



COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXPENSES POLICY (2020)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In October 2016 the SFHA and the SHR published a model Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policy upon which Ochil View HA has 'personalised'.

This policy specifically outlines the details on the payment of expenses to Committee Members however the Entitlements Payments & Benefits Policy describes the treatment of other benefits e.g. awarding a tenancy, house sales, contracts of employment...etc.

2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all reasonable expenses are reimbursed to the voluntary Committee Members when carrying out Ochil View business and to ensure that no individual should be excluded from fully participating as a Committee Member because of their financial position.

By setting out clear policy details the Association aims to ensure that it is not incurring unjustified expenses

This policy also covers tenants attending events e.g. rent consultation meetings, other consultation events or AGMs arranged by the Association.

3.0 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS / ENTITLEMENTS, PAYMENTS AND BENEFITS POLICY

The Associations Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members outlines the high standards of governance and ethical behaviour required from Committee Members.

The Entitlements, Payments and Benefits Policy (referred to above) confirms that Committee Members have a right to claim expenses in relation to permitted out of pocket expenses and the reimbursement of travel without the need for these to be declared as long as all payments are made in accordance with this policy.

Any allegation made against a Committee Member in relation to falsely claiming expenses will be regarded as a potential Breach of the Code of Conduct and as a result such a matter will be investigated in accordance with the procedures set out at (Appendix 2 of the Code of Conduct).

A breach of this Code may result in action being taken by the Governing Body to remove the member involved.

4.0 PERMITTED COMMITTEE EXPENSES

The Association's Committee members are entitled to claim out of pocket expenses properly incurred in the business of the Association. These expenses should be claimed timeously and on the Committee Members expenses claim form that can be obtained from the Association's office. Eligible expenses include the following:

- ✓ Car Journeys
- ✓ Other Travel Costs
- ✓ Fees for Conference and Training Events
- ✓ Overnight Accommodation
- ✓ Carers Allowance
- ✓ Meal Allowance
- ✓ Payment for Loss of Earnings
- ✓ Other payments and Out of Pocket Expenses

4.1 Car Journeys

Car expenses are payable to Committee Members when undertaking Association business e.g. meetings, conferences, training courses and similar activities.

Mileage allowance will be paid for use of a private car, based on the EVH rates for casual users, of 45p a mile.

An additional mileage allowance of 2p a mile, for each additional passenger, will be paid to a Committee Member providing transport to other Members.

Committee Members should use due cognisance and appropriate judgement when deciding on using their own car or public transport. If a Committee member chooses to use their car for any purpose when undertaking Association business, they must ensure that they have the appropriate vehicle insurance policy arrangements in place.

4.2 Other Travel Costs

A motorcycle allowance 24p a mile may be claimed and for bicycles 20p per mile.

Second class public transport should be used as a first option, when it is the most convenient method of transport and where it is available.

Taxi fares will be reimbursed for travel between the public transport terminus and the meeting venue. Committee Members travelling together on public transport are expected to share a taxi. Reasonable taxi fares will be reimbursed where a receipt is produced.

Where necessary, air travel by economy class only will be refunded. Tickets should be booked as far in advance as possible to ensure most cost-effective arrangements. Copy of tickets and receipts must be attached to the expenses claim form.

4.3 Fees for Conference and Training Events

Conference and training course fees will be paid by the Association directly to the organising body in advance or following the 'activity' (whichever is required by the organiser).

4.4 Overnight Accommodation

Where overnight accommodation is required it will normally be booked in advance by the Association and the cost will be paid direct to the hotel in advance or following the overnight stay (whichever is required by the hotel).

When a Committee Member is required to be away from home overnight an overnight allowance will be paid of £18.65 each night. This payment will be made in advance of the 'activity'. Should the Committee Member, for any reason, not attend the 'activity' the money will be repayable to the Association.

A further subsistence allowance will be paid for actual expenses incurred where these are deemed to be reasonable. (See 4.6 below)

Where any meal is provided in the overall accommodation charge, no separate claim should be made for a subsistence allowance.

