Commissioners' fees and expenses policy

Document status

Abstract	This document outlines the Commission's approach to claiming and paying fees and expenses to Commissioners
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Revision frequency	Every two years (Commissioners' fee rates to be reviewed annually in line with the recommendations of the Senior Salaries Review Body for judges)
Owner	Chief Executive Officer
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Document revision

Version	Date	Revised by	Purpose of issue	Summary of changes
V9 – 11.5 Dec 2018 – Mar 2024 - The policy has undergone several updates to reflect revised fee rates. Amendments have also incorporated internal audit recommendations, additional guidance for Commissioners, clarification on claimable activities, updates to railcard eligibility, and changes to accommodation rates. Further revisions included updating job titles and terminology, clarifying Commissioners' employment status, and revising the fees and expenses claims process.				
V11.6	Sep 25	Rafa Chowdhury	Updated fee rates	Updated fee rates to 2025/26 levels
V12	Feb 26	Rafa Chowdhury/Bipon Bhakri	Two-year review	Separated out from staff expenses policy, with all references to staff removed. Updated mileage rates. Updated and increased admin allowances. Removed review matrix – claims to be claimed based on actual time spent. Updated Commissioner fee rates to 2026/27 levels. The definition of a daily rate has been updated from 8 hours to 7.5 hours.

Document distribution / approval

Name	Purpose
Leadership Team	For comment
Chief Executive	For approval
ARC	For noting
Commission Board	For noting

Name	Purpose
Commissioners	Final version for distribution as a mandatory read

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Policy principles

The Commission's fees and expenses policy is designed to ensure that expenses incurred while carrying out official duties are managed in a fair, transparent and cost-effective manner. The following principles underpin the policy:

1. Value for money
All expenses must represent the most economical option available, balancing cost with practicality and business needs.

2. Business necessity
Reimbursement will only be made for expenses that are required for the performance of Commission duties and directly related to official business.

3. Fairness and consistency
Clear limits and conditions apply to all claims to ensure equitable treatment of Commissioners and compliance with organisational standards.

4. Safety and compliance
Commissioners must meet all legal and organisational requirements, such as completing the driving risk assessment and holding appropriate insurance for business use.

5. Environmental responsibility
The policy supports sustainable travel choices, including the use of public transport and advisory mileage rates for electric vehicles.

6. Transparency and accountability
All claims must be supported by receipts and submitted promptly to maintain accurate financial records and uphold accountability.

7. Adaptability to modern working practices
Provisions for home-working equipment are included, supporting flexible and efficient working practices.

Commissioners' fees

Commissioners' fees were set by the Speaker's Committee when the Commission was established. The fee level is reviewed annually, and any increases reflect the percentage increase paid to High Court Judges as part of the Senior Salaries Review Body's work.

The role of Commissioner is a statutory appointment and, as such, Commissioners are regarded as office holders (not as employees or self-employed).

For the purpose of fee claims, a full-day rate represents 7.5 hours of Commission-related work (and a half-day accordingly represents 3.75 hours of Commission-related work).

Commissioners are expected to consider the test of public scrutiny when making claims. Where a Commissioner claims a full-day fee, it is not expected that they will undertake paid work for another organisation on the same day.

The Chair of the Board is remunerated through a fixed annual amount (effective from 1 January 2026) and is not eligible for claiming fees as set out below but will be able to claim expenses in relation to travel, accommodation, other expenses and working from home as laid out in this policy.

Current rates (from 1 April 2026) are:

- Deputy Chair: daily fee of £436 (£218 per half day, £58.13 per 1 hour) unless formally deputising for the Chair, in which case a 9.5% mark-up will be applied to the Deputy Chair's remuneration (daily fee of £494, £247 per half day, £65.86 per hour).
- Other members: daily fee of £436 (£218 per half day, £58.13 per 1 hour).

The maximum that can be claimed for activity undertaken within a single day is the full-day rate.

Administrative allowances

<u>Commissioners may claim a fixed monthly administrative allowance for:</u>

- Review allocations and brief discussions on reviews
- Reading and responding to emails
- Short conversations with staff/ fellow Commissioners/Chief Executive/Chair
- General reading (not Board papers)

Monthly administrative allowances:

Deputy Chair	- 1 day per month
Commissioner	- ½ day per month
ARC Chair	- ½ day per month

Where a Commissioner's administrative workload exceeds the above allowance, additional time may be claimed separately to reflect the actual time worked.

Review-related activity

Commissioners should claim for review-related activities based on the actual time spent on them, rounded to the nearest half hour. Claims may include travel time where this is necessary to deliver the activity.

