



Matthew Davis

By email: newsdesk@datanews.co.uk

Network Rail
Freedom of Information
The Quadrant
Elder Gate
Milton Keynes
MK9 1EN

12 May 2023

Dear Matthew Davis

Information request

Reference number: FOI2023/00305

Thank you for your email of 10 March 2023, in which you requested the following information:

1. In the last calendar years 2021 and 2022 how much have you spent and how many flight journeys have been booked for (a) UK domestic air journeys and (b) international air journeys.
2. How many flight journeys were made in 2021 and 2022 between (i) Birmingham and Glasgow, (ii) Birmingham and Edinburgh and (iii) Gatwick and Glasgow.
3. Which member of your executive Committee took UK domestic flights on the greatest number of occasions in 2021 and 2022? Please list this flights and the individual costs associated with them as well as the arrival and departure airports.

4. Which member of your executive committee took international flights on the greatest number of occasions in 2021 and 2022? Please list this flights and the individual costs associated with them as well as the arrival and departure airports.

5. How many flight journeys booked in 2021 and 2022 for (i) UK domestic travel and (ii) international travel were in either business class or first class? Please list these flights individually with the arrival and departure points and the cost of the flights.

I have processed your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and can confirm that we hold this information.

1. **In the last calendar years 2021 and 2022: How much have you spent and how many flight journeys have been booked for (a) UK domestic air journeys and (b) international air journeys.**

The table below sets out the number of tickets for UK domestic air journeys and international air journeys and the total costs for each type of air travel in 2021 and 2022. When reviewing this data, please note that I have excluded tickets (and the costs of those tickets) where we cancelled and were issued a refund. The increased average cost of flights in 2022 compared to 2021 is down to price increases in the airline industry as opposed to any change of approach on Network Rail's part.

	2021	
Type of flight	Number of tickets purchased	Paid fare (including air tax)
UK Domestic	454	£81,414
International	1,270	£173,698
Total	1,724	£255,112

	2022	
Type of flight	Number of tickets purchased	Paid fare (including air tax)
UK Domestic	985	£188,006.84
International	1,622	£315,026.74
Total	2,607	£503,033.58

We have offices and facilities spread across Great Britain; our employees are required to travel on a regular basis for business purposes. Rail is the main method of transport used by our approximately 40,000 employees. The table below shows the proportion of flights against railway journeys. You will see that across 2021 and 2022 our flight costs were only around 6 % of our rail costs.

Year	Number of tickets purchased	Paid fare
2021	123,185	£4,960,222
2022	224,549	£9,728,776

2. How many flight journeys were made in 2021 and 2022 between (i) Birmingham and Glasgow, (ii) Birmingham and Edinburgh and (iii) Gatwick and Glasgow.

Please find the data requested below. This data includes single and return flight bookings, broken down separately. It may be useful to know that some return journeys are booked as two single trips or include a flight one way and a rail or sleeper train journey on the other leg. These numbers also exclude amendments and any journeys between any of these locations that were refunded.

(i) Birmingham and Glasgow

Flight details	2021	2022
Singles	39	60
Returns	33	80
Total	72	140

(ii) Birmingham and Edinburgh

Flight details	2021	2022
Singles	24	19
Returns	19	16
Total	43	35

(iii) Gatwick and Glasgow.

Flight details	2021	2022
Singles	18	44
Returns	13	39
Total	31	83

3. Which member of your executive Committee took UK domestic flights on the greatest number of occasions in 2021 and 2022? Please list this flights and the individual costs associated with them as well as the arrival and departure airports.

I have understood questions 3 and 4 of your request to relate to employees listed as being or having been on the Network Rail executive leadership team during 2021 and 2022.¹ Our Managing Director for Wales and Western, Michelle Handforth, took a total of 19 domestic flights for 2021 and 34 flights for 2022.

¹ The full list of members of our executive leadership team is provided at the following website link: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/who-we-are/how-we-work/our-leadership/our-executive-leadership-team>

All trips were Economy class. Please find the attached Excel file 'Question 3 Data' that details this for each of the bookings.

4. Which member of your executive committee took international flights on the greatest number of occasions in 2021 and 2022? Please list these flights and the individual costs associated with them as well as the arrival and departure airports.

Our Group Safety and Engineering Director (Technical Authority) Martin Frobisher took one international flight for 2021 and two flights for 2022, all of which were economy class. These were all the flights taken by members of our executive. Please find the details in the table below:

	2021		
Journey	Ticket type	Date	Total cost
Manchester/Madrid/Manchester	Return	27-November 2021 – 1-December 2021	£78.17

	2022		
Journey	Ticket type	Date	Total invoice cost
Manchester/Lisbon	Single	31 March 2022	£200.88
Lisbon/Manchester	Single	1 April 2022	£140.40
Total			£341.32

5. How many flight journeys booked in 2021 and 2022 for (i) UK domestic travel and (ii) international travel were in either business class or first class? Please list these flights individually with the arrival and departure points and the cost of the flights.

Network Rail staff did not buy any Business or First class flight tickets for international or domestic travel in 2021. While we did not buy Business or First class tickets for domestic travel in 2022, our staff took four international Business class flights in 2022, two of which were booked as round tickets to reduce overall costs. These are listed in the table below. They did not take any First class flights.

Originating City	Destination City	Ticket Type	Return City	Total Cost
Manchester	Tokyo Haneda	Return	Manchester	£4,214
London	Berlin	Return	London	£689.47
Seville Paris	Manchester	Single		£536.10
Berlin	London	Single		£227.39

I thought it might be helpful to provide a little information about Network Rail's rules and approach to business and travel expenses. We are committed to being a cost-conscious organisation and are mindful that the money we spend is public money. In 2017, as part of our drive to get best value for public money, we implemented a new [business travel and expenses policy](#), see link attached.

The policy includes the following provisions:

- Rail is the preferred choice of travel wherever practicable
- Prior to arranging any meeting consideration must be given to alternative methods in which the meeting could be conducted, including using teleconference or video conference facilities, to avoid the need to travel to other locations.
- UK air travel should be used where it represents the most cost-effective option compared to the relevant train fare, when considering the total cost of the journey (including hotels, taxi fares etc.)

- Economy class travel is to be used for all business journeys, except Executive Band who may choose to travel business class. In addition, where individuals travel with an Executive Band or an important customer/supplier then, at the discretion of the function director, they too may travel business class.

All breaches of the policy are taken seriously, and we investigate and act as appropriate.

Finally, I wanted to add that we've started dealing with requests for the Great British Rail Transition Team and other subsidiaries of Network Rail Holdco.² In this case the data we've provided is just for Network Rail Infrastructure Limited. If you would like to see any information about any of the subsidiaries of the holding company, please let me know and I'd be happy to look at this as a new request.

If you have any enquiries about this response, please contact me in the first instance at FOI@networkrail.co.uk. Details of your appeal rights are below. Please remember to quote the reference number at the top of this letter in all future communications.

Yours sincerely

Elliot Palk
Information Officer

You are encouraged to use and re-use the information made available in this response freely and flexibly, with only a few conditions. These are set out in the [Open Government Licence](#) for public sector information. For further information please visit our [website](#).

² <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/04423711>

Appeal rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to the Compliance and Appeals team at Network Rail, Freedom of Information, The Quadrant, Elder Gate, Milton Keynes, MK9 1EN, or by email at ComplianceandAppealsFOI@networkrail.co.uk. Your request must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner (ICO) can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or you can contact the ICO through the 'Make a Complaint' section of their website on this link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

The relevant section to select will be "Official or Public Information".