



Hammersmith & Fulham The Economy Department Resident Expenses Policy

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At Hammersmith & Fulham, we want council housing residents to work with us to improve services and represent their communities. You should be able to get involved without facing any barriers, so we have co-produced this inclusive Resident Expenses Policy with residents. It has been designed to make sure your contribution and time is recognised in a fair way through digital support and repayment of out-of-pocket expenses.

Who can make a resident expenses claim?

To be eligible you must:

- Take part in a:
 - qualifying meeting
 - focus group
 - activity or event.

or

- Be an active member of one of our service improvement groups or a representative forum.

Does this support include TRA committee member roles?

In general, our support to Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) is set out in the TRA Registration and Grant Policy and they are expected to reimburse their own members' expenses. However, in exceptional circumstances we will cover expenses of members of registered TRAs.

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Travel and parking costs

Lots of our work with you will take place online from the comfort of your home! However, there will be times when we work with you in person. If you travel to meetings, we encourage you to cycle, walk or take public transport.

We will reimburse travel costs and parking expenses for the time that you work with us in a meeting, event, or activity.

It is your responsibility to park in designated parking areas. We will not pay for parking fines.

Taxi travel will only be reimbursed if there are no suitable alternative methods of transport, to a maximum of £25 per claim.

Please provide receipts/oyster card journey records for all travel and evidence of parking charges for the date and time of the claim. This could include a screenshot of your bank statement.

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Childcare and carer costs

Whether meeting us online or in person, there may be times when you need to pay someone to look after those you care for. You may claim up to £15 per hour for the time you work with us during a meeting, activity, or event, up to a maximum of £45 per session. Where relevant, please include up to 30 minutes each way for travel time as part of your claim. You must provide receipts in order to make a claim.

At certain events we will provide onsite childcare. We will let residents know in advance if this will be available. We will not pay additional childcare expense claims unless there are qualifying circumstances, such as our childcare provision not being suitable for your child.

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Digital Inclusion Allowance

May only be claimed by Service Improvement Group or Forum Members.

H&F is working in new ways with residents, with lots of our engagement now taking place online on platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. This helps to fulfil the council's ambition to be the greenest borough, reducing travel to and from meetings and events and removing the need for hard copies of meeting papers.

We know that some people are not online yet and we will always take the approach of leaving no-one behind. The purpose of the Digital Inclusion Allowance is to help residents who are part of our service improvement groups or members of a representative forum to access the internet and join us at online meetings.

To make a claim, you must be an active member of a group or forum. This means that you attend at least 50% of meetings and activities across a calendar year, contribute by email and send apologies when you are not able to attend.

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A flexible allowance

The Digital Inclusion Allowance may be used in a number of ways to contribute to:

- The cost of home
- broadband supply.
- The cost of a tablet and mobile data contract.
- The cost of phone calls to join online meetings or stay in touch with other group members.
- The purchase of an electronic device.
- The purchase of relevant software or IT subscriptions.

We cannot fund the purchase of printers or ink cartridges. Instead, we will support you to get the most out of online resources and software by providing help, training and peer support.

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How it works

We will either reimburse you to the maximum total value of £25 per month or make a one-off payment of £300. Please provide proof of purchase to set up your initial ongoing monthly claim or to receive a one-off payment.

If you opt for the £25 per month option, this will continue while you remain an active member of a service improvement group or forum.

If you opt for the one-off payment to purchase a device, only one such claim can be made every three years. You will also need to wait for at least 12 months from the date of a one-off claim until you can claim an ongoing monthly digital inclusion allowance.

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Making an expense claim

To make it as easy as possible for you to make an expense claim, we have developed one short form for you to complete. You will find this at:

www.lbhf.gov.uk/housing/resident-involvement/getting-support-get-involved.

We aim to pay all expense claims within 15 working days.

If you have any questions or need help with your claim, please contact the Resident Involvement Team:

- 0208 753 6652
- getinvolved@lbhf.gov.uk

If you have any other support needs that are not covered by this Policy, then please do get in touch with us to talk these through.

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Ongoing review

The support offered by the Expenses Policy is intentionally wide ranging because we want residents to get involved without any barriers. But do bear in mind that expenses will be paid using funding that comes from council housing residents' rents and service charges. Please only claim for money you have spent or resources that you need in order to take part.

We will review this Policy on an annual basis, working with residents, to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

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Recognising your time and giving you something in return

We want to recognise the time and effort you put into working with us to improve services for everyone and to represent the community you are a part of, so we have come up with a recognition scheme. Points win prizes, if you like! All involved residents will automatically be opted into the offer and no claim is necessary. You can opt out if you wish. All recognition points will be for use in shops, services and venues in the borough, to support the local economy.

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