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Non-Clinical Policy for Service User and Carer Expenses and Remunerations

'NHS Oxfordshire is ambitious about improving the health and wellbeing of local people.'

'We will support and promote strong communities so that people live their lives as successfully and independently as possible. We will provide effective and efficient support to the most vulnerable.'

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**230 Non-Clinical Policy for Service User and Carer Expenses and Remunerations
February 2010**

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1. Introduction and Purpose

It is good practice for both NHS and Local Authorities to offer out of pocket expenses and where appropriate reward to members of the public when they get involved in consultative activity.

This policy defines the situations in which such payment may be made. It also provides guidance to members of staff working with the public as to when and how reimbursement and/or reward can be offered.

NHS Oxfordshire (PCT) and Oxfordshire Social and Community Services (OSCS) have been working in partnership to develop a joint user and carer expenses policy. This will establish principles and protocols for reimbursing patients and the public their out of pocket expenses and remunerating certain activities as defined in the policy.

NHS Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire County Council are ambitious about improving the health and wellbeing of local people.

The PCT will work with its partners to deliver a transformation in local health services, so that by 2013 the people of Oxfordshire will:

- Be healthier, particularly if they are vulnerable or live in our most deprived communities;
- Be working with the PCT to promote physical and mental well being and prevent ill health;
- Be actively supported to manage their health and care needs at home, when this is appropriate;
- Have access to high quality, personalised, safe and appropriate health services;
- Get excellent value from their local health services;
- Have a PCT which is a high performing organisation.

This policy has been developed in line with the PCTs Communications and Public Involvement Strategy and the County Council's six principles for involvement. It will enable patient and public views to be taken into account in the commissioning, development and provision of services.

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to working with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Our aim is to deliver prosperity and security for the people of Oxfordshire by encouraging economic growth while improving the quality of life and environment for those living and working in the county.

Our core values of **Customer Focus, Honesty, One Team, Involvement, Can-do and Efficient and Effective** are consistently reflected in delivery of our four key areas of focus:

- **Thriving communities**
- **World class economy**
- **Tackling climate change**
- **Better public services**

Everything we do is guided by our key objectives of **Low Taxes, Real Choice** and **Value for Money**.

This policy defines the process and gives guidance on the payment of expenses incurred by members of the public, carers and service users who have been asked individually to be involved in the work of a PCT and Oxfordshire Social and Community Services. It clarifies the circumstances where a volunteer should be offered payment for their involvement.

2. Background

Service users and carers contribute their time and expertise to improving services.

This may be achieved by:

- representation on working groups
- focus groups
- project work

“Each relevant English body must make arrangements, as respects health services for which it is responsible, which secure that users of those services are, whether directly or through representatives, involved (whether by being consulted or provided with information, or in other ways) in –

- a) the planning of the provision of those services
- b) the development and consideration of proposals for changes in the way those services are provided, and
- c) decisions to be made by that body affecting the operation of those services. “

Section 242(1B) of the NHS Act 2006

The duty to involve specifies three ways of involving:

- **providing information** about the exercise of the particular function
- **consulting** about the exercise of a particular function
- **involving** in another way

Within the context of the duty ‘**local persons**’ refers to *those people likely to be affected by, or interested in, a particular council function*. It covers local residents (children, young people as well as adults), those who work and study in the county, visitors, services users, local third sector organisations, businesses, bodies such as parish councils and; other interested parties. The duty places a special emphasis on effective engagement with all parts of the community – including those who can often be marginalised or vulnerable people (sometimes referred to as ‘hard to reach’.)

Part 7, section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health (LGPIH) Act 2007.

Whilst it is recognised that individuals may obtain personal satisfaction from being involved, it is unreasonable to expect them to resource their own involvement as this runs the risk of excluding people on financial grounds.

The joint user and carers expenses policy will help staff in all roles and settings identify how they can best support all those wishing to contribute their time, experience and skills, while acknowledging that individuals have different needs. Although service user involvement may be completely on a voluntary basis it is good practice to offer to reimburse volunteers’ out of pocket expenses and this policy has been developed to enable those individuals to claim payment for their time should they wish.

3. Principles

This policy is based a set of principles identified in the Communications and Patient and Public Involvement Strategy:

- Communications and public involvement must be embedded in the organisation
- Communication and public involvement are two-way processes involving listening as well as informing
- Effective communication and public involvement must support equity and accessibility
- Good communication and public involvement build and enhance trust
- Communication and public involvement are learning tools
- Effective communication and public involvement require planning and preparation.

