



Resident Involvement Expenses Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidance on the payment of expenses and involvement incentives to residents participating in Southern Housing's resident involvement activities.
- 1.2 We provide involvement incentives and expenses to:
 - Increase diversity by encouraging a wider range of residents to engage with Southern Housing
 - Promote inclusion by reducing the financial barriers to involvement residents may face
 - Provide recognition of the contribution made by involved residents to the work of Southern Housing.
- 1.3 Payment will be offered across the range of involvement activities in a way that's:
 - Consistent
 - Transparent
 - Fair - reflective of the level of engagement and commitment involved.
- 1.4 Involved residents are not employed by Southern Housing and nothing in this Policy seeks to create an employment or worker relationship.
- 1.5 There will be no obligation on Southern Housing to make any particular volume or frequency of activities available to involved residents and no obligation on involved residents to participate in activities.

2.0 Policy statement and definitions

- 2.1 The terms '**we**', '**our**' and '**us**' mean Southern Housing.
- 2.2 **Resident governance structure** – the collective name for the groups where residents can be formally involved in monitoring and scrutinising Southern Housing performance and services.
- 2.3 **Governance structure** – the collective name for the Southern Housing Board and committees. This doesn't include any resident groups.

- 2.4 **Informal resident involvement** – the term used to describe opportunities for any resident to get involved with Southern Housing, without commitment. For example, attending events, forums, or completing a survey.

3.0 Involvement incentives for resident governance members

- 3.1 We've made incentive payments available to incentivise involvement. These are opt-in and residents are under no obligation to accept payment.
- 3.2 Incentive payments are available up to the maximum rates set out in [Schedule 1](#).
- 3.3 Before agreeing to receive incentive payments, residents are responsible for seeking their own advice about the benefits and/or tax implications.
- 3.4 We'll normally pay incentives quarterly in arrears by bank transfer.
- 3.5 We'll provide flexibility in how incentives are paid, to meet the differing needs and financial circumstances of individual residents. Residents eligible for involvement incentives can:
- Decline to receive payment
 - Decline payment and choose to access a personal development opportunity of equivalent value (e.g. training course or conference attendance)
 - Receive retail vouchers instead of payment
 - Ask to be paid less than the maximum published rate
 - Ask to be paid at a different frequency, for example monthly
 - Make any other reasonable request for flexibility that supports their involvement, which we'll consider on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.6 Residents observing panel meetings as part of the recruitment process won't be eligible for an honorarium payment.

4.0 Payments for co-creation and informal involvement

- 4.1 We'll incentivise participation in co-creation workshops and other activities (that sit outside of the resident governance structure) in the following ways:
- For participation in co-creation workshops or other significant consultation meetings, we'll offer a gift voucher to the value of £10 - £50 depending on length of time and importance of the project. We'll clearly communicate the value of the gift voucher at the start of the project.
 - We'll offer residents participating in Special Advisory Network meetings the opportunity to be entered into a prize draw.
 - We'll offer residents taking part in surveys the opportunity to be entered into a prize draw.

- 4.2 These payments/rewards are opt-in. Residents are under no obligation to accept them.

5.0 Expenses

- 5.1 Involved residents can claim for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of their participation. The following out-of-pocket costs are eligible for reimbursement:

- [Mileage, toll charges and car parking fees](#)
- [Public transport](#)
- [Meal costs while away from home on Southern Housing business, subject to cost limits](#)
- [Telephone calls made as part of their involvement](#)
- Overnight accommodation (in limited circumstances and with the prior approval of the Resident Scrutiny Manager)
- [Care costs](#).

- 5.2 Expenses claims must be made within three months of the date the expense was incurred. The Resident Scrutiny & Involvement Team will authorise and process claims in line with our operating regulations and delegated authority levels.

- 5.3 Members are not able to claim for:

- Care for animals
- Printing costs, i.e. paper and ink cartridges
- Broadband
- Postage.

