



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

<p>Subject:</p> <p>Reimbursement of Expenses for Service Users, Carers and Laypeople</p>	<p>Circular Reference: HSC (F) 12-2021</p> <p>Date: 23 March 2021</p>
<p>For Action by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Chief Executive of HSC Bodies and NIFRS <p>For Information to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Directors of Finance of HSC Bodies and NIFRS <p>Summary of Contents:</p> <p>This circular contains Departmental guidance on the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses of service users, carers and laypeople for their engagement with HSC organisations and NIFRS.</p> <p>Enquiries: Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:</p> <p>Andrew Snowdin Finance Policy and Accountability Unit Room D3 Castle Buildings Stormont Estate BELFAST BT4 3SQ</p> <p>Tel: 028 90765649 fpau@health-ni.gov.uk</p>	<p>Superseded Documents: N/A</p> <p>Related documents: N/A</p> <p>Expiry Date: N/A</p> <p>Status of Contents: Action</p> <p>Implementation: Immediate</p>

Dear Colleagues

PAYMENT OF TRAVELLING, SUBSISTENCE AND OTHER ALLOWANCES TO SERVICE USERS, CARERS AND LAYPEOPLE

Introduction

1. There is increasing recognition of the need and right of service users, carers and laypeople to be effectively and meaningfully engaged in health, social care and public safety service commissioning, development and delivery.
2. The Health and Social Care (Reform) Act 2009 (Article 19) embedded a statutory responsibility to engage stakeholders in HSC development and delivery. Government policy encourages and requires the involvement of service users in the commissioning, planning and evaluation of services. The Co-Production Guide for Northern Ireland, “Connecting and Realising Value Through People” was developed in August 2018 as part of the Department’s “Delivering Together 2026”. This sets out key principles in stakeholder engagement and effective Co-Production.

Purpose

3. The purpose of this circular is to provide guidance on the reimbursement of expenses for service users and carers and laypeople. The Department recognises the valuable contribution these stakeholders make and is committed to ensuring that they are not out of pocket as a result of their involvement in service development and delivery. **Appendix 1** sets out the allowances for travel and subsistence expense payments.
4. The Public Health Agency and the Department have updated their comprehensive guidance, for the reimbursement of expenses for services users and carers, which you should find very helpful. This is attached at **Appendix 2** and provides additional guidance on various reimbursable expenses which may be incurred as a result of engagement with an organisation. This includes replacement care, child care and other costs incurred as a result of participating in organisational service development and delivery.

Action

5. Please ensure that this circular is brought to the attention of the relevant people in your organisation.

Enquiries

6. Any queries on the content of this circular should be directed to fpau@health-ni.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully

Charles Barnett
Finance Policy and Accountability Unit

TRAVEL COSTS

Mileage Rates¹

Type of vehicle/allowance	Up to 3,500 miles per year	Over 3,500 miles per year	All eligible miles travelled
Rate and Engine capacity	Amount per mile	Amount per mile	Amount per mile
Cars (All types of fuel)	45p	20p	
Motor Cycles			28p
Pedal Cycle			20p
Passenger allowance			5p
Reserve rate			28p

Other Travel Costs

Bus/Rail fare – receipt/ticket to be submitted with claim form.

Taxi fare – to be arranged by the meeting organiser in line with organisation's procedures. In exceptional circumstances, with prior approval from the organisation, a receipted claim may be made.

SUBSISTENCE COSTS

Meal Allowances²

Subsistence allowance is claimed by way of meal allowances at the maximum rates given below.

