

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE AND ENTERTAINMENT POLICIES

General information

Introduction

1. This policy applies to all Members, Council Members, staff, fixed term contractors and agency staff and provides guidance on official travelling and subsistence.
2. The CC's business travel expenditure should be incurred in accordance with business needs. The key principle is that everyone should try to minimise the overall costs to the taxpayer, including the use of official time, fares and subsistence, and this will in the majority of cases mean using public transport and taking advantage of cheap fare deals (such as budget airlines, special offers, using rail cards, non-flexible tickets, day returns or season tickets) whenever possible. While the policy sets out circumstances in which people are entitled to travel by first class rail or business class air tickets, the use of these entitlements should be subject to a judgement of value for money, and not considered to be automatic.
3. Claims must be for the actual cost, not up to the limit of the allowance. Claims must be made only for costs incurred by staff and members in the course of conducting CC business.
4. While final authority rests with the Chief Executive who will approve exceptional cases and any queries, Inquiry Directors (IDs) and line managers have delegated authority to approve travel arrangements within approved budgets.

Claims

5. In making claims for reimbursement under these provisions, you should note the following points:
 - (a) unless flat rate allowances are claimed (e.g. mileage allowances), all claims should refer to actual expenses necessarily incurred and should be supported by receipts, except for very small sums for which receipts are not normally issued (e.g. when you have used your Oyster card);

- (b) claims for unusual items of expenditure must be supported by a special note justifying the claim and, where relevant, signed by the line manager;
 - (c) unnecessary queries will be avoided if claims are supported by full details of expenses incurred giving all relevant information; and
 - (d) claims submitted late may be difficult to check; claims should be submitted within a period of six weeks, except at year end (1st April) when expenses should be submitted by the 30th April to allow the CC's annual accounts to be produced.
6. If you knowingly make a false claim, you will face disciplinary action and possibly criminal proceedings.

People with additional needs

7. Exceptions to the CC's rules will be made to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities or special needs (including special dietary requirements). Human Resources (HR) should be made aware of any additional needs and the team will produce a business case if necessary for the Chief Executive. Once authorised any additional needs should also be communicated to the Administrative Services Unit (ASU) at the time of booking. For example, a taxi may be used for longer journeys if access to public transport is not possible.
8. Additionally, people who, because of a disability, cannot use public transport and have to travel by car in all circumstances, may be reimbursed at the standard rate of mileage for all official travel - provided that the normal insurance conditions are met. Payments are free from tax and National Insurance Contribution (NIC) liabilities.

Responsibilities

ASU

9. The ASU is responsible for booking travel and accommodation requirements for staff and Members. All bookings will be made in accordance with the CC's Travel and Subsistence Policy ensuring that best value for money is obtained.
10. The ASU will provide a schedule of priced options for flights, rail travel and hotel accommodation where possible when requesting funding approval. Where permission is sought to use other than the most cost effective option justification must be provided when seeking approval.

Staff

11. All staffs are responsible for ensuring that the CCs resources are used effectively by minimising the cost of any travel and for ensuring that they submit expenses claims only for expenditure incurred for valid business purposes.
12. As claimant you should:
 - a) get your line manager's approval for all proposed travel on CC business before you go;
 - b) be aware of the relevant rules before incurring the costs and submitting your claim;
 - c) make sure the costs are actually and necessarily incurred on CC business;
 - d) contact the ASU by email (ASU@cc.gsi.gov.uk) or call 020 7271 0000 to book all your travel and accommodation requirements; and
 - e) FocalPoint should be used to submit your claim online. Details on how to complete your claim can be found on the following link: Members

