

Local Structure Expense Regulations

Effective from April 2025

Key
New Regulation

These regulations are reviewed annually and apply to **all members** in the NEU Districts, Branches, and Regional/Wales Councils, including Local Officers, when the Local Structure reimburses the expense.

1. General Conditions

Terminology

- HMRC have different rules for employees, officeholders, and volunteers. Correct classification of Local Officers is important because HMRC treat office holders the same as employees, meaning officeholder benefits can be taxable in certain circumstances.
- The term officeholder should not be used. Officeholder is normally a term associated with a statutory director, Non-executive director, or company secretary. Officeholders are liable for PAYE which would impact the way some expenses are processed. Therefore, Local Officers should be referred to as volunteers.

GDPR

- Please ensure GDPR compliance regarding all personal details relating to members.
- GDPR guidance can be found on the IT Section of SharePoint: [IT GDPR Guidance](#)

Receipts

- Receipts are required as indicated for all areas of expenditure. Expenses will only be reimbursed with the appropriate receipt attached.
- Physical receipts are preferred; however, photographs of receipts are acceptable, but the quality must be sufficient for all information to be clearly legible.
- The receipts should be numbered, and cross referenced to the expense claim form, to ensure that each item of expenditure is supported by a receipt.
- Receipts should be the itemised bill. **Credit or debit card slips will not be accepted.**

- Every effort should be made to submit full receipts for all expenses. Claims should be submitted regularly to limit the risk of losing receipts. However, if a receipt cannot be provided, an explanation should be given on the claim form so that a determination can be made if this is an acceptable justification for the receipt being missing to allow reimbursement.

Authorisation

- All expense claims require dual authorisation in line with local financial regulations. The expense can be queried at a quorate general meeting prior to payment if the Treasurer is unsure whether reimbursement should take place.

Rates

- All out-of-pocket expenses (mileage, travel, accommodation, and substance) paid to local officers must be paid in line with the NEU central expense rates contained within these regulations.

Unique Requirements of your Local Structure

- Districts, Branches and Regional/Wales Councils can draw up more detailed expense regulations, based on these regulations, if they are required. However, they cannot contradict these Expenses Regulations, Local Financial Regulations and Union Rules.
- The Expenses Regulations and Local Financial Regulations comprise the absolute standard by which Districts, Branches and Regional/Wales Councils are expected to conduct their financial affairs.
- Any further areas your District, Branch or Regional/Wales Council requires a more detailed policy for must be within the scope of these regulations and cannot breach Union or HMRC rules.

Further Questions

- If you have any questions, please contact the Local Finance team at LocalFinance@neu.org.uk.

2. **Travel Expenses (Receipts required)**

a) **Rail**

Officers traveling by rail on Union business should claim the **appropriate standard class fare**. Expense claims must include either the actual tickets or the ticket confirmation where tickets were purchased online. Seat reservations or credit card receipts that do not show details of the journey are not acceptable.

"appropriate" implies taking advantage of concessionary fares whenever these apply, e.g., day and weekend return fares, etc.

Tickets that have been reimbursed to Officers by the District and subsequently cancelled, should be refunded directly to the District by the individual.

Delay Repay claims can be made if the journey is delayed or cancelled whilst travelling. Please contact the rail network for more details. Delay repay reimbursements will be paid to individuals as it is deemed compensation for the passenger who was directly affected and therefore can be retained.

b) **Oyster Cards and Contactless Payments for Tube, Bus or Tram**

- (i) In London, Oyster cards should be registered with TFL.
- (ii) Once the card is registered, a journey history can be printed and can be used as a receipt.
- (iii) The relevant journeys on the Oyster card statement should be highlighted and a copy of the statement attached to the claim form.
- (iv) Top up receipts will not be accepted.
- (v) If you are using contactless payments the relevant journey(s) on the bank statement should be highlighted and a copy of the statement attached to the claim.
- (vi) Please ensure GDPR compliance regarding personal bank and oyster statements.

c) **Car and Cycles**

Classification of the Local Officers as volunteers means there are certain journeys that can be reimbursed, and certain journeys that cannot be reimbursed. A further distinction is also made between Local Structures without an office and Local Structures with an office.

Journeys between home and an officer's School, College or primary place of work can never be claimed.

