

# Expenses protocol



## **Introduction**

Residents can claim travel and other expenses from Milton Keynes City Council if they are attending meetings that involve the housing service.

Payment is only available after the event via a BACS payment when bank account details are provided, along with a completed expenses form and receipts.

## **General Information**

- Residents include Council tenants, Leaseholders and Shared Owners.
- All residents who attend an event organised by the Council for participation purposes are eligible for these costs.
- Receipts for all expenses must be shown, except carer's allowance, where details of the carer will be given, or travel expenses for attending meetings where minutes must be shown or verification by the relevant officer given.
- All claims should be made within three months of when the cost was incurred. Claims received after this date may be subject to further scrutiny and delay or cancellation.
- All claims made will be paid back to the claimant within 28 days of the date of the claim being made.

## **Carers Allowance**

An allowance is made for reimbursing carers expenses. This is sub-divided into two main groups.

- Minors aged 13 and under
- Persons aged 13 and over who are medically unable to care for themselves and need specialist care.

This allowance is available for all who wish to claim it, with the following conditions:

- It is the duty of the Council to check who is providing the care.
- Allowances for minors will not be paid to spouses and partners residing in the same property if there is no medical reason why they should not be able to look after the children; however, the exception to this will be if the spouse or partner is on shift work at the time of the meeting, evidence of this will be requested.
- It is left to the discretion of the Tenant whether the carer is registered however the council may request details of the carer.

- The total maximum amount available will be £31.50 for carer's claims. The maximum amount payable per child is £4.50 per hour.
- In all cases the Tenant must provide a signed expenses sheet and receipt, which is also signed and dated by the carer for proof of the cost.

### **Travel expenses**

- Travel Expenses – These are available for meetings organised by the resident engagement team and for meetings arranged by other teams in the Council to enable effective participation or for carrying out duties on behalf of Milton Keynes City Council in line with the terms of reference of any group/panel membership. Expenses will also be paid for training arranged through Milton Keynes City Council.
- Public transport should be used where reasonably possible.
- The mileage allowance for private car travel will be 45p to a maximum of £8 per journey (each way), unless by prior arrangement with the resident engagement team. If the allowance is claimed for a long journey for which cheaper transport can be arranged (e.g., train) then the price of the return journey using the lowest travelling price as agreed with the resident engagement team will be the total amount of expenses given, unless safety or medical grounds prevents this.
- Evidence of attending these meetings must be made available, such as minutes or officer verification.
- Further evidence for training and conferences must include providing feedback to other members of the group/panel, through distributing the course materials to all and by way of discussions at the next group/panel meeting. A copy of course materials should also be given to the resident engagement team.
- If a tenant is using their own car and pays to park while at a meeting organised by the Council, they can claim back the cost of parking if they produce evidence and have completed an expense claim form. Completed forms need to be given to the resident engagement team, reimbursement will only be given for the duration of the meeting.
- If the method of travel is by train the resident engagement team will purchase a ticket, which can be collected at the Central Milton Keynes Train Station ticket office.
- Taxis – Milton Keynes City Council operate a taxi account for use by tenants who are attending meetings organised by the resident engagement team. The use of taxi's is an expensive option so public transport (or private car) should be encouraged wherever possible. If the resident does not have a car and public transport is not a viable option a taxi can be used, however they will be booked by the resident engagement team and it is the resident's responsibility to let an officer know that a taxi is required, or no longer required.

- To request a taxi the tenant must in the first instance contact the officer organising the meeting. Taxi sharing is encouraged whenever possible. Only the procedure described must be used to order taxis. Unauthorised use of taxis will be charged to the tenant responsible.

### **Meal allowance**

- Subsistence Allowance – Tenants are encouraged to provide for themselves at mealtimes, however if a meeting arranged with council officers or an event initiated by the Council, which lasts during a lunch period, i.e., 12.30 to 2.pm a subsistence allowance may be claimed. Officers will make every attempt to ensure that meetings are not held at these times.
- If a meeting is not held within a Council property, for example a morning conference where lunch is not provided, then an allowance of up to £5 is available. If lunch is provided, then the tenant is expected to have been adequately catered for and not eligible for any reimbursement. For evening meals an allowance of £15 is available but not for alcoholic beverages.

### **\*Please note**

The resident engagement team reserve the right to carry out spot checks on expenses claims including mileage, where an online route planner service will be utilised to check the distance being claimed for, this is in line with our audit requirements. We reserve the right to refuse expense claims which are not correctly evidenced e.g., valid receipts produced, or inappropriate items claimed for e.g., alcoholic beverages.