Review-related activities cover the following:

- **Preliminary period**
  This includes meeting preparation, Group Leaders' meeting and Full Council meeting

- **Parish meetings**
  These are not required for all reviews

- **Councillor numbers**
  This includes liaison and discussions over the councillor numbers report

- **Draft Recommendations**
  Report preparation and consultation involvement

- **Virtual tour**
  For draft and/or final recommendations as required

- **Physical tour**
  For draft and/or final recommendations as required, including travel (usually one fee day in any 24-hour period)

- **Final Recommendations**
  This includes report preparation

Meeting-related claims

Commissioners should claim separately for attending Board and other Commission-related meetings. Meeting-related activities cover the following:

- *Commission meeting preparation* - The time spent reading Commission papers and related materials in preparation for Commission Board meetings or other formal meetings (such as ARC) is claimable, based on the actual time spent rounded to the nearest half hour.

- *Commission meetings* - This should reflect the actual time spent, rounded to the nearest half hour. Attendance at in-person Board meetings or other in-person committee meetings (for example, the Audit and Risk Committee) includes associated and necessary travel. For virtual Board meetings lasting more than five hours, the full-day rate applies.

- Other meetings such as annual appraisals, attendance at subject specific meetings that you have been invited to and attendance at officer meetings (e.g., EDI working group), should be claimed according to the actual time spent, rounded to the nearest half hour.

Claiming process

Commissioners should make their claim using the annual claim form supplied and forward it to the Finance Lead by the 8th of the following month for payroll input.

Commissioners should seek prior authorisation from either the Chief Executive or the Director of Corporate Services for any other time chargeable on Commission business, such as conferences.

Travel

Travelling by train

Commissioners can arrange their own travel for journeys to and from the Commission's offices and areas under review for which they are the lead Commissioner. In these circumstances, Commissioners would normally pay the up-front cost of their travel and then submit an expense claim for reimbursement.

Travel arrangements for Commissioners can also be made by Commission staff.

As a general rule, Commissioners should ensure that travel costs incurred are reasonable and that the most cost-effective means of travel for the journey is taken.

Standard class tickets should be purchased for all journeys unless:

- a first/business class ticket is cheaper
- there is no standard class ticket available
- the Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services determines that for business reasons first class travel is appropriate
- there is a health and safety reason to travel first/business class (e.g., due to disability).

Appropriate evidence for the decision to travel first class in any of these circumstances should be attached to expense claims.

Commissioners are asked to purchase train tickets as far in advance as possible to ensure the best price.

Commissioners have the option to upgrade to first class and to pay the difference themselves between the standard class and first-class fares. Where possible, evidence (e.g., screenshots) should be provided of the different fares.

The Commission will reimburse Commissioners for the cost of the following railcards when purchased, during their term with the organisation, to achieve discounted prices for tickets bought for Commission business.

- Network Railcard
- 16-25 Railcard
- 26-30 Railcard
- Senior Railcard

The Commission will reimburse Commissioners for the cost of a **multi-year railcard**; however, the reimbursement will be **pro-rated** based on the remaining duration of their term.

Travel by tube

For Oyster and contactless payments, we recommend that an account is created so that the journey and payment history can be accessed (however, we do not require receipts for these journeys where the cost is less than £5).

Travel by private cars

It may be appropriate to travel by car if there are no other suitable means of transport, it is cheaper than other means of transport (e.g., where several people are travelling together), there is a substantial saving in travelling time, the journey cannot be made using public transport, heavy luggage or equipment is being carried, or it is in the interests of safety.

Commissioners will not be permitted to drive on Commission business until they have completed the online driving risk assessment form. Completing the driving risk assessment form is an annual requirement. Further information can be found in the driving at work policy.

Commissioners may use their own cars for travel on Commission business **only** if they hold a valid full driving licence for the UK **and** their car insurance policy covers business use. Commissioners must provide to the Business Team an up-to-date copy of their insurance certificate showing this **before** they can use their own cars for Commission business and must inform the Commission if the insurer stops covering for business use.

Providing these requirements are met, Commissioners can claim an allowance per mile for journeys using their vehicles on Commission business (see Appendix A), providing they keep a record of the miles driven on each journey.

The allowance per mile is reduced for every mile driven above 10,000 miles in a financial year. For tax reasons, Commissioners must record the cumulative miles claimed for in a financial year. A fact sheet is available from the HMRC website at: https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/vehicles-you-use-for-work

Commissioners can claim costs for parking, tolls, etc. when supported by receipts.

Travel by hire cars

When it is determined necessary to use a hire car, the booking should be carried out by Commission staff using the Enterprise car hire account.

