

1 Introduction

1.1 Stockport Homes Group (SHG) is committed to offering a wide range of meaningful opportunities for customers to be involved in decisions that affect their homes and lives.

1.2 The Customer Expenses Policy aims to support customers to engage with the opportunities available through reimbursing out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of involvement. It sets out what SHG will reimburse and how to claim.

1.3 This policy applies to all Stockport Homes' customers that participate in a recognised SHG customer involvement group or activity.

2 Key Features of the Policy

Declaration of Income

2.1 Individual customers are responsible for the notification of eligible income in tax and welfare benefits calculations. Customers are encouraged to seek specialist advice on their individual circumstances from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

Claiming Expenses

2.2 Expenses claim forms are available from the Customer and Community Engagement Team by:

- Email to customer.engagement@stockporthomes.org
- Telephoning 0161 217 6016
- In person from Cornerstone, 2 Edward Street, Stockport, SK1 3NQ.

2.3 Customers are entitled to reclaim any expenses incurred by travelling to and from SHG approved activities, meetings and events. Customers will be required to provide a receipt or ticket as proof of the expenses incurred.

2.4 In order to qualify for reimbursement, claims should be submitted within two months of the date of expenditure.

2.5 Completed claim forms must be submitted to the Customer and Community Engagement Team with receipts for expenditure attached. Payment will be made directly into the customer's bank account by BAC's on provision of their account details. If this is not possible, payment will be made in cash.

Travel Expenses

2.6 The most economical form of public transport should be used. For longer journeys, such as travel to a conference, the Customer and Community Engagement Team will normally arrange and book travel in advance.

2.7 In other circumstances, customers may need to pay their own fares and reclaim the cost by submitting a claim using the form and with tickets and

receipts attached. This would be discussed and agreed with the customer(s) on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration additional needs. Standard class train fares and reasonable bus fares will be reimbursed.

2.8 Where appropriate, alternatives to attending events in person will be explored in order to support those unable to travel to participate. This could include, for example, joining via virtual methods such as MS Teams or Zoom etc. or via the telephone. Options to support this will be discussed and agreed with the customer(s) in advance.

Mileage

2.9 Customers can claim mileage for travel to and from approved events in their own vehicle. Mileage rates are in line with the approved rates set by HMRC and are reimbursed per mile as:

- Car and vans: £0.45p
- Motorcycles: £0.24p
- Bicycles: £0.20p.

2.10 Any parking, road traffic fines or penalties incurred by a customer while carrying out their duties will not be reimbursed by Stockport Homes.

Travel by Taxi

2.11 Special consideration for travel by taxi will be made for customers on a case-by-case basis based on the circumstances of the activity and additional needs. In respect of all use of taxis, arrangements must be made with the Customer and Community Engagement Team with a minimum of 24 hours' notice. Taxi's will be booked via a contract with a local firm; no physical money will be exchanged.

Carers Allowance

Children

2.12 An allowance shall be payable for childcare at a rate equivalent to the current value of the national minimum wage. As a public organisation, Stockport Homes has a duty to safeguard children and young people from harm. As such only registered childminders should be used. A payment will not be payable in respect of care provided by a member of the claimant's immediate family or members of the same household.

2.13 The timing and costs of childcare provision should be agreed with the Customer and Community Engagement Team prior to the activity or event. In all cases, the childminder should send an invoice to the Customer and Community Engagement Team directly for payment.

Other dependents/adults

2.14 For the care of other dependents, a reasonable allowance will be paid. Care costs must be agreed in advance with the Customer and Community

Engagement Team. Payment will only be made to carers outside of the household and non-family members. Customers eligible will normally be in receipt of the Carer's Allowance to look after someone.

Subsistence Allowance

2.15 Subsistence allowance for meals can only be claimed if no meal is provided whilst attending SHG approved business. The subsistence rates have been set as follows and they are in-line with the levels set for Stockport Homes staff. These rates are due to be reviewed in 2026 and subject to any changes, this Policy will be further updated at that time.

- Breakfast: £4.60 (after an event requiring an over-night stay if not provided)
- Lunch: £6.33 (events inclusive of hours between 12 noon and 2 pm)
- Tea: £2.49 (events between 3pm to 7pm)
- Evening Meal: £7.84 (events ending after 7pm).

2.16 Claims must be made using the standard claim form with receipts attached. These allowances include claims for tea, coffee or other soft drinks but not alcoholic drinks. Costs associated with room service will not be reimbursed.

IT and Internet Connection

2.17 Where reasonable and appropriate, SHG will endeavour to loan or provide access to computer equipment to customers to enable them to engage in an involvement activity where there are no alternative options. This would only apply in circumstances where customers commit to an activity that would require sustained engagement over a period of time, for example, a customer panel. In these circumstances costs for broadband may be partially reimbursed on production of a current bill and by prior arrangement with the Customer and Community Engagement Team.

3 Transparency and Accountability

3.1 All expense claims must be supported by sufficient documentation and receipts and invoices will be kept for audit purposes for a period of six years.

3.2 Details of payments made to customers may be subject to publication, as part of Stockport Homes' accounts, to demonstrate transparency.