Period away	Meals	Value
Over 5 hours	One	£5
Over 10 hours	Two	£15

OTHER EXPENSES INCURRED

The following arrangements/costs to be agreed with the organisation:

1. Accommodation.
2. Replacement care.
3. Individual support needs.
4. Childcare costs.
5. Any other costs.

¹ HMRC approved mileage rates

² Agenda for Change Annex 14



Regional Guidance and Procedures for the Reimbursement of Expenses for Service Users and Carers in the Department of Health and Health and Social Care Organisations



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There is an increased recognition of the need for service users and carers to be effectively and meaningfully involved in the commissioning, planning, delivery and evaluation of Health and Social Care (HSC) services.
- 1.2 The HSC (Reform) Act (NI) 2009 placed a statutory legislative requirement on HSC organisations to involve and consult patients, families, carers and local communities on the planning, delivery and evaluation of services. This Government policy has actively encouraged and requires the involvement of service users and carers in shaping Health and Social Care services.
- 1.3 In August 2018, the Department of Health launched the Co-production Guide for Northern Ireland, “Connecting and Realising Value Through People”. At the heart of this guide is a commitment to value, reward and recognise the contribution made by service users and carers.
- 1.4 Health and Social Care organisations believe that where service users and carers are involved in supporting the ongoing development of services, they should at least not be left “out of pocket” or financially worse off as a result.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 For effective involvement, people need to feel supported and that their contribution is valued by both the organisation and its staff.

Involvement of service users and carers is a central element of health and social care activity. The purpose of involvement is to improve services and by working together we can strengthen co-production and make a real difference to our health and social care services.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses for service users and carers. Primarily these are costs associated with travel, caring responsibilities and subsistence.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This guidance applies to all service users and carers involved in supporting the commissioning, planning, delivery and evaluation work of Health and Social Care organisations, who require reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.
- 3.2 This guidance should be adhered to by all HSC staff when involving service users and carers in their area of work. Please note that the information contained in this guidance is accurate at the date of publication.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 **Chief Executives** - overall responsibility for ensuring that this guidance is followed within their organisations.

- 4.2 **Lead Directors** - responsible for the effective implementation of this guidance. They should also ensure resources are used appropriately for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by service users and carers.
- 4.3 **Personal and Public Involvement Leads**- responsible for disseminating this guidance within their organisations and providing clarification as required.
- 4.4 **Other Directors, Heads of Service and Senior Managers** - ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place within their Directorate/ area of responsibility to fulfil their responsibilities under these guidelines.
- 4.5 **HSC staff member who engages service user/carer to participate in involvement work** – is responsible for implementing this guidance with service users and carers, for supporting the service user/carer to claim expenses, retaining claim forms and receipts and for providing advice and guidance throughout the process.
- 4.6 Health and Social Care organisations**
- 4.6.1 Staff should be made aware of this guidance by their HSC organisation and how to process expense claim forms.

4.6.2 In line with good practice service users and carers should expect to receive a payment within 20 working days.

4.6.2 A copy of the easy read version of this guidance should be given by the HSC staff member to those service users/ carers considering involvement with Health and Social Care organisations **prior to their commitment** to becoming involved. (This full guidance should also be made available).

4.6.3 An accessible version (in any format needed) will be provided prior to service users/ carers commitment to becoming involved.

4.7 Service Users and Carers

4.7.1 With regard to expenses as outlined in Section B, 2 of this guidance, service users and carers are required to choose the most cost effective means available to them while still meeting their needs.

4.7.2 Service users and carers who are in receipt of benefits are responsible for writing to their local Jobs and Benefits office to advise that the payments in their bank accounts are for reimbursed expenses and should not be treated as earnings. Letter template is attached in appendix 4.

4.7.3 Service users and carers should submit claims in a timely manner, not more than three months after the involvement event / activity that their claim refers to.

5. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

5.1 The legislative framework that sets the context for this guidance includes:

- section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- The Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009.

5.2 Other relevant documents include:

- Co-Production Guide for Northern Ireland, “Connecting and Realising Value Through People”, August 2018
- Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together, May 2017
- Carers and Direct Payments Act (Northern Ireland) 2002

6. EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

6.1 This guidance has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Using the Equality Commission’s screening criteria no significant equality implications have been identified. The guidance will therefore not be subject to an equality impact assessment.

6.2 Similarly, this guidance has been considered under the terms of Human Rights Act 1998, and was deemed compatible with the European Convention rights contained in the Act.

7. ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

7.1 This document can be made available in alternative formats from HSC organisations, for example Braille, audio format, BSL, ISL and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

7.2 HSC staff should also provide alternative formats up front rather than waiting until there is a request (many with disabilities or who are older people) who may have additional communication needs.

7.3 An easy read version of this guidance is also available. This is available on the Engage website (www.engage.hscni.net)

8. DATA PROTECTION

8.1 Any information supplied when claiming reimbursement of expenses, will be subject to appropriate data protection legislation and GDPR.

9. REVIEW OF THE GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

- 9.1 This guidance and procedures will be reviewed after 12 months initially and every three years thereafter by the Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Team in the Public Health Agency with approval by the Department of Health.

10. DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 10.1 This policy and guidance has been developed through extensive consultation with service users, carers, stakeholders and HSC staff.

Section B: GUIDANCE

1. WHAT IS REIMBURSEMENT?

*“The act of paying back, or the money that is paid back” –
Cambridge Dictionary*

This guidance will set out how service users and carers can claim for out of pocket expenses when involved with HSC organisations.

2. WHEN CAN REIMBURSEMENT BE CLAIMED?

Health and Social Care organisations will reimburse service users/ carers who have agreed to become involved and participate in involvement activities such as:

- regular meetings
- discussion forums
- workshops
- focus groups
- training events
- interview panels
- defined task or programme.

3. WHEN CAN REIMBURSEMENT NOT BE CLAIMED?

Expenses will **NOT** be reimbursed where a service user/ carer:

- chooses to attend an event to respond or comment on open access engagement opportunities e.g. formal consultations
- Is employed elsewhere and the costs are met by their employing organisation as part of their role.
- Attends an event outside HSC system (unless it is deemed beneficial to support knowledge and skills for involvement and has been discussed with HSC staff member and prior agreement has been sought.)

It should be discussed between the service user/ carer and the HSC member of staff prior to attending an involvement activity whether the expenses for the event will be reimbursed.

4. WHAT EXPENSES WILL BE REIMBURSED BY HSC ORGANISATIONS?

The following expenses will be reimbursed:

4.1 Travel

- Car Mileage – will be paid at £0.45 per mile
- Bus / Rail Fare – ticket must be provided with claim form (Service users/ carers are responsible for retaining receipts relating to their travel expenses. These should be sent with claim forms to HSC staff member who will then retain the receipts.)

- **Taxi Fare** – The meeting organiser (staff member) should organise the taxi for the service user/ carer. The taxi should be booked in line with their HSC organisations procedure for booking taxis.
(In exceptional circumstances the service user/carer has paid for their own taxi the receipt should be sent with the claim form. This will only be paid with the prior approval of the HSC organisation)

4.2 Replacement care

This is the **care arrangement in place which allows carers to** participate in involvement activities (outlined in section 2). Types of replacement care include:

- Direct care provision (arranged by the Trust)
- Care purchased from the independent sector (arranged by the Trust).
- Direct payment/ Self Directed Support (SDS) (to enable the Carer to purchase their own care provision).

Alternatively, replacement care costs can be reimbursed if the carer is unable to access support via the Trusts and this is arranged by the carer. This will be reimbursed at the same rate paid by Trusts. Appendix 5 should be completed and attached to the claim form or receipt attached to the claim form.

4.3 Individual support needs

Individual support needs may include a personal assistant or support person to enable a service user to participate. These support needs should be discussed between the staff member and the service user (or their representative) and arranged by the staff member when possible.

The personal assistant or support persons subsistence needs will also be covered and should be submitted via a claim form.

4.4 Childcare costs

Childcare costs will be reimbursed when:

- a Registered Childminder provides the care
- where the person minding the child/ren is not required to register, for example a family member or
- a person is employed by the parents to look after the child in the child's own home.

Reimbursement will be made at the same rate as Northern Ireland Child Minding Association child minding rates. Appendix 5 should be completed and attached to the claim form or a receipt attached to the claim form.

4.5 Subsistence

Service users/ carers can be reimbursed the cost of refreshments or meals if the involvement activity is over a lunch or evening period and these meals have not been provided.

