The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

Staff expenses policy

Document status

Abstract	This document outlines the Commission’s approach to claiming and paying fees and expenses to staff
Date issued	August 2026 (effective from 18 August 2026)
Version and status	V12
Revision frequency	Every two years
Owner	Director of Corporate Services
Author	Finance Lead
Contributors	N/A
Protective marking	None
Equalities screening	Not applicable

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 rates. Amendments have also incorporated internal audit recommendations, updates to railcard eligibility, and changes to accommodation rates. Further revisions included updating job titles and terminology and revising the fees and expenses claims process.				
V12	Jan 26	Rafa Chowdhury/Bipon Bhakri	Two-yearly review	Separated out from Commissioners' fees and expenses policy, with all references to Commissioners' fees removed. Added reference to Trainline and Premier Inn Business Account. Updated mileage rates.

Document distribution / approval

Name	Purpose
Leadership Team	For comment – completed on 22 January 2026
ARC	For endorsement – completed on 3 August 2026
Commission Board	For approval – scheduled for 18 August 2026
All staff	Final version for distribution as a mandatory read

CONTENTS

1. Policy principles

The Commission's staff 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 staff and compliance with organisational standards.

4. Safety and compliance
Staff 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.

2. Travel

2.1. Travelling by train

Advance train travel arrangements should be made by members of staff using the Commission's Business account of the Trainline website.

The Leadership Team and the Review team who travel frequently as part of their tours have access to the Commission's Trainline Business Account, which enables them to book train tickets for themselves and for any staff members or Commissioners accompanying them.

The Business Team can also prebook tickets on behalf of other staff members, who are travelling on business purposes.

The Government Procurement Card can be used to purchase train tickets where it is not possible to use the Trainline account.

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.

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

Staff 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 staff for the cost of the following one-year railcards when purchased, during their employment with the organisation, to achieve discounted prices for tickets bought for Commission business.
- Network Railcard
- 16-25 Railcard
- 26-30 Railcard
- Senior Railcard

2.2. 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).

2.3. Travelling by private car

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.

Staff 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.

Staff 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. Staff 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, staff 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.

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

2.4. Travelling by hire cars

When it is determined necessary to use a hire car, the booking should be made 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.

Staff 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.

2.5. 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.

2.6. 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.

2.7. Travelling by motorcycle or bicycle

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

3. Accommodation expenses

3.1. 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.

Hotel accommodation should be arranged by members of staff using the Commission's Premier Inn Business Pay Account.

Review Officers and Review Managers have access to the Commission's Premier Inn Business Pay Account, which enables them to book hotel accommodation for themselves and for any staff members or Commissioners accompanying them. Further details can be found in the Premier Inn Cards Procedure document on SharePoint.

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

Commission staff should look to stay at hotels that fall within the limits set out in Appendix A*. If staff choose 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 must be sought in advance of booking.

Where a member of staff 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 members of staff undertaking official duties. Partners are not covered in the event of accident, illness, or other incidents during travel.

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

3.2. Staying overnight with friends and relatives or at a second home

Staff may claim up to £25.00 for actual, receipted 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.

3.3. 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, staff 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 staff 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 must be spent but the upper limit that must not be breached.

3.4. 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.

4. Other expenses

4.1. Alcohol

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

4.2. Personal losses

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

4.3. Fines and penalties

Staff 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.

Staff 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.

4.4. 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.

4.5. Childcare and other caring responsibilities

The Commission may reimburse the cost of care for children or other dependants while a member of staff 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.

5. Working from home

5.1. Equipment and furniture

The Commission will pay for the cost of certain equipment and furniture suitable for staff working from home. These items can either be purchased by claiming the cost back through expenses via Aqilla or by using a Government Procurement Card (GPC).

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 & Mouse	N/A (Business Team will order)
Laptop stand	£40 (claim through expenses)
Headphones	£60 (claim through expenses)

You can find more information about this from the 'Purchasing equipment and furniture for home working' guidance document accessible from SharePoint.

If you need to purchase other sundries such as stamps or paper, you will need to purchase those items yourself and claim the expense through Aqilla. Receipts must be retained and uploaded to Aqilla as part of the normal process for claiming expenses.

6. Claiming expenses

All expense claims should be submitted by 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.

To assist with budget planning and control, it is important that staff claim 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, 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, this should be discussed with the Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services, explaining the reason for the delay.

[1] This includes delivery

The Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services authorise each other's expenses (but not their own). The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee reviews the expenses of the Chief Executive on a regular basis.

Staff claims are authorised by a relevant manager. The Aqilla system enables claimants to check the status of their claim, and their claim history.

Details of the Chief Executive's 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)		Additional 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