

South West Strategic Health Authority

Travelling and Subsistence Policy

1. Introduction

1. This policy sets out the travelling and subsistence rates paid to all staff of the South West Strategic Health Authority, including the Chairman and Non-Executive Members.
- 1.2 These allowances have either been approved by the Secretary of State, or agreed under the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook or by local agreement.
- 1.3 The Travelling and Subsistence policy is necessary to ensure:
 - payment of allowances are managed effectively;
 - all claims are submitted promptly and are properly authorised;
 - all staff, including the Chairman and Non-Executive Members, do not receive any allowances to which they have no entitlement;
 - records of the various payments are adequately maintained;
 - the South West Strategic Health Authority complies with all statutory legislation and submits necessary returns promptly;
 - the South West Strategic Health Authority meets the requirements of both statutory and internal auditors.

2. Responsibilities of employees

- 2.1 When claiming for mileage for car journeys, it is the legal duty of each employee driving the vehicle to hold valid motor insurance which covers business use, a current driving licence and MOT certificate where applicable. Employees will need to provide a copy of their driving license, motor insurance, MOT (where applicable) and vehicle registration document on an annual basis for auditing purposes.
- 2.2 All claims must be an accurate record of official business expenses incurred. Any falsified expenses or subsistence claims will be managed under the Disciplinary policy and could potentially result in dismissal for gross misconduct and prosecution. Employees are therefore advised to familiarise themselves with their responsibilities under the following organisational documents and policies, all of which are available on the intranet:

- Standards of Business Conduct for NHS Staff;
- South West Strategic Health Authority Standing Orders;
- South West Strategic Health Authority Standing Financial Instructions;
- Disciplinary policy of the South West Strategic Health Authority;
- Hospitality Expenses policy of the South West Strategic Health Authority;
- Mobile Phone policy of the South West Strategic Health Authority;
- Guide to Expenses and Allowance Rates for Employees of South West Strategic Health Authority.

3. Travelling allowances

3.1 These are paid in accordance with the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service under the following categories:

- use of lease car;
- use of private car;
- public transport (rail, bus, air, taxi).

Lease car users

3.2 Staff entitled to a lease car under the Lease Car policy of the South West Strategic Health Authority are eligible to claim reimbursement of fuel costs for all mileage travelled in connection with the business of the South West Strategic Health Authority.

3.3 Claims for reimbursement of these allowances must be authorised and submitted for payment within three calendar months or they will not be paid. In extenuating circumstances, this three calendar month rule can be relaxed but approval must be obtained from the Director of Finance and Performance.

Private car users

3.4 Staff who are ineligible for a lease car are classified as a 'private car user'. Under this classification staff will be entitled to a mileage allowance which is dependent on the engine capacity and the total annual official business miles.

3.5 Claims for reimbursement of these allowances must be authorised and submitted for payment within three calendar months or they will not be paid. In extenuating circumstances this three calendar month rule can

be relaxed but approval must be obtained from the Director of Finance and Performance.

- 3.6 Staff driving a vehicle for official business must hold a valid driving licence, motor insurance which covers business use, and MOT certificate if required.

Public transport

- 3.7 This refers to travel on official journeys by means other than a lease or private car.
- 3.8 If staff intend to travel by train they should contact their Directors Personal Assistant or member of staff with delegated authority, who will arrange the purchase of the ticket prior to the journey. The ticket will normally be for second class travel. In exceptional circumstances the Chief Executive or Director of Finance and Performance may authorise first class travel.
- 3.9 Claims for travel by other public services (including car parking) must be authorised and submitted for payment within three calendar months or they will not be paid. In extenuating circumstances, this three calendar month rule can be relaxed but approval must be obtained from the Director of Finance and Performance.
- 3.10 Receipts must be attached to the claim. Claims must be made on a separate form for each month, photocopied and submitted double sided and be completed correctly as Payroll will return incorrect claims. The South West Strategic Health Authority reserves the right not to reimburse staff travel if no receipt or proof of payment is submitted attached with the claim, unless it clearly states that no receipt is required for this allowance.

