

# NHS Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB)

## Volunteer Reimbursement Policy

V1.1

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<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Execs</b>
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<b>Responsible Director</b>	<b>Michael Watson</b>
<b>Staff Audience</b>	<b>Staff working with patient volunteers</b>
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<b>Description</b>	<b>Policy and high-level procedures for</b>
<b>Superseded Documents (if applicable)</b>	

### Document Control

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## **1. Introduction**

The ICB encourages and facilitates the maximum possible volunteer participation in our work. There is strong evidence that health and care services are better when people who use them are involved in their design. For effective participation, people need to feel supported and to know their voluntary contribution is valued and has impact.

The ICB is committed to removing any financial barriers to involvement and to ensure that volunteers are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses.

## **2. Purpose**

This policy will outline the reimbursement process and applies to individual volunteers who help with our work. It does not apply to patient and public organisations such as Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprises (VCFSE). Our arrangements and engagement policies with this sector are agreed within the ICB's VCFSE Alliance.

## **3. Definitions**

A volunteer is anyone who supports the work of the Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) by giving their time, skills and experience in an unpaid capacity beyond the reimbursement of expenses. The ICB's Patient Safety Partners are covered by a separate policy as their involvement requires training and is set nationally.

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 Communications and Engagement Team**

The ICB's Head of Communications and Engagement will be responsible for approving reimbursement payments and overseeing the budget for participation. Members of the engagement team will record, co-ordinate and action claims.

Volunteers will be responsible for making claims, within a three-month period from the day the cost was incurred, They will also be responsible for providing receipts when appropriate and for checking that their claims comply with any conditions of benefits.

### **4.2 Executive Team**

The ICB Executive Team is responsible for formal approval and monitoring compliance of this policy.

### **4.3 Consultation and communication with stakeholders**

Patient volunteers receive information on the policy and support with expenses whilst involved with the ICB.

## **5. Content**

The ICB aims to prevent cost becoming a barrier to involvement by providing fair and appropriate reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers (service users, patients, carers and members of the public), who participate in events and activities by invitation. People acting in their capacity as an official or employee of another organisation will not normally qualify for payment. An individual has the right to choose whether they wish to

claim reimbursement for their involvement, and they should be told about reimbursement at the earliest opportunity of their participation

This policy is for volunteers engaged in agreed participation activity. It does not cover situations where payment is made for people's time.

The purpose of the reimbursement is to:

- ensure that people contributing their views on a voluntary basis are not out-of-pocket as a result of their participation
- provide clarity on reimbursement so that people can make an informed choice to become involved and participate
- agree reimbursement practice with partner organisations for joint events.

Everyone invited by the ICB to participate in involvement opportunities and whose expenses are not paid by another organisation, is entitled to claim expenses. This does not include board, public meetings or other events where there is a general invitation to members of the public and which are open for anyone to attend.

**Reimbursement to include:**

- travel and parking, including alternative transport arrangements when necessary and agreed in advance. Parking costs will be met for the duration of the meeting. Parking fines are not covered
- receipted costs for caring arrangements, including childcare. This may be paid at an appropriate rate dependent on individual circumstances and should be discussed and agreed in advance
- interpretation support, signer, personal assistant or advocate costs necessary for participation. This should be discussed and agreed in advance so appropriate arrangements can be made. When volunteers need a carer / support worker to accompany them to an activity the ICB will reimburse reasonable expenses / costs of this support if not provided elsewhere (such as via support payments).
- subsistence: if the attendance (including travel) exceeds 5 hours and refreshments are not provided, receipted expenses may be claimed. These will cover meals and non- alcoholic drinks. A guide price would be a maximum of £10 for lunch /breakfast and £15 for an evening meal
- where a volunteer is asked by the ICB to attend a conference or event. In these cases, the cost will be reimbursed including reasonable out-of-pocket expenses and very rarely, accommodation costs. Payment in advance of travel will be made if essential, taking into account the cost of living for individuals facing financial difficulties. Receipts must be provided after the event and any unused reimbursement repaid. All arrangements will be agreed in advance
- incidental costs such as printing, postage and telephone calls. In general, the person leading the meeting / activity should aim to reduce any costs, for example by providing documents or freepost address. In the event of a claim, receipts should be provided where possible

Reimbursement of expenses for people under 16 years will sit outside this policy.

People are requested to use public transport or the most cost effective, environmentally friendly form of transport where practical. Sharing transport where possible to reduce congestion and cost is optimal.

Where this is not possible, for example due to a disability, caring responsibilities or location of a meeting venue then people can claim the volunteer rate.

### **Current Rate**

Vehicle	First 10,000 miles	Additional 10,000 mile
Car	45p per mile	25p per mile
Motorcycle	45p	25p
Cycle	20p	

Payment of 5p per mile can be paid to drivers for having passenger who is also attending the activity. Volunteers need to ensure that their vehicle is taxed, they have an appropriate driving licence and the vehicle is legally roadworthy.

In exceptional circumstances, the cost of a taxi or special transport arrangements can be met with prior agreement.

### **Claiming expenses**

To claim, an expense form would be completed by the volunteer and sent to the engagement team as soon as possible and with any receipts for processing. It is important all claims are made within a three-month period. Exceptions can be made if the volunteer claiming has had a prolonged period of sickness.

Claims will be authorised as quickly as possible; however payment will be dependent on process timetables within the Finance department and this may vary.

Claimants need to be aware that payments may be regarded as income. It is the responsibility of individuals to comply with any conditions of benefits they may receive and should, if necessary, seek advice from the benefits agency or Citizens Advice Bureau  
Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses> for further advice and information.

## **6. Monitoring compliance**

Claims will be checked on submission to ensure they meet the requirements of the policy.

### **Health and safety and Insurance**

Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions and should not act outside of their agreed role. Any incidents should be reported to the engagement manager.

The ICB has insurance policies that will cover volunteers in carrying out their roles. This will not include vehicle insurance.

## **7. Education and training**

Staff working with volunteers will need to be aware of this policy and the ICB's approach to reimbursement

## Appendix A – NHS Herts and West Essex ICB Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

Very occasionally it will be clear that some proposals will not impact on the protected equality groups and health inequalities groups.

Where you can show that there is no impact, positive or negative, on any of the groups please complete this form and include it with any reports/papers used to make a decision on the proposal.

<b>Name of policy / service</b>	Volunteer Reimbursement Policy
<b>What is it that is being proposed?</b>	Payment of volunteer out-of-pocket expenses
<b>What are the intended outcome(s) of the proposal</b>	Eliminating or reducing financial barriers to involvement
<b>Explain why you think a full equality impact assessment is not needed</b>	This policy is to ensure that all volunteers have access to out-of-pocket expenses. This policy includes alternative care costs and transport costs where appropriate
<b>On what evidence/information have you based your decision?</b>	This policy is to ensure all volunteers have access to out-of-pocket expenses and that no individual is disadvantaged or excluded because of costs incurred.
<b>How will you monitor the impact of policy or service?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing monitoring of claims</li> <li>• Gathering feedback on volunteer experience of submitting claims</li> </ul>
<b>How will you report your findings?</b>	

Having considered the proposal and sufficient evidence to reach a reasonable decision on actual and/or likely current and/or future impact I have decided that a full equality impact assessment is not required.

Assessor's name and job title  
Heather Aylward

Date  
July 2022