



Expenses, Rewards and Remuneration Policy for Children, Young People and Adults for Engagement Activity Only

February 2014

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This Policy will be reviewed annually

Review date: March 2015

1. Introduction and purpose

We value the experience and expertise of the public, users, carers, parents, and young people and believe community engagement is at the heart of providing high quality, responsive services. We are committed to ensuring people are involved at all levels in strategic planning, commissioning, service development, monitoring and review.

It is good practice to offer out of pocket expenses and, where appropriate, payments/rewards to people when they are involved in consultation and engagement activity. We hope people will obtain skills, knowledge, experience and personal satisfaction from being involved, but it is unreasonable to expect them to resource their own involvement and could risk excluding people on financial grounds.

This Policy:

- Creates a framework for reimbursements and rewards
- Provides principles and guidance for staff working with children, young people and adults as to when and how reimbursement, care costs and/or rewards can be offered.

The Policy covers Oxfordshire County Council's Children, Education and Families and Social and Community Services Directorates; and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. Until April 2013, NHS Oxfordshire (Primary Care Trust) and Oxfordshire County Council used a joint User and Carer Expenses Policy for Adults. This revised version includes Children, Education and Families and takes account of legislation relating to the employment of children and young people, including the 1998 Oxfordshire County Council Bye-Law on the Employment of Children and Young People¹.

Throughout this document, children, young people, users, carers, patients and members of the public involved, are referred to as 'participants'.

2. Background

Participants contribute their time and expertise to improving services in multiple ways, through co-productive involvement in commissioning, strategy and service development, involvement in recruitment, representing people at board levels etc. Additionally, young people are involved in democratic processes, including Oxfordshire Youth Parliament and UK Youth Parliament. Young people are also

¹<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/business/licensesandpermits/parttimeemploymentapplicationform.pdf>
<https://www.gov.uk/child-employment>

involved in processes that enable Oxfordshire County Council to have their views on sufficiency and quality of provision under the duty to *secure access to sufficient activities to improve young people's well-being (Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 507b)*.

The Duty of Best Value² requires public bodies to consult representatives of the public about the arrangements they make to secure continuous improvements in the way they exercise their functions. The statutory guidance on the Best Value Duty published in November 2012, further set out 'reasonable expectations' of the way local authorities should work with voluntary and community groups, small businesses and to consult with people affected by any changes.

Oxfordshire County Council Consultation Strategy outlines the councils principles and approach to ensuring consultation practice meets the legal requirements.³ The policy accords with the principles set out in Department of Health's *Reward and Recognition Guidance 2006*⁴ which state the principles for payment and reimbursement for service user and carer involvement:

- Participants are not to be left out of pocket or put at risk of being financially worse off as a result of their involvement
- the terms of involvement will be agreed prior to any activity, and people will have the right information at the right time to make informed choices about their involvement
- the contribution participants make will be recognised appropriately
- a wide range of people should be supported to be involved and any barriers minimised, and information given (e.g. to prevent a breach of benefit conditions)
- any payments are made openly and consistently against transparent criteria
- paperwork is kept to a minimum, is accessible & easy to understand.

3. Rewards, Expenses, Care and Support Costs

Rewards and Payments

We will agree rewards/payments with the person involved **before** they commit to anything, using the framework outlined in Appendix 3. This recognises participant's significant time commitment and expertise. Rewards can be made in a variety of ways, e.g. certificates, prizes, incentives and accreditation, as well as through vouchers and payments. The vouchers can only be obtained for the specific designated activity and should link to care plans where appropriate.

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5945/1976926.pdf

³ <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/consultation-and-law>

⁴ 'Reward and Recognition: The principles & practice of service user payment & reimbursement in health and social care. A guide for service providers, service users and carers', Department of Health (2006)

If a reward or payment is offered, it is the participant's decision whether to accept payment or undertake the activity voluntarily. People can opt to receive no payment at all to avoid affecting benefits but, if in doubt, should seek advice from the benefits agency to check. Payment for reading or travel time is not usually paid.

Prior to any activity taking place, the organiser **must** agree the activity and costs with the cost centre manager.

