



PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY HOMES RESIDENTS' EXPENSES POLICY

Version:	Version 1
Lead Directorate:	Housing and Neighbourhoods
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1. The Importance of Involvement

Plymouth Community Homes recognise the importance of residents being involved in decisions that affect their homes and lives. We want to encourage involvement and out-of-pocket expenses can deter residents from becoming involved. This policy sets out how we reimburse genuine out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of involvement. It sets out when we will reimburse expenses, and what is needed in order to claim.

2. What Is Covered

This is not a reward scheme; Plymouth Community Homes does not pay residents to become involved. PCH cover the extra costs that residents face as a result of becoming involved. Reimbursed out-of-pocket expenses are not earnings, and therefore no tax or national insurance is payable on the expenses reimbursed, nor should they affect entitlement to state benefits.

3. Who Can Claim

All PCH tenants, leaseholders and shared-owners can claim for out-of-pocket expenses resulting from involvement. Carers and guests may qualify under certain circumstances.

If a carer needs to accompany a resident during their involvement, the carer may claim costs such as transport under the same rates and conditions as residents. PCH will not reimburse the cost of the carer themselves or any of their personal expenses such as dependants' care. Guests invited along to meetings by PCH may also qualify to make claims under the same rates and conditions as residents. Such guests' and carers' claims would need to be agreed in advance by the meeting organiser.

4. How To Claim

Complete the Residents' Expenses Claim form in order to make a claim for expenses. A copy can be obtained from our website, any member of staff who has access to a networked computer, or at the meeting itself. We will provide support in completing the claim form where needed by claimants, including providing a translation or a different format or medium upon request.

Residents are encouraged to claim on the day of the meeting and all claims must be made no more than a month after the expense was incurred. Claims will normally be paid in cash on the day, although in certain circumstances payments may be made direct to a bank account. We require receipts or proof of spending (with the exception of mileage claims) and can help with establishing what would be sufficient proof.

5. Liabilities

PCH do not reimburse any fines incurred, for example speeding or parking. Where residents use their own vehicle to transport passengers they must ensure that this is not in breach of their insurance and that they stay within parking and other legal requirements.

The act of reimbursing genuine out-of-pocket expenses does not in any way imply contract, or any other form, of employment, paid or unpaid.

6. Qualifying Events

We will reimburse expenses for any meetings which PCH has arranged specifically for the purposes of involvement and explicitly asked a resident to attend. Whilst PCH may in certain circumstances pay subsistence costs incurred while attending meetings (e.g. where an overnight stay is required) this is not defined within this policy. For certain meetings, such as the Board, separate arrangements apply; you can find further details about this below under 'Examples of meetings not covered by this policy'.

PCH meeting organisers will decide whether a meeting is a qualifying event and ensure that residents know whether expenses can be reimbursed. Occasional exceptions may be made so that residents can attend a non-qualifying meeting, but this is at PCH's discretion.

Examples of meetings covered by this policy:

- Focus Groups
- Learn For Free training
- Contract Tender Evaluation meetings
- Continuous Improvement Groups
- Customer Assurance Panel meetings
- Money Tree Fund Panels

Examples of meetings not covered by this policy:

- Local fun days and local events – *transport may be arranged by PCH*
- Meetings arranged by residents' associations, Plymfed, PUSH (Plymouth United Sheltered Housing), DTAG (Disabled Tenants' Action Group) and other similar organisations – *the organisation arranging the meeting will be responsible for transport arrangements*
- Board meetings – *covered by the Board Member Expenses Policy*

7. Qualifying Expenses

Reasonable qualifying expenses are:

- **Travel costs**, although in some circumstances we will arrange the travel for the meeting. For example, PCH may decide that a shared taxi, minibus or coach is the most cost effective travel option. When claiming mileage we confirm mileage payable based on a route planner such as RAC or AA.
- **Care costs** for children or adult dependants by approval in advance.
- **Other costs** as set out below and by prior arrangement.

Full details of expenses are contained in the table on the following pages.

