Parkinson's UK

Volunteer Expenses Policy

Document information

Approved by: ELT	Date: June 2026
Frequency of review: 3 years	Next review date: June 2029
ELT Owner: Chief People Officer	Policy lead: Head of Volunteering

Volunteer Expenses Policy

1. Purpose and scope

We want volunteering with Parkinson's UK to be as accessible and inclusive as possible. It is important that volunteers claim expenses incurred while volunteering with Parkinson's UK. We want to ensure that there aren't financial barriers to volunteering. We expect that all reasonable volunteer expenses are claimed and reimbursed in a timely manner.

This policy sets out the criteria for reimbursing volunteers for expenses incurred while volunteering. It covers:

- Travel
- Subsistence
- Accommodation
- Carer and professional support, childcare and administration
- Family volunteering

It also covers how to claim expenses, how we handle your information and where to find support.

This policy applies to volunteers, including trustees and independent committee members.

2. Policy statement

We want to make sure that volunteers aren't out of pocket when volunteering with Parkinson's UK. Therefore, we'll reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred while carrying out volunteering activities.

We all have a responsibility to keep our expenses to reasonable levels and use charitable funds in the most effective ways possible. We want to ensure that we are getting the best value for money, using the most efficient way of travelling and minimising risk. We have set the levels of reimbursement in line with UK standards of good practice and our staff expenses policy.

2.1 Travel

We will reimburse all travel costs incurred as part of your volunteer role. Speak with your staff contact **before** travelling if a journey will be more than 100 miles in total.

Public transport

Standard class public transport must be used when travelling on behalf of Parkinson's UK. Please book tickets as far in advance as possible, making use of any concessions, special offers or discounts where you can. This includes bus, coach, train, tram, ferry and air travel.

If you are using a prepay scheme such as Oyster Card in London, please submit a copy of the individual journeys made and highlight the journeys you are claiming for. We are unable to reimburse Oyster Card 'top ups' as expenses claimed must be for the actual cost of travel.

We are unable to reimburse the purchase of any form of season ticket or railcard (such as young persons, senior or disability railcards). That's because these can be used for other journeys so are classed as a taxable benefit by HMRC.

If you would like to travel first class, we would ask you to pay the additional costs.

Taxis

We ask all our volunteers, staff and supporters to use taxis only when necessary to ensure the charity's money is used as effectively as possible. Taxis should only be used where public transport is not practical or where there is a time constraint, an emergency or for safety reasons. A receipt for reimbursement will be required.

Driving private vehicles

When using your own vehicle, you will be reimbursed in accordance with the following set mileage rates.

First 10,000 miles in the tax year	Over 10,000 miles in the tax year
Car 55p per mile Motorcycle 24p per mile Bicycle 20p per mile	Car 25p per mile Motorcycle 24p per mile Bicycle 20p per mile

The above rates are set by HMRC. These rates are reviewed annually by HMRC and any changes are at the discretion of Parkinson's UK. Mileage rates are clearly written on the volunteer expenses claim form and we will ensure this is kept up to date to reflect any changes.

Parking

Please provide receipts when claiming parking costs.

Tolls,congestion, clean air zones, and ULEZ charges

Driving within Congestion and ULEZ (Ultra Low Emission Zone) zones is not encouraged and should be avoided, particularly where public transport is cheaper and more practical. Where driving through designated zones is necessary, then you will be reimbursed for these charges. Please provide receipts for these costs if possible. Any additional costs incurred due to late payments or fines will not be reimbursed.

Penalties and fines

We cannot reimburse parking or congestion fines, speeding tickets or other driving offences.

2.2 Subsistence

We will reimburse your subsistence up to the following rates detailed below. Please make sure you submit receipts with your claims.

Breakfast	If you stay overnight as part of your volunteering, and breakfast is not included with the accommodation, you can claim up to a maximum of £15 (including VAT).
Lunch	When volunteering for five hours or more or over lunchtime, and lunch is not provided, you can claim the cost of lunch up to the value of £15 (including VAT and any service charge).
Snacks	We understand that if you volunteer for a particularly long day, or during the evening, you may need additional food and drink. In these circumstances you can claim additional food and soft drinks up to the value of £10 (including VAT and any service charge).
Evening meal	If you stay overnight as part of your volunteering, the cost of an evening meal can be claimed up to a maximum of £25 (including VAT and any service charge).
Alcoholic drinks	Please note that alcohol is not an allowable expense.

2.3 Accommodation

Occasionally you may need to stay overnight to attend training, a meeting or an event related to your volunteer role. Please ensure that the stay is a reasonable cost based on the hotel (or B&B) available to you in the area that you are required to stay. The aim should be to book a Premier Inn style hotel, which is considered a three star accommodation. The policy limits are based on a 12 mile radius of:

- Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, London, and Manchester: up to £300 per night (including VAT)
- Elsewhere in the UK and abroad: up to £200 per night (including VAT)

We understand that there may be occurrences where finding suitable accommodation within these limits is unrealistic due to hotel demand etc. In these instances, please confirm with your staff contact before booking accommodation above these limits.

Rooms must be booked on a single occupancy basis. If you book a double occupancy room, we would ask you to pay the additional amount. However, if you require your carer to travel with you, the charity will cover the full cost.

If you require accommodation for training, meetings or events at the UK office, please talk to your staff contact first as it may be possible to book and pay for accommodation centrally using the charity's travel management company, Click Travel.