Travel costs

Travel expenses will be paid to ensure people are not out of pocket. Where possible people will be encouraged to use public transport or car shares. Participants choosing to attend a public/open meeting would not normally be paid travel costs. If people are representing another organisation, they should claim through that route. Taxi costs will only be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of organisers/managers and agreed prior to the meeting (unless in an absolute emergency).

Care costs

Care costs can be paid in the following situations, where agreed with the organiser in advance and supported by receipts from the registered provider:

- childcare costs for children aged 16 or under
- carers' costs or for other dependents. Medical or social services confirmation that care is required may be requested. Care costs are paid to cover the actual costs of care, i.e. the amount required to pay the person who is covering the care responsibilities. Costs are only payable where cover is not normally provided as part of a care package
- participants cannot normally claim for care provided by a member of the household (there are some exceptions where direct payments are paid to 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.

Any concerns about claims should be discussed with line managers.

Support costs

If a participant requires someone to support them in the meeting, or to get to the meeting, his or her travel costs can also be claimed for, but not the cost of the time travelling or supporting in a meeting. They can also claim for the costs of employing the person to accompany them, if necessary, with the prior agreement of line managers.

4. Information Governance and Confidentiality

Participants must adhere to the Information Governance standards and Codes of Confidentiality detailed in the policies of Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. These will be explained at introductory meetings.

Participants' personal information will be stored in a safe and secure way as detailed in the Information Governance policies of each organisation.

5. Accountability and Responsibility of the participants

Participants are encouraged to alert the Benefits Agency, Inland Revenue and Job Centres about their involvement and acceptance of payments, as appropriate. Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group have a duty of care to protect people from jeopardising their benefits and a duty in law to report any known fraud.

If people participate and receive a reward or payment, 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. The Inland Revenue will ensure the correct Income Tax and National Insurance contributions are paid.

There are several organisations who can advise you about this. More information can be found on Volunteering England website:

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/statebenefits>

6. Compliance with Financial Regulations

This policy is in line with Financial Regulations sections C12 and D3 as follows (under amendment).

In a limited number of cases, it is appropriate for the Council's funds to be used to purchase vouchers or gift cards that can be exchanged for goods in particular shops or used to buy particular services. For example, single vouchers may be an appropriate reward to give to people for helping the Council or as a specific incentive linked to the care plan and young person's outcomes or behaving in some way, when we do not wish or it would not be appropriate to make cash payments. Vouchers are unlikely to be an appropriate method if many of them are used to make a single purchase, or if more than one of them is given to any person at one time. Vouchers should not be used to bypass normal procurement routes for other types of expenditure. Vouchers are equivalent to cash however, so they should be treated in the same way. They should be purchased and controlled by identifiable persons with clear records of purchase, and be kept in secure conditions. Clear records should be kept of when, why and to whom they have been given out with an explanation of the reason for providing vouchers linked to service objectives. Note that payments may be considered to be taxable income and might affect any benefits that individuals claim.

In addition, there should be a clear, written overall policy on when, how and why the vouchers or gift cards should be used linked clearly to service objectives.

Appendix 1: Guidance for participants

To claim a reward or payment you will be working with us on a particular issue or a development plan, giving your time and expertise to help us improve services. The organiser must agree any payment/reward/fee with you **beforehand**, and request this payment on your behalf.

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 (if you use car parks please provide receipts). Mileage is paid at the rate of 45p per mile, (which might have tax implications depending on current taxable rate). This rate will be revised in line with OCC mileage rates, following the annual review of the policy
- bicycle: you can claim 20p per mile
- car as a passenger: the driver can claim an additional 2p per mile for a passenger
- bus or train: you can claim the cost of a standard return ticket, please provide receipt or used tickets (or photocopies/photographs).
- Usually expenses will be reimbursed by cheque or to your bank account. Where necessary, immediate cash reimbursements can be made to enable you to participate, **with prior agreement of the manager**.

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 care package. Care costs can be used to ensure that the person you care for can attend a meeting. Care costs include childcare costs. You will be asked to provide receipts, where appropriate, or evidence of 'usual rate of pay'.

Support costs

If you require someone to support you in the meeting, or to get to the meeting, the supporters travel costs can be claimed for, but not the cost of his/her time travelling or supporting you at the meeting. You can also claim the costs of employing this person to accompany you, if necessary. Please ensure that you provide receipts and discuss this with the organiser prior to the meeting.

