

Travel and Subsistence Policy

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the arrangements for travel on official business and reimbursement of expenses incurred. Official travel does not include travel between one's home and place of work, except when asked to undertake additional travel to work late at night or at weekends.
- 1.2 As a responsible employer PSOW has a duty to consider appropriate business travel arrangements and take reasonable steps to ensure that this is safe (for example avoiding long periods of driving without a break) and legal (for example that private car use is covered by appropriate insurance and MOT testing where required).
- 1.3 Staff have a duty to organise their travel arrangements with due regard to safety and economy, whilst ensuring effectiveness for the benefit of the office. Travel arrangements, particularly for longer journeys or durations, should be discussed and agreed with line managers.
- 1.4 The general principle that applies to the claiming and payment of expenses is that where no expense is incurred, no payment is due. Claiming monies to which you are not entitled may, depending on the circumstances, constitute grounds for disciplinary and / or criminal action. Where there is any doubt over entitlement, staff should refer the matter to Corporate Services.
- 1.5 The purpose of subsistence payments is to reimburse staff for necessary additional expenditure incurred while away from the office. This could be accommodation and / or food, bridge tolls, parking fees, etc. In all cases reimbursement will need to be approved by the appropriate line manager who will assess it in accordance with the policy set out below.
- 1.6 Members of staff may arrange their own travel plans for local journeys, but Corporate Services should generally make arrangements for accommodation and air or long-distance rail travel. For all reimbursements, staff are to complete a Travel and Subsistence Claim Form available on the PSOW intranet and attach the receipt(s). The line manager is to authorise the form and pass it to Corporate Services for payment.

2 Subsistence allowance – day

- 2.1 Staff may claim reimbursement for necessary expenditure on meals if absent from their normal place of duty for more than 5 hours. Refer to Appendix A for current limits.
- 2.2 No reimbursements will be made for alcoholic beverages.

3 Subsistence allowance – overnight

- 3.1 Corporate Services will arrange accommodation (and breakfast and evening meal if possible) for staff who require overnight accommodation due to Ombudsman related business. No reimbursement will be made in such circumstances as payment will be arranged direct by Corporate Services. Corporate Services will choose the most appropriate hotel based upon locality, convenience, price and travel cost comparisons using, where possible, the negotiated government rate.
- 3.2 In exceptional circumstances a member of staff may wish to choose their own hotel venue and pay direct themselves. The member of staff can claim reimbursement for overnight accommodation costs, based upon the limits set out in Appendix A, on provision of relevant receipts.
- 3.3 Reimbursement for claims exceeding the limits in Appendix A may be considered in exceptional circumstances provided they are supported with relevant receipts.
- 3.4 Reimbursement for claims without a valid receipt may be considered in exceptional circumstances. The maximum amount that will be reimbursed in such circumstances are set out in Appendix A.
- 3.5 If a member of staff stays privately with family, friends, etc. they may claim a flat rate as set out in Appendix A. This is taxable.
- 3.6 When staying overnight, staff may also claim a personal incidental allowance as stated in Appendix A to cover miscellaneous items such as a newspaper or telephone calls.
- 3.7 No reimbursements will be made for alcoholic beverages.

4 Overseas allowance

- 4.1 Valid and reasonable travelling expenses and subsistence whilst abroad may be claimed at actual cost, supported by receipts, subject to currency conversion at date of transaction.
- 4.2 Staff may also claim an overseas incidental allowance as per Appendix A.

5 Hire vehicles

- 5.1 PSOW does not own or lease any vehicles. Staff may use their own vehicles and seek reimbursement on the basis of car allowance mileage rates as set out in Appendix B. Alternatively, cars may be hired by PSOW, through contract arrangements with vehicle hire companies, if this is considered more appropriate by PSOW after consideration of business factors such as cost, time, number of staff travelling, equipment to be carried, information security and Equality Act or disability issues. Staff are requested to provide relevant information that may affect the decision, on the car hire request form. PSOW will make an informed decision, comparing the cost of car hire with alternative travel arrangements e.g. public transport, use of own car.
- 5.2 Before a staff member commences driving a hire car for the first time, they must provide Corporate Services with a photocopy of their full licence (both front and back, including online counterpart if applicable). Subsequently if there are any changes to the validity of their driving licence, e.g. points, they must notify Corporate Services when next requesting a hire vehicle.
- 5.3 Staff must seek approval from their line manager in writing (i.e. email) before completing a car hire request form which is available on the PSOW intranet. Wherever possible, the request should be submitted 5 working days before the vehicle is required to allow time for the reservation to be made. Corporate Services will arrange with the car hire company to drop off and collect the car at the requested location. Once the booking is made, the staff member will be given a copy of the hire order. PSOW will be invoiced directly for the hire costs. Staff should check the condition of the vehicle on delivery (or as soon as possible after but before its first use by the member of staff) and ensure vehicles are returned in a satisfactory condition,

reporting any loss or damage to the Corporate Services who will inform the hire firm. Any accidents or incidents involving any vehicle hired by PSOW are to be reported immediately to Corporate Services.

- 5.4 Reimbursement for fuel is provided for business trips if using a hire vehicle. An advance is not given, and staff will need to buy the fuel and then seek reimbursement, with a receipt.