2.4 Other expenses

Informal carer costs

An informal carer may be a relative, friend or partner who provides unpaid support to a person who, due to illness, disability, a mental health condition or an addiction, cannot manage without their support. When a volunteer would be unable to participate in training, meetings or events without their support, the cost of travel, subsistence and accommodation for the carer will be covered in line with the agreed limits set out in this policy. The maximum amounts that can be claimed are set out in the subsistence and accommodation sections.

Professional carer costs

We are unable to meet the costs of professional carers standing in during your volunteering hours. However, you can claim for costs incurred when training, meetings or events fall outside your normal volunteering hours. In these instances, we will meet the costs of travel and subsistence for professional carers in line with the agreed limits set out in this policy. Where necessary, we will meet the costs of a carer's fee up to a maximum of £25 an hour, when agreed in advance with your staff contact or local group.

Professional support

We recognise that some volunteers may have additional needs and may require professional support to enable them to volunteer. In these instances, you will be reimbursed for the costs incurred. The type of support required will depend on your individual needs but may include:

- Assistance during travel
- A sign language interpreter
- A translator
- A hearing loop

Please discuss your additional needs with your staff contact or local group before purchasing or arranging support.

Childcare costs

We are unable to reimburse the costs of childcare during your volunteering hours. However, you can claim for costs incurred when you are asked to attend training or events outside of your normal volunteering hours. We will reimburse the actual costs of care provided by a registered childminder to a maximum of £13 per hour inside the M25 and £12 per hour outside the M25. Please speak with your staff contact or local group before booking childcare.

Administration costs

We understand that there may be administration costs for some volunteering roles. These may include:

- Postage
- Stationery
- Printing materials
- Phone calls

When claiming for stationery or postage, please provide the relevant receipts. When claiming for phone calls, please highlight the relevant calls on the bill where possible. We understand the potential challenges of getting an itemised bill so you can claim up to £5 where an itemised bill isn't available.

Under certain circumstances, you may also be reimbursed for the costs of portable equipment, such as lockable case boxes or paper shredders. Please talk to your staff contact for more information.

We are unable to reimburse via expenses the costs of furniture, utilities including gas, electricity, broadband/phone line installation and rental costs or computer equipment including software. Where such services or equipment are required for delivering or supporting volunteering activities, this will be purchased via local group funds or by the charity centrally. Please speak with your staff contact about what is applicable for your specific volunteering role.

Family volunteering

Children volunteering alongside a parent, guardian, or carer are able to claim their expenses incurred while volunteering in line with this policy.

2.5 How to claim expenses

We encourage you to claim back expenses incurred while volunteering for Parkinson's UK.

Completing an expense claim form

We ask all volunteers to complete a volunteer expense claim form, except under extraordinary circumstances. This form can be found on the Parkinson's UK website. Please provide receipts to submit with your expense claim form.

Depending on your volunteering role, you can claim expenses through either:

- Your local group funds

- Centrally via your staff contact and our Finance team

Claiming expenses via your local group

If you are a group volunteer, you should claim expenses through your local group funds. Claims made through a local group may take longer to be processed depending on how regularly your group meets.

If you have two separate volunteering roles, expenses relating to the two roles must be claimed separately through the appropriate channels.

Claiming expenses centrally

For all other volunteer roles, including Trustees, please use this option. You should claim expenses by sending your completed expense claim form to your staff contact.

The Finance team aims to process all volunteer expenses claims within 3 weeks of the date they receive the completed form. If information is incorrect or missing, a member of the team will get in touch to resolve the issue. Any forms submitted with incomplete information could result in a delay to reimbursement.

Donating your expenses

We understand that not everyone will wish to claim back their expenses. If this is the case, we encourage you to make a claim but to donate it to Parkinson's UK. We recognise that may be time consuming for you, but it gives volunteers who are able to claim Gift Aid the opportunity to help raise extra funds for the charity. It also helps us assess the true costs of involving volunteers in our work.

2.6 How we handle your information

By making a volunteer expenses claim, we ask you to supply certain details, including address, contact information and bank details. We collect this information only to process your expenses claim. We keep details on record within our central finance database for statutory accounting reasons. It also helps to be able to expedite any subsequent claims in line with current data protection regulations. No details from the finance database are ever used for any purpose other than to make payment and are never passed to any third party.

2.7 Where to find support

If you have any questions about expenses that are not covered in this policy, look at the Volunteer Expenses FAQs. If your question isn't answered there, please ask your staff contact or the Volunteering team at volunteering@parkinsons.org.uk or on **020 7963 9328**.

3. Training and support

We have developed Volunteering Expenses FAQs to answer any questions you may have about claiming expenses. Your staff contact will provide you with support.

Further support is available from the Volunteering Team.

4. Responsibilities

The following responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:

- The **Executive Leadership Team (ELT)** is responsible for approving changes and updates.
- The **Chief People Officer** is the ELT owner of this policy.
- The **Head of Volunteering**, in liaison with the **Financial Operations team**, is responsible for ensuring policy compliance and implementation throughout the organisation.

5. Monitoring and compliance

The Volunteering team and Financial Operations team will monitor compliance with this policy.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Related documents

Appendix 2 - Record of review

Appendix 1: Related documents

Volunteer Expenses FAQs

Volunteering Agreement

Health and Safety Policy

Appendix 2: Version Control

Date	Summary of changes
April 2023	Rates amended in line with employees' policy. References to trustees included for completeness.
June 2026	Policy ownership updated Car travel - annual mileage rates updated to 55p in line with HMRC recommendations and employee policy