

Governor Expenses Policy

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1.0	28 October 2013	Meena Patel, Membership Officer	Draft	A policy to inform governors on their entitlement to claim reimbursement of out of pocket expenses while performing their role
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Governor Expenses Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The role of a governor on the Council of Governors is voluntary and it is a guiding principle of Foundation Trust status that governors do not receive any form of salary for this role. However governors can claim for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses such as travel which have been incurred whilst undertaking their governor role.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 This policy sets out the procedure for Trust Governors to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses.

3 Procedure for staff governors

- 3.1 Staff governors will need to claim expenses in accordance with the Trust's Expenses Policy and complete the relevant staff expense claim form. These are available on the Trust's intranet. When completing the staff expense claim form, the Membership Manager or nominated Trust staff member can authorise the claim and complete and sign the section 'Certification of Authorisation'. The completed staff expense claim form must then be posted to the North London Pay Consortium. The address for this is on the claim form.
- 3.2 Staff governors can contact the Membership Office for further guidance on claiming expenses.

4 Meetings and events

- 4.1 Governors can claim reimbursement of out of pocket expenses incurred whilst attending meetings and events where the Trust has invited governors to attend or where governors are required to attend as part of their role.

Governors can claim reimbursement of expenses for attending the following:

- Official Council of Governor Meetings
- Governor training sessions including Governor Inductions
- Trust Board Meetings
- Trust groups and subcommittee meetings
- Governor Borough Director Meetings
- Membership recruitment and engagement events in the local community
- Annual Members Meeting
- Annual General Meeting
- Any other Trust meetings/events where governors have been invited to attend in the capacity of their role.
- Meetings and events organised by Foundation Trust Governors Association(FTGA) and Foundation Trust Network (FTN)

- 4.2 Governors can also claim expenses incurred whilst attending external meetings and events but only by request or on behalf of the Trust in his/her capacity as a Governor.

5 Types of expenses governors can claim

- 5.1 Expenses will only be reimbursed for the types of expenditure listed below. If a

governor wishes to claim reimbursement for any other necessary expenses incurred whilst undertaking their role, the governor is required to discuss this with the Membership Manager or authorised Trust staff member in advance and seek prior agreement before claiming the expense.

Travel expenses will be reimbursed for a return journey i.e. to travel to and from a meeting/event, which should be made by the cheapest available means.

With the exception of claiming for mileage, a valid receipt or proof of travel must be submitted with all claims for expenses. Details of the acceptable proof of travel can be found on pages 7 and 8 of this policy.

5.2 **Public transport/buses, trains and tubes**

Where possible governors are asked to use a pay as you go Oyster card when using public transport. Using an Oyster card is usually cheaper than purchasing a single or return ticket

Guidance around using Oyster cards can be found on page 7 of this document.

5.3 **Rail**

If governors are required to make rail journeys to travel outside of London, governors are asked to book their journey in advance where possible and use the cheapest standard class ticket available. A valid receipt or the original ticket(s) must be submitted. The Membership Office can also book rail tickets for governors asked to travel to meeting/events outside of London.

5.4 **Mileage**

Where possible governors are asked to use public transport to travel to and from meetings/events as parking spaces may be limited. Governors using their own vehicle to travel to and from meetings/events can claim for reimbursement of mileage expenses. Governors using their own vehicle are asked that the journey is made using the shortest practicable route.

Spot checks may be undertaken by the Trust's Finance Department to verify the reasonable of mileage claimed. The total mileage used for a return journey will need to be provided. The mileage rate is reviewed annually and accordance with the Agenda for Change. The Membership Office can update governors of the current mileage rate.

5.5 **Congestion charge**

If a governor is required to attend a meeting/event and where there is no other alternative route but to drive within the congestion zones to get to and from a meeting/event, reimbursement of the cost will be provided with a valid receipt. However, governors are asked to either use public transport or to avoid the congestion zones where possible.

Please note any additional charges incurred due to the late payment of a congestion charge will not be reimbursed.

5.6 **Parking and toll charges**

Reasonable parking charges and toll charges will be reimbursed upon submission of a valid receipt or ticket. Governors are asked to be aware that parking spaces in London are often limited.

