

Customer Involvement Expenses Policy

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the expenses and incentives that ISHA will and will not provide for involved customers. These costs are incurred by ISHA not as a form of payment, but as a way to thank customers for volunteering their time to improve our services and policies.

In addition, expenses, incentives and training are provided by ISHA in order to adhere to our commitment to equal and fair treatment of all customers, as laid out in our [Equality and Diversity Statement](#) and our [Equality and Diversity Strategy](#).

2.0 Expenses

2.1 We pay qualifying expenses for...

- Attendance of ISHA & Lien Viet events, including meetings, focus groups, and training
- Carrying out duties as part of an authorised ISHA group or panel, by prior arrangement only

2.2 Qualifying expenses

ISHA will reimburse the following expenses incurred while performing the actions outlined in **2.1**:

- Travel expenses
- Child care/carer expenses
- Meal and refreshment costs
- Phone costs, when agreed prior

2.3 We will not pay expenses for...

- Loss of earnings as a result of participation
- Printing, internet, stationery, or telephone costs – where necessary, ISHA will directly provide these resources when needed for authorised ISHA groups or panels

2.4 How we pay expenses

In all cases, valid receipts (where possible) and a completed **Expenses Form** are necessary for ISHA to reimburse expenses. If you are unsure whether or not an expense will be reimbursable, please speak to ISHA staff prior to incurring the expense.

2.4.1 Travel expenses

- **Driving:** As part of our commitment to sustainability, we encourage customers to travel to meetings and other events via public transport. However, when deemed necessary for accessibility reasons, mileage will be reimbursed at 50p per mile, paid based on direct travel (from home/work to meeting location and back).
- **Parking:** Where driving has been deemed necessary for accessibility reasons, we will also reimburse parking when receipts are provided.
- **Public transport:** We will reimburse travel via public transport when valid receipts are provided. Frequently involved customers may qualify for a customer Oyster card which will be registered, topped up, and monitored by ISHA staff.

2.4.2 Child care/carer expenses

- These services should be provided by a registered childminder or carer wherever possible
- When a registered childminder or carer is not available, other arrangements should be agreed with ISHA staff prior; non-registered childminders or carers will be paid at an agreed upon rate per hour
- A receipt must be presented to ISHA staff

2.4.3 Meal and refreshment costs

- In most cases, ISHA will provide refreshments at meetings and events, as well as meals when attendance is required over lunch (12:00-14:00) or dinner (18:30-20:00).
- When a meal is not provided at a conference or other ISHA-authorized event (such as a training or conference), you may be reimbursed up to £10. These claims require prior agreement from ISHA staff and receipts must be provided.

2.4.4 Phone costs

- If a customer will be required to make frequent phone calls as part of their involvement, ISHA may agree to cover additional phone costs at a reasonable rate
- This must be agreed upon with ISHA staff prior to incurring the expenses and receipts must be provided

3.0 Incentives & Training

3.1 When we provide incentives

- In certain cases, it may be appropriate to encourage and recognise customer involvement by providing incentives.
- Incentives will not be used as a form of payment for time volunteered.

3.2 Types of Incentives

3.2.1 Vouchers

- Incentives may be provided in the form of vouchers, which do not count as earnings and should not affect entitlement to state benefits.
- Vouchers are meant to encourage intensive involvement where it may not otherwise happen (such as focus groups with customers who are harder to reach), or to thank customers for performing more complicated, isolated tasks (such as Mystery Shopping).
- Vouchers will not be provided for regular meetings or casual events.
- ISHA reserves the right to withhold offering a voucher if a customer has failed to complete the agreed upon task.

3.2.2 Local Improvement Grant

- Where appropriate, incentives may be provided in the form of a grant for estate improvement.
- In such cases, all expenditures must be for the improvement of communal areas or for social initiatives in your area.
- The grant will not be paid by ISHA up front. All expenses must be recorded and reported to appropriate ISHA staff to reclaim the expenses. Where this is not financially possible, ISHA staff will make the purchases on customers' behalf.

3.3 Customer Training

If ISHA determines a customer requires or would benefit from training in order to complete tasks for ISHA-authorized groups or other involvement activities, ISHA will cover the costs of the training, as well as:

- Travel to and from the training venue, as outlined in **2.4.1**;
- Childcare or carer costs necessary to enable the customer's attendance, as outlined in **2.4.2**;
- Where not included, meals at the training, as outlined in **2.4.3**;