongoing basis.

This EQIA has been reviewed by the Head of Department and approved by the Chief Executive.



Reviewed by: [REDACTED]

Date: 30/9/2025



Approved by: Mark Roberts

Date: 01/10/2025