



Resident Governance Expenses and Reward Policy

Version 1

Approved by: Executive Team
Board approval on the principle of
pay (section three)

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to describe the principles for resident governance member expenses and reward (pay).
- 1.2 Members are only entitled to claim reimbursement of reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses. By this, we mean money that has been paid out by the member to take part in Optivo business.
- 1.3 Members are responsible for declaring work (including voluntary) to the Department of Work and Pensions if claiming welfare benefits. The effect of this work depends on individual circumstances. We encourage all members to meet with our Financial Inclusion Team. This information will be provided as part of the recruitment and induction processes.

2.0 Policy statement and definitions

- 2.1 The terms **we**, **our** and **us** means Optivo. **Members** is the collective term for resident governance members. Where we refer to members of a specific group, that group's name will be stated.
- 2.2 **Resident governance structure** – the collective name for the groups where residents can be formally involved in monitoring and scrutinising Optivo performance and services.
- 2.3 **Governance structure** – the collective name for the Optivo Board and Committees. This doesn't include any resident groups.
- 2.4 **Informal resident involvement** – the term used to describe opportunities for any resident to get involved with Optivo, without commitment. For example, attending events, forums or completing a survey.

3.0 Honorarium (payment) to Scrutiny Panel members

- 3.1 Scrutiny Panel members receive an honorarium for their services. Scrutiny Panel Members are not employees of Optivo.

- 3.2 The honorarium is paid at London Living Wage, for each hour spent on a scrutiny review. Scrutiny Panel members can choose to receive this as a monetary payment or as vouchers.
- 3.3 Scrutiny Panel members will not be paid to attend training, unless it's mandatory for a scrutiny review.

4.0 Expenses

- 4.1 Members can claim for the following, 'out of pocket' expenses:

1. Mileage, including toll charges and car parking fees
2. Rail travel and public transport
3. Some meal costs
4. Reasonable child care and carer costs (including carers accompanying members to meetings)
5. Telephone calls made in respect of Group business
6. Information technology
7. Overnight accommodation (in limited circumstances, e.g. attending an overnight conference).

- 4.2 Expense claims must be made within three months of the date the expense was incurred. Claims will be authorised and processed by the Governance and Compliance Department in line with our Operating Regulations and delegated authority levels.

- 4.3 Members are not able to claim for:

1. Care for animals
2. Cycling or walking to and from meetings
3. Items for which the member has incurred no expense, i.e. if a member were to get a lift with another member
4. Printing costs, i.e. paper and ink cartridges
5. Postage.

- 4.4 In line with environmental objectives and value for money, members should view communication electronically, where possible. Printed material / meeting papers will be provided by staff for members who don't have an iPad / tablet. Members can also use their own tablets to view papers and should notify the Governance and Compliance Department they no longer require hard copies.

5.0 Mileage

- 5.1 Mileage is claimed on a 'pence per mile' basis. Members can claim the distance from their home to the meeting venue, via the most direct route. If meeting start times require members to travel directly from a different location, and the journey is longer, we may provide the additional mileage with prior arrangement of the Governance and Compliance Department. This will be subject to 'spot-checks' using route planner.

- 5.2 Members are responsible for ensuring they hold appropriate vehicle insurance. They're responsible for contacting their individual insurance providers to confirm if any travel to (Optivo) meetings is classified as business purposes.
- 5.3 In keeping with our environmental objectives, members will also be entitled to claim an additional amount for carrying other members as passengers in their vehicle providing they are not part of their household/family.
- 5.4 The mileage rate payable will be in line with HMRC guidance and these amounts can go up or down. The Governance and Compliance Department will notify members of rates and any changes.
- 5.5 If car parking, congestion or toll charges are incurred, receipts must be obtained and attached to the claim form. Optivo will not pay for any car parking penalties, penalty notices or fines incurred as a result of an overstay, unlawful parking or failure to purchase a valid parking ticket.

6.0 Rail and public transport

- 6.1 Members are entitled to claim the cost of rail and public transport; i.e. trains, buses, tube, etc. In London, if a member uses their Oyster / Contactless Card, the cost of the single journey at the Oyster rate will be reimbursed. Journey histories can be obtained at www.tfl.gov.uk for registered cards. A printout of the last eight journeys is also available on request from ticket offices for unregistered Oyster cards. Optivo will not reimburse the actual cost of topping up Oyster cards.
- 6.2 There are no circumstances when first class travel will be paid.
- 6.3 Taxis should only be used as a last resort. For example, where public transport is:
- Unavailable
 - Inappropriate (for example, due to disability)
 - More expensive
 - Considered unsafe (for example, travelling after dark).

