

SCIE reimbursement and payments policy guidelines for experts by experience and carers

1. Introduction

This document forms the basis for SCIE's policy on paid expenses and payment/remuneration for adults, children and young people who are involved in SCIE work.

SCIE has a long-standing commitment to paying experts by experience and carers in order to give recognition to the values of their input into participation/co-production initiatives. Our other guiding principle is that no experts by experience or carers should ever be left out of pocket from taking part in co-production. This means that SCIE pays all expenses incurred and, as far as possible, makes bookings and pays directly so that experts by experience and carers do not need to meet costs.

Each project manager is responsible for looking at the participation element of their project and budgeting accordingly to ensure that they meet the requirements of the policy.

2. Efficiency and value for money

There is shared responsibility to ensure that SCIE offers value for money and that systems are set up to keep costs as low as possible, whilst continuing to ensure that people are not left out of pocket.

Some of the approaches that may help with this would be:

- Advanced planning and notice for meetings so that the cheapest fares can be accessed
- Use of telephone or video conferencing where possible to reduce travel
- Use less expensive hotels where possible without compromising accessibility
- Start meetings later to avoid overnight stays where possible
- Where a smaller sub group can achieve the same task, agree what skills are needed and set an upper limit on number of people attending.

3. Work that we pay fees for

SCIE will usually pay experts by experience who work with us on projects, programmes or other activities. There may be occasions when we reward expert by experiences and carers in other ways such as providing training or vocational experience but this will

need to be clearly justified and explained. This approach can be particularly useful when working with children and young people (see below).

Fees or specific rewards will not be offered to experts by experience and carers when they take part in market research and other activities where SCIE is seeking input from a range of people including experts by experience and carers (for example, user-testing of websites and new services). In such situations, experts by experience and carers will be offered the same rewards as other participants.

SCIE has a duty of care to experts by experience and carers and staff must ensure they make people aware of the conditions that apply to people receiving benefits accept payments when they take part in user involvement. For example, they are required inform Jobcentre Plus about voluntary or paid involvement.

SCIE has an advice service provided through Bedford Citizens' Advice Bureau, which is available to any experts by experience or carers who are considering involvement in SCIE's work. Staff should consider recommending that experts by experience and carers contact Bedford CAB when they first become involved with SCIE and at any other time when there is concern about the affect of a payment on a person's benefits. SCIE staff should not try to give advice on the issue.

Contact details for Bedford CAB are given on the payments form.

Experts by experience and carers may sometimes ask for their fee to be paid to an organisation they work with or represent or for the fee to be donated to a charity. This can be because of concerns about the effect of the payment on their benefits or can be a matter of choice or the way they work with their organisation. If the fee is to be paid to their organisation, the organisation should invoice SCIE.

Where somebody asks for their fee to be donated to a charity this cannot be a charity from which they receive a service or support.

4. Fees rates for attending meetings

Adults

As stated in SCIE's statement of principles on co-production, we will offer experts by experience and carers a fee or equivalent training or other benefits for their participation."

The standard participation fee paid by SCIE will be £150 per day and £75 for half a day. In most cases this fee will be sufficient to cover preparation time and/or follow up work where required (reading papers and reports etc. On occasions when more substantial additional work is necessary, such as the chair of a meeting needing more time to prepare than other participants, an additional fee may be appropriate. This should be based on £15 per hour

There may sometimes be variations in fees for specifically funded projects, so we will always confirm the fee being offered for any activity.

If a person is asked to facilitate a meeting or deliver training on a consultancy basis, this is a different arrangement, which needs to be made through the normal procurement processes under agreement by the project manager.

Children and Young People

The children and young people involved in SCIE work should be rewarded for taking part in participation activities. However, the context and the legal situation are different so the rates are lower.

Rewards for children and young people need to be comparable but not necessarily equal to those provided to adults, recognising that children and young people do not have the same financial commitments and responsibilities as adults and that where children are paid for working it is not generally at the same rates as adults.

SCIE recognises that when children and young people of different ages are participating on a SCIE project that careful consideration has to be given as to whether all participants should receive the same fee or a differentiation by age should be considered. This will be decided by the project manager in conjunction with the Senior Management Group Lead.

An example might be when they are a group of children between the ages of 16-21 years old participate in a project- in which instance it might be decided that it is most ethical to pay a flat fee to all our participants as they a) have an equal contribution and b) it may otherwise create discord or disagreement amongst the children and young people.

As a general policy there are three rates for children and young people: primary age; secondary age and over 18's (considered as adults)

Alternative forms of reward such as training and vocational experience are particularly valuable for children and young people. Training opportunities and useful educational and vocational experience should be identified in the planning of any activities involving children and young people, and the activity may need to be adjusted to maximise the benefits for potential participants. Certificates and/or letters of reference should be offered to participants after the activity is completed.

Primary Age

SCIE's reimbursement rate will be £5 an hour. Consideration will be given as to whether a financial reward is appropriate or an alternative form of reward. This will be discussed in advance with the appropriate carer/guardian/parent.

Secondary age

SCIE's rate of payment will be £10 an hour.

SCIE acknowledges that not all young people have bank account it may be necessary to make alternative arrangements to pay the young people through the organisation they are affiliated with.

Over 18s

Anyone over 18 is an adult and will be paid accordingly for their involvement in SCIE work. The only occasion where this will not be adhered too is when there is a mixed age group of experts by experience. As above all final decisions will be made by the project development manager and senior management lead.

5. Travel expenses and costs of food and refreshments

Reimbursement for reasonable travel will be offered in full for any pre-arranged involvement, whether paid or voluntary. This may include travel tickets, mileage, and essential (pre-agreed) taxi fares.

Everyone – SCIE staff and experts by experience and carers taking part - must take responsibility for ensuring that costs are kept to a minimum by using the cheapest tickets for travel and low costs hotels and venues as far as possible. We recognise that access issues can mean some experts by experience do not have the option take the cheapest form of transport or use cheaper hotels.

All experts by experience and carers who come to meetings and events can claim reasonable amounts for refreshments and meals when travelling:

- Meals during the day should cost a maximum of £10 per person.
- Meals in the evening should cost a maximum of £25 per evening or overnight stay in London and £20 per evening or overnight stay outside London.

In order for SCIE to comply with its duties to HMRC, we will reimburse the actual cost of meals incurred based on a receipt provided when the claim is made.

It is impossible to plan every eventuality relating to expenses. It is important to encourage everyone who is going to be claiming expenses to discuss anything that may be unusual or expensive as early as possible. A good way of identifying these such costs is to ensure that a booking form is completed well in advance prior to each event or meeting.

Wherever possible SCIE should purchase tickets for travel and pay for overnight accommodation on behalf of experts by experience and carers to avoid their having to pay out money and wait to be reimbursed.

6. Payment for personal assistants

If an expert by experience pays a personal assistant to help them get to and participate in a meeting it is important that they do not suffer a financial disadvantage.

The general principle is that SCIE pays for any additional time that the expert by experience needs the PA for and/or costs that are not covered by their standard arrangements/funding.

The calculations will be worked out on an individual basis and the reasoning behind the costs needs to be written down so there is an audit trail.

Examples

1. The expert by experience has a full time PA who they would pay wherever they were at the time they attended the meeting. Therefore, the only additional cost for attending the meeting would be the travel expenses for the PA.
2. An expert by experience has a PA who does not normally stay with them overnight, but when they attend a meeting involving an overnight stay the PA has to stay too. If the expert by experience has to pay the PA for an overnight stay, these costs will be paid along with accommodation costs.
3. An expert by experience does not need PA support on a day-to-day basis, but in order to be involved in a meeting they need someone with them. The costs of for paying the PA will be paid for duration of the meeting and any travelling time.

7. Payments for replacement carers and child care

SCIE will meet the costs of replacements carers where a carer needs to pay for someone to take over their caring responsibilities while they attend a meeting or event.

Similarly, SCIE will meet childcare costs where they are associated with an expert by experience or carer attending a meeting.

Proof of purchase such as receipts or invoices is required when these payments are made.

8. Payments for social workers/residential staff/foster carers

If an expert by experience needs the support of a social worker/residential staff or foster carer this will be decided on a case by case basis. The welfare of the participant will always be paramount in our decision making.

9. Expert by experience payment and expenses forms

All claims for fees must be made using the expert by experience/carer payment form except where the person has self employed status. Experts by experience and carers who are self employed can use the form or invoice for fees.

The fee payments form is available online and will be provided to claimants by the administrative support team. Please draw people's attention to the extensive advice in the form, particularly the length of time that it can take to process claims.

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