

**Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast**

**Policy on payments and expenses for members of the public**

## Policy contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Covering your expenses .....	4
3. Payment for your time .....	7
Appendix A: Brief Jargon Buster .....	10
Appendix B: Further sources of information .....	12

This policy has been adapted from a policy written by INVOLVE Coordinating Centre and based on guidance agreed with the Department of Health and Social Care: 'National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Programmes: Payment and reimbursement rates for public involvement (2009)'

## **1. Introduction**

The Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast (ARC NWC) is committed to the active involvement of members of the public in our work.

### **The policy tells you:**

- when public advisers will have their expenses covered reimbursed
- what ARC NWC regards as reasonable expenses
- what to expect from ARC NWC when claiming
- when other payments, such as for your time, will be made
- who to contact for further information on your responsibilities in paying tax and national insurance, and your responsibilities when you are receiving state benefits
- what will happen if there is a problem.

### **Further information is also included in appendices:**

- useful links and contact details
- a brief jargon buster of the terms used in this policy

Please contact a member of staff at the ARC NWC public involvement team if you have any questions about this policy. We will be happy to talk through how to have your expenses covered or claim any payments. You will find our contact details on the final page of this document.

## 2. Covering your expenses

It is our policy at ARC NWC that public advisers should not be out of pocket as a result of contributing to our work.

You can usually have your expenses covered if you have been invited to take part in or to contribute to an ARC NWC event, activity, committee or piece of work.

This policy uses the term 'covering your expenses' to describe two ways in which ARC NWC may pay your expenses.

1. We can pay directly for your expenses - we will cover your expenses by paying directly for the costs ourselves, for example, by purchasing travel tickets or travel cards ahead of your journey, by booking and paying for hotel accommodation in advance, or by paying an alternative carer or personal assistant directly.

**OR**

2. we can reimburse expenses that you have already paid for - reimbursement means being able to claim back money that you have paid out because of involvement in an ARC NWC event or activity.

### State benefits

If you are receiving state benefits, any payment of fees and expenses to you may affect your benefit claim. For free, confidential advice you can contact the Benefits Advice Service for involvement. <https://www.invo.org.uk/benefits-advice-service-for-involvement-for-members-of-the-public/>

In relation to this and other matters, you may also find it useful to refer to INVOLVE's guide: *What you need to know about payment: An introductory guide for members of the public who are considering active involvement in NHS, public health or social care research (2011)*.

<http://www.invo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/INVOLVEpaymentdocument2011.pdf>

The ARC NWC team are not able to offer expert advice in regard to benefits or tax but can support you in the process of getting advice.

**If you are in any doubt about whether you are entitled to have your expenses reimbursed by ARC NWC please check with a member of staff engaging/involving or inviting you before spending any money. ARC NWC has the right to refuse to reimburse you for any unreasonable expenses claims.**

### 2.1 What expenses will be reimbursed?

If you wish to have your expenses reimbursed you will need to provide receipts for everything that you have paid for. Out-of-pocket expenses that are reasonable and necessary will usually be covered and these include:

**Travel costs:**

- Public transport where practical: bus, underground, and trains at standard class or cheaper day rates.
- Taxis where the circumstances justify the costs incurred. If you need to use taxis please inform the ARC NWC Public Involvement Team in advance about your circumstances.
- Your own car where absolutely necessary. We expect you to use public transport where this is practical, but mileage allowance for car users will be covered at 45 pence per mile.
- Air travel may also be used where appropriate if this is cheaper than other forms of transport, but you will need to get prior agreement from ARC NWC.
- Your expenses can be paid directly. In most circumstances, they can buy your travel tickets or a travel card for you. Please provide two weeks' notice in advance of the event.

**Accommodation:**

We can book hotel accommodation for you in advance through an agency. This gives reduced rates and is the usual way we arrange an overnight stay.

If you think you will need accommodation, you will need to discuss any arrangement with the ARC NWC Public Involvement Team, two weeks in advance.

