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SUPC Update

Current Travel Framework – due to the Christmas shut down period, the current framework has been extended until **31 March 2024**.

New Travel Framework – will be contracting and **preparing to go live in January 2024**, but there will be an overlap with the previous framework to support the contracting period.

Tender update – We had 20 interested bidders who logged on to view our tender. From these, 6 proceeded to submit final bids. Part of the new process will be to reach out to bidders who declined to participate in the tender and understand their reasons why. This will be shared in due course.

“ SUPC says:

We would encourage all members to start planning their scope of change and update programme in light of the new requirements as early as possible, and also to review all their active and expiring contracts to plan accordingly, given the additional administrative burden that is anticipated with the new regs.



“ SUPC says:

We are looking to review our internal processes and procedures ahead of the procurement act coming into effect. We will be taking the opportunity to revisit strategic goals and vision, and work our ambitions into deliverable plans. Our aim is to ensure our ways of working are fit for purpose and as streamlined and efficient as possible.



New Procurement Act October 2024

- Currently we understand that **all tendering started**, including a PIN or market engagement activity, **and contracts that are awarded before the new regulations come into effect, will remain exempt** from new process requirement until further notice. This includes the additional number of notices.
- **Any tenders or contracts awarded on the current, or new framework up until October 2024, will remain exempt** from the new process requirements, until further updates are announced.
- Ahead of the new objectives and requirements of the updated Act, we will be sharing more guidance. The topline changes and new revised national objectives will replace the procurement principles of PCR 2015.

Principles of Procurement Changes

PCR2015

- Transparency
- Equal treatment
- Non-discriminatory
- Proportionality

Procurement Bill

- Delivering value for money
- Maximising public benefit
- Sharing information (linked to suppliers understanding policies and decisions)
- Acting with integrity

“ SUPC says:

Members may want to take a view on their full contract portfolio, get ahead of what will be expiring and think about whether to award via frameworks or lean into the change and undertake tenders under the new regs. Most will probably need to plan a combination of both options, given time and resources available.



The university of the future - SUMS Consulting Annual Conference 2023

Diversity Travel (one of our current framework suppliers) exhibited at the SUMS Consulting Annual Conference *The university of the future* on 9 November, in partnership with Lufthansa Group.

They met with delegates to discuss the future of travel in the HE sector and their approach to delivering sustainable travel programmes.



We asked Diversity what insights they had on future trends and how members can prepare for the upcoming year - with a special focus on Student Groups?



- For student groups, we are actively encouraging our bookers to plan further in advance for their trips to popular European and long-haul destinations
- Brexit has resulted in tougher entry routes to the UK for those both inside and outside the EU. To enter the UK EU travellers now require a valid passport instead of an ID card
- Non-EU student travellers have been even harder hit and are no longer able to benefit from the List of Travellers Scheme. Instead of a simple form to enter the UK for study trips, since May 2022 students have required a visa to enter the UK. The new process can be a very lengthy and expensive process, again impacting the attractiveness of the UK as an academic travel destination
- Many EU schools/Universities are now opting to travel within the EU to avoid the need for visas and additional costs. This is impacting the number of places available for UK students to travel to, with less availability and higher prices due to increased demand
- To avoid this, it is crucial for our UK institutions to plan as their study trips as early as they can, this can secure best availability and lowest rates
- Due to increased visa office delays, international students now require 3-4 months for visa applications. Planning ahead is crucial to accommodate all students.

SUPC wanted to know what changes Diversity have undertaken to help:

- Diversity Travel reserves rooms up to a year ahead with popular European accommodation providers. This allows group leaders to secure low rates and flexible terms, eliminating the need for final names and numbers until 4-6 weeks before travel
- We assist university partners through webinars and on-campus meetings, highlighting the advantages of early booking and offering support without requiring final names/numbers. Many of our university partners now book a semester in advance.





Air Traffic Control

In August 2023, a high-profile Air Traffic Control breakdown led to the cancellation of over 2,000 flights in the UK. Here at SUPC, we promptly contacted suppliers to assess the impact on members.

