

Resident Involvement Expenses Policy

Cornwall Housing

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Policy control sheet

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Notes

This document details what support residents can expect from Cornwall Housing when participating in consultation about their housing service

Non-legal influences on this policy

1985 Housing & Planning Act
 1986 Housing & Planning Act
 2011 Localism Act

Legal influences on this policy

The regulatory framework for social housing in England
 Cornwall Housing Commissioning Plan
 Secure tenants' conditions of tenancy

Other documents linked to this policy

Resident Involvement Strategy
 Tenant Participation Core Standards

Table of contents

	Page
1. The importance of involvement	4
2. What is covered	4
3. Who can claim	4
4. How to claim	4
5. Liabilities	4
6. Qualifying events	5
7. Examples of meetings covered by this policy	5
8. Examples of meetings not covered by this policy	5
9. Qualifying expenses	6
10. The use of vouchers to cover expenses	11
11. Monitoring and review	11

The importance of involvement

Cornwall Housing 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.

What is covered?

This is not a reward scheme; Cornwall Housing (CHL) does not pay residents to become involved. 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.

Who can claim?

All Cornwall Council and Cornwall Housing tenants, leaseholders and other residents of Cornwall Housing can claim out-of-pocket expenses resulting from involvement.

4. How to claim

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. We will provide support in completing the claim form where needed by claimants, including providing a translation or a different format upon request.

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.

5. 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.

6. Qualifying events

We 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.

For certain meetings, such as the complainants or their advocates attending a Complaints Appeals panel, separate arrangements apply; you can find further details about this below under 'Examples of meetings not covered by this policy'.

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.

7. Examples of meetings covered by this policy:

- Local and country wide training and conferences
- Tenant forum meetings
- Focus groups
- Board committee meetings

8. 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

9. Qualifying expenses

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 a 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.

Expense	Amount	Details
Transport – getting to and from our meetings and training		
Car	Mileage as per HMRC's approved mileage rates for volunteers. (45p per mile for 2018.19, reducing to 25p per mile over 10,000 miles)	You will need to provide details of the addresses you've travelled between. Where someone not participating in the meeting drives a participant to enable them to attend, we will reimburse total mileage at the non-passenger rate.
	Out of county travel must be discussed and agreed with the Engagement Team and an acceptable sum or reimbursement agreed in advance.	You will need to provide details of the addresses you travelled between and may be asked for a copy of a petrol receipt.

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.</p>	<p>If you 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>You will need to provide details of the addresses you travelled between.</p> <p>We will not reimburse passenger mileage for a motorbike claim.</p>
Parking	<p>Cost of parking at face value of the parking ticket.</p>	<p>We will reimburse parking for the duration of the meeting, including reasonable time to get to and from the car. We will need the copy or to photocopy the parking receipt.</p>
Bus	<p>Cost of ticket at face value</p>	<p>We will need the copy or to photocopy the bus ticket.</p>
Bicycle	<p>20p per mile for 2018.19</p>	<p>You will need to provide details of the addresses you travelled between.</p>

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> <p>Lack of suitable public transport</p> <p>Group travel (where cost effective)</p> <p>Late night travel</p> <p>Mobility or specialist care needs</p> <p>Exceptions as approved by the engagement team.</p>
Car ferry	Cost of ticket at face value	We will need the copy or to photocopy the ferry ticket.
Train	Cost of ticket at face value	<p>We will need the copy or to photocopy the train ticket.</p> <p>Out of county journeys must be booked by CHL.</p>
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.

Other expenses – other costs you may encounter		
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>We can reimburse the resident who has paid for the care.</p> <p>We 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>You are responsible for informing us of any special dietary requirements or food allergies</p>
	Costs of meals and refreshments at external training, conferences and other CHL activities	Where CHL cannot provide refreshments residents may be permitted to buy their own meals and refreshments.
	<p>Maximum costs in line with those for staff of Cornwall Housing, details provided when required.</p> <p>This must be discussed and agreed with the engagement team prior to expenses being incurred.</p>	<p>We will need the copy or to photocopy the receipt(s) to reimburse you.</p>

Phone calls	No reimbursement available	We 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 our discretion where using a phone is necessary for the involvement – for example, performing research or mystery shopping for the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel.
Stationary	Other arrangement in place, no reimbursement available	We do not reimburse the costs of stationary 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. We do not reimburse the cost of software for residents personal computers.

Printers and printer ink	Other arrangement in place, no reimbursement available	We do not reimburse the costs of printing. All papers required will be provided for meetings or tasks arranged by CHL.
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10. The use of vouchers to cover expenses

Occasionally we may offer a flat-rate 'Thank-you' voucher to participants in a consultation which is intended as a small token of appreciation and to cover any of their expenses incurred. This is used to prevent the handling of large amounts of cash when in local communities.

In these circumstances this 'token' amount could be seen as additional income by HMRC or DWP, and we will make this clear to the recipient, and that it is their duty to inform the relevant authorities.

11. Monitoring and review

We will monitor this policy to ensure it meets good practice and current legislation and will review it in accordance with our review timetable for all engagement policies.

Alternative formats

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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:-

Mar mynnowgh hwi kavos an kedhlow ma war son-sidi, sonsnod, yn Braille, prynt bras, furvas aral po styrys yn taves dres Sowsnek, kesteveugh mar pleg:-

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