Expense	Amount	Details
Transport – <i>getting to and from our meetings and training</i>		
Car	<p>Mileage as per HMRC's Approved Mileage Rates.</p> <p>45p per mile for 2012/13.</p>	<p>You will need to provide details of the addresses you travelled between.</p> <p>Where someone not participating in the meeting drives a resident there to enable them to attend, we will reimburse total mileage at the non-passenger rate.</p>
	<p>Passenger mileage</p> <p>5p per mile will also be paid for each person who is given a lift to the same meeting.</p>	<p>You will need to record how far each extra passenger travelled with you.</p>
Motorbike	<p>Mileage as per HMRC's Approved Mileage Rates.</p> <p>24p per mile for 2012/13.</p>	<p>You will need to provide details of the addresses you travelled between.</p>
Bicycle	<p>Mileage as per HMRC's Approved Mileage Rates.</p> <p>20p per mile for 2012/13.</p>	<p>You will need to provide details of the addresses you travelled between.</p>
Parking	<p>Cost of parking at face value of the parking ticket.</p>	<p>We will reimburse the cost of parking for the duration of the meeting, including reasonable time to walk to and from the car park.</p> <p>You will need to allow us to photocopy your receipt or parking ticket.</p>

Expense	Amount	Details
Bus	Cost of ticket at face value, including Return and Day Rider tickets.	<p>You will need to allow us to photocopy your bus ticket.</p> <p>Bus passes cannot be used to claim reimbursement because they do not provide proof of journey.</p>
Taxi	Arranged by PCH , no reimbursement available.	<p>Taxis are available by prior arrangement only and will be organised by PCH.</p> <p>Eligibility is limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility issues • Vulnerabilities • Specialist care needs • Lack of suitable public transport • Group travel (where cost effective) • Late-night travel • Exceptions as approved by the meeting organiser
	Cost of taxi where resident has specialist care needs.	<p>Where a resident has specialist care needs we may allow them to arrange a taxi with a specialist firm as needed.</p> <p>This will be pre-agreed by the meeting organiser and PCH will meet the cost. You will need to allow us to photocopy your receipt.</p>
Minibus	Arranged by PCH , no reimbursement available.	<p>Minibuses will be booked directly by PCH where appropriate.</p> <p>This may be used because a journey is long, or many residents are travelling to the same venue.</p>

Expense	Amount	Details
Coach	Arranged by PCH , no reimbursement available.	Coaches will be booked directly by PCH where appropriate. This may be used because a journey is long, or many residents are travelling to the same venue.
Railway	Arranged by PCH , no reimbursement available.	Trains will be booked directly by PCH where appropriate. We book standard class seats. This may be used because a journey is long.
Other expenses – <i>other costs you may encounter</i>		
Care and Support	Cost of care where the resident is the carer of a dependant (a minor or an adult who is unable to look after themselves). This must be discussed with the organiser first and an acceptable sum should be agreed in advance.	We can reimburse the resident who has paid for the care, or we can make payment directly to the carer if desired. You will need to allow us to photocopy your receipt if we reimburse you. Although there is no maximum limit, care costs must be kept reasonable and agreed in advance. Choosing a carer is your responsibility.

Expense	Amount	Details
<p>Meals and Refreshments</p>	<p>Arranged by PCH, no reimbursement available.</p>	<p>Drinks and refreshments will be provided at all meetings where suitable facilities exist.</p> <p>Meals will be provided where meetings cross mealtimes.</p> <p>You are responsible for informing us of any special dietary requirements.</p>
	<p>Cost of meals and refreshments where no facilities exist on-site.</p> <p>This must be discussed with the organiser first and an acceptable sum should be agreed in advance.</p>	<p>Where there are no suitable facilities on-site and refreshments cannot be provided then PCH may permit residents to buy their own meals and refreshments.</p> <p>You will need to allow us to photocopy your receipt.</p>
<p>Phone Calls</p>	<p>Other arrangements in place, no reimbursement available.</p>	<p>We do not usually reimburse the costs of phone calls.</p> <p>Access to a PCH phone will be provided if it's needed for a particular meeting or event.</p>
	<p>Cost of calls, by prior arrangement.</p>	<p>Reimbursement may be agreed at our discretion where using a phone is necessary for the involvement – for example, performing research within a Continuous Improvement Group.</p> <p>We may ask for an itemised copy of your phone bill.</p>

Expense	Amount	Details
Stationery	Other arrangements in place, no reimbursement available.	We do not reimburse the costs of stationery and consumables. All resources required will be provided for meetings or tasks arranged by PCH.
Other	By arrangement	Prior approval should be sought from the meeting organiser before claiming any expenses which are not covered above. These will only be granted in extenuating circumstances and where not in contradiction to this policy.

The latest HMRC Approved Mileage Rates can be found at [hmrc.gov.uk/rates/travel.htm](https://www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/travel.htm)

8. Equality and Diversity

PCH will apply this policy consistently and fairly, and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

PCH will make this policy available in other languages and formats on request.

We will carry out an equality impact assessment on this policy, in line with our corporate procedure.

9. Monitoring and Review

We will monitor this policy to ensure it meets good practice and current legislation and will review it in accordance with our review timetable for all policies.