Rewards/'Experts by Experience' fees/Remuneration

For adults, the fees are generally paid at £10.00 per hour up to a maximum of £15.00 per hour (excluding travel time). Where you are involved over several sessions on a single piece of work, an overall maximum amount should be discussed with the meeting organiser and agreed prior to the work being undertaken. If you are receiving a means tested benefit, you are responsible for checking the effect on your entitlement.

It is not our policy to provide cash payments to children and young people under the age of 18. In place of cash payments we offer rewards and incentives, e.g. Cinema tickets, DVDs, High Street store vouchers, certificates, accreditation, prizes, a meal as part of the working session etc. Where possible the rewards will be appropriate to the project you are involved with. The amount of the reward will be up to £10 for a half day and £15 for a full day, or an equivalent amount for a group 'thank you' trip/meal, with prior agreement of the cost centre manager.

Meals

Where you are taking part in events during normal working hours, where lunch is not provided the subsistence policy guidance will apply. (This will be subject to any updated rates and remain in line with the OCC Subsistence Policy). Receipts for meals must be provided.

If you are working outside normal hours (e.g. evenings and weekends), your entitlements will be agreed with you by the organiser prior to the event. The OCC Subsistence Policy will provide the overall framework for any claims.

It is your choice whether or not to accept any payments for your involvement.

How to claim:

To claim expenses:

1. The organiser must agree your expenses and 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 organiser will send the completed form for endorsement and payment.
4. Please return any claim forms within 28 days of the event.

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

Tax and benefit Implications

If you are claiming or receiving any statutory benefits, you should make sure you get independent advice about how a reward could affect your entitlement to benefits.

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 district/city council or Job Centre, as any payment may affect any Benefits that you are receiving.

Appendix 2: Guidance: for organisers of meetings

Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group value the experience and knowledge that participants can bring to the work we do. It is good practice to de-brief participants, thank them appropriately and follow meetings with a report (or alternative version, as appropriate) giving feedback about the key findings, actions and what will happen next. Where the topic may be sensitive, organisers should ensure skilled staff are available to support people.

All events should give people information about making complaints, raising concerns and giving positive feedback – and people should be encouraged to do so, to enable organisational learning. Information given to participants should be accessible and available in appropriate alternative formats, where appropriate.

Organisers responsibilities:

1. Offering expenses, payments and rewards

Meeting organisers should ensure that all participants are offered expenses to enable them to attend meetings. They should supply the claim forms and ensure everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities. The organiser should ensure all receipts are attached to the form (or photocopied or photographed), or where unavoidable, the organiser must have had sight of receipts. Organisers should check that payment by cheques is acceptable or whether alternative payment is required. Cash refunds can be made on the day to reimburse people attending who need immediate reimbursement, with the prior agreement of cost centre managers.

The organiser must obtain agreement for the payment of any rewards or payments prior to the event. Where participants are involved over several sessions on the same piece of work, the overall maximum payment should be agreed prior to the start of the work.

Any expenses or rewards should be accounted for and agreed in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council policy and where appropriate linked to the care planning process. Rewards should be obtained for the specific relevant activity only.

2. Incentives

Where incentives are offered, e.g. for a prize draw for a survey return; these should not exceed £25 and may be less or 'in kind' depending on the nature of the work undertaken.

3. Checking claim forms

It is the responsibility of the organiser to check the form, including checking the arithmetic and adding the cost centre code. 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. All

forms from participants should be returned for payment within 28 days of the event.

The organiser will ensure approval, processing and payment of the claim forms is carried out smoothly following the event.

4. Signature

The organiser must ensure there is a validated signature or payment may not be approved.

5. Meals

Where participants are taking part in an activity outside working hours, meals and food can be provided, using the same OCC policy and rates as that covering staff expenses:

<http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/staff/hrtoolkits/duringemploy/travelexpensesmanual.pdf>

Entitlements should be discussed with participants prior to the event and agreed with line managers.