4 Summary of what can be claimed and how (all rates applicable at 1st January 2026)

What	Guidance	Additional Information	How booked / reimbursed
Car travel	In line with current HMRC rates. Currently 45p per mile.		Customer Expenses Claim Form
Car Share	Where a customer transports other customers in their own vehicle, they can claim the HMRC passenger rate in addition to the mileage rate. Currently 5p per passenger per mile.		Customer Expenses Claim Form
Travel by Motorcycle	In line with current HMRC rates. Currently 24p per mile.		Customer Expense Claim Form
Travel by Bicycle	In line with current HMRC rates. Currently 20p per mile.		Customer Expenses Claim Form
Parking	The cost of parking will be reimbursed where a customer attends a meeting or training hosted by or on behalf of SHG.	Must have a valid receipt. Any excess parking charges, road traffic fines or penalties incurred by a customer while carrying out their duties will not be reimbursed.	Customer Expenses Claim Form
Train Travel	To obtain best value, rail fares should be booked as far in advance as possible and on set trains, where possible.	Must have a valid receipt. Standard Class Fares only.	Customer Expenses Claim Form
Other public transport: Bus / Tram / Tube	Look at taking advantage of return fares and day tickets if cheaper and practical.	Must have a valid receipt.	Customer Expenses Claim Form
Taxi costs	Special consideration for travel by taxi will be made for customers with additional needs including mobility requirements. More generally, the use of taxis will be allowed for evening meetings or where the venue is of such location that it would be inefficient to use public transport.	In respect of all use of taxis, arrangements must be made with the Customer and Community Engagement Team with a minimum of 24 hours' notice.	Taxi's will be booked in advance via a contract with a local firm, no physical money is exchanged.
Carers Allowance	An allowance shall be payable for childcare at a rate equivalent to the current value of the national	Only registered childminders or childcare providers should be used.	In all cases, the childcare provider should

<p>Childcare</p>	<p>minimum wage. A payment will not be payable in respect of care provided by a member of the customers immediate family, friends or members of the same household.</p> <p>For community activities with more than one child requiring childcare, the Customer and Community Engagement Team may arrange a local creche facility.</p>	<p>The timing and costs of formal childcare provision should be agreed with the Customer and Community Engagement Team prior to the activity or event.</p>	<p>send an invoice to the Customer and Community Engagement Team for payment.</p>
<p>Carers Allowance</p>	<p>For the care of other dependents, a reasonable allowance will be paid. Care costs must be agreed in advance with the Customer and Community Engagement Team. Payment will only be made to non-household or non-family members. Customers eligible for this will normally be in receipt of the Carer's Allowance to look after someone.</p>	<p>Customers eligible will normally be in receipt of the Carer's Allowance to look after someone.</p>	
<p>Subsistence Allowance</p>	<p>Subsistence allowance for meals can only be claimed if no meal is provided whilst attending approved activities. The subsistence rates have been set as follows and they are in-line with the levels set for Stockport Homes staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast: £4.60 (if required to leave home before 7am or stay overnight where breakfast is not provided as part of the room charge. after an event requiring an over-night stay if not provided) • Lunch: £6.33 (events inclusive of hours between 12 noon and 2 pm) • Tea: £2.49 (events between 3pm to 7pm) • Evening Meal: £7.84 (events ending after 7pm) 	<p>Breakfast is payable when a resident is required to leave home before 7am or is staying overnight in bookable accommodation where breakfast is not provided as part of the room charge.</p> <p>Lunch is payable when a resident is attending training, meetings or conferences away from SHG premises for a full day where lunch is not provided.</p> <p>Tea is payable when a resident attends an event ending after 3pm when they will not arrive home before 7pm.</p> <p>An evening meal is payable when a resident is required to stay overnight at bookable accommodation and an evening meal is not provided.</p> <p>Valid receipts will be required.</p>	<p>Customer Expenses Claim Form</p>

5 Internal Controls

1	Version control	Version number will change every three years or at major review	
	Version No.	Date	Change/s and reasons for change
	1	January 2026	Review of existing policy

2	Policy Owner i.e. Director	Director of Customer Services
	Policy Author/s i.e. Head of Service	Head of Customer Voice
	Approved by/date	Director of Customer Services – 8 th January 2026 – Decision
	Communication	Team Meeting
	Effective Date - the date of sign-off	8 th January 2026
	Next Full Review Date i.e. 3 years after effective date, with an annual light touch review	7 th January 2029

3	Regulatory Standards	Please list the Consumer, Governance, Viability standards and outcomes this policy meets
	Standard/s	Required outcome
	Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard	Registered providers must communicate with tenants and supply information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account. <u>1.1 Fairness and respect</u> 1.1.1 Registered providers must treat tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect. <u>1.2 Diverse needs</u> 1.2.1 In relation to the housing and landlord services they provide, registered providers must take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants. <u>1.3 Engagement with tenants</u> 1.3.1 Registered providers must take tenants' views into account in their decision making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered. <u>1.4 Information about landlord services</u> 1.4.1 Registered providers must communicate with tenants and provide information so tenants can use

		landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account.
4	Linked policies/strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHG’s Customer Voice and Influence Strategy 2024-2027 • SHG Customer Experience Strategy 2026-2029
5	Equality, diversity and inclusion	Describe how different experiences, characteristics, and approaches were considered during the formulation of the policy, e.g. neurodiversity, age, religion, sex/gender, financial/digital inclusion.
		An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this Policy. The Policy aims to ensure that customers are not disadvantaged financially by getting involved in Stockport Homes’ activities. An easy read version of this Policy will be available for customers.
6	Customer/Colleague Voice	Describe how the customer and/or colleague voice shapes and influences the policy and services
		N/A
7	Risk management	This policy helps to mitigate the following risks identified on the Corporate Risk Register
	Corporate Risk 2	Stockport Homes does not maintain a strong, positive reputation where stakeholders have trust and confidence in SHG
	Corporate Risk 6	Stockport Homes does not deliver excellent customer services in the way that customers require them
	Corporate Risk 7	Stockport Homes does not respond to and learn from complaints effectively and does not listen to the customer voice
8	Performance monitoring	Please list the relevant government TSMs (Tenant Satisfaction Measures)
		<p>TSM Satisfaction:</p> <p>TP06 - Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.</p> <p>TP07 - Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them.</p> <p>TP11 - Satisfied with landlords contribution to neighbourhood</p>