Additional overnight expenses may be claimed in exceptional circumstances subject to approval by the Chief Executive.

4.5 Carers Allowance

Where a Committee Member has the 'official' responsibility as carer for a disabled or dependent member of family, expenses properly incurred in providing alternative care arrangements will be reimbursed by the Association.

Expenses will also be reimbursed to Committee Members for child minding expenses actually and legitimately incurred in order to attend to the business of the Association.

When an appropriate qualified person has carried out the child minding or has taken care of the dependent, the expenses paid shall be in accordance with the invoice provided by that person that confirms their actual cost.

Expenses shall not be paid when another member of the household is looking after the child or other dependent.

It will be acceptable for the Committee member to make a payment to another close relative, who is not a member of the household, and have this reimbursed, providing that the person is suitably qualified and the costs reasonable.

The maximum number of hours that can be claimed will be 3 hrs each meeting subject to a maximum of £38.50 for 3 hours.

Carers allowances for longer periods e.g. attendance at conferences or training sessions should be pre-agreed with the Chief Executive.

4.6 Meal Allowance

Meal allowances will only be paid where additional expense is incurred. No allowance will be paid where a suitable meal is provided.

Claims for the meal allowance will only be paid for actual expenses where these claims are reasonable and receipts are provided; this usually means up to the following *maximum* limits:

- ✓ £11 Breakfast
- ✓ £13 Lunch
- ✓ £26.50 Evening Meal

4.7 Payment for Loss of Earnings

The Association may make payment for loss of earnings to a Committee member to cover attendance at a meeting or an event providing that:

- ✓ The payment is not made in respect of a routine meeting;
- ✓ Attendance by the person claiming loss of earnings was important e.g. the Convenor of the Executive Committee at a disciplinary hearing;
- ✓ Every effort was made to hold the meeting at a time which would avoid Committee members losing salary or annual leave;
- ✓ The Committee member provides a letter from their employer confirming that earnings have been lost or leave entitlement had to be used, and the amount or value involved.

The Association's policy on payment of loss of earnings will accord with the policy on jury duty expenses subject to a maximum of £385.

4.8 Other Payments and Out of Pocket Expenses

Reimbursement will be made for other out of pocket expenses directly related to the Association's business, e.g. postage, telephone costs etc

Animal care expenses may be authorised in advance by the Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive may authorise payment of other reasonable expenses when the Chief Executive deems it necessary to carry out the Association's business. However, no expenditure will be authorised unless it is within the guidelines laid down by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

4.9 Subsistence allowances will increase in line with the EVH salary increase percentage on an annual basis. Mileage allowances are based on HMRC allowances and will increase in line with those HMRC allowances.

5.0 EXPENSE CLAIMS PROCEDURE

5.1 Committee Expenses Claim Form

A Committee Expenses Claim Form is attached (**Appendix 1**).

The form must be completed and signed by the Committee Member for all expenses claimed.

It should be submitted to the Finance Department and will be authorised by the Chief Executive prior to payment being made.

5.2 Evidence of Expenditure

Receipts/vouchers must be attached to the claim form as proof of expenditure.

Claims for mileage must be fully detailed, i.e. date, reason for travel, places of travel and miles travelled.

5.3 Method of Payment

Payment will be made by bank transfer for all expense claims over £40.00.

Expense claims under £40.00 will be paid by cash or bank transfer, at the request of the Committee Member.

5.4 Timescales for Payment

All expenses should be claimed in the month in which they are incurred.

5.5 Expense Claim Limit

Expenses in excess of £275 must be specifically approved by the Chief Executive prior to the expense being incurred.

6.0 **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be subject to review at least every three years.

Anne Smith
Director of Finance & Corporate Services

October 2020

Policy Review & Consultation Process

Reviewed by Management Team on	27 October 2020
Reviewed by the Finance, Audit & Corporate Governance Committee on	5 November 2020
APPROVED BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ON	26th NOVEMBER 2020
Date of Next Review	November 2023