



*National Treatment Agency
for Substance Misuse*

EXPENSES POLICY FOR SERVICE USERS
AND CARERS
November 2005

1. Introduction

This policy applies to the NTA and its work in involving users and carers at regional or national level.

The NTA values the knowledge and experiences of past and present users of substance misuse treatment services and current substance users. In addition, the views and experiences of the carers of service users are of equal value. The NTA is actively seeking to increase involvement of service users and their carers in its work and throughout the substance misuse treatment system. The NTA recognises that reimbursing expenses to people who contribute their time and expertise is good practice, fair and is a step towards increasing user and carer participation in the planning and delivery of the NTA's work.

2. Policy Statement

The NTA will offer reimbursement of expenses to individuals for their expertise and time when they are specifically asked by the NTA to contribute to activities, including:

- Research, policy or service development
- Planning, training and education activities
- National or regional working groups, advisory groups or conferences

Expenses will not be offered for attendance at meetings or events unless the person has been specifically asked to attend or contribute on behalf of the NTA or NTA group that they participate in.

3. Expense Reimbursement

The NTA will reimburse actual expenses incurred by those who have been invited by the NTA to attend meetings, forums, advisory groups or conferences. The payment of expenses will be in line with the Guidance for Implementation in Section 4. The expenses covered by this policy are:

- Travel Expenses – actual costs of public transport, taxi/cab and a mileage rate for cars.
- Subsistence Expenses – the actual costs for meals and/or refreshments.
- Caring Expenses – the costs of providing alternative care.

4. Guidance for Implementation

4.1 Standard Definitions:

Definition of a service user:

Any person with experience of the treatment system should be encouraged to become involved at the local partnership, regional or national level.

A service user is defined as any person who is;

- In contact with treatment services
- Has recently completed treatment
- Has identified a need for a treatment intervention but has not yet made contact with treatment services.

Definition of a carer:

A carer is any person who looks after a person identified as a service user above or is directly affected by that person's substance use or service use. The NTA's approach is inclusive, however a carer will cease to function as a carer representative if the designated user completed treatment and is problem free for four years.

Local Partnership:

This term covers those partnerships in the local area responsible for the delivery of the Drugs Strategy and the Drug Treatment Plan.

4.2 Travel Expenses

People may claim actual expense incurred for travelling to and from any meeting or event.

- People are expected to use public transport, at standard class rate, whenever possible and fares will be reimbursed only when a valid ticket/receipt is produced. An expenses form must be completed by the person claiming the expense and authorised by a relevant NTA member of staff.
- Wherever possible, people attending national or regional meetings should request tickets in advance of the meeting.
- The use of taxis/cabs is appropriate for those who cannot use public transport due to access issues, but should be agreed in advance by the NTA member of staff who invited them to attend.
- Cars should only be used when public transport is not available or where the mileage claimed does not exceed the standard rail fare applicable at that time. Where the costs do exceed the standard rail fare only this amount will be paid.
- Cars may be used when more than two people are attending. The mileage claimed, however, should not exceed the costs of joint rail or bus fares applicable at the time. Where the costs do exceed any joint standard rail fare only this amount will be paid.

Mileage Rates for Drivers

All journeys undertaken by car should be agreed between the NTA staff member responsible for the area of work in advance of the event or meeting. Mileage will be paid to service users/carers at the same rate as it is paid for staff. However, as it is unlikely that any individual will travel enough miles to be considered a Regular User, all payments should be made on the Standard Rate. Standard Rate allowances are:

Engine Capacity	501 to 1000cc	1001 to 1500cc	Over 1500cc
Up to 3,500 miles	34p	43p	53p
All miles thereafter	16.2p	18.3p	20.5p

For those who use their car the NTA manager responsible for inviting them to attend can request a copy of the driving license, registration, tax and insurance documents to ensure that the car is legal and safe.

4.3 Subsistence Expenses

People may claim the actual costs of meals and/or refreshments:

- Where the meeting/visit exceeds four hours, including travel time; and
- Where the expenditure is not met directly by the meeting organiser or organisation being visited (e.g. if lunch is provided at the meeting then no subsistence expense will be payable) and
- Where additional expenditure is necessarily incurred.
- Receipts must be provided and an expenses form must be completed by the person claiming the expense and authorised by the relevant NTA member of staff.

4.4 Caring Expenses

People may claim expenses incurred in organising alternative care.

