

EVOLVING DUTY OF CARE TO ENCOMPASS HEALTH AND WELLBEING WITH OIL SPILL RESPONSE

16

Hour days on
3-week trips

42

Page travel
policy

1.5

Hour meeting replaced
with online training

With travel volumes so low, the COVID pandemic gave many travel managers the opportunity to rethink what business travel for their employees looks like. Weighing up cost, sustainability and wellness were on the mind of many, while safety and health were thrust into the spotlight.

Oil Spill Response continued to travel throughout the pandemic, with spills to respond to and equipment to maintain. But now that travel is picking up again in earnest, Travel Manager Alice Linley-Munro has shifted her priorities and placed even more importance on safety and wellbeing, together with FCM's tools, resources and team.



BACKGROUND



Oil Spill Response has partnered with FCM since 2016. Travel Manager Alice Linley-Munro has worn multiple travel hats at the company since starting, often booking travel for employees in various parts of the world.

Due to the nature of its business, and its values, Oil Spill Response has always had safety and duty of care at the forefront of its programme. “Oil Spill Response has always had business critical travel and always had that need for comfort on safety and security,” says Sarah Raitt, FCM Account Manager. But since the COVID-19 outbreak, duty of care has evolved to encompass more than traveller tracking and safety maps.

“It’s been a pause to take stock and think. We value our staff. They work really hard for us. We need to make sure that we’re not contributing to burnout.”

– ALICE LINLEY-MUNRO





DUTY OF CARE AS A FAMILY AFFAIR

“Across the business, there’s more of a focus on, and a wider understanding of, duty of care,” says Alice. Duty of care had always meant check-in calls and security processes on the ground, but it has now moved into the realm of families, mental health and wellbeing.

Oil Spill Response recognised that families would be worried about where their family members are, especially for some of the destinations they’re required to fly to. At the start of COVID, they communicated with travellers’ families how the company keeps them safe on the road, and the steps they were taking to keep people safe. It was prompted by the pandemic but will continue long after, due to how well received it was by travellers and families.

Alice also made use of FCM’s tools built in the pandemic, such as the FCM Trip Checker, where travellers could find out the latest testing and entry requirements. “The widget has been an absolute godsend. It made me feel quite confident in talking to industry friends, and saying I was confident with the information and data we were provided,”

– ALICE LINLEY-MUNRO

CARING FOR EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

There's also a focus on fatigue. Response and equipment hire services (EHS) staff often travel last minute and cram a lot of working hours in. A trip may last three days, but they're working 16-hour days and when they get home, they're back out to work.

“So there’s focus on making sure that our staff are ready and able to work. In many ways the pandemic was great for us as a company in terms of looking after our people; to tear it up and start again,” says Alice. “There is also an appreciation that wellness and wellbeing is really different to different people.”

