

# Volunteer Expenses Policy

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## Who is this expenses policy for?

The policy is for people involved in volunteering activity in any part of Healthwatch Cornwall (HC).

There are several types of volunteer:

- HC board members
- Partnership board volunteers (includes self-advocates and carers)
- Community outreach volunteers
- Operational support volunteers

Every volunteer involved in the work of HC will have a named contact member of staff who will inform him/her about this policy and respond to questions about it.

## Why does this policy exist?

The aim of this policy is to ensure that no volunteer is out of pocket as a result of their volunteering work, and to ensure that HC monitors and manages the cost of expenses within their day-to-day operational budgets.

## How will this policy be applied?

This policy will be applied to volunteers with HC in the following groups:

- Those required to use their own car or public transport as an essential part of the volunteering role for HC
- Those involved in internal and external meetings, events, working groups, seminars, task groups, committees, projects or other activities in which HC participates.



Members of the public attending a meeting set up by HC are not 'volunteers' and will not be subject to this policy.

## What expenses are covered?

HC will reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred as a consequence of direct

involvement of volunteers in its work. Where unusually large sums are involved (£50 and above) expenditure should be agreed in advance with the volunteer's contact at HC, in particular where travel outside Cornwall is involved.

## Travel

The following travel expenses will be reimbursed, provided that relevant receipts are attached to the claim form:

- Bus/coach fares
- Train fares (standard class)
- Car parking charges
- Bridge tolls
- Ferry fares

Taxi fares will not normally be reimbursed, except on a case-by-case basis (e.g. where there are mobility problems, late night meetings at isolated locations). Prior agreement is essential.

Please note that volunteers can approach their contact and ask for tickets to be booked for them in advance, thus avoiding volunteers having to pay out substantial sums of money. Specialist transport, for example where the volunteer has a disability, must be arranged by HC. HC must be notified as soon as possible if specialist transport needs to be cancelled.

## Mileage rates

Mileage rates are set by HMRC. Current rates are:

Cars and Vans: 45p per mile (up to 10,000 miles)

Motorcycles: 24p per mile (up to 10,000 miles)

Bikes: 20p per mile (up to 10,000 miles)



Note: lower rates are paid over 10,000 miles but it is not anticipated that this will be required.

### **Requirement for Standard Motor Vehicle (SMV) Mileage:**

In line with national policy guidance all volunteers in receipt of the SMV mileage rate must fulfil the following requirements:

- Drive their own private vehicle (including motorcycles), i.e. one belonging to the volunteer, their spouse or partner
- Have a valid driving licence

It is the responsibility of volunteers to ensure that their vehicle insurance policy covers the journey resulting from their involvement with HC.

## **Subsistence Allowances**

### **Day Subsistence Allowance**

This allowance only applies when there are no refreshments or meals provided, and when the volunteering activity lasts:

- more than four hours but less than ten hours - £5.00
- more than ten hours - £15

### **24-hour subsistence allowance:**

This is paid when an overnight stay is required and has been agreed in advance with the contact at HC.

- Costs of bed and breakfast as agreed with your contact
- Meal allowance up to £20
- Personal incidental expenses allowance (e.g. phone calls) up to £5

Note that: volunteers can approach their contact and ask for accommodation to be booked in advance in order to avoid disbursement by the volunteer of considerable sums of money.

## **Other expenses**

The following expenses are also covered, but need to be agreed in advance with the volunteers' contact at HC:

- Taxi fares (see above)



- Childcare arrangements: where a volunteer needs additional childcare support as a result of volunteering with Healthwatch (e.g. child minder, crèche, nursery)
- Carer responsibilities: where a volunteer has caring responsibilities, then reasonable carer's expenses will be reimbursed to cover the cost of a temporary replacement

Other exceptional expenses may be reimbursed subject to prior agreement with the volunteer's contact.

### Expenses not covered

- Lost earnings
- First class travel (volunteers should pay the difference between standard and first-class travel)

### Expenses for those receiving benefits

People may volunteer and claim benefits if:

- the only money they get from volunteering is to cover expenses
- they continue to meet the conditions of the benefit they receive. See <https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses> for more details.

The potential tax or benefit implications remain a matter for the individual concerned. HC recommends that volunteers seek advice directly from the relevant agency.

### How are expenses paid?

Expenses will only be reimbursed on receipt of a validated and signed expenses claim form. These should be available from the staff member asking for volunteer involvement.

Your contact can offer assistance in completing forms. HC will make sure that payment is processed as quickly as possible, but it may take up to four weeks.

Payment is usually made by BACS and it is the volunteer's responsibility to make sure HC has their bank details. However, if a volunteer does not have a bank account or a delay in payment may cause financial difficulty, staff may be asked to provide cash at the time of attendance at a meeting or event. If expenses have not been reimbursed within six weeks, volunteers are asked to speak to their contact and/or the manager of the project they are working on.



Claims should be made within three months of the activity and be in the same financial year—from April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. This ensures they can be tracked efficiently, and also that the expenses budget accurately reflects activity.

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