

The SUN Network Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Payment of Public Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear and robust procedures for payment and reimbursement of expenses to people with an interest in mental health and/or drug and alcohol services locally who are part of the work of The SUN Network.

It is the core task of The SUN Network to engage with these individuals in significant numbers, and therefore it is essential to be clear about the terms of engagement.

Payment and/or reimbursement of expenses may be necessary in the following circumstances (this list is not comprehensive):

- Where people are incurring expenses of their own by participating in *work stream* activities organised by The SUN Network. (Work stream activity is defined by us as a particular project or process whereby we are expecting the member of the public to carry out work equivalent to that of a paid role within our organisation)
- Where a financial incentive such as a voucher or entry into a prize draw may be necessary in order to encourage participation.

It is intended that the clear and robust procedures set out in this policy will:

- Be one way of encouraging people to become involved in The SUN Network activities, by showing that their contributions are properly valued
- Ensure that involvement is inclusive and accessible for everyone and that they will not be left out of pocket or put at risk of being financially worse off because of their involvement
- Demonstrate the values of The SUN Network so that people will be encouraged to participate in our work
- Encourage individuals and organisations within the integrated Care System to value and pay for lived experience contributions

Staff should at all times be pro-active about this policy and its implementation, confidently offering and explaining it to potential beneficiaries and taking responsibility to make sure it is administered as efficiently as possible. However, acknowledging that not everyone requires or is able to accept payment for involvement, so to advise individuals that payment is an option without being overbearing or insensitive.

Scope

It is important to be clear about when this policy is applicable and when it is not.

The SUN Network will not pay expenses or make other payments in the following circumstances (this list is not comprehensive):

- Where a member of the public is simply contributing their views without incurring expenses, for example: offering feedback on a service
- Where the involvement – which may be participating at a meeting, workshop, or conference, or working alongside staff to co-produce a plan or a service – is through another agency (most probably commissioners or Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT)) or is outside of our organisational remit or funding streams. If in doubt, the executive Director can advise
- Where the member of the public is a child
- Where the organisation's role is simply to advertise or promote engagement in a piece of work which is led by another agency

Duties

All staff must be aware of this policy. If staff have queries on it, they should raise them with the Executive Director. In the event of members of the public having issues or complaints about this policy which cannot be immediately resolved by the member of staff, the member of staff should refer to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director must make new staff aware of the policy as part of their induction and should be available to answer queries as necessary, ensuring that it is consistently applied.

The Executive Director should also ensure that the policy is reviewed within its defined period of three years or earlier if new legislation requires it.

Prior to Engagement

Before engagement has begun, the responsible member of staff must consider whether this policy is relevant and if it is, discuss it with any participating members of the public.

Staff should:

- Understand that there is no obligation on participants to accept payment or expenses
- Explain what is available to them for the particular engagement activity, outlining the difference between expenses and payment for activity
- Confirm with the Executive Director that there is funding available for this purpose
- When payments are being considered, staff should tell the member of the public that if they are on benefits these may be affected and that they may wish to seek independent advice on this from an agency such as Citizens Advice or a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) advisor (it is the member of the public's responsibility to do this). *

- That there is no abuse of the payment system (overclaiming, fraudulent claiming or claiming to a bank account other than their own)
- Be aware that we do not pay for travel time

[Note: Payment of *expenses* will not affect the amounts of welfare benefits payable.]

If it is agreed that expenses or other payments are to be paid, the process should be explained, including the paperwork, the amounts, and the timescale for payment. Staff are welcome to share this policy with members of the public if that would be helpful.

If it is the preference of the member of the public to be paid in vouchers rather than cash, they can select this option on the claim form.

The value of any prize to encourage involvement should not exceed £30 per individual prize.

Engagement

The claim form required for any expenses or other payment is shown at Annex 1. Where possible, this should be completed at the time of the event (e.g., immediately after a meeting and staff members offer paper copies) It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure any payments are made without delay and that the individual is aware that they must always claim within 60 days from the occasion they are claiming for. The form must be given to the Executive Director for payment. Electronic use of the claim form is also acceptable.

