

# COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR



## EXPENSES POLICY 2024

## AMENDMENT RECORD

This plan is to be reviewed every three years.

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENTS MADE	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW
1	04/07/2024	Full Review – First draft	01/07/2027 - Highlighted Links to be updated once new website launched late 2024

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Employees are entitled to claim for expenses incurred whilst on Comhairle business. The purpose of the Policy is to explain the principles and the basis on which expenses should be incurred and claimed.
- 1.2 Employees should not be financially disadvantaged in going about the business of the Comhairle, however employees will only be reimbursed for expenditure which is additional and necessarily incurred. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.
- 1.3 Employees should familiarise themselves with the Policy and be aware that claims improperly made could lead to disciplinary action, the matter being referred for police investigation and possible prosecution.
- 1.4 Actual rates for mileage and subsistence are available on the [Intranet – Employee Expenses & Allowances](#).
- 1.5 Itemised receipts are required for all expenses claims. VAT receipts are required for all mileage claims.
- 1.6 All expenses claims must be checked and signed-off by officers who are authorised signatories (Authorised Officers) for this purpose. This will usually be an employee's Line Manager.
- 1.7 Any queries should be referred to Human Resources or Payroll.

## 2. MILEAGE ALLOWANCES

- 2.1 Employees using their own motor vehicle (including electric vehicles) for Business Travel within the local authority area can claim expenses for mileage at the rate detailed on the [Intranet – Employee Expenses & Allowances](#). Employees using their own bicycle for Business Travel can also claim expenses for mileage at the rate detailed on the Intranet.
- 2.2 Employees using their own motor vehicles for Business Travel must be appropriately insured for business use at their own expense. Motor insurance documents will be required to be submitted to Authorising Officers to confirm that this cover is in place for mileage claims to be approved.
- 2.3 Mileage allowances are not to be applied to travel outwith the boundary of the authority (i.e. mainland travel). Mainland travel will be reimbursed through receipted expenditure for petrol or diesel or the equivalent cheapest public transport rate. Mainland travel costs can be calculated using the [Mileage calculator | AA \(theaa.com\)](#).
- 2.4 VAT receipts must be attached to expenses claims for all business mileage undertaken by employees in their own vehicles. Evidence of payment must also be included with expenses claims for business mileage undertaken by employees in their own electric vehicle. Claims not supported by an appropriate VAT receipt or evidence of payment may not be authorised for payment. VAT receipts should be dated on or before the dates which mileage has been claimed. The quantity of fuel shown on the VAT receipts must be sufficient for the mileage claimed. Where mileages on travel are low, a single fuel bill may be sufficient to cover more than one claim. Information on what constitutes a proper VAT receipt can be found in the [CnES VAT Manual](#).

- 2.4 Mileage shall be calculated by measuring the journey by the most direct route available from the employee's administrative centre to the places visited. Cases where increased mileage can be justified based on time saved must be agreed in advance with the appropriate Manager.
- 2.5 When an employee visits a site(s) on the way to base, the claimable mileage is the **total mileage undertaken less the normal mileage between home and base**. The same arrangement applies where an employee travels from base to a site(s) and on to home. Where an employee does not visit base, i.e. spends the full day on a site(s) visit, the claimable mileage is the total mileage undertaken less the normal return mileage between home and base.
- 2.6 Where an employee, having returned home, is required to return to the administrative centre or to visit a site in the evening, or at the weekend, actual return mileage for the visit is payable.

### 3. MEAL EXPENSES

- 3.1 For an employee to be reimbursed for expenditure incurred on a meal, the employee must have:
- (a) been prevented from following their *normal* meal arrangements,
  - (b) incurred expenditure additional to their normal outlay, and
  - (c) necessarily incurred that expenditure.
- 3.2 The majority of employees operate from a fixed base and become eligible for the reimbursement of expenses when unable to return to that base to take their normal meal.
- 3.3 Mobile and outside officers are those employees who are rarely able to return to their administrative centre at mealtimes, or for whom normal meal arrangements are likely to involve eating at any one of a number of places. This definition includes employees who, whilst operating from a fixed base, spend most of their time away from that location; employees who, whilst spending the majority of their time at their base, regularly work away from that location at a specific location(s).
- 3.4 *Mobile or outside officers* are not eligible for the reimbursement of expenditure incurred on a meal, except when they are forced to depart from their normal arrangements and to necessarily incur additional expenditure.
- 3.5 The following additional conditions must also be satisfied in all cases:
- (a) times of departure and return must be entered on the expenses report,
  - (b) breakfast expenses will only be reimbursed where employees are required to leave home at least one and a half hours before the time at which they would normally leave home to get to their normal place of work by 8.30am provided they finish work not earlier than 5.00pm. Reimbursement will not be considered where the working day has been advanced, e.g. where an employee begins work at 6.30am and finishes at 3.00pm,
  - (c) lunch expenses will only be reimbursed where employees are required to undertake duties away from their administrative centre and the journey is commenced before 12 noon and completed after 2.00pm,

(d) dinner expenses will only be reimbursed where employees are engaged away from their administrative centre and their work continues until at least 8.30pm.

