



SP-UK

SUICIDE PREVENTION UK

Suicide Prevention UK

Expenses Policy

2024

Introduction and Purpose

Volunteering is a rewarding experience, yet it is recognised that due to the nature of the role, i.e., the volunteer not taking a wage or receiving any benefit in kind yet incurring out-of-pocket expenses may be a barrier to engaging with charities in such a capacity.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the volunteers of Suicide Prevention UK are reimbursed for reasonable and legitimate out-of-pocket expenses incurred whilst volunteering for the Charity.

Scope

Whilst this policy is primarily focused on volunteer expenses, we recognise that employees may also be entitled to claim reasonable expenses. Therefore, this policy also applies to Charity employees.

However, it must be noted that expenses for Trustees are strictly regulated, and the following guidance from The Charity Commission should also be followed when accruing trustee expenses and authorising those expenses:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/trustee-expenses-and-payments-cc11/trustee-expenses-and-payments#payment-of-expenses-to-a-trustee>

General Principles

- Suicide Prevention UK and its volunteers must endeavour to keep expense claims to a minimum. This may be done by:
 - Forward planning – booking train travel, hotels, etc, in advance wherever possible.
 - Getting the best value for money wherever possible. For example, using car sharing options when travelling as a group, looking for discounts (particularly on high-value items), and using public transport rather than taking taxis (where it is safe and practicable to do so).
- When travelling, consider environmental sustainability as well as cost.
- All large expense claims must be authorised by the Board of Trustees prior to being incurred.
- All expenses should be submitted with the relevant receipts. Where proof of purchase is not made available, we may reasonably refuse to reimburse the costs.

Policy

What is Classed as Reasonable Expenses

Suicide Prevention UK acknowledges that certain day-to-day expenditure is deemed both reasonable and necessary in enabling the Charity to fulfil its aims.

Reasonable expenses are:

- Limited to a specific cash amount, which varies on the nature of the activity, goods, or service.
- Only payable where the work or travel undertaken is solely and legitimately beneficial to the Charity.
- Only payable where goods and services purchased are solely and legitimately beneficial to the Charity.
- For the most part, only payable where prior authorisation has been given.

Reasonable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Mileage¹ when using personal vehicles (including to and from the place of volunteering and home, mileage when on patrol and attending call-outs and to and from third-party venues when travelling for Charity business.)
- Other travel expenses such as train, bus journeys, etc.
- Car parking.
- Equipment, such as personal protective clothing (PPE).
- Administration costs such as postage, phone calls and stationery.
- Training costs (when approved by the Board of Trustees in advance).
- Hotels and other accommodations (when approved by the Board of Trustees in advance and there is a legitimate need to fund an overnight stay).
- Incidental claims for goods or services arising from charity work where the volunteer has incurred out-of-pocket expenses that they would not usually incur if they had not volunteered. For example, refreshments when working over and above the hours required for a 'normal shift'.

¹ For current UK mileage rates, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-and-allowances-travel-mileage-and-fuel-allowances/travel-mileage-and-fuel-rates-and-allowances>

What is Not Classed as Reasonable Expenses

- Unreasonable claims where the expense could and should have been reduced, for example, claiming for a taxi fare when public transport is available at a lower rate and is a suitable alternative, first class or business travel premiums, or expenses incurred at a higher rate where forward planning would have reduced the costs significantly.
- Added extras which are only beneficial to the individual and will not benefit the Charity, such as magazines or books to read on a train journey, spa treatments or room service when staying away from home, etc.
- Alcohol purchases (when bought with a meal).
- Fines related to speeding, illegal parking, etc.
- Benefits in kind, such as private medical insurance, gym memberships, etc.

Claiming for Expenses

Volunteers should complete the Expense Claim Form (Appendix A) and submit it weekly to the Founder and CEO, Michael Everett, via email.

VAT receipts should be provided when goods and services subject to value-added tax are claimed (not simply the credit card receipt) and should be scanned and forwarded in the same email.

Where printed receipts are not available for any reason, the expenditure should be recorded accurately on the expense form, and any evidence available should be attached. Examples of evidence may be a ticket (with the price printed on the ticket) accompanied by a credit card or handwritten receipt.

Authorisation of Expenses

All expenses are authorised by the Suicide Prevention UK Founder and CEO, who will review each item and corresponding receipt before determining if the expense can be claimed.

Pre-authorisation is always required for large and/or incidental claims before being incurred.

When seeking authorisation, the volunteer should state why the claim is necessary and take note of the limitations for variable claim amounts. (The Founder and CEO will put reasonable limits on variable expenses. For example, when travelling for business, a maximum spend for meals will be provided.)

All pre-authorisations must be documented in writing and either physically signed off or approved as a digital signature for review by the Board of Trustees as required.

Paying Expenses

Expenses may be paid into the claimant's bank account or paid out of petty cash.

Expenses will be reimbursed as soon as possible. We aim for two (2) working days; however, it may take longer if the Founder and CEO is unavailable and cannot, therefore, approve such claims within the period aimed for.

Should any volunteer not be reimbursed within 28 days of submitting their claim, we ask that they

Tax, National Insurance and Benefits

Suicide Prevention UK will only reimburse volunteers and employees for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of their unpaid volunteering or employed role.

Therefore:

- As a volunteer, you will not have to pay any income tax or NIC on the payments.
- As an employee, you are also exempt from paying additional tax, as we only pay the 'allowable mileage rates'.

Any volunteer who is concerned that their state benefits may be affected by their volunteering role and/or expense claims should seek professional advice. The Citizens Advice Bureau have prepared this useful guide to support volunteers:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/benefits-introduction/how-volunteering-affects-your-benefits/>

Monitoring and Reviewing

This policy should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains compliant with current legislation, meets best practices, and is not discriminatory.

Policy Date: November 2020

Review Date: April 2024

Next Review: April 2025

Dated and Signed by the Chair and Founder of Suicide Prevention UK:

Appendix A: Expense Claim Form

Name:

Date of Submission:

Signature:

Mileage

Date	Reason for journey	Start location	End location	Total Miles	Passenger Total	Total in £	Authorised by

Other Expenses

Date	Reason for expense	Details (what was it for?)	Receipt provided?	Total in £	Authorised by

(Please expand the tables as required)