



Climate change

Conservation

Sustainability

# Excess baggage: the case for reducing government flying

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## Full report

List of departmental and devolved government acronyms and initials

Attorney General's Office	AGO
Cabinet Office	CO
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	BIS
Department for Communities and Local Government	DCLG
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	DCMS
Department for Education	DfE
Department of Energy and Climate Change	DECC
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Defra
Department of Health	DoH
Department for International Development	DfID
Department for Transport	DfT
Department for Work and Pensions	DWP
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	FCO
HM Revenue & Customs	HMRC
HM Treasury	HMT
Home Office	HO
Ministry of Defence	MoD
Ministry of Justice	MoJ
Northern Ireland Office	NIO
Office for National Statistics	ONS
Scottish Government	SG
Welsh Assembly Government	WAG

This is the full report by JMP Consultants Ltd commissioned by WWF-UK, published in June 2010. The research, undertaken between January and May 2010, examined FY 2006/07 – FY 2008/09 data supplied following two Freedom of Information requests made in December 2009 and January 2010. WWF-UK's interpretation of the findings contained in this report is published in a separate executive summary which can be downloaded from [www.wwf.org.uk/excessbaggage](http://www.wwf.org.uk/excessbaggage).

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# Background and objectives

## Introduction

WWF-UK commissioned JMP Consultants, an independent transport consultancy, to undertake research on the use of business flights by 22 central Whitehall departments and devolved governments, in order to inform their policy and campaigning work to encourage lower carbon alternatives to flying.

The overall aim of the research was to identify if flying by government departments is increasing and how much flying may be unnecessary. JMP were also tasked with identifying examples of best practice and the potential financial and carbon saving that could be realised if government as a whole mirrored the performance of best practice departments.

### **The research objectives were defined as follows:**

- to assess if government flying is on the increase or decrease, and by how much and in which particular areas/routes;
- to identify examples of best practice and the worst performing departments;
- to define what can be called unnecessary flying;
- to understand what best practice departments are doing to reduce their flying and what they have achieved in terms of fewer flight numbers, money and carbon saved;
- to extrapolate how much taxpayer money and carbon emissions would be saved if the performance of best practice departments was applied across Whitehall and devolved governments; and
- to recommend actions that government could take to reduce their reliance on flying and increase their use of lower carbon alternatives such as rail and videoconferencing.

## Research parameters

The research covers flying by Ministers and their officials within central Whitehall departments and devolved governments. The aim of the research was to determine whether the number of business flights, expenditure and emissions has increased or decreased, and the top flight routes used by departments.

## Research methodology

Two Freedom of Information (Fol) requests were sent to 22 central Whitehall departments and devolved governments in Scotland and Wales by WWF-UK. The first requested information on the number of flights, expenditure and emissions in Financial Year (FY) 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09, and the second requested information on the most frequently flown routes in FY 2008/09. A full copy of the requests can be seen in Appendix A. A list of departments that received WWF-UK's Fol requests can be seen in Appendix B.

JMP undertook desk-based research to identify other sources of information on government's use of business flights. This included a review of government documents and reports, Hansard and written and online media.

The findings in this report are based on information provided by departments and desk-based research but no further data verification has been undertaken by JMP. Individual department responses to WWF-UK FoI requests with suggested actions to reduce flying can be seen in Appendix C.

## Is government flying on the increase?

The total number of flights taken by government Ministers and their officials appears to be increasing. The increase in flying by larger departments, like HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), appears to outweigh the reductions in flights achieved by some of the smaller government departments.

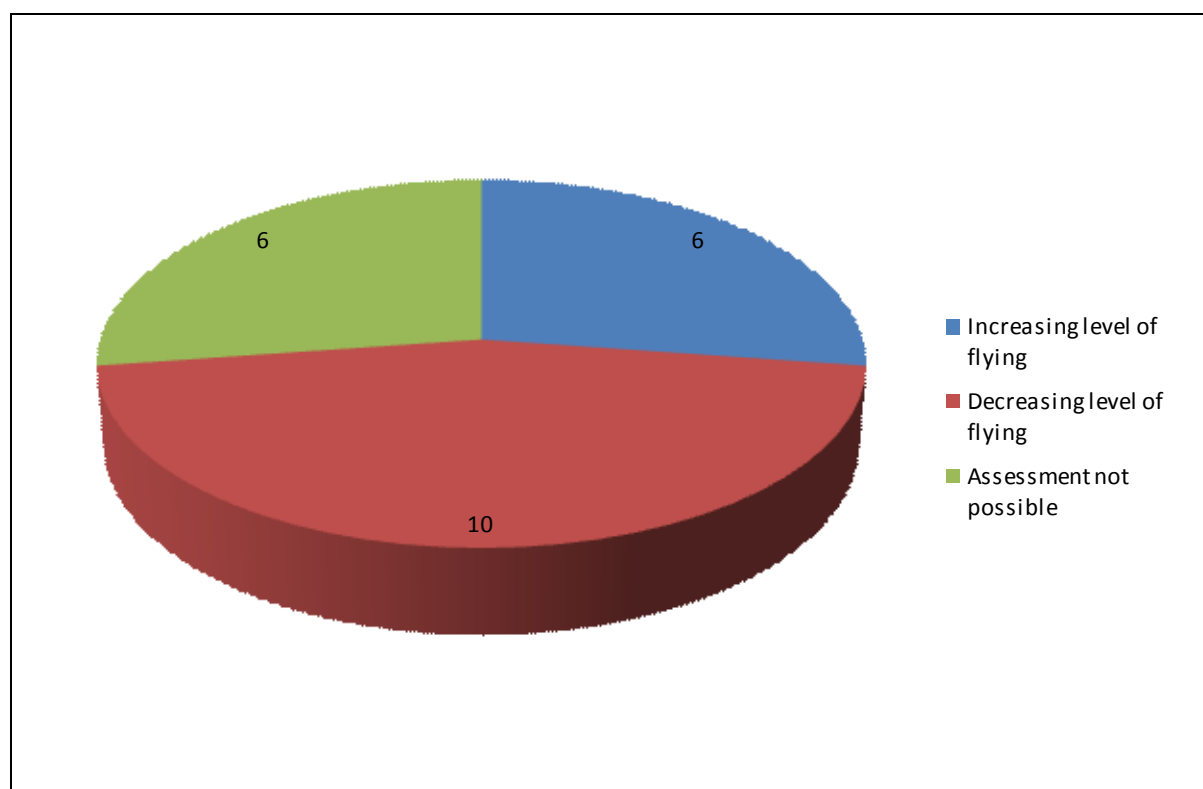
Of the 22 departments surveyed<sup>1</sup> six appear to be increasing their level of flying, A further six departments provided such limited data that an assessment of the number of flights taken is not possible.

Half of the departments surveyed were unable to provide a comprehensive response on their use of business flights. This shows that there is substantial room for improvement in departmental flight data and an opportunity to reduce unnecessary flying.

At a time of fiscal restraint and demand for greater transparency on travel and expenses, it is surprising that so many departments were unable to provide complete information.

Our assessment of whether flights are increasing or decreasing in individual departments is shown in Figure 1.1 below

**Figure 1.1**  
**Number of departments increasing or decreasing their flying between FY 2006/07 and FY 2008/09**



<sup>1</sup> WWF-UK requested information on flight numbers from the Welsh Assembly Government and the Scottish Government, along with central government departments. From this point forward, the term department is used generically to encompass both central Whitehall departments and devolved governments.

Based on available data, flying appears to be on the increase in the following government departments:

- Cabinet Office (CO)
- Department of Health (DoH)
- Department for International Development (DfID)
- Department for Transport (DfT)
- HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)
- Ministry of Defence (MoD)

Ten departments appear to be making progress to reduce their flying, although many of these are quite small in terms of their total flight numbers. These are:

- Attorney General's Office (AGO)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
- Department for Education (DfE)
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Home Office (HO)
- Northern Ireland Office (NIO)
- Scottish Government (SG)
- Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)

It has not been possible to comment on the performance of the remaining six departments as they provided little or no data.

- HM Treasury (HMT)
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
- Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)

The use of low carbon alternatives and videoconferencing has the potential to reduce demand for air travel and ensure that carbon emissions are managed to levels consistent with the UK's carbon budgets.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Meeting the UK Aviation target – options for reducing emissions to 2050, Committee on Climate Change, 2009

The government is committed to leading by example and securing the behaviour change needed to create a low carbon economy.<sup>3</sup> A reduction in the number of flights used by government is the perfect platform from which to demonstrate leadership and save taxpayers money.

## Responses to WWF-UK Fol requests

Of the 22 departments contacted by WWF-UK, 11 (50%) were able to provide comprehensive information on the number of flights used by Ministers and their officials between FY 2006/07 and FY 2008/09.

The departments that were able to provide complete information are shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1**  
**Departments that provided complete information on flight numbers**

Department	Total number of flights		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Attorney General's Office	223	144	160
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (a)	5,506	4,449	3,788
Department for Education	1,573	966	922
Department for Culture, Media and Sport (b)	331	101	241
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	3,386	3,622	1,724
Department of Health (c)	2,040	2,205	2,811
Department for Transport (d)	1,601	3,350	3,455
Department for Work and Pensions (e)	28,171	30,380	27,325
Northern Ireland Office	8,388	7,639	7,539
Scottish Government	9,470	6,699	6,586
Welsh Assembly Government	1,580	1,474	916

(a) The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills was formed in June 2009. The information provided relates to departments before the merger and includes figures for the Department of Trade and Industry.

(b) The Department for Culture, Media and Sport was not able to provide data between July and September 2007 due to a change of contracts.

(c) Data from the Department of Health includes the core department and its executive agencies, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory (MHPR) Agency. The MHPR Agency could not provide carbon emissions data.

(d) Data from the Department for Transport include the core department and its executive agencies (DVLA, Coastguard Agency [CA], Vehicle Certification Agency [VCA] and the Driving Standards Agency [DSA]). The core department provided data on expenditure and carbon emissions but not the number of flights. The DVLA and VCA provided a full set of data. The DSA provided a full set of data for FY 2007/08 and 2008/09 but not 2006/07. The MCA provided carbon emissions data only.

(e) The Department for Work and Pensions only began recording information centrally from June 2006 onwards.

<sup>3</sup> Securing the Future, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2005

Departments that provided partial information are shown in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2**  
**Departments that provided partial information on flight numbers**

Department	Total number of flights		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
<b>Department of Energy and Climate Change (a)</b>	-	-	1,378
<b>HM Revenue &amp; Customs</b>	-	59,294	71,566
<b>The Home Office (b)</b>	-	-	4,065
<b>Ministry of Defence (c)</b>	-	45,225	321,394

(a) The Department of Energy and Climate Change was created in October 2008 bringing together Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) employees and some Defra staff. The figures only cover FY 2008/09. A breakdown of carbon emissions for former Defra staff is not available.

(b) The Home Office: data for the total number and expenditure on flights for FY2008/09 is only available between December 2008 and March 2009 due to a change in the Home Office's travel contractor.

(c) Ministry of Defence data only exists from December 2007 in FY 2007/2008 onwards.

Seven departments could not provide any information on flight numbers between 2006/07 and 2008/09. These were the Cabinet Office, DCLG, DfID, FCO, HMT, ONS and MoJ. In addition to being unable to provide information on the number of flights the ONS and MoJ did not provide any information on flight expenditure or emissions.

## Departmental flights

Departments reported that Ministers and officials used a total of 452,562 flights in FY2008/09. The MoD (321,394 flights), HMRC (71,566 flights) and DWP (27,325 flights) accounted for 93% of all flights taken in FY 2008/09 according to FoI responses received.

In FY 2007/08 departments reported 165,548 flights, but this figure includes only four months of data from the MoD, which is the largest user of flights. If the MoD data is uplifted to provide an estimate for the year, this would mean that in FY 2007/08 all departments took 301,223 flights, of which the MoD accounted for 180,900 flights. Using this uplifted estimate, there were 151,339 more government flights in 2008/09 than in 2007/08.

In FY 2006/07 departments reported 62,269 flights. The MoD and HMRC were unable to provide any information, and DWP was unable to report flights for a full year. Therefore meaningful comparisons are not possible.

We have found that some departments have provided more detailed information on the flights that they had used when requested by other parties. There are also inconsistencies in the data reported to other parties and to WWF-UK. This suggests that there may have been incomplete or inaccurate reporting in some cases.

For example, based on answers to Parliamentary Questions from Simon Hughes MP in 2009, departments reported a total of 210,000 domestic flights, at a cost of over £21.8m during FY 2008/09.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, departments reported 116,000 domestic flights to WWF-UK, at a cost of £11m.

<sup>4</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/8527078.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8527078.stm)

In the previous PQ, the MoD reported expenditure of £16m on 175,000 domestic flights in FY 2008/09, but was unable to breakdown flight expenditure by domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights when requested by WWF-UK. DECC reported that it used 676 domestic flights in FY 2008/09 to WWF-UK, but reported over 1,000 flights in the previous PQ. The MoJ, which was unable to provide any information on flight numbers and expenditure to WWF-UK, reported 2,262 domestic flights in the previous PQ at a cost of over £475,000 in FY 2008/09.<sup>5</sup>

Departments provided the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) with information on distance travelled by air travel in FY 2007/08. The SDC found that 36% of total distance travelled by government was by air. Air travel accounted for 98% of total distance travelled by the FCO and DfID.<sup>6</sup> It is surprising that departments like the FCO and DfID have been able to provide information on flight distances, but were unable to report on the number of flights or expenditure.

The issue surrounding the quality of travel data has been a long standing one for government. The SDC has repeatedly expressed concern about the quality of government data and has singled out travel as an area where data quality issues remain.<sup>7</sup> It appears that some departments are still not investing the resources needed to collate flight data and understand demand for air travel.

