LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Expenses policy - (Including subsistence, public transport, overseas travel arrangements and professional body memberships)

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Owner:	**Head of HR Operations and Systems, People Services**
Responsible work team:	**Policy, Pay and Reward**

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out the Brigade's arrangements for all employees to claim and be reimbursed reasonable business expenses incurred whilst on duty so the cost to the Brigade is minimised applying the value of service, whilst complying with inland revenue and customs and excise requirements.

1.2 Expenses for volunteers (cadets and independent members of LFC boards) must have their expenses approved by an authorising manager, who must be an employee, and should be emailed to Finance to AccountsPayable@london-fire.gov.uk.

1.3 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the guidance on Hotwire which also provides examples for you.

1.4 All expenses claims are monitored to ensure they are submitted and authorised fairly, consistently and in accordance with this policy. Any concerns regarding the misuse of expenses provisions may be investigated and dealt with under Policy number 392 – Discipline (conduct) procedure which may result in summary dismissal. In addition, fraud cases may be referred to the Brigade's internal audit service which is managed by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), in accordance with Policy number 568 – Counter fraud and corruption policy and response plan.

1.5 This policy should be applied in line with the Brigade's values:

- Service – We put the public first.
- Courage – We step up to the challenge.
- Learning – We listen so that we can improve.
- Teamwork – We work together and include everyone.
- Equity – We treat everyone fairly according to their needs.
- Integrity – We act with honesty.

2 Receipts

2.1 Till receipts are required for reimbursements under £25 and VAT receipts are required for reimbursements over £25. Please note that reimbursements must not be authorised without relevant receipts, other than reimbursements for travel at the Oyster card/contactless rate.

3 Definitions

3.1 **'Business expenses'** – costs reasonably and properly incurred by employees in furtherance of Brigade business objectives.

3.2 **'Normal place of work'** – the place where an employee usually and regularly carries out the significant proportion of their duties and responsibilities. (This has specific taxation significance).

3.3 **'Normal working hours/day'** – the range/number of hours of duty during which an employee usually and regularly carries out the significant proportion of their duties and responsibilities.

3.4 **'Authorising manager'** – A senior employee with written delegation to authorise and validate claims for expenses reimbursement, and is registered with payroll, this will usually someone in the line management chain of the individual claiming.

3.5 **'Travelling on official business'** – this refers to journeys undertaken in pursuance of the business objectives of the Brigade. Further details are outlined in paragraph 8 below.

Note: Variation to the standard terms of this policy may be made for individuals on special requirements for medical/disability related reasons and beliefs/religious reasons. In these cases, authorisation of the head of service will be required.

4 Subsistence

4.1 Subsistence in the context of this policy includes hotel costs, food and refreshments and incidental expenses when working away from the normal place of work and outside normal working hours, which are properly and reasonably incurred on Brigade business.

5 Overnight subsistence

5.1 **Hotel accommodation –** Reimbursement of bed and breakfast charges shall normally be reimbursed to the actual receipted cost or £54.91, whichever is the lower amount, and 24-hour absence shall normally be reimbursed to the actual receipted cost or £109.80, whichever is the lower amount. This is subject to prior approval of head of service.

5.2 **Hotel accommodation in respect of conferences** – Where a conference is held in a specific hotel or group of hotels and it is of specific benefit for delegates to stay in the conference hotel, staying in the conference hotel will be allowed, even if the cost exceeds maxima stated in the policy, or the hotels cannot be booked through our booking agents. This is subject to prior approval of head of service.

5.3 **Meals when in overnight accommodation** – Where you are staying in overnight accommodation, you may order the hotel set meal or two courses from the normal fixed price hotel menu, even when this exceeds the limits set out below for evening meals subject to head of service approval of the expenditure over the published maxima.

5.4 **Out of pocket expenses (personal incidental expenses)** – Personal out of pocket expenses incurred when away from home overnight on business or training, such as telephone calls, refreshments or other reasonable receipted expenditure shall normally be reimbursed up to a maximum of £4.99 per day or £19.91 per week.

5.5 **Alcoholic drinks -** The payment for any alcoholic drinks consumed will not be reimbursed by the Brigade.

6 Daily subsistence

6.1 Reimbursement for breakfast and/or lunch will not be made where there are subsidised canteen or restaurant facilities available to Brigade employees, or where there is subsistence provided as part of the cost of a conference or course.