“ SUPC says:

Here at SUPC we took an action to contact all suppliers to get a handle on the scale of the issue and how it affected our members, and individual travellers.

We issued communications to remind all members and contract owners what to do and who to contact if they should find themselves stuck as a method of reassurance and reminding people who can help in what space.

Sometimes its hard to think when you are stuck in an unfamiliar – and we were pleased to share that these updates and communications were well received.



After assessing the situation with suppliers, SUPC provided communication to members and contract owners with necessary actions to take if they find themselves stuck.

The issue arose from an extremely rare set of circumstances, causing chaos for passengers, however, the full picture and impact of this is now clear.

The Civil Aviation Authority announced its own independent review as it submitted an initial report from Nats, the air traffic control services provider, to the transport secretary.

Headlines broadcast included some unsettling stories e.g. “We’re £1,000 out of pocket”, “travellers affected by UK air traffic chaos...”

The technical report from Nats confirmed that a single flight plan with confusing waypoint data brought its bespoke software system down. An error triggered by the plan – which was correctly submitted by an incoming airline – forced the system to stop processing flight plans automatically, leaving controllers to handle operations manually.

At SUPC our members were fortunately less affected, largely due to the time of year. We did a post issue review and uncovered the following data:

Total number of travellers impacted	455
Number of additional calls / e-mails / interactions with clients required	1,410
Numbers of additional hours worked to deal with spike*	60
Number of night accommodation booked for travellers without flights	50
Average number of days delayed after original booking	1
Total number of cancellations	123
Total value of spend affected (ex VAT)	£230,611
Total number of bookings affected	241
Total cost of incremental spend required for resolution by suppliers	£11,140

*reported by 2 suppliers, others did not collate this data

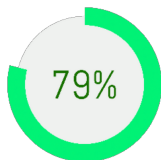
British Travel Association White Paper

The British Travel Association (BTA) is the representative body for the UK business travel industry and Travel Management Companies (TMCs). BTA member TMCs account for over 90% of all business travel booked in the UK.

Key take outs:

- Business travel, contributing £27.7bn per annum to UK GVA (Gross Value Add)
- For airlines, business travellers account for 15-20% of their customer base
- On our railways, business travellers provide over £1bn.

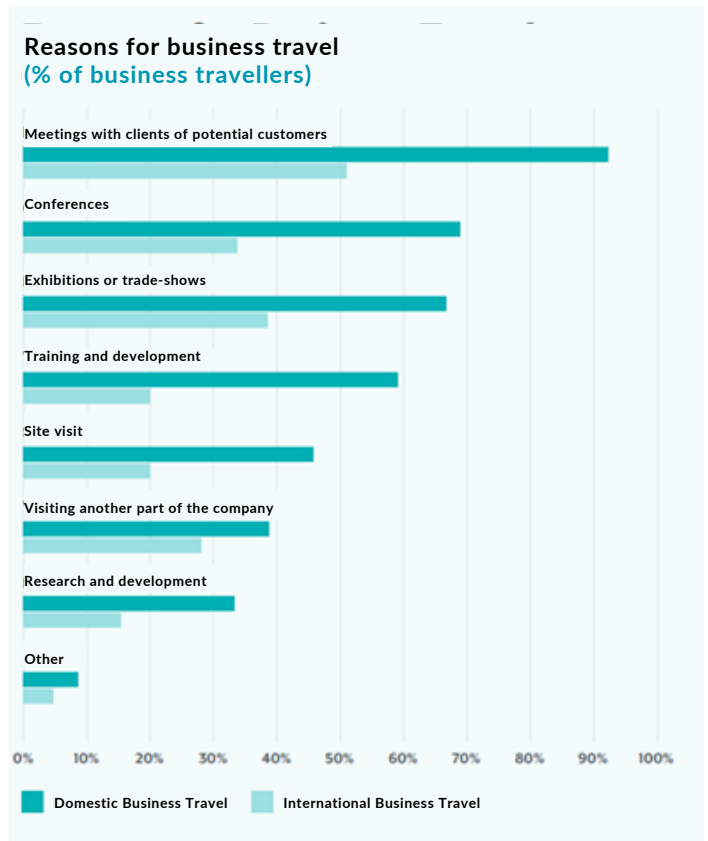
Reasons for business travel:



of businesses stated in person meetings as their preference compared to virtual meetings



