

The impact of hospital allocation preferencing on the commutes of West Yorkshire anaesthetic trainees

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Background

There are a myriad of reasons to reduce trainee commutes where training commitments allow. Direct impacts of longer commutes on the trainee include:

1. Decreased road safety, especially after night shifts¹
2. Deleterious physical, psychological, and social effects²
3. Less time for healthy eating, sleep, and study
4. Increased travel costs

Broader impacts include larger carbon footprints, which is a direct contradiction to the NHS commitment to Net Zero by 2045³.

Methods

Three surveys were offered to West Yorkshire Stage 1 Anaesthetic trainees, spanning three subsequent rotations in July 2023, February and August 2024.

The surveys gathered:

1. Commuting data: current daily commuting time, distance travelled one-way and happiness with current commute on a Linkert scale rated 1 to 5 (very unhappy to very happy).
2. Ranked preferences for hospital allocation for the following rotation.

Trainees who took public transport, walked or cycled were not included in the data comparison.

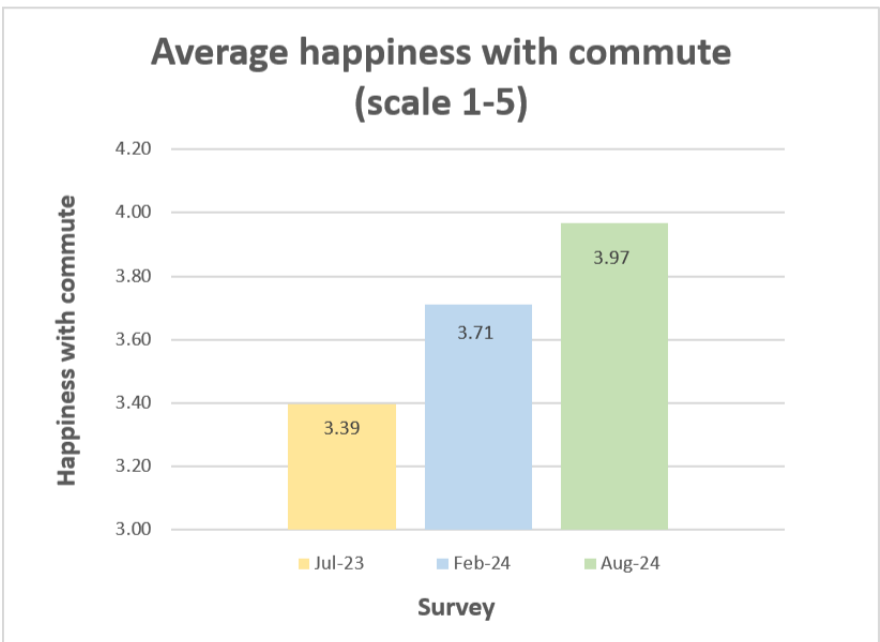
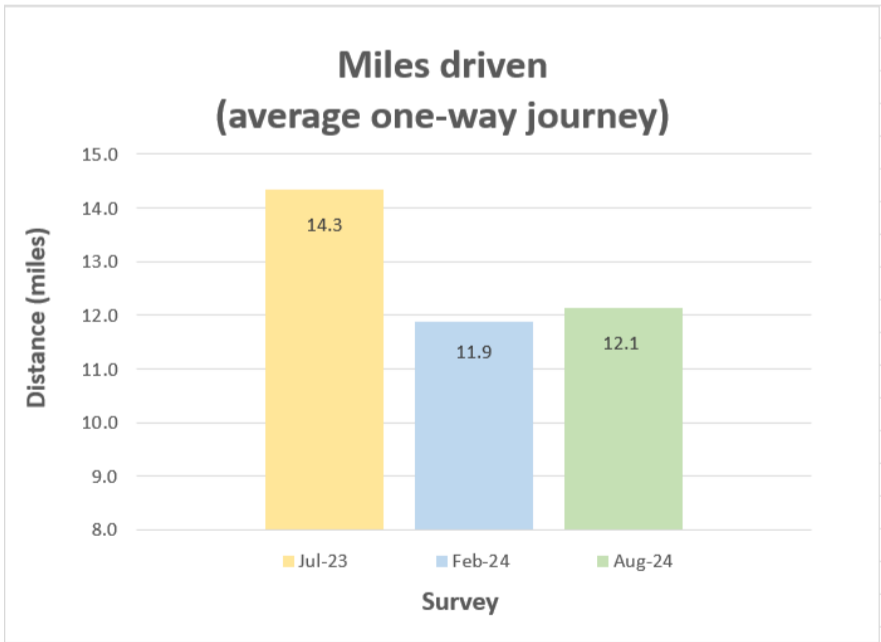
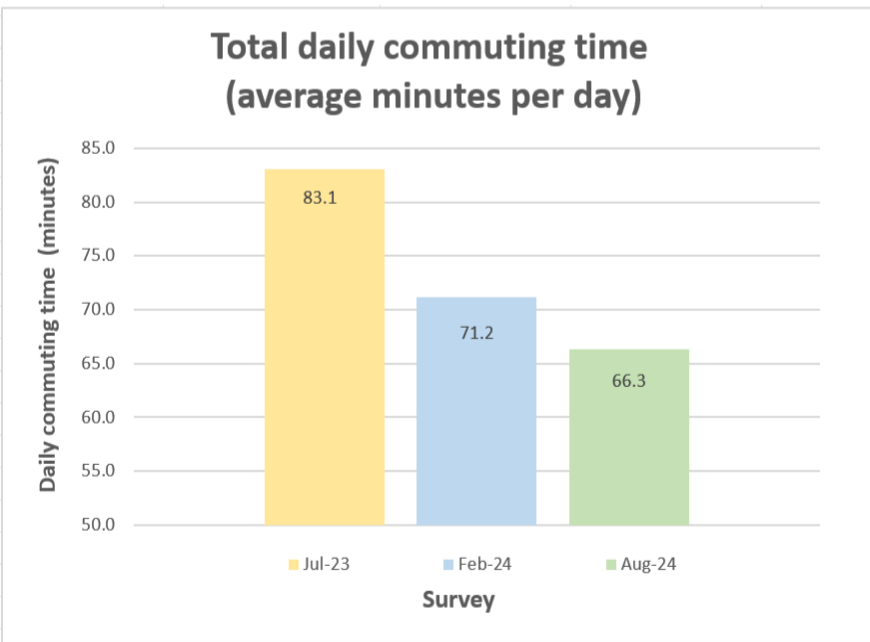
Results & Discussion

