

Vocal Payment Policy
Last updated: February 2024

Notes

This document is designed to provide a clear and consistent approach to the costing and payments for Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement activities (PPIE) carried out with Vocal.

1. Honorarium Payments

- 1.1. Vocal offers honorarium payments for PPIE activities. Our payment rates are based on the [National Institute for Health and Care Research](#) (NIHR) guidelines (as of July 2022). Please see Section 2.3. in this document.

We will always let public contributors know what honorarium payment is available before they take part in any activities.

- 1.2. Honorarium payments and expenses will ordinarily be made via BACS transfer.

To be paid via BACS, the public contributor must provide details of a valid bank account with an account name that matches their name on Vocal's records. Vocal cannot make payments into any other accounts, for example, a relative's account or a charity.

If a public contributor does not have access to a bank account, the public contributor will be given a form to take to the Cashiers office (ground floor of Manchester Royal Infirmary) to receive a cash payment.

- 1.3. Payment rates

The table below gives indicative rates of payment for PPIE activities.

Vocal Honorarium Payments	
Document reviews	
£15	For reviewing of short documents that do not include complex language and completing a feedback form, e.g., Lay summaries.
£25	For completing reviews of documents (including appendices) of up to 10 pages in total and completing feedback forms e.g., Patient Information Sheets, short grant applications, Expressions of Interest

£37.50	For completing reviews of documents (including appendices) of up to 15 pages in total and completing feedback forms e.g., Patient Information Sheets, short grant applications, Expressions of Interest
£50	For completing reviews of documents (including appendices) of up to 25 pages in total and completing feedback forms e.g., grant applications, articles
Face-to-face or virtual activities	
£25	For an activity requiring little or no preparation and which equates to up to or around one hour, e.g., a discussion group
	for activities lasting between 1:15 and 1:45, payment will increase by £6.25 for every additional 15 minutes.
£50	For an activity which equates to around two hours.
	for activities lasting between 2:15 and 2:45, payment will increase by £6.25 for every additional 15 minutes.
£75	For an activity which equates to approximately half a day's activity.
£150	For an all-day activity (5 hours plus).
Meeting preparation or follow-up work	
£12.50	For preparation or follow-up which equates to around half an hour. For example, completing a survey or reading a short document.
£25	For preparation or follow-up which equates to around one hour.
£50	For preparation of follow-up which equates to around two hours.
Other activities	
£Variable	For any activities that fall outside or in between these categories, these guidelines should be used as a reference to determine payment amounts.

1.4. Changes in circumstances

If a public contributor prepares for a meeting but is unable to attend in exceptional circumstances (e.g., illness or an emergency), a nominal payment may be offered depending upon the amount of preparation undertaken in advance of the meeting.

If an activity is cancelled, Vocal will give as much notice as possible to public contributors.

If an activity is cancelled at short notice, e.g., within 24 hours of the planned start time, and budget allows, the payment (or part-payment) will be honoured.

For cancellations within a week of the planned activity, Vocal staff will give consideration to any arrangements already made by contributors when deciding whether to offer payment or part payment. If a contributor has already arranged travel, then these expenses should be covered, if they cannot be rearranged.

If the requirements of an activity are reduced at short notice because of changes initiated by Vocal or our partners, we will honour the original honorarium payment offered. If the activity requirements are increased, we will increase the payment offered accordingly.

1.5. Employment Status

Honorarium payments do not mean that public contributors have an ongoing contract of employment. Public contributors can:

- choose not to accept an honorarium payment.
- request a lower amount.
- request payment be delayed (as long as budget deadlines allow)

1.6. Implications of accepting payments

Receiving payment of a fee for involvement can be treated as earnings and can have implications for public contributors if they are employed, unemployed, receiving state benefits or retired.

If public contributors are receiving state benefits, any payment (including payment in vouchers), and expenses may affect their benefit claim. A Benefits Advice Service is provided by NIHR which is available to members of the public who are involved in, or considering involvement in, research with the NIHR. Public contributors can find out how to access this service on the [NIHR website](#).

To use this service public contributors will need to know the name of the NIHR organisation they are involved with or the NIHR programme that is funding the research they are involved with.

Vocal staff can supply a Welfare and Benefits letter to public contributors if they need to obtain permission for paid involvement or notifying payments received for involvement in their Universal Credit Journal.

2. Remote / home working costs

An optional £5 remote working allowance is available to cover any out-of-pocket costs public contributors may incur by taking part in activities, such as use of mobile data, printing costs or additional telephone costs. This is an expense claim rather than a payment.

Vocal staff will make public contributors aware of this optional fee where applicable.

3. Expenses

3.1. Travel expenses

For face-to-face meetings, Vocal will reimburse reasonable travel expenses as follows, in line with The University of Manchester NHS Foundation Trust's policy.

Mileage can be verified using the distance between the journey's starting postcode and the postcode of the meeting venue, using Google Maps. As actual mileage will fluctuate depending on the route taken, use the distance from postcode to postcode as a guide to check the mileage claimed is realistic:

Motor Vehicles

40p per mile (each way), per session.

Motorcycles

24p per mile (each way), per session.

Bicycles

20p per mile (each way), per session.

Public Transport

Bus - the cost of the journey (each way) will be reimbursed against bus tickets or screenshot of a smartphone app.

Taxis

The cost of the journey (each way) where justified will be reimbursed against the taxi receipt or screenshot of a smartphone app.

Rail travel

The cost of the journey (each way) will be reimbursed against train tickets or screenshot of a smartphone app.

Parking

The cost of parking will be reimbursed against parking tickets, receipts, or screenshot of a smartphone app.

- 3.2. If travel costs are likely to be over £20, the public contributor should discuss this with their Vocal contact in advance.
- 3.3. Travel expenses will ordinarily be reimbursed via BACS. See section 1.2. of this policy for further details on payment methods.

3.4. Subsistence

Refreshments will be provided at face-to-face activities. This will vary according to the event and will be communicated to public contributors in advance of the activity.

Public contributors cannot claim for food and drink expenses unless agreed in advance with their Vocal contact.

4. Accessibility

4.1. We're committed to making our activities as accessible as possible. In the context of this payment policy this could include, but is not limited to:

- Covering higher costs of travel.
- Covering costs of contributor's carer's travel.
- Covering costs of child/dependents care.

Vocal staff will discuss accessibility support with public contributors as part of our sign-up process.