

PAYMENT OF EXPENSES FOR VOLUNTARY PATIENT REPRESENTATIVES (VPRs)
Policy Reference: MECCG132

Document Information

Target Audience and brief description	All voluntary patient representatives engaged in CCG business. This policy does not apply to CCG staff claiming expenses.
Action Required	Once the policy has been approved, this will be available in the library on the CCG website. The policy, along with an expenses form, will also be made available to patient representatives who attend meetings on behalf of the CCG.

Version	1.1
Accountable Executive	Chief Finance Officer
Responsible Post holder/Policy Owner	Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Committee Approval	Audit Committee, 4 September 2019
Adopted by the Board	26 September 2019
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1. Introduction

This policy defines Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group's (hereafter referred to as MECCG) approach to the involvement and reimbursement of expenses for voluntary patient representatives (hereafter referred to as VPR) who are engaged in Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group led activities that support delivery of the organisations statutory obligations to involve and consult as defined in Section 242 1(B) of the NHS Act 2006 and in line with the Government response to the NHS Future Forum report. The Act places a statutory duty on all NHS bodies to involve and consult members of the public on an ongoing basis in planning services, proposals for change to the delivery of services and in decisions that affect how services operate.

The policy also supports the implementation of the CCG's Communications and Engagement Strategy – endorsed by the CCG Board in June 2019 available to view as part of the Board papers on www.midessexccg.nhs.uk).

Mid Essex CCG recognises that services developed with the help of VPRs are better services. VPRs help the organisation to focus on the interest of patients, carers and the general public and can bring a different perspective to the group's work which often reflects the views of the local community.

This policy has been developed in partnership with members Mid Essex CCG Community Champions.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, consistent, non-discriminatory approach to reimbursement of expenses for VPRs.

3. Definitions

- **Voluntary Patient Representative (VPR)**

Refers to voluntary patients or other members of the public who provide contribution to the CCG's work and decision making.

- **Reimbursement**

Refers to the refunding of travel expenses or specific costs that VPRs have incurred as a direct consequence of their involvement.

4. Reimbursement

4.1 Principles of good practice

- A copy of this policy should be given to all VPRs when they give a commitment to become involved.
- Many arrangements for VPRs are made on a casual and ad-hoc basis. However, if possible, the costs that VPRs are likely to incur during the course of the involvement should be discussed and agreed in advance.

- VPRs on social security benefits should not be expected to make any commitment to involvement work until they understand how it will affect any benefits they may be claiming.
- Prior to agreeing to involvement, the VPR and CCG may have to agree an exceptional cost/expense due to health need, disability, social needs, ethnicity and so on.
- Where paperwork is necessary to safeguard both the VPR and CCG, it will be accessible and easy to understand. VPRs will have a named contact, the Head of Communications and Engagement, to discuss any expense queries.
- MECCG will have in place a process for paying expenses to ensure advisers are reimbursed as soon as possible.

4.2. General principles

4.2.1 Receipts will be required for all expenses that are to be reimbursed apart from car mileage.

4.2.2 Reimbursed expenses should be for the exact amount, not an averaged or rounded up amount.

4.2.3 The VPR Reimbursement Form (Appendix A) should be received by MECCG within one month of the incurred expenses. Late submissions, not exceeding three months from incurred expenses, will be accepted where appropriate.

4.2.4 The claim procedure will be followed in making all claims for reimbursement.

4.3 Authorised person for approving reimbursement

This will be firstly the Head of Communications and Engagement, with authorisation by the Chief Finance Officer..

4.4. Who is reimbursed?

4.4.1 VPRs will be reimbursed defined expenses only (see section 5.5).

4.4.2 If the VPR requires a 'supporter' such as an interpreter, signer or carer to attend the meeting, the 'supporter' can also claim reasonable reimbursement under the same conditions as the VPR themselves. The 'supporter' would be required to fill in the VPR Reimbursement Form. This will need to be agreed with MECCG in advance as they may be able to organise certain types of support.