Note: In the case of mobile or outside employees, the above principles also apply but for absences from normal administrative centre substitute absences from area/route.

- 3.6 The reimbursement of expenditure, including the deduction of the “normal cost” of a meal, will also apply to those employees working at their normal place of employment but outside their normal working hours and who are not in receipt of overtime payments.
- 3.7 Where a suitable meal is provided at a Comhairle establishment being visited, or at an event being attended, no reimbursement of expenses will be made.

#### **4. MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSES**

- 4.1 Travel arrangements should be made using the Comhairle’s travel bookers who will pay costs directly as set out in the [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - Business Travel Policy \(sharepoint.com\)](#).
- 4.2 If travellers make their own arrangements, written notification as to why this was necessary must be made available to the Authorising Officer for the expenses claim to be approved.
- 4.3 Where travellers purchase tickets on a ferry, train, bus or at a ticket office, or use a taxi, receipts must be retained to support any claim for reimbursement on expenses claim form. Reimbursement of all fares including rail and air travel will relate to the cheapest fare.
- 4.4 In cases where use of a taxi or car hire is agreed in advance, the actual expenditure will be reimbursed. Taxi and fuel receipts must be retained and presented to support any claim for reimbursement.
- 4.5 When an Employee of the Comhairle combines business and personal travel, the Comhairle will reimburse the traveller only for the expenses incurred that are directly related to the business portion of the trip.
- 4.6 The Comhairle will reimburse:
- Parking at actual and reasonable cost
  - Toll charges for Bridges, Tunnels and Roads
- 4.7 The Comhairle will NOT reimburse:
- fines incurred through illegal parking and any other traffic offences.
  - excess baggage charges, except if the excess baggage consists of Comhairle property or heavy or bulky items necessary for Comhairle business.
  - personal items lost whilst travelling on business, except when such losses fall within the terms of personal effects and money section of the Business Travel Insurance Section.
- 4.8 No reimbursement shall be made by the Comhairle if free accommodation, meals, or alternative transport arrangements are provided e.g. by the airline in the event of an airline delay or cancellation.
- 4.9 The Comhairle will not pay or reimburse travellers for upgrades or to pre-book seats, however this is permitted at the expense of the traveller.

## 5. OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

- 5.1 Arrangements for overnight accommodation should be made using the Comhairle's internal travel bookers who will pay costs directly as set out in the [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - Business Travel Policy \(sharepoint.com\)](#).
- 5.2 Overnight Subsistence Accommodation with Family and Friends will be reimbursed at the rates detailed on the [Intranet – Employee Expenses & Allowances](#). A receipt is not required.
- 5.3 Meal allowances, excluding alcoholic beverages, will be reimbursed where Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner has been purchased. Up to £5 may be claimed for other miscellaneous expenditure (eg, tea, coffee, etc). Itemised receipts must be attached to the expenses claim form.

## 6. FOREIGN TRAVEL

- 6.1 Overseas travel and subsistence (excluding alcoholic beverages) is reimbursed on an actual basis.
- 6.2 Receipts in foreign currency must be converted to pounds sterling before submission. [Xe Currency Converter - Live Exchange Rates Today](#) can be used to convert currency. The exchange rate used must be detailed to support the claim.
- 6.3 Foreign currency advances can be obtained through the usual process for Advanced Subsistence.

## 7. ADVANCED SUBSISTENCE

- 7.1 Advance subsistence for travel, including foreign travel, is available when on official Comhairle business. 90% of the current maximum overnight subsistence rate is payable for the number of nights out with the Western Isles.
- 7.2 To obtain an advance, the [Request for Advance of Expenses/Wages form](#) must be completed by the employee, approved and signed-off by a line manager who is an authorised signatory, and submitted to [payroll@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:payroll@cne-siar.gov.uk) with a copy of the authorised travel request form. Fully completed forms must be with the payroll office by 2pm for payment on the following day.
- 7.3 Upon return, the traveller should complete their expenses claim form as usual, claiming the full overnight subsistence amount and highlighting the advance amount paid.

## 8. RELOCATION EXPENSES FOR COMPULSORILY TRANSFERRED EMPLOYEES

- 8.1 Where an employee incurs additional travelling expenses as a result of the place of employment being changed, the Comhairle shall pay an allowance equal to the difference between the costs of travelling from home to the new place of work, and home to the old place of work, for a period of six months. This allowance will be based on either;
  - (a) bus fare, or
  - (b) a mileage allowance in respect of the additional mileage incurred by the change of employment. This will be payable at the rate for mileage over 10,000 miles as listed on the [Intranet – Employee Expenses & Allowances](#).