4. Subsistence allowance

- 4.1 These are paid in accordance with the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service and claims can be made when:
- an employee stays overnight in an hotel, guest house or other commercial accommodation;
 - an employee stays for short overnight periods with friends or relatives or in caravan accommodation;
 - travelling overnight in a sleeping berth (rail or boat);
 - travel costs are incurred for short term temporary absence;
 - an employee has to stay away in the same location for over thirty nights;

- an employee spends more on meals than they would have spent at their headquarters and has to travel more than five miles from headquarters when on business.

4.2 The terms and current amounts which can be claimed are as follows.

Short overnight stay in hotel

- 4.3 The actual receipted cost of bed and breakfast is up to a normal maximum limit of £55 per night plus a meal allowance of £20 per night to cover the cost of a main evening meal and one other daytime meal (where meals are not provided). No reimbursement will be made for any alcoholic drinks purchased. This will be reviewed again by April 2011.
- 4.4 When a short overnight stay in a hotel in a large city is required, the maximum limit is increased to £120 per night plus (or a value deemed reasonable by the relevant Director or delegated authority) a meal allowance of £20 per night. This will be reviewed again by April 2011.
- 4.5 Where the rates available through approved agents, taking into account published government rates, and the business in a genuine reason which must be stated on the claim, additional assistance may be granted at the discretion of the Chief Executive or Director of Finance and Performance.

Short overnight stay in non-commercial accommodation

- 4.6 A flat rate of £25 is payable for short overnight periods with friends or relatives when away on South West Strategic Health Authority business. No receipts are required for this allowance.
- 4.7 An employee who is staying in accommodation provided free shall be entitled to claim an allowance up to £20 per day to cover meals not provided free of charge. No receipts are required for this allowance.
- 4.8 When accommodation and meals are provided free of charge an incidental expense allowance of £4.20 per day will be payable. This is subject to tax and national insurance deduction. No receipts are required for this allowance.

Travelling overnight in a sleeping berth

- 4.9 The cost of a sleeping berth and meals, excluding alcoholic drinks, will be reimbursed subject to the production of receipts.
- 4.10 Short term temporary absence travel costs
- 4.11 The cost of travelling between the hotel and temporary place of work will be separately reimbursed on an actual cost basis.

Long term overnight stays

- 4.12 A maximum amount of either £35 or £25 per night is allowed, depending on the personal circumstances of the claimant. Further details are given in NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook which can be found on the intranet.

Day meals subsistence allowance

- 4.13 A lunch allowance of £5 if more than five hours away from the office including the lunch time between 12.00 noon and 2.00 pm, if a meal is not provided free of charge. A receipt is not required for this allowance.
- 4.14 An evening meal allowance of £15 when away from base for more than ten hours and unable to return to base or home before 7.00 pm, if a meal is not provided free of charge. A receipt is not required for this allowance.
- 4.15 There may be some circumstances when an employee could qualify for both allowances. The NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook sets out these circumstances.
- 4.16 An allowance of £3.25 when an employee is required to work late at night. This will be subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

Excess travelling allowances

- 4.17 These are payable to those staff who incur additional travelling costs when required to change their headquarters. These allowances will be subject to tax and national insurance deductions.
- 4.18 The excess shall be calculated on the basis of bus or second class rail fares, or public transport rate/lease car mileage rates and is payable for a period of four years.

Hotel facilities

- 4.19 There will be occasions, because of work commitments, when staff will be offered or expected to stay overnight in hotel accommodation.
- 4.20 The South West Strategic Health Authority will be responsible for paying the full cost of the accommodation.
- 4.21 All control of this arrangement will be the responsibility of the appropriate Director (or delegated authority) who must countersign the claim form.

Business expenses of the Chief Executive

- 4.22 The Chief Executive will be entitled to use a banker's card to settle business expenses incurred solely on South West Strategic Health Authority business.

- 4.23 A schedule will be prepared by listing all items of expenditure and accompanied by receipts for approval by the Chairman.
- 4.24 The Director of Finance and Performance will then ensure that the schedule is checked against the imprest bank statement.