- Allowance for day meals is the following:
 - lunch up to £5
 - dinner up to £15
- No reimbursement can be made for alcohol or tips.

This is outlined in Appendix 6 and is in line with the NHS Employees Handbook, Annex 14.

4.6 Accommodation

If accommodation is required, this should be booked by the HSC staff member inviting the service user/ carer to the involvement activity. Only with prior agreement should this be booked by the service user/ carer and submitted on a claim form.

4.7 Other

Any other potential costs incurred, which are essential to facilitate involvement, co-production and partnership should be discussed and agreed in advance with the organisation the service user or carer is engaged with. Examples of such are:

4.7.1 Administration

- If a service user or carer has specific tasks to undertake that require administration, the HSC organisation by prior

agreement, will provide the necessary resources e.g. printing.

- All receipted costs for stationery, postage, photocopying and telephone calls may be met provided this has been agreed in advance.
- Staff members are encouraged to arrange a convenient date and time to contact the service user and carer so they are not out of pocket for telephone calls.

Please note: All expenses need to be “wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred” in the course of involvement. All expenses as outlined under Section 4 must be discussed and agreed in advance. The Health and Social Care organisation will not be liable for the reimbursement of expenses that have not been agreed.

5. WHAT MUST SERVICE USERS AND CARERS DO IF IN RECEIPT OF BENEFITS?

- Reimbursed expenses for service user and carer involvement do not affect benefit entitlement.
- Service users/carers should however advise the Jobs and Benefits office that the payments into their bank accounts are for reimbursed expenses so that these are not treated as earnings.
- Service users/ carers should use the sample letter in Appendix 4.
- Service users/ carers should retain all remittance advices that they will receive from Business Services Organisation (BSO) payments

team to provide evidence of the reimbursement of their out of pocket expenses, if requested by the Jobs & Benefits office.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further advice and information regarding this guidance document can be obtained from the Engage Website at www.engage.hscni.net, the Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Leads in each HSC organisation or the HSC staff member inviting the service user/ carer to attend the involvement activity.

APPENDICES

A guide to Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Reimbursement of expenses for service users and carers – a guide for HSC staff

This guide outlines the process for the reimbursement of expenses for service users and carers who are involved with Health and Social Care (HSC). Further guidance may be found on the [Engage website](#).

Service user/ carer attends agreed or invited Involvement activity

- Identify approver for claim forms in line with Authorisation Framework (Available from your HSC organisations finance department)

Issue claim form

- Give HSC Regional Guidance for Reimbursement of expenses (Inc Easy Read Guide) and claim form to service user and/or carer.
- Provide named person and address/email for completed claim form to be submitted to.
- Support service user and/or carer to complete claim form

Receive claim form

- Date stamp claim form on receipt in office

Approve completed claim form

- Check submitted claim form has been correctly completed.
- Authorise the claim form and include payment cost centre.
- Ensure service user or carer preferred payment details are included.
- Scan claim form and any receipts. (Ensure all receipts are retained)
- Submit to BSO payment team by email for processing.
- Keep a record of the BSO payment team confirmation of receipt of submitted claim form.
- Send a copy to service user/carers – Ask if they are not paid within 10 working days to contact you.

Process completed claim form – BSO payments centre

- Issue payment via preferred payment method (cheque or bank account) to the service user and/or carer

Money is paid to service user and/or carer

Appendix 2- Claim form

**SERVICE USER or CARER CLAIM FORM
REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES**

Name of Claimant

Address

.....

.....

For BACS Payment*

Sort Code: ___/___/___

Account Number: _____

Name of Bank: _____

Signature of Claimant

Date

Please note: All expenses need to be “wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred” in the course of involvement. The Health and Social Care organisation will not be liable for the reimbursement of expenses that have not been agreed in advance.

