

Payment of Public Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear and robust procedures for payment and reimbursement of expenses to people with an interest in mental health and/or drug and alcohol services locally who are part of the work of the SUN network.

It is the core task of the SUN Network to engage with these individuals in significant numbers, and therefore it is essential to be clear about the terms of engagement.

Payment and/or reimbursement of expenses may be necessary in the following circumstances (this list is not comprehensive):

- Where people are incurring expenses of their own by participating in activities organised by the SUN Network
- Where people are participating in activities organised by the SUN Network at a level equivalent to those doing so as part of their paid job
- Where a financial incentive such as a voucher or entry in to a prize draw may be necessary in order to encourage participation

It is intended that the clear and robust procedures set out in this policy will:

- be one way of encouraging people to become involved in SUN Network activities, by showing that their contributions are properly valued
- ensure that involvement is inclusive and accessible for everyone and that they will not be left out of pocket or put at risk of being financially worse off because of their involvement
- demonstrate the values of the SUN Network so that people will be encouraged to become members of the organisation

Staff should at all times be pro-active about this policy and its implementation, confidently offering and explaining it to potential beneficiaries and taking responsibility to make sure it is administered as efficiently as possible.

2. Scope

It is important to be clear about when this policy is applicable and when it is not.

The SUN Network will not pay expenses or make other payments in the following circumstances (this list is not comprehensive):

- where a member of the public is simply contributing their views without incurring expenses
- where the involvement – which may be attendance at a meeting, workshop or conference, or working alongside staff to co-produce a plan or a service – is at the behest of another agency (most probably commissioners or Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT))

[note: For meetings, “at the behest of..” is defined by the organisation which provides the chair of the meeting.]

- where the member of the public is a child
- where the organisation’s role is simply to advertise or promote engagement in a piece of work which is led by another agency

In many instances, when the SUN Network is working alongside members of the public, those people will be members of the SUN Network and they may also be operating on behalf of SUN as a volunteer. This policy is applicable to all those scenarios.

3. Duties

All staff must be aware of this policy. If staff have queries on it, they should raise them with their line manager. In the event of members of the public having issues or complaints about this policy which cannot be immediately resolved by the member of staff, the member of staff should refer to their line manager.

The Executive Director must make new staff aware of the policy as part of their induction and should be available to answer queries as necessary, ensuring that it is consistently applied. This post holder should also ensure that the policy is reviewed within its defined period or earlier if new legislation requires it.

The Chair on behalf of the Board of Directors will make sure the policy review takes place.

4. Prior to Engagement

Before engagement has begun, the responsible member of staff must consider whether this policy is relevant and if it is, discuss it with any participating members of the public.

Staff should:

- understand that there is no obligation on participants to accept payment or expenses
- explain what is available to them for the particular engagement activity, outlining the difference between expenses and payment for activity
- confirm that there is funding available for this purpose
- when payments are being considered, staff should tell the member of the public that if they are on benefits these may be affected and that they may wish to seek independent advice on this from an agency such as Citizens Advice (it is the member of the public’s responsibility to do this).

[Note: Payment of **expenses** will not affect the amounts of welfare benefits payable.]

If it is agreed that expenses or other payments are to be paid, the process should be explained, including the paperwork, the amounts, and the timescale for payment. Staff are welcome to share this policy with members of the public if that would be helpful.

If it is in the interests of the member of the public to be paid in vouchers rather than cash – for example, when someone with substance misuse issues may be at risk of spending the cash to feed their dependency – the option of payment by vouchers should be discussed and actioned if agreed.

When considering payment of vouchers or cash to incentivise participation in a project, staff should consider the likely impact of this approach in each case. If they wish to go ahead they must obtain the permission of the Executive Director beforehand, and the value of any prize should not exceed £20.

5. Engagement

The claim form required for any expenses or other payment is shown at Appendix 1. Where possible, this should be completed at the time of the event (eg. immediately after a meeting).

It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure any payments are made without delay and always within 14 days from receipt of the claim form.