Please note any parking or traffic fines incurred while driving to or from a meeting/event is the responsibility of the governor and will not be reimbursed by the Trust.

5.7 Taxis

The Membership Office can book taxis for governors to attend meetings/events but only under exceptional circumstances and only when the use of a taxi has been agreed in advance with the Membership Manager or nominated Trust staff member, for example where public transport would not be appropriate or reasonable e.g. if a governor has mobility issues. Governors are asked to advise the Membership Office of any travel requirements they may have, for example requiring a low vehicle for ease of getting in and out of vehicle or requiring the taxi to park as close as possible to the pick-up address.

Where the use of a taxi is required for a valid reason, the governor is required to inform the Membership Office at least **48 hours or two days** prior to the travel date.

The Trust has a contract with an approved taxi service provider and this provider will be used to book taxis for governors. Once the taxi has been booked by the Membership Office, governors will be provided with the booking details. If a pre-booked taxi is no longer required by a governor, the Membership Office must be notified as far in advance as possible so that the booking can be cancelled. Alternatively Governors may also cancel taxi bookings directly.

Reimbursement of expenses for the use of a local taxi will **only** be made in exceptional circumstances and **only** by prior agreement from the Trust Secretary or Trust's Finance Department. Where a Governor believes it is necessary for them to use a local taxi to carry out their duties and they wish the Trust to reimburse them for the cost of using a taxi, they must seek prior approval and state their reason(s) to justify why they need to use a local taxi. If it is agreed that a governor will be reimbursed for booking their own local taxi, a valid receipt must be submitted with the expenses claim. Please note, reimbursement will not be made without a valid receipt.

5.8 Lunch, refreshments and food expenses

Where possible lunch and refreshments will be provided for meetings and events that are held between 12pm – 2pm. However if a governor is invited to attend a meeting or event between 12pm – 2pm and lunch is not provided, governors are entitled to claim for lunch/refreshment expenses. Where governors are required to attend a meeting after 5pm for example the Council of Governor Meeting, sandwiches and or light refreshments will be available at the meeting. Where food and refreshments are not provided, governors will be entitled to claim expenses and receive reimbursement for buying their own food and refreshments.

There is a **maximum total amount** governors are entitled to claim for lunch, refreshments or food expenses. Governors wishing to claim this expense are asked to contact the Membership Office **beforehand** to request the total maximum amount that governors can claim for this expense. To be reimbursed for lunch, refreshments or food expenses, a valid receipt must be submitted with the expense claim.

5.9 Other expenses

Expenses other than those listed above will need to be agreed and authorised by the Trust Secretary or Trust's Finance Department.

6 Procedure to claim expenses

6.1 Governors are responsible for the completion and accuracy of their claims and submitting them to the Membership Office. Please note expense claims should be

submitted within **one calendar month** of the expense being incurred. Expense claims for reimbursement for items which are more than four months old will not be reimbursed (i.e. more than four months after the expense has been incurred). This is in line with the financial procedures as set by the Trust.

6.2 **Payment method**

Payment of governor expenses will be made by BACS and occasionally by cheque. Governors wishing to claim expenses will need to complete the **Governor BACS Payment Request– Appendix A** and submit the form to the Membership Office. The BACS Payment Request Form can be obtained from the Membership Office.

Please note governor's bank account details will be kept strictly confidential and only used by the Trust for the purpose of reimbursing governor expenses. BACS payments will usually be made within seven to 10 working days after an expense claim has been submitted. If reimbursement is likely to take more than 10 days, governors will be informed.

6.3 **Completing Governor Expense Claim Forms**

To claim expenses, governors are asked to sign and complete the forms: **Governor Travel Information Form – Appendix B** and the **Governor Expense Claim Form - Appendix C**. Copies of the forms are available on request from the Membership Office and made available to all governors.

On the '**Governor Travel Information Form**' governors are asked to provide the following information:

- The date(s) of travel
- The address/or postcode of where the journey commenced
- The name of the meeting(s) attended
- The venue(s) for meeting(s) attended
- The mode of transport used
- The total mileage if applicable
- The total amount being claimed for a return journey (i.e. a return journey is traveling from work or home to the meeting and then travelling home after the meeting).