For Official Use Only

Date received in HSC Office

Approved by Date

HSC Officer

Cost Centre Account / Activity Code

Date to BSO Payments Team Confirmation received

TRAVEL

Date	Detail of Journey	Purpose of Meeting/ Activity	No of Miles	Other Transport i.e bus/rail

Total miles claimed: _____

OTHER

Expense Type:	Purpose of Meeting/ Activity	Amount to Claim (£)
Replacement Care		
Childcare Costs		
Subsistence		
Other		

- ❖ Please attach any receipts
- ❖ Please attach Replacement Care/Childcare form

Appendix 3: Sample claim form

**SERVICE USER or CARER CLAIM FORM
REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES**

Name of ClaimantPaul Smith.....
Address22 The Meadows.....
.....Belfast.....
.....BT1 11B.....

For BACS Payment*

Sort Code: 11 / 01 / 00

Account Number: 0158946

Name of Bank: Dankse Bank, Donegall Square North

Signature of Claimant

Date

Please note: All expenses need to be “wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred” in the course of involvement. The Health and Social Care organisation will not be liable for the reimbursement of expenses that have not been agreed in advance.

For Official Use Only

Date received in HSC Office

Approved by Date
HSC Officer

Cost Centre Account / Activity Code

Date to BSO Payments Team Confirmation received

TRAVEL

Date	Detail of Journey	Purpose of Meeting/ Activity	No of Miles	Other Transport i.e bus/rail
1 Jan 2020	Home to 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast	Adoption Support Group	10 miles (return)	
2 Jan 2020		MHLD meeting, BHSC	N/A	Bus Fare (£5.60)

Total miles claimed: _____ 10 _____

OTHER

Expense Type:	Purpose of Meeting/ Activity	£
Replacement Care		
Childcare Costs	Community of Practice meeting	6.50 (form attached)
Subsistence		
Other		

- ❖ Please attach any receipts
- ❖ Please attach Replacement Care/Childcare form to claim form

Appendix 4 - Sample letter for Jobs & benefits office

Address

Date

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you to explain about **service user and carer involvement** in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland.

Individuals become involved in health and social care work who have personal experience of health and social care issues, including people who are carers, partners and other family members who are offering their experience and expertise. This is a Department of Health Policy.

People who are asked to help by offering their involvement in health and social care work, will be asked to attend involvement events. This is described as service user involvement. The Department for Communities has introduced legislation specific to involvement. Please see a description of 'service users' Employment and Support Allowance Chapter V4:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/dm-adm-chapter-v4.pdf>

There is a reference to reimbursed expenses being ignored Paragraph V4119. Notional earnings are not applied to service user involvement.

Health and Social Care organisations in Northern Ireland offer support measures as required so that people who have a condition that adversely affects them in using public transport are able to travel to meetings or events and to participate. Support is provided if this is needed for people to participate in discussion about services. Involvement should not be mistaken for a reduction of care or mobility needs.

Evidence can be provided of all payments I have received for reimbursed expenses.

Yours faithfully

Name of Service User/Carer

Appendix 5



Template for Replacement Care / Childcare

I confirm that I received the amount of
_____ for providing Replacement

Care / Childcare (please circle) from

_____ on

(Date)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

*Service users/ carers should attach this form to their claim form

Appendix 6

Annex 14: Subsistence allowances

Schedule of recommended allowances

Night allowances: first 30 nights	Actual receipted cost of bed and breakfast up to a maximum of £55 (subject to the provisions of paragraph 18.3 if this is exceeded for genuine business reasons).
Meals allowance	Per 24 hour period: £20.00
Night allowances in non-commercial accommodation	Per 24 hour period: £25.00
Night allowances: after first 30 nights	Maximum amount payable: £35.00
Day meals subsistence allowances	<p>Lunch allowance (more than five hours away from base, including the lunchtime period between 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm) £5.00</p> <p>Evening meal allowance (more than ten hours away from base and return after 7:00 pm) £15.00</p>
Incidental expenses allowance (this allowance is subject to a tax liability)	Per 24 hour period: £4.20
Late night duties allowance (this allowance is subject to a tax liability)	Per 24 hour period: £3.25