Developing people for health and healthcare

Relocation and Travel Expenses - Arrangements for Doctors & Dentists in Training & Public Health Trainees

November 2020

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Foreword

1. This document sets out the arrangements for the payment of relocation and associated travel expenses for doctors, dentists and Public Health trainees (to be referred to as trainees) commencing in accredited HEE training programmes with effect from 5th August 2020. The **implementation** of the new arrangements in this framework commences on 1 November. From this date existing local guidance or arrangements for trainees who started new training programmes from August 2020 onwards will cease. Implementation for all other (existing) trainees will be agreed on a region by region basis.

2. The 2016 national Terms and Conditions of Service (Schedule 11, paragraph 29) state that "assistance with relocation expenses, including removal or excess mileage, shall be provided to doctors but the conditions under which expenses are reimbursable and the amount which may be claimed are subject to negotiation and agreement at a local level **except** where another body has responsibility for providing the assistance". Health Education England accepts this responsibility for all trainees as set out in Paragraph 1.

3. Local Employers are responsible for administering claims made by trainees and then recharging Health Education England as required.

Purpose & Guiding Principles

4. The purpose of this document is to provide clear, reasonable and consistent assistance to all trainees who face the financial costs of moving house (as a homeowner or not) to take up training and who are disadvantaged as a result of training programmes which cover large geographical areas. This is part of HEE's Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives (EJDWL) programme. HEE has worked with professional representatives to develop recruitment initiatives that help doctors to secure placements close to their existing support network and personal commitments.

5. It is recognised that each region has different geography and travel systems and therefore there is some flexibility within each region to address this in terms of toll charges and public transport costs. These flexibilities are set out in Appendix 1.

6. The guiding principles behind the provision of relocation expenses is that a trainee should not be financially disadvantaged by reasonable costs incurred through a move in the interests of the service, or to further their training. However, trainees are not expected to profit materially from public funds used for reimbursement in respect of relocation and associated expenses.

7. These arrangements and the maximum financial allowance payable do not include any costs incurred as a result of accommodation provided following night duty shifts and on call commitments, etc which should be provided by the placement organisation under appropriate Trust Health & Safety policies and in accordance with the requirements of schedule 12 and 13 of the 2016 national Terms and Conditions of Service.

8. HEE will support and facilitate the implementation any national agreements which are developed in relation to green/sustainable approaches to travel and transport in the context of these arrangements.

Eligibility

9. The following groups are eligible to claim expenses under this framework:

- Medical Trainees from Foundation Year One Onwards including trainees in academic training programmes
- Dental Trainees from Dental Core Training onwards including trainees in academic training programmes
- Public Health Trainees including trainees in academic training

Provided they meet the criteria to relocate to take up appointment of a training post which lasts a minimum of two years **or** who have to rotate to different geographical areas as part of their training programme. This includes trainees who are on leave under Section 15 of NHS Staff Handbook or on sick leave.

10. Trainees who are deemed to be out of programme (OOP) will not be eligible to claim relocation, temporary accommodation or excess mileage payments whilst they are out of programme but may claim expenses in order to support them returning to their training programme. **The exception to this is trainees on approved OOPT (Out of Programme for Training) experience.**

11. Trainees appointed to single-site training programmes (ie they do not change geographical location during the entirety of the training programme) will not be eligible to claim excess mileage payments.

12. GP Trainees working in a GP practice setting who are required to use their own vehicle on the expectation that home visits may be required to be undertaken who are reimbursed for the cost of mileage from home to principal place of work, and any associated allowances as described in Schedule 11 of the TCS cannot claim concurrently for excess mileage/expenses payments under this framework.

Funding Provision for Removal and Excess Mileage

13. Reimbursement will be provided to the agreed maximum sum for all categories of expenses outlined in this document, inclusive of all removal and associated expenses and excess mileage claims. The maximum sum is £10,000 for the entire period of postgraduate training and is not proportioned for trainees working less than full time.

14. The maximum sum is based upon an assumption of 8 years reckonable service in any approved HEE training programme. Trainees who exceed this period of training (for example trainees whose CCT is awarded after completion of ST7/8 and trainees working less than full time) and who have exhausted the £10,000 maximum allowance will be entitled to continue to claim for excess mileage and/or removal expenses.

