

Finance: Involvement Policy and Procedure

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1. Introduction and Scope

1.1 Independent Mental Health Network (IMHN) considers that working in partnership with patients and the public needs to be central to the way that organisations work. We are committed to ensuring that public and patient voices are at the heart of shaping our healthcare services.

1.2 IMHN aims to ensure that members are not financially out of pocket when they support our involvement work.

1.3 This policy sets out when and what financial support is available to members who are involved in our work.

1.4 Throughout the development of the policies and processes cited in this document, we have:

- Given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (as cited under the Equality Act 2010) and those who do not share it; and
- Given regard to the need to reduce inequalities between patients in access to, and outcomes from healthcare services and to ensure services are provided in an integrated way where this might reduce health inequalities.

1.5 This policy will also cover our expectations of other organisations when they are carrying out involvement work in partnership with IMHN.

2. Relevant Information consulted

2.1 The following documents/information have also been considered in producing this policy:

- “Working with our patient and public voice partners; reimbursing out of pocket expenses and involvement payments”, - NHS England, February 2015
- MIND expenses policy
- Recovery Focus Payment Policy

3. Principles

3.1 In line with NHS England guidance, IMHN supports the following principles for involvement:

- “Enabling patient and public volunteers to take part, and not assuming that one size fits all – this means creating space and time to enable patients and the public to effectively participate. For example, not everyone can travel and make face to face meetings, online options are useful but don’t suit everyone; weekday and day time meetings are often not suitable for people to join. We should therefore offer a variety of participation approaches.
- Treating patient and public voice input respectfully – this means really listening to individual perspectives. Engaging with patients and the public should never be a “tick-box” exercise. Together we can create better services, develop creative solutions and understand what matters to patients and the public.
- Saying thank you – it’s simple and courteous, and often overlooked! A letter or email from the lead professionals is well received, and acknowledges the contributions that people have made.
- Feeding back on actions – patients and the public have told us that they often feel that their input goes into a “black hole”. It is good practice to ensure that we feedback what happened as a result of people’s participation. Where things can’t be changed, it is important to communicate this too.
- As a general rule, opportunities to get involved should be open to all. Where lots of people are likely to be interested in particular roles or opportunities e.g. where there are limited spaces on a governance group, a transparent recruitment/selection process should take place. However, there are some circumstances where NHS England might need to hear from individuals or communities who have specific experience, e.g in relation to a specific condition or healthcare experience; we would then work proactively to hear from these voices.”
- “NHS England is committed to removing barriers to participation.”
- “In some circumstances we will make involvement payments, this will fall under a PPV Expert Adviser role.”
- “A wide range of PPV partners should be sought. People bring different perspectives, experience and expertise. Their insight and input should be actively encouraged and is very much welcomed.
- Each event or project will have a named NHS England contact for patient and public partners to liaise with. Anyone experiencing specific barriers or with particular support needs should contact the lead person for the project or event and we will do our best to resolve any issues.

- We will actively seek a diversity of PPV partners and recognise that patients and carers often have complex conditions or circumstances and this may mean making bespoke arrangements to support people’s involvement. These will be agreed in advance with the NHS England event lead.
- Many of our PPV partners will also be service users and will by definition likely to have ill health, disabilities, or be carers. We recognise that timely reimbursement is good practice. We also understand that it is essential for many people who are reliant on prompt payments, and failure to do this can seriously jeopardise their financial circumstances.
- Many people choose to become involved with NHS England’s work for the opportunity to learn new skills, make a contribution, and meet new people and groups. Consideration should be given to other forms of support and recognition to enhance the experience for individuals who get involved. This might include, for example, training and learning, attending conferences, confidence building, help with ongoing learning, CV development and future employment. We also recognise that some PPV partners would like to further develop their participation and involvement skills. NHS England is currently working with a wide range of patients and the public to develop a “Participation Academy”, a programme where PPV partners and staff will be able to take part in learning opportunities, develop new skills and share good practice.
- NHS England programme leads should ensure that sufficient provision is made within the programme budget to support patient and public participation. PPV partner expenses should be coded to the programme cost centre and should be processed with urgency.