- Caring expenses must be agreed with the relevant NTA member of staff in advance.
- Where possible a registered carer or caring agency should be used to provide alternative care.
- Invoices or receipts used from these agencies will be required as proof of expense.
- Other expenses relating to the care of a child or adult will be paid up to the rate of £7.50 per hour or £40.00 for any one claim.
- Expenses relating to the care of a child will usually be limited to:
 - Children under school age
 - Children age 16, or under, during school holidays or out of school hours
- Those in receipt of the Childcare element of the Working Families Tax Credit should be clear about what their usual arrangements are and what is an extra expense incurred by their involvement in the work of the NTA. Verification of what these are will be required.
- The use of local authority assisted childcare or nurseries provided by further education or workplaces should be encouraged but not regarded as the only appropriate provider as family members may be more appropriate in some circumstances.
- Expenses relating to the care of an adult will also be paid.
- An expenses form must be completed by the person claiming the expense and authorised by the relevant NTA member of staff.

Because those who have caring responsibilities, whether for children or adults, are at risk of being excluded due to the additional costs and responsibilities that they incur as carers, the Caring Expenses part of this policy should be implemented in a way that maximises the involvement of the carer, meets the needs of the person being cared for and meets the needs of the NTA to account for money spent.

4.5 Administering Payment of Expenses

- Payment of expenses should be made to the individual in a way that suits their circumstances.
- Special consideration should be given to making sure that those who do not have a bank account are not disadvantaged by the system.
- A cash float should be made available at meetings/events where service users or carers require immediate payment.
- A named NTA member of staff will be responsible for the administration of the cash float. Receipt books should be used to ensure that all cash handed out is signed for and that we are able to use the information for budgeting and auditing purposes. Receipts must be taken as proof of expense.

4.6 Budgets

The NTA funds used to pay expenses come from the regional, programme or project budget responsible for the area of work.

As a basic framework:

- Regional Forum expenses should be paid from Regional Budgets for user or carer involvement only where local partnerships are unwilling to reimburse expenses.
- National User or Carer Advisory Groups will be paid from national user/carers programme budget.
- Working groups for research projects will be paid from research team budget.

In general the interaction between local partnership level groups and NTA regions should be funded at partnership level, the interaction between NTA regions and national level organisations should be funded by NTA regions and interactions at national level should be funded by NTA national.

4.7 Attending NTA Conferences

The NTA regularly makes a number of subsidised spaces available at its national conferences. For those attending a national conference the following expenses are available:

- Travel to/from the conference must be organised in advance and train tickets sent to the delegate.
- Overnight accommodation can be provided for those who would have to travel more than three hours before the start of the conference, where the conference starts before 10am.
- A £15 meal allowance can be provided for the evening before the conference, for those who have had accommodation organised.
- Subsistence expenses can be claimed by all for expenses incurred on the journeys to and from the conference.

Appendix A – Information for users and carers on claiming expenses.

When you are invited by the NTA to participate in a meeting, advisory group, forum or conference we will reimburse the expenses you incur for travel, subsistence (food and drink) and caring.

Travel

- You should speak with the NTA Regional office or Head office to organise a travel ticket in advance of the meeting. If this is not possible then you can pay for the ticket yourself and claim back the money.
- If there is no public transport near you or you have arranged to take a number of people in your car then you must agree this with the relevant NTA staff member in advance of the meeting. Once agreed you will then be paid a rate per mile travelled.
- If you use a car then the Regional Manager or Manager at Head Office can ask for a copy of your driving licence, registration documents and insurance documents to make sure that the car that we are paying for is legal and safe.
- You must have receipts and use an expenses claim form, which will be given to you, to claim back these expenses.

Subsistence

- You can claim back the cost of food or drink that you have had to buy on the day of the meeting, but only:
- When the total time involved has been four hours or more and no drinks or food was provided at the meeting.
- If you have expenses to claim then you must have receipts and use an expenses claim form to claim these back.

Caring

- If you have to organise someone else to care for a child or adult when you attend the meeting then we will repay you the cost of this.
- You must agree this in advance of the meeting with the relevant NTA staff member.
- Whatever has been agreed can be claimed using the expenses claim form. If you have used a caring agency, such as a nursery, then receipts or invoices should be provided.

We will aim to make sure that you get any expenses reimbursed as quickly as possible and in a way that suits your needs.