15. Expenses used for removal/relocation are exempt from income tax as per the relevant HMRC guidance. Excess mileage claims may be subject to tax. Trainees should clarify their personal position with their employer. Further guidance is available on the HMRC website at https://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-relocation.

16. It is envisaged that this assistance will allow a trainee to move into a HEE training region from other parts of the country, or from a devolved nation, to take up a training programme or allow a trainee already living in the region where they are training to move to a more central location which facilitates commuting to the majority of the prospective educational placements on the training programme.

17. Where during the course of employment a trainee relocates to a geographical location further away, in terms of travel time or distance from their training place of work they will not be entitled to claim any additional excess mileage incurred unless it can be demonstrated that the new residence is closer to the majority of the remaining placements for their training programme.

18. Throughout the course of their training programme, eligible trainees may claim excess mileage at the nationally agreed reserve rate when their journey from home to their place of work exceeds 17 miles each way. This recognises the requirement for trainees to be based at different hospitals and other places of work during the duration of a training programme which may cover a significant geographical area and will recompense trainees for expenses that are deemed unreasonable.

19. Any relocation and/or excess mileage claims payable will be subject to the overall maximum expenses limit of £10,000 with the exception of circumstances set out in Paragraph 14. Individual trainees who can demonstrate exceptional circumstances, for example married or cohabiting trainees who "shared" removal costs; or significantly long/expensive commutes due to rotation placements or can demonstrate other exceptional personal circumstances (including trainees with disabilities) will be able to apply for additional recompense via the Postgraduate Dean (or nominated deputy).

20. Where a trainee's designated place of work for their current placement, or a prospective placement, is changed due to reasons beyond the control of the trainee (e.g. reconfiguration of services, removal of training places, redeployment due to emergency service pressures, etc.), then any eligible relocation or excess travel expenses shall be reimbursed in accordance with this document but shall not count towards a trainee's overall maximum expenses limit.

21. As part of HEE's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, any eligible costs incurred by a trainee due to their, or their partner's, active military service shall be claimable. Any expenses paid to a trainee, which are related to military service, will not count towards an individual trainee's £10,000 maximum allowance.

Criteria to Claim Removal Expenses

22. In order to be eligible for removal expenses, trainees should relocate their primary residence at least 30 miles from their old residence or/at least one hour's travel time in normal traffic and live within a 'reasonable commute' (deemed to be no further than 20 miles, in radius, each way) of the majority of the anticipated prospective hospitals/placements on their training programme.

23. Where the first placement of a trainee's training programme is considered to be located on the periphery of where the rest of the trainee's placements are due to be, or anticipated to be, located. Then the trainee will be eligible to claim removal expenses (up to a maximum of £500) if they choose to relocate within 20 miles of their place of work for this first placement. In this scenario, a trainee's residence does not need to be within 20 miles of the majority of the placements for their training programme.

24. All removal and associated expenses will be reimbursed from UK port of entry only, with the exception of the Isle of Man and Jersey for those trainees appointed to a training programme which includes one or more rotations to these locations.

Removal Claims

25. The property for which reimbursement of removal and associated expenses is to be made should be of a broadly comparable standard.

26. Trainees who are buying their first property or are moving from one rental property to another can only claim the cost of removal of furniture and effects (up to a maximum of £500) and for expenses relating to a search for accommodation. No other expenses will be reimbursed in these circumstances.

27. House purchase costs will not be reimbursed to first time buyers or applicants whose existing property is not being sold.

28. One failed purchase may be reimbursed where the trainee is not responsible for the abandonment of the transaction, or the trainee's withdrawal is entirely reasonable. However, this reimbursement will be included in the maximum limit for reimbursement.

29. Where two trainees are moving together, the maximum tax-free allowance claimable under HMRC for one relocation is £8,000 (ie the HRMC allowance is per move not per trainee).

Excess Mileage Claims

30. It is recognised that most training programmes will involve trainees working at numerous placements over a period of many years which may cover a significant geographical area and it is accepted that it is not reasonable or practicable to expect trainees to relocate upon every rotation.

31. HEE will provide recompense for excess mileage expenses (payable at the reserve/PTR rate) incurred as a result of rotation when their home to place of work is more than 17 miles each way. Trainees appointed to single-site training programmes are not eligible to claim excess mileage as they are expected to live within a reasonable commute (less than 20 miles) of the place of work.