Oxfordshire County Council, Social and Community Service's consultation and involvement principles:

The following **six principles** underpin and guide all our consultations and involvement exercises:

- **Be necessary** – consultation should only be undertaken when the council has a genuine reason to seek feedback to confirm, inform, influence or review service delivery, policy development or council policies.
- **Be proportionate** – the inputs of consultation (financial, staff, consultees' time etc.) must be proportionate to the potential impacts of the consultation findings. Consultation should demonstrate value for money and be conducted in a coordinated way to avoid duplication of effort and consultation fatigue.
- **Be robust** - consultation must be undertaken in an open and honest way. This means being clear about the purpose and scope of the consultation and how its outcomes will be used. It also means consulting at a time when issues and proposals are still at a formative stage and providing sufficient information to allow people to give intelligent and considered responses.
- **Be accessible and inclusive** – consultation should allow all interested parties to have their say and give them adequate time to do. Special efforts should be made to engage those who are not usually consulted by using a range of methods and working in partnership with others.
- **Be coordinated** – consultation should be integrated into business planning and management. Every effort should be made to join-up consultations across services and partners in order to avoid duplication of effort, over consultation of groups & individuals; and to share learning as widely as possible.

- **Be used**– consultation findings should be reported in as reliable and representative as possible. All views expressed in a consultation should be taken into account when the council makes decisions and the council must explain in advance how it will do this. Feedback should be provided on the outcomes of consultation.

The policy accords with the principles set out in Department of Health's Reward and Recognition Guidance which state the principles for payment and reimbursement for service user and carer involvement.

- service users are not to be left out of pocket or put at risk of being financially worse off as a result of their involvement in service improvement
- service providers and service users will discuss and agree on the terms of involvement prior to committing to it
- service users are given the right information at the right time to be able to make an informed choice about how and on what terms they want to be involved
- the contribution service users make can be recognised and valued in all sorts of ways such as being thanked, positive feedback and acknowledgement, staff time, practical assistance, training, personal development or seeing the impact of the work and changes made as a result of involvement. Payment can also be offered for certain levels of involvement
- a wide range of service users, with different needs and experiences are encouraged and supported to be involved. The way that payment and/or reimbursement of expenses are settled should not needlessly create barriers that deter service users from being involved
- service users in receipt of benefits should be provided with the right information and support to prevent a breach of their benefit conditions. Breach of benefit conditions can result in benefits being stopped
- service users are paid according to open and consistent criteria that takes into account
- the level of involvement, the type of work and the skills and expertise required
- paperwork to claim payment and reimbursement is kept to a minimum. Where paperwork is necessary to safeguard both the service provider and the service user, it should be accessible and easy to understand

Department of Health (2006) 'Reward and recognition: The principles and practice of service user payment and reimbursement in health and social care. A guide for service providers, service users and carers'

4. How is the Policy to be Used?

This Policy is for PCT and Oxfordshire Social and Community Services staff who may be engaging the services of a service user or carer in the development of any Policy, Service, Strategy, Process etc. It informs service users and carers who are involved, or are considering their involvement in improving health services. This policy is specifically aimed at those service users and carers who are over the age of 18 and/or acting on behalf of a young person under the age of 18. This policy is not applicable to individuals under the age of 18 who wish to claim in their own right.

This policy explains the principles for reimbursing travel and other related expenses incurred by members of the public involved in the work of the PCT and Oxfordshire Social and Community Services. The policy includes information in relation to members of the public who have a special need that requires them to be accompanied by a personal assistant or by a carer, and enables the claiming of travel and associated expenses for them.

Throughout this document members of the public and their carers have been referred to as participants.

This policy provides guidance on what expenses can be claimed and how participants will be paid.

As a publicly funded bodies the PCT and Oxfordshire Social and Community Services have a responsibility to Parliament and to taxpayers to ensure that they account for the resources they are given and that these are used for the purpose provided. Therefore all claims for reimbursement must show that it was reasonable to incur the expenditure and that the reimbursement sought accords with this Service User and Carer Expenses Policy and with the PCT and Oxfordshire Social and Community service's work plan.

This policy and the process of reimbursing expenses will be regularly reviewed.

5. Equity and Independence

- Paying people who use services and members of the public does not influence the independence of their views.
- A role description can be drawn up with them to clarify and acknowledge the independent role of the individual involved.
- A role description can also be agreed for all members of any formal group to confirm their equitable status.

