

# Panel Member and Area Support Team member expenses policy

March 2023



children's  
hearings  
scotland



## 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out Children's Hearings Scotland's (CHS) scheme of expenses and details the types of expenses Panel Members and volunteer AST members can claim for, as well as CHS' rates of payment. CHS values the significant time and effort that Panel Members dedicate to their roles as tribunal members and also recognises the commitment of unsalaried members of Area Support Teams in support of the Children's Panel. CHS understands that their commitment to the Panel may cause them to incur expenses.

1.2 CHS is committed to:

- ensuring that Panel Members and AST members are not left out-of-pocket as a result of their volunteering; and
- reimbursing all reasonable expenses in an accessible, fair and timely manner.

1.3 Out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers are defined in best practice across the voluntary sector as including:

- travelling expenses to and from where they are working as a volunteer
- other subsistence costs – e.g. food and drink
- any special clothing and/or tools
- training
- childcare

1.4 Reasonable expenses are those necessarily incurred while undertaking approved Panel Member and AST activities. A list of approved activities is attached as Appendix 1. Only reasonable expenses as set out in this policy will be reimbursed.

1.5 Panel Members and AST members must ensure that their attendance is recorded at events, as expense claims will not be paid without proof of attendance.

1.6 The authority to determine and pay allowances to children's Panel Members is given to the National Convener in the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (Schedule 2 Section 4) and determinations of allowances are subject to the approval of Scottish Ministers. The authority is given in Schedule 1 Section 10 (9) for CHS to pay expenses and allowances determined by the Scottish Ministers to those to whom a function of the National Convener is delegated.

1.7 This expenses policy supports CHS' vision, mission and values, as well as the commitments made in the National Standards for Panel Members.



## 2. CHS' Commitment to Paying Expenses

2.1 CHS will reimburse all reasonable and necessary expenses which Panel Members and AST members incur in order to organise their roles.

- CHS will provide an accessible, fair and timely process for the claiming and reimbursement of expenses.
- CHS may reimburse the actual value of all reasonable expenses subject to maximum limits.
- CHS does not require receipts for mileage or un-ticketed parking. For all other claims, claimants should upload images of receipts to the expenses service alongside their claim, or retain receipts for 12 months in case the approver requires to see them to approve the claim. If a receipt cannot be provided, any payment will be at the discretion of CHS.
- CHS will only be able to reimburse expenses which are claimed within three months of the date on which they were incurred.
- CHS will be guided by HM Revenue and Customs on recommended mileage rates and passenger payments.
- CHS will organise to provide accommodation and catering for large-scale events in order that Panel Members and AST members do not incur unnecessary expense in order to attend.
- CHS will endeavour to organise national events and meetings in locations where there are convenient public transport links.

2.2 CHS and Clerks to the ASTs will manage and monitor expenses claims and CHS will review the expenses policy after one year. CHS will seek feedback from Panel Members and AST members on the policy's operation and it will be reviewed every two years thereafter.

## 3. Considerations for Panel Members and AST members

3.1 CHS recognises that being present at a hearing on time is the most important factor for Panel Members when making decisions about how they will travel and what accommodation they will need, and this should always take precedence. Where there is a range of travel options available which are convenient and practical, CHS asks that Panel and AST members consider the environment and getting best value when making their choices, and as far as possible try to:

- Use public transport where it is convenient and more cost effective than private transport.
- Share private transport with other Panel Members and AST members if this is possible and practical.
- Book travel and accommodation as far in advance as possible to secure the lowest rate available.



- Use of videoconferencing facilities/Microsoft Teams for AST business where these are available and appropriate to reduce the need for travel. CHS will encourage the use of online meetings to minimise the time commitment required from volunteers.