Telephone calls/rental

- 4.25 Staff who are regularly required to be on-call in evenings and weekends and hence need to be contactable by telephone are entitled to a refund of their telephone line rental. This sum will be refunded on the submission of a relevant telephone bill.
- 4.26 In other cases it may be necessary for an employee to make a business call on their private telephone. An itemised telephone bill should be submitted with the claim form.
- 4.27 An employee issued with a business mobile phone is required to sign a declaration as to whether or not it is being used for making or receiving private calls. If it is, the employee is liable to pay the total cost of these calls (including VAT).
- 4.28 An account is sent to the South West Strategic Health Authority on a monthly basis which has to be settled within fourteen days. The individual employee must sign the account as being correct, identifying any private calls. The account will then need to be authorised by the line manager of the claimant.
- 4.29 The cost incurred for repairs resulting from misuse of the telephone will have to be paid for by the individual.
- 4.30 A mobile telephone is available on an ad hoc basis to any member of staff who is away from headquarters on South West Strategic Health Authority business or is required to work late. The Directorate of Finance and Performance will issue a telephone in such circumstances.

5. Authorising travel and subsistence claims

- 5.1 Fully completed claim forms must be approved for payment by the authorised budgetary signatory before being submitted to Payroll by the fourth day of the month, if they are to be included with the salary for that month. Claims received after this date may not be paid until the following month's salary payment.
- 5.2 Incorrectly completed claims should not be signed by the authorised budgetary signatory of the claimant but returned to the individual for correct completion prior to authorisation.

- 5.3 Authorised signatories need to be aware of the importance of scrutinising all claims prior to authorisation to assure themselves that the claims are legitimate and that the claimant holds a current driving licence and MOT certificate and valid motor insurance which covers them to use their vehicle for business purposes.
- 5.4 Claims for reimbursement of these allowances must be authorised and submitted for payment within three calendar months or they will not be paid. In extenuating circumstances this three calendar month rule can be relaxed but approval must be obtained from the Director of Finance and Performance. A separate form must be submitted for each calendar month in which expenses have been incurred.
- 5.5 The Chairman will authorise the claims from the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will authorise claims from the Chairman and Directors. The Directors (or delegated authority) and line managers will approve all claims from staff who are directly accountable to them.
- 5.6 The Secretariat Manager will authorise the claims from Non-Executive Directors.

6. Travel and subsistence for the Chairman and non-Executive Directors

- 6.1 The allowances payable to the Chairman and Non-Executive Directors are determined by the Secretary of State for Health. They comprise:
- travelling allowances;
 - overnight absence allowance;
 - day subsistence allowance.

Travel allowances

- 6.2 The Chairman and Non-Executive Directors are entitled to claim a mileage allowance which is dependent on the engine capacity and the total annual miles necessary to travel in the course of their duties.
- 6.3 The mileage allowance claimed when travelling to and from the place where the duties of the post are normally performed are taxable.
- 6.4 Special arrangements have been agreed with the Inland Revenue whereby the Chairman and Non-Executive Directors can elect to have these expenses tax-free. Any income tax that becomes liable is paid by South West Strategic Health Authority.

Overnight absence and day subsistence

- 6.5 The Chairman and Non-Executive Directors are entitled to claim these allowances up to the current agreed limits for expenditure actually incurred in the course of their duties.
- 6.6 Any subsistence claimed when no refreshments are provided are taxable if they relate to days attending the place where the duties of the post are performed.
- 6.7 Special arrangements have been agreed with the Inland Revenue whereby the Chairman and Non-Executive Directors can elect to have these expenses tax-free. Any income tax that becomes liable is paid by South West Strategic Health Authority.

7. Intended outcomes

- 7.1 The intended outcomes of this policy are to ensure that:
- all employees will have been treated fairly and consistently when requesting and claiming for travel and subsistence;
 - the needs of individuals are balanced with the overall requirements of the South West Strategic Health Authority;
 - all employees have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities for line managers and themselves in requesting and claiming for travel and subsistence.
- 7.2 An equality impact assessment for this policy will be completed every three years.

Policy Approved: April 2010

Review By: April 2011