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Tenants Expenses Scheme

October 2022

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 In this scheme “Tenant” means any tenant, or leaseholder, of Mid Devon Housing (MDH) who claims any out of pocket expenses whilst attending various tenant involvement activities.

1.2 MDH wants to provide tenants with high quality services and is committed to increasing tenant involvement in our work. We will cover most out-of-pocket expenses for travel, and other reasonable costs, as required, to enable tenants to get involved in a variety of ways. This may be attending training elsewhere which necessitates travel to and from the venue where this is taking place.

1.3 We have a duty to deliver value for money and for this reason we will monitor expenditure very closely. We also need to ensure that the health and safety of our tenant representatives is maintained at all times. From time to time, we may ask tenants to consider alternative arrangements, as appropriate. As a general rule, we will expect tenants to travel using public transport, where possible, in support of the Council’s carbon reduction strategy.

**2.0 Travelling Allowances**

2.1 If a tenant owns a vehicle, and uses it to transport themselves, to any tenant involvement activities, they will need to provide us with their:

* Driving Licence
* MOT Certificate
* Vehicle insurance document, ensuring it extends to using their vehicle to attend meetings/conferences/courses, and, if transporting other tenants, to carrying passengers to such events.

2.2 The mileage allowance rate will be provided, upon request. It is updated periodically and replicates the scheme used by the Council to pay Officer expenses.

2.3 If any tenant has to pay for car parking when attending tenant involvement business, they will be reimbursed. MDH will only pay for the time taken to attend the event and will not reimburse where a ticket has been purchased for a period which covers more than the required time.

**3.0 Transport**

3.1 Transport can be arranged for any tenant who:

* Does not own their own vehicle.
* Is unable to travel on public transport.
* Does not live on a reasonable, regular public transport route.
* Does not have access to public transport available at the time of the tenant involvement activity.
* Is travelling to the tenant involvement activity from within the Mid Devon area.

3.2 If any tenant has to travel by public transport, we can buy tickets in advance or we will refund you second class train and bus travel on receipt of the used ticket(s).

3.3 As part of our policy of becoming a more environmentally responsible organisation we encourage tenants to consider how they travel to events and where possible, share transport or travel by train or bus. We may arrange taxis or for larger events, arrange a coach or minibus to pick up tenants at designated places.

**4.0 Meal Allowances**

4.1 A tenant can be reimbursed for the cost of purchasing food under the circumstances listed below.

* They are away from their home for a long period of time whilst carrying out any official tenant representative activity and need to purchase a meal.
* They are attending any all-day training or tenant involvement activity where food is not provided.

4.2 The meal allowance will reflect that payable to any Officer of MDH or the Council as a whole and information on this will be made available prior to any visit or other journey where the Involved Tenant may be required to purchase any food or meals.

4.3 Refreshments will be provided by MDH if Involved Tenants are invited to attend a meeting at Phoenix House or elsewhere.

**5.0 Child Care or Carer Allowance**

5.1 MDH will pay allowances for the care of tenant’s dependants including children, elderly persons or people with disabilities whilst attending various tenant involvement events. We will pay according to the terms of an accredited nursery or registered child minder or that of a carers allowance up to a maximum of the minimum wage of a person over 21 years of age. This will be for the duration of the particular event and will include reasonable travelling time. The allowance will not be paid to a member of the tenant’s household.

**6.0 Attending Conferences and Training Events**

6.1MDH is committed to providing conference and training opportunities for tenants. If a tenant does attend an external event, they will be expected to feedback on this event to other tenants, as appropriate.

8.2 If MDH has arranged a training event, refreshments will be provided.

8.2 Most training opportunities will be available virtually but an Involved Tenant may wish to attend a seminar or conference which is occurring elsewhere in the country. If this is the case, any such request will be carefully considered. Any tenant whose visit is being paid for by MDH will be required to abide by the terms of the MDH Code of Conduct for Tenant Involvement. They must also understand that they could be asked to work with Officers to write a suitable article regarding the event for publication or to be posted on social media and/ or to feedback on what was discussed to MDH Officers or other tenants.

**7.0 All Claims**

7.1 In order to support effective management of our tenant involvement budget, claims for the payment of all expenses must have the relevant information or receipts to enable correct payments to be made.

7.2 Claims cannot be made in advance. Payment will not be reimbursed on any tenant expense that is six months from the date of the claim nor will claims be accepted unless they are made in the prescribed format.

**10.0 Tax and Benefits**

10.1 Expenses paid to tenants are not considered as earnings. They cover out of pocket expenses and should not affect tenants’ entitlement to benefits but may affect tenants’ tax position. Therefore we strongly recommend that tenants advise the HM Revenue and Customs of any reimbursement of expenses.