

Travel and Subsistence Policy

Travel & Subsistence Policy

Contents

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Subsistence allowance - day

3.0 Overnight accommodation

4.0 Overseas allowance

5.0 Hire vehicles

6.0 Private vehicles

7.0 Public transport

8.0 Taxi Fares

9.0 Other costs

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 reimbursement 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 via the Corporate Services Manager.

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. Employees 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 give it to a Corporate Services Officer for payment.

2. Subsistence Allowance- Day

2.1. An employee may claim reimbursement for necessary expenditure on meals if absent from their normal place of duty for more than five hours. Refer to Appendix A for current limits.

2.2. No reimbursements will be made for alcoholic beverages.

3. Overnight Accommodation

3.1. Corporate Services will arrange accommodation (and breakfast and evening meal if possible) for employees who require overnight accommodation due to Ombudsman related business. No re-imbursment 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 an employee may wish to choose their own hotel venue and pay direct themselves. Employees can claim re-imbursment for overnight accommodation costs based upon the limits set out in appendix A and on provision of relevant receipts.

3.3. Re-imbursment for claims exceeding the limits in appendix A may be considered in exceptional circumstances provided they are supported with relevant receipts.

3.4. Re-imbursment for claims without a valid receipt may be considered in exceptional circumstances. The maximum amount that will be re-imbursed in such circumstances are set out in Appendix A

3.5. If you stay privately with family, friends, etc, you may claim a flat rate as set out in appendix A. Re-imbursment is subject to tax liability.

3.6. When you are staying overnight, you 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 reimbursement.

5. Hire Vehicles

5.1. PSOW do 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 factor 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 details on the car hire request form that are relevant and may impact any of the business factors to enable PSOW to make an informed decision when comparing the request for car hire cost against alternative travel arrangements e.g. public transport, own car use etc.

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 British licence (including online counterpart if applicable). Subsequently if one of those staff members has any change to the validity of their driving licence, e.g. points, they must notify the Corporate Services Manager when next requesting a hire vehicle.

5.3. A car hire form is available on the PSOW intranet and this needs to be completed by the person requesting the car. The form is then to be approved by the person's line manager and passed to the Corporate Services Manager for consideration and authorisation. Corporate Services staff will then process the request. Requests should wherever possible be submitted five 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 print out 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 which happen in any vehicle hired by PSOW are to be reported immediately to the Corporate Services Manager.

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 motor 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 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.

Travel & Subsistence Policy

6.3. PSOW will pay an additional sum for any employee carrying official passengers in their vehicle. 5p per mile can be claimed irrespective of the number of persons carried.

6.4. Staff must ensure they have business cover on their own car insurance if using their own vehicle for work related travel (other than normal travel to / from their normal place of work) and that Corporate Services are provided, prior to the journey, with a copy of the motor insurance certificate that covers the appropriate period and relevant business cover. Corporate Services are able to check the GOV.UK website for the vehicle TAX and MOT status. Staff should not use their own vehicle for business travel if they do not have the appropriate motor insurance. PSOW have a duty of care to ensure staff have the appropriate insurance for work related travel and therefore Corporate Services are unable to reimburse the mileage costs unless PSOW have a copy of the appropriate certificate on record. (If using a hire vehicle insurance is arranged by the hire company and paid for by PSOW.)

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 or when no alternative exists.

7.4. If air travel is the most cost effective mode of transport this should be used. Economy class is to be used wherever possible. Specific approval in advance for overseas travel must be obtained from the Ombudsman and/or Director.

8. Taxi fares

8.1. Taxis can be used (and the fares reimbursed) for official travel where it is appropriate to do so, e.g. they should only be used when alternatives are not available or the following are applicable:-

- There is a significant saving in official time;
- When having to transport heavy luggage and/or equipment;
- Where members of staff are travelling together and it is a cheaper option.

Travel & Subsistence Policy

8.2. A receipt must be presented which shows details of the journey and this should be attached to the claim form.

9. Other Costs

9.1. Parking fees and bridge tolls will be reimbursed with supporting receipts.

9.2. Financial penalties for motoring offences, including parking tickets, will not be borne by the office.

10. Control box

| Control box – for PSOW internal use only | |
|--|------------------|
| Document drafter / proposer | John Young |
| Approver Group | Management Team |
| Summary version available (YES - See section after this control box / No) | No |
| For external publication to PSOW publication scheme (Full / Summary / Redacted / No) | Full |
| Approver Group approval date | 21 February 2017 |
| EIA approved (or comment as to why EIA n/a e.g. review- no changes) | 21 February 2017 |

Appendix A

Subsistence Allowances

| Allowance | Maximum re- imbursement 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 required ** Duplication of claim items not allowable i.e. cannot claim for breakfast or evening meal if already included in accommodation claim below |
| 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 (Non London outside M25) - paid by staff member | £95 (Add £5 if breakfast included , add £15 if evening meal included) | receipt required ** |
| Misc e.g. parking / bridge tolls etc | 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. Re- imbursement is subject to Tax liability. |

** claims without receipts will need to be referred to Corporate Services Manager for consideration in exceptional circumstances. It must be noted that any claims authorised without receipts where a receipt is required may incur additional tax liability on the part of the claimant

Appendix B

Mileage Allowances

Employee vehicles: mileage payments for business travel

| Type of vehicle | Rate per business mile 2016-17 |
|-------------------|---|
| 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 business miles in a tax year. |
| Motorcycle | 24p for all business miles |
| Cycle | 20p for all business miles |