6. Expenses and Reimbursement

Payment for involvement

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The PCT and Oxfordshire County Council (Social and Community Services) will, whenever possible, make payment available for patients/carers/service users and the public who are working with the PCT and Oxfordshire County Council (Social and Community Services) in the planning, commissioning and delivery of services. Whether payment is to be made or not, must be agreed and clearly communicated to the patient/carer/service user or member of the public before they commit to any participation.

NHS Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire County Council have set a level of fee which will be available to patients/carers/service users and the public who work with the organisations, should they wish to claim it. Full detail of these fees is provided in (Appendix 1.)

If payment is offered it is the involvee's decision whether or not to accept payment. Actual costs of expenses should always be reimbursed. People can opt to receive no payment at all to avoid affecting benefits but should still seek advice from the benefits agency to check this is acceptable.

For each period of involvement we will not cap the amount to be paid but prior to any activity the manager must agree with the budget holder that the funding is available for the piece of work. Once any agreed limit is reached it must be renegotiated.

Levels of Involvement and Reimbursement

Type of activity	Payment
Attendance at open or public meetings/consultations and giving an individual view	No payment and no reimbursement of expenses
Responding to questionnaires	No payment and no reimbursement of expenses
Participating in a training session	No payment and no reimbursement
Attending consultation events or workshops by invitation	Expenses only
Participating in training which is necessary to carry out involvement work	Payment of time and reimbursement
Representation and participation at designated meetings	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Leading or co-leading Focus Groups	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Chairing designated groups or meetings	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Staff recruitment and Interview Panel membership	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Presentations (including preparation)	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Staff Training	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Evaluating and reviewing documents on behalf of the organisation	Payment of time and reimbursement
Monitoring services or evaluating services	Payment of time and reimbursement
Development and evaluation of tenders	Payment of time and reimbursement
Planning or preparing or facilitating workshops	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Planning, preparing and delivering conferences	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Speaking at events/conferences on behalf of the organisation as a representative of service user or carer group	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses

Before any claim is made an agreement should be made between the service user and the member of staff involved about the level of involvement above.

The types of out of pocket expenses that will be paid include:

Car mileage

Car parking costs (a receipt must be provided)

Public transport fares (a receipt must be provided)

Bicycle mileage

Car passenger mileage

Lunch to a maximum limit of £5.00 (if attending a meeting between 12 and 2)

Out of Pocket expenses will **not** be paid where a patient/carer/service user or member of public:

- chooses to attend a public/open meeting
- where they attend as an individual in their own right to express their own personal experiences and not as a representative of other service users or carers
- where they are representing another organisation, through which expenses can be claimed

Carers' costs

Care costs can be paid in the following situations:

- Reimbursement for childcare costs may be claimed for children aged 16 or under in order for participants to attend meetings and get involved in the work of the PCT and/or Oxfordshire Social and Community Services.
- Reimbursement for carers' costs or for other dependents may also be claimed. Medical or social services confirmation that care is required may be requested. Care costs are paid to cover the actual costs of care. This means whatever you need to pay the person who is covering your care responsibilities. Costs are only payable where cover is not normally provided as part of your social services care package.
- Participants may not claim for care provided by a member of the household or by a person who is under 16. Participants are also unable to claim for care which is provided by or is available from another organisation (e.g. social services).

Support costs

If a service user requires someone to support them in the meeting, or to get to the meeting, his or her travel costs can also be claimed for. They can also claim for the costs of employing the person to accompany them.

7. Accountability and Responsibility of the Claimant

If you are claiming benefits

Service users and/or carers are encouraged to alert the Benefits Agency about their involvement and acceptance of payments. However, the PCT and Social and Community services also have a duty of care to protect people from jeopardising their benefits and a duty in law to report known fraud.

If service users or carers participate and receive a payment in return this could be regarded as paid work for tax and benefit purposes.

Benefits Advisors can explain how much an individual can earn without affecting their benefits, depending on which benefits they are claiming, and whether payments can be spread over a period of time to minimise the impact on benefits.

If someone chooses to take part on a voluntary basis (without claiming the fee), out of pocket expenses should be reimbursed.

Generally, voluntary work does not affect benefits, but people claiming certain benefits need to be aware that voluntary work may affect their entitlement to higher levels of benefit and may raise questions about their fitness for work. They need to bear in mind that they should not commit to so much voluntary work that they are no longer regarded as being available for, or incapable of, work.

Service users and carers who decide to accept payment for their involvement should notify the Inland Revenue and complete form P46 so that the correct income tax and National Insurance contributions are paid where appropriate. The Inland Revenue will advise the individual on this.