4.4.3 Expenses will not be reimbursed where a VPR chooses to attend an open meeting, when they are there as an individual in their own right, wanting to express their views on their own experiences, not as a representative of the CCG.

4.4.4. Expenses will not be reimbursed where a VPR takes part in a research survey or generic consultation.

5. Type of expenses

5.1 Travel

Reimbursement for travel should be offered in full for any pre-agreed involvement. VPRs using their own car will be paid the current mileage rate as stated in the NHS terms and conditions service handbook. Mileage should be calculated from the VPRs home address to the venue of the meeting using the shortest available route.

Those using public transport will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred and only on submission of the appropriate receipt or ticket.

Those wishing to use taxis due to special circumstances must agree arrangements in advance with MECCG before reimbursement can be made. The organisation's account will be used wherever possible, and where this is not applicable, a receipt or ticket must be obtained and attached to the VPR Reimbursement Form.

Reasonable car parking fees will be reimbursed and it is essential that a receipt or ticket is obtained and attached to the VPR Reimbursement Form.

VPRs must ensure that the car being used to travel has the correct and valid insurance, MOT and vehicle tax before claiming expenditure. MECCG reserves the right to view the relevant documentation as stated at any time.

Rates of reimbursement are as follows under the NHS terms and conditions service handbook from 1 July 2013.

Type of vehicle/allowance	Annual mileage up to 3,500 (standard rate)	Annual mileage over 3,500 miles (standard rate)	All eligible miles travelled
Car (all types of fuel)	45 pence per mile	24 pence per mile	
Passenger Miles			5 pence per mile
Motor cycle			33 pence per mile
Pedal cycle			20 pence per mile

5.2 Parking on CCG premises – Patient Reference Group

VPRs attending Locality Reference Group meetings or board meetings in public on CCG premises will, depending on the time of the meeting, be issued with a parking permit if appropriate. It is the responsibility of the permit holder to display the permit clearly in their vehicle.

5.3 Costs incurred from replacement care and individual support needs

To ensure that involvement is accessible to all service users, the organisation should be prepared to reimburse these costs which may include interpreters,

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signers for deaf people; personal care assistants i.e. the cost of a personal assistant or support person who is needed to enable someone to participate. However, the exact arrangements must be discussed between the VPR and MECCG and agreed in advance.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Mid Essex CCG:

- has a duty of care towards VPRs who are involved in CCG business
- has a responsibility to provide adequate expertise, information, time, administrative and financial resource to support effective involvement
- will review the policy on a regular basis with involvement from relevant stakeholders

6.2 Voluntary Patient Representative (VPR)

- needs to understand and agree to the terms and conditions upon which they get involved
- with regard to expenses such as travel and so on, VPRs are required to choose the most cost effective means available to them while still meeting their needs.

7. References:

National Guidance/Legislation:

The National Health Service Act 2006, Section 242, Department of Health
Our health our care, our say, 2006 Department of Health
A stronger Local Voice 2006, Department of Health
Health Reform in England 2006, Department of Health
Reward and Recognition, Department of Health (August 2006)
Valuing Involvement, Care Services Improvement Partnership/National Institute for Mental Health (August 2007)

Appendix A

Claim for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses (non – employees)

Payments will be made by cheque. Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS.

PAYEE NAME TO APPEAR ON CHEQUE:

ADDRESS TO WHICH CHEQUE TO BE SENT (*including post code*):

TOTAL AMOUNT OF CLAIM (*See overleaf for details*)

£ _____

I certify that this claim is for expenses necessarily incurred by me in the course of activity on behalf of the CCG and that no other remuneration has been received or separate claim made for these costs.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE CCG BY:

NAME:

DESIGNATION:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Claims should be submitted to:

Katherine Raven, Head of Communications and Engagement,
Wren House, Hedgerows Business Park, Colchester Road, Chelmsford, CM2 5PF
katherine.raven1@nhs.net 01245 459414

