



Document reference: 281A2015
Date approved: April 2015
Date for next review: March 2017

Wales Audit Office Travel and Subsistence Policy

Travel and Subsistence Policy

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Further review	2
3.0	T&S principles	2
4.0	Staff responsibilities	3
5.0	Line manager responsibilities	4
6.0	Finance team responsibilities	4
7.0	Business Services responsibilities	4
8.0	Travel centre and office base allocations	5
9.0	What you can claim	6

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This *Wales Audit Office Travel and Subsistence Policy* is based on the principles laid out within the Code of Conduct and follows the guidance as detailed by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) in respect of the payment of staff' travel.
- 1.2. All claims should be based on the rules and principles detailed in this policy.
- 1.3. This policy applies to all employee, including permanent, fixed-term and casual workers, referred to as staff throughout this policy.

2. Further review

- 2.1. These arrangements will be monitored and reviewed by March 2017 at the latest, to ensure they meet the evolving needs of the Wales Audit Office, remain within HMRC rules for the reimbursement of expenses and continue to ensure good value for money for the Wales Audit Office.

3. T&S principles

- 3.1. The core principle is that expenses should be reasonably incurred for appropriate business purposes on a nil gain nil loss basis. This policy indicates what is generally reasonable.
- 3.2. These arrangements have been designed to:
 - meet the business and operational needs of the Wales Audit Office;
 - reimburse staff and workers for the reasonable additional expense of business travel;
 - comply with HMRC requirements to minimise potential tax liabilities;
 - reflect the Wales Audit Office's financial, budgetary and control environment along with supporting environmental and social factors;
 - be transparent and provide accountability, reflecting the Wales Audit Office's organisational values;
 - support the Accounting Officer's personal responsibilities for the stewardship of public funds, the regularity and propriety of their use, and in securing value for money; and
 - clarify the roles and responsibilities of both staff and relevant teams such as Finance and Business Services in supporting and managing the T&S policy and procedure.

-
- 3.3.** The Wales Audit Office will not normally pay for any loss or damage to personal effects as a result of business travel.
- 3.4.** The principle of all travel reimbursement for mobile staff is reimbursement for all business mileage/journey costs on a 'lesser of' principle.
All business mileage is calculated within the expenses system based on addresses and postcodes. Reimbursement is made on the basis of the fastest route between the start and finish points given and is calculated automatically, with the lesser of principle underpinning this calculation. Staff can claim for significant detours where considered appropriate.
- 3.5.** All enabler staff are able to claim for all business journeys except where that journey is primarily the same as their ordinary commute, for example a journey to an office in Cardiff where their office base is Cardiff would not be subject to reimbursement. All journeys will be based on the lesser of principle that is reimbursement is made on the business miles from office to business place or home to business place whichever is the least miles.
- 3.6.** Staff are asked to consider whether business travel is required or if there are alternative means that could be used, for example, videoconferencing, telephone conference calls or meetings by Lync. Where car travel is necessary, staff are encouraged to consider car sharing as an option.
- 3.7.** Staff have responsibility for ensuring a true and accurate claim is submitted. Where a member of staff is found to have either submitted or conspired to submit a false claim, this will be taken very seriously and may lead to disciplinary action (which could result in dismissal) or criminal prosecution.

4. Staff responsibilities

- 4.1.** Staff are responsible for:
- Submitting their claim via the expenses system, no later than **three months** from the date of the expense.
 - Complying with this policy before incurring the costs and submitting a claim.
 - Submit claims for personal travel and subsistence costs only. No claims will be allowed where staff are claiming for colleagues.
 - Making sure the costs are actually and necessarily incurred on Wales Audit Office business.
 - Using the Business Services team to arrange travel and accommodation, unless there is a sound business reason not to do so.
 - Making sure they use the correct rates and that claims are correct.
 - Ensuring that all claims made are supported by relevant receipts, which should be uploaded to the expenses system.

-
- Letting the Business Services team know if they are not satisfied with the travel or accommodation arrangements made for them.

5. Line manager responsibilities

5.1. Line managers will:

- authorise that expenses incurred by members of their team have been properly incurred on Wales Audit Office business;
- authorise claims as soon as possible;
- review the level of travel completed by staff within their teams having regard to their welfare; and
- only approve if relevant receipts are attached.

6. Finance team responsibilities

6.1. The Finance team is responsible for authorising and paying all eligible claims. It will:

- provide prompt, friendly and authoritative advice;
- verify that all claims are properly receipted; and
- pay claims within eight working days of receipt of authorised claim.

6.2. Where staff fail to submit claims within **three months of the date of the expense**, the claim will be automatically rejected by the Finance team and will not be reimbursed unless there are exceptional circumstances eg, long-term sickness, maternity leave.