6.2 Items claimed for must be appropriate to the meal that is being claimed, and the receipt must contain detail to support this in terms of time/date and items purchased.

6.3 **Breakfast** – Where you leave home before 6:00 hrs and are working at least five miles[1]from your normal place of work for at least five hours, the cost of breakfast shall be reimbursed at the actual receipted cost up to a maximum normally of £7.87.

[1] This is measured by the most direct route available and therefore can be the most direct distance by public transport if that is the actual mode of travel used.

6.4 **Lunch** – Where you are working at least five miles[1]from your normal place of work for at least five hours including the lunch period 12:00-14:00, the cost of lunch shall be reimbursed at the actual receipted cost up to a maximum normally of £10.50.

6.5 **Evening meals** - Where you are working at least five miles[1] from your normal place of work and will not reach home before 21:00 hrs, the cost of an evening meal shall be reimbursed at the actual receipted cost up to a maximum normally of £19.65.

7 Subsistence and travel related to training

Subsistence

7.1 Subsistence cannot be claimed if the accommodation price for a residential training course specifies the inclusion of meals.

7.2 Where meals are not included in the accommodation price, the normal receipted maxima will apply.

7.3 Where you are provided with board and/or lodging as part of the course arrangements, subsistence expenses cannot be claimed, provided that food is included.

7.4 Where meal or buffet facilities are available at non-residential course venues, subsistence cannot be claimed.

7.5 For operational staff on courses of longer than 5 days the training venue shall be considered the normal place of work, from the first day of the course, and the end of each day of instruction shall be considered the end of the normal working hours/day.

7.6 For operational staff subsistence is only claimable for the first 5 days of a course. Therefore, from the sixth day onwards no subsistence can be claimed.

Travel to residential training courses

7.7 You will be entitled to make a claim for journeys to and from a residential training course at the start and end of the course plus return journeys to and from home for each weekend during the course as set out below:

- Travelling to and from a residential training course by rail will be reimbursed the receipted cost or the cost of the most economical fare reasonably available in the absence of a receipt. Saver and supersaver fares are available for most journeys. There is no entitlement to first class travel.
- Travelling by private vehicle will be reimbursed the cost of the most economical fare reasonably available, or the appropriate car mileage rate as set out in appendix 1, whichever is the cheaper. If you use your leased car, the mileage will be calculated at the appropriate leased car mileage rate.
- Where more than one person is travelling by car to the same training venue, you are encouraged to share cars for which the driver will be entitled to claim an additional rate per passenger per mile.

7.8 **Out of pocket expenses (personal incidental expenses)** – Personal out of pocket expenses incurred when away from home overnight on business or training, such as telephone calls, refreshments or other reasonable receipted expenditure shall normally be reimbursed up to a maximum rate of £4.99 per day or £19.91 per week.

Travel to non-residential training courses

7.9 Where you travel to non-residential training venues by public transport (or by car but are not authorised car users) then you will be reimbursed the additional cost from home to the training venue by public transport compared to the normal home to duty journey. You are reminded that your motor insurance must include 'for business use' and that this be certified on the claim form.

Note: Where courses for operational staff take place over a ten day fortnight then for each tenth day only, you have the option of claiming reimbursement of any fares incurred.

7.10 Where you are authorised to use your private vehicles for official business (e.g. leased, ECUS or casual car scheme (Policy number 770 - Brigade car schemes) and travel to training venues in Greater London in your private vehicle then you will be eligible to claim mileage in accordance with the normal provisions of the individual schemes providing that the cost is cheaper than the public transport costs. Where you travel outside of the Brigade area, mileage allowances will only be payable if the journey has been authorised in advance. This will be reimbursed at the regular mileage rate or 55p per mile, whichever is lower.

7.11 When deciding which rate is appropriate members of the essential and casual car schemes should take into account the rate variations that apply in each scheme relating to the amount of mileage already claimed.

7.12 Car parking costs will be refunded, subject to prior approval if receipts are provided and a full justification for parking costs is submitted with the claim form.

7.13 Taxi fares will not be reimbursed without prior approval and a full justification for using a taxi submitted via the online system. Receipts must be supplied with all claims for reimbursement of taxi fares.

8 Travelling on official business

8.1 When you travel on official business then you are entitled to reimbursement of additional reasonable and necessarily incurred additional expenditure on transport.