Departments' responses to WWF-UK FoI requests can be seen in Appendix C.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/dec/12/government-3m-flights-public-servants>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/SDiG\\_REPORT\\_08.pdf](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/SDiG_REPORT_08.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=934>

## Which are the best and worst performing departments?

There is evidence to suggest that some departments are reviewing their use of flights and identifying smarter and lower carbon ways to deliver departmental objectives. In this section departmental performance is compared to identify best practice departments and those that could achieve more.

### Departments reducing their flying

There are nine departments that have reported reductions in flight numbers between FY 2006/07 and FY 2008/09. A tenth department provided incomplete data, but this suggests flights have decreased. The performance of these departments is explored in more detail below.

#### *Flight numbers*

The nine departments that reported reductions in flight numbers between FY 2006/07 and FY 2008/09 can be seen in Table 1.3. Of these, Defra, DfE and WAG have reduced their flight numbers the most.

**Table 1.3**  
**Departments reporting reductions in number of flights between FY 2006/07 and FY 2008/09**

Department	Total number of flights			Percentage change since 2006
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Attorney General's Office	223	144	160	- 28%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	5,506	4,449	3,788	- 31%
Department for Education	1,573	966	922	- 37%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	331	101	241	- 27%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	3,386	3,622	1,724	- 49%
Department for Work and Pensions	28,171	30,380	27,325	- 3%
Northern Ireland Office	8,388	7,639	7,539	- 10%
Scottish Government	9,470	6,699	6,586	- 30%
Welsh Assembly Government	1,580	1,474	916	- 42%

Across all nine departments a flight reduction of 16% was achieved between FY2006/07 and FY2008/09. Whilst the reduction in flights reported is to be commended, there appears to be room for further reductions.

The tenth department which appears to be reducing its flights is the HO based on reported expenditure and CO<sub>2</sub> data.

#### *Flight expenditure*

Departments that reported a reduction in flights numbers have, in most instances, also reported a reduction in expenditure. Table 1.4 shows expenditure on flights by the nine departments that have

reported reductions in flight numbers. Of these, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has reduced its expenditure on flights the most.

**Table 1.4**

**Expenditure on flights by departments reporting flight reductions between FY 2006/07 and FY 2008/09**

Department	Total expenditure on flights			Percentage change since 2006
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Attorney General's Office	£101,282	£47,144	£99,026	- 2%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	£2,011,027	£3,150,168	£2,994,876	+ 49%
Department for Education	£381,130	£216,536	£210,486	- 45%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	£299,609	£164,740	£119,979	- 60%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	£1,812,197	£1,888,095	£1,129,333	- 38%
Department for Work and Pensions	£3,100,459	£3,814,587	£3,506,518	+ 13%
Northern Ireland Office	£1,767,987	£1,536,333	£1,528,974	- 14%
Scottish Government	£2,320,195	£2,003,133	£2,016,821	- 13%
Welsh Assembly Government	£158,648	£160,552	£112,038	- 29%

Although reporting a reduction in flight numbers, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) reported an increase in expenditure of 49%, whilst DWP reported an increase in expenditure of 13%. The collective savings achieved by these departments between FY2006/07 and FY2008/09, at £244,483, would have been much higher if these two departments had not substantially increased their flight expenditure.

### *Flight emissions*

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has reported the highest reduction in carbon emissions from flying. Table 1.5 shows emissions from flights by the nine departments that have reported reductions in flight numbers.

**Table 1.5**  
**Emissions from flights by departments reporting flight reductions between FY 2006/07 and FY 2008/09**

Department	Total emissions from flights (tonnes)			Percentage change since 2006
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	
Attorney General's Office	79	41	93	+ 18%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	4,469	5,933	649	- 85%
Department for Education	240	132	128	- 47%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	-	-	-	-
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	-	3,843	3,184	- 17%
Department for Work and Pensions	4,633	2,789	2,762	- 40%
Northern Ireland Office	1,148	639	650	- 43%
Scottish Government	1,445	1,359	1,456	+ 1%
Welsh Assembly Government	252	193	56	- 78%

Even with incomplete data, there has been a 27% reduction in carbon emissions from flying across these nine departments. Reductions in emissions reported by departments do not always align with expectations. For example, BIS reported a fall in flight numbers of 30%, but reported emissions reductions of 85%. DWP reported a 43% reduction in emissions from a 3% reduction in flight numbers, whilst the Scottish Government reported a 30% reduction in flight numbers, but reported a 1% increase in emissions. Such anomalies could indicate inaccuracies in emissions calculation or changes in reporting methodologies.

## Best practice departments

Our analysis identifies DfE and Defra as best practice departments.

The reduction in flight numbers, expenditure and emissions reported by DfE and Defra are consistently in the top tier. DfE and Defra percentage reductions in flight numbers and expenditure are in the top three of all departments, and both reported significant reductions in emissions: 47% and 17% respectively. DfE and Defra's performance since FY 2006/07 shows that they are leading the way in reducing flight numbers, expenditure and emissions across government.

If DfE and Defra flight information is aggregated, they reported a 45% reduction in flight numbers and a 39% reduction in expenditure since FY 2006/07. They also reported a 17% reduction in emissions since FY 2007/08. This can be seen in Table 1.6.

**Table 1.6**  
**Changes in DfE and Defra flight data since FY 2006/07**

Department	Total number of business flights			Total expenditure on business flights (£)			Total emissions from flights (tonnes)		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Department for Education	1,573	966	992	£381,130	£216,536	£210,486	240	132	128
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	3,386	3,622	1,724	£1,812,197	£1,888,095	£1,129,333	-	3,843	3,184
<b>Total</b>	4,959	4,588	2,716	£2,193,327	£2,104,631	£1,339,819	240	3,975	3,312
<b>Percentage change since 2006</b>			<b>- 45%</b>			<b>- 39%</b>			<b>- 17%</b>

The WAG and DCMS have also reported notable reductions in business flights and expenditure. The WAG however, was unable to report emissions from all flights, whilst DCMS was unable to provide any information on emissions. Consequently, we have not been able to consider them as best practice departments, but the reported reductions are of note.

## Worst performers

Worst performing departments are those six departments that appear to have increased their flying (CO, DoH, DfID, DfT, HMRC, MoD), plus the five departments that have not been able to provide sufficient information on their use of flights (DCLG, FCO, HMT, MoJ, ONS). A sixth department, DECC, was created in 2008 and it has not been possible to comment on changes in their flight numbers.

Of those departments that were able to provide a complete response to WWF-UK's FoI requests, two reported an increase in the number of flights. The DfT reported a 3% increase in flight numbers whilst the DoH reported a 38% increase.

HMRC, which reported information for the last two years, increased flights numbers by 12,000, or 21%. Their expenditure increased by 31% and emissions by 23%. The MoD, the largest government department and user of flights, was able to provide partial data for FY2007/08, but complete data in FY 2008/09. However, if the flights reported in FY 2007/08 were representative of MoD operations, and this trend was to continue for the full year, then the data suggests that their flying has increased by 137%.

DCLG, CO and HMT were unable to provide information on flight numbers, but provided flight expenditure information. Expenditure on flights by the CO increased to £5.1m in FY 2008/09, a rise of 54% since FY 2006/07. Expenditure at DCLG fell by 53% to £280k, whilst expenditure at HMT fell 27% to £920k.

It is difficult to make assumptions on whether an increase or decrease in expenditure leads to a corresponding rise or fall in flight numbers. The type of trip, class of travel and travel contracts can all influence levels of expenditure. However, when cost and carbon from flying have both increased, but where flight numbers have not been provided, an increase in flying has been assumed.

The FCO was only able to provide flight distances and emissions data for Ministers since FY 2007/08, whilst the MoJ and the ONS were unable to provide any flight numbers, expenditure or emissions information.

# What could government achieve if it was to mirror the performance of best practice departments?

## Potential savings

If all departments and devolved administrations were to mirror the achievements of DfE and Defra, and maintain this for three years, then government could reduce the number of flights by over 600,000 and save more than £116m. In addition, at least 59,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. These savings are shown in Table 1.7.

**Table 1.7**

**Potential saving that government could achieve if all departments mirrored best practice for the next three years**

	Number of Business Flights	Expenditure on Business Flights (£)	Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes)
2008/09 Departmental totals	449,846	£99,429,572	118,521
Best practice percentage reductions (DfE and Defra)	- 45.23%	- 38.91%	- 16.68%
Potential savings for each of the next 3 years	203,465	£38,688,046	19,769
Total potential saving over the next 3 years	610,396	£116,064,139	59,308

A number of departments, like the FCO and MoJ were unable to provide any information on flights or expenditure, and others provided only partial data. The potential savings for government as a whole therefore, could be even greater.

Not all departments may be able to reduce flight numbers to the same levels as DfE and Defra. For example, the MOD, which has a unique role, may not be able to reduce its dependence on flights as much as other departments. For government as a whole to achieve the flight reductions that DfE and Defra have achieved, it may be that some departments need to go further and faster than others.

In the examples below we have explored what HMRC, DWP and BIS, the three next largest flying departments after the MoD, could achieve if they were able to mirror the achievements of DfE and Defra, and maintain this for the next three years.

### *HM Revenue & Customs*

If HMRC was to mirror best practice it could save £8m and reduce flights by 97,108 over three years. In addition 1,100 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved.

### *Department for Work and Pensions*

If the DWP was to mirror best practice it could save £4.1m and reduce flights by 37,077 over three years. In addition 1,382 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved.

### *Department for Business, Innovation and Skills*

If BIS was to mirror best practice it could save £3.5m and reduce flights by 5,140 over three years. In addition 325 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved.

## What is unnecessary flying?

This research has been undertaken to help government identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary flying.

To achieve reductions in flying, government needs to understand demand for air travel and identify when officials are travelling unnecessarily. By doing this, government can design travel policies to promote rail travel and videoconferencing as alternatives to flights.

## Defining unnecessary air travel

For the purposes of this report we have defined unnecessary flying as:

- domestic flights where rail alternatives are easily available;
- short-haul flights to Europe that could be replaced by high speed rail or conventional rail;
- any flight to a meeting that could be held using audio, web or videoconferencing just as effectively.

Government has already recognised that alternatives to travel have an important role to play in reducing unnecessary flying, improving productivity and reducing emissions. The CO promotes the experience of the Department for Universities Innovation and Skills (DIUS) on its website.<sup>8</sup>

*'DIUS is saving money, improving productivity and helping the environment. They have installed high-definition tele-presence systems enabling geographically distant colleagues to be virtually on-site.'*

The increased use of alternatives to travel is a win-win-win for government. Government could save money, reduce carbon emissions and support a transition to a low carbon economy by mainstreaming and promoting the use of alternatives to flights.

## How much of government flying is unnecessary?

The high level of domestic flying by government suggests that there is a clear opportunity to switch from flights to train travel. There is also evidence that government departments are still choosing to fly to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Brussels, Paris, Geneva and Amsterdam when rail travel is a viable proposition.

It appears that insufficient attention is being given by departments to their sustainability and carbon reduction commitments.

Some examples of unnecessary domestic flying and short-haul flying during FY 2008/09 include:

- over 1,000 flights between London and Manchester taken by the Home Office;
- over 1,400 flights between London and Newcastle taken by the Department for Work and Pensions;
- over 1,400 flights between Birmingham and Glasgow taken by the Department for Work and Pensions;
- 127 flights taken between Southampton and Leeds by the Department of Health;
- 60 flights between London and Brussels taken by HM Treasury;

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<sup>8</sup> [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/140571/tg\\_annual\\_report07.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/140571/tg_annual_report07.pdf) Due to machinery of government changes DIUS is now part of The Department for Business Innovation and Skills.

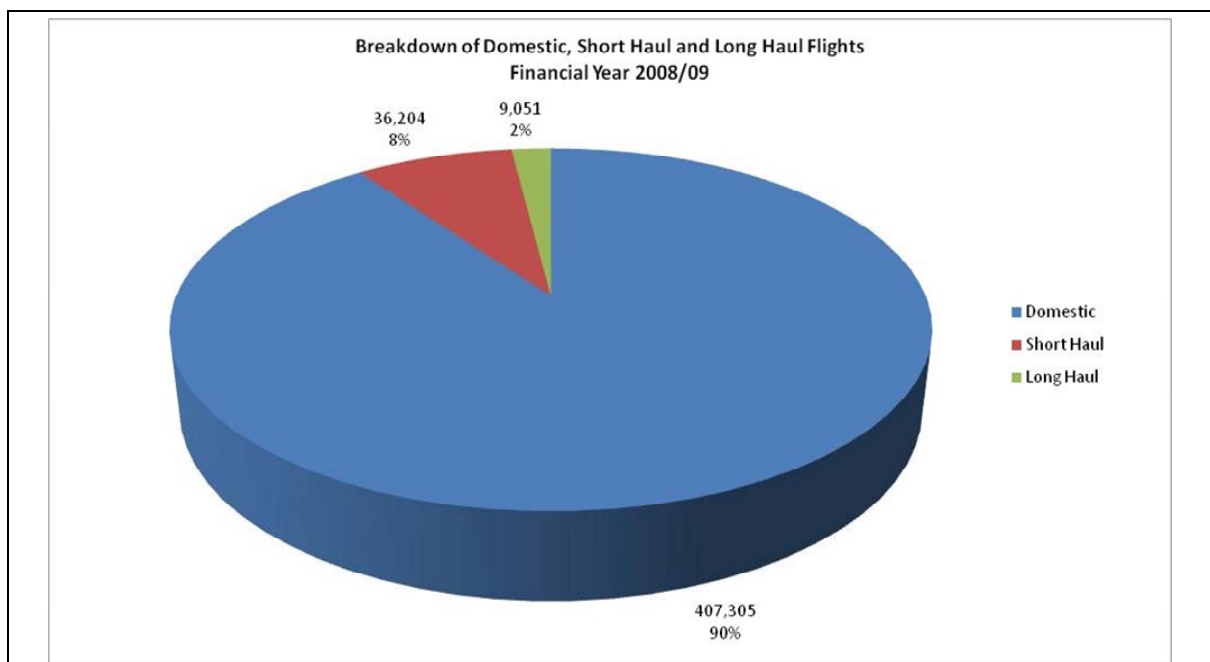
- 185 flights between London and Geneva by the Department of Health;
- 72 flights between London and Amsterdam by the Home Office;

Departments were also asked to provide a breakdown of the number of domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights undertaken between FY 2006/07 and FY 2008/09.