7. Business Services responsibilities

7.1. Business Services will:

- Book requests for travel for staff through the contracted service providers or direct (as relevant) and will inform staff of the bookings by email. All rail and air tickets will be purchased standard/economy class.
- Book all requests for hotel accommodation using either the contracted service provider or through local agreed arrangements, whichever provides the best value for money, and inform staff of the arrangements by email.
- Book all hire car requests.
- Book taxis via reception (except for early starts and in remote locations).
- Complete all requests within **one working day**, unless there are business or practical operational reasons not to do so.

8. Travel centre and office base allocations

Travel centre allocation

- 8.1. Travel centres are notional points of reference, which are used as a basis for claiming travel expenses for staff. Staff working in financial audit and performance audit, except those classed as operational enablers, are classed as mobile workers as they work within a geographical area.
- 8.2. All staff in mobile roles are allocated to one of four travel centres in Wales. Staff are allocated to the travel centre nearest to their home (for staff living outside Wales, home is regarded as the England-Wales border at the most direct route from home to that travel centre). The agreed travel centres are the following Wales Audit Office offices:
- Cathedral Road, Cardiff
 - Penllergaer, Swansea
 - Ewloe
 - Caernarfon (Gwynedd Council audit rooms)
- 8.3. Staff who lived more than one hour's drive (based on AA Route Planner) from one of the four centres at 31 October 2013 were allocated a travel centre at their home address. Should those staff move to live within one hour of one of those four offices, their travel centre will become that office. It is important to note that staff who were allocated a travel centre at their home address will not have formal homeworking contracts. Home will merely be the place from which to claim business travel expenses. This was a transitional arrangement following the 2013 review of travel centres.
- 8.4. After 31 October 2013, where staff move home, other than in accordance with the *Wales Audit Office Relocation Policy and Procedure*, they would normally retain their existing travel centres. Resource managers will be able to propose travel centre re-allocation if this suits the needs of the Wales Audit Office; such changes would be subject to approval by the HR Manager.

Office-based staff

- 8.5. Corporate enabler staff are normally allocated to a permanent office base, as advised individually.

Home-based staff

- 8.6.** Any staff whose home is classed as their travel centre can claim business mileage from the Wales Audit Office for all journeys in the performance of their employment duties. However, where the individual's home is outside of Wales, staff will only be able to claim from the point at which they cross the border into Wales.

Staff with two permanent workplaces

- 8.7.** Some staff may have two permanent workplaces. Where this is the case, staff may make claims for travel that occurs between the two workplaces on a tax-free basis. However, claims for travel from home to either workplace cannot be claimed without the prior approval of the Director of Finance, who may seek approval from the Management Committee.
- 8.8.** All other business journeys can be claimed under the normal rules.

9. What you can claim

Travel

- 9.1.** Travel costs between home to travel centre/office base **will not** be paid; as this is seen as your normal commute.
- 9.2.** All mileage is calculated within the expenses system based on addresses and postcodes. Reimbursement is made on the basis of the fastest route between the start and finish points given and is calculated automatically. Staff can claim for significant detours where considered appropriate. All travel should, wherever possible, be booked by Business Services but if tickets can be sourced cheaper and more easily locally, staff can purchase the tickets, and reclaim via expenses. Where staff have purchased their tickets, any claim must be supported by the receipt – the rail or air ticket alone will not suffice. All receipts need to be scanned and uploaded into the expenses system to support your travel claim.
- 9.3.** Where staff have completed journeys for business purposes, the following reimbursement arrangements are available.

	Reimbursement arrangement
Rail journeys	All rail journeys should, wherever possible, be booked through Business Services. All journeys will be booked as standard class rail travel.
Air travel	All air travel should, wherever possible, be booked through Business Services. All journeys will be booked as economy class. Long-term car parking and/or hotel accommodation can be booked if you require this for your journey. Staff are encouraged to download a copy of the travel insurance form (available on the Business Service pages of the Hub) for reference when travelling abroad.
Business journeys by car, motorbike, bicycle	Reimbursement of all business journeys are based on the Wales Audit Office rates which are in line with HMRC rates. However the Wales Audit Office only reimburses staff up to the 2000cc rate. No reimbursement is offered over the 2000cc rate. The rates are updated regularly in line with any HMRC rate changes. All staff claiming for business travel must hold a valid driving licence, have a valid MOT certificate (if legally required) and have business travel insurance cover, prior to using their own car or motorbike. These documents, along with the V5 registration document, must be scanned and attached to the expenses system prior to any claim being made. No claim will be paid without these documents. Where staff are also in receipt of TA the car must be registered to them. The Wales Audit Office will not meet the cost of any insurance excess payments nor accept any liability in the event of road traffic incidents whilst travelling.
Transporting colleagues in a private vehicle, including those in receipts of TA	5p per mile per additional passenger. This is not payable to staff with lease cars.
Car parking costs incurred on business journeys	Car parking costs will be reimbursed but must be fully receipted. This includes the cost of car parking at Sophia Gardens where the Cathedral Road car park is full.
Taxi fares	Taxis may be booked via reception. However, on occasion where reception is unable to book the taxi, taxi fares will be reimbursed where there is a time saving compared to alternative transport. Claims for taxi fares must be supported by receipts.