## **4. Expenses Panel Members can claim**

4.1 Panel Members can claim for:

- Mileage, including car, motorbike and bicycle
- Parking
- Public transport, including bus, train, ferries and flights and taxis (taxis in exceptional circumstances only)
- Subsistence, including accommodation and meals
- Financial loss, including dependent care costs and loss of earnings

## **5. Expenses AST Members Can Claim (see Section 10)**

5.1 In addition to the expenses Panel Members can claim for which are listed above, AST members can also claim for:

- Telephone calls, text messages and postage costs incurred in respect of their duties
- Essential printing and photocopying costs

## **6. Costs Which Cannot be Claimed**

6.1 Panel Members and AST members will not be reimbursed for:

- Any fees or fines incurred as a result of the improper use of transport (e.g. parking fines and speeding fines).
- Any expenses which are already provided by another party.
- Any expenses which should be more appropriately paid to someone else (for example, mileage claims when another Panel Member has provided transport and incurred the expense).
- Any non-essential additional costs a Panel Member or AST member chooses to pay (e.g. tipping of taxi drivers or restaurant staff).
- Any expenses for meals and refreshments when these have been provided free of charge by CHS or any other body (e.g. lunch at training events).
- The purchase of alcohol.



## 7. Travel Expenses

### 7.1 Mileage claims

Motorists are responsible for ensuring they have appropriate insurance cover. CHS will not contribute to the cost of motor insurance.

Mileage claims should be as precise as possible. Motorists should claim for the number of miles travelled, however if exact figures are not available mileage should be calculated using an online route planner tool (e.g. Google maps, AA Route Planner).

**Cars and Vans** - mileage may be paid to car and van users at 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles in the tax year, then at 25p per mile thereafter.

**Motorcycles** - mileage may be paid to motorcycle users at 24p per mile.

**Bicycles** - mileage may be paid to bicycle users at 20p per mile.

**Passengers** - an additional rate of 5p per mile may be paid to drivers carrying other Panel Members or AST members as passengers.

**Parking** - Reasonably incurred parking costs may be reimbursed in respect of time spent carrying out panel or AST activity. Wherever possible, parking costs should be supported by a receipt. Panel Members are encouraged to use free parking whenever available.

### 7.2 Public Transport Claims

**Buses and Trains** - bus and train costs may be paid in full upon production of a ticket for the lowest available rate. CHS will not contribute to the cost of travel passes.

**Ferries and Flights**- ferry and flight costs must be approved by CHS, or a person with delegated authority from CHS, prior to travel. Costs may be paid in full upon production of a ticket for the lowest available rate.

**Taxis** - CHS will pay for taxi fares when a Panel Member or AST member has accessibility needs which require it, or when it is more economical for group travel than any other mode of transport. CHS will pay for taxi fares where a Panel Member or AST member requires to use a taxi for reasons of personal safety. Otherwise, taxi fares may be paid in exceptional circumstances only. Taxi fares may be paid in full upon production of a receipt.



## 8. Subsistence Claims

### 8.1 Accommodation

- Overnight accommodation must be approved and booked in advance by CHS, or a person with delegated authority from CHS, except in emergency circumstances.
- The cost of overnight accommodation may be paid up to a maximum of £80 per night for bed and breakfast and upon production of a receipt.
- The cost of overnight accommodation on a ferry may be paid upon production of a ticket for the lowest available rate. Flexibility in exceptional circumstances is at the discretion of CHS.
- No claim should be made if overnight accommodation is provided free of charge by CHS or any other body.

### 8.2 Meals

- In exceptional circumstances, Panel Members and AST members may require to claim for meals. CHS may reimburse meal costs at its discretion.
- When a Panel Member or AST member undertakes approved activities and is obliged to take a meal away from their home or work base which requires them to incur additional expense, they may claim for the cost of the meal up to maximum limits. The circumstances must have made it unavoidable for them to spend more than they normally would have done.
- Upon production of a receipt, subsistence costs will be paid at a rate of:
  - <5 hours £4.90
  - >10 hours £10.70
  - 24 hours £25.05
- Your local clerks have accompanying guidance for the application of this policy in relation to claims for specific meals (Breakfast/lunch/dinner).