The vast majority of businesses agreed that in person meetings are more effective than virtual meetings for teamwork, employee wellbeing and innovation



“ SUPC asked the BTA what they think we can expect in 2024:

We continue to live in a volatile world, pandemics, cost of living, economic and geographic disruption... there is an increased risk to some Travel, and the immediate future remains a little uncertain but, ... but the outlook remains positive – general forecast of recovery is that the Business Travel sector will reach 80-85% of 2019 levels. The introduction of artificial intelligence – there is a view that AI might at some point be used to personalise the business, predict and prevent travel disruptions and automate tasks such as travel booking and expense reporting, Sustainability continues to be a high priority.

“ SUPC says:

While there is more focus on reporting on carbon emissions due to member institutions requiring data to report on their Sustainability policies... to produce a different result, travellers need to be open to opting for more sustainable methods of travel, e.g.: rail which in the UK comes with its own level of uncertainty – hindering confidence in changing behaviour at the root cause. This might be where Institutions gain board or exec level support in order to draw up rigorous travel policies with specific guidelines, in order to direct bookers to ensure less carbon emitting travel – but this is a hard nut to crack, with variables influencing the decision-making process. Start with good data! You can't improve on a situation if you don't know where you are starting from. Reporting Carbon emissions and sharing those stats may gain buy in from other parties, especially the department that may own and be accountable for managing your internal Travel Policy.

The role of a TMC

TMCs manage 99% of FTSE 250 companies, SMEs and central government teams to meet and undertake business activity that supports the UK economy. Ensuring travellers are supported in managing a complex and volatile travel landscape eg, in the event of disruption or natural disaster.



1

Pre-trip

Risk management
Booking
Customisation
Economic & environmental travel guidance



2

Trip

Live travel updates
24 hour support
Travel guides
Duty of care



3

Post-trip

Personal & corporate reporting
Carbon reporting
Return on investment measurement

Key recommendations from the BTA's White Paper are:

International trade agreements

We're calling for: International trade agreements to greater reflect the needs of people travelling internationally for work, including work visas and permits.

Workforce strategy

We're calling for: A long-term workforce strategy which identifies the skills needed for a strong travel sector, including greater recognition for the business travel sector and what is needed to help plug the skills gap.

Carbon off-setting

We're calling for: An industry standard for carbon off-setting for the entire business travel journey.

Promoting business travel

We're calling for: The creation of a new UK Global Business Travel fund

Transport strategy

We're calling for: A strategic transport plan which covers the entirety of the United Kingdom. A joined-up, multi-modal transport system which connects our villages, towns and cities to major economic hubs is crucial for facilitating business travel for workers across the UK. This is because travelling for work relies on being able to get from A to B in a quick and efficient way, with every minute of delay often costing businesses money and time.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)

We're calling for: A watertight SAF mandate, alongside grants for developers to boost production and offer subsidies to those purchasing and using SAF in greater quantities.

Rail infrastructure

We're calling for: The prioritisation of rail infrastructure and key business routes.

Air passenger duty

We're calling for: Air Passenger Duty (APD) to be frozen or cut, and the proceeds of APD to be used to support green projects like SAF.

Rail reforms

We're calling for: Rail ticketing reforms to benefit the business traveller.

Electric vehicles

The BTA welcomes the shift to electric vehicles but we need to see greater investment in charging infrastructure.
We're calling for: Greater investment in tackling some of the existing challenges facing EVs at the moment. This includes the accessibility of EV charging points as well as the speed and simplicity of charging an EV.

Regional airports

We're calling for: Investment in our regional airports to help deliver growth across the country.