Cars hired should be from the compact grouping, examples of which are a Ford Focus / Ford Puma / Toyota Corolla / Seat Leon, depending on availability. Larger cars are more expensive and should only be hired in exceptional circumstances.

Commissioners may not use cars hired on Commission business for personal use.

Fuel costs for hired cars will be paid, providing the claim is supported by a receipt.

Travelling by air

Air travel should only be used when it is the most economical and practical method of travel. Whenever possible, flights should be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounted rates.

When travelling by air on Commission business, economy class should be used. The Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services can exceptionally determine that business class travel is appropriate when the flight is outside the UK and lasts for more than 4 hours, or it is cheaper to use a higher class. Appropriate evidence for the decision to travel in a higher class and the authorisation should be attached to expense claims.

Prior approval must be sought from the Director of Corporate Services or Chief Executive before expenditure is incurred on all travel outside the UK on Commission business.

Travelling by taxi

The Commission will reimburse the cost of taxi fares where:

- There are no other suitable modes of transport.
- It is cheaper to use a taxi (e.g., where several people are travelling together)
- It is not possible to make the journey on time using public transport.
- It is not possible or impractical to use public transport (e.g., due to mobility issues).
- Heavy luggage or equipment is being carried.
- You are required to travel at times when public transport may not be practical, or you may not feel safe (e.g., very early or late). In these cases, judgement should be used as to whether staying overnight before or after may be a better and/or more cost-effective option.

A receipt must be provided for any taxi journey taken. Gratuities, where appropriate, and providing the amount is reasonable and commensurate with the costs of the journey, may be claimed. The cost should be included in the receipt total.

Travelling by motorcycle or bicycle

Commissioners may claim an allowance to use their own motorcycle or bicycle for journeys on Commission business. (See Appendix A).

Accommodation expenses

Hotel accommodation

The Commission will pay the costs of commercial overnight accommodation with private facilities for a double room in a standard/medium quality hotel. See Appendix A for the applicable rates.

A flat rate allowance of £5.00 per night to cover incidental costs, such as the cost of small personal items, access to Wi-Fi, etc., may be claimed without submitting receipts. Alternatively, the actual, receipted costs - up to £5 - for these items may be claimed, but not both.

Where a Commissioner is accompanied by their partner during a visit, any additional cost arising from the presence of the partner must either be excluded from the claim or reimbursed within one month of the date of travel. Business insurance applies only to Commissioners undertaking official duties. Partners are not covered under the organisation's business insurance policy in the event of accident, illness or other incidents during travel.

Accommodation bookings should be made in advance by Commission staff whenever possible.
If, exceptionally, it has not been possible to book accommodation in advance, Commissioners should aim to stay in a standard/medium quality hotel within the limits set out in Appendix A.

Commission staff will offer a choice of hotels that fall within the limits set out in Appendix A. If a Commissioner chooses to stay in a hotel that is above the limits set out in Appendix A, they may make the booking themselves and reclaim the cost through an expense claim (up to the limits set out in Appendix A).

Occasionally it may not be possible to find suitable accommodation within the limits set out in Appendix A within reasonable travelling distance/time. The Director of Corporate Services / Chief Executive has discretion to approve a higher rate in these circumstances. Approval <u>must</u> be sought in advance of booking.

Staying overnight with friends and relatives or at a second home

A Commissioner may claim up to £25.00 for actual expenditure when staying overnight with friends and relatives in circumstances where they are away from their permanent home on official duty. The same applies when, in the same circumstances, they are able to stay in accommodation owned by them, but which is not their prime residence, e.g. a second home. HMRC no longer allows a flat rate allowance.

Meals while away from home

The Commission will reimburse the cost of meals when staying away from home overnight on Commission business. If meals are not included in the price of overnight accommodation, Commissioners should obtain a receipt for the cost of any meal claimed for. The cost of meals will be reimbursed up to the amount set out in Appendix A.

The Commission will reimburse the cost of meals taken while on Commission business provided that:

- A total of more than 5 hours is spent away on Commission business.
- It would not be reasonable for a Commissioner to return home or to their normal place of work for a meal.
- Costs of no more than three meals in any 24-hour period are claimed.
- Claims are supported by itemised receipts for the cost of any meals. This can include hot or cold drinks, but not the cost of alcoholic drinks.

Allowable limits for meals are set out in Appendix A. They are intended to represent the maximum that would be incurred for a normal meal across the UK – they are not intended to be the limit up to which Commissioners must spend but the upper limit that must not be breached.

