


# **NHS West Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group**

## **Volunteer expenses policy**

## Document control form

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Produced by:	Communications and Engagement Manager
What is it for?	This policy sets out guiding principles around working with volunteers and the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses
Who is it aimed at and which settings?	NHS West Norfolk CCG volunteers, patients, carers and public representatives and staff who support them
Evidence base:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with our Patient and Public Voice Partners – Reimbursing out of pocket expenses and involvement payments. NHS England. February 2015</li> <li>Volunteering England</li> </ul>
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## 1. Introduction

1.1. NHS West Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group is a membership organisation led by family doctors that plans and buys health services for its local population. CCGs have a duty to operate within the limited budget they are given, while commissioning for quality and best value.

1.2. The CCG considers working in partnership with patients and the public to be central to the way that we work. We are committed to ensuring that public and patient voices are at the heart of shaping our healthcare services.

1.3. This policy is written to set out some guiding principles and practice around working with volunteers and the reimbursing them for out of pocket expenses. The policy applies to individual patients/carers and members of the public who help the CCG with our work (not to paid staff of other organisations) and covers patients and the public who are residents of West Norfolk.

1.4. The CCG defines 'volunteering' as "any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives". [www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/volunteering-policy](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/volunteering-policy)

1.5. The CCG recognises that all the people who live and use services within their areas can offer individual feedback on their experiences and as such are 'experts by experience'.

1.6. The CCG aims to ensure that patients and the public are not financially out of pocket when they support our work. This policy sets out when and what financial support is available to patients and the public who are involved in our work, in line with our duty to ensure the best use of public funds.

1.7. By 'covering expenses' we mean reimbursing the costs that are incurred by a volunteer while being involved in activities for the CCG. This includes travel and carer support where necessary. Further guidance can be found in section 2 and Appendix 1. We only support volunteer activity and do not pay involvement fees.

## 2. Categories of financial support for volunteers

2.1. The CCG has the following approach to financial support for volunteers:

2.2. Category A – public meetings and meetings in public. This applies to meetings and surveys/questionnaires that participants choose to attend or participate in because they are relevant to their areas of personal interest. Examples of this type of engagement would include the CCG's Annual General Meeting and Stakeholder events, Governing Body meetings, a public meeting, or where CCG staff engage with people in public spaces like libraries and shopping centres to ask for their views or input. No financial reimbursements are offered.

2.3. Category B – reimbursing out of pocket expenses. This is the CCG's usual arrangement for volunteers' input into CCG work providing patient and service user voice, feedback and perspectives. It applies when the CCG is inviting input into specific programmes of work.

Examples of this would include volunteers being participants/delegates at discussion forums, events, workshops, being part of a wide range of committees and reference groups. Full details of what out of pocket expenses can be claimed, and how to make a claim can be found at section 9 and Appendix 1.

2.4 Supporter & Advocacy Organisations – supporters or advocates attending with or for volunteers who would not otherwise be able to take part in the engagement activity will be reimbursed for their expenses using the form in Appendix 1 if agreed in advance with the CCG. A supporter or advocate will not be reimbursed their expenses if they are attending an event as a paid employee representing their own or their organisation's views.

### **3. Supporting people in receipt of state benefits**

3.1. The CCG actively seeks a diverse and inclusive approach to involvement. We recognise that many of our volunteers have ongoing health conditions and may be in receipt of state benefits. The CCG seeks to ensure that being in receipt of benefits does not constitute a barrier to involvement.

3.2. In general, volunteers who are claiming out of pocket expenses can do so without it affecting their benefit entitlements.

3.3. However, rules and regulations around receiving income while in receipt of benefits vary significantly according to individual circumstances, so volunteers should discuss this with their benefits advisor or Jobcentre Plus.

3.4. It is the responsibility of the volunteer, not the CCG, to make sure they are complying with the conditions under which they receive benefits.

### **4. Working in partnership with other organisations**

4.1. The CCG usually covers expenses for volunteers who are working with us as individuals. Paid workers from voluntary organisations who attend workshops, advisory groups and consultation events are expected to seek support from their own organisations. However, representatives from small, user-led organisations may be supported with out of pocket expenses where they are not able to access any other public funds. Where these organisations find that meeting the costs of participation is likely to cause difficulty, they should contact the meeting organiser to discuss in advance.

4.2. Volunteers may also be involved in working with a number of organisations, for example with a local authority, voluntary sector organisations and or other neighbouring CCGs. If the volunteer is claiming expenses from one organisation for involvement in a specific piece of work, they may not claim expenses from other organisations for the same piece of work.

