

## RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT EXPENSES POLICY



<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Resident Engagement Expenses Policy</b>		
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<b>Associated documents</b>	Resident Engagement Strategy	<b>EIA Completed by</b>	E West May 24

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. background and purpose	3
2. INTRODUCTION – WHO CAN CLAIM AND WHAT IS COVERED	3
3. HOW TO CLAIM	3
4. QUALIFYING EVENTS AND EXPENSES	3
5. Reference documents	9
Diversity & inclusion	10

## **1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

- 1.1. CHL (CHL) and Cornwall Council recognise the importance of residents being involved in decisions that affect their homes and lives. We want to encourage involvement, and out-of-pocket expenses can deter residents from becoming involved. This policy sets out how we reimburse genuine out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of involvement. It sets out when we will reimburse expenses, and what is needed in order to claim.

## **2. INTRODUCTION – WHO CAN CLAIM AND WHAT IS COVERED**

- 2.1. CHL covers the extra costs that residents face as a result of becoming involved. Reimbursed out-of-pocket expenses are not earnings, and therefore no tax or national insurance is payable on the expenses reimbursed, nor should they affect entitlement to state benefits. However, occasionally we will provide participants with a non-cash gift voucher incentivise engagement and to thank them for their involvement. In some circumstances this can count towards ‘income’ and will need to be declared by the individual to the relevant benefits or tax authorities. For example, if it can be shown that they hold an office or voluntary work employment, or by contributing to miscellaneous income.
- 2.2. All Cornwall Council and CHL tenants, leaseholders and other residents of CHL can claim out-of-pocket expenses resulting from involvement.

## **3. HOW TO CLAIM**

- 3.1. Complete the Resident Expenses Claim Form in order to make a claim for expenses. A copy can be obtained from our engagement staff, or at the meeting itself. CHL will provide support in completing the claim form where needed by claimants, including providing a translation or a different format upon request.
- 3.2. Residents are encouraged to claim on the day of the meeting or within the month that the expenses were incurred. Claims will normally be paid in cash on the day, although in certain circumstances payments may be made direct to a bank account. We require receipts or proof of spending and can help with establishing what would be sufficient proof.

## **4. QUALIFYING EVENTS AND EXPENSES**

- 4.1. CHL will reimburse expenses for any meetings which CHL has arranged specifically for the purposes of involvement or governance and explicitly invited a resident to attend. Whilst CHL may in certain circumstances pay subsistence costs incurred while attending meetings (e.g., where an overnight stay is required) this has to be

explicitly agreed in writing with CHL engagement team before the expenses are incurred.

- 4.2 The CHL engagement team will decide whether a meeting is a qualifying event and ensure that residents know whether expenses can be reimbursed. Occasional exceptions may be made so that residents can attend a non-qualifying meeting, but this is at CHL's discretion.

**Examples of meetings covered by this policy:**

- Local and country wide training and conferences
- Tenant forum or Scrutiny Panel meetings
- Focus groups

**Examples of meetings not covered by this policy:**

- Local fun days and resident events – unless a resident is volunteering with CHL at the event.
- Public and neighbourhood meetings - unless a resident is volunteering with CHL at the event.
- Meetings arranged by tenants and residents' associations or other resident groups.
- Council meetings – unless a resident has been specifically invited by the Council or CHL to observe or participate in that council meeting.

Reasonable qualifying expenses are:

• **Travel costs**, although in some circumstances we will arrange the travel for the meeting. For example, CHL may decide that a shared taxi or train is the most cost-effective travel option. When claiming mileage, we confirm mileage payable based on an online route planner such as AA or Google

- **Care costs** for children or adult dependants by approval in advance
- **Other costs** as set out below and by prior arrangement

Full details of expenses are contained in the table on the following pages.

**Liabilities** - CHL do not reimburse any fines incurred, for example speeding or parking.

Where residents use their own vehicle to transport passengers they must ensure that this is not in breach of their insurance and that they stay within parking and other legal requirements. The act of reimbursing genuine out-of-pocket expenses does not in any way imply contract, or any other form, of employment, paid or unpaid.

Expense	Amount	Details
<b>Transport – getting to and from our meetings and training</b>		
Car	<p>Mileage as per HMRC's approved mileage rates for volunteers.</p> <p>(45p per mile for 2023.24, reducing to 25p per mile over 10,000 miles)</p>	<p>Residents will need to provide details of the addresses you've travelled between.</p> <p>Where someone not participating in the meeting drives a participant to enable them to attend, CHL will reimburse total mileage at the non-passenger rate.</p>
	<p>Out of county travel must be discussed and agreed with the Engagement Team and an acceptable sum or reimbursement agreed in advance.</p>	<p>Residents will need to provide details of the addresses you travelled between and may be asked for a copy of a petrol receipt.</p>
Car – Passenger mileage	<p>Passenger mileage</p> <p>5p per mile will also be paid for each person who is participating in the meeting and is given a lift. (In line with HMRC approved rates)</p>	<p>If residents want to claim for passenger miles you will need to record how far each extra passenger travelled with you.</p>
Motorbike	<p>Mileage as per HMRC's approved mileage rates.</p> <p>24p per mile for 2018.19</p>	<p>Residents will need to provide details of the addresses you travelled between.</p> <p>CHL will not reimburse passenger mileage for a motorbike claim.</p>