People involved on a voluntary basis who are on certain benefits should contact their local Jobcentre Plus office and complete a JCP VOL1 form before undertaking any voluntary work.

You should be aware that if you receive a payment while you are claiming benefits your benefits may be affected. There are several organisations who can advise you about this.

8. Monitoring

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through checks of the expenses claim forms and through ongoing engagement work.

9. Review

This document will be reviewed after three years.

APPENDIX 1



Joint User and Carers expenses & remuneration Claim Form

Claimant Details

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel:

Email:

Meeting Details

Meeting name/purpose:

Venue of Meeting:

Date of Meeting:

Meeting Organiser:

Expenses Details: *(Please attach receipts for all claims except car mileage & consultancy fees)*

Travel

Car mileage miles @ 40 pence per mile £.....

Car parking £.....

Fares £.....

Other (please specify) £.....

Consultancy Costs @ £15.00 per hour £.....

Care Costs £..... per hour for.....hours

Total Expenses To Be Paid (Travel + Care) £..... Code NFFB80 73190

REF: / / (For office use only)

Signature of Claimant: _____ Date: _____

Expenses Approved by: _____ Meeting Organiser

Date:

Payment Authorised by: _____ (Authorised Manager)

Please return this form to: Communications and PPI Administrator, Oxfordshire PCT,
2nd Floor, Jubilee House, 5510 John Smith Drive, Oxford Business Park South, Oxford,
OX4 9LH. For enquiries please call the Team Administrator on: 01865 334641.

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Oxfordshire Users and Carers expenses- Guidance for what you can claim and how much.

If you want advice on getting involved in our work, please see our Guidance notes for service users.

Travel expenses for getting to and from a meeting

It is expected that you will travel to and from meetings by the cheapest and most appropriate form of transport.

If you travel by:

- private car you can claim parking & mileage.
- mileage is paid at the rate of 40p per mile
- public transport, use car parks, or need to use a taxi, **please provide receipts.**
- by bicycle you can claim 6.2p per mile
- car as a passenger, the driver can claim an additional 2p per mile for the passenger, if you are car sharing for joint involvement activities.

Care costs

Care costs are paid to cover the actual costs of care. This means whatever you need to pay the person who is covering your care responsibilities. Costs are only payable where cover is not normally provided as part of your social services care package. Care costs can be used to ensure that the person you care for can attend a meeting. Care costs include childcare costs. **Please provide receipts.**

Support costs

If you require someone unpaid to support you in the meeting, or to get to the meeting, his or her travel costs can also be claimed for. You can also claim for the costs of employing this person to accompany you. **Please ensure that you provide receipts.**

Consultancy fees

To claim these fees you must be working with Health or Social Services as a representative for a particular issue or care group on a particular service development or plan. The member of staff you are working with must agree such a payment with you beforehand, and request this payment on your behalf. Fees are currently paid at £15.00 per hour (excluding travel time). **If you are receiving a means tested benefit, you are responsible for checking the effect on your entitlement.**

How to claim

What you need to do to claim expenses:

1. The Health or Social Services person organising the meeting must agree your claim-they will give you a form to complete and **MUST countersign to approve the validity of the claim.**
2. Please attach receipts for parking, public transport, etc
3. The completed form will be sent by the meeting organiser to the Communications and Engagement Team at Jubilee House, for endorsement prior to payment.

Please allow 30 days for payment – any queries about your claim should be addressed to the meeting organiser

APPENDIX 2

Guidelines for staff who are asking a service user or carer to get involved in meetings

NHS Oxfordshire and Social & Community Services value the experience and knowledge that service users and carers can bring to the work we do. It is important that all staff are mindful of the fact that, in helping us, service users and carers may revisit times and memories that are painful and upsetting for them.

Always leave a little time to talk to them after their involvement and do a de-brief if necessary. It is always important and valuable to thank them for their input.

Your Responsibilities

1. Offering expenses
Meeting organiser should ensure that all service users or carers attending meetings which meet the guidelines are offered expenses. They should supply the claim forms and ensure that the user is aware of their rights and responsibilities. Anyone claiming expenses should ensure that the form is completed and returned to the organiser. **All receipts for claims should be attached to the form, or the meeting organiser must have had sight of any receipts. We would normally expect to pay expenses by cheque. Meeting organisers should check that this is acceptable with the service user so as not to exclude anyone.**
2. Checking claim forms
It is the responsibility of the meeting organiser to check the form – this includes checking the arithmetic. By signing the form the organiser is confirming the expenses are validly claimed in accordance with the policy. Any amendments to the form should be initialled as accepted by the claimant. Note all forms should be returned for payment within 28 days of the event.
3. Signature
Without a validated signature a payment may not be approved.