A. Local Structures without an Office

Where the individual is based at home, and travels from that place to a meeting, they can claim for their travel costs and this would not be ultimately taxable. The individual is not gaining anything from this claim. The individual has incurred a cost required to carry out their role, and so the cost can be reimbursed.

B. Local Structures with an Office

The start and end points of the journey are key to determining what can and cannot be claimed.

- (i) Travel which either begins, or ends, at the officer's home, for example, travel from home to the office, or office to home, cannot be claimed if the officer carries out work from the office on a regular basis because the office is considered to be a place of work by HMRC.
- (ii) If the officer does not work from the office on a regular basis, meaning travel to, or from, the office is an exception to their normal working practices when carrying out Union business, then the travel can be claimed. This is the only exception to point i.
- (iii) Travel whilst conducting Union business and member representation, such as journeys between the office and a meeting, journeys between meetings, and journeys from a meeting to the office, can be claimed.
- (iv) Travel from the officer's School, College, or primary place of work to the office can be claimed.

As the Local Officers are not employees of NEU, there are no reporting obligations for the Union. Should any expense be made that are ultimately taxable, then the individual should declare this personally to HMRC.

C. General Points Applicable to all Journeys

- (i) Full details of the journey undertaken must be indicated on the claim, including reason for travel, start and end points and total mileage.
- (ii) HRMC allows mileage to be reimbursed at the following rates in accordance with their approved mileage allowance payments (AMAP): -

Car 45p per mile for the first 10,000 business miles in a financial year

25p per mile more than 10,000 business miles in a financial year

Motorcycles 24p per mile (no mileage limit)

Cycles 20p per mile (no mileage limit)

- (iii) If an officer carries another Union officer in their car for business travel, an additional 5p per passenger (max 2 passengers) may be claimed per business mile. The passenger must also be travelling on a business journey i.e. not home to a place of work or vice versa.
- (iv) Officers using their own cars must hold comprehensive motor insurance and ensure their insurance covers the use of their car for business purposes.

D. Taxis and Parking

- (i) Taxi – reasonable fees will be reimbursed on provision of receipts.
- (ii) Parking - reasonable fees will be reimbursed on provision of receipts.

3. **Subsistence** (Receipts required)

a) **Meals**

Subsistence shall be allowed up to the following maximum rates (correct for 25-26):

Breakfast	£9.44
Lunch	£13.29
Dinner	£37.31

For clarity, please be aware that the rates are not an allowance. An allowance would attract Income Tax and NI in accordance with HMRC policy.

These rates cannot be grouped together or rolled over into separate claims – for example if an officer has two dinner claims and one of the claims is for £30.00 the remaining amount cannot be rolled over into the other dinner claim.

Claims for breakfast and dinner should only be submitted where an officer is required to leave home before 7am and/or be out until after 7pm, or in conjunction with an overnight stay, whilst on Union business.

If meals are included in any accommodation costs, they cannot be claimed for separately.

HMRC rules state that only meals eaten out are allowable. Therefore, the cost of ingredients to prepare food at home, or takeaways to be eaten at home will not be reimbursed.

Officers dining together must each obtain a copy of the receipt (high resolution photographs are acceptable) and divide the receipt between the number of diners to only claim their portion of the bill. Everyone must write on the bill the number of attendees and the apportionment.

Alcohol is not deemed to be subsistence by HMRC unless purchased with a meal.

A guide provided by HMRC equates reasonable to a maximum of two alcoholic drinks per person.

Union policy restricts the claiming of alcohol to an evening meal only.

b) Meeting Refreshments

(i) Meeting Individual Members

At the Meeting	If an officer is meeting an individual member, a cup of tea/coffee/soft drink and light refreshments for both parties can be claimed up to a maximum of £5 per person attending the meeting
Travel to/from the Meeting	If an officer must travel more than 1.5 hours to/from meeting an individual member from their home address, light refreshments can be claimed whilst travelling up to a maximum of £5. Please note, that this can only be claimed whilst travelling and cannot be added to any other subsistence claim.

The two rates above should be considered separate and cannot be combined or added to any other subsistence claim.

(ii) General Meetings, Committee Meetings & AGM's

Expenditure on General Meetings, Committee Meetings, AGM's, and other similar meetings must always be reasonable and proportionate.

Reasonable expenditure should be considered as being that which allows the Local Structure to comfortably perform the functions required without unnecessary excess.

