

## Volunteer expenses FAQs

This FAQs sheet answers the most commonly asked questions about Parkinson's UK volunteer expenses, so please read on to find out more.

### 1. What can I claim for?

For details of what you can claim, please see the ***Volunteer expenses policy***. Some items, such as professional support like a translator or sign language interpreter, need to be agreed in advance with your staff contact or local group.

### 2. What do you mean by an 'actual expense'?

An actual expense means being reimbursed for the exact amount you have spent rather than a flat amount to cover your volunteer expenses. A flat amount could cover more than you actually spent. If you receive more than the actual amount than you spent, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) could consider that you're making a profit. This could affect any benefits you receive or suggest that you are employed and be liable for tax.

### 3. What if I don't want to claim my expenses?

You can make a claim and donate the amount back to Parkinson's UK. If you are a UK taxpayer, an extra 25p for every £1 donated is added when the donation is Gift Aided. Please complete a ***Gift Aid Declaration Form*** and send this in with your donation to Parkinson's UK or, in the case of local group volunteers, to your local group.

#### **4. What will I need to make a claim?**

To make a claim, you will need:

- full detailed proof of purchase for example receipts or, where available, an itemised bill highlighting the items you're claiming for
- a ***volunteer expenses form*** – please speak to your staff contact if you don't have a copy
- your bank details – if you claim through the Parkinson's UK office, and provide details on the form, we can pay your expenses directly into your bank account

#### **5. I volunteer for my local group and for other roles within the charity – how do I claim my expenses?**

You will need to complete a separate expenses form for each volunteer role you undertake. This is because they all need to be approved and processed in different ways. Your local group is responsible for approving expenses incurred as part of any group activity.

For other volunteer roles within the charity, the staff contact responsible for the role is also responsible for approving expenses associated with the role.

#### **6. What if I didn't get a receipt for something I have purchased?**

Wherever possible, you should obtain a detailed receipt for items purchased. However, we understand this may not always be possible – for example when claiming for toll charges. In these cases, please write on the expenses form that no receipt was available.

#### **7. What can I do if I lose a receipt?**

We understand that sometimes receipts can be mislaid. So, for expenses claimed from the Parkinson's UK office, your staff contact will complete a form that details the missing receipts and submit it to the Finance team, along with your expenses form. If claiming from your local group, please talk to them about their guidance.

## **8. How will the money be reimbursed to me?**

We know people prefer to receive their expenses in different ways. That's why we offer two different options (for claims processed by the UK Office):

- **BACS** – this is a transfer of money directly into your bank account. We prefer to reimburse your expenses directly into your bank account as this is quicker for you and saves the charity money. The first time you claim expenses by BACS you will also need to complete the bank details section on the volunteer expense claim form.
- **Cheque** – we can issue a cheque for the amount which and send it to your home address.

Volunteer expenses claimed from local groups will usually be reimbursed by cheque but, occasionally, with petty cash. For amounts under £10 a month – for example milk for refreshments at a meeting – you will be reimbursed if you provide proof of purchase with the following attached:

- your printed name and signature
- the first line of your address
- a few words explaining the reason for the spend

You will be asked to sign a receipt to confirm you have received the cash or cheque. These receipts will then be kept with the local group's financial records.

## **9. What should I do if I don't receive reimbursement within three weeks?**

If you have not received your expenses within three weeks of submitting a claim through your staff contact, please contact them. Claiming expenses through a local group may take longer than three weeks as groups don't always meet frequently. However, if you have any queries about a claim, please contact your treasurer or support group finance contact.

## **10. How we handle your information**

When making a volunteer expenses claim, you will be asked to supply certain details including your address, contact information and bank details. We collect this information only in order to process your expenses claim. We keep details on record within our central finance database for statutory accounting reasons and to be able to expedite any subsequent claims, in line with current data protection regulations. No details from the finance database are ever used for any purpose, other than to make payment, and are never passed to any third party.

## **11. I've purchased an item on behalf of my local group – can I include this in my expenses?**

Yes – items related to the delivery of group activities, which have been agreed in advance with the group/committee, can be claimed back through group funds. More information on what you can spend group funds on can be found in the **Local Group Directory**.

## **12. I am the main carer for a person with Parkinson's – can I make a claim for a professional carer to stand in during my usual volunteering hours?**

No – unfortunately we are only able to cover the costs for carers where a training, meeting or event falls outside of your regular volunteering hours. As a charity, we must be mindful of costs and we expect volunteers to be able to commit to the volunteering hours of the role as agreed with their staff contact.

### **13. I am currently claiming state benefits – can I claim expenses?**

Yes – volunteers can claim benefits and expenses while volunteering with Parkinson's UK.

However, it's important you tell your benefits adviser you are volunteering and that you will have your actual, out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed. You may need to provide proof of expenses, including photocopies of the original receipts. If your benefits adviser asks you to provide a letter confirming your volunteering status, please contact the Volunteering team ([volunteering@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@parkinsons.org.uk)) who will be able to provide you with one. For more information on volunteering while claiming state benefits, please contact your benefits adviser or visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) (England and Wales), [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) (Northern Ireland) or [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot) (Scotland).

### **14. Can I claim for the cost of service charge when eating in a café or restaurant?**

Yes- you can claim for the cost of the service charge with your meal.

### **15. Who do I contact if I have a question about expenses?**

If you have any queries or questions about expenses, that are not answered on this sheet or in the ***Volunteer Expenses policy***, please talk to your staff contact.