

EXPENSES POLICY

1. General Policy Statement

In order to undertake the functions and activities of Healthwatch Luton it is recognised that employees, volunteers and Directors will incur travel and other necessary incidental expenses in the course of their work. All such reasonable expenses should be substantiated by receipts (not credit/debit card vouchers) and may be claimed back from the organisation.

Directors of Healthwatch Luton must also have regard to Clause 6 (2) (a) of the organisation's *Articles of Association*, which entitles directors *to be reimbursed reasonable expenses properly incurred when acting on behalf of HWL*.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to enable staff, volunteers, Directors and others to whom this policy applies who incur travel and other necessary incidental expenses in the course of their work to claim these using the organisation's Expense Claim Form.

This policy applies to staff, volunteers and Directors employed by or working for Healthwatch Luton. Aspects of this policy, in particular those concerning travel expenses, also apply to potential employees attending an interview, to consultants engaged by Healthwatch Luton and to Healthwatch participants who participate in working groups.

3. Principle

In making a decision on how to travel, employees, volunteers and Directors should have regard to:

- distance to be travelled and location;
- the most economical means of travel;
- car sharing;
- environmental impact;

- personal safety;
- the availability and use of concessionary, apex and cheap day travel fares.

Long distance travel (in excess of 100 miles) should normally be by rail unless location and circumstances demand otherwise.

Employees who use their car for business travel must have a current driving licence and valid insurance to enable them to use their car for business. Similarly, volunteers and Directors who use their car for voluntary work must have a current driving licence and valid insurance to enable them to use their car for such purposes. These matters are the responsibility of the individual concerned.

Subsistence costs (which includes meals, refreshments and accommodation) while travelling or staying away on business are expenses of travel.

Volunteers and Directors may claim their travel expenses to and from the office and elsewhere in the course of their work for Healthwatch Luton.

4. Mileage Allowances

Employees, volunteers and Directors who need to use their car in the performance of their duties are eligible to receive a mileage allowance for the use of their car while on Healthwatch Luton business. Car sharing is encouraged where possible.

Mileage allowances will be paid for travel incurred by car, motorcycle or bicycle in accordance with the HM Revenue and Customs approved rates, which are currently:

Vehicle	Mileage Allowance
Car	45p for the first 10,000 miles and 25p per mile thereafter
Motor Cycle	24p

When making a mileage allowance claim the claimant should provide details of the following:

- date of journey;
- starting point, intermediary and/or final destination(s);
- purpose of journey;
- name(s) of passengers if car sharing; • total mileage to the nearest whole mile (inclusive of any deduction for ordinary commuting if an employee);
- mileage rate;
- total cost of mileage claim.

Employees may claim the total mileage for journeys made from, and which return to, their usual place of work.

Employees cannot claim for ordinary commuting (travel between home or any other place attended for personal reasons and their usual workplace) or for private travel (any other travel that is not business).

If, during the course of their duties, employees travel between their home and an alternative place of work (usually elsewhere within Luton) at the beginning or end of the day, they should **deduct their ordinary commuting mileage** from the total journey. For business journeys outside of Luton the employee may claim for the whole journey from, and returning to, their home.

Employees making additional journeys to their ordinary commuting mileage (e.g. evening meetings and weekend events) may claim for their mileage between home and their usual place of work.

5. Public Transport

Standard class rail and bus fares may be claimed for journeys undertaken while on Healthwatch Luton business or voluntary work. Standard class air fares, comparable with an equivalent rail fare, may be claimed for long distance travel within the United Kingdom. Tickets and receipts must be provided with any claim, along with details of the date, starting point, destination and purpose of the journey.

6. Taxi Fares

Taxi fares may be claimed in exceptional circumstances (such as evening meetings) where public or private transport is not available. Receipts must be provided with any claim, along with details of the date, starting point, destination and purpose of the journey.

7. Meals and Refreshments

Reasonable claims for meals and light refreshments may be made while travelling long distance, working away from home, for working lunches or if working away from the organisation's premises for a period of four hours or more when it would be reasonable to expect a meal to be taken. Meals must not exceed those available from three star restaurants or similar (e.g. Pizza Hut, Little Chef, Brewers Fare, Beefeater etc.). Receipts must be provided with any claim, along with details of the date and the occasion.

8. Accommodation

Claims for overnight accommodation may be made where this is necessary and will generally be approved in advance (e.g. while attending a conference or training event away from home). Accommodation should not normally exceed travel lodge type accommodation or three-star hotels. Claims for newspapers, laundry and other personal expenses cannot be made. Receipts must be provided with any claim, along with details of the date and the occasion.

9. Non-Travel Related Expenses

Claims for non-travel related expenses may be made and receipts must be provided with any claim, which may include:

Telephone – calls made from home or mobile telephones on behalf of Healthwatch Luton. A copy of the front page of the telephone bill and the relevant page(s) showing details of the calls made (other personal calls should be redacted) must be provided with any claim.

Postage – for mail sent on behalf of, or to, Healthwatch Luton.

Computer and Stationery Supplies – for business use at home by directors and volunteers.

Books and Publications – where these are appropriate to the role undertaken by an employee, volunteer or director within the organisation.

Care Costs – additional (child) care costs incurred while fulfilling responsibilities outside of normal working hours and in unavoidable circumstances, normally with prior approval from the Chief Operating Officer where this is likely to exceed three hours or £25 on any one occasion.

10. Interview Expenses

Candidates attending employee interviews at Healthwatch Luton may claim the cost of their travel to the interview at 45 pence per mile or the cost of local public transport, or a standard class rail fare if travelling long distance. Tickets and receipts must be provided with any claim for public transport. Candidates will be advised of this and provided with an Expense Claim Form at the time they are invited to interview.

11. Making a Claim

Expense claims should be made on the organisation's Expense Claim Form, available from the office or on the intranet, together with receipts and tickets as appropriate. Claims should be submitted to the Chief Operating Officer who will authorise the claim and arrange for payment by BACS.

Expense claims should be made on a regular basis, usually at the end of each month in the case of employees and at least by the end of each quarter in the case of directors and volunteers. Late claims will be dealt with the following month.

All Directors and volunteers should claim expenses. Where an individual does not wish to claim all or part of their expenses their claim form should clearly state the amount they wish to donate.

12. General

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment. This policy takes account of the HM Revenue and Customs regulations and guidance on the claiming of out of pocket expenses (including mileage allowances) in the course of the organisation's business.

Under HM Revenue and Customs regulations employees are required to keep a record of their travel expenses; such records should be retained for seven years.

13. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy, and its procedures, will be monitored and amended as and when necessary, by the Chief Operating Officer. Significant changes will require the approval of the Board of Directors. The policy will also be reviewed every two years as part of a continuing review of organisational policies.

Policy reviewed: October 2025

Next review date: October 2026