If you wish to make your own hotel booking, please contact a member of the ARC NWC public involvement team in advance. Please note expenditure on hotels from your own personal funds will only be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances and/or where it is not possible to pre book and/or use corporate cards. Hotel costs should be limited to reasonable amounts. The University reserves the right to restrict the amount reimbursed where the costs incurred are excessive.

If you choose to stay with a relative or friend we are not able to offer to cover any of their costs.

**Subsistence:**

Meals and snacks are generally provided by ARC NWC at an event. Whilst travelling on ARC NWC business involving an overnight stay or where travelling results in returning home after 8.00pm, advisers may claim the cost of meals, snacks, and non-alcoholic drinks. To have subsistence costs reimbursed you will need to provide receipts.

**Alternative carer or child-care costs:**

If you usually care for or support someone, involvement with ARC NWC activities may mean that you would not be able to give care or support to the person who normally receives this from you. For example, this may be a disabled person or a child. ARC NWC can usually reimburse the cost of providing necessary alternative care whilst you are away. You will need to be able to provide evidence of the costs, such as an invoice. We can also pay the alternative carer directly.

**Accompanying carer:**

If it is necessary for an informal (unpaid) carer (such as a relative or friend) to accompany you on ARC NWC business their expenses can also be covered. You will need to let the ARC NWC Public Involvement Team know about this arrangement in advance.

**Personal assistants and support workers:**

If you use a personal assistant or support worker to accompany you their expenses, costs can be covered. To be able to reimburse these costs you will need to provide evidence, such as an invoice. ARC NWC can also pay directly the personal assistant or support worker.

**You will need to discuss any arrangement in advance with the ARC NWC Public Involvement Team.**

**2.2 How ARC NWC will cover your expenses**

Payment of expenses are paid for by ARC NWC and administered by The University of Liverpool on behalf of ARC NWC. Reimbursed expenses are paid into a bank or building society account.

If you want the costs of alternative support, or a child carer, or personal assistant or support worker to be paid directly to them, you will need to provide their name and address to ARC NWC so that payment arrangements can be made directly with them.

**If you wish to pay for the expenses yourself and be reimbursed after the event.**

You should:

- Complete and submit the **ARC NWC UoL Payment F2** form. This should be completed with all relevant receipts attached. Claims that are made without receipts will not be paid. You will need to provide your bank or building society details. Claims are paid by an electronic transfer system (called BACS) directly into your account.
- Submit the form, receipts and bank details to the ARC NWC Public Involvement Team at the address at the end of this document within six weeks of the event of expenditure being incurred. In most cases we will process a claim within four weeks.

**2.3 What if there is a problem?**

In all cases, if there is a problem, such as a delay in receiving reimbursement or the amount you receive is wrong, you should contact a member of staff at the ARC NWC Public Involvement Team. Our contact details are at the end of this document.

In the case of an overpayment being made, all parties (the adviser, and ARC NWC) will be informed of the error and there will be a discussion about how this can be rectified to return the overpayment to University of Liverpool.

The Public Involvement team will look at the incident to identify why the overpayment occurred, and implement any changes that would prevent further overpayments.

### 3. Payment for your time

At ARC NWC we believe that people should be recognised and rewarded for the work they do for us. We offer payment for time, expertise, and skills where this contributes to the work of ARC NWC. The rates of payment offered vary depending on the situation.

**We use the word payment to describe the money received for the contribution of time, expertise and skills. This will always be agreed with you in advance.**

#### 3.1 Who can be paid for their time?

You could be offered payment if you are not receiving a full-time salary from public funds and you meet both of the following criteria:

- you are a member of the public;
- you are being asked to provide a public perspective in the work you do for ARC NWC.