Reimbursement is based on the most expeditious route and fare by public transport. The Brigade encourages the use of Oyster/contactless cards for official business travel, where appropriate.

8.2 Additional qualifying journeys include travel in connection with:

- Officially arranged medical or Counselling and Trauma Service appointments.
- Obtaining medical treatment arising from a 'due to service injury', with prior approval.
- Examinations/selection procedures required for promotion.
- Required/requested attendance at disciplinary proceedings.
- Obtaining treatment from the Firefighters Charity whilst sick or light/restricted duties.
- Brigade arranged training venues.

8.3 Staff absent sick on half or nil pay shall receive full reimbursement of fares when attending occupational health medical appointments.

8.4 Recognised trades union officials are entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable and necessarily incurred additional travel expenditure in respect of industrial relations duties. Additional qualifying journeys includes travel in connection with meetings within the Policy number 959 - Industrial Relations procedures of the Brigade such as:

- Scheduled joint committee meetings and side meetings.
- Other joint meetings called at the request of management.

8.5 Where possible a receipt should be provided to evidence public transport expenditure. In the absence of a receipt the reimbursement shall be made based on the cost as shown on the Transport for London website journey planner, or at the most economical rate appropriate. Please note that receipts are available from ticket machines when paid for by debit/credit card and from the ticket office. In situations where a travel card is purchased, the travel card will suffice as evidence of expenditure.

8.6 For travel within the greater London area, you are expected to use the most economical mode of travel. For multiple daily journeys, the appropriate travel card or bus pass should be used. Where you have not obtained or retained a receipt, reimbursement shall be at the Oyster card/contactless rate.

8.7 For travel outside of the Greater London area - you are expected, where sufficient notice of the necessity to travel occurs, to book /purchase mainline rail tickets in advance to take advantage of the cheapest fares available at time of booking/purchase.

8.8 Rail tickets can be obtained through Network Business Travel as outlined in the procedure in general guidance and procedural note.

9 TFL's Santander cycle hire

9.1 You can use the Santander cycle hire scheme for short journeys. For journeys of up to 30 minutes the Brigade will reimburse evidenced usage at a rate of £3 per day (the 24-hour access fee).

9.2 You can find details of the scheme on the TFL website.

9.3 Usage of the scheme can be evidenced by one of the following methods:

(a) Journey log can be printed from the TFL website or TFL terminals by members or key users. Please note that journey logs are available for the previous 8 days.

(b) 1 day "access period ID" receipt printed by TFL terminals.

9.4 Claims submitted without evidence will not be reimbursed.

10 Additional travelling expenses on relocation

10.1 Fire and Rescue Staff (FRS) and Control Staff, following relocation to a new primary place of duty will be eligible to claim an amount towards additional expenditure that is incurred in respect of travelling from their home to their new place of duty, they will be entitled to receive the additional fares for one year from the date of relocation.

Travel by public transport

10.2 If you travel by public transport, reimbursement will be calculated on the increased difference in rates between home and former workplace and home and new workplace. For instance, if you previously needed a Travelcard for zones 4 and 5 from home to work but now need a Travelcard covering zones 1 to 5, claims can be submitted based on the difference between a two zone and five zone ticket. Payment for any month will not exceed the amount determined by this formula whether the employee holds an annual ticket or purchases a ticket(s) for any other period.

10.3 Claims for Annual Travelcard differences must be based on a monthly basis for one-twelfth of the difference in annual season/Travelcard costs. Taking the example given in the preceding paragraph, the calculation, using 2026 rates would be as follows:

Annual Travelcard zones 1 to 5	£3,056
Less Annual Travelcard zones 3 and 5	£1,484

Difference	£1,572
Divided by 12	£131.00 per month

10.4 No reimbursement will be made after the first 4 weeks of any period of sick leave or extended annual leave.

10.5 Where you are redeployed other than at the beginning of the month, reimbursement for that month will be calculated on a pro rata basis.

10.6 Similarly, if you cease to be eligible for additional fares other than at the end of the month, then reimbursement will be calculated on a pro rata basis.

