



London Sustainability Exchange

London Sustainability Exchange Expense Policy

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MAYOR OF LONDON



1 Policy Statement

- LSx will reimburse to staff and volunteers any expenses wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred to further the charity's business in accordance with the policy. Staff and volunteers are entitled but not obliged to claim full reimbursement for business-related expenses.

2 Principles

- Unless expressly noted, all expenses allowed under this policy conform to Inland Revenue guidance about entitlement to tax relief. Where expenses do not conform to Inland Revenue guidance, this is noted in the policy; if you claim expenses that do not qualify for tax relief, you are responsible for any tax owed unless specifically agreed in advance with the Forum. Advice regarding Inland Revenue is available from Central Services.
- All staff and volunteers have a duty to keep expenses reimbursed from charitable funds to a minimum, taking into account:
 - LSx environment policy
 - Personal safety
 - The cost of staff time e.g. when choosing between travel options that are slower but less expensive
- Expenses should be handled with integrity, fairness, openness and honesty; as far as practical they should be handled consistently across volunteers, interns, staff, job applicants and trustees unless specifically stated otherwise.
- Managers and other account holders are ultimately responsible for using their judgement to determine whether an expense is reasonable and justifiable in terms of accomplishing LSx's charitable mission and weighing the impact on the principle behind sustainable development. Where managers authorise an exception to the policy (for example because a more expensive type of travel is specifically funded by another party) they should clearly note this on the expense form.

3 Breach of policy

Staff who have made a false claim for expenses or have authorised any claim, knowing it to be false, may be subject to the disciplinary procedure, which may lead to dismissal.

If someone working in a voluntary capacity makes a false claim for expenses, claims will be examined by the relevant members of staff or trustees. In the case of all volunteers other than trustees, this will be the Operations Coordinator. In the case of trustees, this will involve the Company Secretary and the Chair of Trustees.

4 Policy reviews

The Operations Coordinator will review and update the policy annually and recommend changes to the Director.

If policy guidelines are consistently difficult to administer or inappropriate, the Director should be informed so that relevant adjustments can be proposed.

5 Travel

- LSx will reimburse the cost of business travel. In line with Inland Revenue guidance, business travel is defined as travel to a meeting, training course or other event outside the normal place of work, unless the travel cost is substantially the same as ordinary commuting cost. For trustees, volunteers, interns and job applicants, travel to the LSx office is also considered business travel.
- Staff and volunteers who purchase travel cards or season tickets for their normal commute may not claim reimbursement for other business travel that would be covered by the travel card or season ticket. Part reimbursement can be reclaimed for a journey that extends beyond the area covered by a travel card.
- Similarly, where LSx has arranged travel for a group to minimise cost, no reimbursement will be allowed for taking other modes of travel unless it has been agreed in advance that the group travel would be unreasonable for the person concerned.
- Staff and volunteers are encouraged to use modes of transport other than private vehicles. If using a private car is unavoidable, mileage will be reimbursed at a rate to be determined, plus parking fees. Staff and volunteers must ensure that their vehicle insurance covers them for business purposes.
- For staff and volunteers using their own bicycles for LSx business, reimbursement will be made at a rate to be determined.
- Car hire will only be authorised where total costs incurred are less than or the same as other available means of transport; or if public transport and/or taxis are not available or reasonably practical; or where there is heavy luggage which would make other means of transportation very difficult or dangerous. Costs should be kept to a minimum by hiring the lowest practicable class of car and by replenishing any fuel used before returning the car to avoid excessive rental agency refuelling charges. LSx's insurance policy does not cover hire cars; additional insurance and collision waivers should be arranged and charged as a normal expense.
- Taxi fares will be reimbursed where using an alternative and cheaper mode of transport is not practicable or reasonable, i.e.:
- When working before or after normal public transport schedules

- For emergency callouts or other urgent travel, e.g. for security alarms or delivery of urgent documents
- Where using a taxi saves a substantial amount of time
- When heavy baggage or valuable material must be transported
- When several people can share a taxi for substantially the same cost as public transport
- When public transport is not available or is severely disrupted

Staff who are required by their line manager to work at the office past 9pm, or when public transport has stopped working or it would not be reasonable to use it, can charge reasonable taxi fares home.

Under normal circumstances LSx will not reimburse taxis for trips longer than 20 miles.

LSx staff and volunteers should not call cabs 'on account' as this results in substantial additional cost, i.e. £4 response charge plus VAT plus monthly administration charges.

