

# Proposed Expenses Policy for the Plymouth LINK



## Introduction

As people get involved with the LINK there will be times when their involvement costs them money. This may be because of transport or being involved with an event all day and needing lunch or refreshments. This policy outlines who, when and how people can claim expenses they incur when they get involved in the LINK.

The LINK wants to make sure it is using best practice for its volunteers and so this policy has been put together using examples of good practice from other LINKs and guidance from the Department of Health and Volunteering England. Reimbursing expenses will help make sure that everyone can be involved in the LINK and that nobody is unfairly disadvantaged because of financial difficulties. This policy is also in place to recognise the value of people who give their time, skills and expertise to the LINK.

## **Who can claim expenses?**

- † LINK Ambassadors
- † LINK Enter and View Team
- † LINK Stewardship Group
- † LINK participants who attend LINK meetings or events

## **What can you claim expenses for?**

### **Travel**

#### Public Transport

Because budgets are limited we recommend that people use public transport when they can. Tickets should be given to the Host Support Team who will reimburse the cost of the ticket.

If you are unable to use public transport and need to use a taxi because of disability or specific needs speak to the LINK Support Team who will authorise this. Where possible taxis will be arranged through the company account and can be paid for directly by the LINK, however costs can be reimbursed if you get a receipt for the journey. The LINK recommend use of private hire cabs as a more cost effective option.

### Car's and motorcycles

If you use your own car or motorcycle costs will be reimbursed at the Inland Revenue's approved mileage rates. For 2008-09 these are:

	First 10'000 miles claimed in the tax year	Each mile over 10'000 miles in the tax year
CAR	40P	25P
Motorcycle	24p	24p

### **Meals and refreshments**

Most events attended by LINK volunteers will be arranged with refreshments and meals provided (any special dietary needs should be given to the Host Support team or event so that they can cater for you). However where refreshments and meals are not provided or cannot be arranged by the LINK the cost of meals and drinks will be reimbursed in the following situations -

- ✓ Where activities last for 4 hours or more,
- ✓ Where activities are over a meal time
- ✓ When a person has a specific medical need (i.e. individual with diabetes carrying out promotion at an event over lunch time for only 2 hours). In these circumstances please discuss beforehand with the LINK Support Team.
- ✓ Where it is agreed that volunteers will attend activities on behalf of the LINK

Volunteers taking part in LINK activities will be reimbursed for one drink per 2 hours on production of the receipt. No more than 3 drinks to be reimbursed within an 8 hour period.

Please see 'Expense Limits' section for agreed maximum amounts to be reimbursed

### **Carer's/Childcare costs**

If additional care is needed in order to enable a parent or carer to attend an event or meeting then the LINK will arrange for/meet reasonable expenses to organise care for children or a dependant person. These expenses will only be authorised if these payments enable people to attend meetings or events which they would otherwise miss. These claims must be agreed beforehand with the LINK Support Manager and will only be paid when care is provided by a registered Childminder or care provider. You cannot claim for care that is:

- Provided by a member of your household;
- Provided by a person who is under 16; or

→ Provided by, funded by, or available from, another organisation (i.e. social services or befriending)

The LINK will work with Plymouth City Council to facilitate respite for carers and will hold details of a small number of registered child care providers to use if needed.

## **Other expenses**

### Postage, envelopes, telephone calls etc

All people carrying out tasks for the LINK will be given the opportunity to use resources available from the LINK Office. I.E. any telephone calls can be made from the LINK Office and envelopes, stamps etc will be provided. If this is not an option then alternative arrangements can be made with agreement from the LINK Support Team Manager.

### Interpreter, translation service, signer, Braille Transcripts, any other reasonable support that a person may need

Equality and diversity is central to the LINK and the LINK will try to make sure it is accessible to people from all cultures and communities. The LINK will hold information about resources and access to specialist translation services and work with others and be creative to make this happen. The LINK has a budget for accessibility to support engagement from individuals with any specialist needs. Please speak to the LINK Support Team at the earliest opportunity about any requirements you have. Payment of specialist support (i.e. translations, signers, interpreters etc) must be agreed beforehand. The LINK is committed to finding good value for money and best practice suggests that quotes be obtained where possible. Therefore if you have a preferred way of accessing any resources which suits your needs more (i.e. a signer who you know and regularly employ), please discuss this with the LINK Support Team Manager at the earliest time possible.

## **Procedure for claiming expenses**

- All claims for reimbursement, except mileage, must be supported by a receipt.
- A running Expenses claim form will be held by the LINK Support Team and all expenses will be logged and dated.
- Transport and mileage expenses occur because you are attending a meeting or event according to the request or needs of the LINK or as part of your role. All other expenses must be approved in advance for example, taxi's carer's costs, meals and specialist support, translation etc.
- Expenses must be claimed within 3 months.

- Payment can be made by cheque or cash. The LINK Support Team will try to make sure that there is enough cash available to reimburse LINK members. The LINK Support Team will always try and get reimbursement back to you as quickly as possible.
- The LINK advises that you also keep your own records of any reimbursement paid to you.
- If a volunteer is excluded from getting involved because they are unable to afford expenses up front, the LINK Support Team will work with a volunteer to pay expenses in advance so that a volunteer can get involved.

The LINK aims to be as flexible as possible regarding the payment of expenses, taking into account individual circumstances wherever possible. This aims to make sure that expenses are paid in a way that's fair and equal to everyone.

## Expense limits

Public Transport -Buses	No Limit but if the fare exceeds the cost of a day rider ticket then a day rider should be purchased instead.
Taxis	No limit but taxi's only available from within the Plymouth boundary
Cars and motorcycles	No limit but mileage will only be reimbursed for travel within the Plymouth boundaries
Meals	£5.00 maximum
Drinks	£2.00 maximum
Carer's/Childcare Costs	£12.50 an hour maximum

- If an individual decide to purchase an item that exceeds the maximum reimbursement allowance they can still claim for the maximum amount i.e. if buying a speciality coffee costing £2, on production of receipt to the LINK Support Team £1.50 will be refunded.
- These limits will also be looked at in individual circumstances, for example if LINK volunteers are attending an event in London, limits will need to be increased to allow for the higher costs, so that the volunteer is not out of pocket.

## **Policy Review**

As more people get involved in the LINK the demand for payment of expenses will increase. Costs of volunteering will be reviewed regularly by the Stewardship Group within the budgets and the LINK will be consulted about any proposed changes to this policy.