4. Consultancy Fees for attendance

These may not be paid unless they have been agreed previously with the service user/carer. Organiser should note the maximum payment level.

5. Meeting claims

The authorised signatory is authorising payment from the appropriate PCT or Social & Community Services fund. Forms will be returned to organiser for further action if they have not been fully completed or if there are errors.

Acknowledgements and other forms of reward

Specifically thanking and acknowledging individuals for their time and contributions should not be overlooked whether they are paid or not.

Consideration should be given to enhancing the experiential benefits for individuals who get involved. These might include training and learning, attending conferences, confidence building, help with ongoing learning, CV development, and future employment, for example.

Guidelines on when to offer expenses and/or reimbursement

1. If payment is offered it is the individual's decision whether or not to accept payment. Actual costs of expenses should always be reimbursed.
2. For each period of involvement we will not cap the amount to be paid but prior to any activity the manager must agree with the budget holder that the funding is available for the piece of work.

Once any agreed limit is reached it must be renegotiated.

3. The levels of involvement and reimbursement are shown below as a guide for when to offer payment.

Type of activity	Payment
Attendance at open or public meetings/consultations and giving an individual view	No payment and no reimbursement of expenses
Responding to questionnaires	No payment and no reimbursement of expenses
Participating in a training session	No payment and no reimbursement
Attending consultation events or workshops by invitation	Expenses only
Participating in training which is necessary to carry out involvement work	Payment of time and reimbursement
Representation and participation at designated meetings	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Leading or co-leading Focus Groups	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Chairing designated groups or meetings	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Staff recruitment and Interview Panel membership	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Presentations (including preparation)	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Staff Training	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Evaluating and reviewing documents on behalf of the organisation	Payment of time and reimbursement
Monitoring services or evaluating services	Payment of time and reimbursement
Development and evaluation of tenders	Payment of time and reimbursement
Planning or preparing or facilitating workshops	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Planning, preparing and delivering conferences	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses
Speaking at events/conferences on behalf of the organisation as a representative of service user or carer group	Payment of time and reimbursement of expenses

4. Before any claim is made an agreement should be made between the service user and the member of staff involved about the level of involvement above.

5. The types of out of pocket expenses that will be paid include:

- Car mileage
- Car parking costs (a receipt must be provided)
- Public transport fares (a receipt must be provided)
- Bicycle mileage
- Car passenger mileage

6. Out of Pocket expenses will **not** be paid where a patient/carer/service user or member of public:

- chooses to attend a public/open meeting
- where they attend as an individual in their own right to express their own personal experiences and not as a representative of other service users or carers
- where they are representing another organisation, through which expenses can be claimed

7. Care costs can be paid in the following situations:

- Reimbursement for childcare costs may be claimed for children aged 16 or under in order for participants to attend meetings and get involved in the work of the PCT and/or Oxfordshire Social and Community Services.
- Reimbursement for carers' costs or for other dependents may also be claimed. Medical or social services confirmation that care is required may be requested. Care costs are paid to cover the actual costs of care. This means whatever you need to pay the person who is covering your care responsibilities. Costs are only payable where cover is not normally provided as part of their social services care package.
- Participants may not claim for care provided by a member of the household or by a person who is under 16. Participants are also unable to claim for care which is provided by or is available from another organisation (e.g. social services).

8. Support costs can be paid in the following situations:

If a service user requires someone to support them in the meeting, or to get to the meeting, his or her travel costs can also be claimed for. They can also claim for the costs of employing the person to accompany them.

APPENDIX 3



Payments to Service Users and Carers

NHS Oxfordshire and Social & Community Services value the experience and knowledge of its service users and carers. **It is our policy to offer a payment to Service Users and Carers when they take part in meetings, training, recruitment etc.** This amount of payment would be agreed with you by the person asking you to get involved. If you require payment before the meeting please let the member of staff know.



It is your choice whether or not to accept payment.

If you are claiming or receiving any statutory benefits, please make sure you get some independent advice about how any payment from us could affect your entitlement to these benefits.

Whether or not you accept payment, your expenses will be refunded. The rates of payment are detailed on the expenses claim form.



It is your responsibility to:

- **Inform the Department of Work and Pensions if any payment takes you above the weekly income disregard for your particular circumstances.**
- **Inform the Inland Revenue of any earnings.**
- **Inform your local Council or Job Centre, as any payment may affect any Benefits that you are receiving**