Chapter 10: Staff Expenses

1. About this Chapter

1.1 This chapter sets out what you should do, if in the course of your work you incur expenses, such as travel and subsistence.

1.2 This chapter explains:

- when you can claim travel and subsistence expenses and incidental costs
- when you may be eligible to claim for extra travelling expenses incurred as a result of public transport being disrupted
- the rules for reimbursement of professional subscriptions
- the procedure for making a claim for travel and subsistence expenses and incidental costs
- the maximum rates for payments (expenditure claims to be supported by receipts).

2. Staff Expenses Policy

2.1 The Staff Expenses Policy sets out the rules and processes which staff of the House of Commons Service must comply with in respect of expenses incurred in the course of their duties, to ensure that HR policy, finance, and procurement rules are being followed alongside HMRC rules and regulations. It covers expenses relating to the following: travel by public transport for work purposes (other than normal home to work and return journeys); mileage; subsistence; car parking and congestion charge; hospitality and entertainment; and professional subscriptions.

Principles

2.2 The guiding principle of the Staff Expense Policy is one of reimbursement for expenditure necessarily and actually incurred in order to meet House of Commons’ objectives. The House of Commons Service will reimburse employees for reasonable expenses wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred in connection with its business. Employees should not be either financially disadvantaged or advantaged because of genuine business expenses resulting from the need to be away from home and work. A full list of the general principles are set out in the Staff Expenses Policy.

2.3 The Staff Expense Policy is on the Intranet at:

[Staff Expenses Policy]

3. Travel on Official Business Away from the House of Commons

3.1 The House will meet the cost of any travel or other expenses you necessarily incur when undertaking official business, subject to the rules set out in the Staff Expenses Policy.

3.2 You are responsible for meeting the cost of your daily travel between your home and your permanent place of work.
3.3 If your travel on official duties is covered by a season (or other) ticket which you use for your journey to and from work, then no claim will be allowed.

3.4 There are separate rules relating only to staff travelling with Members of Parliament (select Committee travel and international assembly delegation travel) only. These are set out in the Staff Expenses Policy.

3.5 In exceptional circumstances you may be reimbursed for a reasonable travelling upgrade when on official business and away from the House. For example:

- if you have a disability or are pregnant
- you are travelling on a long-haul flight and needing to attend a meeting or conference soon after arrival
- you are required to travel by rail at night and are travelling alone

**Travelling time when on official business away from the House**

3.6 The rules for claiming reimbursement for travelling time in excess of your normal travelling time for home-to-office/office-to-home journeys is set out in chapter 9 of the Staff Handbook.

**Insurance for staff travelling overseas on official business away from the House**

**Personal Accident Insurance**

3.7 Staff who suffer serious injury when at work or when commuting will be covered by the House’s personal accident insurance policy. Details are on the intranet at:

[Commons Staff Insurance](#)

**Travel Insurance**

3.8 Staff are covered by the House’s travel insurance policy when travelling abroad on official business. Details are on the intranet at:

[Travel Insurance](#)

3.9 For further information please contact the Insurance Administrator on ext. 5732.

4. Subsistence Payments and Personal or Incidental Expenses Allowance

**Subsistence**

4.1 The purpose of subsistence payments is to meet the necessary additional costs of food and accommodation incurred by staff when working on official business away from home or Westminster.

4.2 The rules on claiming subsistence are set out in the Staff Expenses Policy.
4.3 Subsistence arrangements relating to a disruption in public transport are covered separately in paragraphs 5.17 to 5.20.

**Personal or incidental expenses allowance**

4.4 If you are away from home on official business and have to stay overnight you may also claim:

- a personal or incidental expenses allowance.

4.5 The maximum current rate is set out in the [Staff Expenses Policy](#).

### 5. Transport Disruption

#### General

5.1 See [chapter 11](#) for the policy and procedure on what is expected of you when you face difficulties attending work during severe weather or transport disruption.

5.2 HMRC guidance makes clear that the tax exemption is applicable only if the disruption is caused by a strike or industrial action, if not then the reimbursement is taxable. More detailed advice on the tax position is available via your Finance Business Partner.

**Extra travel expenses when public transport is disrupted**

5.3 If you incur additional travel costs due to disruption of travel or public transport in an emergency, you may claim any reasonable additional expenses you have incurred in travelling to and from work (such as, additional train or bus fares because you have to travel to an alternative railway station) providing that:

- your journey from home to office is more than four miles
- you do not claim unnecessary or avoidable expenses.