Travel by private vehicle

10.7 Where you travel by private vehicle between home and the new workplace, payment will be made on the basis of the additional mileage compared to the journey from home to the former workplace at the following rates:

Travel by car	24p per mile	(LPG rate 14 p per mile)
Motorcycle above 500 cc	14p per mile	
Motorcycle 151 - 500 cc	11p per mile	
Motorcycle/moped/scooter up to 150 cc	8p per mile	
Electric vehicles	4p per mile	

10.8 A separate entry must be made on the claim form for each day travelled for which a claim is being made.

10.9 No claim will be reimbursed where the mileage incurred is in excess of a direct journey between the old place of work and the new primary place of duty. This means that you are expected to claim on the basis of the most direct and cost-effective route to get to your new location and not journeys that are excessive in mileage.

10.10 Passengers sharing a vehicle are not eligible to claim additional fares or mileage allowance. However, the driver may claim 3p per passenger mile for the additional distance any other redeployed member of staff is transported to/from the place of work compared to their journey before redeployment. The names of the passenger(s) and details of their individual journeys must be stated on the claim form in such cases.

General

10.11 Eligibility to claim additional travelling expenses following a relocation exercise will be in accordance with that detailed at paragraph 10 above. In cases of promotion or where you make a subsequent transfer request to a different location, eligibility will cease from the date of effect of the promotion or transfer.

11 Business mileage

11.1 The Brigade will re-imburse mileage claims for journeys necessarily undertaken in the course of duty once you have arrived at work. These expenses are non-taxable.

11.2 Mileage claims for journeys from home (or standby base) will only be re-imbursed when the destination meets the HMRC criteria for being a 'temporary workplace', in which case the expenses are non-taxable. The main criteria for a 'temporary workplace' are as follows (all the following will need to apply):

- The location is not your normal place of work (n.b. where a station commander has responsibility for two stations, both stations are their normal place of work, noting that travel between these two stations having arrived, and undertaken work, at one of these stations is business mileage).

- There is an objective requirement for attending that location; attendance at the location is not merely a convenience for you.
- Either: The location is more than 10 miles away from your normal workplace; Or: The journey from home/standby base to the temporary workplace is in a different direction to the journey from home/standby base to normal workplace.

11.3 Where the Brigade re-imburses home/standby base to temporary workplace mileage, the mileage from home/standby base to normal workplace must first be netted off.

11.4 The above principles apply to journeys to home (or standby base), i.e. mileage claims from 'temporary workplace' to home/standby base will be re-imbursed, having netted off the mileage from normal workplace to home/standby base.

11.5 Journeys to and from operational incidents to which you have been mobilised are always business mileage, and in these cases, there is no netting off of mileage between standby base and normal workplace, even where you go from standby base to incident, and then on to normal workplace. Where you travel from an incident to home, the maximum mileage that can be claimed for this journey is incident to standby base.

11.6 Examples of home to temporary workplace journeys and the mileage claimable are available on Hotwire.

11.7 Mileage rates for this can be found on the car schemes page on Hotwire.

12 Home to office mileage

12.1 Home to office (normal workplace) mileage is not claimable.

12.2 The position of HMRC is that an officer's stand-by base, other than when specifically responding to emergencies (or incidents), is not a 'place of work'. Therefore, journeys between normal office and the stand-by base, whether or not the officer is on a 24, cannot be claimed as business mileage.

13 LGV Expenses

13.1 LGV medicals are to be performed by your GP. The GP should complete the necessary DVLA Medical Examination Report (form D4). The Brigade will grant you a partial 'Gone to Visit' (GTV) absence to attend the GP appointment in line with Policy number 1005 - Partial attendance policy. The GP will charge a fee for this medical which the Brigade will reimburse. Claims should only be made by employees who have completed the MD qualification and whose role requires them to drive. Where it is necessary to pass a medical prior to obtaining a provisional LGV licence, the cost may be reclaimed provided a receipt from the doctor or practice is attached. An advance payment for LGV medical examination fees can also be claimed. In order to claim the payment, you should get an email or letter from the GP surgery confirming how much the medical will cost, the cost may vary dependent on the GP. This is important as the Brigade will not be able to process the claim without it. Once confirmation of the cost has been agreed you should give it to the officer in charge who will approve the payment using the online expenses form. Once the medical has been completed you should provide the officer in charge with the official receipt from the GP surgery confirming that the payment has been made.

13.2 You can also claim reimbursement for the LGV Theory and Hazard tests, and an advance payment is also available for these. The advance payment can be claimed by completing the online expenses form and providing confirmation to your officer in charge.