Only 13 departments were able to provide a breakdown of domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights in FY 2008/09. These departments reported a total of 129,000 flights, of which 116,000 were domestic.

Figure 1.2 shows the number of domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights reported by departments in FY 2008/09.

**Figure 1.2**  
**Domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights reported by departments in FY 2008/09**



Departments were also asked to further provide information on their most frequently flown domestic, short-haul and long-haul flight routes in FY 2008/09. Thirteen departments were able to provide information and their responses are shown in Table 1.8.

**Table 1.8**  
**Frequently flown flight routes in FY 2008/09**

Department	Top Domestic Flight Route	Top Short Haul Flight Route	Top Long Haul Flight Route
Attorney General's Office	London/Belfast - 92	London/Luxembourg – 10	London/ Providenciales - 6
Department for Education	London/Manchester - 147	Geneva/London – 28	London/New York - 20
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	Glasgow/London - 5	London/Strasbourg – 7	London/New York – 3
Department of Energy and Climate Change	Edinburgh/London - 6	London/Warsaw – 28	London/Washington – 31
Department of Health	London/Edinburgh - 84	Geneva/London – 72	Washington/London - 27
Department for Work and Pensions	Glasgow/London – 3,735	Brussels/Manchester – 71	London/Washington – 33
HM Treasury	London/Edinburgh - 94	London/Brussels – 60	London/Washington – 53
The Home Office	London/Manchester – 1,031	Amsterdam/London - 72	London/Washington - 37
Ministry of Defence	Belfast/London – 14,480	London/Dusseldorf – 7,092	London/Washington – 3,880
Ministry of Justice	London/Glasgow	Dublin/London	London/Hong Kong
Northern Ireland Office	Belfast/London – 4,925	London/Strasbourg – 24	London/New York – 32
Office for National Statistics	Belfast/Southampton - 140	London/Luxembourg - 252	London/Ottawa - 16
Scottish Government	Edinburgh/London – 2,108	Edinburgh/Brussels – 421	Edinburgh/Washington – 10
Welsh Assembly Government	Cardiff/Edinburgh - 168	Bristol/Brussels – 30	London/Luanda - 4

The most frequent domestic routes are between London and Belfast, London and Edinburgh and London and Glasgow. The research also shows that the Home Office also flew over 1,000 times between London and Manchester. Departments like DfE, a best practice department, could reduce flights even further by promoting rail travel for viable routes. DfE flew between London and Manchester 147 times, representing 20% of its total domestic flights.

The most frequent short-haul route was between London and Strasbourg and London and Geneva. For long-haul flights, the most frequently flown route was between London and Washington.

The 112,000 domestic flights that departments reported to WWF-UK are far fewer than the 210,000 domestic flights, worth £21m, reported by departments in response to Simon Hughes' previous PQ requests. This would seem to indicate there is an even greater opportunity for government to reduce domestic flights than reported to WWF-UK.

# What are best practice departments doing to reduce their flying?

Government can learn from the experiences of DfE, Defra and other departments. Our research has identified a number of common practices amongst departments that have reduced flights, expenditure and emissions.

## Understanding and managing demand

Government can only manage what it measures. Access to information on how flights are used is essential if departments are to understand demand, and identify how rail and alternatives to travel can be used to deliver departmental objectives.

It is not surprising therefore, that those departments that were able to provide detailed information on flight numbers, expenditure and emissions also reported the greatest reductions in the number of flights. Departments that provided partial data often reported increases in flight numbers and expenditure.

This would indicate that departments that are investing in data collation and analysis have identified more efficient, effective and lower carbon ways of delivering departmental objectives.

## Reducing domestic flying

Departments that have reduced unnecessary domestic air travel include the two best practice departments. Defra and DfE have reduced domestic flights by 66% and 32% respectively. The WAG, NIO, AGO and BIS have also reported reductions in domestic flights since FY 2006/07.

The opposite also applies to those departments that have increased flight numbers. The DoH, which has reported an increase in total flights of 38% since FY 2006/07, has reported an increase in domestic flights of 66%. HMRC, which has reported an increase in total flights since FY 2007/08, reported an increase in domestic flights of 21%.

This would seem to indicate that reducing unnecessary air travel is key to reducing overall flight numbers.

## Promoting alternatives to travel

Departments embracing new communication technologies are not only reducing demand for flights, but reducing the need to travel. At a recent conference<sup>9</sup>, a speaker from Defra said that since promoting videoconferencing to their staff they had seen uptake increase by 500% in the past year. Defra is an advocate of the business benefits of videoconferencing as an alternative to travel, and is now raising awareness further by training 2,500 employees on videoconferencing equipment.

# Is Government meeting its promises to reduce emissions from flying?

Government is committed to reducing carbon emissions from its own operations and demonstrating to the wider public and private sector that low carbon operations make business sense.

## Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate targets

The Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate (SOGES) framework is the government's main vehicle for systematically assessing, reporting and improving government performance in managing

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<sup>9</sup> BASE conference, 17 March 2010, Rethinking business travel and communications

the sustainability of its estate. The SOGE targets, which commenced in 2005/06, do not have an emissions reduction target for air travel.

Government has committed to offsetting emissions from all Ministers' and officials' air travel since April 2006. Departments and executive agencies report their annual air travel emissions to the Government Carbon Offsetting Facility which then offsets them.

The Office of Government Commerce (OGC), the CO, Defra and DECC in a memorandum to the Environmental Audit Committee outlined the role that offsetting plays in tackling climate change. The memorandum stated that;

*'Government's consistent policy on offsetting is that it has a legitimate place in the hierarchy of actions to tackle climate change. But measuring emissions and avoiding and reducing them must be undertaken before offsetting is considered.'*<sup>10</sup>

This research found that a number of departments were unable to provide emissions data, and as there is no government-wide performance measure for air travel, departments do not have reduction targets to aim for. Government's carbon offsetting commitment therefore, appears to contradict its own hierarchy of actions to tackle climate change.

We identified one department with an air travel reduction target. HMRC has a target to reduce domestic air travel by 5% between 2007 and 2012, but based on performance reported to WWF-UK does not appear to be on track to meet this.<sup>11</sup>

### **Sustainable Development in Government Framework**

In March 2010, the government announced that the Sustainable Development in Government (SDiG) Framework will replace the SOGE targets when they expire in 2010/11. Government has set itself a target to reduce emissions by 34% by 2020 (from 1999/2000 levels).<sup>12</sup>

The SDiG framework will require departments to report Scope 1 (all owned or controlled emissions sources), Scope 2 (the consumption of purchased energy) and Scope 3 (employee business travel) emissions. Air travel is a Scope 3 emission. There is no specific emissions reduction target for air travel in the new framework, but emissions from air travel will count towards a department's total carbon footprint.

To reduce emissions for flights, departments need to understand demand and calculate emissions. This research has shown that a number of departments are not in a position to do this in FY 2008/09, and it is unclear how performance will be benchmark against 1999/2000 levels.

The lack of a specific air travel targets in government's new sustainability framework does not encourage departments to review their use of flights and identify ways to reduce flight numbers and emissions.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmenvaud/503/503.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/corporate-responsibility/sdap-2007-2012.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/gov/estates/sdigtargets.htm>

# Research conclusions

## Why reducing flying should matter to government

### It need not cost more and can save money

The cost of air travel is more than simply the price of an air ticket. There are other costs to consider such as accommodation, expenses and supplier's fees. Air travel also results in unproductive travel time.

Government can deliver its objectives and reduce travel but it must demonstrate political will by introducing flight reduction targets and holding departments to account to achieve them. The benefits of doing so are clear as the two best practice departments, DfE and Defra, have already saved nearly £1m by reducing their flying.

### Public procurement can change behaviour

Government spends £5.5 billion on business travel and cars and has identified travel as a key area of expenditure.<sup>13</sup> If government is committed to changing the way it travels and communicates then the marketplace will respond and offer low carbon solutions.

### Government has sustainability and carbon targets to deliver

Government has committed to leading by example and reducing emissions from its own operations. Air travel, which represented 36% of all miles travelled by government in FY 2007/08, will have an important role to play in achieving the SDiG target.<sup>14</sup>

### Because the private sector is doing it

There are many private sector businesses already challenging the use of business flights and replacing unnecessary flights with lower carbon travel and communication technologies. WWF-UK found that 89% of FTSE 350 companies surveyed expected that they will want to fly less over the next 10 years.<sup>15</sup>

BT has eliminated 859,784 meetings per year, reduced business travel by 20% between 2006 and 2008, and saved £135m in travel costs through flexible, smarter and mobile working.<sup>16</sup>

DHL, a global leader in express communications and logistics said the use of videoconferencing had enabled it to respond to internal problems and issues 15% faster.<sup>17</sup>

## Recommendations: opportunities for improvement

Government has not developed the structures, systems or processes to communicate the business benefits of flying less. To ensure government funds are used efficiently and effectively the Civil

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/documents/full-document.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=934>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.wwf.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/campaigning/one\\_planet\\_mobility/new\\_report\\_travelling\\_light](http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/campaigning/one_planet_mobility/new_report_travelling_light)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.nbtn.org.uk/downloads/casestudies/nbtn-casestudy-bt.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.polycom.com/global/documents/whitepapers/value\\_of\\_video\\_collaboration.pdf](http://www.polycom.com/global/documents/whitepapers/value_of_video_collaboration.pdf)

Service Management Code<sup>18</sup> sets out instructions for departments in relation to the terms and conditions of service of civil servants.

Chapter 8.2 of the Code states that departments and agencies '*must use the most efficient and economic means of travel in the circumstances*'. Government has to understand the need for travel, and how communication technologies could support the delivery of business objectives to ensure the guidance is adhered to. Departments unable to identify their use of business flights will find it difficult to confirm that civil servants are using the most '*efficient*' and '*economic*' means of travel.

There is no reason why government as a whole cannot follow the example set by best practice departments like DfE and Defra. We have made three recommendations to support government reduce the number of business flights.

#### **Improve management information and reporting systems by working with travel suppliers**

A number of departments that provided comprehensive flight information use centrally agreed travel contracts negotiated by Buying Solutions, an executive agency of the Office of Government Commerce. We would have expected therefore, that all departments using these framework contracts would have been able to provide information on flights. This however, was not the case.

Government should ensure that all future travel tenders issued by Buying Solutions, and those issued independently by departments, require travel suppliers to provide management information on flights.

Travel suppliers are already geared up to provide comprehensive flight information, so it is disappointing that departments are not using this data to identify where rail and alternatives to travel could be used to replace flights.

#### **Reducing unnecessary air travel by introducing a sustainable travel policy**

Government should develop a sustainable travel policy that all departments are required to adopt. The sustainable travel policy should include: a definition of unnecessary travel; a travel hierarchy that raises awareness of the suitability of different travel modes and alternatives to travel; and clearly defined employee entitlements.

The sustainable travel policy should be mandated at a senior level and have systems and structures needed to monitor compliance. Management information should be regularly reviewed, non-compliance addressed, and the policy audited and updated to support the delivery of departmental objectives in a sustainable and low carbon manner.

#### **Embed alternatives to travel in travel procurement processes, actively promote alternatives and provide training on their use**

The use of alternatives to travel presents government with the opportunity to make a step change in the way it procures and manages travel. If alternatives to travel are to be mainstreamed then videoconferencing needs to be embedded in travel procurement and sustainable travel policies.

This, in turn, would encourage procurers and travel managers to focus on sourcing solutions that enable employees to connect with one another using low carbon travel options, as well as using alternatives to travel that enable virtual meetings.

Defra is experiencing the benefits of increased use of videoconferencing and is training employees to encourage greater utilisation of its conferencing facilities. The Department for Constitutional Affairs, part of the MoJ, has also researched the potential value of videoconferencing and identified that

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/resources/csmc/index.aspx>

increased adoption saves staff time, cut travel budgets, and reduces carbon emissions.<sup>19</sup> There is a clear evidence base in government that alternatives to travel have an important role to play in enabling officials to deliver departmental objectives.

Travel management companies are already exploring how they can partner with videoconferencing suppliers. Government procurement can drive further integration of travel and alternatives to travel in the supply chain.

## Final thoughts

There appears to be no collective ambition to: understand flights profiles; assess the need for air travel; or explore the opportunities that low carbon travel or alternatives to travel offer.

Government has a choice: it can be leader and work in partnership with pioneers in the private sector and travel suppliers, or it can be a laggard, wait for others and then follow.

This report is intended to support government in reducing its use of unnecessary flights. Government can stimulate a step change in the way flights are procured and managed. We hope this report stimulates this discussion through identifying the vast potential that exists for improvement. More importantly, we hope the report generates the required actions.

Suggestions for actions by department are included in Appendix C.

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<sup>19</sup> [http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/communitiessummit/show\\_case\\_study.php/00235.html](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/communitiessummit/show_case_study.php/00235.html)

## **Appendix A**

### **Freedom of Information questions**

## Freedom of Information – request 1

Under the Freedom of Information Act, WWF hereby requests information on business flights\* undertaken by Ministers and their officials from the Department and its executive agencies for the last 3 financial years (Financial years: 2006/2007, 2007/2008 and 2008/2009).

Specifically WWF would like to know:

- The total number of Ministers and Officials working at the Department and its executive agencies in each financial year.
- The number of domestic, short-haul and long-haul business flights, and the total number of flights undertaken by Ministers and their officials in each financial year.
- The expenditure on domestic, short-haul and long-haul business flights, and the total expenditure on flights undertaken by Ministers and their officials in each financial year.
- The total CO<sub>2</sub> arising from on domestic, short-haul and long-haul business flights, and the total CO<sub>2</sub> on all flights undertaken by Ministers and their officials in each financial year.

