

Reviewed

19 June 2024

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June 2027

Equality and diversity policy statement

This policy document can be produced in various formats, for instance, in larger print or audio-format; and it can also be translated into other languages, as appropriate.

Our equality and diversity policy statement describes our key equality commitments that we use to develop all organisational services; this includes employment services and services to tenants and other customers.

Our core values include providing a fair and equal service for all people and this is detailed in our Equality and Diversity Policy. Our approach to implementing this policy will reflect that commitment.

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Introduction

Pineview Housing Association Ltd understands that on occasion employees, committee and customer forum member will incur expenses whilst carrying out their role and must be reimbursed. This policy sets out the expectations and procedure for the Association reimbursing work related expenses.

This Policy relates to Staff, Committee and Customer Forum members and is based on the EVH Model Expenses Policy updated in May 2016 and demonstrates integrity and accountability in line with both the Code of Conduct and the Entitlements, Payments and Benefit Policy.

Principles

- Employees and volunteer members of the Association will be neither financially advantaged nor disadvantaged as a result of incurring genuine business expenses.
- Employees' will travel to and from their normal place of work in their own time and at their own expense.
- The association will reimburse costs of any necessary travel made on its behalf, over and above normal travel to work.
- Travel must be by the most cost effective mode of transport, taking into account journey time as well as monetary cost. For staff members travel will be as per EVH terms & Conditions of Employment.
- Any discount obtained in the course of incurring an expense must be included in any subsequent claim submitted.
- Any breeches of this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Association's procedures.

Business Car Insurance

Employees or volunteer members using their own cars for business travel must have their vehicle comprehensively insured and specifically state for business purposes (not just commuting to a single workplace). A copy of the insurance certificate must be provided to the Health and Safety Administrator before travelling for business purposes takes place and expenses are submitted. Thereafter copies of annual renewal certificates must be submitted. The Association will not accept responsibility for any damage to an employees' car or for injury to the occupants whilst the car is being used for business purposes. The Association will not process reimbursements without evidence of valid insurance. Individuals are solely responsible for ensuring the road-worthiness of the vehicle prior to any journey.

Travelling by Car

Where it is cost effective to make a business journey by an employees' or volunteer members' car, a mileage allowance may be claimed in line with current EVH allowance rates.

Any expense claim must detail the number of miles travelled, the destination and the purpose of the journey.

If the employee travels directly to and/or from home then the amount of miles between their home and normal place of work should be deducted from the mileage claimed.

Travelling by Taxi

Taxis should only be used with authority of Senior Staff when necessary and before every journey. Receipts should be obtained for the fare only and submitted with the expenses claim. The Association will not reimburse any outlay by individuals in terms of a tip to the driver.

Travelling by Public Transport

Travel by bus, train or other public transport should only be by standard class. Where possible, tickets should be booked in advance to take full advantage of any discounts available on fares. All claims should be accompanied by tickets and/or receipts.

Travelling by Air

Where necessary, air travel is permitted only where prior approval has been granted by the Management Committee. Air travel will be refunded at economy class rates only. Where possible, tickets should be booked well in advance to take full advantage of any discounts available on fares. All claims should be accompanied by tickets and/or receipts.

Subsistence Allowance

The rates of the allowance are based on an extension to the working day and/or working out with an employee's normal area. It is therefore necessary to detail the start and finish times of each business activity when claiming the allowance.

Levels of subsistence allowance

1. For employees who are on duty for more than 10 hours in any one day.
2. For employees who are on duty out with their normal area between 5 and 10 hours in any one day.

Rates

The rates are reviewed every year as part of salary negotiations and announced thereafter. See EVH Salary Scales for the current year.

Corrective Eyewear

Where an employee uses VDU equipment for the majority of their role (as stated in the Association's H&S Manual) they can claim for a contribution towards corrective eyewear. If further eye tests result in a different prescription being prescribed, the allowance can be claimed again. The allowance can only be claimed on subsequent occasions when there is a change in prescription. Verification of the change in prescription must be submitted with the expense via a letter from the optician that confirms the individual's prescription has changed and they require corrective eyewear for VDU use.

Conference Expenses

Committee and Customer Forum Members:

Where members are required to attend an overnight conference an allowance of £30.00 per night will be given.

Where a members are required to attend an evening function at which they may require to purchase refreshments, an allowance of £20 will be made. This allowance will not be paid if an overnight allowance is being paid. Where possible, receipts should be provided.

An allowance up to a maximum of £10 will be made for tea/coffee stops when travelling to a conference or a visit to another area. Receipts must be provided.

Staff Members:

Staff expenses will be as per the EVH terms and conditions of employment and associated current allowance rates.

Where possible, receipts should be provided, but where this is not possible the allowance will be taxed as income for staff as appropriate.

Telephone Calls

Staff and volunteer members are entitled to claim the cost of telephone calls incurred in the course of their duties.

Where possible, evidence of the call should be produced either by a home telephone bill, a hotel bill or a mobile phone bill. Where this is not possible, a reasonable amount may be claimed in accordance with current BT rates. For calls made from a pay as you go mobile phone 50p per call will be given.

Other Expenses – Committee and Customer Forum Members

Child Care or Caring Responsibilities

To fulfil the duties expected of Committee Members and Customer Forum Members and to ensure a representative balance of skills and experience on the Management Committee, the Association will meet reasonable expenses for childcare or carers' costs. Payment of childcare and carers' costs will normally be made when volunteer members are attending meetings, training events, seminars and conferences or whilst acting on Pineview business.

Payment will be made for children under 16 years of age, or up to and including age 18 years for children with disabilities, and for adult dependents who are in receipt of welfare benefits relating to attention/supervision needs or disability. The children and adult dependents must normally live with the committee member. Payment will not be made to another member of the volunteer member's household but may be paid to close relatives, who live elsewhere. Childcare costs will be paid for any children or step children of a committee member, or any children for whom the committee member is the legal guardian.

To comply with the law on caring for children in return for payment, the person looking after the child should be:

- A registered childminder
- A close relative of the child

Hourly care costs will be paid, up to a maximum equivalent of the hourly rate of the Real Living Wage. A limit of 8 hours will be paid in any one day. No extra payment will be made for additional children or adult dependents.

The Director will have the discretion to pay care costs if requested by volunteer members in particular circumstances.

Loss of Earnings

The Association will pay loss of earnings providing that:

- the payment is not being made in respect of a routine meeting and
- every effort has been made to hold the relevant meeting at a time which will avoid volunteers losing salary or annual leave and
- attendance by the person claiming loss of earnings was important and
- the volunteer members is able to provide a letter from their employer confirming that earnings have been lost or annual leave entitlement has been used and the amount or value involved

There will be a limit on the amount payable per day which will be equal to the current daily jury duty rate.

Representation on Other Organisations

Sometimes volunteer members will represent the Association on other organisations. Payment of expenses will not be automatic but must be approved by the Management Committee which will take each request on its merits.

Miscellaneous Expenses

Occasionally, other reasonable expenses incurred by employees and volunteer members that are not covered in this policy may be refunded by the Association. Each case will be considered on its own merits without setting any precedent for the future.

All expenses claims must be submitted using the attached form (S.09a Expenses Claim Form) and accompanied by appropriate receipts to the Senior Finance & Corporate Services Officer.

Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years to ensure it continues to meet the requirements of the Association or where EVH issues a revised Expenses Model Policy, whichever is sooner.