Taxis will only be used when they've been booked by Optivo staff, using an Optivo taxi company account. Members who are registered disabled, have mobility or health issues that prevent them from using public transport may request a taxi to attend Optivo events. Members travelling from a similar area will be expected to share taxis. At least 24 hours' notice must be given if a taxi is required. The exception would be taking a taxi from a rail station to the meeting venue. Then claims for taxi fares must be supported with receipts and attached to the claim form.

- 6.4 If a member attends a non-mandatory external event, they will be expected to use public transport where possible. Claims for public transport fares must be supported with receipts and attached to the claim form.

7.0 Some meal costs

- 7.1 When members are away from home for more than five hours, spanning a mealtime, we will provide food and drink. If members attend an Optivo external event where food and drink is provided, members may not claim for purchases of their own food or drink.
- 7.2 If food hasn't been provided, members may claim the cost of a meal (including non-alcoholic drinks) whilst on official Optivo governance business, provided they will be away from their home for more than five hours spanning normal meal times.
- 7.3 When lunch and/or dinner is claimed – the maximum allowed for each is as follows:
- Breakfast £5 (before noon)
 - Lunch £7.75 (12noon to 2pm)
 - Dinner £20 (after 5pm).

Receipts must be obtained and attached to the claim form. The cost of alcoholic drinks will not be reimbursed.

8.0 Carer costs

- 8.1 We will cover childcare and carer costs to enable members to attend Optivo governance meetings and events. Details of dependants being cared for must be provided. Members must provide the Governance and Compliance Department with details of dependents, if making a claim.
- 8.2 Childcare will only be paid for children up to their 16th birthday. Care for children aged 16 years or above will only be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances.
- 8.3 We will reimburse up to £7 per hour for child carer costs. This is not per child. We will reimburse up to £8.50 per hour for adult carer costs.
- 8.4 In line with adult carer costs, members who require a carer's support during meetings may claim up to £8.50 an hour for their carer, where no external funding is available.
- 8.5 Where dependants have additional care needs, members are able to speak to us about claiming for extra costs. This will be subject to:
- Approval from the Governance and Compliance Department
 - Evidence of additional needs.

9.0 Telephone calls made in response of Optivo business

- 9.1 Telephone calls made on behalf of Optivo business to other resident governance members can be claimed, but must be evidenced by a telephone call log and an

itemised bill. Calls to staff will not be reimbursed, as we expect members to use the Optivo free phone number.

- 9.2 The cost of line rental will not be reimbursed. Lump sum claims not related to actual usage will not be reimbursed.
- 9.3 If a member's telephone company charges for an itemised bill, we will reimburse this, providing a receipt is provided.

10.0 Postage

- 10.1 Email should be used whenever possible. Alternatively the Governance and Compliance Team can supply pre-paid envelopes.

11.0 Information technology

- 11.1 Optivo will support members in their role by providing access to a computer and relevant internet or email access.
- 11.2 If a member is given IT equipment to use, this is on a 'loan' basis and must be returned if they cease to be a member.
- 11.3 Free Wi-Fi is provided in Optivo offices wherever possible.
- 11.4 Members may claim up to £15 a month for broadband expenses if:
1. We have received a signed 'Acceptable Use Policy' and agreement to comply with the Probity Policy
 2. The access has not been misused according to the above policies.
- 11.5 Members may not make a broadband claim if:
1. They don't regularly communicate with us electronically
 2. They don't regularly log into their Optivo account
 3. They have been provided with technology that enables them to use 3G, 4G or something similar.

12.0 Overnight accommodation

- 12.1 In limited circumstances Optivo will pay for overnight accommodation for members, e.g. when attending overnight conferences. The Governance and Compliance Department will approve each request on an individual basis.

13.0 Training, development and support

- 13.1 Members will receive training to support them in their role.
- 13.2 Ongoing development needs and other relevant support will be addressed through personal development reviews.

14.0 Responsibilities

- 14.1 The Board is responsible for approving the principle of paying Scrutiny Panel members.
- 14.2 The Executive Team is responsible for approving this policy.
- 14.3 The Executive Director Governance & Compliance is responsible for this policy. The Governance and Compliance Department provides administrative support for processing Board and Committee pay and expenses.

9.0 Review

- 9.1 We'll review this Policy at the next governance review, which is expected to be autumn 2018.