13. Members can claim all costs associated with travel from home to the CC for group meetings and other inquiry-related meetings, seminars and for any site visits.
14. Members should generally follow the same rules that apply to staff and be aware of the relevant rules before incurring costs and submitting claims for travel expenses (which should be supported by valid receipts).
15. At the start of each inquiry, Members should agree with the ID their standard travel requirements for the journey to and from their primary residence and the CC. Any non standard journeys should be agreed with the ID on a case by case basis.
16. Whenever possible and cost effective the ASU should be contacted to arrange any travel and hotel accommodation requirements either by email (ASU@cc.gsi.gov.uk) or call 020 7271 0000. Please see detailed guidance below for more information.
17. Claims should be submitted via FocalPoint and the relevant paperwork and receipts sent to Finance who will arrange for approval by the Inquiry Director before payment is made. Claims and any queries should be emailed to FinanceDL@cc.gsi.gov.uk or call Sue McDonald on 020 7271 0310.
18. Additional guidance for using FocalPoint can be found at: <https://edrmapps:444/Non-Inquiry/Resources/Information%20Technology/Everyone%20IT%20Procedures%20and%20Templates/User%20Guides/Focalpoint%20Members%20Expenses%20Guide.doc>

Line managers and IDs

19. Line managers and IDs are responsible for approving travel plans in advance in response to business needs and for confirming that subsequent claims represent a valid business expense.
20. Prior to authorizing travel expenditure, line managers should make sure that staffs are aware that they have a responsibility to keep costs as low as possible.

21. When approving claims for payment, line managers should check that the costs are actually and necessarily incurred on CC business and are within the sum approved. Claims should then be approved on FocalPoint by the line manager.

22. Finance will arrange payment of claims to be made by BACS once they have received the relevant authorized paperwork and online approval from line managers on FocalPoint.

T and S Guidance

Travel to and from home

Staff and Council Members where the CC is their permanent place of work

23. Staff and Council Members are responsible for the cost of daily travel between their home and permanent place of work. Only exceptionally can you be paid for this journey.
24. The principal exceptions are:
 - a) where the CC has agreed to pay for your travel to work as part of your contract of employment and/or terms and conditions of employment;
 - b) when you are required to make an additional attendance outside normal working hours;
 - c) when you foresee that you will be required to stay exceptionally late at the office, until public transport has stopped running or when the service is severely restricted (guide 10.00 pm);
 - d) when you are travelling under emergency arrangements (for example the CC's business continuity plan) on behalf of the CC ; or
 - e) where you believe that you have a personal reason for requesting the CC pay for your home to work travel (eg a new or temporary medical condition, etc). The HR team will advise the Chief Executive whether an individual claim or request should be supported.

CC Members working on inquiries or attending ad-hoc meetings

25. Members can claim for travel between their primary residence and the CC; in general the CC's rules on use and type of transport will apply. If a Member is travelling from their second or holiday home and the cost is higher the CC will only reimburse them for the amount equivalent to their normal primary home to work journey, unless exceptional circumstances apply – for example, a

meeting has been arranged at short notice at the CC in what is normally a holiday period.

Private car usage

26. If you travel by car, you can claim reimbursement for mileage. You can also claim for tolls, reasonable parking charges and if appropriate the congestion charge. You can use your car where there is:
- a) no suitable public transport option;
 - b) a saving of official time, but bearing in mind that you will be unable to work en route;
 - c) a cost saving by using a car instead of public transport; or
 - d) a need to carry office equipment or other items.
27. As with other travel proposals, you will consider whether travel by private car is consistent with business needs and can be met from the appropriate travel and subsistence budget.
28. If you are using your car on official business, you will be expected to use it at the request of the CC and to carry official passengers.
29. When using your car on official business, you must hold a valid driving licence and have insurance cover for using your car on official business - you will not be able to recover any money from the CC because of any excess clause in your policy. The CC will accept no liability in event of any accident, damage, injury or death.

Mileage rates

30. The mileage rates are set by the Inland Revenue and are currently:

Cars and vans:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| First 10,000 miles a year | 40p per mile |
| Any mileage over 10,000 a year | 25p per mile |
| Motorcycles | 24p per mile |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Bicycles | 20p per mile |
| Passenger rate (per passenger) | 5p per mile |
| Carriage of equipment | 2p per mile |

Health and safety

31. You should familiarize yourself with the CC health and safety guidance and should not use mobile phones while driving. You must not under any circumstances drive on official business while under the influence of alcohol, or drugs (illegal or otherwise) which could adversely affect your driving. The CC will not accept any liability for any accident that results from illegal behaviour and it may result in the CC taking disciplinary action against an individual.