## 9. SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS

- 9.1 Expenses claims can be made using the [Expenses Claim Form](#). Guidance for [Completing your Expenses Claim Form \(sharepoint.com\)](#) is available on the intranet.
- 9.2 Completed Expenses Claim Forms must be checked and signed-off by an Authorised Officer (usually the employee's line manager) and then emailed to [payroll@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:payroll@cne-siar.gov.uk). For expense claims submitted via electronic documents, evidence of approval is required. To evidence approval, the expense claim should be emailed to payroll by the Authorising Officer, or an email trail with evidence that the expense claim has been approved must be provided. Expenses claims can only be approved by officers who are authorised signatories for this purpose.
- 9.3 Expenses claim should include all details of the Comhairle business which necessitated the expenses claim including start and finish times, location, and purpose.
- 9.4 **Claims for reimbursement of expenses must relate only to the individual concerned.** Under no circumstances should the Comhairle be paying for a spouse, partner or any other person who may have travelled with the Comhairle employee for reasons other than Comhairle business.
- 9.5 Each employee is required to authorise their own claim and is therefore wholly responsible for their accuracy and validity. This means that each employee must be fully conversant with the rules relating to travelling and subsistence and with requirements, including the submission of VAT receipts.
- 9.6 Claims should be submitted on a regular monthly basis. All claims must be submitted within two months of the expenditure being incurred. Please note that no payment will be made in relation to claims over 2 months old, unless there is a valid reason for the delay e.g. long term sickness. The reason for the delay must be submitted in writing to their Authorising Officer, who must submit the evidence to the Head of Accountancy and Exchequer Services.
- 9.7 Internal Audit has the authority to access all records and individuals may be asked to give Internal Audit access to their travel and subsistence claim documentation. Individuals may also be asked to justify the detail of their claims.
- 9.8 Some travellers may be entitled to concessionary or discounted fares for air, sea, rail or bus travel. These must be declared, and any claims adjusted accordingly.

## 10. RESPONSIBILITY OF AUTHORISING OFFICERS

- 10.1 Expenses claims must only be approved by officers who are authorised signatories for this purpose.
- 10.2 Authorising Officers must ensure that Dates, Times, Journey, and Detail of Approved Duties have been fully completed, and that all receipts are attached before authorising the claim for payment. **Where receipts are not attached, no payment shall be made.**
- 10.3 Authorising Officers should also ensure:
  - a) The number of miles for which VAT receipts are attached to a mileage claim is inserted in the relevant box of the claim form;
  - b) Receipts attached to mileage claims are VAT receipts;

- c) VAT receipts are dated on or before the dates for which mileage has been claimed on the mileage claim;
- d) The value of the fuel shown on the VAT receipts is sufficient for mileage claimed;
- e) There are receipts attached for all expenditure and all expenditure is correctly detailed at the back of the form including reason and dates of travel;
- f) The correct cost codes have been included with the claim;
- g) VAT on accommodation has also been inserted in the correct box only if applicable and only where a proper VAT invoice for accommodation has been attached to the expenses claim;
- h) The friends and family rate is not claimed when hotel accommodation has been paid for by the Comhairle; and
- i) blank areas of the form are ruled off, including blank total columns at the foot of the form, to ensure further information is not added later.

10.4 Authorising Officers must also ensure that Expenses Claim are submitted timeously each month.

10.5 Managers have access to the expense and mileage claims made by the staff under their management control. This may be supplemented by reports from the Chief Executive's Department. Managers will use this information to review and retain control over claims being made and travel time incurred. In conjunction with their knowledge of the individual's circumstances and the historical and projected work patterns managers will also carry out an annual review of the mileage undertaken by each member of staff. Managers must:

- (i) reappraise the working arrangements of any post that regularly involves travelling high mileage to ensure the most effective travel arrangements are in place;
- (ii) scrutinise and review the reasonableness of travel and subsistence claims; and
- (iii) where appropriate, take action to ensure that all future journeys are necessary.

Evidence that these checks have taken place should be retained for audit inspection.

## **11. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE EXPENSES POLICY**

11.1 In addition to false mileage and expenditure claims, improper claims include those involving the maximising of mileage and expense and the undertaking of unnecessary journeys.

11.2 The responsibility for submitting proper claims rests with claiming employees. The subsequent management and control checks on claims do not remove this responsibility from claiming employees.

11.3 Claims improperly made could lead to disciplinary action and to the matter being referred for police investigation and possible prosecution.

## **12. REVIEW**

12.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years.