

Reimbursement of Expenses Policy (for Public, Patient, Carer, and Volunteers involvement)

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Reimbursement of Expenses Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group, referred to hereafter as the CCG, recognises and values the contribution that the public, patients, carers and volunteers make to the effective monitoring, evaluation, feedback and improvement of our services. The CCG are committed to ensuring that our committees and meetings are as accessible as possible to ensure that patient engagement and involvement is encouraged. NHS Wirral CCG is committed to proactively seeking and building continuous and meaningful engagement with patients, as well as the wider public, to shape services and improve health.
- 1.2 The CCG has a duty under section 11 of the Health and Social Act 2012 to inform, liaise and consult with the population of Wirral regarding plans, as part of our Public and Patient Involvement agenda.
- 1.3 It is recognised that a vital part of allowing involvement in committees and meetings is by ensuring that all reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses are reimbursed, as appropriate. It is recognised that reimbursement may sometimes be in addition to travel expenses such as child or replacement care.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is consistency in payment of expenses across all public meetings or specified activities taking place within Wirral.
- 2.2 This policy sets out the principles and practice for the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses for such individuals, thus removing potential barriers to involvement and ensuring local people have a voice in the business of the CCG.

3. ACTIVITY / EXPENSES COVERED BY THIS POLICY

- 3.1 The reimbursement of expenses for activity covered by this policy is for individuals who are invited to attend meetings within NHS Wirral CCG, as members of the public, carers or patients. This also includes existing, potential or ex patients, or carers of patients. This includes the following activities:
- Attending service re-design, consultation, and general business meetings
 - Attending focus groups or Patient & Public Involvement activities / events conducted by the CCG
 - Attending working groups set up by the CCG or service users
- 3.2 The following activities are not covered by this policy:
- Individuals attending open public meetings, including Patient Participation meetings, or other meetings without specific invitations to assist in CCG business
 - Representatives of voluntary sector organisations whose expenses are funded from another source
- 3.3 Expenses will be paid for:
- Travel:
 - Bus / Train or taxi – Up to the value of £5.40 (the cost of a day travel ticket for public transport)
 - Car mileage – Up to the value of a maximum of a 12 mile radius, in line with the NHS Agenda for Change remuneration costs and mileage rates
 - Refreshments, if not provided as part of the activity.
 - All meetings will be held in publicly accessible venues where possible however if the location presents access issues, the use of a taxi is acceptable.
- 3.4 If a meeting is planned across the lunch period or any other mealtime period, it is reasonable for the CCG to consider providing a selection of sandwiches or similar provision.
- 3.5 In August 2006 the Department of Work and Pensions announced new rules and guidance regarding volunteer's eligibility in claiming the cost of their meals are now considered as an earnings disregard, meaning any payment for meal

expenses does not affect their taxation or benefit status. If the CCG decide not to provide catering in this case, a payment of up to £3.00 is an acceptable alternative.

- 3.6 The payment of expenses will be avoided where possible by the provision of refreshments at meetings and attempts will be made for meetings / events to not be held during a meal time period, where possible.
- 3.7 If in exceptional circumstances, the CCG asks a member of the public to attend an event outside of the area, the CCG will endeavor to arrange travel arrangements on their behalf (e.g. purchase of train tickets).

4. AUDIT AND MONITORING

- 4.1 Senior CCG managers are responsible for Patient and Public Involvement meetings and activities and are required to authorise signatory payments, in line with this policy.
- 4.2 Claims for small amounts, including those of less value than £10, will be processed through the CCG standard petty cash arrangements. This is held by the petty cash custodian, and will be overseen by the Chief Finance Officer. Where meetings are not held on site, arrangements will need to be made for reimbursement.
- 4.3 The CCG's Audit Committee may review compliance with this policy on a periodic basis.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Chief Finance Officer

The Chief Finance Officer will be responsible for ensuring organisational compliance with this policy.