14 Medical charges (operational staff)

Treatment covered

14.1 Section 4, Part B, paragraph 5, of the National Joint Council's (2004) Scheme of Conditions of Service (the 'grey book'), provides for the reimbursement of charges incurred under Sections 77, 78 and 79 of the National Health Service Act 1977; these relate to:

- Dental treatment (including the provision of dentures).
- The provision of eye tests and spectacles.
- The provision of other appliances for which a charge has been prescribed.
- By regulations made under the National Health Service Act; and (d) the prescription for drugs or medicines dispensed under National Health Service arrangements.

14.2 The above provisions only apply to employees whose continuous service commenced prior to 1 November 1994.

14.3 Under local agreements reached in 2012, these provisions are withdrawn from Brigade station and group commanders with effect from 1 April 2012.

14.4 Notwithstanding paragraphs 14.2 and 14.3, the arrangements in paragraph 14.1 apply to all Brigade grey book staff when the charges referred to arise directly from an illness or injury arising out of the execution of duty.

14.5 A member to whom paragraph 14.1 applies and who incurs expenditure in obtaining spectacles, dental treatment, dentures, or appliances of the type referred to in paragraph 14.1, other than through the National Health Service, may be reimbursed to the extent that the expenditure could have been reimbursed under paragraph 14.1 if the treatment or appliances had been obtained through the National Health Service.

Effect of neglect

14.6 A member to whom paragraph 14.1 of this policy applies and who incurs expenditure on medical, dental, or optical treatment and who:

- Refuses or neglects to submit to any medical examination which the Brigade may require.
- Has caused or substantially aggravated the infirmity which occasioned the treatment for which expenditure is incurred.
- Refuses or neglects fully to co-operate in any medical treatment which the Brigade considers necessary.

Will not be entitled to reimbursement under the provisions of the preceding paragraphs of this policy.

Partial liability for charges

14.7 Where only a proportion of the total cost of treatment is borne by the member of the Brigade and the remainder by some outside body, only the expenditure incurred by the member can be considered for reimbursement. The Form 325 must show the total cost of the treatment and its allocation between the other source and the applicant.

15 Professional body membership

15.1 The Brigade will reimburse subscription and upgrading fees for membership of a professional body or association, but only where the requirement for membership is a requirement of the role and is clearly stated in the job description and person specification.

15.2 One subscription will normally be reimbursed per role per annum, except where it is a requirement of the role to be a member of more than one professional body/association.

15.3 The appropriateness of the requirement for membership of a professional body/association will be agreed by the head of service in consultation with the 'Head of Operations and Systems - People Services' and will be noted in the job description and person specifications.

15.4 Where the requirement for membership applies to a number of generic roles within a department, the cost and terms of team/corporate membership should be considered and applied where it represents a cost saving to the Brigade.

15.5 The cost of reimbursements for all qualifying roles will be met from existing departmental budgets.

15.6 Reimbursement of professional subscriptions can be a benefit in kind so you and the manager must check whether your professional association is on the HMRC Approved learned societies and professional organisations list (no. 3) and record this on your claim form. If it is not on the list, then you must pay the tax on it. You may be able to claim tax relief on this which you will need to do with HMRC directly yourself. This is why it is important that you must record this on your form so that you and the Brigade comply with HMRC rules.

15.7 The person specification may be varied to cover individuals who hold or are working towards achieving qualifications and/or membership of the required body.

15.8 Procedure for claiming reimbursement:

- Claimants can claim reimbursement of their annual subscription or upgrade fees by completing claim form FNPC2, located via the Templates and Resources App >Finance>FNPC2. The claim must be accompanied by a receipt for the payment. Claims should be charged to subjective budget code 4812 and will be held against the relevant departments budget.
- The claim is to be authorised by the appropriate head of service, or delegated authority.
- The authorised claim form should be emailed to the ESTEAMA mailbox. Payment will be reimbursed via payroll.

Team/corporate memberships should be ordered and paid for through the SAP system.

16 Home workspace equipment

16.1 Staff who work regularly from home may claim the value up to £150 on an appropriate chair - the seat height should be adjustable and the seat back adjustable for height/tilt, a desk/stable work surface - large enough and glare free to accommodate work equipment, a footrest – if required by a risk assessment.