Parking	Cost of parking at face value of the parking ticket.	CHL will reimburse parking for the duration of the meeting, including reasonable time to get to and from the car. CHL will need the copy or to photocopy the parking receipt.
Bus	Cost of ticket at face value	CHL will need the copy. or to photocopy the bus ticket.
Bicycle	20p per mile for 2023.24	Residents will need to provide details of the addresses you travelled between.
Taxi	Arranged by CHL, no reimbursement available.	<p>Unless they are used as part of travel from a train or plane to a conference or out of county training venue, Taxis are available by prior arrangement only and will be organised. by CHL.</p> <p>Eligibility is limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of suitable public transport</li> <li>• Group travel (where cost effective)</li> <li>• Late night travel</li> <li>• Mobility or specialist care needs</li> </ul> <p>Exceptions as approved by the Engagement Team.</p>

Car ferry	Cost of ticket at face value	CHL will need the copy or to photocopy the ferry ticket.
Train	Cost of ticket at face value	CHL will need the copy or to photocopy the train ticket.  Out of county journeys must be booked by CHL.
Minibus, coach, or plane	Arranged by CHL, no reimbursement available.	Other transport may be booked by CHL because a journey is long, or many residents are travelling to the same venue.
<b>Other expenses – other costs you may encounter</b>		
Care costs	<p>Cost of care where the resident is the carer of a dependant (a child or an adult who is unable to look after themselves).</p> <p>This must be discussed with the Engagement Team and an acceptable sum for the actual care costs should be agreed in advance.</p>	<p>CHL can reimburse the resident who has paid for the care.</p> <p>CHL will need the copy or to photocopy the care receipt to reimburse you.</p>

Meals and refreshments	Arranged by CHL	<p>Drinks and refreshments will be provided at all meetings to which residents are invited to participate. Meals or buffet food will be provided, where meetings or travel to and from meetings across mealtimes.</p> <p>Residents are responsible for informing us of any special dietary requirements or food allergies</p>
	<p>Costs of meals and refreshments at external training, conferences and other CHL activities</p> <p>Maximum costs in line with those for staff of CHL, details provided when required.</p> <p>This must be discussed and agreed with the Engagement Team prior to expenses being incurred.</p>	<p>Where CHL cannot provide refreshments, residents may be permitted to buy their own meals and refreshments.</p> <p>CHL will need the copy or to photocopy the receipt(s) to reimburse you.</p>
Phone calls	No reimbursement available	CHL do not reimburse the costs of phone calls. Access to a CHL phone will be provided if it's needed for a particular CHL engagement activity.
	Cost of calls by prior arrangement only	Reimbursement may be agreed at CHL's discretion where using a phone is necessary for the involvement – for example, performing research or mystery shopping for the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel



Stationery	Other arrangement in place, no reimbursement available	CHL do not reimburse the costs of stationery and consumables.  All resources required will be provided for meetings or tasks arranged by CHL
Computer Access	Hardware arranged by CHL, broadband through expenses with relevant evidence of cost.	Very involved volunteers who do not have a computer, or a good broadband connection to enable participation in virtual meetings, are eligible for a laptop or tablet or broadband expenses at the Engagement Team's discretion.
Computer software	No reimbursement available	All CHL computers have the required software. CHL do not reimburse the cost of software for resident's personal computers.
Printers and printer ink	Other arrangement in place, no reimbursement available	CHL do not reimburse the costs of printing.  All papers required will be provided for meetings or tasks arranged by CHL.

## 5. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### 5.1.

Reference documents or regulations

- 1985 Housing & Planning Act
- 1986 Housing & Planning Act
- 2011 Localism Act
- The regulatory framework for social housing in England – Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard
- CHL Commissioning Plan
- Secure tenants' conditions of tenancy
- Resident Engagement Strategy
- Tenant Participation Policy, and Core Standards
- HMRC EIM771100 – volunteers
- Gov.uk NMW04100 – defining a volunteer.

## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

CHL is committed to treating all people with fairness and respect. We aim to create an inclusive environment where people are treated with dignity, inequalities are challenged and we anticipate and respond positively to different needs and circumstances to enable individuals to achieve their potential and foster good relations within the communities we serve. We want to be recognised as an organisation delivering fair, inclusive, accessible services and an employer and partner of choice.

When applying this policy, we act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and to reduce discrimination and harassment by making reasonable adjustments such as:

- eliminating discrimination – by providing support to those who need it and information in accessible formats and languages on request.
- tailoring the policy to meet both the specific needs of the individual, including those with additional support needs, and the diverse needs of the wider community
- advancing equality of opportunity – treating all tenants fairly
- fostering good relationships – listening to customers and responding appropriately
- compliant with all aspects of Equality & Diversity legislation, and specifically the Equality Act 2010.



## Contact us:

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By letter: **CHL, Chy Trevail, Beacon Technology Park, Bodmin, PL31 2FR**

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## Alternative formats:

If you would like this information on audio CD, audio tape, Braille, large print, any other format or interpreted in a language other than English, please contact [info@cornwallhousing.org.uk](mailto:info@cornwallhousing.org.uk)