Please input the information into a table like the one below. Estimates are acceptable if precise data is unavailable. Please put an (e) next to estimated data.

Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
		Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
2008/2009													
2007/2008													
2006/2007													

Please briefly explain how the Department and its executive agencies collate information on business flights and calculates CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

I look forward to receiving a response within 20 working days.

\* Please use the following definition for a flight. One flight is between the origin and the final destination, e.g. London Heathrow to Paris Charles de Gaulle is one flight. So, a return flight from London Heathrow to Paris Charles de Gaulle would count as two flights.

If the flight has a connection, e.g. London Heathrow to Sydney via Singapore, this is classed as one flight. The return leg, Sydney to London Heathrow via Singapore would also be one flight, giving a total of two flights.

Best wishes

Jean Leston, Transport Policy Officer

December 2009

## Freedom of Information – request 2

Under the Freedom of Information Act, WWF hereby requests information on the most frequently flown business flights\* undertaken by Ministers and their officials from the Department and its executive agencies for the last financial year (2008/2009).

Specifically WWF would like to know:

- The top five most frequently flown domestic flight routes
- The top five most frequently flown short-haul flight routes
- The top five most frequently flown long-haul flight routes

Please input the information into a table like the one below.

Domestic Flights		
Ranking	Flight Route	Number of Flights
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
Short Haul Flights		
Ranking	Flight Route	Number of Flights
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
Long Haul Flights		
Ranking	Flight Route	Number of Flights
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

I look forward to receiving a response within 20 working days.

Best wishes

Jean Leston, Transport Policy Officer

January 2010

\* Please use the following definition for a flight. One flight is between the origin and the final destination, e.g. London Heathrow to Paris Charles de Gaulle is one flight. So, a return flight from London Heathrow to Paris Charles de Gaulle would count as two flights.

If the flight has a connection, e.g. London Heathrow to Sydney via Singapore, this is classed as one flight. The return leg, Sydney to London Heathrow via Singapore would also be one flight, giving a total of two flights.

## **Appendix B**

### **Freedom of Information request list**

Freedom of Information requests were sent to the following departments:

- Attorney General's Office
- Cabinet Office
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (1)
- Department for Education
- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Department of Energy and Climate Change
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department of Health
- Department for International Development
- Department for Transport
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- HM Revenue & Customs
- HM Treasury
- Home Office
- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Justice
- Northern Ireland Office
- Office for National Statistics
- Scottish Government
- Welsh Assembly Government

(1) Due to machinery of Government change, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) was created in June 2009. Information provided relates to departments before the merger and include figures for the former Department of Trade and Industry.

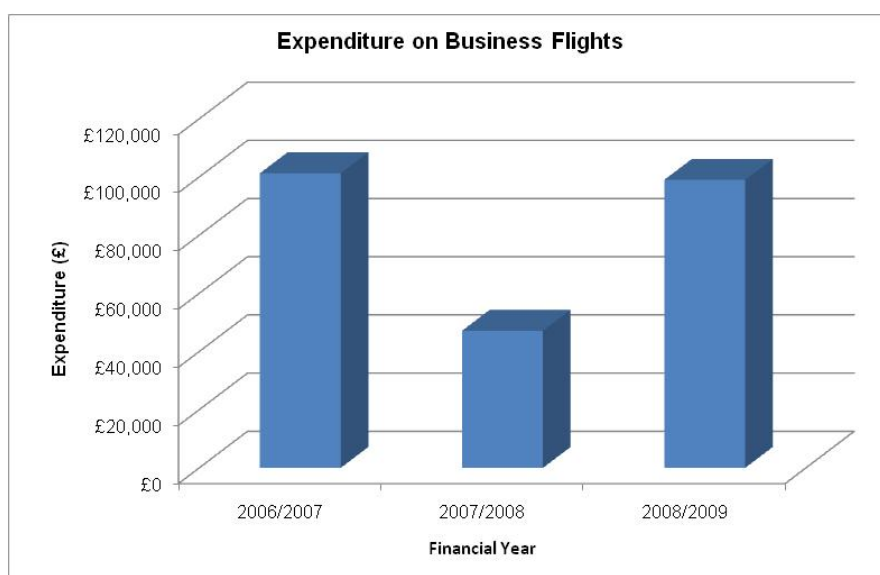
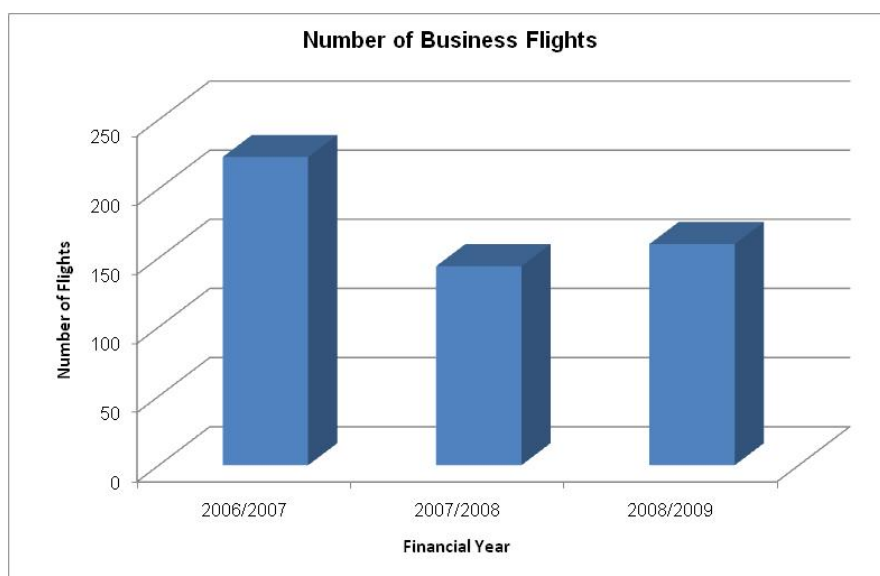
## **Appendix C**

**Departmental data from Fol request 1 with suggestions  
for action based on Fol request 2**

## Attorney General's Office

**Data summary:** the Attorney General's Office provided a complete data set. The number of flights, expenditure and emissions was broken down by domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Attorney General's Office	2008/2009	48	110	22	28	160	£19,670	£7,302	£72,055	£99,026	20.02	3.63	69.79	93.44
	2007/2008	49	114	18	12	144	£22,137	£5,229	£19,778	£47,144	19.91	4.57	16.62	41.1
	2006/2007	49	131	50	42	223	£25,493	£17,270	£58,519	£101,282	23.71	13.59	41.32	78.62



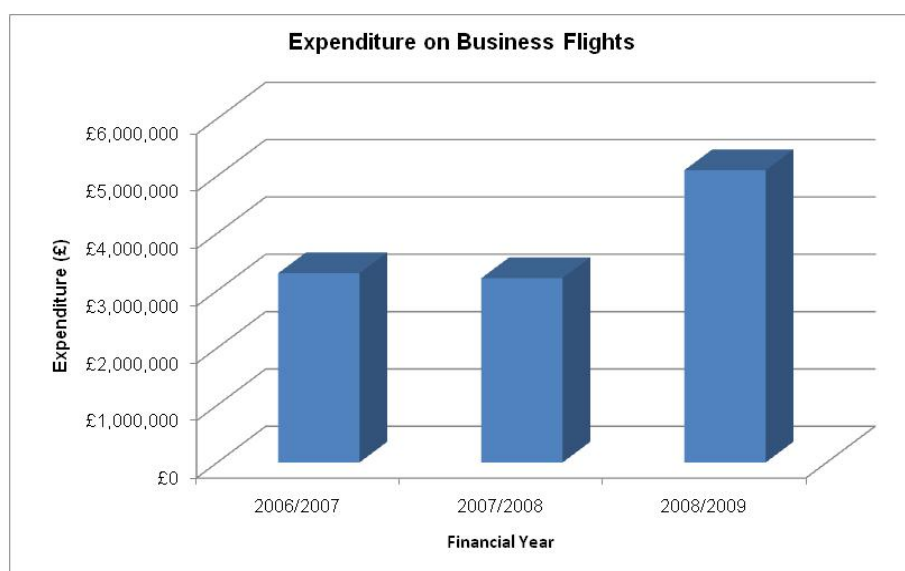
**Performance summary:** between FY 2008/09 the Attorney General's Office flights decreased by 28%, expenditure decreased by 2% and emissions increased by 18%.

If the Attorney General's Office was to mirror best practice it could save £116k and reduce flights by 217 over three years. In addition 47 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department could focus on using the train between London – Amsterdam, which was identified as one of the short-haul routes, and examine opportunities for increased rail travel or videoconferencing between London – Belfast, London – Edinburgh and London – Glasgow domestic routes.

## Cabinet Office

**Data summary:** the Cabinet Office provided total expenditure for each financial year. Emissions, broken down by domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights were provided for each year, apart from domestic flight emissions in FY 2006/07. A weblink to the department's Annual Report and Accounts for FY 2008/09 was also provided showing km distance flown by Ministers and their officials for the past three years.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Cabinet Office	2008/2009									£5,100,132	17	5440	952.5	6409.5
	2007/2008									£3,216,143	50.9	3387	914.3	4352.2
	2006/2007									£3,302,805		3348	818.5	4166.5



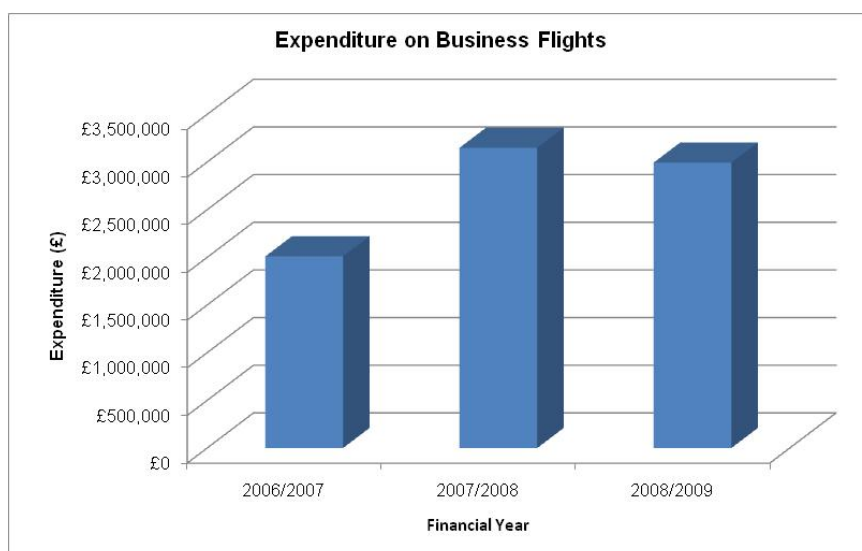
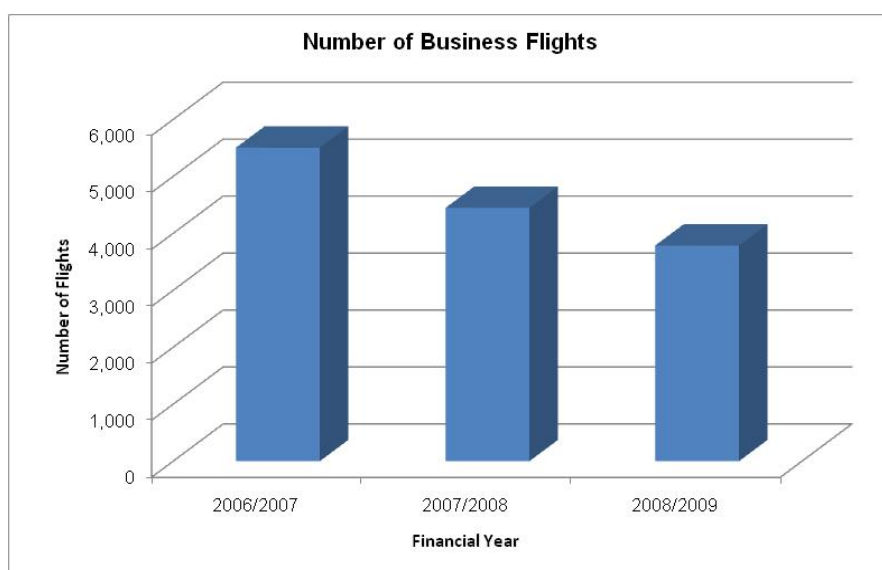
**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2007/08 Cabinet Office expenditure on flights increased by 54% and emissions also increased by 54%. Km distance flown has increased by 53%.

If the Cabinet Office was to mirror best practice it could save £6m. In addition 3,207 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department provided no information on frequently flown flights routes. Understanding frequently flown flights routes could help the department meets its 10:10 commitment of reducing emission by 10% in 2010.

## Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

**Data summary:** due to machinery of Government change, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills was formed in June 2009. Information provided relates to departments before the merger and include figures for the former Department of Trade and Industry. A complete data set was provided.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	2008/2009	3300	1,440	1,369	979	3,788	£293,222	£468,762	£2,232,892	£2,994,876	55	134	460	649
	2007/2008	3013	1,851	1,515	1,083	4,449	£391,243	£548,053	£2,210,872	£3,150,168	514	1284	4135	5933
	2006/2007	3121	2,198	2,049	1,259	5,506	£430,186	£739,575	£2,011,027		1717		2752	4469



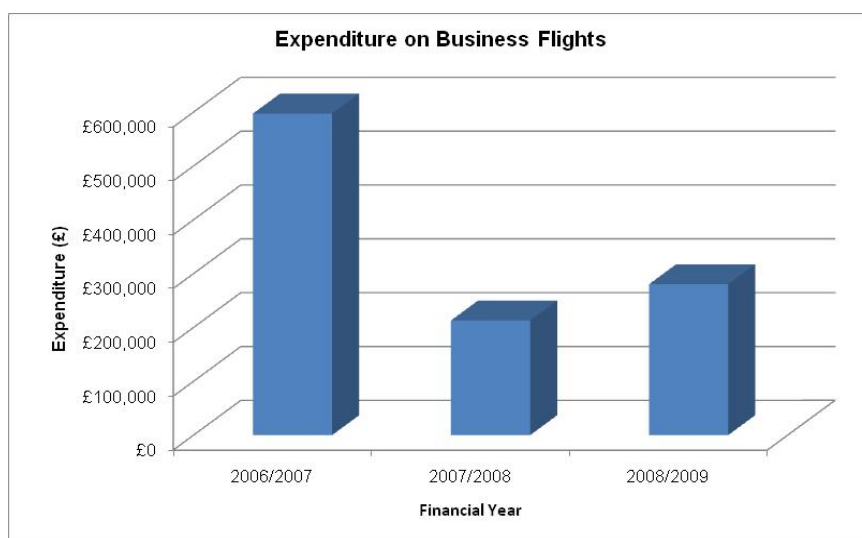
**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 the number of flights decreased by 31%. Carbon emissions decreased by 85% and expenditure increased by 49%.

