



Forest and Land Scotland – Scotland's Largest Workplace

Forest and Land Scotland (FLS) is a Scottish Government agency who manage Scotland's forests and associated land. They have 1000 employees working in roles that range from human resources to rangers so they have a very diverse workforce. While the pandemic was at its peak, FLS piloted a Smarter Working programme as part of developing new national office work places in Edinburgh and Inverness. They developed a people led approach which has put their employees at the heart of the programme and looked to deliver the best value from their buildings, their vehicles and their digital assets with a clear focus on reducing carbon emissions.

While workplace is part of the solution, the focus was on people and culture side with an interactive toolkit and ways of working to help people to understand the new Smarter Working behaviours. As this was all delivered during lockdown, they had to deliver their engagement sessions online with 85% of their people connecting with these sessions virtually.

Eighty percent of their workforce are located across FLS's five regions, each of which with a regional office located in the forests they support. The Durris regional office in East region was redeveloped to FLS's Smarter Working principles in 2022, along with the toolkits which support the delivery of Smarter Working within their national offices. There are plans to extend this to other regions through 2023. This supports equity across their workforce but also widens the opportunity to use the forests for various types of work such as walking catch-ups, outdoor decked areas for more formal meetings, etc.

Like many others they are now exploring shared workspace opportunities with likeminded partners, widening the opportunity to use those wonderful outdoor spaces for work. They are looking to understand and capture the positive impacts that this increased flexibility offers people in the way they work and we follow their journey with interest.

Doug Harvey, Land Management (East Region)

"The completion of a new office at one of our hubs enabled us to really embrace the organisation's Smarter Working principles. Whilst Smarter Working for us isn't all about our buildings, our colleagues now have a useable and flexible space, which lends itself to informal one to ones, small meetings and desk work - all enabling colleagues to choose the best way to work for them and the organisation. Our managers are leading by example, empowering colleagues to make decisions around working patterns, including home, field and office working. A lot of our colleagues work out in the forest but having an accessible and inviting space to do work that lends itself to quiet or indoor spaces has been a huge benefit. It's common to see our foresters carry out site visits in the morning, and come back to the office for computer based work or teams meetings in the afternoon - whether that be at a fixed desk or a booth. We've made the technology as simple as possible to help colleagues from front line field staff to managers get access to this option."