Parking

32. Car parking charges can be claimed providing that they are reasonable; for example, long-term car parking should be used at airports rather than short term, whenever possible.

Parking fines and congestion charges

33. You are responsible for ensuring that your car is parked legally at all times whilst on official business. The CC will not accept any liability for the payment of parking fines or fines for non-payment of the congestion charge.

Public transport

34. As a general principal the CC will only book travel that is appropriate to the individual's CC work commitments. You should not expect the CC to pay the additional cost of any travel arrangements that are scheduled to meet non CC work commitments or personal appointments; for example we will not normally book open period returns (i.e. 30 days) for rail or air travel.

Rail travel

35. All staff and Members should normally use standard class travel (this includes Eurostar travel).
36. Tickets should be booked in advance via the ASU wherever possible as the CC is able to obtain extra discounts (which are not reflected in the face value of the ticket price) through its travel supplier/ agent.
37. In a limited number of circumstances it may be cheaper to buy a ticket at the station, for example where the traveller:
 - Holds a rail card; and/or
 - May to be able to travel off peak if a meeting ends earlier than expected.
38. The ASU can book tickets for people holding railcards; they can also arrange for tickets to be collected from 'home' stations.
39. First class is only allowed where a single rail journey time is in excess of two hours or in the following circumstances:
 - a) when a seat could not be found in a standard class compartment and it was not possible to reserve a seat;
 - b) when people are travelling alone and feel unsafe in a standard class compartment they may upgrade to first class (typically after 9.00 pm at night);
 - c) if people are able to book far enough in advance to take advantage of special offers/cheaper fares, they may book non-standard class travel where this provides better value for money than the equivalent standard class fare; and
 - d) there may be other circumstances where non-standard class travel is appropriate; a business case should be made through the HR team who will consider individual cases (e. g. new or temporary medical conditions, etc) and will then advise the Chief Executive as to whether the claim should be supported.

London Travelcards and Oyster cards

40. If you have a London Travelcard or an Oystercard, you are expected to use this wherever possible.
41. To claim for journeys using an Oystercard, specific journeys must be claimed. No claims for general top-up of Oystercards will be permitted.

Sleeping berths

42. People travelling overnight on official business are entitled to a sleeping berth and may travel first class when using a sleeping berth.

Self drive car hire

43. Where it is necessary for you to be provided with a short-term hire car for a particular official journey or journeys the CC may, at its discretion, meet all hiring and running costs incurred by you using the vehicle on that journey. Hiring in these circumstances must be subject to the prior approval from your line manager.
44. In an emergency (e.g. where your private vehicle breaks down while on official business), any expenses necessarily incurred by you in hiring a vehicle to complete the official business may be met, at the CC's discretion, even where you were unable to obtain prior approval. The insurance on the vehicle must, however, specifically cover the use of the vehicle by you for business purposes.
45. Breakdowns at, or near, your home address (or which occur while not driving on official business) are not classed as emergencies and you must in all such circumstances seek the permission of the CC before hiring a car.
46. Actual costs for fuel should be claimed rather than mileage rates, which should be supported by receipts.

Taxis

47. Taxis can be cost effective for short journeys, especially when several people are travelling together. All claims for taxi fares must be supported by receipts and the reason for the use of a taxi.
48. The CC will reimburse your taxi fares where there is no alternative method of public transport and for the following:
 - a) where there is a saving in official time;
 - b) the person travelling has mobility problems;
 - c) there are safety reasons when travelling alone;
 - d) you have to transport heavy luggage, or equipment;
 - e) you have to leave home very early or travel home late in the evening and public transport is not operating frequently; and
 - f) there are a number of people travelling together and a taxi represents a cost-effective method of transport.
49. Any waiting time should be kept to a minimum. The CC will reimburse any reasonable tips (up to 10% of the taxi fare) paid to taxi drivers.
50. The CC has a taxi account which can be used if taking a taxi from the office or within London. To book, you will need to email your requirements to ASU@cc.gsi.gov.uk or call the ASU on 020 7271 0000. Although the CC has a taxi account it is cheaper to just hail a taxi on the street and then re-claim the cost.

Chauffeur driven cars

51. These are very expensive and should only be used in highly exceptional circumstances and with the prior approval of the Chief Executive.