If the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills was to mirror best practice it could save £3.5m and reduce flights by 5,140 over three years. In addition 325 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department provided no information on frequently flown flights routes.

## Department for Communities and Local Government

**Data summary:** DCLG provided total figures for expenditure on business flights for each of the financial years. Information was also provided for carbon emissions, broken down by flight type. The emissions data in the table below includes the core department and its executive agencies. Complete emissions data was not provided from the Fire Service College for FY 2006/07 and from the Planning Inspectorate for FY 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department for Communities and Local Government	2008/2009	2,207								£280,295	34.75	110.37	187.12	332.24
	2007/2008	2,001								£213,009	27.97	137.55	90.93	165.52
	2006/2007	2,045								£597,311		50.54	206.35	299.4



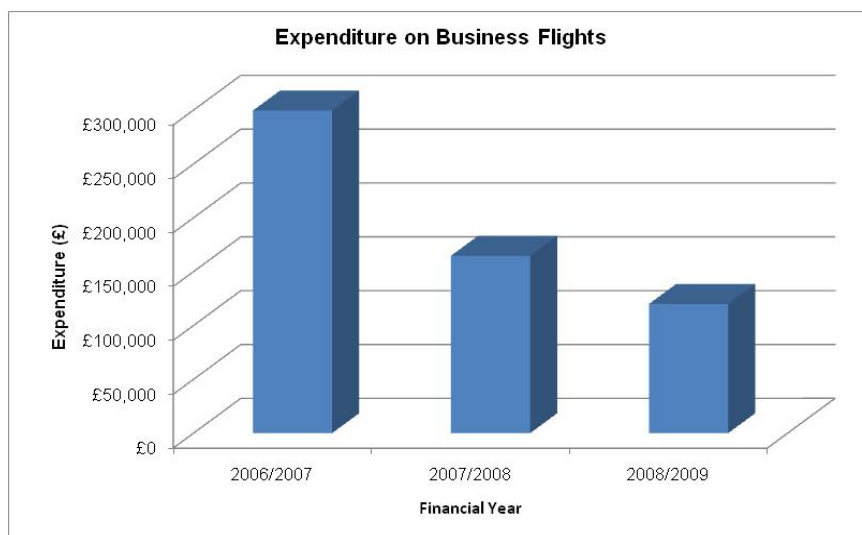
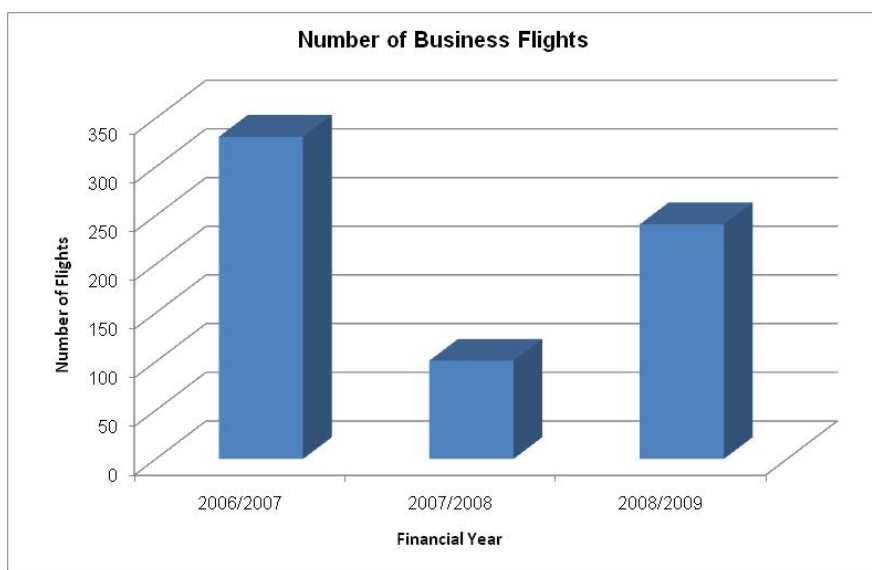
**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 expenditure on business flights decreased by 53% and carbon emissions increased by 11%.

If the Department for Communities and Local Government was to mirror best practice it could save £327k. In addition 166 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department provided no information on frequently flown flights routes.

## Department for Culture, Media and Sport

**Data summary:** data is not available between July and September of FY 2006/07 as DCMS was changing contracts. The number of flights and expenditure has been broken down by domestic, short-haul and long-haul for FY 2006/07 and 2008/09.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	2008/2009	459	73	77	91	241	£11,778	£17,790	£90,412	£119,979				
	2007/2008	492	23	44	34	101	£6,543	£7,722	£25,055	£164,740				
	2006/2007	539				331				£299,609				



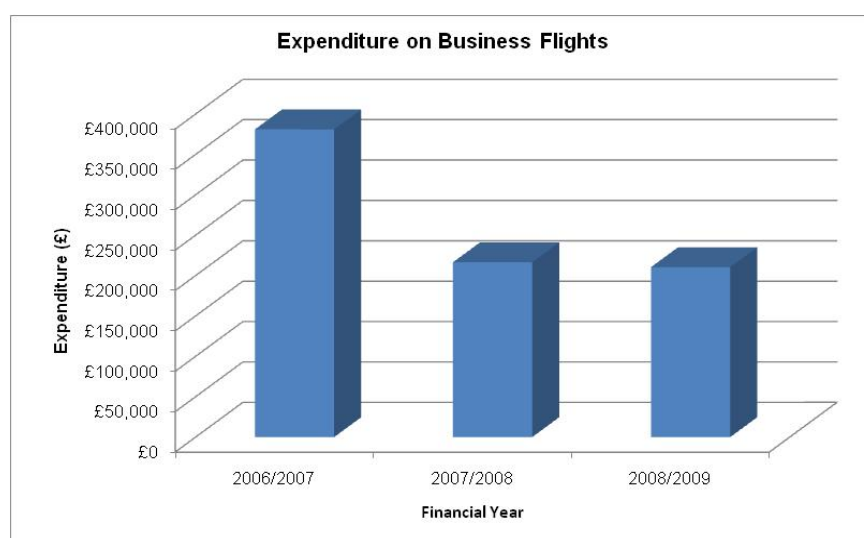
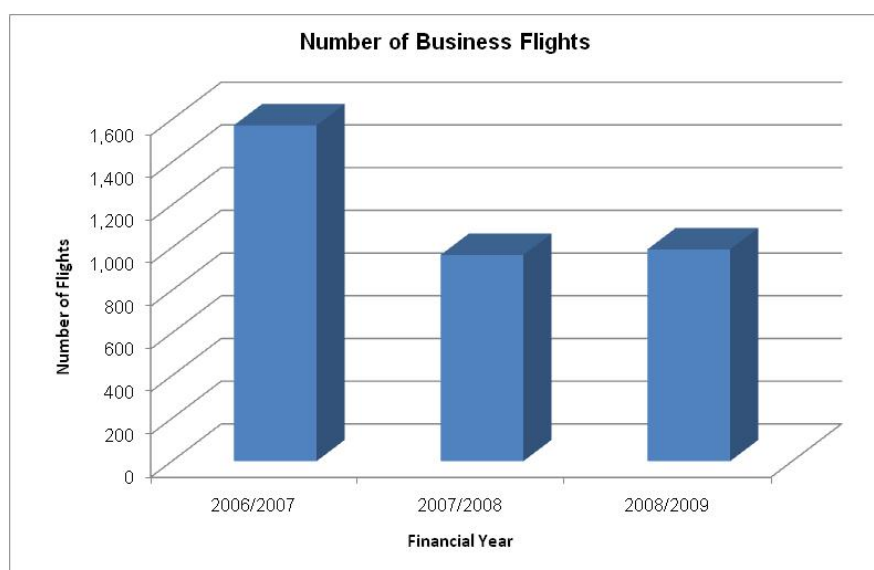
**Performance summary:** the data shows a 27% decrease in the number of flights between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09. Expenditure on business flights decreased by 60% which is very high relative to flights.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport could have achieved the best practice rating if carbon emissions data had been provided. If DCMS was to mirror best practice it could save £140k and reduce flights by 327 over three years. The Department could promote rail travel for its most frequently flown domestic routes London – Edinburgh and London – Glasgow, and investigate the viability of using videoconferencing between London – New York, its most frequently flown long-haul destination.

## Department for Education

**Data summary:** the Department for Education provided a complete data set. The number of flights, expenditure and emissions were broken down by domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department for Education	2008/2009	2,812	718	192	82	992	£70,975	£34,943	£104,568	£210,486	42.2	16.7	68.7	127.6
	2007/2008	2,899	702	182	82	966	£72,628	£27,561	£116,347	£216,536	47	18.6	66	131.6
	2006/2007	2,960	1,047	421	105	1,573	£116,451	£76,031	£188,648	£381,130	85.4	52.3	102.4	240.1



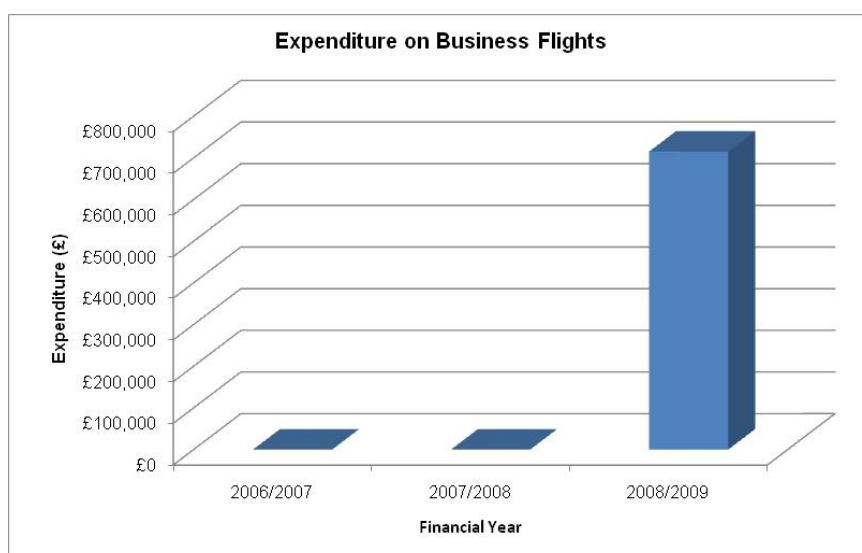
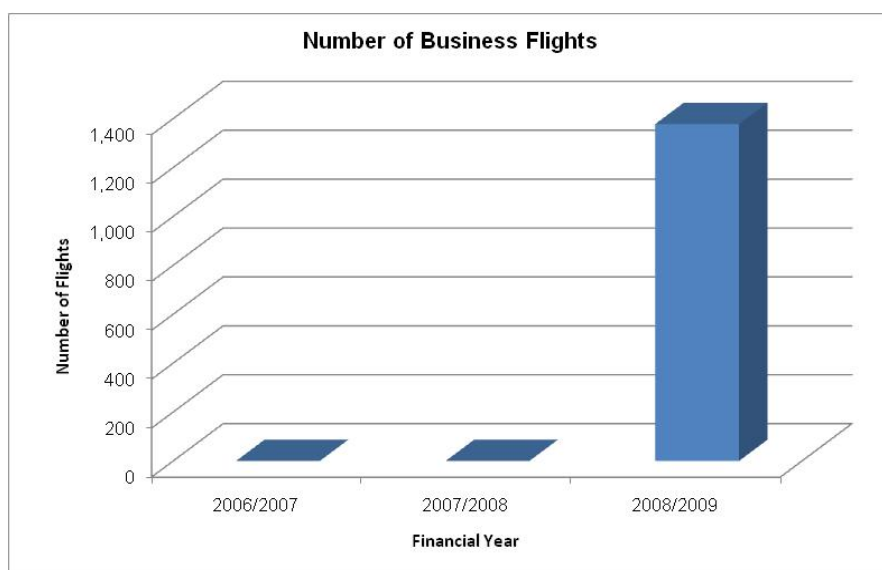
**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 the number of business flights decreased by 37%. Expenditure decreased by 45% and carbon emissions decreased by 47%.

The Department for Education could make even further gains by using rail travel on its top flight route, London – Manchester. There were over 100 flights on this route in FY 2008/09.