#### 3.2 When will payment for time be offered?

Payment for time will be offered when ARC NWC have identified specific activities where public advisers might make a contribution from their expertise by experience and you have been **directly invited** by us to get involved in our work. The amount you will be offered for any activity will always be agreed in advance. For example, payments are often offered for the following activities:

- Attending ARC NWC meetings, such as Steering Board, Management meetings, Theme meetings, project steering groups and consultation events where views are specifically sought to benefit ARC NWC's knowledge base.
- Commenting on written materials.
- Undertaking a peer review when ARC NWC is commissioning work.
- Commenting on design and content of new ARC NWC, publications including peer review and editing.
- Providing training for or on behalf of ARC NWC.
- Co-presenting talks and workshops with ARC NWC staff.

#### 3.3 Payment for attending training:

If training is essential for advisers to fulfil their role then payment will be offered for their time. Payment for non-essential training will be decided on a case-by-case basis, and must be agreed prior to the training.

We are committed to setting payment rates fairly, and these will vary depending on the situation, and what is being asked of you. ARC NWC will always make clear what payments, if any, will be offered when inviting you to take part. It is then your choice as to whether or not you take part, and whether or not you accept any payment that is offered.

### 3.4 What payment for time will be paid?

ARC NWC uses a fee schedule that is based on the rates outlined by INVOLVE. This is based on the National Institute for Health Research Programmes committee rate and includes preparation time as a benchmark for deciding what payment rates should apply to different situations.

For example:

A two hour meeting plus preparation £50

A two hour meeting attendance (no preparation) £25

Public Advisor Forum £25

ARC sub-groups - £25/50 (includes 2-3 hours meeting by invitation).

### 3.5 How will payment be made?

Payments will be made after the event or activity on a monthly basis in the same way as expenses are re-embursed.

Payment is made directly into your bank account, through an electronic transfer system (called BACS), from the University of Liverpool.

To claim for payments, if they are offered, you should complete and sign the University of Liverpool Payment Request Form entitled '**UoL Payment F2form**'.

### 3.5 Once-off payment and Vouchers

Once-off payments are treated like any other payment and can affect your state benefits. If you are receiving any state benefits you should inform benefits authorities when you receive a once-off payment.

You might be offered high street vouchers as payment. The benefits authorities treat vouchers as earnings like any other payments.

Any subsequent paid involvement in the financial year with ARC NWC cannot be treated as a once-off. ARC NWC can provide you with a letter of thanks when making a once-off payment.

If you are receiving state benefits, any payment of fees and expenses to you may affect your benefit claim. For free, confidential advice you can contact the Benefits Advice Service for involvement. <https://www.invo.org.uk/benefits-advice-service-for-involvement-for-members-of-the-public/>

### 3.6 Tax and National Insurance

Payments made to you for your work with ARC NWC, except for once-off events as described above, are usually subject to tax and National Insurance. You may still be liable to pay tax and National Insurance on the payments you have received and therefore you will need to check your total annual taxable income at the end of the financial year.



If you are receiving state benefits you should check if any of the state benefits you receive are taxable and may count towards the annual taxable income.

### 3.7 Benefits Advice Service

Staff at the ARC NWC cannot offer you advice on tax or National Insurance. If in doubt you should contact your local HM Customs and Revenue (HMRC) Office. Information about dealing with HMRC and the details of local offices is available on the Direct.gov website (see Appendix B).

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) offers a confidential service to:

- **members of the public involved** with NIHR organisations or NIHR funded research projects.
- **staff within NIHR organisations** who are supporting members of the public to get involved.

Further information is available on the INVOLVE website: [www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/benefits-advice-service/](http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/benefits-advice-service/)

### 3.7 What if there is a problem?

In all cases, if there is a problem, such as a delay in receiving payment or the amount you receive is wrong, you should contact a member of staff at the ARC NWC Public Involvement Team. Our contact details are at the end of this document.

## **Appendix A: Brief Jargon Buster**

### **BACS**

BACS (originally an acronym for Bankers' Automated Clearing Services) is a United Kingdom scheme for the electronic processing of financial transactions. BACS payments take three working days to clear - they are entered into the system on the first day, processed on the second day, and cleared on the third day

### **Covering expenses**

When we talk about covering expenses it includes two ways of paying for out of pocket expenses.

