

Policy on reimbursement of expenses and involvement payments

In this document we are using the term **lay partner** to refer to patients, carers or members of the public who are involved in the work of the Oxford Academic Health Science Network (hereafter referred to as **Oxford AHSN**).

Involvement means the planning and design of research or services. It does not cover participation in clinical trials.

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1. Introduction

The Thames Valley and Milton Keynes Patient Experience Operational Group aims to have one payment rate across the Thames Valley and to work towards the same systems for recording payments.

The Thames Valley and Milton Keynes Patient Experience Operational Group - <http://tvscn.nhs.uk/patients-carers/thames-valley-milton-keynes-patient-experience-strategy-group/> is made up of members from;

- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- NIHR Clinical Research Network: Thames Valley and South Midlands
- Oxford Academic Health Science Network (AHSN)
- NHS England Thames Valley
- Strategic Clinical Networks
- NIHR Oxford Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC)
- NIHR Biomedical Research Centre, Oxford

2. Principles of payment

We are committed to working with patients, carers and the public as active partners in our work and networks. (This specifically excludes practitioners and professionals asked to comment from a professional perspective.) We will provide for reimbursement of expenses and payment for involvement in line with current national policies including the NHS England document *Patient and Public Voice Expenses Policy (Feb 2015)* and *INVOLVE internal payment policy*.



Working with our Patients and Public Voice



INVOLVE-internal-payment-policy-FINAL

<http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment/>

This policy sets out the categories of financial support for patient, carer and public representation and involvement to enable this to happen across the members of the Thames Valley & Milton Keynes Patient Experience Strategy Group.

We will ensure that adverts for lay partner roles will make it clear if payment is offered and lay partners are given this policy prior to their appointment.

We will make internal arrangements so that reimbursement and payment is made as soon as possible, that the process is as simple as possible for the lay partner and that lay partners are given clear information on how to get assistance should they need it.

We will pay all lay partners at the same rate and comply with legal requirements as to minimum levels, whilst aspiring to at least the living wage minimum level. Virtual involvement will be treated as being equivalent to involvement in person.

We will not employ lay partners, they are volunteers of the organisation, even if payments are made.

We will endeavour to find the funds to reimburse and pay people that get involved at the preparation and design stage of work, before it is granted funding.

This policy relates to children & young people as much as it does to adults. However, it is good practice to get permission from parents or guardians before giving payment to a minor.

Payment of staff who act as lay members

In principle a project should not rely on staff acting as lay members, but they may on occasion be used in addition to other lay members who provide a more independent voice.

The staff who are also lay members should only be involved in this way on work that they are not directly employed on. If they act as a lay member outside of their normal working hours they should then be paid as other lay members are and reimbursed if they have made a special visit to the site or had to make special arrangements covered by the expenses policy. However, if their work as a lay member is agreed by their manager to be within their normal working hours they should not receive an additional payment or reimbursement.

3. Levels of Involvement

The Thames Valley and Milton Keynes Patient Experience Operational Group, of which Oxford AHSN is member, have agreed levels of Involvement [see Diagram 1]. This mirrors the NHS England approach to prioritising financial support for involvement.



Diagram 1: Levels of Involvement

4. Categories of financial support

We recognise there may be times when involvement does not fit neatly into these three categories, for example a lay partner may spend considerable time reviewing or writing project or policy documents, creating patient questionnaires, collating results and writing up reports that is in addition to reading papers and giving input into a board meeting. Guidance is given in the section on payment for time.

Category A – Membership (public meetings, general participation) – no financial support provided. This applies to open access public meetings or surveys/questionnaires where participants choose to attend or participate. No financial support is offered.

Category B – Involvement (partnership work) – reimbursement of out of pocket expenses only. This will be the usual arrangement for lay partners who are involved with the Oxford AHSN work providing feedback and lay perspectives e.g. being participants/delegates at discussion forums, events, workshops or focus groups.

Category C – Leadership – involvement payment and out of pocket expenses. This is a more active and accountable role than the examples given and requiring enhanced skills, expertise, greater time commitment, public accountability or involvement in decision making and/or delivery.

For example lay partners on:

- Thames Valley and Milton Keynes Patient Experience Operational Group
- CLAHRC Management Board

Or involvement in:

- co-design and co-delivery of large events and conferences
- co-production of Oxford AHSN policy and programmes

Both of the above in-depth roles are characterised by lay partners playing a strong leadership role and actively leading/delivering part of the work programme.

If the participation of a lay partner expands over time, for example the nature of the involvement work increases or their expertise is required for multiple programmes, this should be discussed as to whether the status of their involvement requires re-evaluation. Similarly discussions should take place if the level of participation decreases, for example the programme changes and the person no longer feels able to contribute.

There should be a written agreement between the Oxford AHSN and lay partner on what payments will be offered. It is recommended that record of this agreement is kept by both the lay partner and the organisation.

