

Working with members of the public – Out of pocket expenses policy

Contents

Policy overview	2
Introduction.....	2
Scope	2
Who is this expenses policy for?	2
Why this expenses policy exists	2
When does this expenses policy apply?	3
What expenses are covered?	3
Office supplies	4
Interpreting, British Sign Language and other communication support.	4
Pre-agreed expenses.....	4
Taxi fares.....	4
Childcare arrangements	4
Carer responsibilities	5
What is not covered by this policy?	5
Advance booking of fares and/or accommodation	5
Approaches from third parties for patient and/or public expenses	6
Can expenses be claimed whilst receiving benefits?	6
How are expenses paid?	7
Reviewing this policy.....	7
Audit.....	7
How to complete the expenses claim form:	8

Policy overview

Introduction

NHS South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is committed to working together with patients and the public to improve the health of people living in south east London.

We know that local people give up their time to take part in CCG engagement activities and may incur costs. We value the contribution local people can make through giving their time and expertise. We want to ensure that no-one is left out of pocket through taking part in the work of the CCG.

This policy sets some guiding principles and practice around reimbursing out of pocket expenses for public members. It should be read alongside the '[Principles for engagement](#)', which sets out general principles for engaging with the CCG.

Scope

This policy applies to individuals, including patients, carers and members of the public, who help the CCG with our work. It covers patients, carers and members of the public who are resident in south east London (Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark) including those living on the borders but registered with a GP surgery in south east London.

This policy does not apply to voluntary sector organisations who we may work with to deliver patient and public engagement activity. We recognise that working with voluntary sector organisations is hugely important as they bring valuable insight and input to our work.

Neither does it apply to people working with the CCG who are not members of the public, for example expert advisers such as clinicians, scientific advisors, contractors or people working in other consultancy roles. Members of the public in engagement roles are not employees, workers or agents of the CCG.

Who is this expenses policy for?

This expenses policy applies to individuals such as patients, service users, carers, families and other members of the public directly involved in our work.

Why this expenses policy exists

The CCG actively seeks patient, carer and public input to inform our work. We do this through a wide range of approaches, including asking people to work in partnership with us to develop programmes of work, to inform our commissioning decisions and to be part of our governance and assurance processes.

The CCG wants to ensure that no-one is out of pocket for taking part in CCG engagement activities. The CCG recognises that many people we are seeking to engage may have low incomes and be in receipt of state benefits. We also recognise that people give up their personal time to take part in meetings and people may incur additional costs to do this.

This expenses policy exists in order to clarify and set out why and how the CCG reimburses out of pocket expenses for patients and members of the public.

When does this expenses policy apply?

This expenses payment policy applies when the CCG invites people to take part in specific programmes of work and includes participating in focus and reference groups, workshops, project / programme boards and committees. **It does not apply for public events, such as webinars, meetings in public, or live stream events on social media.**

What expenses are covered?

The following expenses will be reimbursed, providing receipts are attached to the claim form (unless otherwise stated):

- Mileage costs for use of a car at 56p per mile
- Mileage costs for use of a motorcycle at 28p per mile
- Passenger miles at 5p per mile per passenger when a representative takes another representative in their car to attend a meeting
- Mileage costs for use of a bicycle at 20p per mile
- Bus and tube fares
- Train fares (second class only)
- Car parking fees
- Office supplies e.g., printing cost and additional cost for taking part in CCGs engagement activities, such as broadband usage (this is set at a fixed cost of £5).
- Carer and childcare costs

Mileage costs are in line with the [NHS Employer Agenda for Change Reimbursement of travel cost](#). The CCG will still reimburse travel costs incurred when a meeting has been cancelled at short notice and where the representative was not informed of the cancellation before travelling and has, therefore, incurred costs. It is the responsibility of individuals to ensure that their vehicle insurance policy covers their journeys as a result of their involvement with the CCG and that their driving licence is valid. NHS staff may ask to see the vehicle insurance policy and driving licence.

Office supplies

The CCG recognises that some individuals will make use of home office supplies as part of their engagement with us. This might include use of a telephone or internet connection to join meetings remotely, and / or it might include printing out papers at home that have been sent via email. Therefore, where individuals support the CCG by participating in meetings remotely from their home we will offer a standing allowance of £5 per meeting to cover the cost of telephone calls, paper, printing ink and paper, stamps, internet connection, stationery and other home office sundries (without the need for evidence such as receipts).

Interpreting, British Sign Language and other communication support.

In general, the CCG will provide communication support such as interpreters, as part of the meeting, so long as the CCG is notified of the request at least a week before the meeting. Where individuals have specific / complex needs, they should discuss with the CCG as the CCG may be able to arrange the specific support. Where this is not the case and the individual has to arrange their own support, provision should be made to reimburse these costs and these arrangements would need to be agreed in advance with the CCG.

Pre-agreed expenses

The following expenses will be reimbursed only with the prior approval of the CCG and on production of a valid receipt:

Taxi fares – the CCG will book taxis in some special circumstances such as:

- where people cannot use public transport or need to use a taxi due to disability for example
- where there is no alternative transport,
- to avoid numerous changes of transport,
- to avoid carrying heavy luggage or equipment.

Where the CCG cannot book a taxi and an individual has to book their own taxi, this must be agreed with the CCG beforehand. The CCG will use discretion in dealing with requests.