32. The mileage costs that may be paid under these circumstances is the mileage from home to the place of work less 17 miles (trainees are not eligible for reimbursement of mileage costs for the first 17 miles of their journey as this is not defined as 'excess travel').

33. Where a trainee's permanent residence is outside of the relevant HEE regional footprint and they choose not to relocate, there is no entitlement to excess mileage payments unless it can be demonstrated that their residence is within reasonable commuting distance of the majority of the placements on their training programme. Otherwise, agreement of any financial assistance will be subject to the agreement of the Postgraduate Dean (or nominated deputy) on the grounds of exceptional personal circumstances and separate arrangements put in place.

34. Under existing NHS terms and conditions of service, only mileage expenses are reimbursable in respect of excess travel - ie there is no entitlement to reimbursement for toll or parking charges. However, it has been agreed that HEE will reimburse trainees for agreed tunnel/bridge toll charges as per the Regional Flexibilities Framework at Appendix 1.

35. Where trainees use public transport for journeys, they can claim expenses based on the equivalent mileage as per the Reserve/PTR mileage rate as set out in paragraph 31.

36. Where trainees travel by bicycle, excess mileage rates are payable at 20p per mile over and above the 17 mile each way minimum

37. Payment of excess mileage claims should not be agreed where, in the judgement of the employer and following agreement with HEE via the Postgraduate Dean (or nominated deputy) the journey time and/or the distance involved exceeds the normal limit for daily commutes, as specified in paragraph 38 and is likely to be detrimental to the safety of the trainee, and/or to the satisfactory performance of the trainee's duties/where patient safety will be affected.

38. Excess mileage claims should be limited to 53 paid miles each way per day (ie a total journey of 70 miles each way). It is however recognised that regional geographies and travel systems as well as individual circumstances will vary and therefore trainees who wish to exceed these normal limits should discuss their personal position with the employer in the first instance.

39. Where daily travel distances are agreed to be excessive, alternative arrangements will need to be considered which address the needs of both the trainee and the service. This may include temporary accommodation expenses (subject to a maximum monthly allowance inclusive of one journey to and from home each week). NB: These expenses will be included within the maximum allowance payable of £10,000 except in exceptional circumstances as set out in paragraph 18 and are calculated based on the BCIS (Building Cost Information Service) data for regional property rental costs. Maximum regional rates are set out at Appendix 3.

40. Where a trainee, who does commute long distances which are deemed to be acceptable normally, identifies a day, or a run of days, where they would prefer to stay in temporary accommodation close to their place of work, in anticipation of working the next day, rather than commuting back to their home they can claim for the cost of their normal return journey excess mileage and use this to fund the cost of their accommodation for that night(s). A trainee cannot claim twice.

41. Individual trainees cannot sub-let or accept any monies for the permanent residence if claiming temporary accommodation allowance.

Process for Claiming & Reimbursement of Removal Expenses & Excess Mileage

42. Trainees who wish to claim re-imbursement of removal expenses should complete the application form which is available from the HEE Local Office Website and/or the employer. Trainees should submit a request for confirmation of eligibility for reimbursement as soon as possible and certainly before incurring any costs and no later than within one calendar month of commencement in post.

43. There is no requirement for the employer to accept responsibility for expenses incurred if the trainee does not confirm eligibility for re-imbursement as set out above.

44. Re-imbursement will not normally be made until the trainee takes up the appointment subject to circumstances set out in Paragraph 45.

45. Trainees should submit actual expenses claims within three months of the expenditure being incurred. Where a trainee has relocated, and incurred eligible expenses in advance of commencing in a prospective training programme placement due to extraneous circumstances (e.g. relocating from abroad, relocating in advance to align with school years, etc.), then a trainee will be able to submit claims for eligible expenses within three months of commencing in their post, rather than three months from when the expense was incurred.

46. Original receipts in respect of removal expenses will be required as proof of outlay against authorised expenditure. Reimbursement will not be made to third parties. Receipts are not required for excess mileage claims.

47. Removal expenses for reimbursement include costs associated with:

- Expenses during search for accommodation
- Expenses associated with house sale/purchase
- Continuing Commitments
- Expenses on removal

48. Included and excluded expenses for reimbursement are set out in Appendix 2.

49. Any subsistence claims associated with removal will be paid at the rates set out in Section 18 (Annex 14) of the NHS Terms & Conditions of Service handbook.