	Reimbursement arrangement
Car hire	<p>Where staff do not have a car and/or if public transport is not a viable solution due to several transfers or the remote location of client sites, the Business Services team can arrange for a car to be hired for a business journey. A full clean driving licence is required to be provided in advance.</p> <p>Where a hire car has been provided with a full tank, the member of staff must fill the car with fuel on the return of the car. Where fuel is purchased, a VAT receipt must be obtained and submitted on the expenses system.</p> <p>Staff in receipt of either transport allowance, or a lease car, are not eligible for car hire except in exceptional circumstances, which must be agreed by the Business Services Manager in discussions with the HR.</p>

Day subsistence

9.4. Where staff are away from their normal travel centre or office base, but are carrying out work in line with their role, no reimbursement of expenses for day subsistence (lunch) will be permitted. However, reimbursement for exceptional costs will be allowed for staff when travelling on business but **must be supported by receipts**. For example:

- If a member of staff needs to leave home early in the morning before 7:00am, reimbursement for a breakfast is allowable up to a maximum cost of **£5.00**.
- If a member of staff is travelling home late at night, after 8:00 pm, reimbursement for an evening meal, taken en route and not at home, is allowable, up to a maximum of **£10.00**.
- If a member of staff is travelling by car or train on a journey of more than two hours' duration, any reasonable costs for refreshments will be reimbursed up to a maximum of **£5.00**. We encourage all staff driving on long journeys under normal health and safety rules to make a journey stop.

Overnight subsistence

9.5. Overnight accommodation is available to staff where the business journey is more than 1.5 hours away from their travel centre. This includes where staff are staying with friends or family.

9.6. Where a journey is less than 1½ hours for a claim, according to AA Route Finder, then staff need to have manager approval as evidence in an email setting out rationale prior to any booking of accommodation. This authorisation will need to be included with any claim.

-
- 9.7.** Bed and breakfast accommodation should be booked through Business Services. The budget for hotel accommodation is:
- up to a maximum of **£90 per night** for all hotels outside of the London area; and
 - up to a maximum of **£150 for all hotels within the London area.**
- 9.8.** All stays are booked with guaranteed late arrival. If you are going to be unusually late, please contact the hotel directly to confirm your arrival time.
- 9.9.** All stays are booked as standard on a B&B basis with dinner (if taken). Generally, the package for bed/breakfast and dinner includes selection for dinner from the table d'hôte menu. Reimbursement for costs above the standard table d'hôte will not be allowed. Reimbursement for room service will not be allowed.
- 9.10.** Where staff stay in a hotel where breakfast is not available, a maximum of £15 can be claimed for breakfast. All claims must have valid receipts.
- 9.11.** Staff staying on a bed/breakfast basis will be able to submit a claim for dinner excluding alcoholic drinks of up to **£25**, which must be fully receipted. Costs above this level, even if receipted, will be excluded from the claim. Staff can also claim:
- the cost of travel between the hotel and place of work; and
 - car parking costs incurred.
- 9.12.** The Wales Audit Office will not reimburse gratuities, incidentals (eg, newspapers) or room service charges.
- 9.13.** Staff should always cancel any bookings that are no longer required as soon as possible. Cancellation policies differ at each hotel, often requiring 24 to 48 hours' notice in advance.
- 9.14.** A flat rate allowance of **£20.00 per night** may be claimed by staff who choose to stay with friends or family while on Wales Audit Office business. The basis for this claim must be in line with all claims for overnight subsistence and the journey is more than 1.5 hours from their travel centre. Staff should note that this payment is a taxable benefit and that the Wales Audit Office currently bears this tax cost. The tax paid will appear on an employee's payslip.
- 9.15.** An overnight allowance of **£5.00** can be claimed to cover personal-related expenses. This does not have to be receipted. This is payable to all staff regardless of where they stay.

Other expenses

9.16. If any business calls are made on a personal phone, a claim for the direct call cost (with no addition for line rental) may be made on the expenses system. The itemised bill must be attached to the claim, highlighting the calls which are being claimed. Note that where individuals have contracts with 'free' minutes which are used for business calls these will not be reimbursed, in line with HMRC guidance.

Short-term international assignments

9.17. All international travel and accommodation rates are payable in line with HMRC Guidelines for Subsistence for overseas travel and are location-specific rates which means that staff will not incur any tax liability. Part-day rates will be paid as applicable. Receipts will not be required for these payments which will be expected to cover all meals, local travel and incidental expenses. Currency conversion will be at the prevailing daily rate for the day that the expense was incurred. The prevailing rates are available through the expenses system.

9.18. Staff should note that where assignments are financed by other organisations (such as the EU for Twinning projects), the rules of the sponsoring organisation will apply.

10. Wales Audit Office Board

10.1. The Wales Audit Office Board has its own separate policy which is in line with the rates and terms offered to staff. The Board policy can be accessed on the Hub.