## Department of Energy and Climate Change

**Data summary:** DECC was created in October 2008 and therefore the figures only cover FY 2008/09. A breakdown of carbon emissions for DECC is not available for former Defra staff, but BIS has been able to provide this data for the former BERR staff.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department of Energy and Climate Change	2008/2009		676	526	176	1,378	£161,502	£90,051	£390,160	£715,115	121	43	204	368
	2007/2008													
	2006/2007													



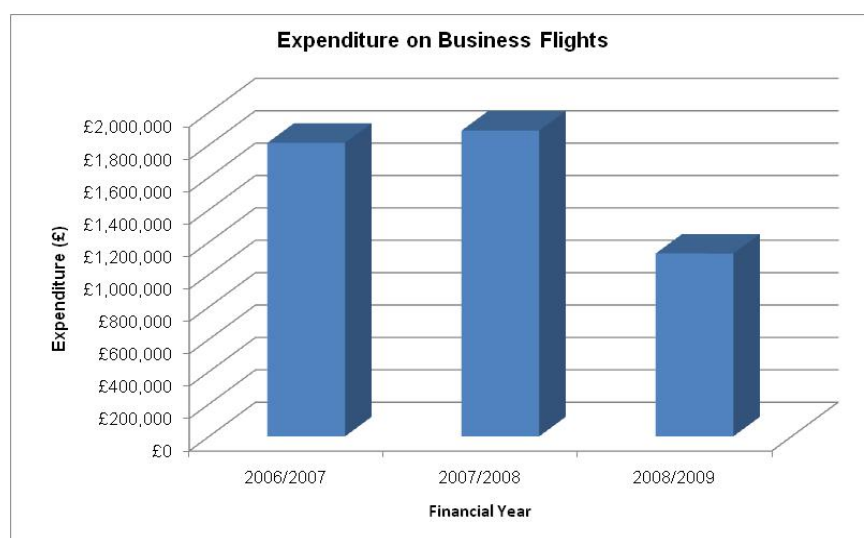
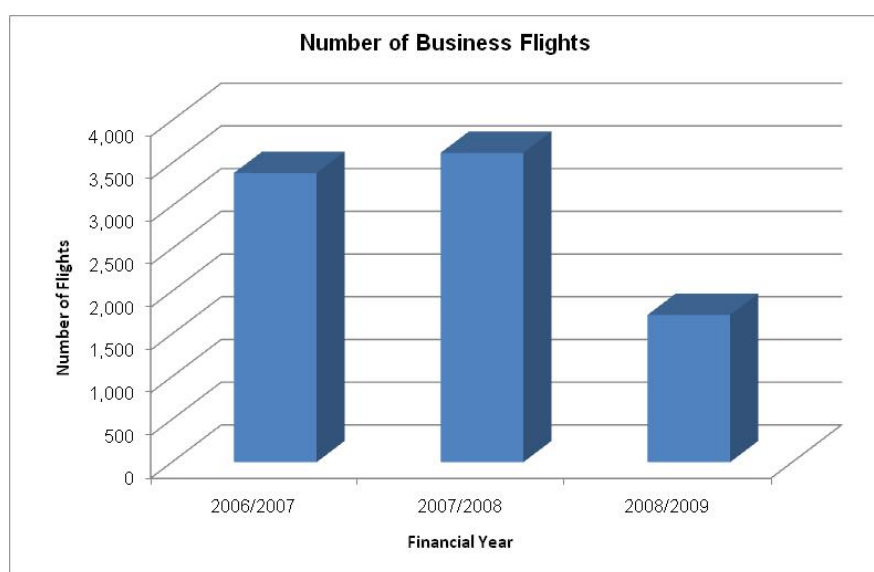
**Performance summary:** in FY 2008/09 DECC spent £715,115 on 1,378 flights with emissions of 368 tonnes.

If the Department of Energy and Climate Change was to mirror best practice it could save £835k and reduce flights by 1,870 over three years. In addition 184 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department could investigate the viability of videoconferencing between London – Warsaw and London – Washington, its most frequently flown short- and long-haul routes respectively. These actions would contribute to the department meeting its 10:10 obligations.

## Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

**Data summary:** complete data was provided by Defra for the number of flights and expenditure. A total figure for carbon emissions was provided for FY 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	2008/2009	10,079	663	783	278	1,724	£127,318	£255,761	£746,254	£1,129,333				3,184
	2007/2008	11,795	2,023	1,212	387	3,622	£420,832	£383,712	£1,083,551	£1,888,095				3,844
	2006/2007	12,311	1,938	1,052	396	3,386	£403,250	£344,490	£1,064,457	£1,812,197				

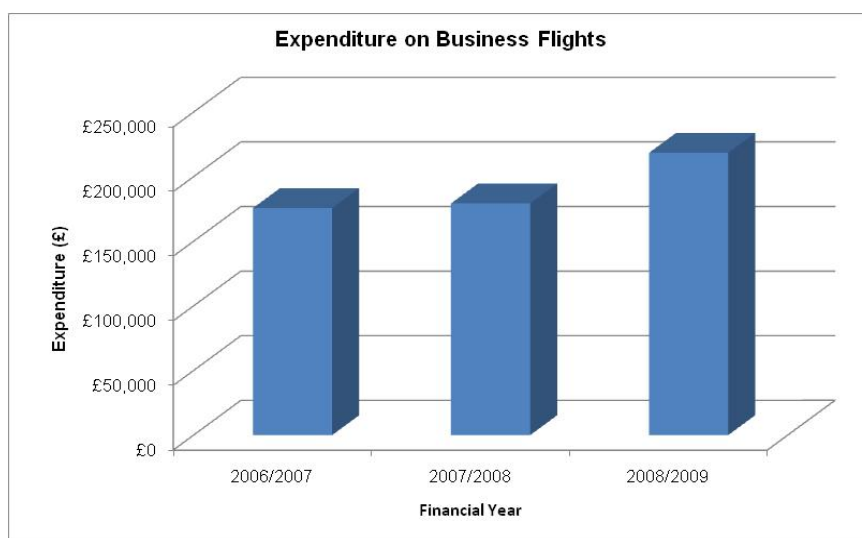


**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 the number of business flights decreased by 49% and expenditure decreased by 38%. Defra provided no information on frequently flown flights routes. Identifying frequently flown flight routes and travellers would enable Defra to target actions.

## Department for International Development

**Data summary:** the Department for International Development provided information from the Government Carbon Offsetting Fund. The financial costs in the table are for offsetting only.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department for International Development	2008/2009	2,365					£6,989	£6,750	£204,731	£218,470	705	681	20,659	22,045
	2007/2008	1,612					£6,712	£17,806	£154,793	£179,311	677	1,797	15,620	18,094
	2006/2007	1,719						£17,731	£158,011	£175,742		1,789	15,944	17,733



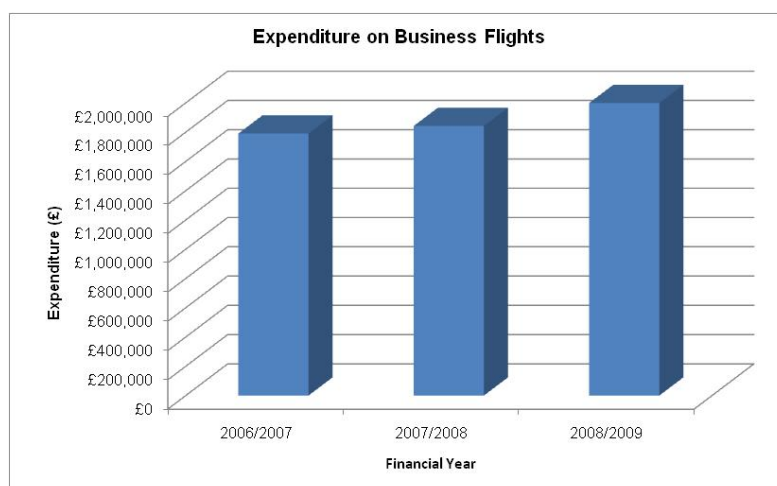
**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 carbon emissions increased by 24%.

If the Department for International Development was to mirror best practice it could save £255k on offsetting expenditure over three years. In addition 11,031 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department provided no information on frequently flown flights routes.

## Department for Transport

**Data summary:** the data provided includes the core department and its executive agencies (the DVLA, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Vehicle Certification Agency and the Driving Standards Agency). The core department provided data on expenditure and carbon emissions but not for the number of flights. The DVLA and Vehicle Certification Agency provided a full set of data. The Driving Standards Agency provided a full set of data for financial years 2007/08 and 2008/09 but not 2006/07. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency provided carbon emissions data only.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department for Transport	2008/2009	28,716	1,006	71	1	3,455	£144,705	£16,659	£316	£1,999,392	281	623	1,178	2,238
	2007/2008	28,272	1,087	90	11	3,350	£151,339	£23,530	£9,403	£1,842,604	289	587	947	1,958
	2006/2007	28,557	1,099	127	12	1,601	£154,013	£30,523	£10,383	£1,790,726	99	56	20	1,532



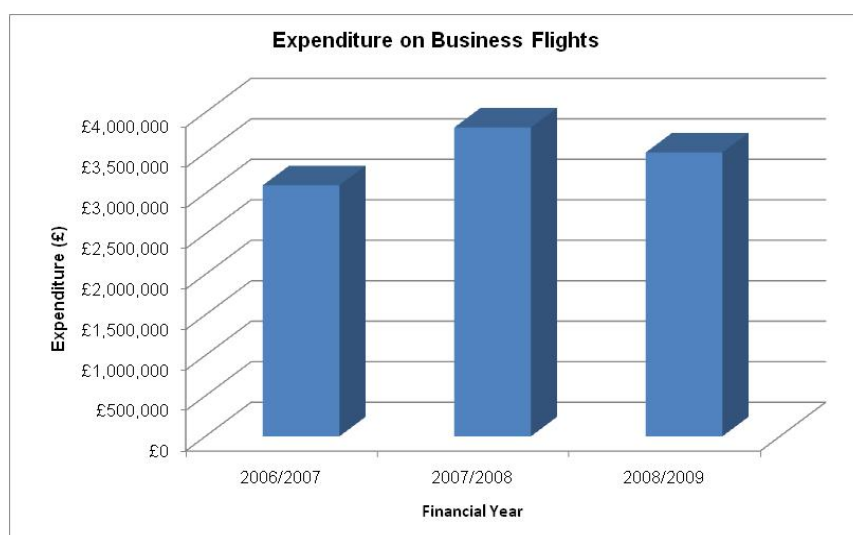
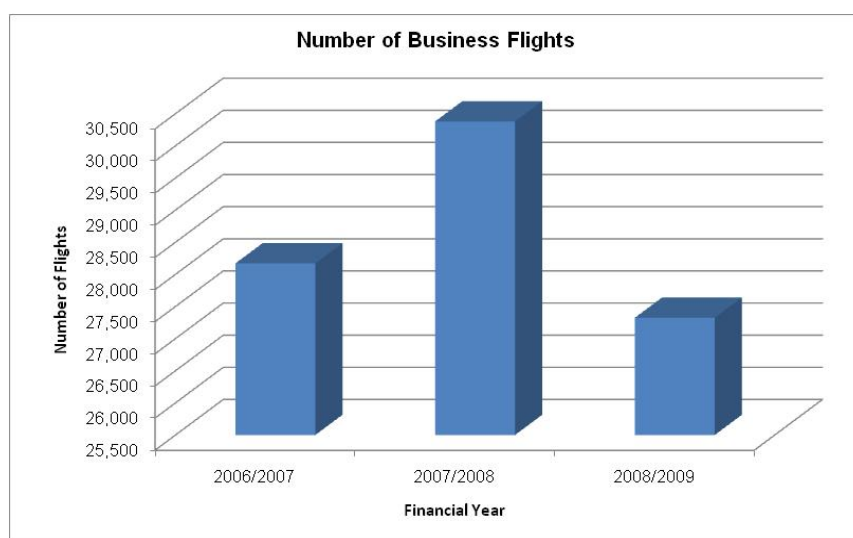
**Performance summary:** between FY 2007/08 and 2008/09 the number of flights increased by 3%. Expenditure between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 increased by 12% and carbon emissions increased by 14% between FY 2007/08 and 2008/09.

If the Department for Transport was to mirror best practice it could save £2.3m and reduce flights by 4,688 over three years. In addition 1,120 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department provided no information on frequently flown flights routes.

## Department for Work and Pensions

**Data summary:** the central recording of data for DWP only captures information from June 2006 onwards. DWP were not able to break down the number and financial cost of business flights by short-haul and long-haul. Emissions data for DWP could not be broken down by domestic and short-haul flights. All figures are estimated and derived from DWP's supplier's management information.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department for Work and Pensions	2008/2009	96,481	25,860	1,465		27,325	£2,966,713	£539,805		£3,506,518	2306		456	2762
	2007/2008	102,371	28,995	1,385		30,380	£3,315,161	£499,426		£3,814,587	2468		322	2789
	2006/2007	108,472	26,832	1,339		28,171	£2,542,551	£557,908		£3,100,459	4280		353	4633



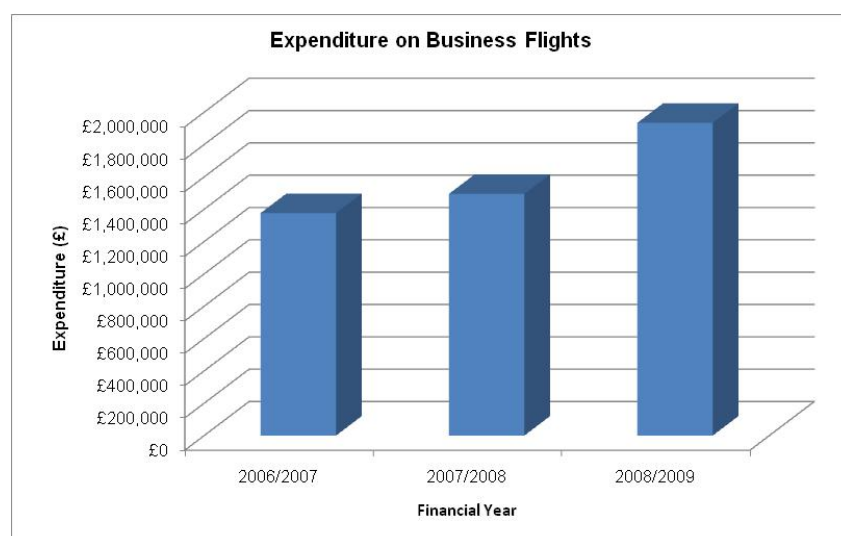
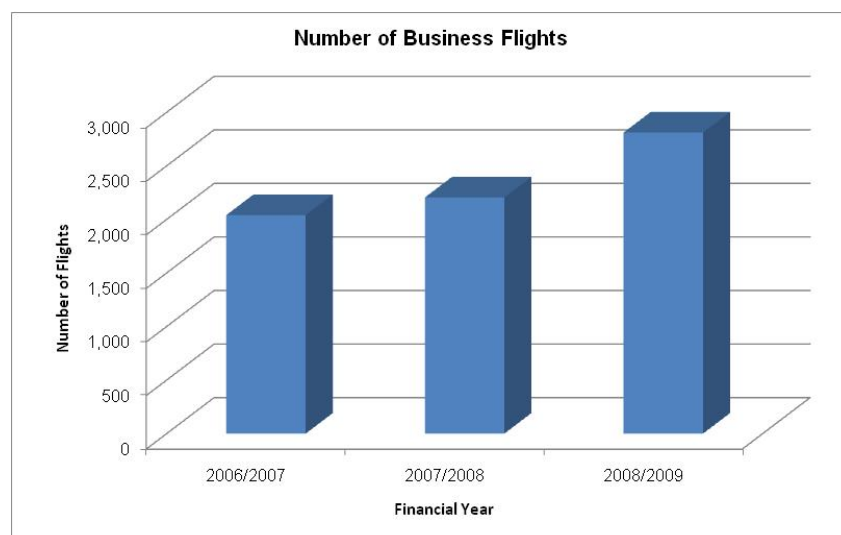
**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 the data for DWP shows a decrease of 3% in the number of flights. Expenditure increased by 13% and carbon emissions decreased by 40%.