50. Trainees who wish to claim reimbursement of excess mileage/temporary accommodation as set out in Paragraphs 30-41 should complete the relevant claim form on a monthly basis. Claim forms are available from the employer.

Commitment of Undertaking by Trainees

51. Trainees who apply for and receive assistance for relocation and associated expenses will be expected to sign an undertaking which confirms that:

- They are fully aware of the conditions of the arrangements and are complying with them
- They will notify the employer if they are seeking to recover any expenses (in part or full) from another source, for example partner's employer
- They will only submit legitimate and valid receipted claims for reimbursement
- They will repay the appropriate proportion of any removal expenses received should they leave HEE approved postgraduate training within two years, or 18 months for Foundation Trainees, of commencing either a; foundation, core, higher or run through training programme.

52. Should a trainee resign from HEE approved postgraduate training within 2 years, or 18 months for Foundation trainees, they will be required to repay any removal expenses received, abated by 1/24th for each calendar month of service completed unless, in exceptional circumstances only, their Postgraduate Dean (or nominated deputy) formally waives this requirement. Repayment arrangements will be as agreed with the Employer.

53. The undertaking is set out within the Application for Removal Expenses, which is available from the HEE Local Office Website and/or the Employer.

Appeals procedure

54. Any trainee who feels that he/she has been unfairly treated in relation to their claim for Relocation and Associated Expenses may write to their Postgraduate Dean setting out the reasons for the appeal. The Postgraduate Dean or nominated deputy will review each case based on any written evidence submitted and will provide a written response within 4 weeks. There will be no further right of appeal.

Equality Impact Assessment

55. HEE commissioned an independent Equality Impact Assessment of the framework in July 2020 to ensure that equality is at its heart. This included a review of other organisations' policies; interviews conducted with trainees and research of current and best practice.

56. The report set out a number of recommendations which have been included within the final version of the framework.

Evaluation & Review

57. The framework will be monitored annually with analysis of the uptake of arrangements by different groups to determine relative impact.

58. These arrangements will be subject to review no later than April 2022. HEE will seek to engage with the BMA on changes to the framework including any inflationary increases.

Appendix 1

Regional Flexibilities Framework

It is recognised that each region has different geography, economies and travel systems and therefore there is some flexibility within each region to address this in terms of commuting times, toll charges, temporary accommodation and public transport charges.

East & West Midlands

- Allowance for M6 toll where explicit agreement is agreed by the Postgraduate Dean/nominated Deputy

East of England

- Allowance for Dartford Dart/Tunnel crossing charges where it is agreed necessary for trainees to use this

London

- Where trainees are required to travel into Zones 1-3, they can claim the cost of excess fares from Zone 4 onwards, with the cost of travel within Zones 1-3 being deducted from the total amount. Further information on how to register a contactless payment account so that receipts can be shared is available at https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/how-to-pay-and-where-to-buy-tickets-and-oyster/pay-as-you-go/contactless-and-mobile-pay-as-you-go#on-this-page-5
- Allowance for ULEZ (Ultra Low Emission Charge) where it is agreed that it is essential for trainees to use their cars
- Allowance for Dartford Dart/Tunnel crossing charges where it is agreed essential for trainees to use this

North West

- Allowance for Mersey Tunnel and the Mersey Gateway Bridge toll charges subject to trainees utilising most efficient regular user options

South East

- Allowance for Isle of Wight ferry charges subject to trainees utilising most efficient regular user options
- Allowance for Dartford Dart/Tunnel crossing charges where it is agreed necessary for trainees to use this

South West

- Allowance for the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry tolls subject to trainees utilising most efficient regular user options

Yorkshire & the Humber and North East

- Allowance for Humber Bridge and Tyne Tunnel toll charges subject to trainees utilising most efficient regular user options

Appendix 2

Expenses for Reimbursement under the HEE Removal & Associated Expenses Guidance

Search for New Accommodation

- Whenever relocating, trainees are entitled to be reimbursed for a maximum of two preliminary visits to the area of their new employment in search of accommodation

- Expenses for preliminary visits may be reimbursed; these cover accommodation and subsistence for a maximum of four nights and return travel at public transport rate or standard rail fare, for the trainee and their immediate family. This re-imbursement is included within the maximum allowance available.