4.3. When the CCG is working jointly with other organisations (for example the Department of Health, local authorities, or Public Health England), it should be made clear to volunteers in advance which organisation is responsible for expenses. The expenses policy implemented in these circumstances will be that of the lead organisation that is responsible for paying volunteers' expenses.

4.4. Organisations that represent service users will be responsible for their own administration costs and overheads and other associated costs that fall outside the scope of this volunteer expenses policy.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. A representative of the CCG will be responsible for:

- receiving claims
- validating claims
- submitting claims through the CCG finance process for payment by cheque
- providing expenses claim forms for volunteers, in electronic or paper format as required

5.2. Volunteers and/or their advocates will be responsible for:

- providing their name and address so they can be paid by cheque; or the name and address of someone else the cheque can be paid to, together with an explanation of who that person is
- submitting a completed expenses claim form, together with valid receipts where applicable, to the CCG representative
- using and organising the most cost-effective method of travel, for example, if using a bus, to obtain a day ticket if more cost-effective, car sharing where possible and use of a taxi only when absolutely necessary
- informing any relevant agency of expenses payments that may affect any benefits they receive

## 6. What is not covered by this policy

6.1. Travel expenses of individuals attending open public meetings (e.g. Annual General Meeting of the CCG) without specific invitation from the CCG to attend.

6.2. Travel expenses for representatives of voluntary, community or faith organisations whose expenses are funded from another source.

6.3. Any fines incurred while travelling to or from valid CCG business (e.g. parking or speeding)

6.4. Loss of personal belongings.

6.5. Damage to vehicles while travelling to or from, or in attendance at, valid CCG business.

6.6. Items that are covered by other forms of funding (e.g. free childcare places)

## 7. Monitoring and review

7.1. The policy will be reviewed as required.

7.2. The CCG reserves the right to review this policy at any time. All payments are made in good faith and form no formal contract between the CCG and the volunteer.

7.3. The CCG's auditors may review samples of claims at any time and where there is evidence to suggest an inappropriate claim may have been made, the CCG reserves the right to investigate further and refer it to the CCG's anti-fraud specialist.

7.4. Individuals must declare all payments as necessary to HMRC and the CCG has no responsibility to engage with HMRC in any circumstances on a volunteer's behalf.

## **8. Covering out of pocket expenses**

8.1 The CCG will reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred by volunteers supporting us as long as they do not exceed the agreed rates (see Appendix 1).

8.2 There may be instances where the costs of participation are a barrier to involvement. The CCG will encourage volunteers to discuss their participation needs in advance so that we can explore solutions together. Assessment of such situations will be on a case-by-case basis.

8.3 All claims will be made using the form in Appendix 1 and given to the CCG representative responsible for organising the event/meeting for processing.

## **9. Carers and support workers**

9.1. The CCG recognises that in some circumstances volunteers will need to arrange for carers/support workers to accompany them to a meeting, or to take over caring responsibilities while they are at a meeting (including child care, care of family members with disabilities). The CCG will meet the expenses/costs of carer/support workers that are reasonable for the local area, and we will cover the requirements of the carer/support worker who accompanies the volunteer in line with the guidelines above. We will also cover the hourly costs of the carer/support worker where these costs are not normally covered elsewhere (for example, by service user support payments from other public funds e.g. social services). Where reimbursement is needed for carers/support workers, this is on a case-by-case basis and should be agreed in advance with the meeting organiser.

9.2 Where the CCG is reimbursing the cost of care or support workers to support participants to attend, this should be delivered by a registered worker. For the avoidance of doubt, the carer or support worker is engaged by the volunteer and not by the CCG. The CCG will reimburse actual expenditure based on receipts/invoices submitted with expense claims. The receipt/invoice should provide details of the carer's registration and/or professional organisation providing the care.



## Appendix 1

### Expenses claim form – Patient and public engagement

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Telephone number: .....

Event/meeting: .....

Date: .....

#### Travel Costs

Return travel by public transport/taxi £.....

Car mileage, distance travelled, including return journey ..... miles @ 25p per mile  
£.....

#### Carer/Childcare Costs

Total costs arising of carer/childcare arrangements to allow volunteer to attend event need to be agreed in advance (maximum £10 per hour)

Register number of Registered/Approved Carer .....  
£.....

#### Parking costs

Receipts/tickets are required. The CCG will not pay any parking fines/penalty charge notices  
£.....

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**Total amount claimed:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Signed:** .....

Authorised by CCG representative: .....