If the Department for Work and Pensions was to mirror best practice it could save £4.1m and reduce flights by 37,077 over three years. In addition 1,382 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department could focus on promoting rail travel and videoconferencing between London – Glasgow and London – Edinburgh which accounted for over 5,000 flights, and London – Newcastle which accounted for over 1,400 flights.

## Department of Health

**Data summary:** data for the Department of Health includes the core department and its executive agency the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulation Agency. The core department provided carbon emissions from business flights, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulation Agency could not provide this information. A full set of data was received for the number and expenditure on business flights for the core department and the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulation Agency.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Department of Health	2008/2009	3,180	1,528	820	463	2,811	£272,352	£260,459	£1,402,364	£1,935,175				967.3
	2007/2008	3,053	1,100	700	405	2,205	£184,004	£229,026	£1,082,504	£1,495,534				918.2
	2006/2007	3,081	919	753	368	2,040	£160,098	£262,798	£953,818	£1,376,714				917.62



**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 the number of flights increased by 38%. Expenditure for this period increased by 41% and emissions increased by 5%.

If the Department of Health was to mirror best practice it could save £2.3m and reduce flights by 3,814 over three years. In addition 484 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department could promote rail travel instead of Newquay – London Gatwick and Southampton – Leeds flights which are two of its top five domestic flight routes.

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**Data summary:** the Foreign and Commonwealth Office provided data for distance travelled by air and carbon emissions by Ministers for chartered and RAF flights only. The information covers FY 2007/08 and 2008/09. Conversion factors have been applied according to the Defra guidelines.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	2008/2009											42	20	63
	2007/2008											9	9	18
	2006/2007													

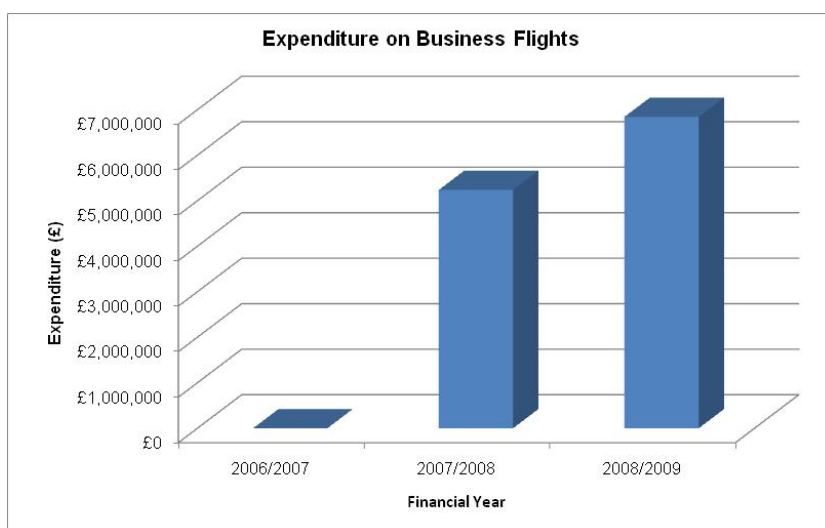
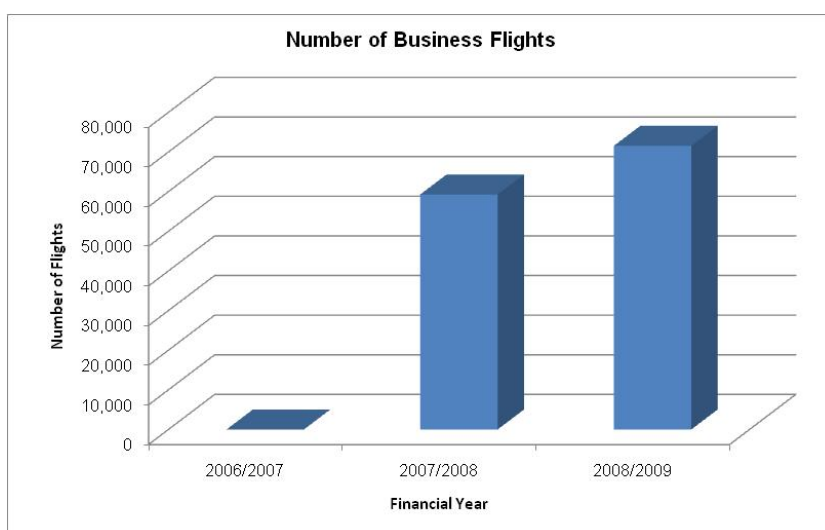
**Performance summary:** the emissions data shows a 250% increase between FY 2007/08 and 2008/09. Distance by air for this period increased by 230%.

If Ministers at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were to mirror best practice they could save 32 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. The department provided no information on frequently flown flights routes. To achieve its 10:10 commitment, FCO needs to review its management information systems and understand its frequently flown flight routes.

## HM Revenue & Customs

**Data summary:** complete data was provided by HMRC for FY 2007/08 and 2008/09. This has been broken down by domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
HM Revenue & Customs	2008/2009	82,003	67,825	3,043	698	71,566	£5,746,555	£378,965	£719,375	£6,844,894	5059	320.4	1051.8	6431
	2007/2008	85,769	55,894	2,854	546	59,294	£4,360,023	£320,703	£558,302	£5,239,028	4086.8	318.7	825.1	5231
	2006/2007													



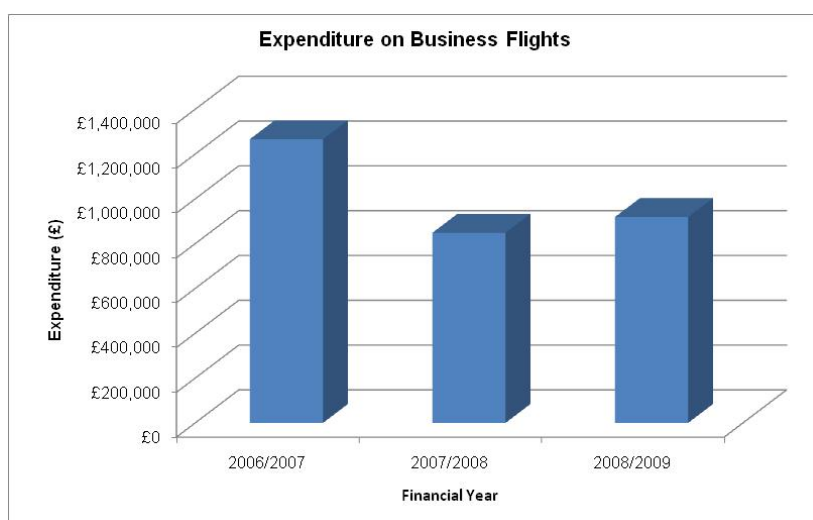
**Performance summary:** between FY 2007/08 and 2008/09 the number of flights increased by 21%. Expenditure data increased by 31% over the same time period and emissions increased by 23%.

If HM Revenue & Customs was to mirror best practice it could save £8m and reduce flights by 97,108 over three years. In addition 1,100 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The department provided no information on frequently flown flights routes

## HM Treasury

**Data summary:** HM Treasury could not provide a breakdown of domestic, short-haul and long-haul flights but volunteered information on UK and overseas expenditure on flights.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
HM Treasury	2008/2009	1,569					£75,226	£844,111		£919,337				
	2007/2008	1,451					£66,409	£782,641		£849,050				
	2006/2007	1,611					£83,752	£1,183,070		£1,266,822				



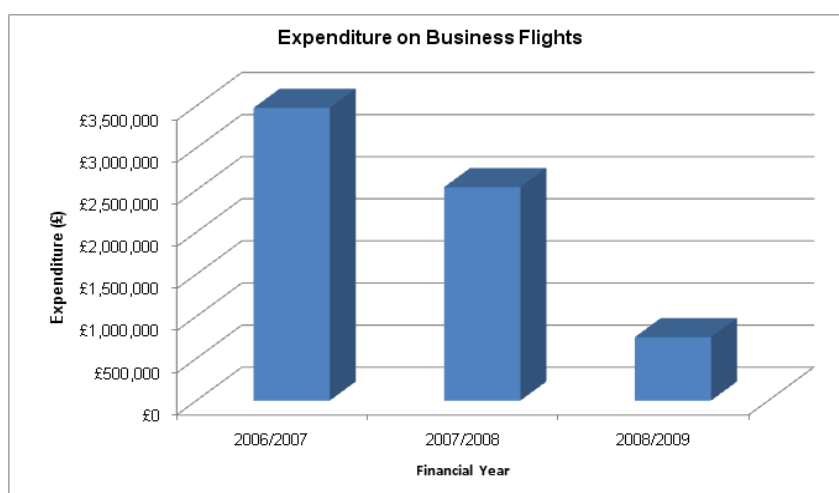
**Performance summary:** the data provided on expenditure on business flights shows a 27% decrease between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09.

If HM Treasury was to mirror best practice it could save £1.1m over three years. The department could use rail travel instead of flights between London – Brussels and London – Amsterdam. Flights between Manchester – London, a top five domestic route, could also be replaced by rail travel, and videoconferencing explored for London – Washington; the most frequently used long-haul route.

## Home Office

**Data summary:** the Home Office were able to provide information on flight expenditure in FY 2006/07 and FY 2007/08 and carbon emissions in FY 2006/07 to FY 2008/09. In FY 2008/09 flight numbers and flight expenditure were only available for 4 months (December 2008 to March 2009) as the Home Office's travel contractor changed. Total expenditure for FY 2006/07 includes the core department and the UK Border Agency. Total expenditure for FY 2007/08 includes the core department, the UK Border Agency and Criminal Records Bureau.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
The Home Office	2008/2009		2,986	745	270	4,065	£295,585	£148,783	£312,476	£753,644	815	663	1,489	2,938
	2007/2008									£2,536,066	858	739	1,466	3,036
	2006/2007									£3,476,385	2,223		1,711	3,934

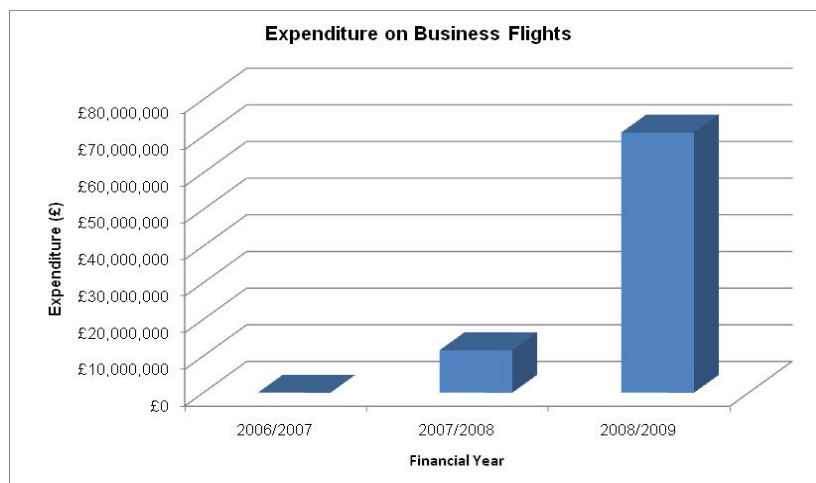
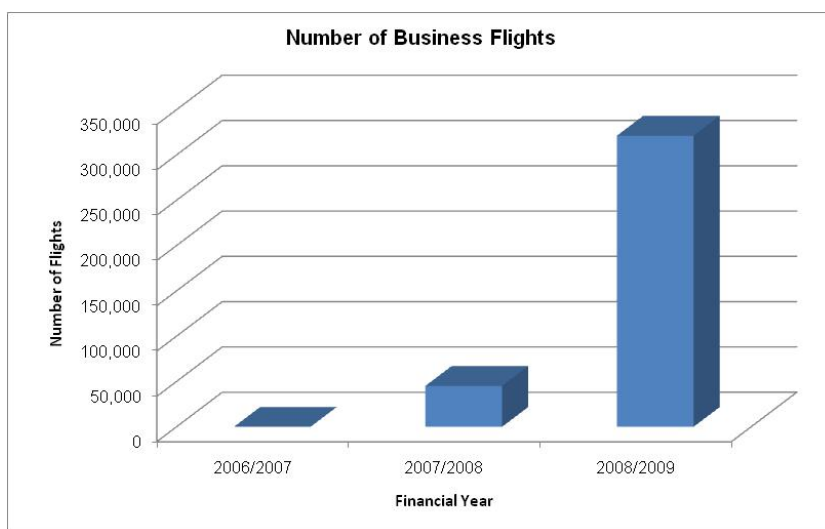


**Performance summary:** flight expenditure by the Home Office has decreased by 27% over the past two years. Carbon emissions from flights have declined by 25% over the past three years. If the Home Office was to mirror best practice it could save £880k and reduce flights by 5,516 over three years. In addition 1,470 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. These figures are based on 4 month's worth of flight data in FY 2008/09. If flights undertaken in the trend was representative then savings could be significantly greater; potentially £3.5m, 20,000 flights and 5,900 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. The department could use rail travel for London – Manchester trips, its top domestic flight route with over 1,000 flights, and London – Amsterdam, its top short-haul flight route, with over 70 flights.