6.0 Mileage

- 6.1 Involved residents can claim mileage on a pence per mile basis in line with HMRC rates, following submission of an itemised claim. They can claim the distance from their home or workplace to the meeting venue, via the most direct route.
- 6.2 Involved residents are responsible for ensuring they hold appropriate vehicle insurance and that their insurer covers use for Southern Housing business.
- 6.3 In keeping with our environmental objectives, involved residents will also be entitled to claim an additional amount for carrying other involved residents as passengers in their vehicle providing they're not part of their household.
- 6.4 Residents can claim car parking, congestion, or toll charges if they provide receipts. Southern Housing will not pay for any car parking penalties, penalty notices, or fines incurred while driving on Southern Housing business.

7.0 Public transport

- 7.1 Involved residents are entitled to claim the cost of public transport to and from Southern Housing meetings and engagements.

- 7.2 For journeys paid for with Oyster/contactless cards, we'll reimburse the actual cost of the journey. All journeys claimed must be supported by an itemised journey history.
- 7.3 We won't pay for first class travel under any circumstances.
- 7.4 Taxis should only be used where public transport is either:
- Unavailable
 - Unsuitable for the resident's needs (for example, due to disability)
 - More expensive
 - Considered unsafe (for example, travelling after dark).
- 7.5 Taxis may only be used when booked by Southern Housing staff using a company account. Residents must give us at least 24 hours' notice if a taxi's required.
- 7.6 Involved residents travelling from nearby areas will likely be expected to share a taxi.

8.0 Meal costs

- 8.1 Residents may claim meal costs when they're away from home for more than five hours on Southern Housing business, attending an activity at which food and drink isn't provided.
- 8.2 Resident can claim meal costs in accordance with the rates set out in [Schedule 2](#).
- 8.3 We won't reimburse the cost of alcoholic drinks.

9.0 Care costs

- 9.1 We'll cover childcare and carer costs to enable involved residents to attend Southern Housing governance meetings and events.
- 9.2 Prior approval should be sought from the Resident Scrutiny Manager, who will review requests on a case-by-case basis.
- 9.3 We'll only pay claims for government-approved childcare providers or carers.

10.0 Telephone calls

- 10.1 We won't reimburse calls to Southern Housing staff, as we expect involved residents to use the Southern Housing freephone number. Residents can claim all other calls related to Southern Housing duties but this must be evidenced by a telephone call log and itemised bill.
- 10.2 We won't reimburse the cost of line rental, nor will we pay lump sum claims not related to actual usage.

- 10.3 If a member's telephone company charges for an itemised bill, we'll reimburse this, providing a receipt is submitted.

11.0 Postage

- 11.1 Email should be used whenever possible. The Resident Scrutiny & Involvement Team can supply pre-paid envelopes to residents where needed.

12.0 Responsibilities

- 12.1 The Executive Team is responsible for approving this Policy.
- 12.2 The Corporate Director of External Affairs & Resident Involvement is responsible for implementation of this Policy.

13.0 Review

- 13.1 We'll review this Policy 12 months after merger.

Policy controls

Effective from	16 December 2022
Approved by	Shadow Board
Approval date	14 December 2022
Policy owner	Corporate Director of External Affairs & Resident Involvement
Policy author	Alan Strickland, Corporate Director of External Affairs & Resident Involvement

Version history			
Version no.	Date	Summary of change	Author and approver
1.0	14.12.22	New policy	Alan Strickland, Corporate Director of External Affairs & Resident Involvement Shadow Board

Schedule 1

We'll make involvement incentives at the following rates to residents who are members of the resident governance structure:

- Resident Strategy Group members (excluding the chair*) - £75 per meeting, up to a maximum of £375 per annum.
- Resident Scrutiny Panel – chair £200 per scrutiny project, up to a maximum of £400 per annum. All other members £150 per scrutiny project, up to a maximum of £300 per annum.
- Regional Residents' Panels and Service Panels members – chairs £50 per meeting up to a maximum of £250 per annum. All other members £40 per meeting, up to a maximum of £200 per annum.

*The chair of Resident Strategy Group is remunerated as a member of the Housing & Communities Committee, so does not receive the payments provided to other RSG members.

Schedule 2

Food and drink costs may be claimed up to the following limits, on submission of receipts:

- Breakfast: £7.50 (before 11am)
- Lunch: £7.50 (12 noon to 2pm)
- Dinner: £20 (after 5pm)