Where participants are involved in whole day events, lunch will be provided. Organisers will arrange catering using the subsistence rates as guidance for spend per head e.g lunch up to a maximum of £9.50, however best value should always be considered. Where people are travelling to events, e.g. conferences, lunch can be bought by the organiser on behalf of participants at a maximum of £9.50, or any updated rate within the OCC Expenses and Subsistence Policy.

Appendix 3: Guidance: Rewards, Fees and Payments

1. If payment is offered it is the participant's decision whether or not to accept payment. Actual costs of expenses should always be reimbursed.

There is no 'cap' on the amount of involvement a participant can take part in, but all payments supporting involvement should be discussed with line managers and agreed prior to the event, and the manager should confirm that the funding is available and the work required. Payment for reading or travel time will not generally be offered, but we aim to ensure that participants have time to understand the context of the activity. **If time for reading and preparation is significant and payment required, this must be agreed with managers prior to the activity.** Once any agreed limit is reached it must be renegotiated.

2. The categories and levels of involvement and reimbursement are shown below as a guide for when to offer rewards/payments. The category of the event and therefore the entitlement must be discussed and agreed with line managers prior to the event.

Type of activity	Category	Payment
Attendance at <i>open or public</i> meetings/consultations and giving an individual view	1	No reward/payment; no reimbursement of expenses (unless in exceptional circumstances)
Responding to questionnaires	1	No reward/payment; no reimbursement of expenses. Incentives could be offered in accordance with policy
Attending consultation events or workshops <i>by invitation</i>	2	Expenses only
Participating in training necessary to carry out involvement work	3	Payment/rewards and reimbursement of expenses
Representation and participation at designated meetings/sessions	3	Payment/rewards and reimbursement of expenses
Leading/speaking at Focus Groups/workshops/conferences etc	3	Payment/rewards and reimbursement of expenses
Chairing designated groups or meetings	3	Payment/rewards and reimbursement of expenses
Staff recruitment and Interview Panel membership	3	Payment/rewards and reimbursement of expenses
Presentations	3	Payment/rewards and reimbursement of expenses
Staff Training (input into training)	3	Payment/rewards and reimbursement of expenses
Evaluating and reviewing documents on behalf of the organisation	3	Payment/rewards and reimbursement of expenses
Monitoring services or evaluating services/mystery shopping	3	Payment /rewards and reimbursement of expenses
Development and evaluation of tenders	3	Payment/rewards and

		reimbursement of expenses
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Appendix 4: Claim Form

Participants should complete the form below to claim expenses, care and support costs and any engagement costs agreed.

Claimant details			
Name:			
Address:			
Postcode:			
Meeting details			
Meeting name/purpose:			
Venue of meeting:			
Date of meeting:			
Organiser of meeting:			
Expenses details: (Please attach receipts for all claims except car mileage & engagement fees)			
Travel:			
Car mileage	miles @	45p	p/mile £
Car parking			£
Fares			£
Other (please specify)			£
Experts by Experience*/Engagement cost	@	£	p/hour £
Care/support costs	£	p/hour	for hours £
<small>(As agreed in advance)</small>			
Total expenses to be paid	(travel and care)		£
Tax and benefit Implications			
If you are claiming or receiving any statutory benefits, you should make sure you get independent advice about how a reward could affect your entitlement to benefits.			

(Continued over)

Whether or not you accept the rewards, 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 district/city council or Job Centre, as any payment may affect any Benefits that you are receiving.

I have read with Participants Guidance and the Tax and Benefit Implications (above)

Signature of claimant:

Date:

Expenses approved by:

Meeting organiser

Date:

Cost Centre Code:

Expenses authorised by:

Manager name

Cost Centre Manager signature

Date:

Please return this form to:

Meeting Organiser at: Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Jubilee House, 5510 John Smith Drive, Oxford Business Park South, Oxford, OX4 2LH

or

Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, New Rd, Oxford OX1 1ND

** Experts by Experience are people who have experience of using health and/or social care services*

Appendix 5: Check List for meeting organisers

Action	Event and date of event	Rationale of decision/category of event	Officer	Date
1. Discussed all entitlements with participants prior to event/activity				
2. Discussed time commitments and amounts with line manager Decision and rationale agreed and noted				
3. Category agreed prior to event				
4. Claim forms completed, with cost centre manager sign-off				
5. Claim processed				