5.4 You should use alternative public transport where possible.

5.5 In exceptional circumstances (for example, if you have a disability or are pregnant) reasonable travelling expenses may be reimbursed if you live less than four miles from work. This is subject to approval from the budget holding manager.

5.6 The ‘four mile rule’ also applies to travel from London main line termini to work, in the absence of public transport. You are expected to walk from the terminus to work unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case your Line Manager has the discretion to reimburse you for your taxi fare.

5.7 If your travel during a period of disruption of public transport is covered by a season (or other) ticket which you use for your journey to and from work, then no claim will be allowed.
5.8 If your travel during a period of disruption of public transport is partially covered by a season (or other) ticket which you use for your journey to and from work, then the portion not covered may be eligible to be claimed.

5.9 When submitting a claim, you will need to supply the following information:

- receipts or oyster statement
- how and when the excess expenses arose, and
- the amount, after taking into account any credit due on season (or other) tickets (see paragraphs 5.7 to 5.8 above).

**Use of taxis when public transport is disrupted**

5.10 If your role has been designated as essential, you may, with the prior authority of your Line Manager, take a taxi to or from work, in the following circumstances:

- no alternative public transport or late night transport is available, or
- your health precludes walking the prescribed distances.

5.11 You must produce receipts to support your claim for reimbursement of taxi fares.

5.12 Teams can, if they wish, nominate certain officials to coordinate bookings within their team and they can then make bookings with the Admissions Order Office. Your Line Manager should be able to tell you what arrangement there is for making bookings. Such arrangements will not preclude sharing late night transport with staff from other teams.

**Car parking arrangements when public transport is disrupted**

5.13 If you have a permit for the Palace of Westminster car park, normal parking arrangements apply on a first come, first served basis. Category 6 permit holders (permanent photo identity pass holders) may park on non-sitting Fridays and non-sitting days, if space permits.

5.14 Arrangements for essential staff who have not been issued with a parking permit may be made with the Serjeant at Arms’ Office through your Line Manager. This is subject to the likely availability of space. Details of the Q-Park Westminster car park is on the following website:

[Q-Park Westminster car park](#)

5.15 Essential staff using their own cars who have to use parking space for which charges are levied will be reimbursed the necessary expenditure involved.

5.16 The full rules relating to car parking and congestion charge are set out in the [Staff Expenses Policy](#).
Accommodation and subsistence when public transport is disrupted

5.17 If you are designated as essential staff and cannot make the journey home you may make private arrangements to stay within daily travelling distance. This may include House sponsored sleeping accommodation if agreed by management.

5.18 Subject to the rates set out in the Staff Expenses Policy, claims for reimbursement may be made as follows:

- If your own arrangements are supported by receipts you may claim
  - reimbursement of the actual costs of bed and breakfast
  - the cost of other meals
  - personal or incidental expenses allowance
  - any necessary additional travelling expenses.

- If your own arrangements are not supported by receipts, you may claim
  - personal or incidental expenses allowance

- If you sleep in House overnight accommodation, you may claim supported by receipts
  - the cost of meals
  - personal or incidental expenses allowance.

5.19 Sleeping accommodation for those who wish to stay overnight in House-sponsored accommodation is available on a first come, first served basis. If you require overnight accommodation you should contact the In House Services Service Centre on ext. 4226.

5.20 Further information on House sponsored overnight accommodation is on the Intranet at: Overnight accommodation

Staff on regular night duty when public transport is disrupted

5.21 If you are undertaking regular night duty during a transport emergency and sleep in House-sponsored accommodation or stay elsewhere without returning home in order to attend for duty, you may also claim under the arrangements set out above in paragraphs 5.17 to 5.18, but only if you incur additional expenses (see Staff Expenses Policy for maximum payment rates).

5.22 Where accommodation is provided as part of your normal work arrangement, you are not eligible to claim expenses or subsistence during a transport emergency.

6. Professional subscriptions

6.1 Staff who are members of a professional body may reclaim the cost of one professional subscription to that body per year provided that it satisfies the following conditions:

- where the membership is either essential for carrying out your present duties or
- directly relevant to your post.
6.2 For more information see the section on Professional Subscriptions in the Staff Expenses Policy.

7. Making expenses claims

7.1 The process for claiming expenses is set out in of the Staff Expenses Policy

8. If You Have Queries

8.1 This chapter is not intended to cover every eventuality. If you have any queries please send these to payandreward@parliament.uk.