16.2 Advice on appropriateness of equipment should be sought from the Health and Safety department and be consistent with any DSE Assessment. You will be responsible for delivery, provision of receipts and ensuring repairs as appropriate within warrantee periods. Further information can be accessed via this link: Guidance on home working.

17 Arrangements for overseas travel by LFB staff

17.1 The arrangements for staff overseas travel align with the terms of the Staff Code and Grey Book.

17.2 Section A sets out the arrangements required when staff undertake visits overseas. Section B summarises the practical arrangements concerning overseas travel by staff.

SECTION A – POLICY GUIDELINES

18 Authorising the visit

18.1 The London Fire Commissioner has authority to approve overseas travel for staff to attend conferences, seminars, training courses and study trips and for fact-finding and information gathering purposes subject to such attendance/travel benefiting the Brigade in the performance of one or more of its statutory functions and only where no reasonable London or UK based alternative exists.

18.2 The pro forma located via the Templates and Resources App >Governance>Officer's Overseas Travel is to be completed and signed by the Commissioner before any firm bookings are made. A copy of the completed proforma should also be sent to the LFBsecurity@london-fire.gov.uk.

18.3 Practical arrangements for overseas travel set out in Section B must be followed.

18.4 Individual departments are responsible for all the arrangements in accordance with the policy and practices set out in here.

Note: In the case of overseas travel by the London Fire Commissioner, the pro forma is to be counter-signed by the Director of Corporate Services.

Travel by air

18.5 Travel bookings are to be made by the Brigade's current agency, details of which can be obtained from the Procurement Department. Where possible staff are encouraged to travel by rail (e.g. Eurostar) for European visits in order to reduce the Brigade's carbon footprint'. Should the cost of travelling to a European destination by rail be more expensive than travelling by plane, the staff member travelling should seek advice from the head of service as to which mode of transport should be taken. Justification for travel by air is to be noted on the Overseas Travel Request form.

18.6 For visits to European destinations, the cheapest available economy option (including flights with airlines which do not provide in-flight services) should be selected.

18.7 For visits to non-European destinations, travel by standard economy or tourist class is permitted.

18.8 If the price of any flight is affected by the particular date of travel, regard must also be paid to the effect of the date on other costs so that the value for money is assessed on an overall basis.

18.9 It is the Brigade's policy to demonstrate economy in the use of public funds; where it is clearly justified in writing at the time of authorisation, the Commissioner may exceptionally agree arrangements outside those indicated above.

18.10 Where exceptional air travel is authorised, the Brigade will ensure that carbon emissions are offset via certified offset schemes. The offsetting commitment will be triggered by the purchase of the ticket through the authorised travel agency, so no further action is required by individual departments. The requirement for offsetting should still be noted on the authorisation form.

19 Hotel accommodation

19.1 Each individual department is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for overseas travel and hotel accommodation. Hotel bookings are to be made by the Brigade's current agency, details of which can be obtained from Contract Management (contractssection@london-fire.gov.uk).

19.2 The standard of accommodation when staff travel abroad should normally be based on the equivalent of three-star accommodation in this country.

19.3 Where it is clearly justified in writing at the time of authorisation, the Commissioner may exceptionally agree accommodation above three-star e.g. if no 3 Star accommodation is reasonably available at the location.

19.4 Where pre-booked travel and/or accommodation plans are altered due to circumstances beyond the staff member's control new accommodation and/or travel of a similar standard and nature should be arranged, usually by the department administrators through the Brigade's current agency. Where this is not reasonably practicable the alternative arrangements may be made locally. Costs of these should then be reclaimed in accordance with paragraph 27 of this policy. In making any such local arrangements staff will need to be able to justify their decision, including that:

- The benefits are commensurate with the costs involved, that the Brigade receives value for money from the visit; and the expenditure is lawful and reasonable, with appropriate documentation demonstrating prior approval, and support of the expenditure.

20 Partners travelling privately overseas with staff and arrangements for combining an official visit with a private visit (or extending the duration of the visit)

20.1 When a partner accompanies a Brigade staff member privately on an overseas visit, the employee will compensate the Brigade so far as necessary to ensure that it does not bear any cost which would not have been incurred if they had gone without the partner; such compensation shall be paid to the Brigade within one month of their return to the UK from the trip.

20.2 When an employee for private reasons varies the travel or accommodation arrangement which would otherwise apply (e.g. extends the duration of an overseas visit), they shall compensate the Brigade so far as necessary to ensure that it does not bear any cost which would not have been incurred if they had not varied the arrangements; such compensation shall be paid to the Brigade within one month of their return to the UK.