The proportionate element refers to the fact that the Local Structures all vary in size and what would be considered appropriate for one may not translate to appropriate for all. Therefore, Local Structures should consider the size of the meeting when judging this and only employ the necessary funds.

The costs of District, Branch and Regional/Wales Council meetings and other organised events should always be covered by the Local Structure, not at the personal expense of officers/members.

The Districts, Branches and Regional/Wales Councils have several ways of making payment that mean costs should not fall to officers/members such as cheque, bank transfer and Unity offer a Corporate MultiPay Card which can be linked to the bank account.

Provided the District, Branch or Regional/Wales Council has completely covered the costs, not individual members or officers, a reasonable amount of alcohol is permissible at Union events. **As a guide, a reasonable amount of alcohol per person is considered to be couple of pints or bottles of beer, a half-bottle of wine or a couple of spirits per person.**

Under HMRC regulations, there are restrictions on the amount of alcohol individuals can claim with their travel and subsistence expenses as outlined on page 6, however these apply because an individual is making the purchase and reclaiming the costs back on expenses.

The distinction between the District, Branch or Regional/Wales Council providing a reasonable amount of alcohol at Union events and officers/members claiming for alcohol with their expenses is crucial for compliance with HMRC and Union rules.

Alcohol can affect a person's behaviour so when providing alcohol at events Local Structures should remind members of the NEU Code of Professional Conduct contained in Appendix I of the National Rules and the NEU Behaviour Statement below.

NEU Behaviour Statement

Everyone attending a National Education Union (NEU) event has the right to expect a space free from bullying, intimidation, and harassment; to be treated with dignity, respect, and courtesy and not to be discriminated against.

The NEU will not tolerate any form of harassment or discrimination. Members attending an NEU event are responsible for their own behaviour and must ensure they behave appropriately showing respect to others during NEU events and social activities.

Reports of inappropriate behaviour, including behaviour which brings injury or discredit to the union, will be treated seriously, and acted upon promptly. Any such behaviour may ultimately result in attendees being asked to leave and/or action being taken against members under the Union's Code of Professional Conduct. The event coordinator will outline how members can report inappropriate behaviour, and the event coordinator has complete discretion to ask individuals to leave the event.

4. Overnight Accommodation (Receipts required)

Overnight Expenses

The Union recognises that the cost of a hotel or B&B in London and other cities varies greatly depending on the time of the year and other events taking place. Officers should seek to book accommodation at the most advantageous price and provide appropriate receipts.

Food and drink on hotel bills will only be reimbursed on production of an itemised receipt in line with the subsistence policy above.

5. Annual Conference & Other NEU Conferences (Receipts required)

Delegates can claim **reasonable** out-of-pocket expenses from their District for expenses incurred whilst attending in-person NEU Conferences that are in accordance with HMRC policy and Union financial regulations.

a) Receipts

HMRC's policy is that all out-of-pocket expenses are supported by full VAT receipts. If receipts are not provided, HMRC can classify the money received as taxable income for the delegate and request the necessary Income tax and NI payments accordingly.

b) Rates

Within the scope of HMRC's policy the Union has set reasonable rates for certain areas of expenditure which must be followed by Districts.

c) Subsistence

Breakfast	£9.21
Lunch	£12.97
Dinner	£36.41

If the cost of breakfast is included in the hotel costs, this cannot be claimed for separately.

Alcohol is not deemed to be subsistence by HMRC unless purchased with a meal. A guide provided by HMRC as reasonable equates to a **maximum of two** alcoholic drinks per person.

Union policy restricts the claiming of alcohol to an evening meal only.

d) Travel

Rail journeys can be reimbursed as the appropriate standard second class fare subject to the provision of receipts.

HMRC allow mileage to be claimed at 45p per mile subject to the provision of details for the journey, including start and end points and reason for travel.

If a delegate carries another Union delegate in their car for business travel, an additional 5p per passenger (max 2 passengers) may be claimed per business mile. The passenger must also be travelling because they are attending the Conference as a nominated delegate or observer.

If a delegate travels to a Conference by car, the maximum that can be claimed from the District is the value of a standard class rail fare from the delegates home train station to the train station in the location where the Conference is being held.

e) Conference Advance

Districts can provide an advance to cover **out of pocket** Conference expenses if doing so would prevent the delegate incurring financial hardship. **Such expenses should be those that are covered by these expense regulations, in line with the local finance regulations.** Districts must agree and minute the advance at a quorate general meeting.