6 Private vehicles

- 6.1 If you use your private vehicle (car, van, motorcycle or bicycle) for official travel, expenses will be met by payment of a mileage allowance at the appropriate rate per mile (Appendix B). Motor mileage allowances will not be paid for home to office travel or vice-versa. It may be convenient to travel from home directly to a destination for work or training. A mileage allowance may still be claimed for such journeys. If the distance from your home to the destination is shorter than the distance it would be from the office, only that shorter distance may be claimed. However, if the distance from your home to the destination is further than it would be from the office, only the distance from the office may be claimed.
- 6.2 Staff may opt to use their own vehicles for longer journeys. A lower rate per mile will be paid for journeys longer than 150 miles. For these purposes the journey length is the full round-trip journey (out and return) even if this is undertaken on separate days.
- 6.3 PSOW will pay an additional sum for any member of staff carrying official passengers in their vehicle. 5p per mile can be claimed irrespective of the number of persons carried.

Insurance requirements for private vehicles

- 6.4 Staff driving a private vehicle for official business are responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is insured for business use. Approval of the use of a private vehicle and of the payment of mileage allowances are dependant on this.
- 6.5 For staff to qualify for mileage allowance, at either standard or public

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transport rate, their insurance policy must contain a clause either permitting their use of the vehicle in connection with business, or specifically permitting their use of the vehicle on PSOW business. If the vehicle is owned by the spouse / civil partner / partner of the member of staff, the insurance policy must specifically provide cover for the member of staff to use the vehicle for official business.

6.6 Insurance must cover without financial limit against claims in respect of:

- bodily injury to, or death of, any passengers or third parties
- damage to the property of third parties

6.7 Staff are not precluded from receiving the standard rate mileage if their insurance, which is otherwise fully comprehensive, excludes liability in respect of:

- frost damage
- theft of any part or accessory (unless the vehicle itself is stolen)
- any article owned by the driver, left in the vehicle

Excess clause

6.8 If the insurance policy meets the above requirements but has an excess clause requiring the policyholder to bear the first part of a claim, the member of staff is responsible for meeting the cost of this excess.

7 Public transport

7.1 The office will meet or reimburse the cost of rail, air, bus and coach fares incurred in travelling on official business, including the cost of seat reservations when they are necessary. The cost of any necessary supplements incurred will also be reimbursed, e.g. upgrading a Saver / Supersaver to a standard cheap day return.

7.2 The member of staff is required to consider the most appropriate way of undertaking a journey (or they may ask for assistance from

Corporate Services) based upon cost, time, number of staff travelling, equipment to be carried, information security and Equality Act or disability issues. If public transport is subsequently considered the most appropriate way of completing the journey by PSOW any reimbursement will be based upon the public transport fare.

7.3 Standard class rail travel should always be used where it is practicable to do so.

8 Air travel

8.1 The class of air travel is governed by:

- the airline's price structure on the various routes
- the duration of the flight

8.2 All flights should be economy class in Europe and if travelling outside of Europe premium economy / business class is permissible.

8.3 Flights should be booked as far in advance as possible to obtain the best price.

9 Taxi fares

9.1 Taxis can be used (and the fares reimbursed) for official travel where it is appropriate to do so. They should be used only when alternatives are not available or appropriate bearing in mind:

- whether public transport options are available
- whether there is a significant time saving
- whether transporting heavy luggage and / or equipment
- whether members of staff are travelling together, and it is a cheaper option
- whether travelling alone after dark
- when travelling very early (before 06:30) or very late (after 22:00).

- 9.2 When staying at a hotel on official business, taxi fares will only be reimbursed for official trips e.g. between the hotel and the temporary workplace or the station. Taxis for personal use will not be reimbursed.
- 9.3 When travelling overseas, taxis should be avoided if public transport is available except during unsocial hours or if meeting times dictate, e.g. it is not possible to catch a flight or attend a meeting if public transport is used.
- 9.4 A receipt must be presented which shows details of the journey and this should be attached to the claim form.

10 Other costs

- 10.1 Parking fees and bridge tolls will be reimbursed with supporting receipts.
- 10.2 The cost of financial penalties for motoring offences, including parking tickets, will not be borne by the office.

11 Review and publication

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years and will be published internally and externally.
- 11.2 All queries about this document can be directed to policycontrol@ombudsman.wales.

12 Subsistence allowances

Appendix A

Allowance	Maximum reimbursement claim	Note (no alcoholic beverage costs will be reimbursed)
Overnight Accommodation (includes meals - arranged by Corporate Services)	No reimbursement as paid direct by Corporate Services	CS to arrange best value
Daily subsistence if working away from office in excess of 5 hours	£30 per day (based upon breakfast £5, Daytime meal £10, Evening meal £15)	Receipt(s) required ** Duplication of claim items not allowable i.e. cannot claim for breakfast or evening meal if already included in accommodation costs
Accommodation per night (London within M25) - paid by staff member	£120 (Add £5 if breakfast included, add £15 if evening meal included)	Receipt required **
Accommodation per night (Outside M25 and non-London) - paid by staff member	£95 (Add £5 if breakfast included, add £15 if evening meal included)	Receipt required **
Miscellaneous e.g. parking / bridge tolls	As per receipt	Receipt required **
Incidental allowance (to cover newspapers and telephone calls)	£5	No receipt required
Accommodation with family or friends	£25 per night	No receipt required Payment is taxable

** Claims without receipts, in exceptional circumstances, will need to be referred to Corporate Services for consideration. Any claims that are authorised where receipts are expected but not provided may result in additional tax liability.

13 Mileage allowances

Appendix B

Staff vehicles: mileage payments for business travel

Type of vehicle	Rate per business mile
Car	45p for the first 150 miles per round trip but up to a maximum of 10,000 business miles in a tax year. 25p for each subsequent mile over 150 miles in a round trip, or any mileage in excess of 10,000
Motorcycle	24p for all business miles
Cycle	20p for all business miles