Air travel

52. Economy class will be the usual mode of air travel for short haul and domestic flights. Business class (or other levels between standard and first class) travel by plane will be acceptable for journeys over 4 hours (e.g. US, Far East, Australia, etc). Members and staff should ensure that they use the most cost effective means of air travel (for example using a budget airline where flights are available).
53. Staff and Members flying on CC business are not allowed to accrue frequent flyer points or miles on loyalty cards; this is a taxable benefit for individuals which the CC would have to declare to HMRC, and the CC collects these benefits on bookings made on behalf of the CC.

Hotels

Booking accommodation

54. The ASU should book all accommodation for staff and Members. Either email your requirements to ASU@cc.gsi.gov.uk or call 020 7271 0000.
55. The CC's guideline rate for UK hotels is £130 including VAT per night (B&B).
56. Within London the CC has agreed preferential rates with a number of hotels close to the CC, You will normally be placed in one of these hotels. Where this is not possible, accommodation will be found through the CC's travel/accommodation provider. Both of these options ensure that the CC achieves value for money.
57. If Members and staff wish to book alternative accommodation from that offered by the ASU, or wish to stay at a more expensive hotel (and they do not have prior approval from the Chief Executive), they will be expected to pay any excess costs above £130, including any additional travel costs.
58. The CC will not meet the cost of an additional hotel booking if a member of staff or Member decides to cancel an ASU booked hotel at short notice and then book themselves into another hotel.

Standards

59. The following represents the amenities that the ASU will book as a minimum:
- A single room with:
- a) en suite facilities (showers instead of baths are acceptable);
 - b) TV;
 - c) tea/coffee making facilities;
 - d) a telephone;
 - e) adequate space and where it is necessary to work in the room, facilities available for doing so;
 - f) satisfactory personal security arrangements and adequate emergency procedures;
 - g) the surrounding area should be secure and safe;
 - h) restaurant facilities available either in the hotel or locally offering a table d'hôte menu at reasonable prices for a three course meal with coffee; and
 - i) adequate car parking facilities where a private vehicle is being used.
60. Exceptional arrangements may be made:
- a) for people travelling on their own where personal safety is paramount, higher rated accommodation may be allowed if this contributes towards safeguarding the individual; or
 - b) for people with a disability or special needs, individuals should contact HR who will put a business case to the Chief Executive for him to consider.

Additional hotel related expenditure

61. The CC will not reimburse for personal entertainment, for example pay as you view TV, bar bills before and after dinner or mini-bar bills. You may however claim for papers and personal telephone calls up to £5 in value. Receipts will need to be submitted.

62. The cost of all work related calls can be reclaimed in full.

Hearings, conferences, residential courses, seminars and international meetings

63. There may be occasions when staff or Members need to attend CC hearings, residential conferences, courses or seminars that are held in hotels that are dearer than the CC's standard rates. On such occasions, people are permitted to stay at the hotel in which the event is held, irrespective of the star rating of the hotel. This may also apply when attending meetings overseas and looking for hotels located near to the venue of the meeting. This ensures the most appropriate use of time both in booking accommodation and for people attending such events. Booking accommodation well ahead for these events, where possible, can significantly reduce the cost.

Casual absence from home (CAH)

64. CAH allows a member of staff to stay at a London hotel and claim subsistence under the CC's standard T and S rules. You are entitled to a CAH if you are required by your manager to work:
- a) late or through the night to complete your job;
 - b) a double shift after a normal day's work because you are doing extra, non-rostered on-call or stand-by duties;
 - c) in the mornings before 7.00 am; or
 - d) at the weekend in the office and travel to and from home is difficult.
65. These allowances are not paid if you:
- a) are on night duty instead of day duty;
 - b) sleep at the office for your own convenience; or
 - c) are required, as part of your conditions of service, to work at night or be on-call/stand-by at night in addition to your normal day duty.

Staying with friends

66. In lieu of all accommodation and meal costs, those who wish to stay with family or friends rather than in hotel accommodation may choose to claim an allowance of £25 per night.

