

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK AND COUNTRYSIDE JOINT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM: AMMENDED EXPENSES SCHEME

Members of the Northumberland National Park and Countryside Joint Local Access Forum are entitled to receive reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses and for the expenses resulting from the care of their children or dependants incurred when on official business. This report sets out the amended scheme, for information, resulting from recent changes to the Northumberland National Park Authority Scheme for Members.

Background

1. Under Section 11 of the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002, the appointing authority is expected to meet 'any reasonable expenses incurred by a local access forum which they establish or by the members of that forum'.
2. These 'reasonable expenses' are classified as being 'such as are incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings of the forum and any other activities relating to the discharge of the functions of the forum, but only in respect of:
 - a. Travel and subsistence costs, and
 - b. Any expenses of arranging for the care of their children or dependants.'
3. The DEFRA guidelines on financial provisions state that the level of travel and subsistence allowances paid to forum members should be consistent with the levels paid by the appointing authority to its members. The schemes in place for the two appointing authorities (Northumberland National Park Authority and Northumberland County Council) have been looked at, as well as those from other local access fora.
4. Northumberland County Council has already undertaken a review of allowances and an Independent Remuneration Panel has made recommendations on rates for travel and subsistence which will be adopted by the Council from 1st October 2003. These allowances are based on the Inland Revenue authorised mileage and subsistence rates, which ensure that there is no profit element liable to tax and Inland Revenue reporting requirements. This makes the scheme easier to administer.
5. The proposed scheme for Northumberland National Park and Countryside Joint Local Access Forum is therefore based on Northumberland County Council's scheme and is attached at Appendix A. The amended scheme is effective from 1st April 2004. The Joint Local Access Forum is asked to endorse this proposal.

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NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK AND COUNTRYSIDE JOINT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Mileage

Based on Inland Revenue authorised mileage rates, as follows:

Cars (all cc's)

40p per mile (first 10,000 miles)

25p per mile (over 10,000 miles)

5p per mile (each additional passenger to whom a travelling allowance would otherwise be payable)

Motor Cycles

24p per mile

Bicycles

20p per mile

Long Journey Limitation

Members may claim the appropriate mileage rate for their vehicle for official journeys up to 400 miles (round trip). However the appropriate second class public transport fare should be claimed when the car is taken mainly for a Member's own convenience and the destination is conveniently served by public transport.

Rail Fares

The fare claimed shall be second class. Reservation of seats, portorage of luggage may also be claimed. Receipts will be required.

Taxi Fares

The reimbursement of taxi fares may be made in cases of urgency where no public transport is reasonably available. Receipts will be required.

Further Expenses

The actual amount spent on tolls, ferries or parking fees, including overnight garaging, may be claimed. Receipts will be required.

Subsistence Rates

Receipts should be attached to all claims for subsistence.

Day Subsistence Allowance

Breakfast £5.50 Absence of more than 4 hours before 11 am

Lunch	£7.50	Absence of more than 4 hours, including the period between 11.45 am and 2 pm,
Tea	£3.75	Absence of more than 4 hours including the period 3pm to 6 pm
Dinner	£15.00	Absence of more than 4 hours ending after 7 pm

The above may only be claimed where a meal has not been provided free of charge in the period to which the allowance relates.

Overnight Allowance

Overnight	£85.28
Overnight (in London)	£97.28

Rates refer to the maximum payable. Reimbursement will be on actual cost and receipts will be required.

Meals on Trains

Where main meals (breakfast, lunch or dinner) are taken on trains, during a period for which there is an entitlement to a day subsistence allowance, the reasonable cost of the meals may be reimbursed in full, within the limits specified below. Receipts will be required.

Childcare and Dependant Carer's Allowance

A childcare and dependant carer's allowance shall be paid to all members of the Joint Local Access Forum in respect of costs necessarily incurred by them in making arrangements for the care of children (aged 14 and under) or other dependant relatives (requiring care because of age and / or disability) to enable them to perform any approved duty (other dependant relatives include: parents; partners; siblings and other agreed by the appointing authority).

For childcare and care of other dependants the maximum allowance payable will be equivalent to the Northumberland County Council Home Carers hourly rate.

All claims for childcare or care of a dependant should be accompanied by a receipt or a statement signed by both the Forum member and the carer certifying that care has been provided, that the expenditure has been incurred and that the carer does not live in the same household as the member.

The allowance will be payable for the time the member is in attendance at an approved duty, plus travelling to and from the venue.

Rates for Carer's Allowance

(Based on the rate paid to Home Carers by Northumberland County Council)

£5.77 for weekdays
£7.02 for weekends