- expenses can be paid for directly by ARC NWC
- ARC NWC will give you back (reimburse) the money you have spent

### **Earnings**

Total of what you have received in payment for doing a piece of work, or contributing time and experience.

### **Expenditure**

What you have paid out to take part in an event or activity.

### **Income**

Total amount of money you receive from all sources.

### **Members of the Public**

At ARC NWC we use this term to cover:

- patients and potential patients
- people who provide care or support on an informal (i.e. unpaid) basis
- parents/guardians
- people who use health and social care services
- disabled people
- members of the public and communities who might be targeted by health promotion, public health and social care
- groups asking for research because they believe they have been exposed to potentially harmful substances or products
- organisations that represent people who use health and social care services.

With our definition this term does not include professional contractors. Other organisations have different definitions of this term.

### **Once-off payment**

When paid involvement is once-off, for not more than one day in that financial year, members of the public may be given a gift of money as a thank you. This money is not taxable.

### **Out of pocket expenses**

The term out of pocket expenses refers to expenditure that is required to enable you to participate in an event or activity such as travel costs, accommodation, subsistence, alternative support or child care costs, accompanying carers and personal assistant or support workers.

### **Paid directly**

It is possible for some expenses to be paid directly by ARC NWC, (eg purchasing your travel tickets in advance or paying a carer directly for their work). Public Advisers may prefer this method of covering expenses to prevent them being out of pocket.

## **Payments**

Money given to you for doing something with ARC NWC, for example, reading and commenting on a new publication.

## **Peer review**

Peer reviewing is where people with similar interests and expertise read and comment on a document, for example, a proposed plan for a research project. Peer review helps to check the quality of the document. Members of the public who act as peer reviewers may choose to comment on:

- whether the research addressed an important and relevant question
- the methods used by the researchers
- the quality of the public involvement in the research.

## **Personal income tax allowance**

This is the amount of income you can receive in a financial year before tax will start to be deducted. The amount will be affected by your personal circumstances.

## **Reimburse / Reimbursement**

Money given back to you because you spent it in order to take part in something. For example, paying back your travel fares for going to a meeting.

## **State Benefits**

These are payments made by the Government to support people who have ill-health or a disability that limits their capacity to work, or people who are unemployed and looking for work or people who are caring for another person. Benefits have to be applied for, and certain conditions have to be met for those benefits to be awarded.

## **Subsistence**

This is a term used for the costs of day to day needs such as food and drink whilst you are travelling to an event.

## **Taxable benefits**

Some benefits are subject to tax, others are not.

## **Tax return form (self-assessment form)**

When you have received money that has not already been taxed by an organisation, you will need to complete a tax return form (sometimes called a self-assessment form). If you receive a salary, this is usually taxed, but if you have earnings, for example from consultations you have been involved in over the year, this may have to be declared to the tax office. The tax office will only want to be informed if your taxable income is more than your tax threshold or allowance. The tax office will then use the information to calculate the tax you owe the Government.

## Appendix B: Further sources of information

**Department for Work and Pensions guidance on once-off payments** is set out in their booklet “Doing the Right Thing” that is available on their website through the search facility <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/>

**HM Revenue and Customs circular EIM71105** is available through the search facility. [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) Type in EIM71105.

**HM Revenue and Customs** information about the need to complete a tax return is available from: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa/need-tax-return.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa/need-tax-return.htm)

**Direct.gov** The Direct.gov website has all sorts of easy to use information on just about anything that concerns government and statutory services, including information about taxes (including personal income tax allowances) and state benefits. See [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

### **Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)**

Use [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index.htm) to find your local CAB and for other useful information. If you do not have internet access, call the national CAB office on 020 7833 2181 (Please note: This is an administrative office and no advice is available on this number).

### **ARC NWC Contact Details**

The ARC public involvement team:

Email: [arcnwc@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:arcnwc@liverpool.ac.uk)

Phone: 0151 795 1404 or 0151 794 5538

Address:

The University of Liverpool  
Department of Health Services Research  
2nd floor, Block B, Waterhouse Building  
Liverpool L69 3GL