## 9. Financial Loss Claims

### 9.1 Dependent Care

- Care costs may only be paid for the number of hours spent on panel or AST activities and travelling to and from these commitments.
- CHS will consider reimbursing a higher hourly rate for child and dependant care rates on an exceptional basis.
- Childcare costs will only be paid for children who are looked after in registered childcare. Proof of registration must be submitted to CHS. CHS will not reimburse claims for children who are looked after in unregistered childcare.
- No payment will normally be made to anyone who is a parent, step-parent, guardian, sibling or child of the dependant, or who is living within the same household as the dependant. Any exceptions will be at the discretion of CHS.



- CHS will not reimburse, or contribute towards, costs for existing care arrangements that Panel or AST members may already have for their dependants.
- Dependent rates for child care will be paid at a rate of £6 per hour per child
- Dependent care rates for adult care and children with additional support needs should be claimed by people registered as an unpaid carer. The rates paid should be based on the ceiling equivalent to the current carer rate paid by the local authority where they live, and will be per hour per dependent adult or child.

## 9.2 Loss of Earnings

- Loss of earnings will be paid at a rate equal to that of the Scottish Real Living Wage hourly rate.
- A maximum of 4 x the hourly rate for less than 4 hours service and a maximum of 8 x the hourly rate for more than 4 hours service per day.
- CHS is only able to pay loss of earnings expenses where an employer grants the Panel Member or AST member unpaid time off to undertake panel activities. Evidence from an employer stating the employee's hourly rate, and confirmation that they are not being paid for time spent out of work, must be submitted to CHS. This must include confirmation that they are not providing flexi credit to cover any time out of work.
- Self-employed Panel Members who are unable to vary their hours of work must provide evidence from their accountant of their actual hourly earnings based upon their most recent accounts and calculated at a 35 hour week, and submit this to CHS. Please note that if you are self-employed you may be liable to business income taxation on any payment for financial loss.
- No claim can be made by Panel Members and AST members who work shifts or have flexible working arrangements and can undertake panel activities without financial loss.
- Dependent care expenses and loss of earnings expenses cannot be claimed for the same period.

## 10. Telephone, Postage, Photocopying and Printing Claims (AST members only)

### 10.1 Telephone Calls, Text Messages and Postage

- Those not provided with mobile phones by CHS (for Panel and AST business use only) may be reimbursed for telephone call and text message costs to their full value upon production of an itemised telephone bill.
- Postage may be reimbursed in full upon production of receipts.



## 10.2 Photocopying and Printing

- Whenever possible and practical, AST members should pass AST and panel-related documents to the clerk to the AST for printing and photocopying.
- In exceptional circumstances where AST members require to print or photocopy AST and panel-related documents at home, ink cartridges may be requested from CHS up to a maximum of one cartridge in a six month period.
- If public copying or printing facilities are used, copy costs may be reimbursed only on production of a receipt.

## 11. How to Claim Expenses

Panel Members and AST members should complete an expenses claim using the online expenses service, uploading receipts there if requested to. The AST Clerk will then review the claim, and either approve it for payment or return it to the claimant if there is an issue preventing approval. Claimants who cannot use the expenses service should contact their AST Clerk for further instructions.





### **Approved Panel Member and AST Member Activities**

Panel Members and AST members may be reimbursed for expenses claims incurred while attending the following approved activities:

1. Hearings
2. All national training linked to the national curriculum
3. Other local training linked to the national curriculum which has been approved by the National Convener
4. AST meetings and/or AST sub-committee meetings as agreed by the Area Convener
5. Other approved meetings (as set out in the Panel Member and AST Member Handbook)
6. Local agency meetings which have been agreed by the Area Convener or Depute Area Convener
7. Forums and events which have been organised or sponsored by CHS
8. Other legitimate panel business as agreed by CHS