

Guidance to Witnesses on Expense Claims

Introduction

1. Thank you for assisting us. Witnesses play a crucial part in helping the GMC fulfil its statutory duty to deal firmly and fairly with doctors whose fitness to practise is called into question.
2. As a registered charity, we have a duty to account carefully for all expenditure. Our expense policy aims to ensure that you are reimbursed appropriately for expenses wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred. The guidance below explains what we will reimburse. Please note that these are not allowances. All expenditure must be supported by itemised receipts (not credit/debit card vouchers). Please note that unreceipted expenditure may be deducted from your claim.
3. Where a witness has a disability we will adjust expense arrangements to meet specific needs. If you have caring responsibilities, we will also consider requests for a contribution towards any additional cost incurred. If this is the case, please contact the GMC for further guidance.
4. If you have any queries, or believe that you may need to incur costs in addition to that set out below, please contact either the solicitor or the GMC member of staff dealing with the case.
5. Please contact us if you require this expenses policy and claim form in an alternative format.

Claims procedure

6. All claims for reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenditure must be submitted on the form provided by the solicitor dealing with the case.
7. All expense claims should be submitted as soon as practicable, preferably within seven days. Claims made later than a month after the conclusion of the case are paid only in exceptional circumstances. We aim to reimburse all expenses within one month of receipt of your claim form.

Accommodation and subsistence

8. When it is necessary for you to stay away from home the solicitor handling the case will arrange hotel accommodation. We have negotiated preferential rates with hotels near hearing centres.
9. Alternatively, when it is necessary for you to stay away from home you may choose to stay in non-commercial accommodation (i.e. with friends and relatives). In this case, £25 may be claimed. This limit is set by HM Revenue and Customs and covers all costs including accommodation, evening meal and breakfast. No claim may be made by witnesses staying in their own property.
10. Overnight accommodation will not be arranged if the hearing is held within normal commuting distance of your home.
11. The costs of extra services such as hotel laundry, newspapers, video hire and mini bar bills will not be reimbursed.
12. We will reimburse essential telephone calls to arrange transport and reasonable calls to your home. As telephone calls from hotels are expensive, you are asked to keep such calls to a minimum.
13. We will reimburse the cost of an evening meal up to £30, including gratuities and ½ bottle of wine or similar drinks taken with the meal.
14. We will reimburse the cost of lunch up to £10.

Travel

15. Journeys should be made by public transport wherever possible. Standard class rail fare will be reimbursed between the nearest station to your home and the location of the hearing. Economy class air travel may be reimbursed where the total door to door cost is cheaper than rail travel or where there are other overriding considerations.
16. Taxi fares will be reimbursed when:
 - a. Carrying bulky files, equipment or luggage.
 - b. It is an awkward route by public transport.
 - c. It is essential, or otherwise cost effective to go by taxi.
 - d. Travelling late at night (after 8.00pm).
 - e. A disability or condition means you are unable to use public transport.
17. A mileage allowance of 45p per mile will be paid for witnesses using a private vehicle. You are required to use the shortest or fastest practicable route. For audit purposes, the start and finish points of the journey must be shown on the claim form. The GMC will not accept liability for any loss or damage to private vehicles. You should ensure that the vehicle is properly insured, and

the GMC will not reimburse any insurance premiums.

18. Car parking will be reimbursed at cost when supported by an itemised receipt.

Loss of earnings

19. Most employers will allow employees time off to attend hearings without loss of earnings. Where that is not the case, we reimburse loss of earnings at the same rates as in the Crown courts. Claims must be accompanied by documentary evidence such as a letter from your employer stating the amount of earnings lost, net of tax. The rates of reimbursement are as follows:
 - a. Ordinary witness:
 - i. Not exceeding four hours £33.50.
 - ii. Exceeding four hours £67.00.
 - b. Professional witness (as defined by regulation as doctors, dentists, veterinary surgeons, lawyers and accountants only):
 - i. Not exceeding two hours £83.50.
 - ii. Exceeding two hours but not exceeding four hours £117.
 - iii. Exceeding four but not exceeding six hours £174
 - iv. Exceeding six hours £234.

GP Locum Expenses

20. Where loss of earnings is not claimed, a witness in general medical practice may claim the actual cost of employing a locum up to a maximum of £430 per day.

Partners/supporters

21. Witnesses occasionally request that their partner or a friend or relative accompany them. We normally expect witnesses to meet the costs of a partner or supporter themselves.
22. In cases where it is essential for a family member, carer or support worker to attend with a witness (for example, because of a disability, medical condition or age), witnesses are invited to apply to the GMC solicitor dealing with the case for approval of their family member's/carers' expenses. Such expenses may, at the discretion of the GMC, be discharged in exceptional circumstances.
23. The GMC will make reasonable adjustments for witnesses with disabilities in accordance with the requirements set out by the Equality Act 2010.