21 Incidental expenditure and currency advance

21.1 Staff who travel overseas are expected to use their credit cards (or similar) to draw cash, pay for meals, (and hotel accommodation if not pre-paid by the Brigade) etc, and then claim reimbursement promptly on their return in the normal way. The Brigade will reimburse them for the expenditure and any consequential costs arising from using the credit card, except costs arising because of their failure to claim promptly.

21.2 Incidental travel and subsistence allowances are as set out in this policy are converted to the local currency at the exchange rate when costs are incurred. These allowances may be increased to allow for higher levels of cost in the destination. This should be stated in Part B of the initial pro forma seeking authorisation for the visit with some supporting evidence such as recent receipts from the location or from freely available internet databases such as Numbeo.com or Expatistan.com.

21.3 No currency advances are to be provided unless exceptionally the destination to be visited or salary of the staff member, in the view of the travelling staff members' Director (or the relevant Head of Service, should the Director choose to delegate authority), justifies the provision of an advance. Any such advances will be provided in accordance with the following policy. Where an advance is given but all meals are included within the accommodation arranged by the Brigade, the amount of the advance shall cover only necessary meals whilst travelling to and from the place to be visited; transport costs between airports and accommodation; incidental expenditure and one brief personal phone call on arrival and any necessary business calls.

21.4 The amount of any advance should be consistent with rates in this policy.

21.5 On return, all remaining currency is to be returned to the Finance Department together with a detailed inventory and receipts as far as practicable on all expenditure incurred. Where receipts are not available an explanation should be provided as to the nature of the expenditure incurred.

SECTION B – PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

22 Pre-booking arrangements

22.1 As soon as the possibility of an overseas visit becomes known to a member of staff, they must notify their Head of Service.

22.2 The pro forma accessed via the links in this policy needs to be submitted, then signed by the Head of Service. The form is then to be passed to the designated member of staff officer within each department ('travel bookings officer'), to deal with their department's travel, together with details of overseas visit/conference and travel/hotel and other requirements.

22.3 Once a copy of the application has been submitted to the Multi Agency Liaison Security and Intelligence Team (MALSI) via the LFB security Mailbox, work will start on reviewing the protective security arrangements for the travel period, in line with the requirements of Policy number 0619 – LFB security classifications system.

22.4 Notification of any particular requirements in advance shall be provided to the designated travel bookings officer.

22.5 All costs associated with the visit will be met from individual departmental budgets, including the conference registration if applicable. However, in the majority of cases, the designated travel bookings officer should make the conference registration booking, as the current travel agency does not provide this service and it usually ensures that the member of staff can attend at a reduced delegate rate. A provisional conference/hotel booking may be made by the department in advance of authorisation by the Commissioner, providing no cancellation fee is incurred should the visit not be approved.

22.6 In liaison with the staff member(s) undertaking the visit and in accordance with this policy, the designated travel bookings officer will complete Part B of the pro forma located via the Templates and Resources App >Governance>Officer's Overseas Travel and return a copy to the staff member(s) concerned.

23 Authorisation for the visit

23.1 It is the responsibility of the Head of Service (or staff undertaking the visit) to obtain authorisation from the Commissioner including agreement to any specific justification for exceptional arrangements.

24 Confirmation of booking arrangements

24.1 On receipt of signed authorisation from the Commissioner, the designated travel bookings officer will confirm travel and accommodation requirements with the staff concerned and make the necessary bookings.

Detailed records

24.2 It is essential that detailed records of all overseas visits are kept by each department. These details may have to be disclosed.

25 Advance and insurance cover

25.1 Advances are provided on an exceptional basis as laid out in paragraph 21 of this policy.

25.2 The Finance Department will arrange necessary insurance cover, plus any approved advance if requested in writing by the Head of Service.

26 Confirmation of arrangements

26.1 The designated travel bookings officer will provide written confirmation to the staff advising also of any additional cost to be reimbursed to the Brigade under paragraph 20 of this policy (Partners arrangements etc).

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27 Procedure for claiming expenses

Note: You are encouraged to submit claims monthly and all claims must be made and authorised within 3 months of the date of the incurred expenditure. Expense claims that are more than three months old and mileage claims that are more than 6 months old will be deemed out of date and will not be met unless the head of service (delegated to group commander for station-based staff) considers that there are circumstances to justify the delay.