4. Financial Support

IMHN will take a tiered approach to the provision of financial support for involvement. There will be three tiers: Tier A (voluntary activities), Tier B (paid involvement work), Tier C (Facilitating involvement and strategic work).

4.1 Tier A (Voluntary Activities)

This applies to open meetings of IMHN (such as monthly business meetings or open meetings arranged with partner organisations). This will also include activities where attendance at the activity is voluntary.

4.2 Tier B (Paid Involvement Work)

This typically applies to where a member is representing IMHN or a branch of the organisation to provide feedback for the purpose of service improvement. This could include attending contract and performance monitoring meetings, focus groups reviewing a service, local authority meetings where a member is providing expertise to improve policies and processes (e.g. supporting the development of a local Suicide Prevention Audit Group (SPAG)).

4.3 Tier C (Facilitating Involvement and Strategic Work)

This typically applies to where a member is carrying out substantial facilitation of involvement work or delivering strategic work whilst serving as a committee member on a branch of IMHN or a regular member who may be tasked with delivering more “strategic work” for the organisation. This tier could also cover facilitating training and other work as agreed in line with this policy.

4.4 Financial Support Matrix

Tier	Type of Involvement	Financial Support
A	Voluntary Activities (e.g. attendance at: BIMHN monthly business meetings, open meetings, voluntary meetings to support development of IMHN/branch of IMHN)	Out of pocket travel expenses may be claimed by members where there is an identified budget and in line with travel expenses policy.
B	Paid Involvement Work (e.g. attendance at contract and performance monitoring meetings; attending a focus group supporting service improvement; supporting work on behalf of IMHN with a local authority or other partner organisation for purpose of service improvement; membership of a working group of a branch of IMHN to support development of organisation; attendance at a conference or event lasting for at least half a day)	Out of pocket travel expenses shall be paid in line with travel expenses policy. A rate of £12 per hour (or other rate as agreed with a partner organisation) shall be paid where budgets allow (up to a maximum of £120 per day). Subsistence may be claimed in line with relevant section of policy. Note: Details of reimbursement must be agreed in advance.
C	Facilitating Involvement and Strategic Work (e.g. a member is carrying out substantial facilitation of involvement work or delivering strategic work whilst serving as a committee member on a branch of IMHN or a regular member who may be tasked with delivering more “strategic work” for the organisation; facilitating training for the organisation).	Out of pocket expenses shall be paid in line with travel expenses policy. A rate of up to £20 per hour shall be paid where budgets allow (up to a maximum of £160 a day). Subsistence may be claimed in line with relevant section of policy. Note: Details of reimbursement must be agreed in advance. Note: Branch Committee Members shall be paid at the same rate as non-committee members for attendance at contract and performance monitoring meetings and other Tier B graded meetings.
Other		

4.5 Payment of Out of Pocket Expenses

Information on this can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy.

5. Supporting People in receipt of state benefits

In line with NHS England guidance:

5.1 IMHN actively seeks a diverse and inclusive approach to involvement. We recognise that many of our members may have on-going health conditions and may often be in receipt of state benefits. IMHN seeks to ensure that being in receipt of benefits does not constitute a barrier to involvement.

5.2 In general, members who are claiming out of pocket expenses only can do so without an adverse impact on their benefit entitlements.

5.3 However, people who receive anything that might be deemed to be earnings or income by Her Majesty's Custom and Revenue service (HMRC) may put their benefit entitlement in jeopardy. It must be noted that income can include any payments made, or vouchers or financial gifts given. It is extremely important that IMHN works transparently and sensitively. Members receiving any payments or anything that can be classed as income 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.

5.4 Any payment made by IMHN has implications for the individual's personal financial circumstances. People in receipt of benefits must keep to the conditions of those benefits on what they can do and the amount they can be paid. If a person, even inadvertently, breaches their benefits conditions in some way while offering their help through involvement, this could have serious consequences for the individual. It is the responsibility of the individual and not IMHN to comply with the conditions of their benefits.

5.5 Rules and regulations around receiving income while in receipt of benefits vary significantly according to individual circumstances, because of this we do not intend to provide detailed information on the different conditions for individual benefits in this guide. Individuals will have a responsibility to ensure that they have checked with the relevant agencies. A person should also speak to their benefits advisor or Jobcentre Plus to discuss their individual circumstances.