Expenses That May Be Claimed

Any of the following types of *expenses* may be claimed, with prior agreement from the staff member responsible for leading the involvement activity in conjunction with the Executive Director confirming funding:

- Travel
- Parking
- Food
- Necessary stationery and equipment
- Accommodation
- Conference booking fees

People are expected to use the most economic and practicable forms of transport whilst meeting their individual needs. Public transport and parking claims must be supported by appropriate receipts. Private vehicle travel expenses will be paid at the same rate as for staff using their own vehicles and will include the passenger rate where applicable.

Claims will only be accepted for use of private cars for the most direct route available. The business mileage rate payable for cars is 45p per mile for up to 10,000 miles per annum, and an extra 2p per passenger per mile. The business mileage rate payable for motorcycles is 33p per mile up to 3500 miles

Making A Payment

Payment and claims for reimbursement forms will need to be completed promptly after the involvement activity has taken place and submitted internally.

Claims submitted more than 60 days after the event will not be honoured.

Every payment or claim for reimbursement form must be signed by the claimant.

Copies of all receipts must be attached. No reimbursement will be made without receipts.

The organisation will keep records for the reimbursement of expenses so that they are available in case of enquiries regarding benefit rules and tax purposes.

If the person is in receipt of benefits and requires a letter as evidence of their involvement, it is their responsibility to request this, and the responsibility of The SUN Network to provide them with this.

The SUN Network is also required to give accurate details of any payments made to an individual if asked to do so by the Benefits Agency, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), or Inland Revenue.

The SUN Network can accept no responsibility if members of the public are penalised once such information is shared.

Rates of Pay

The offer of payment and reimbursement can be made to anyone who has been asked by The SUN Network to participate in an involvement activity as outlined in section one above. The tables below outline the most common types of involvement activity and the suggested rate of pay to compensate people for their time and contribution. It is recognised that in some circumstances, the suggested payment rates may be varied to ensure equity, or where it is justified by the expectations of the role. This must be agreed in advance by the Executive Director.

If people are involved in part of a session, they will be paid pro rata according to the rate of pay applicable.

Suggested subsistence allowances:

Type of allowance	Details	£
Night allowances	Actual receipted costs of bed and breakfast up to a maximum of:	£60.00
	In non-commercial accommodation, per 24-hour period:	£25.00

Meal Allowance	Per 24-hour period	£25.00
Lunch Allowance	More than five hours away from base, including the lunchtime period between 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	£5.00
Evening Meal Allowance	More than ten hours away from base and return after 7:00 pm	£15.00

Suggested rate of pay for activities.

Where people are incurring expenses of their own by participating in work stream activities organised by The SUN Network. (Work stream activity is defined by us as a particular project or process whereby we are expecting the member of the public to carry out work equivalent to that of a paid role within our organisation)

Involvement Activity	£
Attending events by invitation and being asked to give an individual view only	Expenses and provision of refreshments
Participation in working groups, focus groups, committees, recruitment panels, designated meetings, etc.	£12.00 per hour + expenses

Methods of Payment

Payments can be in the form of bank transfer to the individuals own bank account (not a family member or friend) or by electronic vouchers. All payment and vouchers are recorded by The SUN Network for HMRC and tax purposes. Other methods of payment that are in line with legislation can be explored with the agreement of the Executive Director.

Support and Advice

The SUN Network will provide support to members of the public so that they can be properly involved in their activities. This includes stationery or materials that will assist them in being involved in activities, as well as hard or electronic copies of relevant policies and documents needed.

Staff will assist those who need help in understanding the terms and conditions of their involvement and completing the forms to claim payments.

Support will also include access to any potential training that participants need to undertake, in order to successfully carry out their role e.g., co-production training.

*Access to guidance and advice on receiving payments for involvement work, and how they may affect benefit entitlements can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-your-earnings-affect-your-payments>

A Gov.uk calculator to help you see how payments may affect your benefits can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>

The SUN Network will always advise you to speak to your DWP advisor.

Approved by The SUN Network Board of Directors July 2024

Next Review Date: July 2027

Responsible Officer: Executive Director of The SUN Network.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Kev Cliff".

Signed:

Kev Cliff

Chair of Directors

Date: 29th July 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Lois Sidney".

Signed:

Lois Sidney

Executive Director

Date: 29th July 2024