27.1 Claimants should submit claims using iTrent and must provide the receipt as supportive evidence. Prescription charges require the NHS Receipt Form FP57 as evidence the prescription is for you.

27.2 The exchange rate at the time of an overseas expense must be used for overseas related expenses.

27.3 All claims are to be authorised by the authorising managers who are required to accurately interrogate the claim details against the supporting evidence to ensure that they are satisfied that the claim is legitimate in line with the requirements stated in this policy. Additionally, a check list is provided on Hotwire. If the authorising manager is not satisfied, then the claim must be rejected.

27.4 In exceptional circumstances, where it has not been possible to claim online, the claimant should contact HR Services (via the HR Helpdesk) for the appropriate paper claim form. Receipts must be attached for all expenses. If no receipt is obtained or the receipt is missing or lost, then no payment can be made. Exceptions to this rule must be authorised by the head of service or delegated authority.

27.5 These claims must still be authorised by an authorising manager. Checks to be made using the provided check list before authorising the claim. A note from the authorising manager should accompany the claim stating why it was not possible to claim on-line. Short-term system failures will not be deemed an exception.

28 Increase in maximum rate for reimbursement

28.1 The maximum rates for subsistence reimbursement shall be considered by the Head of HR Operations and Systems, People Services, or delegated officer, on an annual basis, determined by changes in the retail price index for catering and other retail price indices as appropriate, as published by the office of national statistics. Any resulting changes will be implemented from the 1 April each year. (The RPI for catering takes into account costings/prices of restaurant meals, canteen meals, take-away meals and snacks).

29 Records

29.1 Please send records by email to RecordsServices@london-fire.gov.uk. Records will be kept on your electronic personal record file (e-PRF) and retained in accordance with Policy number 788 - Electronic personal record files (e-PRF) policy. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with Policy number 351 – Data protection and privacy policy.

30 Help and support

30.1 Please contact the HR Helpdesk on extension 89100 option 3 and by email to IT.HR@london-fire.gov.uk.

30.2 This policy may also be available on request in other alternative accessible formats as set out in Policy number 290 – Guidance note on translation and interpretation. Please contact Communications on extension 30753 and by email to communications.team@london-fire.gov.uk to discuss your needs and options.

30.3 The Brigade invites your engagement so that it can learn to improve so if you have a suggestion that can improve this policy then please submit your idea via the Staff Suggestion Scheme on Hotwire as set out in Policy number 887 – Staff suggestion scheme. Any changes do need to go through the agreed engagement, consultation, negotiation or governance requirements.

31 Expenses rates

31.1 An expanded list of expenses rates (including subsistence) is available on Hotwire via this link:

Expenses rates - July 2026

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	19/04/24	SDIA	**H** – 09/02/26	HSWIA	09/02/26	RA	N/A

Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	**Brief description of change**	**Date**
Page 12	SDIA and HSWIA updated.	11/02/2026
Paragraph 11 and 12 Page 7, para 10.3	Both paragraphs are added from Policy No 770 and were paragraphs 9 and 10 there. Figures updated and link to rates added.	11/03/2026
Page 1 Page 11, para 15	Policy title changed. Addition of information on professional body membership.	27/04/2026
Page 13, para 16 Page 14, para 21 added and Appendix 1 removed	Consolidation of 'home workspace equipment' expense provisions into this policy. Removal of expenses rates with link to single reference point for the information added to ensure versions and information are current and aligned on an ongoing basis.	18/05/2026
Page 6, para 7.10	Mileage rate increased from 45p to 55p per mile.	29/05/2026
Page 14	Expenses rates updated.	01/07/2026
Page 1 Page 4, para 5.1 Page 16, paras 17.2, 17.3, 17.4 and 17.6 Page 16, para 17.9 Page 12, paras 17 - 27 Throughout	Policy title updated. Hotel contractor removed. Manual processes that are now automated removed. Monitoring details consolidated into Introduction paragraph 1.4. Incorporation of 'PN 596 Arrangements for Overseas Travel for LFB Staff' into the expenses policy. Removal of 'officers' to be replaced by 'staff'.	03/09/2026

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Allowances	Expenses
Travel	

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	**FOIA exemption**	**Security marking classification**