If a lay partner is involved in a multi-organisation meeting, the payment of expenses and/or for their time will lie with the organisation that recruited and appointed them. If they are a lay partner for more than one participating organisation they should take responsibility for negotiating whose budget is used to reimburse them in advance of their attendance.

Table 1: Payment guide

Lay partner involvement This table is offered for guidance only	Expenses?	Payment for time?
Attendance at open or public meetings/ consultations and giving an individual view, no commitment required.	No	No
Responding to questionnaires	No	No
Attendance at consultation events by invitation	Yes	No
Representation and participation at designated meetings (regardless of what the meeting is trying to achieve) where no, little or occasional commitment is required.	Yes	No
Evaluating and reviewing documents (unless this is part of ongoing role)	Yes	No
Helping to write documents (lay summaries, articles for a newsletter, patient information leaflets etc.)	Yes	Yes
Participating in training necessary to carry out involvement work at leadership level. (This will be negotiated individually. Some training will enhance the lay partners CV and be very much for their personal benefit, in which case there may be less need to pay them for their time).	Yes	Yes
Representation and participation at designated meetings (regardless of what the meeting is trying to achieve) where in-depth commitment is required; for example lay partner on strategic board over a 12 month commitment	Yes	Yes
Leading focus groups, workshops or conferences etc.	Yes	Yes
Chairing designated groups or meetings	Yes	Yes
Staff recruitment and interview panel membership	Yes	Yes
Giving presentations	Yes	Yes
Staff training (where the lay partner inputs into staff training)	Yes	Yes
Monitoring/evaluating services or mystery shopping	Yes	Yes
Development and evaluation of tenders	Yes	Yes
Taking part as an active researcher e.g. by interviewing participants	Yes	Yes
Co-applicants in research funding applications	Yes	Yes
Disseminating results of research (incl. holding events within an outside organisation to publicise research or a given project)	Yes	Yes

5. Reimbursement of expenses for involvement

Lay partners involved in involvement (category B) and leadership (category C) roles may be eligible to claim the expenses listed below. Receipts must be supplied whenever possible. Lay partners should not claim expenses that are not listed in this policy without the advance agreement of their key link researcher or manager. It is the responsibility of this worker to

approve expense claims and follow the process for reimbursement of expenses and involvement payments required by Oxford AHSN. If the lay partner has any questions or expects to incur expenses not covered by this document (including overnight accommodation), they should contact their link researcher or manager in advance of making any bookings or incurring any expenses.

Where a young person or child is involved and it is their parents who have incurred expenses to enable their involvement, then it is the parents who should make the claim for their expenses to be reimbursed.

Personal Vehicles

- Lay partners can use their own vehicles when necessary and will receive reimbursement for the miles travelled.
- Expected start point is the persons' home.
- Rates of reimbursement are:
 - Cars and vans – 45p for the first 10,000 business miles in the tax year.
 - Cars and vans – 25p for each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year.
 - Bicycles – 20p per mile
 - Parking expenses will be refunded to the value of the ticket. No parking fines will be reimbursed.
 - An additional 5p per mile will be paid for those bringing a colleague

Public Transport

- Standard class public transport will be refunded to the value of the ticket, and lay partners are encouraged to choose the cheapest fare reasonably available.

Taxi

- Can be used with justification e.g. multiple people travelling to same place, personal safety, disability or efficiency.
- A receipt is needed.

Carers and Support Workers

- We recognise in some circumstances lay partners need to arrange for carers/support workers to accompany them to a meeting, or to take over caring responsibilities while they are at a meeting.
- Oxford AHSN will meet the reasonable expenses/costs of carer/support workers; we will cover the travel/accommodation/subsistence requirements of the carer/support worker who accompanies the lay partner.
- Where reimbursement is needed for carers/support workers, this will be agreed on a case by case basis and should be agreed in advance with the link researcher or manager.
- For the avoidance of doubt, the carer or support worker is engaged by the lay partner and not by Oxford AHSN.
- Oxford AHSN will reimburse actual expenditure based on receipts submitted with expense claims. The receipt should provide details of the carer's registration and/or professional organisation providing the care.

Office Supplies

- Oxford AHSN will try to keep any home office supply use to a minimum for the lay partner, in an effort to reduce the administrative burden. Lay partners can request hard copies of meeting papers etc. to be supplied to them.

- Office expenses will not be offered if the lay partner is being paid for their time.

Meals and accommodation

- Generally speaking Oxford AHSN will aim to provide refreshments where appropriate. On the rare occasion that a lay partner is asked to be at a venue over a meal time where food is not provided, they will be allocated £15 for an evening meal and £10 for lunch. The purchase of alcohol or tobacco products will not be reimbursed.

6. Payment for time i.e. in addition to expenses as above

Payment levels and activities are to be agreed between the Oxford AHSN and lay partners before involvement work begins. Payments may also need reviewing if circumstances change.

Payments can be declined or smaller payments requested. Payment does not relate to travel time.