The miscellaneous category in Section 11 gives Districts some discretion in deciding which expenses can be covered. If a member would be unable to attend Conference for reasons of financial hardship then the District Committee can agree to cover reasonable out of pocket expenses, in addition to travel, subsistence and accommodation costs.

Receipts must be provided for all expenditure following the Conference and any unspent money must be returned to the District.

The responsibility for ensuring this process is adhered to lies with the Committee/Officers.

6. Communication Devices (Receipts required)

1. Mobile Phones

There are two options regarding mobile phones: -

a) Procuring devices and contracts via Onecom Group

This is the Union's recommended option because it guarantees compliance with HMRC policy.

Full details can be found via this link [Mobile Phones for Officers](#)

b) The officer uses their personal mobile phone and does not submit mobile phone claims as part of their expenses. This option is available because almost all mobile phone contracts include unlimited minutes and texts and some include unlimited data meaning the officer is not incurring an additional expense by using their own mobile phone,

2. Broadband Services

The majority of households in the UK already have broadband access with the resident paying an agreed monthly fee to the provider. This cost is not based on volume, meaning it does not incrementally increase based on internet usage. Consequently, any partial contribution or full reimbursement of broadband costs will be considered a taxable benefit by HMRC and is **not permitted**.

7. Childcare and Carer Support (Receipts required)

Officers may claim for formal registered childcare and carer costs incurred specifically to perform their duties as Union officers.

The expense claim should specify the details of the event attended which must include the date and location of the event and the capacity in which the officer attended.

The claim should specify the number of hours and the number of children or individuals cared for.

The Union will only allow the reimbursement of childcare/carers costs which are outside the claimant's normal working hours, or days, if part time

If childcare/carers costs have already been claimed from the Union centrally, they cannot also be claimed from the District, Branch or Regional/Wales Council.

8. Working from Home Allowance

Officers who regularly carry out Union work from their home, and therefore use part of their home as an office, are able to claim a Working from Home Allowance from their District, Branch or Regional Council to cover the additional household expenses incurred.

Officers cannot claim the working from home allowance if the Local Structure has an office, and the officer conducts the majority of their Union related business from the office.

You cannot claim tax relief if you choose to work from home.

The limits are as follows: -

Payment Period	Maximum per Period	Annual Maximum
Weekly	£6	£312
Monthly	£26	£312

The payment can be made directly to officers and Treasurers are not required to collect receipts or invoices relating to the payment.

However, the decision to provide this payment to an officer must be made a quorate general meeting and be included in the minutes for audit purposes.

Please note, even though receipts or invoices are not required, there must be evidence that the payments have been appropriately authorised by the Local Structure, so it is essential the decision is minuted.

No officer may receive the allowance from more than source. This covers the National Union, NEU Local Structures and any other positions the individual may hold outside the NEU.

No payments can be made above these limits because they are set by HMRC.

The Working from Home Allowance cannot be backdated and comes into effect when the decision is made.

The decision cannot cover a period that extends beyond the end of the current financial year due to potential changes in officers so must be revisited by the District at least every 12 months.

9. Unity Corporate MultiPay Card Regulations

Overview

The Unity Corporate MultiPay Card (the Card) is a charge card offered by Unity Trust Bank that Districts, Branches and Regional Councils can use to enable card payments to be made without a local officer having to use a personal card.

This is because all payments should be made directly by the local structure, apart from out-of-pocket expenses, and the Card will provide a method of doing this.

General Points

- The Card is not pre-loaded with funds, instead local structures can spend on their card each month up to an approved limit and the cost will be taken directly from the local structure's Unity current account by direct debit the following month.
- The default limit on the cards is £1,000 per month, however if you require a higher limit, please contact the Local Finance team.
- Each local structure can only have **one** card which can be used by any signatory to the bank account. The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring the card is only used by signatories, for knowing where the card is held and for ensuring the relevant paperwork is completed and filed correctly.
- Local officers cannot have a Card to use to pay for their personal out-of-pocket expenses. If a local officer will suffer financial hardship because of expenses incurred whilst on Union business, they can apply for a float (*please see the Float section of the Expense Regulations for full details*).
- Unity charges a fee of £3 per month per card for using the service.

