

Expenses Guidance

Overview

This expenses policy explains the rules and the process for claiming back reasonable travel and accommodation costs for those attending UK Covid-19 Preliminary Hearings.

The Inquiries Act and Rules allow for the reasonable costs of attending Inquiry public hearings to be refunded. The conditions and rates in this statement have been set, where possible, in line with the practice of public bodies.

Who this guidance applies to:

- Witnesses
- Core Participants and their legal representatives in receipt of an award under section 40 of the Inquiries Act 2005, where such expenses are allowable under the terms of the award, and any prior authority required has been obtained from the Solicitor to the Inquiry

The Inquiry finance team will consider individual circumstances, reasonable costs and travelling distance when deciding claims for travel and other expenses. All expenses, such as for travel and accommodation, must be supported by receipts.

It would be very helpful if any claims could be submitted within one month of attending a public hearing or meeting.

The conditions and rates in this statement have been set, where possible, in line with the practice of public bodies. Please note, it will not be possible to refund your expenses before any meeting or hearing takes place, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Travel expenses

- Claims for travel expenses must include tickets that clearly show the date of travel, the details of where someone has travelled to and from, and the price.
- The cost of journeys by rail or coach can be reimbursed at a standard rate or economy fare.

- Where possible tickets should be booked in good time so that cheaper fares are secured.
- Car and motorcycle mileage will be reimbursed at 45p per mile.
- Prior agreement should be obtained for parking charges expected to cost over £10. All other parking expenses can be refunded.
- Rail, tube and bus services should be used for journeys in London and other cities where this is more convenient, quicker and cost-effective.
- For people with mobility difficulties, taxis may be more appropriate than other forms of public transport. Prior approval should be obtained from the finance team.
- The cost of journeys by air in the UK will be reimbursed for economy class travel only. Costs of travel from outside the UK will not be reimbursed. For travel to and from London airports, the London Underground, the Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted express services, Thameslink (for Luton or Gatwick) or the Docklands Light Railway should be used at standard class.

Accommodation costs

- Those attending a public hearing will be reimbursed for an overnight stay if they live 1 hour and 45 minutes away or more from the hearing's venue, Bishop's Bridge Road.
- Prior written agreement by email must be obtained from the finance team for reimbursement before any bookings/reservations are made.
- The following maximum rates will apply to claims for hotel (bed and breakfast rate) / self-catering accommodation:
 - £150 – London (for a double, twin or single occupancy room)
 - £110 - other major cities
 - £100 – Elsewhere (for a double, twin or single occupancy room)Participants sharing a room can only be reimbursed at the maximum allowable amount per night per room.

Companion's expenses

- If someone attending an Inquiry meeting or hearing requires a companion to accompany them (such as a support worker or family member), this person's travel costs may be reimbursed by the Inquiry. In such cases, individuals must obtain approval from the finance team in advance.

Food and drink costs

- For daytime travel, you can claim £15 for food and drink costs, with an additional £15 if you are staying overnight.

Claiming your money back

- We will reimburse you by bank transfer into your personal bank account.
- You need to fill out an expenses form, which is attached to your event invite.
- Please fill out the form and email it back to the Inquiry team, or you can give the form to a member of Inquiry staff on the day. Staff will be on hand to help complete forms on the day.
- It's important that you keep your tickets or receipts so we can make copies.
- Expenses should be reimbursed within 4-6 weeks

The email address for the Inquiry is: contact@coronavirus.inquiry.gov.uk