

Customer Engagement Expenses Policy

August 2025

Owner: Customer Engagement Manager

<u>Version No.</u>	<u>Purpose/Changes</u>	<u>Approval Date</u>	<u>Approved By</u>	<u>Suggested Review Date</u>
11.0	Annual health check	03/09/2025	Leadership Team	2026/2027
V10.0	Annual health check	11/12/2024	ELT	August 2025
V9.0	Annual health check	20/09/2023	ELT	August 2024
V8.0	Annual health check	23/08/2022	ELT	August 2023
V7.0	Annual health check	11/08/2021	ELT	August 2022
6.0	Annual health check	12/06/2020	Head of Corporate Services	June 2021
5.0	Annual health check	12/04/2019	Head of Customer and Support Services	May 2020
4.0	Annual health check	30/05/2018	Head of Customer and Support Services	May 2019
3.0	Annual health check	05/05/2017	Head of Customer and Support Services	May 2018
2.0	Annual health check	05/05/2016	Head of Customer and Support Services	May 2017
1.0	Full review and revision	13/05/2015	Heads of Service	May 2016

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1. Our policy is...

- 1.1 Everyone should have equal opportunities to become Ongo Homes (OH) volunteers. At OH, we believe it is important that customers are not out of pocket because of volunteering, participating in events, attending meetings or being involved in other activities (i.e., conferences or training events).

2. It applies to...

- 2.1 This policy covers travel, subsistence and childcare / carers costs incurred by volunteers (and other customers engaged in officially recognised OH or customer engagement activity) travelling to meetings and other OH business providing prior approval has been obtained from the Customer Engagement Manager or the Head of People, Culture and Engagement or Head of Governance and Assurance.
- 2.2 Claims for incidental expenses (i.e. telephone calls, stationery will not be reimbursed unless they have been authorised by the Customer Engagement team (receipts will be required).

3. Because we want to...

- 3.1 Make sure no volunteer or customer is out of pocket because of their volunteer work.
- 3.2 Provide clear guidelines to ensure that volunteers or customers do not inadvertently incur expenses which OH can neither justify nor reimburse.
- 3.3 Make sure Customer Engagement monitors and manages the cost of expenses within their day-to-day operational budgets.

Expenses will only be reimbursed if they comply with this policy.

4. We will...

- 4.1 Meetings will be held face-to-face (national, regional, and local) wherever possible, at venues that are accessible by public transport.
- 4.2 Make sure expense claims are authorised and paid as quickly as possible. This may be at the meeting or event itself when this is feasible. Our preferred method of payment is via BACS transfer in arrears (bank details will be required) although in cases of extreme hardship, consideration will be given to paying customers via other methods, e.g. petty cash.

4.3 Make sure customers are aware of the need to ensure their expense claims are cost effective and value for money. For example, car sharing is encouraged wherever possible. Receipts or travel tickets must be submitted with all claims.

4.4 Travel expenses will cover:

- The costs of economy class rail fare or bus fare to and from the venue
- Taxi fares where necessary (e.g. for customers with mobility difficulties or to and from the nearest railway station if that is the only means of transport. Specially adapted taxis can be arranged for wheelchair users)
- Mileage rates for car drivers to be reimbursed at the approved HMRC rates
- Car park charges (supported by receipts)

4.5 Pay mileage and parking expenses to the driver when expense claims have been submitted on a monthly basis (continuing to encourage car sharing wherever possible).

4.6 Occasionally it may be necessary to stay away overnight, for example if there are meetings in the same location on consecutive days or if it would otherwise be necessary to leave home before 7am or return after 7pm. The Customer Engagement Manager or the Head of People, Culture and Engagement will book hotel accommodation.

4.7 **Subsistence**

4.7.1 The cost of meals and refreshments can be reimbursed in line with the following principles:

- All expenditure is supported by receipts
- Refreshments have not been provided at the event
- Where not provided at the project or event (or is not included in the rate for overnight stays in hotels), you can claim up to the amounts stated in the *Being involved, expenses and allowances* leaflet for breakfast, lunch and dinner
- If you are volunteering at an event for more than five hours, lunch expenses can be claimed up to the amount shown in the *Being involved, expenses and allowances* leaflet

4.8 **Childcare or carers expenses**

- If a volunteer has to use childcare then reasonable childcare costs will be reimbursed (receipts will be required)
- Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed if a volunteer needs to be accompanied by a carer due to disability
- If a volunteer is normally the sole and essential carer for another member of the household, reasonable expenses to provide cover to enable the

representative to attend a meeting will be reimbursed. A receipt or note from the carer must be attached to the claim form

