

Volunteer expenses FAQs

At Parkinson's UK we are very grateful for the time you give to the charity and believe it's important that you're not left out of pocket for doing so. 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 are volunteer expenses?

A volunteer expense is an expense that you incur when giving your time to Parkinson's UK, such as lunch, travel or car parking. Parkinson's UK reimburses reasonable out-of-pocket expenses as outlined in [this policy](#).

2. What if I don't want/need to claim my expenses?

We strongly recommend that volunteers claim any expenses incurred whilst volunteering with us so that you are not left out of pocket. However, we understand that not all volunteers wish to claim their expenses. If this is the case, you can make a claim and donate the amount back to Parkinson's UK. If you are a UK taxpayer, and your donation is Gift Aided, this can raise further funds for the charity (an extra 25p per £1 donated). You'll need to complete a [Gift Aid Declaration Form](#) and send this in along with your donation to Parkinson's UK or in the case of local group volunteers, your local group.

3. What can I claim for?

Details of what we reimburse are outlined in the [Volunteer expenses policy](#). Some items, such as professional support, need to be agreed in advance with your staff contact or local group.

4. What do you mean by an actual expense?

This means that we reimburse only the exact amount you have spent rather than using a flat amount to cover your volunteer expenses per day. If you receive more than the actual amount that you were out of pocket in the first place, then it could be interpreted by HM Revenue and Customs that you are making a profit. This can affect any benefit entitlement you may have, or imply that you are employed and should therefore be taxed.

5. What do I need to make a claim?

To make a claim you will need the following things:

- full detailed proof of purchase e.g. receipts or an itemised bill highlighting the items you are claiming for

- a [volunteer expenses form](#). This can be found on the Parkinson's UK website, and on our volunteer site, Assemble. Please speak to your staff contact if you're not sure how to access this.
- your bank details - if you claim through Parkinson's UK Office we can pay your expenses directly into your bank account, if you provide details on the form.

6. How will you handle this personal information?

By making a volunteer expenses claim, you will be asked to supply certain details, including address and contact information and bank details. We collect this information in order to process your expenses claim only. 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.

7. What is the process for claiming expenses through my staff contact?

To claim expenses back for a volunteer role not linked to a local group you will need to complete a [volunteer expenses form](#) and attach or scan and insert all receipts to the form. This should then be given, posted or emailed to your staff contact.

8. What is the process for claiming expenses through my local group?

To claim back expenses incurred whilst volunteering for your local group you should complete a [volunteer expenses form](#), and attach or scan and insert all receipts to the form. This should then be given or sent to the designated person within your group who processes expenses, usually the Treasurer or Support Group Finance contact.

For expenses under £10 a volunteer expenses form is not necessary and volunteers can claim back from their local group by providing detailed proof of purchase as detailed in question 12, below. Treasurers or Support Group Finance contacts must keep records of all reimbursed claims as outlined in the Treasurers' guide.

If you are told you cannot claim expenses by your group but believe you should be able to claim, then please contact the Local Networks team on localnetworks@parkinsons.org.uk.

9. 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 expense form for each volunteer role that you undertake. This is because they need to be approved and processed in different ways. Your local group is responsible for approving expenses incurred as part of any group activity,

and each of your other roles within the charity will have a staff contact responsible for approving expenses incurred as part of those roles.

10. 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 that this may not always be possible - for example when claiming for items such as road toll charges. In these cases, you should clearly state on the expenses form that no receipt was available.

11. What can I do if I've lost a receipt?

We understand that sometimes receipts can be mislaid, so for expenses claimed through the Parkinson's UK office, your staff contact will complete a form and submit it to the Finance team along with your expenses form, detailing what has happened, so that we can reimburse you.

If you're claiming through your local group, please talk to your Treasurer or Support Group Finance contact for their guidance.

12. How long will it take to process my claim?

We don't want to leave you out of pocket, so when you claim through the Parkinson's UK Office, we aim to process all volunteer expense claims within three weeks from the date the form was submitted. If information is incorrect or missing the Finance team will make contact with you as quickly as possible to resolve the issue. If you are claiming expenses back through your local group this process may take longer depending on how regularly your group meets.

13. 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 through 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 is sent to your home address, which you would need to pay into the bank yourself.

Volunteer expenses claimed through local groups will usually be reimbursed by cheque but occasionally with petty cash. For amounts under £10 per month, like milk for

refreshments at a meeting, you may 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'll be asked to sign a receipt to confirm that you have received the cash or cheque. These receipts will then be kept in the local group's financial records.

14. What should I do if I don't receive reimbursement within three weeks?

If you have not received your expenses after three weeks of submitting a claim through your staff contact, you should contact them, so that they can find out why there is a delay.

Claiming expenses through a local group may take longer than three weeks as groups don't always meet regularly. However if you have any queries about a claim you have submitted please contact your Treasurer or Support Group Finance contact.

15. I've purchased an item on behalf of my local group, can I include this in my expenses?

Yes, items of expenditure related to the delivery of group activities which have been agreed in advance by the group/committee can be claimed back through group funds. More information on what group funds can be spent on can be found in the [Local group Directory](#).

16. 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 regular volunteering hours?

No, unfortunately we are not able to cover the costs for carers, except 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 regular volunteering hours of the role as outlined in the volunteer role description.

17. I am currently in receipt of benefits, can I claim expenses?

Volunteers are able to claim benefits and expenses whilst volunteering with Parkinson's UK.

It's important you tell your benefits advisor that you are volunteering and that you will be having your actual, out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed. You may need to provide proof of expenses, including photocopies of the original receipts. If your benefits advisor asks you to provide a letter confirming your volunteering status, please contact the Volunteering team who will be able to provide you with one. For more information on volunteering

whilst claiming state benefits please contact your benefits advisor or visit www.direct.gov.uk.

18. 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, please talk to your staff contact.