6. Expenses That May Be Claimed.

Any of the following types of expenses may be claimed, with prior agreement from the staff member responsible for leading the involvement activity:

- Travel
- Parking
- Food
- Necessary stationery and equipment
- Accommodation
- Conference booking fees

People are expected to use the most economic and practicable forms of transport whilst meeting their individual needs. Public transport and parking claims must be supported by appropriate receipts.

Private vehicle travel expenses will be paid at the same rate as for staff using their own vehicles and will include the passenger rate where applicable. Claims will only be accepted for use of private cars for the most direct route available.

The business mileage rate payable for cars is 45p per mile.

The business mileage rate payable for motorcycles is 33p per mile up to 3500 miles

7. Making A Payment

Payment and claims for reimbursement forms will need to be completed promptly after the involvement activity has taken place, and submitted internally. Claims submitted more than 2 months after the event will not be honoured.

Every payment or claim for reimbursement form must be signed by both the claimant and the appropriate budget holder. Copies of all receipts must be attached. No reimbursement will be made without receipts.

The organisation will keep records for the reimbursement of expenses so that they are available in case of enquiries regarding benefit rules and tax purposes.

If the person is in receipt of benefits and requires a letter as evidence of their involvement, it is their responsibility to request this, and the responsibility of the SUN Network to provide them with this.

The SUN Network is also required to give accurate details of any payments made to an individual if asked to do so by the Benefits Agency or Inland Revenue. The SUN Network can accept no responsibility if members of the public are penalised once such information is shared.

8. Rates of Pay

The offer of payment and reimbursement can be made to anyone who has been asked by the SUN Network to participate in an involvement activity as outlined in section 1 above.

The tables below outline the most common types of involvement activity and the suggested rate of pay to compensate people for their time and contribution. It is recognised that in some circumstances, the suggested payment rates may be varied to ensure equity, or where it is justified by the expectations of the role. If people are involved in part of a session they will be paid pro rata according to the rate of pay applicable.

Suggested subsistence allowances:

Type of allowance	details	£
Night allowances	Actual receipted costs of bed and breakfast up to a maximum of:	55
	In non-commercial accommodation, per 24 hour period:	25
Meal allowance	Per 24 hour period	25
Lunch allowance	More than five hours away from base, including the lunchtime period between 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	5
Evening meal allowance	More than ten hours away from base and return after 7:00 pm	15

Suggested rate of pay for activities:

Involvement Activity	£
Attending events by invitation and being asked to give an individual view only	Expenses and provision of refreshments
Participation in working groups, focus groups, committees, recruitment panels, designated meetings etc.	£10.00 per hour + Expenses
Preparation time. i.e. preparing a discussion paper, studying application forms, preparing a presentation, reviewing policies and protocols (reading of minutes/papers and debriefs does not form part of paid preparation time)	£6.50 per hour + Expenses

9. Support and Advice

The SUN Network will provide support to members of the public so that they can be properly involved in their activities. This includes stationery or materials that will assist them in being involved in activities, as well as hard or electronic copies of relevant policies and documents needed.

Staff will assist those who need help in understanding the terms and conditions of their involvement and completing the forms to claim payments.

Support will also include access to any necessary training that participants need to undertake, in order to successfully carry out their role e.g. negotiation and influencing skills.

Access to guidance and advice on receiving payments for involvement work, and how they may affect benefit entitlements can be found here:

<http://www.crn.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/mentalhealth/sites/21/Benefitconditions-paid-andvoluntary.pdf>

References

“Model Payment Policy for Service Users and carers for MHRN Hubs Hosted by NHS Trusts” (MHRN, 2013)

“MHRN Service Users and Carers Payments Policy: Benefits Conditions and Systems Around Paid and Voluntary Involvement” (MHRN and NIHR, 2013)



Approved by Board of Directors Date: 23 April 2018 Next Review Date: April 2021
Responsible Officer: Executive Director

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Signed:.....

Date:.....

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