- Prior approval from the Customer Engagement Manager or the Head of People and Culture and Engagement must be obtained for any childcare or carers expenses
- 4.9 Some costs incurred by volunteers, outside of those specifically detailed within this policy may be reimbursed to allow individuals to carry out the responsibilities of their role, up to a maximum amount of £20 per month, (e.g. CV Officer expenses for internet or if volunteers are working on a specific group such as Scrutiny) at the discretion of the Customer Engagement Manager or the Head of People, Culture and Engagement.
- 4.10 To claim expenses, a claim form must be completed and returned to Customer Engagement for payment to be processed. Support can be provided to assist customers in submitting a claim where necessary. The form must include details of:
- Purpose of the claim (e.g. general volunteering, meeting, event)
 - Name of the event / meeting, venue, date and time
 - Name and address of person claiming
 - Amount being claimed
 - Signature of person claiming
 - Receipts required to be attached to the form
 - Forms must be submitted on a monthly basis to the Customer Engagement Team
- 4.11 Expense claim forms are available from the Ongo Homes website – [Expense Claim Form](#) – or from the Customer Engagement team at Ongo House, High Street, Scunthorpe, DN15 6AT.

5. Making sure we do what we say...

- 5.1 The Customer Engagement Manager or the Head of People, Culture and Engagement has overall responsibility for this policy and for monitoring its effectiveness.
- 5.2 The Customer Engagement team are responsible for ensuring they have read and understood the policy and that it is implemented on a day-to-day basis.

6. Other things to bear in mind...

- 6.1 This policy also links to:
- OH Customer Engagement Framework
 - OH Being involved, expenses and allowances leaflet
 - Appendices 1&2
 - HM Revenue and Customs tax-free mileage rates

7. We'll look at this again...

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed annually. We will review earlier if any regulatory or legislative changes occur that have an impact on this policy.

APPENDIX 1 – Customer Engagement expense rates

We will always set our mileage rates in line with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Mileage Approved Rates (MAPS). They are set at a level to take into account depreciation and other running costs, as well as fuel.

Rates paid for mileage will be updated each April to reflect any new rates set by HMRC.

Rates listed are applicable as of April 2025:

- Mileage: 0.45p per mile (additional mileage can be claimed for passengers when car sharing, at 5p per mile)

APPENDIX 2 – Expenses guidance

Travel expenses:

Guidance	Information required
Rail fares: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To and from within OH region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rail tickets should be booked in advance via Customer Engagement
Bus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To and from home within OH region (volunteer to make own arrangements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “All day tickets” to be bought at the appropriate fare at the time of purchase instead of return fare if cheaper People who travel more than three days per week for volunteer purposes should purchase a week pass the appropriate fare at the time of purchase Bus tickets to be attached to the claim form
Taxi fares: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These will be paid when the individual does not have access to a car or public transport Taxi sharing from the same area is essential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bookings to be made through Customer Engagement with the exception of Community Voice when bookings will be made via the treasurer Taxi accounts are set up with individual firms
Car mileage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual journey mileage including return can be claimed Car sharing is encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mileage Details of journey to be included on the claim form Additional passengers to be included on claim form
Car parking fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be claimed for the period of the meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receipt / parking ticket to be provided
Travel outside of the region OH operates in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Engagement will advise on the most cost-effective travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel arrangements to be agreed with the Customer Engagement Manager or the Head of People, Culture and Engagement in advance

APPENDIX 2 – Expenses guidance

Childcare or carer support expenses:

Guidance	Information required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare allowance (to be agreed with the Customer Engagement Manager or the Head of People, Culture and Engagement before submitting a claim) In respect of carer support expenses, no expenses will be paid to a member of the same household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payment to be made to registered childcare providers / carers only, receipt / invoice to be provided Reasonable costs will be reimbursed, as agreed with the Customer Engagement Manager or the Head of People, Culture and Engagement.

Subsistence expenses:

Guidance	Information required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overnight accommodation – where an individual attends training or a conference requiring an overnight stay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed and booked by the Customer Engagement Team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full day meetings held at Ongo House or The Arc Invites to external events would normally indicate if refreshments are being provided For attending conferences / training sessions where meals are not provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OH will provide expenses for refreshments at meetings or events (if nothing else is provided). Receipts must be provided to make a claim
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support for local community groups 	<p>OH will provide financial assistance in the form of grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start-up grants – to pay for setting up a new group (leaflets / publicity) Annual grant – to pay towards the running costs of a group (hiring venue, stationery, leaflets etc.) Community grant – for small projects Customer Engagement will provide further information on the grants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Engagement can provide information about external funding opportunities for resident associations and community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OH will signpost to external funding opportunities