Childcare arrangements – if a patient or member of the public needs additional childcare support as a result of working with the CCG (e.g. child minder, crèche, nursery), then reasonable childminding expenses will be reimbursed on production of a receipt and agreed by the CCG beforehand. The amount of reimbursement is

subject to the current hourly childminding rate paid by the local authority. Childcare expenses will not be paid where the CCG is providing crèche facilities. The CCG recognises that there may be special requirements for childcare and will use discretion in dealing with requests.

Carer responsibilities – if a patient or member of the public has caring responsibilities, then reasonable carer’s expenses will be reimbursed to cover the cost of a temporary replacement on the production of a receipt and agreed with the CCG beforehand. When an individual needs to have a carer accompany them to enable them to take part in the meeting or event (including communication support) this would need to be agreed with the CCG in advance and each request will be considered on an individual basis.

What is not covered by this policy?

- First Class travel
- Travel expenses of individuals attending open public meetings or CCG meetings held in public (e.g. Annual General Meeting, Governing Body meetings of the CCG) without specific invitation from the CCG to attend to assist in CCG business.
- Travel expenses for representatives of voluntary, community or faith organisations whose expenses are funded by their organisation.
- Any fines incurred while en route to or from valid CCG business (eg parking or speeding)
- Loss of personal belongings.
- Damage to vehicles while en route to, in attendance at, or en route from valid CCG business.
- **Public meetings / webinars, meetings in public and live stream social media events.**

Advance booking of fares and/or accommodation

Travel to events or conferences as a local person on behalf of the CCG must be discussed and agreed with the CCG.

Once agreed, travel arrangements and accommodation should be booked, whenever possible, in advance by the CCG on behalf of the individual. This will ensure NHS discounts will apply.

If an individual has to book their own travel, their expenses must be agreed in advance. Standard fares and discounted rates should be used whenever possible.

If an individual is entitled to concessionary fares or free travel, advance booking by the CCG may not be necessary. A representative may make their own booking in agreement with the CCG.

Approaches from third parties for patient and/or public expenses

This policy applies to CCG meetings/events only. If a person is invited to a meeting/event that is being organised by another organisation/third party, then this policy would not normally apply. If a person wishes to attend a meeting/event being organised by another organisation, they should in the first instance approach that organisation to enquire what their own expenses reimbursement policy is.

If the organisation is requesting a patient or member of public attendance from the CCG then this must be discussed and agreed with the CCG in advance of confirmation of attendance being issued.

If the organisation does not have its own expenses policy, or no clarity has been agreed on expenses, no assumption should be made that the CCG will be able to refund the costs incurred. It will be the responsibility of the representative to accept or decline the offer to be involved.

Circumstances that are not clear will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Can expenses be claimed whilst receiving benefits?

Yes. Current benefit rules mean that a refund of expenses will not affect benefits.

Individuals can volunteer while receiving benefits as long as you continue to meet all the conditions of your benefit. Individuals should tell their benefit office before they start claiming any expenses and individuals.

All persons should notify the benefits office where they make a claim before they offer their time to be involved with the CCG. If benefits are claimed from more than one office, then all offices need to be informed. The benefits advisor will vary depending on the type of benefit received. There are no limits on the amount of time people can give as long as they continue to meet the conditions of the benefit or tax credit they are receiving.

[There is more information on the government website.](#)

How are expenses paid?

Expenses will be paid in a timely manner wherever possible, so to cause as little disruption to an individual as possible.

All claimants will need to fill in and sign attached claim form which need to be submitted to the CCG member of staff leading on the engagement activity. This form will be counter signed by the CCG engagement team before being submitted to the CCG's finance department for payment.

Payment will be by a cheque.

We will endeavour to make sure that payment is made as quickly as possible but this can take up to 3 – 4 weeks.

If expenses have not been reimbursed by 4 weeks, individuals are asked to contact the member of CCG staff who invited them to be engaged to.

The current rate of 45p per mile is the maximum amount patients and members of the public can receive without paying tax on this rate.

The CCG will review this rate in line with any future changes made by HM Revenue and Customs.

Claims needs to be submitted to the CCG no later than 3 months after the event.

Reviewing this policy

This policy was approved by the:

- Engagement Assurance Committee on 20 September 2021
- The Integrated Governance and Performance committee on 30 September 2021

Future national policy may influence this policy and, as a result, rates may change together with what expenses will be covered. Individuals will be notified of any changes and this policy will be updated as appropriate.

Audit

To ensure the policy is fit for purpose, the CCG will undertake an annual audit survey of a small number of individuals that have submitted a claim. The purpose of this audit is to hear people's views on the claims process, from finding out the information, submitting a claim and receiving payment. This information will be

used to ensure that individuals are not experiencing any barriers when seeking out of pocket expenses.

How to complete the expenses claim form:

Please fill in all sections in clear handwriting provide as much information as you can on the expenses claim form and return the form to your named contact person or the manager of the department you have been involved with.

N.B. All claims must be counter signed/approved by a member of the Communications and Engagement team prior to claim being approved. Colleagues from other departments will be asked to confirm attendance from claimant prior to claim being submitted.

Average childminding rates

The average rate for childminding across south east London is £9 per hour.

[Top 10 Childminders in London - Childminders Near You | Care.com](#)