Appendix 1: Covering out of pocket expenses

IMHN will reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred by members supporting us as long as they do not exceed agreed rates (see below). Receipts are required for all expenses, except where travel and accommodation has been booked directly by IMHN.

There may be instances where the costs of participation are a barrier to involvement. IMHN will encourage members to discuss their participation needs so that we can explore solutions together. Assessment of such situations will be on a case-by-case basis.

Where members are invited to attend events that are offered at a number of locations across England, out of pocket expenses will be offered in respect of travel to the nearest event location, unless this event is fully booked.

1. Travel

Rail Travel

The “lowest logical fare” should be booked for all rail journeys, making the best use of off-peak and advance fares. If travellers require a standard underground travel card, they should let IMHN know in advance.

First class travel by rail is not permitted unless there is a medical or disability need. Evidence (e.g. a medical note) may be required to support the request. These requirements must be discussed and agreed in advance.

Bus Travel

Bus travel will be reimbursed, when accompanied by receipts or tickets quoting the price paid for travel.

Taxis

Taxis may only be used where there is a justification on the grounds of multiple people travelling to the same place and it works out cheaper than other forms of transport, personal safety, disability or efficiency e.g. meetings in different parts of the city during the day or travelling with heavy items of luggage or late at night or where this is the only feasible mode of transport. Claims should be evidenced through receipts.

Taxi travel must be agreed in advance with a member of the branch committee (where it relates to activities of a branch), or a member of the Board of Trustees (where it relates to activities of the Board).

Personal vehicles

Members may use their own vehicles when necessary and will receive reimbursement for the miles travelled. This will include reimbursement for reasonable expenses associated with the parking of the personal vehicle.

Rates of reimbursement are in line with Her Majesty's Customs and Revenue Service (HMRC) recommendations, correct at HMRC website August 2014. When travelling by personal vehicle, the vehicle must have valid insurance tax and an MOT certificate.

Approved mileage rates:

From 2011-12	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Cars and vans	45p	25p
Motorcycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p

Members who necessarily incur charges in the performance of their duties, for example, tolls and congestion charges, will be refunded these expenses on production of receipts.

Members are personally liable for any excess parking penalties, charges, or fines issued to them and IMHN will provide no refunds for these charges. The exception to this may be where a member is able to demonstrate it was due to circumstances beyond their control in connection with carrying out the business of IMHN.

Carrying passengers on the same journey

If a passenger is carried (by car or van) to the same meeting, an additional 5p per mile can be claimed. This is in line with HMRC policy (correct at August 2014).

2. Accommodation

Although it will not be usual to cover the cost of accommodation, there may be some activities that start at a time when an overnight stay prior to the event would be beneficial.

Examples of this may include:

- Without an overnight stay the member would need to leave home before 7am to arrive at the event
- Where members may have conditions or disabilities that make travelling for too long in one day difficult.
- The cost of travel, overnight accommodation and subsistence is cheaper than rail travel on the day of the event (taking into account advance travel booking options).

Accommodation requirements must be discussed and agreed in advance with the meeting organiser. IMHN will usually book and purchase accommodation on behalf of members.

The cost of accommodation cannot exceed £100 per night for hotels booked outside of London and £150 for hotels booked in London. Both limits are inclusive of VAT and any other charges without exception.

3. Subsistence/Meals

If members are involved in IMHN activity away from home for a considerable period of time, reimbursement may be claimed as detailed below. Receipts must be retained and submitted for the claim. The following rates may be claimed:

Breakfast (where leaving house before 7 am)	Up to £5
Lunch	Up to £5
Evening Meal	Up to £15
NB: Maximum claim in a 24 hour period	Up to £20

These rates include the cost of food and drinks, however the purchase of any alcoholic drinks will not be reimbursed. Where refreshments and food are provided at meetings/IMHN activities, subsistence allowances will not be paid.

In the cases where an IMHN branch does not have an office space for use for meetings and work, an allowance of up to £5 per person per day may be claimed (budget permitting) to cover refreshments at meetings taking place in coffee establishments, etc. Receipts must be retained.

4. Process for reimbursement

To be confirmed at time of bank account set up.