5.2 All CCG staff

All CCG staff undertaking patient and public involvement activity must:

- Meet the costs of printing and circulating papers for meetings, covering postage costs where necessary.
- Reimburse expenses to people who have an agreement with the CCG about getting involved and have been invited to take part in a meeting, event or defined task or work programme.
- Discuss and agree with an individual the costs they are likely to incur in the course of their involvement.
- Reimburse expenses at the current rates.
- Provide any help for patients and the public.

5.3 Patient and public responsibilities

Individuals who receive expenses from the CCG must honestly and accurately complete the expenses claim form as required and provide appropriate evidence of expenses incurred i.e. parking.

6. PREPARATION BEFORE MEETINGS / ACTIVITIES

- 6.1 The following points need to be considered and discussed with public members and patient representatives before meetings / activities are organised, whereby service users, carers or patients attend:
- Arrangements are required to be made for transport, as necessary
 - Papers for the meetings are in accessible formats and distributed at least 7 days in advance of the actual meeting date
 - That consideration is given to the timings of meetings
 - That the provision of advocates, interpreters and/or personal assistants, where required, are considered
 - Arrangements of the room including accessibility or if any adaptation aids are required

- Refreshments to be available and ensuring that possible dietary needs have been taken into account
- That there are regular comfort breaks during lengthy meetings or activities

If all of the above points have been considered, then this could minimise the requirements for additional expenses.

7. PAYMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

7.1 Payments to reimburse the reasonable travel and subsistence costs incurred include:

- Public transport – actual cost of travel, supported by ticket or receipt
- Private car – in conjunction with the current staff rate for the CCG
- Parking costs – actual cost, supported by ticket or receipt

7.2 Claims will only be accepted for the use of a private car, if:

- The most direct route available has been used
- That the journey is within a 12 mile radius
- The vehicle is covered by full third party insurance, including cover against risk or injury too, or death of, passengers, and damage to property, and that the policy is maintained at the date of the claim
- The vehicle is maintained at all times, in a road worthy condition by terms of insurance policy covering the vehicle.

7.3 The CCG may require verification of any of the above, at any time, for example by asking for a copy valid certificate of insurance.

8. PAYMENT OF SUPPORT COSTS

8.1 In some circumstances it may be necessary to reimburse costs the following costs if the carer, patient or member of the public needs additional support to enable them to attend the meeting / activity:

- Childcare costs
- Replacement carer costs
- Personal assistant costs
- Interpreter costs

9. DEFINITIONS

9.1 The public; A resident of Wirral who has an interest in, or is affected by decision or plans undertaken by NHS Wirral CCG.

9.2 Patient; An individual, who has received, is currently receiving or has the potential of receiving a service provided by NHS Wirral CCG.

9.3 Carer; An individual (aged 16 or over) who has provided, currently provides or intends to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for another individual.

9.4 Volunteer; Any individual who has been recruited and registered to perform voluntary tasks within the premises and service areas of NHS Wirral CCG.

9.5 Patient Participation Groups or Activities; Meetings, events or activities, where the views of patients, carers or residents are sought by a particular service of by Wirral CCG as an organisation.

Expenses claim form for patients and public
Details about you

Your name

Your address & postcode

Details about the meeting / event you attended

What was the meeting or event called?

What date did you attend the meeting / event?

Who organised the event (if known)

Details of your claim	Amount	Receipt (it is useful if you have a receipt) Please tick	No receipt (If no receipt is available, Chief Finance officer needs to countersign)
Bus (Up to £5.40)	£		
Rail (Up to £5.40)	£		
Parking (Up to £5.40)	£		
Taxi (Up to £5.40)	£		
Private Vehicle (Travel within a 10 mile radius)	£		
Refreshments (Up to £3.00)	£		
Total	£	Total claimed (please sign) Date	

For official use only

Cost code Expenses code

Payment approved

Signed (Chief Finance Officer)

Name Date