

Volunteer expenses guidance

Volunteers play a crucial role in helping us to ensure people living with and affected by MND receive the support and services they need. This guidance has been produced to sit alongside our volunteer expenses policy and provides a practical guide to be used by all volunteers.

1. Importance of Claiming Expenses

As a Volunteer why should I claim expenses?

We encourage every volunteer to claim expenses. Your gift is your time and you should not be out of pocket. We also need to ensure that volunteering is accessible and equitable to everyone, regardless of personal circumstances. Encouraging every volunteer to claim their expenses is a way of making sure that there are no financial barriers to people being able to volunteer.

In addition, we are always looking for ways to attract external funding, so that we can enhance the work that we do and extend our reach. Funding bids require us to provide a range of information which often includes information about volunteering costs. If volunteers don't claim their expenses, then we are unable to provide the accurate information required and we may miss out on funding opportunities as a result.

What if I still don't want to claim expenses?

We recognise and respect that, as a volunteer, you may not wish to claim expenses. You could, however, consider making the claim and then if you wish, make a separate donation back to the Association which would be very welcome.

2. Receipts

Do I need a receipt to be able to claim my expenses?

Yes; with the exception of mileage, you will need to submit receipts for all expenses. If you use a credit card, then we will need the full receipt not just the printed slip.

I have lost my receipt, does that mean I can't claim?

Whilst we would expect every claim to be submitted with the relevant receipts, we do understand that, on occasion, receipts are not provided, or they simply get misplaced or lost.

If this happens, for items under £10 you can complete a declaration of "no receipt" (noted on the claim form). For items over £10, but less than £100, the expense can be claimed at the discretion of the Branch Treasurer or staff contact; you will also need to provide a short explanation to support your claim.

We want to ensure that we are able to reimburse all of your volunteer expenses. However, if you are unable to provide receipts on a regular basis then we may not be able to authorise your claim.

3. Travel and Accommodation

What is the best way for me to travel when volunteering?

We ask that you consider the most cost-effective way to travel to undertake your volunteer role. This may mean choosing public transport over using a car, or vice versa.

If using public transport, look to book as far in advance as possible in order to secure the best deal and always book standard/second class tickets. If you wish to travel first or business class, then you will need to pay the balance between the cost of the fare compared to the standard/second class option.

If accessible travel is needed, then please use the most practical option to suit your needs which may not be the cheapest.

Can I use a season ticket or Oyster card?

Under HMRC rules, we are not able to reimburse the costs of season tickets or railcards. If you use an Oyster card, we are unable to reimburse top up payments, but you can claim for individual journeys. To do this you will need to obtain a printout of the individual journey and submit this, along with your expense claim form.

What do I need to know if I am using my car to travel?

You must only use a vehicle which is taxed and roadworthy with a current MOT. You are not covered by our driver's insurance, so will need your own insurance policy, which must be current. You will also need to inform your insurance company that you will be using the car for volunteering.

For the first 10,000 miles, you are able to claim 45p per mile, reducing to 25p per mile thereafter.

We would also ask that you read and familiarise yourself with our [vehicle use guidelines](#) before using your car for volunteering activities.

Am I able to carry other passengers?

If you choose to, you may take other volunteers and staff members in your car, providing you do not assist them in any way to get in and out of the vehicle.

For each passenger you can claim an additional 5p per mile, but you must not exceed the vehicle capacity and it must be noted on the claim form.

I need to stay overnight as part of my volunteering role; what do I need to do?

Before you book, you will need to agree this with your branch or group contact, or relevant staff contact. Once agreed, accommodation up to a maximum of £110 per night (£150 in London) including breakfast, will be reimbursed.

If you prefer to stay with a friend or family member who is close to the location, you may. With agreement from your branch or group contact, or relevant staff contact, you are able to purchase a gift up to the value of £20. This gift cannot be alcohol or be given in cash; receipts will need to be provided as with any other claim.

Can I claim for food and refreshments?

Yes, if you are volunteering for 4 hours or more over mealtimes and attending an event where refreshments and meals are not provided.

Currently, you can claim up to a maximum of £10 per day for breakfast/lunch and refreshments and a maximum of £20 for an evening meal. You are unable to claim for alcohol and any amounts exceeding the maximum will not be reimbursed.

4. Other Expenses

Can I claim car parking charges?

Yes; we will reimburse parking charges when submitted with a receipt. However, we recognise that not all car parks issue a receipt, therefore, you may need to submit a declaration of "no receipt" for charges under £10 or obtain authorisation for any amount over £10.

We would also ask that, where practically possible, you avoid toll charges, although we will reimburse costs if submitted with a receipt.

I have received a parking fine; can I claim?

No; we are unable to reimburse the cost of fines or charges incurred whilst volunteering. This includes, but is not limited to, fines relating to failure to pay congestion charges, parking fines and motoring offences, such as speeding.

Can I claim for a donation to another charity?

We have a duty to all our donors who have given to support us, so we are unable to make donations to other charities. However, this does not apply when we are using other charitable organisations facilities, such as meeting rooms which incur a cost.

In this instance, we can reimburse the amount, but would ask that you request an invoice to be sent directly to us for payment, rather than paying the amount yourself.

Can I claim for mobile phone charges?

If your volunteering role is dependent on the use of a mobile phone, then, with agreement from the relevant Branch or Group contact or staff contact, we will be able to provide you with a mobile handset or agree for one to be purchased to be used solely for the purpose of that volunteer role.

If your role is not dependent on the use of a mobile phone, then we can reimburse any call charges you incur as part of your volunteering, when supported by receipts or itemised bill. In some instances, we may also pre-agree an arrangement for phone usage or contract charge.

Can I claim for stationery and equipment?

Yes, we can reimburse the costs of stationery such as paper, stamps and printing materials that you incur as part of your volunteer activities. We are unable to reimburse the cost of furniture, equipment, utilities (gas, electric etc), broadband and line rental and costs of computer equipment unless they are purchased with branch or group funds, with the sole purpose of supporting the branch or group activities.

Do you pay for childcare?

We are unable to cover the cost of childcare for your regular volunteering activities. However, as a volunteer you may be expected to attend training or events that fall outside your regular activities. In this instance, we are able to reimburse the actual costs of care provided by a registered childminder up to a maximum of £10 per hour and you will need to agree this with your branch or group contact or staff contact in advance.

I am the main carer for someone; can I claim for care costs to look after them whilst I volunteer?

We recognise that many of our volunteers are carers for people with MND and other conditions. Whilst we are unable to cover costs for your regular volunteering activities, we recognise that there may be times when you need to attend training, or an event and additional arrangements need to be made.

In this instance, we are able to reimburse actual costs of care provided by a professional carer up to a maximum of £20 per hour and you will need to agree this with your branch or group contact, or staff contact in advance.

I live with MND or another other health limiting condition; can you pay for additional caring support, so that I can participate in a volunteering activity?

We recognise that many of our volunteers live with MND and other health limiting conditions. Whilst we are unable to cover costs for your regular volunteering activities, we recognise that there may be times when you need to attend training, or an event and additional arrangements need to be made.

Where appropriate, we will pay up to £20 per hour for additional caring support. This must be agreed in advance with the volunteer's named staff contact or branch or group contact.

How do I claim expenses?

So that we can make sure you are reimbursed in a timely manner, each month you will need to complete the volunteer [expense claim form](#) which can be found on the Volunteer Zone. On the form, you will need to provide all the relevant information required in each of the boxes.

If you submit a claim for items six months after the costs were incurred, we may not be able to reimburse costs. If you are a branch volunteer, Association Visitor or care volunteer connected to a branch, you will need to send the form, together with receipts, to the branch Treasurer. The Treasurer will then arrange for your claim to be approved by two branch authorised signatories and for payment to be made. This is usually by cheque.

If you are group volunteer, Association Visitor or care volunteer connected to a group or a volunteer with a national or regional role, you will need send your completed form, together with receipts, to the finance team at Francis Crick House in Northampton; they will process your claim and you will be reimbursed within two weeks, either by cheque, or directly into your bank account, depending on your preference.