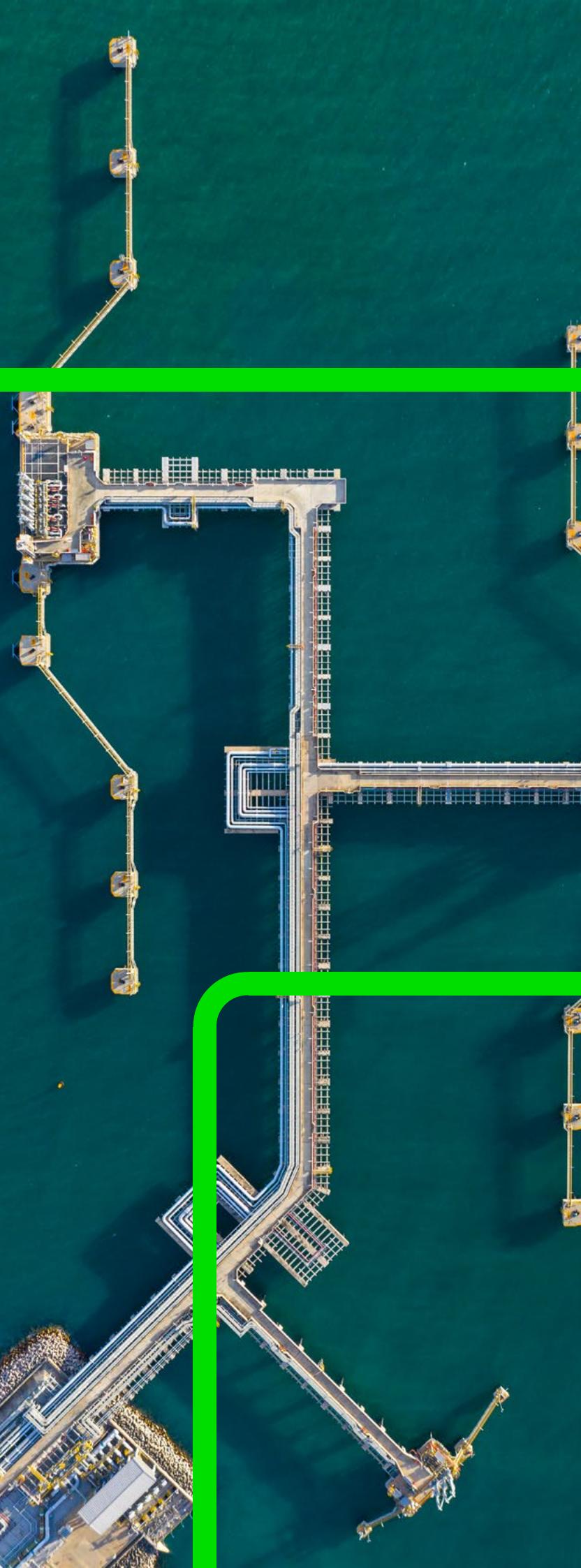
Examples of what’s changed since COVID include:

- Allowing travellers going on day trips to Europe to stay near the airport overnight, to save them travelling from Southampton before an early flight.
- Checking if hotels have gyms or pools, or their proximity to restaurants, so travellers can spend some time exercising or exploring surrounding areas.
- Looking for apartments for longer stays, so the traveller can cook for themselves.
- Relaxing rules around buying extra legroom seats or paying to choose their seat on the flight, now at line manager’s discretion.

Additionally, through FCM Reporting, the company has access to reports related to fatigue, red-eye flights and wellness. *“I told my boss and HR about the wellbeing reports and they were both enthusiastic to have that data. We want all the reporting on fatigue and wellness; it’s perfect timing as there’s such a focus on it,”* said Alice.

Alice is also switching up her ‘introduction to travel’ with employees, having had time to re-evaluate and build during the pandemic. Rather than sit with each traveller individually in a 1.5-hour meeting, Alice and her team have built an online training module, including material built by FCM when introducing new clients. The training details what they need to pack, essential information and key contact details.





WELLBEING VS COST

With these measures in place, it is unsurprising that travel costs will increase. But Alice isn't worried, since the company is travelling less due to sustainability cut-backs and the changing working world. It means an increase in flexibility too.

For example, Alice has changed the company's preferred hotels in Southampton, UK and Singapore. Since the team is travelling once a year now instead of once a quarter, it's opened up the opportunity to look carefully to ensure that the standard of the hotel was appropriate to the need.

THE FUTURE IS IN REPORTING, RISK AND REVISIONS



Technology and reporting is high on the agenda, such as FCM Platform and Power BI reporting, especially the wellness reports.

When it comes to risk management, it's time for a shake-up. Oil Spill Response's current risk technology isn't up to scratch, and the ownership of the contract across various departments has meant it hasn't been properly paid attention to. Alice is now exploring FCM Secure, particularly as it means data does not need to be passed onto another provider, and it's all available in one place.

And the thing pinning this all together: the travel policy. Together with Account Manager Sarah, Alice is determined to revisit the 42-page travel policy that Oil Spill Response has in place, so it has global processes with local nuances. It's a big step in helping travellers feel confident to travel again.