6 Subsistence

LSx will reimburse the following accommodation and subsistence expenses when staff travel or work outside normal office hours:

- Accommodation at a B&B or a budget/moderate hotel. Always check to see if a charity discount is available.
- Up to £5 for breakfast when travel begins by 7am, or when staying overnight and breakfast is not included in the accommodation
- Up to £5 for lunch when away from the office for six hours or more during the day
- Up to £15 for supper when travelling until 9pm or later, staying overnight, or required by their line manager to work at the office until 9pm or later
- The cost of a brief phone call home or other telecommunications charge each evening to a maximum of £2 within the UK or £5 if travelling outside the UK

Tips not exceeding 10% of the basic charge for the service may also be claimed as an expense.

Staff and volunteers who choose to stay with a colleague, friend or relative where this results in a lower cost to LSx than staying in a hotel or taking a rush-hour train may claim up to £25 per night to buy their host a gift or take them out for a meal. Costs will be reimbursed on submission of a valid receipt.

7 Costs of working from home or using own equipment

Staff who are provided with a workstation at the office and who work at home for their own convenience may not claim the cost of internet/broadband monthly charges, insurance, upgrades to home PCs or other personal equipment, or other costs associated with working at home. Telephone calls of a reasonable length will be reimbursed on submission of an itemised bill.

Staff who have not been issued with a mobile phone, and who use their personal mobile phone for LSx business, may claim reimbursement based on submission of an itemised bill.

8 Hospitality

The use of charitable funds for hospitality must be strictly in the best interests of the charity and in accordance with budgetary restraints. Management must ensure that expenditure is moderate and reasonable and that only those members of staff and volunteers for whom attendance is necessary are involved.

Sandwiches and non-alcoholic drinks may be ordered from a local coffee shop for lunchtime meetings with external visitors and volunteers, or internal meetings lasting at least 4 hours. Costs will be paid directly by LSx on receipt of a relevant invoice.

Reasonable meal costs will be reimbursed where, in the course of LSx business, staff or trustees entertain external professional or business contacts. An audit trail of who was present and why must be provided with the claim.

Certain forms of staff hospitality will be paid for or contributed to by LSx if costs are kept to a sensible level in accordance with what the charity can afford and the spirit of the policy. Costs will be set at a maximum of £100 per FTE in the budget, to be used at the SMT member's discretion on staff lunches, working lunches, reasonable refreshments for meetings outside of the office, etc.

9 Eye tests and other medical expenses

Eye tests will be reimbursed to a maximum amount of £20 with a valid receipt.

10 Childcare

Costs for childcare or other care responsibilities will be reimbursed subject to prior written authorisation to paid members of staff who are required to attend meetings outside their normal working hours and who are unable to arrange alternative cost-free childcare. The allowance will be based on actual expenditure up to £10 per hour. It will be paid via the monthly payroll following the submission of an appropriate invoice or receipt and a covering memo, countersigned by the appropriate line manager, detailing the amount payable, and the date, duration and purpose of the meeting attended. The allowance will be subject to tax and National Insurance, which must be paid by the staff person. Childcare is not normally paid to volunteers or other unpaid workers.

11 Professional fees and subscriptions

Fees to professional bodies approved by the Inland Revenue will be reimbursed where they are relevant to the job or are a condition of carrying out the employment.

12 Candidates attending interview

Travel and subsistence costs for candidates attending employment interviews will be reimbursed on request following submission of valid receipts and/or travel tickets or mileage details. Reimbursement will only cover the cost of standard or economy travel rates within Greater London and the subsistence rates currently in existence for staff.

13 Volunteers, interns, students, trustees

Volunteers, interns and trustees will be reimbursed for the cost of travel to the office on submission of receipts, on the same basis as reimbursement for staff. Office volunteers working 5 hours or more per day may claim a subsistence allowance for lunch of £5 with no receipt required.

14 Consultants and contractors

Consultants and contractors should pay their own expenses unless otherwise agreed in their contract. Where travel costs are reimbursed, they should be in line with the guidelines and limits in this policy.

15 Expenses that are not reimbursable

LSx will not normally reimburse the following:

- Travel from your home to your normal place of work (except for volunteers)
- Extensions of business trips for personal travel, or additional costs incurred because of an extension for personal travel
- Valet parking, parking fines, traffic citations, clamping and recovery charges, towing and repair charges
- The cost of tobacco products, minibars, hotel gyms, saunas, personal laundry (except for trips exceeding 5 days), pay-per-view movies or other entertainment while travelling