Subsistence and meals

67. The limit for lunch claims is £15 and for dinner £30 but the actual cost incurred should be claimed and supported with receipts. The limit for lunch and dinner includes gratuities and drinks. Claims for moderate amounts of alcohol are allowed. Any claims over this limit may only be approved with a written explanation of the circumstances.
68. Gratuities are allowed at the standard acceptable UK rate of 10 to 12.5 per cent, but within the overall limit for lunch and dinner.

International travel

69. All proposals for international travel, including the cost of travel, hotels and subsistence, must be agreed with the Chief Executive or, for members of staff, the relevant member of the senior management team, before booking takes place. Claims are then made against the authorized budget. To calculate a budget for your trip, the following link should be used to obtain accommodation and subsistence rates: www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers/emp-income-scale-rates.htm.

Passports, visa and vaccinations

70. Staff and Members going abroad on official duty must be in possession of a valid passport. The CC will not pay for the cost of this.
71. Staff and Members are responsible for arranging their own visas where required, and the cost of the visa may be reimbursed with a receipt. The cost of any vaccinations required or advised for the destination may also be reimbursed with a receipt.

72. The ASU has, however, been able to build up a good relationship with the Home Office from whom we are able to obtain official visas free of charge in most cases. The ASU is therefore able to arrange a time with the Passport Office, where the traveller is able to hand in their passport along with relevant visa forms and the Passport Office will take on the responsibility of obtaining the visa and will call us when it is available. They are also very good at advising on requirements. They have a specific desk that only deals with official visas.
73. Our experience is that trying to contact individual embassies can be quite time consuming and not very useful, and that courier services are very expensive and they do very little.
74. If staff or Members have any concern about health matters when going abroad on official business they should notify HR, who can arrange for them to be referred to the CC's occupational health advisers.

Travel insurance

75. If travelling in Europe you will need an EHIC card. The card is the replacement for form E111. Eligible travellers (persons who are normally resident in the UK) are entitled to receive free or reduced-cost medical care in many European countries on production of an EHIC card. This free card is available from post offices or travel agents. Visit the Department of Health website for more information. Only state-provided emergency treatment is covered, and you will receive treatment on the same terms as nationals of the country you are visiting. Private treatment is generally not covered, and state-provided treatment may not cover all the things that you would expect to receive free of charge from the NHS.
76. The CC has arranged Business Traveller Insurance for all staff and Members on an organisation wide policy. Details can be found on the following link <https://edrmapps:444/Non-Inquiry/Resources/Monthly%20Financial%20Packs/Published%20Finance%200Procedures/Travel%20insurance%20policy%20schedule.pdf>. Please ensure that you have read the policy and have printed a copy of it to take with you before travelling abroad on CC business. .

Accommodation and subsistence rates

77. To arrange your travel and accommodation requirements, contact the ASU by email ASU@cc.gsi.gov.uk or call 020 7271 0000.
78. Government approved accommodation and subsistence rates vary from country to country and start from the point you arrive at your destination. The following link should be used to obtain accommodation and subsistence rates: www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers/emp-income-scale-rates.htm.
79. Subsistence during flights will not be paid if drinks and meals are served free of charge. Where this is not the case, receipts should be obtained.

Calculating your claim

80. You should also ensure that you provide proof of your currency conversion when submitting your travel claim. (The common website to use is www.oanda.com.)

Pre-travel advice

81. Before travelling, you are strongly advised to log on to the [FCO website](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/Locate/) (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/Locate/>) which provides extensive advice on what to do if you get into difficulties while overseas, and to register on its [online consular form](#), as this allows for the British Consulate to keep in touch with British nationals when they are overseas and provide consular assistance in the event of an emergency.

Additional child care costs

82. Additional childcare costs may be paid but only with the prior approval of the budget holder. The CC will only normally cover the costs of additional child care and will not for example meet the additional costs of a child staying in London to be with their parent/ carer.

Travel and subsistence of spouses and partners

83. It is a general rule that, when staff or Council Members attend an official function or overseas trip accompanied by their spouse/partner, any additional

expenses cannot be reimbursed from public funds. However, this rule may be waived in certain circumstances.