Over the three surveys there were 116 responses from 65 respondents. The data shows a trend of reduced commuting time from 83.1 minutes to 66.3 minutes per day, one-way distance driven from 14.3 miles to 12.1 miles and trainee happiness with their commute from 3.39/5 to 3.97/5.

Surveys 1,2 & 3 had 39, 45 and 32 responses respectively.

At the time of the first survey, trainees did not have the routine option to preference hospital placements and at least 16 of the 39 respondents had not contacted the TPD to convey any hospital preference. The implementation of preferencing for all stage 1 trainees has been warmly received with all being allocated to their first or second choice of DGH or tertiary centre (out of three DGHs and three tertiary centres)

Due to the small scale of the study the results did not meet statistical significance defined by p-values of <0.05, further study is required.



References

1. Lee ML, Howard ME, Horrey WJ *et al.* High risk of near-crash driving events following night-shift work. *Proc. of the Nat Ac of Sci.* 2016 Jan.
2. Halonen JJ, Pulakka A, Vahtera J, *et al.* Commuting time to work and behaviour-related health: a fixed-effect analysis. *Occup Environ Med.* 2020;77(2):77-83.
3. NHS England: Delivering a “Net Zero” National Health Service. July 2022. Available from <https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/publication/delivering-a-net-zero-national-health-service/> (accessed 18 April 2024).

