**Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast**

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

*Updated May 2024*

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This policy has been adapted from guidance written by National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (April 2024).

**1. Introduction**

The Applied Resarch Collaboartion 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. The payment offered will depend on the volume and nature of the particular activity.

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**

1. 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. You should notify Jobcentre Plus of any paid or voluntary activity. You may also need permission to undertake any paid activity. Benefit conditions are complex and limits on payments that can be received without benefits vary widely. For free, confidential advice you can contact the Benefits Advice Service for involvement. See appendix B for further details of how to access this advice.

You may also find it useful to refer to NIHR’s guide: *Payment guidance for members of the public considering invovlement in research*  <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-members-of-the-public-considering-involvement-in-research/27372#section-9--more-information-on-welfare-benefits-regulations>

The ARC NWC team are not able to offer expert advice about this issue, but can support you in the process of getting advice.

The ARC NWC team can provide you with a letter that you can show to the Jobcentre Plus to explain your service-user involvement in patient public involvement.

**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 Who can have their expenses covered?**

You can usually have your expenses covered if:

• you are a health and/or social care service user, carer, patient, or other member of the public or a member of the ARC NWC Steering Board or Management group.

**and**

• you have been invited to take part in or to contribute to an ARC NWC event, activity or piece of work.

**2.2 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, ARCNWC can buy travel tickets or a travel card for you. Please provide a minumum 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 invovlement 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.. 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 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. Where your paid carer, personal assistant or support worker is working over and above any hours that you usually pay for, you may claim a reasonable hourly rate for the time that you need the additional cover. However, you must provide receipts.

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

**Remote/home working costs**

Some public contributors will make use of home office supplies as part of their involvement with ARC NWC (eg use of a telephone or internet connection to join meetings remotely, and/or printing out papers at home). Where public contributors participate in meetings remotely from their home, public advisers can claim a standing allowance of £5 per meeting to cover the cost of telephone calls, paper, printing ink and paper, internet connection.

**2.3 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. Claim forms must be submitted to the ARC NWC Public Involvement Team within six months of the event.

• 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 of receipt of your form.

**2.4 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.

There may be times at which ARC NWC invites you to take part in activities **without** offering payment for your time, for example activities (eg attending quarterly meetings or attending research development networks, writing blogs). Travel expenses would be paid, if required) for a face to face meeting. This should be made clear on invitation to the activity. Once projects are agreed and developing grant application advisers will be recruited to projects in the usual way.

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.
* 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, conferences 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?**

There is no nationally recommended rates of payment. ARC NWC uses a fee schedule that is based on the rates outlined by NIHR Centre for Engagement and Dissemination.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-researchers-and-professionals/27392#payment-rates>

table of examples is provided below though teams will be able to discuss how involved each situation is and the fee it attracts.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Task | Fee | Examples |
| Short task or activity which equates to less than half an hour | £12.50 | Reviewing short paper |
| A brief task or activity requiring little or no preparation | £25 | A short meeting (up to 2 hours) requiring no preparation  |
| Public Adviser Forum | £25 | Attendance at Public Adviser Forum |
| ARC sub-groups | £25/ £50 | 2-3 hours meeting with preparation and by invitation |
| A short task or activity likely to require some preparation | £50 | A short meeting (2-3 hours) which involves reading documents beforehand |
| A task or activity with some preparation which equates to approximately half a day’s activity | £75 | Meetings, activities (4 + hours) which involves preparation beforehand, i.e. reading documents before  |
| A task or activity requiring considerable preparation or which equates to approximately a whole day | £150 | Whole day meeting with preparation |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reviewing documents** |  |
| Completing reviews of documents (including appendices) of no more than 25 pages in total | £25 |
| Completing reviews of documents (including appendices) of no more than 50 page in total | £50 |
| Completing reviews of documents (including appendices) of between 51- 200 pages in total | £125 |
| Completing reviews of documents (including appendices) of over 200 pages in total | £200 |

**3.5 How will payment be made?**

Payments will be made after the event or activity on a monthly basis. 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’.** All claim forms must be submitted to the ARC NWC Public Involvement Team within **six** months of the event.

**3.5 One-off payment and Vouchers**

One-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 one-off payment.

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

**3.6 Tax and National Insurance**

Payments made to you for your work with ARC NWC are usually subject to tax and National Insurance. ARCNWC does not deduct tax or National Insurance contributions from payments. 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 self-employed you are responsible for your own tax.

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. You are personally responsible for any income tax or National Insurance contribution liability and ensuring that you are paying the appropriate level of tax. You will need to declare this to HMRC.

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).

**3.7 Benefits Advice Service**

If you are receiving state benefits, any payment of fees and expenses to you may affect your benefit claim.

Public advisers can take the option of asking for a payment at a lower rate, where their benefit limits are below the amount offered, or declining a payment and offering to volunteer.

A Benefits Advice Service is provided by NIHR nationally through the Centre for Engagement and Dissemination, and is open to members of the public who are involved in, or considering involvement in research with the NIHR. It is also available for staff within NIHR organisations who are supporting members of the public to get involved.

For more information on how to access this service, please contact the NIHR PublicPartnerships@nihr.ac.uk or call 020 88437117

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-members-of-the-public-considering-involvement-in-research/27372>.

**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.

**ARC NWC Contact Details**

The ARC Public Involvement Team:

Email: arcnwc@liverpool.ac.uk

Address:

The University of Liverpool

Department of Primary Care & Mental Health

Block B, Waterhouse Building

Liverpool L69 3GL

**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.

**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 to 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**

**HM Revenue and Customs circular EIM71105** is available through the search facility. Type in EIM71105.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs>

**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 the [Citizens Advice Bureau website](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/) to find your local CAB and for other useful information. If you do not have internet access, call or by telephoning 0800 144 8848 (for England) or 0800 702 2020 (for Wales).

**Disability Rights UK**

Helpful online source of information and advice on benefits. You can also obtain copies of their factsheets and publications by contacting [Disability Rights UK](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/)on 0330 995 0400 (this is not an advice line).

**NIHR guidance**

[Payment guidance for members of the public considering involvement in research](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-members-of-the-public-considering-involvement-in-research/27372)

[Payment for public involvement for those in receipt of welfare benefits](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/welfare-benefits-jobcentre-letter/27407#Liaison_with_Jobcentre_Plus:_Payment_for_public_involvement_for_those_in_receipt_of_welfare_benefits)

**Benefits Advice Centre**

Please contact the NIHR PublicPartnerships@nihr.ac.uk or call 020 88437117