On the form: '**Governor Expense Claim Form**', governors are asked to provide their full name, address and postcode, details of the expense(s) being claimed e.g. the cost of travel or the total mileage. This form then needs to be signed and dated. Incomplete Governor Expense Claim Forms will be returned to governors to complete.

6.4 **Proof of expenses**

All expense claims except for mileage must be supported by submitting the **original** receipt, ticket or printout of an Oyster card journey statement. Please note photocopies of receipts or tickets will **not** be accepted. Original copies of receipts must be submitted showing the correct date on which the journey was made and the cost of the journey.

6.4.1 **Using a pay as you go Oyster card**

When using a pay as you go Oyster card, governors will be required to submit one of the following to support an expense claim. Please note a receipt, for example an Oyster card top-up receipt will **not** be accepted to support a claim for expenses.

- **Oyster card journey statement**

To obtain an Oyster card journey statement, a pay as you go Oyster card will need to be registered online and an online account created. This will then allow a journey statement to be printed and submitted as a receipt showing the journey(s) being claimed. Please note that the journey history on an Oyster card is only kept for **8 weeks** and so governors are asked to obtain a printed copy of their journey in good time to ensure expense claims are submitted within the one calendar month of the travel date.

- **Oyster usage statement**

Upon completing a journey, a short printout of the last few journeys (only) can be obtained from London Underground Station's ticket offices. Please note this would need to be obtained either immediately or within a few days of completing a journey as only the last few journeys will show up on the printout.

Where a governor does not currently have an Oyster card, it is requested that governors obtain a pay as you go Oyster card as the cost of travelling is more expensive when purchasing single or return journey tickets. A pay as you go Oyster card can be obtained from any London Underground station and some newsagents. There is a one off charge for an Oyster card which is refundable if the card is no longer required. Where a governor does not already have an Oyster card but obtains one for the purpose of using it to travel to meetings and events as requested by the Trust, the one off charge paid to get the Oyster card will be reimbursed.

6.4.2

Travel cards

The cost of a one day travel card will only be reimbursed if traveling to and from several meetings/events in one day is required and the cost of a travel card works out to be cheaper than using an Oyster card. However please note Oyster cards have a daily price cap which means if several pay as you go journeys are made on the same day, the charge should not be more than the price of an equivalent one day travel card. The full price of a one day travel card will not be reimbursed if a governor is only required to attend one meeting on any given day where the cost of making a return journey is less than the cost of the travel card.

Where a governor already uses a travel card (either daily, weekly, monthly or annual travel card) for their own use, (e.g. to travel to and from work) the governor would **not** be entitled to claim travel expenses for attending meetings/events within the zones already covered by the travel card. Where the governor is required to travel across zones not covered by their travel card, then any excess travel expense incurred will be reimbursed on the production of a valid receipt.

If a one day travel card works out to be cheaper than using a pay as you go Oyster card, the original one day travel card must be submitted with the expense claim.

6.4.3

Unable to provide valid proof of travel

If a receipt or ticket is lost or where a governor is unable to provide proof of travel, reimbursement will only be made exceptionally and at the discretion of the Trust's Finance Department.

6.5

Submitting expense claims to the Membership Office

The receipt, ticket or Oyster card journey statement must be attached to the completed forms (**Appendix B** and **Appendix C**) and submitted to the Membership

Office.

Governors can either hand their expense claims to a Membership Office staff member or post expense claims to the freepost address below (no stamp is required)

Membership Office
FREEPOST RTKB-ESXB-HYYX
East London NHS Foundation Trust
9 Alie Street
London E1 8DE

For any questions or assistance regarding claiming governor expenses, contact the Membership Office on 0800 032 7297 or email: membership@eastlondon.nhs.uk

7 Record of governor expenses

The Membership Office will keep a record of all individual governor expense claims. The Trust is required to submit a yearly report on individual governor expenses to Monitor, an independent regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts.