
Branch Expenses Policy

1. Underlying Principles

- 1.1. We would like to ensure all members can attend the events and activities that this branch is involved in, and that ancillary expenses such as travel and carer costs do not create a barrier to participation.
- 1.2. Often, travel, subsistence and carer costs are covered centrally by the union and can be claimed when booking or attending courses or events. However, expenses for branch and workplace union activities need to be claimed from the branch.
- 1.3. Below we set out the kinds of expenses that can be claimed by members undertaking union business. These should only be claimed from the branch where they are not provided by the employer through the facility agreements for recognized unions, so please check these before claiming.

2. Travel Expenses

- 2.1. Common sense will be applied to all claims for TRAVEL for the purpose of Union expenses to be covered by the branch.
- 2.2. **Train / Coach / Bus.** Travel should be either be booked by the union in advance, or reimbursed to the members up to standard (2nd) class fare (receipt required).
- 2.3. **By car.** For those who have no alternative but to travel by car, a rate of 45p per mile will apply to the equivalent standard class rail. This should generally not exceed the cost of travelling by public transport, but exceptional circumstances will be considered. Where several members travel in one car, only one member will be reimbursed.
- 2.4. **Bicycle.** Reimbursed at a rate of 20p per mile.

3. Subsistence

- 3.1. Claims should only be made if the cost of meals or other subsistence have arisen through participation in a union event or activity and if you would not normally have paid for these yourself. Although there is some flexibility if the rates are slightly exceeded, receipts for the full amounts must be attached. The reimbursement rates are as follows:
 - (i) Lunch – up to £7
 - (ii) Dinner – up to £15

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4. Drinks

- 4.1. There will be occasions when drinks are also bought for a reps team or workplace meeting. Approximate costs must be authorised by the Branch Committee in advance.
- 4.2. In line with Unite national policy, the branch does not agree to alcohol being available at meetings, picket lines, protests, etc., until after the main business of the union is completed.
- 4.3. If alcohol is served, an equal array of soft drinks and snacks should also be presented to encourage responsible drinking.

5. Telephone and Internet

- 5.1. Reasonable telephone and Internet costs can be reimbursed if your union facility agreement does not cover these. This must be authorised in advance by two branch officers. Claim forms and the telephone or internet bill must also be provided.
- 5.2. Please ensure that you research and select the best possible deal for your purposes.
- 5.3. A maximum of £40 per month will be paid.

6. Childcare and Carer Costs

- 6.1. We recognize that without this assistance, some members would struggle to participate in the democratic structures of the branch and wider union. The union recognises that equality of access is fundamental to developing inclusive policy and industrial, organising, political and campaigning strategies throughout the union. (*Full Unite policy Dec 2010 available*).
- 6.2. Unite will reimburse the cost of additional childcare/carers expenses at the living wage, where a signed receipt is provided by the worker who is providing the care. (Please attach this to your expenses claim sheet noting the meeting or activity dates and venue).
- 6.3. Members are not entitled to claim for carer costs that would normally be incurred during their regular working week. Claims should only be made for costs over and above normal arrangements.
- 6.4. Carer costs can be claimed for strike days and where the strike pay and branch top-up if any does not fully meet the care costs.

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- 6.5. Employing family members is not permitted unless that family member is accredited.

7. Making a Claim

- 7.1. All expenses need to be accompanied by evidence of the expenditure. Members should use the expenses form and attach receipts.
- 7.2. Once the branch officer has the full expenses form and evidence, a payment will be made via BACS or by cheque within two weeks. If payment is needed within a shorter timeframe, please arrange this in advance so that the necessary arrangements can be made.
- 7.3. Members without a bank account need to arrange to collect the cash from the Branch Treasurer two weeks after submitting the expenses form and receipts.

Unite LE1111

Agreed January 2014

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