84. If an invitation to a function includes a spouse/partner, their travel and subsistence expenses may be reimbursed if:
 - a) prior approval has been obtained from the Chief Executive or Chairman;
and
 - b) it is expected that the majority of other guests will also be accompanied;
and
 - c) it would cause offence or embarrassment if the invitation were to be refused; and
 - d) it would be unreasonable to expect staff or the Council Member to meet their spouse/partner's expenses.
85. Examples of functions which might qualify are receptions and dinners given by foreign competition bodies and invitations from industry and trade associations. A spouse/partner's travel expenses are reimbursable at the level appropriate to the member of staff or Council Member. Where an overnight stay is necessary, actual expenses may be reimbursed.
86. Expenses paid for spouse/partner's attendance at an official function are taxable. The CC will however gross up the liability.
87. Approving officers should control closely the use of this dispensation, bearing in mind that the use of public funds for this purpose could be misunderstood and might attract adverse comment. Reimbursement must be made from Travel and Subsistence budgets. In all other circumstances people must meet all the expenses of their spouse/partner.
88. Where the party hosting the event intends to pay for a CC member of staff or Council Member and/or for their spouse/partner's expenses the arrangements must be discussed with the Chief Executive before any commitment is made to attend.

Staff recalled from annual leave

89. If you are recalled from annual leave, the CC will reimburse any unused accommodation costs that have already been paid and any cancellation charges that are not covered by insurance, plus any additional travel expenses. Subsistence is not normally paid, but if you can produce receipts and have a valid reason for the expense, the CC may decide to reimburse the expenditure. Any claim will be considered on a case by case basis by the Chief Executive.

Cancellation or postponement of annual leave

90. If the CC asks you to cancel or postpone your annual leave, we will reimburse all the costs that are not covered by insurance, as long as you put in a valid claim with the necessary supporting evidence.

Entertainment

Internal and external working lunches

91. It is permissible to provide working lunches for internal meetings, inter-agency/departmental meetings, or meetings with external parties/ business suppliers. However it should be noted that alcohol should never be provided as part of a working lunch whether external or internal.
92. You must consider the following factors in making your decision for each individual event:
- a) the scheduled length and formality of the meeting. It may be considered disruptive for meetings such as project boards scheduled to run for 2 or more hours, where no refreshment or working lunch was provided, to be interrupted for attendees to make their own refreshments;
 - b) the number of attendees. Where the cost of a member of staff to make tea and coffee would exceed the cost of ordering from catering providers; and
 - c) the journey to and from a meeting by attendees. Where there is a long journey involved the provision of such refreshments or working lunches will facilitate a productive meeting.

Entertaining others

93. Generally the conduct of CC business should not require entertainment. It is advised always to err on the side of caution in this area.
94. Our policy provides that modest entertainment is acceptable only where business cannot be advanced by any other suitable means, or where failure to offer would cause offence or embarrassment. Entertainment should always be clearly in the public interest, and be shown to further the CC's objectives. Entertainment reimbursed from public funds should not include taking another member of staff or a Member out for lunch or dinner.
95. Senior Managers and Council Members may on occasions be expected to entertain official visitors. In these circumstances it would be appropriate to provide modest entertainment such as a restaurant lunch or dinner from the entertainment budget.
96. Costs should be kept to a minimum and no more than a half bottle of wine per person may be purchased when undertaking official entertainment. Itemised receipts must be provided.
97. When accounting for any expenditure on entertainment it is important that it is recorded correctly against the specific account code for entertainment. Such expenditure must not be recorded against any other account code. This is to ensure that information on entertainment is recorded correctly and the true position can be stated in response to any questions.

Managers entertaining their teams

98. Generally it is not acceptable for managers or Council Members to take their team or other members of CC staff out for lunch or evening entertainment at the tax-payers expense. However, a modest celebration either in-house or within the limits set out in paragraph 67 above at the end of an inquiry or a large project is acceptable. Approval should be sought from the Chief Executive in advance.

Hire of Formal Wear for Official Functions

99. If you attend an official function which requires formal wear, and you need to hire an outfit, then you may be reimbursed the actual hire charges. If you

attend official functions frequently, you can buy an outfit and claim the equivalent hire charge on each occasion it is used, until paid for.