Other expenses

Alcohol

The Commission will not reimburse any expenses incurred on the purchase of alcohol.

Personal losses

The Commission does not accept responsibility for personal losses while travelling on Commission business.

Fines and penalties

Commissioners are expected to comply with road traffic laws and drive responsibly when driving for Commission business. Any fines, penalties, or charges (including but not limited to speeding tickets, parking fines, and toll violations) incurred during business travel are the sole responsibility of the driver.

Commissioners must promptly notify the Commission of any fines received while on Commission business and settle them within the required timeframes to avoid additional penalties. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and/or access to hire vehicles.

Other overnight expenses

The Commission will reimburse the cost of making business phone calls and connecting to the internet where this is required for business reasons. Claims must be supported by evidence of the expenditure incurred.

Travelling overseas

All overseas travel and expenses must be pre-authorised by the Director of Corporate Services or the Chief Executive.

The Commission will reimburse costs such as vaccinations travel/medical insurance, visas, etc. where necessary before travelling overseas on Commission business. The Commission does not take out commercial travel insurance. Overseas accommodation should normally be booked by members of Commission staff. Claims for any other expenditure relating to the trip must be supported by receipts.

Childcare and other caring responsibilities

The Commission may reimburse the cost of care for children or other dependants while a Commissioner is away from home on Commission business. This will only be considered when the care is not normally in place for that period and is in addition to the normal contracted hours of the carer.

All expenses for care of dependants must be pre-authorised by the Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services and claims must be supported by receipts.

Working from home

Equipment and furniture

The Commission will pay for the cost of certain equipment and furniture suitable for Commissioners working from home. These items can either be purchased by claiming the cost back through expenses or by contacting the Business Team.

Items eligible for purchase and their agreed spending limits are as follows:

Item	**Pre-approved maximum price[1]**
Chair	£180
Desk	£100
Height-adjusted desk	£150
Floor mat	£35
Monitor	N/A (Business Team will order)
Keyboard and mouse	N/A (Business Team will order)
Laptop stand	£40 (claim through expenses)

[1] This includes delivery.

Headphones	£60 (claim through expenses)

Claiming fees and expenses

All claims should be submitted using the annual Commission fee claim, including scans or photos of receipts to support claims, which will be uploaded to the finance system by the Finance Lead. Advice is available from the Business Team.

For reasons of transparency and audit, it is important that Commissioners record (in an electronic or paper diary) all work undertaken for the Commission that leads to a fee claim. This evidence should be retained for at least three years.

To assist with budget planning and control, it is important that Commissioners claim fees and expenses in a timely manner. It is especially important that all claims are submitted in order for them to be included in the relevant year-end accounts.

Wherever possible, fees/expenses should be claimed immediately after the month end to which they relate - the cut-off date for claims is the eighth of the following month for payment at the end of that month – and no later than the subsequent month. Where this is not possible, then this should be discussed with the Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services, explaining the reason for the delay.

The Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services authorise the expenses of the Chair and other Commissioners. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee reviews the expenses of the Chair on a regular basis.

Details of Commissioners' claims are collated and published quarterly on the Commission's website.

Appendix A: Rates

Limits on expenses reimbursement: reimbursement will be made for actual expenditure, supported by receipts, up to the limit[2] of:

Accommodation	**London**	**Elsewhere**
Hotel, etc - room only	£180.00	£130.00
Hotel, etc - Bed & Breakfast	£190.00	£140.00
Meals		
Breakfast	£10.00	
Lunch	£15.00	
Dinner	£30.00	
Meals eaten at normal place of work outside core working hours	£5.00	
Overnight incidental costs allowance (receipts not needed for £5 flat rate)	£5.00	
Overnight stay with friends/relatives or in a second home (this must be receipted)	£25.00[3]	
Your own car (with valid business use insurance) Petrol/Diesel cars – Hybrid and fully electric cars are treated as either petrol or diesel cars for fuel rates.		
First 10,000 business miles in a financial year:	55p per mile	
Each mile over 10,000 business miles in a financial year:	25p per mile	
Passengers (all business mileage)	5p per person per mile	
Motorcycles		
Pence per mile	24p	

[2] Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs may be higher for people with disabilities (e.g. accessible room, special diets, costs for guide dogs). In these cases, higher limits may be allowed. They must be evidenced and should normally be pre-authorised by the Director of Corporate Services or Chief Executive. The Director of Corporate Services and Chief Executive also have discretion to approve a higher rate if suitable accommodation is not available within the limits.

[3] The flat rate allowance is no longer allowed by HMRC so only actual, receipted costs can be claimed.

Bicycles	
Pence per mile	20p