Payment rate guide:

- Full day meetings: £150 - to include all prep and follow-up
- Half day meetings: £75 – to include all prep and follow-up

Guidance from the National Institute for Health Research INVOLVE body also recommends:

- Short pieces of work which require little prep or follow-up, such as a telephone meeting or reviewing short documents; approx 1-2 hours: £20
- Work totalling approx 2-3 hours: £50
- Longer pieces of work such as reviewing/commenting on strategic documents/policies or plans, via email or post. Approx rates for this are:
 - Reviewing short documents, as above: £20
 - Reviewing for example mid-length reports (~50-100 pages): £150
 - Reviewing large reports/documents, (over 200 pages): £200

Lay partners in receipt of State Benefits

Being in receipt of benefits should not constitute a barrier to involvement.

One of the biggest difficulties for people on benefits because of ill health or disability is that Jobcentre Plus offices can interpret involvement as readiness for work whether or not payment is being offered. NHS England has developed a standard letter which explains clearly that involvement opportunities with NHS England are not an indication of readiness to work, or employment.

People who receive anything that might be deemed earnings or income by Her Majesty's Custom and Revenue service (HMRC) may put their benefit entitlement in jeopardy. Income can include any payments made, vouchers or financial gifts given. It is extremely important that the Oxford AHSN works transparently and sensitively. Lay partners receiving any payments or incentives should be made aware that this may impact on their entitlement to benefits. Breach of benefit conditions can result in an individual's benefits being stopped. They should be given adequate time to get advice (see below) between expressing an interest and being appointed.

It is the responsibility of the individual and not Oxford AHSN to comply with the conditions of their benefits. A person should also speak to their benefits advisor or Jobcentre Plus to discuss their individual circumstances.

7. Responsibility of lay partners

If receiving any form of benefit, the lay partner needs to seek advice on what impact monies received from the Oxford AHSN may have on their benefit allowance (see above).

Lay partners are responsible for related pension contributions, National Insurance (NI) and income tax.

Lay partners seeking reimbursement of expenses must provide evidence of expenditure in the form of a receipt or ticket and can reclaim only their own expenses and not for expenses incurred by other colleagues.

Lay partners should submit claims in a timely manner, within three months after the event/activity that their claim refers to, but no longer than 12 months after as after this time the claim will not be processed.

Where receipts are difficult to obtain (for example the use of Oyster cards or calls made on mobile phones) copies of bills or computer printouts with the relevant section highlighted can be accepted.

Lay partners should record details of when they make a claim and when they receive payment for their own benefit.

Lay partners involved in NHS England funded work, such as Oxford AHSN, also have access to a telephone helpline service. It is provided by Bedford CAB to help resolve any benefit concerns that arise from payment of fees and expenses for public involvement.

The service should be contacted via email involve@nihr.ac.uk; benefits@invo.org.uk or 023 8059 5628.

8. Responsibility of Oxford AHSN

- To ensure there is a record of agreement with lay partners of what is expected, which expenses will be covered and any payments being offered.
- To make payments to lay partners within six weeks of receipt of claims wherever possible.
- Oxford AHSN will at all times communicate openly and with integrity with lay partners regarding the terms outlined in this policy so that it reflects the value placed on the involvement of lay partners with our work

9. Budgeting

INVOLVE has created an online involvement cost calculator applicable not just to research. This also includes costs over and above what those in the scope of this policy but which are useful to consider for embedding involvement work <http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-public-involvement-in-research/>

Reimbursement of PPI representative expenses

Reimbursement for expenses are not taxable.

The Oxford AHSN expenses claim form can be found here: [Expenses Form](#)

It is strongly recommended that you encourage any lay partner in receipt of State Benefits to contact the helpline (see above) to ensure that there are no adverse effects of their involvement work with you, prior to their involvement starting.

You should send your claim forms to the budget holder or delegated authority for authorisation and they will then send it on to your finance team.

It is good practice to pay people on Benefits (at least) their expenses on the day and for this reason you may prefer to arrange for petty cash. (You would do this across the board so as not to embarrass any individuals).

Payment of lay partner

This refers to payment for time which is over and above the reimbursement of expenses

Payment for time is taxable and should be declared for tax purposes.

Once you have appointed the lay partner you should get their bank details and then complete the Oxford AHSN [Expenses Form](#). It should be noted that this will require additional details from the claimant such as their national insurance number, but once you have gathered this information you can store it securely on their file and it will be available for future use.

It is strongly recommended that you encourage any lay partner in receipt of State Benefits to contact the helpline (as above) to ensure that there are no adverse effects of their involvement work with you, prior to their involvement.

You will have made clear to the lay partner from the advertisement onwards what, if any, payment is available. This will be based on what you budgeted for when you made your funding application.

Lay partners are also responsible for their own related pension contributions, National Insurance (NI) and income tax.

Please note that if a PPI representative asks for payment by cheque they should be warned that this may delay payment – BACS transfer is the Oxford University Hospitals preferred method.