



EXPENSES and TRAVEL POLICY

Last updated July 2024

At VOX we ensure that people with lived experience of mental illness have a voice and that it's heard by decision-makers to shape policy and practice. We build connections by bringing people together to create resources and to discuss key issues, listening to what is important for our members. To do this we need to help people overcome barriers to taking part. We achieve this by creating safe spaces, offering multiple ways for people to contribute and, by helping people with the costs involved to travel to our events and activities.

To claim expenses you need to fill in an expenses claim form, for a copy please contact Maryam Razeghian mrzazeghian@mentalhealth.org.uk

Expenses

VOX is able to pay reasonable expenses to staff, volunteers, directors, and members to enable them to take part in activities that VOX organises (and any other person VOX requires to attend our activities such as consultants, facilitators and speakers).

VOX is not able to pay expenses for members to attend events organised by other organisations unless we have specifically requested a volunteer to represent VOX and this has been agreed in advance.

We encourage members to attend our events in person, however we have a limited budget and so request that members consider using online platforms where the distances are time or cost prohibitive.

We do not normally pay expenses for air travel, travelling by plane would only be applicable with prior authorisation from the VOX manager.

Expenses are only eligible within Scotland, overseas travel is not applicable without prior authorisation from the VOX manager.

With the exception of mileage claims, all expenses must be supported by receipts. Please ensure that you obtain a proper VAT invoice and that the receipt lists the actual items purchased and not the receipt that shows that

a credit card payment was made. Credit card slips or credit card/bank statements will not be accepted as evidence of business expenditure. This is required for audit purposes. If for some reason a receipt is not available, please write in the description when submitting the claim as to why.

Public transport

Rail, bus or ferry travel should be booked at the lowest available rate for standard class travel that will allow the individual to arrive in reasonable time to carry out their business. When the cheapest option is not selected, a reason must be provided.

Please let us know if you have a bus pass and do not require reimbursement.

Motorcycles and bicycles

Journeys made by motorcycle can be claimed at 24p per mile and journeys made by bicycle can be claimed at 20p per mile or for the cost of renting a 'city bike' for example a nextbike where a receipt or screenshot of the booking via an app can be provided.

Car travel

We encourage you to use modes of transport other than private vehicles. Reimbursement of mileage for use of private cars will only be made where this is overall the most economical form of travel or where there is a reasonable need demonstrated and this has been agreed in advance (for example carrying heavy items or accessibility requirements).

Car Mileage will be reimbursed at 45p per mile in line with HMRC rules, plus parking fees. These rates include an allowance for the general running cost of a car. For clarity, petrol or diesel costs cannot be claimed, only recorded mileage. Parking fines, towing charges, car cleaning, and other costs of a similar nature will not be reimbursed.

Please let us know if you have a mobility vehicle and do not require reimbursement for wear and tear on your vehicle.

Taxis

Taxis should only be used if cost and convenience outweigh the cost of public transport. For example when working late at night; when working before or after normal public transport schedules or when public transport options are limited (i.e. rural areas), when heavy baggage or valuable material must be

transported, or when several people can share a taxi for substantially the same cost as public transport etc.

Taxis may also be used where there is a reasonable need demonstrated and this has been agreed in advance (for example accessibility requirements).

Fines, taxi cleaning and other fees of a similar nature will not be reimbursed.

If possible please prebook taxis for the cheapest rates and so that you are aware before you start your journey how much it is likely to be.

Hotels / accommodation

All hotels must be booked through Voices of Experience unless there has been a prior agreement otherwise. Hotels that are booked without prior agreement may not be reimbursed. This enables us to obtain the best value accommodation and to more efficiently make payment for them. We will send you an email confirmation of the booking for your stay. All hotel booking should be done by contacting us at voxscotland@mentalhealth.org.uk

Hotels should be booked well in advance to reduce costs. The maximum hotel/accommodation costs are below:

Overnight stays should not exceed £80 (or £120 if in Glasgow or Edinburgh city centre). The maximum length of stay is two nights for a full day event where you are unable to travel to/from home within the same day (ie one night before and one night after). Accommodation will only be provided where you are unable to travel on the day of an event due to the distance or event start/finish time. Where possible you are encouraged to limit your stay to one night only.

Reasons for requesting accommodation that exceeds this overnight rate must be provided and will need to be approved by the VOX Manager prior to booking.

Fines, additional room charges, damages or cleaning fees, or other fees of a similar nature will not be reimbursed.

Subsistence

Subsistence refers to the cost of meals/refreshment for VOX staff, directors, volunteers, and members that are necessarily incurred, are reasonable and over and above what is normally incurred at work. Where VOX provides catering at our events we would not also be able to provide subsistence. All alcoholic drinks are excluded. VOX will reimburse the following subsistence expenses:

- £7.50* for breakfast when work requires you to stay overnight and breakfast is not included in the accommodation.
- £7.50* for lunch/break when away from your office/home for six hours or more during the day, or when driving for three to four hours during the day.
- £20* for evening meal when staying away from home overnight.

*if you are travelling for business purposes and reclaiming all three meals then the individual meal limits can be exceeded if breakfast is not included in the accommodation rate and none of the meals have been provided, providing a daily cap of £35 is not exceeded.

Remuneration for your time

At the moment, VOX is unable to remunerate directors and members for your time to attend our regular activities or consultations. We may, from time to time, receive funding that enables us to remunerate for contributions to specific activities or projects. In these situations we will request volunteers to take part and will agree / publish any remuneration available in advance of you signing up.

From time to time, VOX may enter into contracts for pieces of work such as research or consultancy. There are no restrictions as to who we can appoint as long as the correct processes are followed. Any payments between VOX and a director through a contract for services will be explicitly declared within the VOX annual accounts.