Payment Authorisation

In accordance with the Local Financial Regulations, all payments made using the Card must be authorised by two signatories.

Dual authorisation cannot take place in the same way as it can for cheques or bank transfers, however there are three mechanisms local structures can use to ensure the dual authorisation required by the Regulations is not breached.

1. A Group Email Chain

- To authorise a payment, there must be a clear email trail with all the necessary officers copied in giving the full details of the payment and the consent of at least two signatories must be evident.
- The Treasurer must keep this email as part of the local structure's accounting records along with the applicable receipts/invoices.

2. A Card Payment Authorisation Form

- Your local structure can use the 'Card Payment Authorisation Form' to be signed by two signatories when a payment needs to be made.
- Before each payment is made all necessary officers must be informed and the authorisation form must be completed and signed by two signatories.
- It must contain details of the recipient, date of payment, reason for payment, and authorising parties.
- This form must then be kept as part of the local structure's accounting records along with the receipts/invoices.

3. Meeting Minutes

- The authorisation for the payment can be included in the minutes of the meeting where the decision was made.
- To be valid the meeting must be quorate, and the minutes must be kept as part of the financial records along with the receipts/invoices.

Your local structure can make use of all different methods of authorisation as one may be preferable to the others depending on the situation.

For example, if the expenditure is discussed and authorised at a meeting the form can be completed and signed, or decision included in the minutes, so the payment can be made straight away. If a payment is required in between meetings, the email method may be preferable, so the payment is not delayed.

The idea behind all of this is that transparency is maintained, and the two signatories' rule is fully complied with. This would serve the dual purpose of protecting the Treasurer against any allegations of mismanagement and ensuring the officers are aware of how the local structure's money is being spent.

No signatory can make a payment alone, and without the knowledge and consent of at least one other officer.

10. IT Equipment Purchases

Please use the link below for information and details regarding approved devices and ordering: -

[IT Equipment Purchases](#)

Devices purchased by Local Structures for local officers will remain the property of the Local Structure and should be returned to the Local Structure if an officer steps down, retires, or leaves the Union.

Officers are also reminded that GDPR must be followed. Further details can be found via the link below.

<https://neu365.sharepoint.com/sites/ITInformation/SitePages/GDPR-guidance.aspx>

11. Miscellaneous

Any claims made by officers for miscellaneous items outside the scope of these financial regulations must be approved at a quorate general meeting and be in accordance with the Local Financial Regulations.

Legitimate and reasonable approved expenditure, **where it is incurred in the role of carrying out of Union business**, can be paid if it is supported by an itemised receipt, and the nature of the expenditure is made clear on the expense claim form.

12. Reimbursement of Expenses

The Finance Department has an Excel spreadsheet which can be used by officers when submitting their expenses. Alternatively, if you have devised your own spreadsheet, please feel free to continue to use it.

Officers should submit their expense claims for payment using the spreadsheet every month and provide all the necessary receipts. Claims can only be paid if they are fully supported by receipts (this also applies to expenses at Conferences, see pages 10-11 for full details).

Expense claims should be submitted in a timely manner to assist in the accurate reporting of expenditure at meetings. If your District, Branch or Regional/Wales Council wishes to put a more specific timeframe in place, this can be agreed at a quorate general meeting.

All expense claims require dual authorisation in line with local financial regulations.

Any expense can be queried at a quorate general meeting prior to payment if the Treasurer is unsure whether reimbursement should take place.

13. Expenses Floats

Significant expenses should always be covered by the District, Branch or Regional/Wales Council meaning the majority of payments should be made by the local structure. However, should an expenses float be necessary, the following regulations apply.

Local Secretaries, Treasurers and officers who undertake significant levels of case work may receive a returnable expenses float if their monthly expenses payments are excessive and could cause them personal financial hardship. This float must be refunded in full when the officer retires or leaves the post.

The amount given as a float must be agreed and minuted at a quorate general meeting, and the Secretary, Treasurer or Officer must sign the Float Certificate before being given the funds.

The Float Certificate can be requested from the Finance Department or downloaded from SharePoint.

The Float Certificate is an agreement between Union and individual officer and a copy must be returned to the Finance Department once signed.