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Resident Expense Policy

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1 Introduction and Purpose

This policy will outline how our residents and leaseholders can claim expenses when attending resident involvement meetings and events.

We are committed to supporting our residents and leaseholders to influence and be involved in their housing services.

It's important that resident involvement should not cost our residents to get involved and they should understand that we value the important contribution they make.

We will reimburse residents and leaseholders for reasonable expenses incurred as a result of attending meetings.

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- Residents and leaseholders have a clear and transparent procedure for claiming eligible expenses
- A simple method of claiming expenses.

2 Responsibilities

The Head of Business Improvement and Analytics (Resident Involvement) holds overall responsibility for this policy. The policy relates to the expenses that our residents and leaseholders can claim when attending events and meetings hosted by West Kent.

Commented [MG1]: This is unclear

3 Regulation

The rates contained within this policy relate to those set by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and they will change as and when they are updated/ amended.

For tax and legal reasons, we must reimburse residents expenses as accurately as possible. Any money paid over and above the actual expense incurred is regarded as income by HMRC.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Travel expenses

In all cases, residents should use the most economical form of transport. Public transport should be used wherever possible, and car sharing is encouraged.

4.2 Travel by rail and bus

For national rail journeys, the cheapest available ticket should be purchased, and a receipt must be provided. Fixed-time tickets booked should be used wherever possible as they are often considerably cheaper.

Bus journeys will be reimbursed with a valid ticket.

4.3 Private car use

Car mileage claims will be made at the current HMRC rate of 45p per mile. *We will pay an extra 5p per mile per extra resident who is a passenger to encourage car sharing.*

4.5 Motorcycle use

Residents attending involvement events by motorcycle can claim at the current HMRC rate of 24p per mile.

4.6 Travel by taxi

Arrangements for taxi travel should be made locally by the event organiser using an approved taxi firm. We encourage taxi sharing wherever possible.

Taxi transport will only be provided to residents where there is a clear need. This includes but is not limited to:

- A condition that means an individual cannot use public transport or a private car
- Any other situation approved by meeting or event organiser.

4.7 Bicycle use

Residents attending involvement events by bicycle can claim a mileage allowance of 20p per mile.

4.8 Car parking fees

Car parking fees will be reimbursed with a valid parking ticket. These can only be claimed if a resident has attended a meeting or event.

Parking fines and clamping charges will not be reimbursed.

4.9 Childcare allowance

Childcare payments can only be made to the child/children's parent or guardian, or where the child/children being claimed for normally reside with them.

The costs must be agreed with the event organiser in advance.

Expenses for childcare will only be reimbursed where a registered childcare provider is used.

West Kent will not reimburse:

- The costs of care provided by unregistered providers
- Claims for the events where children are welcome to attend or where in-house childcare is available
- Claims for school age children during school hours.

Childcare payments for children 16 years and above will only be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances as agreed with the meeting organiser.

Residents cannot be reimbursed for childcare provided by family members or members of the same household.

Evidence of the cost of childcare (either through a receipt or invoice) and the childcare providers registration number should be submitted.

4.10 Carers allowance

Residents participating in meetings can claim the cost of care of a dependent for whom they are in receipt of a carers allowance.

Residents cannot be reimbursed for dependent care provided by family members or members of the same household.

Evidence of the cost of dependent care should be submitted for consideration.

4.11 Payment of expenses

All expenses will be reimbursed by direct payment into the resident or leaseholder's bank account via BACS transfer. These can take up to 10 working days to be credited to the nominated account.

Residents will be asked to put their bank details on the expenses claim form. These details will be stored securely and will be correctly disposed of by the Resident Involvement team.

4.12 Expenses that cannot be claimed

West Kent will only pay for actual costs incurred as a result of residents and leaseholders being involved in resident engagement activity (such as meetings and events).

We will not cover expenses for:

- Parking fines
- Speeding fines
- Clamping charges
- Any expense claims where a valid receipt or mileage claim are not provided
- Any expense that the resident or leasehold would have incurred regardless of them attending a meeting or event
- Claims should be made within two months of the date the expense was incurred or the journey made
- Loss of earnings for attending a West Kent meeting or event
- Vehicle insurance costs.

5 Reporting

All expense claims in relation to resident involvement must follow this policy.

It is the responsibility of the resident or leaseholder to ensure their claim is accurate and they must confirm this by signing the declaration on the claim form.

Expense claims will be checked by the Resident Involvement Team and are subject to further internal audit at any time.

We reserve the right to make checks at any time to verify any expense claims. A claim may be refused if there is any doubt as to its validity.

Fraudulent or inflated claims may result in the tenant or leaseholder being suspended or excluded from future resident involvement activities, and from expenses being reimbursed.

6 Consultation

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity in everything we do. We provide a safe and welcoming environment where everyone is valued, included and respected.

Discrimination, harassment and victimisation in any form is not acceptable.

Through the implementation of this policy, we will ensure all customers are treated fairly, regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Residents that are involved in our consultations and policy reviews will be given the opportunity to review the policy prior to publication to ensure that it is easily understood and clear.

7 Communication

The policy will be shared with residents at their request when claiming expenses. It will also be shared with residents that are considering costs to attend events and the services/ reimbursements we offer.

[Summary of Key Material / Key Changes]

- Included in the body of Policy.

RELATED POLICY DOCUMENTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Legislation www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-and-allowances-travel-mileage-and-fuel-allowances/travel-mileage-and-fuel-rates-and-allowances

Related Policies NA

Appendix

Forms None

POLICY SIGN-OFF

[A policy or procedure that affects the entire organisation must be approved at a high level of seniority by an individual or body with a combination of a firm-wide view and an appropriate understanding of the subject matter. Policies should receive final approval from the relevant management group or committee as set out in the Guidance for Procedures and Policies, which can be located on Bettie.

[Policies with narrower scope need be approved at the level of the governance of the group or groups those policies affect.]

Document Name:	Resident Expense Policy
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Equality Impact Assessment on S Drive:	[Yes/No]
Resident Impact Assessment:	Low Risk
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A current version of this procedure is available to all employees on (West Kent Intranet).

APPROVAL SIGNATURE:

JOB TITLE:

DATE:

Change History Record

Version	Date	Details of Change(s)	Approved By
V1.0	[Enter date]	Initial issue	[Enter Job Title]
V2.0	[Enter date]	[Enter details of change]	[Enter Job Title]