

Coventry Local Involvement Network (LINK) Expenses policy for LINK volunteers

1 Policy statement

The LINK believes that volunteers should not be out of pocket for taking part in LINK activities and meetings. Expenses can be a barrier to people volunteering with the LINK therefore the Coventry LINK seeks to reimburse all relevant out of pocket expenses incurred by LINK volunteers.

2 General principles

There are some simple rules that we have to follow when deciding whether money can be repaid. These are:

- the money must really have been spent – or you have incurred a real cost;
- this spending must have taken place only because you are going to a LINK meeting or are carrying out LINK business; and
- your claim for repayment is in line with this *Expenses Guidance* and you complete an *Expenses Claim Form*.

Expenses are administered by the Host organisation.

2 Travel expenses

Travel expenses are payable to LINK volunteers to cover the travel costs of attending LINK meetings; undertaking LINK pieces of work as part of the LINK work programme; and representing the LINK on external partnerships (with agreement from the LINK).

Public transport

Where possible LINK volunteers should travel by public transport. You may claim:

- Standard class rail fares - you should seek to use the most economical standard class ticket available.
- Bus fares – use the most economical type of ticket possible
- Underground fares – when travelling on LINK business in London

You should attach used tickets or receipts for rail fares to your expenses claim form. If you are attending a LINK meeting/event where a cash tin is being used to pay expenses the Host will normally pay your total expenses on the basis of the outward part of your ticket to avoid delay in payment and increase accessibility for volunteers.

Private Cars, Motorcycles and Bicycles

If you use your own car or motorcycle on LINK business you should check with your insurer to ensure your motor insurance covers voluntary work. If you claim for the use of your car or motorcycle on LINK business, the *Expense Claim Form* will ask you to confirm that:

- your motor insurance covers LINK activity;
- you have a valid driving licence;
- you have a valid tax disc on your car or motorcycle and;
- your car or motorcycle has an MOT certificate (if required).

Any loss or damage caused to your own car or motorcycle while using it for LINK business should be covered by your insurance and breakdown cover.

The LINK or LINK Host will not pay the cost of fines or other penalties that you may face for breaking motoring laws, nor will it pay parking fines or clamping charges.

If you use your own car, motorcycle or bicycle, costs will be repaid at the Inland Revenue's approved mileage rates:

Cars and vans	40p
Motor cycles	24p
Bicycles	20p

Where possible, the LINK requests that you consider car sharing.

Use the *Expense Claim Form* to claim the costs of journeys made using your own car, motorcycle or bicycle. You will need to write down the details of the journey.

Car parking

You can claim for reasonable car parking costs for carrying out LINK work or attending LINK meetings. You should use the most economical car parking available that is reasonable for the venue you are attending.

Taxi travel

Wherever possible you should use public transport for short journeys. If this is not possible, or if you have a special need that means you are not able to use public transport, you may have to use a taxi. Before you do so, please speak to the LINK Host organisation as they may have an arrangement with a local firm and the cost can be charged directly to them.

If you do pay for the taxi yourself, you should ask for a receipt. Please attach this receipt to your Expense Claim Form.

3 Carer's/childcare costs

You may claim repayment for a carer's costs to enable you to attend a LINK meeting or undertake LINK business for:

- children aged 16 or under; or
- other dependants - where there is medical or social services proof that care is required.

You may claim for repayment for a carer for the duration of the LINK activity in which you are participating. In addition, you can claim for travelling time to and from the activity for the maximum period of:

- one hour before the start of the meeting or LINK business; and
- one hour after the end of the meeting or Link business.

The maximum allowance that can be paid is £7.50 child/person per hour.

You cannot claim for care that is:

- provided by a member of your household;
- provided by a person who is under 16; or
- provided by, or available from, another organisation (for example social services).

You should claim for carer support on an *Expenses Claim Form*. You should provide:

- details of the reason for the claim;
- the start and end times of the LINK activity and travelling time for which you are claiming;
- medical or social services evidence that care is needed (if the claim is not for a child aged 16 or under). This information can be provided once to the LINK Host for each individual;
- details of your childminder/carers
- an invoice or a receipt to support the claim.

If as result of receiving payments for carer expenses you face a demand to pay extra tax or have a benefit reduced or withdrawn, you will be responsible for paying the tax bill, or appealing against the reduced or withdrawn benefit.

If you have any special needs, or have questions about making arrangements for carer support, please contact the LINK Host organisation.

4 Other expenses

Telephone and Internet

You may claim the costs of telephone calls you are not already paying which you make for LINK business, for either speaking to people or accessing the Internet.

The LINK Host cannot reimburse costs you are already paying, (for example telephone line rental or flat rate Internet connection charges), as these costs are not increased by LINK work.

You should attach a photocopy of your telephone bill to an *Expense Claim Form* with the calls you wish to claim for highlighted (and your other calls hidden if desired).

Other Incidental Expenses

You may on occasion have other expenses from LINK activities. You should check with the LINK Host that such expenses can be reimbursed before buying items. In its role of providing support the Host may be able to supply the items required. For example it should not be necessary for volunteers to purchase stamps, paper, envelopes and other stationery.

Make your claims on an *Expense Claim Form*. Wherever possible attach invoices or receipts to support your claim. If you cannot provide an invoice or a receipt, you should include a note with your *Expense Claim Form* giving the reason for your claim and the amount of your claim.

Should you wish, for example, to claim for a computer printer cartridge, you should include the receipt, note the LINK activities the cartridge was used for and the proportion of the cartridge you consider was used on these activities.

You may claim up to a limit of £50 per annum for incidental expenses.

Subsistence Expenses

Subsistence and incidental expenses you wish to incur may or may not be claimable. Spending must be needed for your LINK's work-plan and should be agreed in advance with the Host organisation.

You may claim the actual cost of meals and/or refreshments up to a limit of £5 for any one claim where you:

- travel to and attend meetings or visits on LINK business in line with Coventry LINK's work-plan; and
- where the meeting or visit lasts more than four hours; and
- where the spending is not met directly by the organiser of the meeting or the organisation being visited (e.g. if lunch is provided); and
- where you have to spend extra money or face extra costs.

You should attach the receipt for subsistence to your *Expense Claim Form*.

Any queries

If you have any questions about what sort of costs are reasonable, or about how the rules work, please speak to the LINK Host: Voluntary Action Coventry.