## Ministry of Defence

**Data summary:** data for the Ministry of Defence only exists from December 2007 as this type of information was not held centrally prior to this date. The data provided includes business flights for civilian and military personnel as well as Ministers and their officials.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Ministry of Defence	2008/2009	270,820				321,394				£71,000,000				71,763
	2007/2008	277,540				45,225				£11,600,000				67.8
	2006/2007	288,740												



**Performance summary:** the data shows the scale of the Ministry of Defence's operations with expenditure of £71,000,000 spent on business flights in FY 2008/09. If the available data for December - March of FY 2007/08 is uplifted to estimate the full year this would show that the MoD's number of flights and flight expenditure have increased by 78% and 53% respectively. Carbon emission data from flights is incomplete but appears to be on the rise.

If the Ministry of Defence was to mirror best practice it could save £82.9m and reduce flights by 436,100 over three years. In addition 35,910 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The Ministry could focus on reducing the 10,000 flights between London – Glasgow, and investigate the viability of videoconferencing between London – Washington, which accounted for almost 4,000 flights.

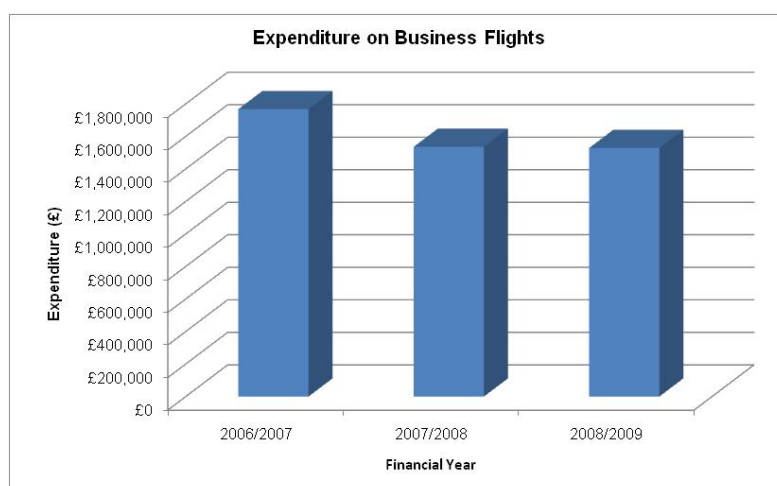
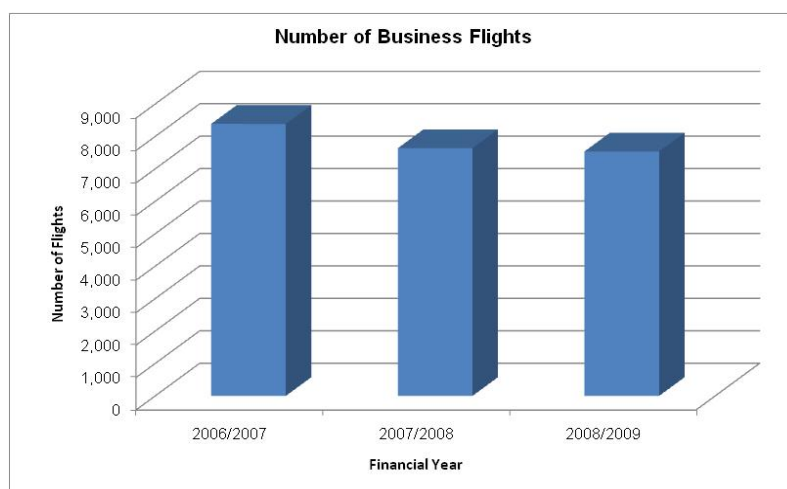
## Ministry of Justice

**Data summary:** the Ministry of Justice was unable to provide the information requested in the first FoI request. Their response to the second FoI request suggests unnecessary flying between London – Manchester that could be easily replaced by train. Train travel or videoconferencing should be considered as an alternative to domestic and short-haul flying to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Amsterdam, and Strasbourg. Videoconferencing could replace long-haul flights to Hong Kong, Vancouver, Ottawa, Toronto, Seattle and Washington.

## Northern Ireland Office

**Data summary:** the Northern Ireland Office was able to provide a breakdown on the number of business flights and carbon emissions and provided a total figure for expenditure.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Northern Ireland Office	2008/2009	1,279	7376	109	54	7539				£1,528,974	582	19	49	650
	2007/2008	1327	7446	127	66	7639				£1,536,333	552	28	59	639
	2006/2007	1301	8245	68	75	8388				£1,767,987		1087	61	1148



**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 the number of flights decreased by 10%. Expenditure decreased by 14% and emissions decreased by 43% in the same period.

If the Northern Ireland Office was to mirror best practice it could save £1.8m and reduce flights by 10,230 over three years. In addition 325 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The Office could promote and train staff to use videoconferencing to reduce trips to London, Manchester and Stansted, and use rail travel between London – Paris.

## Office for National Statistics

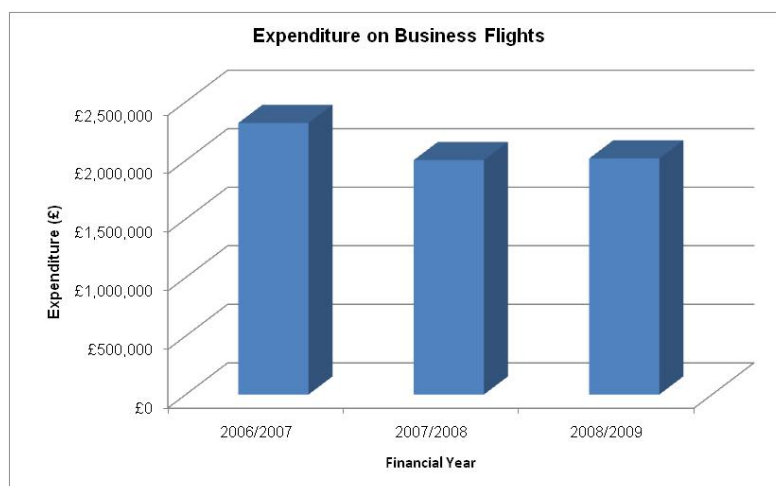
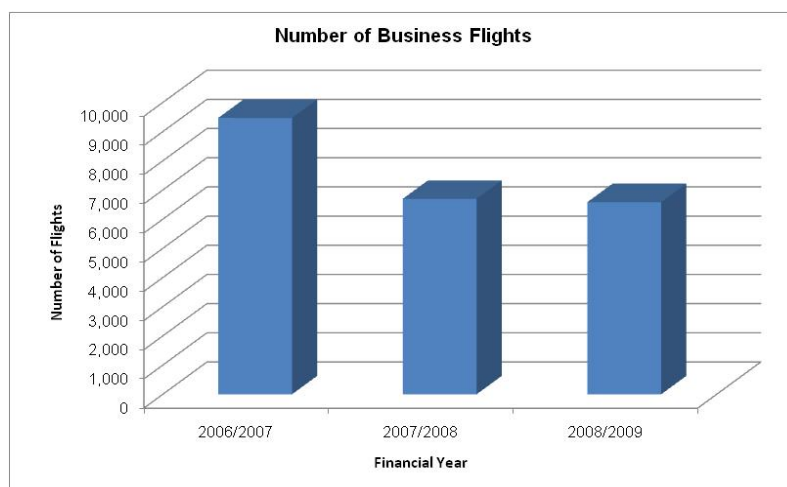
**Data summary:** the Office for National Statistics stated the cost of answering the FoI request would exceed the ceiling limit of £600

Whilst unable to provide data on number of flights, expenditure and emissions, the department provided frequently flown flight routes. This suggests that rail and videoconferencing could be promoted as viable alternatives for domestic flights between Southampton, Manchester, Leeds Bradford, Newcastle and Edinburgh. Videoconferencing links could be considered between Southampton and Belfast. Train travel to replace flights between London and Luxembourg is another possibility.

## Scottish Government

**Data summary:** the Scottish Government provided total figures on the number, expenditure and emissions from business flights. A breakdown of domestic, short-haul and long-flights was provided for the number and expenditure on flights for FY 2008/09.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO2)			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Scottish Government	2008/2009	4,766	5,318	1,119	149	6,586	£1,278,177	£421,654	£316,990	£2,016,821				1456
	2007/2008	4,294				6,699				£2,003,133				1359.3
	2006/2007	4,196				9,470				£2,320,195				1444.8



**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 the number of business flights decreased by 30%. Expenditure on flights decreased by 13% and emissions increased by 1%. There is a possible anomaly in the carbon data as emissions shouldn't be increasing given the extent of flight reduction. Emissions calculations should be checked for inaccuracies or changes in reporting methodologies.

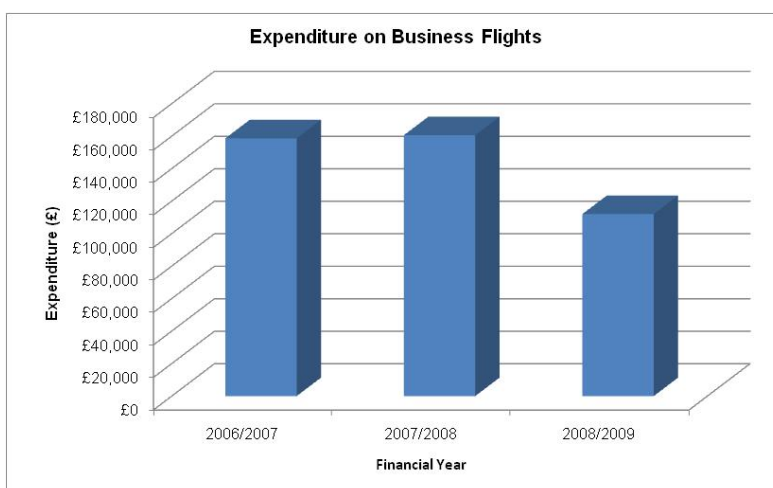
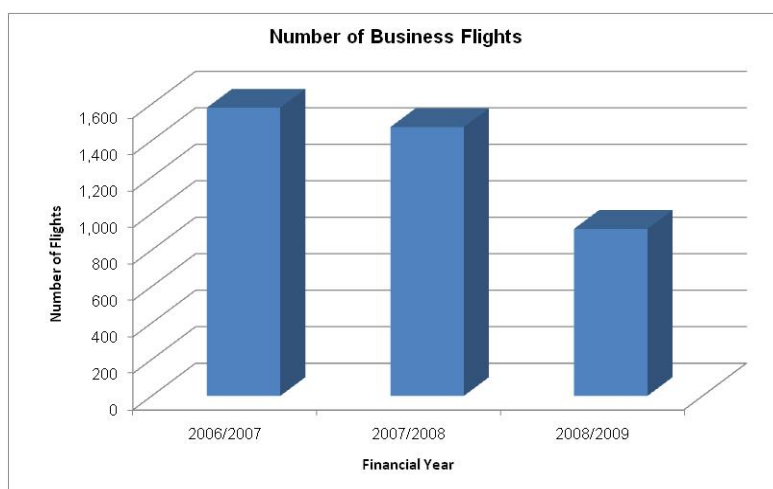
If the Scottish Government was to mirror best practice it could save £2.4m and reduce flights by 8,937 over three years. In addition 729 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The Government could focus on promoting rail travel and videoconferencing between Edinburgh – London and Glasgow – London.

WWF welcomes the Scottish Government's entry into the One in Five Challenge which demonstrates its commitment to reduce its flights by 20% within five years.

## Welsh Assembly Government

**Data summary:** the Welsh Assembly Government provided a complete data set. The number of flights, expenditure and emissions were broken down by domestic, short-haul and long haul-flights.

Department	Financial Year	Total number of staff (Full time equivalent)	Number of Business Flights				Financial Costs of Business Flights				Carbon Emissions from Business Flights (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> )			
			Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total	Domestic	Short Haul	Long Haul	Total
Welsh Assembly Government	2008/2009	6034	688	192	36	916	£36,703	£28,029	£47,306	£112,038	18.37	14.02	23.68	56.07
	2007/2008	5948	1,038	398	38	1,474	£61,600	£53,171	£45,782	£160,552	87.35	41	64.92	193.27
	2006/2007	5925	1,080	460	40	1,580	£54,374	£64,641	£39,633	£158,648	105.7	79.88	66.2	251.78



**Performance summary:** between FY 2006/07 and 2008/09 the number of business flights decreased by 42%, expenditure by 29% and emissions by 78%. There is a possible anomaly in the CO<sub>2</sub> reduction figures as these are greater than we would have expected, especially for long-haul travel.

If the Welsh Assembly Government was to mirror best practice it could save £131k and reduce flights by 1,243 over three years. In addition 28 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> would be saved. The Welsh Assembly Government could focus on promoting better videoconferencing links between contacts in Edinburgh, and use rail for trips to Brussels.

# Government flying by numbers

100%  
RECYCLED

&gt;£100M

If all government departments followed the lead of the best performers to reduce unnecessary flying, then over the next three years the government could be saving well over £100 million of taxpayers' money in avoided flight costs.

20%

To help government and companies to reduce their reliance on business flying, we have developed the One in Five Challenge, a guided programme and award scheme to cut business flying by 20% within five years.



90%

of all government flights are to destinations within the UK.

&lt;50%

Less than half of government departments have reduced their flights.



## Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

[wwf.org.uk](http://wwf.org.uk)