House sale

- Solicitors' fees
- Estate agents' or auctioneer's fees
- Incidental legal expenses

House purchase

- Solicitors' fees
- Estate agents' or auctioneer's fees
- Finder's fees
- Stamp duty (reimbursed to the order of the lower value of either the old permanent residence sold or the new permanent residence purchased)
- Land registration fees
- Survey fees
- Incidental legal expenses

Storage & Removal of Furniture & Effects

- Storage of furniture and effects costs for up to a maximum of 12 months where the necessity for storage arises from the move

- Extra costs of insuring furniture in transit or in store will also be met as appropriate

- Costs of removal of furniture and effects from the old home to the new home which can include a packing/unpacking service.

NB: Before storage and/or removal of furniture is agreed, three competitive quotations should be obtained for approval by the Employer. Re-imbursement will be limited to the lowest quote. For small removals, reimbursement of a self-hire vehicle and fuel would be acceptable

Travel Expenses on Removal

- Trainees and their dependants may be reimbursed for travelling expenses incurred on removal from the old accommodation to the new property accommodation at public transport rate, or standard rail fare.

- Trainees can claim for one return visit to their old property to supervise the removal. This will include one day's paid leave plus mileage at public transport rate/standard rail fare and subsistence.

Continuing Commitments

- Whilst the old property remains unsold, reasonable additional accommodation costs may be reimbursed. Reimbursement will be for the lower of either the monthly mortgage on the old property or the monthly mortgage/rent on the new property for a maximum of 12 months.

- Trainees who have not found suitable accommodation in the new area and who are in accommodation separated from their family due to not being able to re-locate immediately may be reimbursed the travel costs of weekly visits either by the trainee to the family home or by immediate family to the trainee, at public transport rate or standard rail fare for a maximum of 12 months. NB: Travel costs are only to port of entry if outside of UK.

- To be eligible for re-imbursement under these provisions, trainees should expect to be required to demonstrate that they are actively marketing their former property at a realistic price/are actively seeking suitable accommodation in the new area/have a valid reason why they cannot relocate immediately (eg partner's employment, childcare, schooling, or elderly dependents).

- In exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that a trainee was unable to agree leases for rental properties, which matched their rotation dates for placements and did not overlap, when moving to be within a reasonable commuting distance of the next placement, trainees may seek to claim re-imbursement of any additional lease costs for a maximum of three months subject to the overall maximum temporary monthly accommodation allowance.

Rental Agency Fees

- Trainees who are charged an agency fee for house rentals may be reimbursed for these (excluding payment for deposits or any penalty fees for loss or damage, late payment, etc). Agreement needs to be reached in advance with the Employer before these can be reimbursed.

Incidental Expenses

- Trainees are eligible to claim back the costs for mail re-direction up to a maximum period of 6 months for two people

- Trainees are eligible to claim back non-refundable nursery registration administration fee up to a maximum of £150 per child

Temporary Accommodation Expenses

- As set out in Paragraph 36 of the framework, where daily travel distances for a single placement are agreed to be excessive, temporary accommodation expenses can be claimed subject to the regionally agreed maximum as set out in Appendix 1

Excluded expenses

The following categories of expenses are excluded from re-imbursement:

- Interest on bridging loans
- Increase in insurance premiums
- Redemption fees
- Costs of moving livestock and other animals

NB: Any of the expenses set out above which are claimed for reimbursement will be included within the maximum allowance of £10,000 available over the entirety of a trainee's postgraduate training.

Appendix 3

Temporary Accommodation Allowance Rates

	Latest values (BCIS Aug 2018, ERIC 16/17)	Regional Temporary Accommodation Allowance
HEE Region	**Provider BCIS Location Factor**	**£725 Base Rate**
North West	1.01	735
North East & Yorkshire	0.94	680
Midlands	1.02	735
South West	0.99	715
South East	1.13	820
London	1.22	890
East of England	1.02	740

N.B. The above values for the regional BCIS location factor and the regional temporary accommodation allowance reflect the mean average of all trust's BCIS location factor within a region and their subsequent temporary accommodation allowance, using a base rate of £725 per month.