Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE POLICY

Document Control Sheet

Version History

Document Version	Date	History
V1	December 2025	Taken to SLT in January 2026 for consideration.
V2	March 2026	Updated in line with discussion with Head of Corporate Services
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Travel and Subsistence Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Children's Court Guardian Agency (CCGANI) has developed a Travel and Subsistence Policy to help ensure the most efficient, effective and economical use of its travel budget. CCGANI aims to be cost-effective in its use of public sector monies.

1.2 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Agenda for Change Handbook, section 17 which outlines the terms and conditions for HSC staff.

1.3 The Policy applies to all staff.

2. Policy Principles

2.1 The overriding principle is 'efficient and economic travel' –

- While travelling on official business you should use the most efficient and economic form of transport, taking account of not only the cost of travel but also subsistence costs and potential savings in official time and appropriate consideration of work-life balance. Consideration should always be given, at the outset, to alternative means to deliver the business e.g. video/call conferencing, etc.

- All staff are responsible for ensuring that no unnecessary costs are incurred and that the Agency receives good value for money. When claiming expenses, you should be mindful that expenditure of any type must be justified and demonstrably reasonable.

2.2 Reimbursement is not appropriate when no additional expense is incurred.

2.3 The Policy is underpinned by three important public sector service principles:

- **Accountability –** the Agency must be capable of standing the test of scrutiny and propriety;

- **Probity –** the Agency must demonstrate honesty through its Travel and Accommodation procedures. Staff must show accuracy and compliance when claiming reimbursement for travel, or related travel expenses;

- **Openness –** there must be transparency in all the Agency's activities in relation to this Policy.

3. Claims for Travel and Subsistence

Making a Claim

When making a claim for travel and/or subsistence, please note the following: -

3.1 It is the staff members responsibility to bear the cost of daily travel between their home and work base. HMRC guidance states that workers cannot claim 'home to work base' mileage. Guidance from HMRC can be accessed at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/490-employee-travel-a-tax-and-nics-guide;

3.2 All claims must refer to the actual expenses incurred and must be supported by receipts. If a receipt is not available the staff member must include a written explanation regarding this;

3.3 All staff claims must be processed through HRPTS.

3.4 When entering details of the trip on HRPTS it is important to use the 'Comment' box to include further information, which is relevant to the travel claim. This includes:

- Case ID
- The reason for travel;
- For single and multiple trips, you must include the road names e.g. "Strand Road, Portrush" or City Area e.g. Woodbreda, Belfast or postcode (please do not enter the private address information). Post codes should also be included for "Home".
- Deductions of miles for home to base should be noted; and
- Confirmation of passenger details should be included (if applicable).

3.5 Should an authorising manager have a query regarding a staff member claim they will make contact on the basis that insufficient detail has been provided to substantiate the miles being claimed. The staff member will be expected to provide further detail at this point. It should be noted that a delay in responding to this request may result in a delay in the payment of the travel claim or the claim not being authorised.

3.6 Claims processed through HRPTS which *include* receipts (e.g. car parking expenses, sundry items) must be printed out and all receipts clearly marked and stapled to the claim before being passed to the authorising manager (when first claiming travel you will be provided with one to one assistance and training). The Authorising Manager will sign off the receipts and retain a copy of the claim (and receipts) so that they may be inspected by Internal Audit as required.

Authorising a Claim

3.7 Staff travel claims are processed through HRPTS and are approved by the Authorising Line Manager.

3.8 Authorising managers should, where possible, approve expenses in line with the close-down date, thus aiming to have expenses included in salaries at month end. Any delay in an Authorising Manager being in possession of sufficient information to substantiate the miles being claimed or receipts, may lead to a delay in the processing of the claim.

3.9 Authorising managers should certify that to the best of their knowledge: -

- The claim is correct
- That an entitlement exists and all expenses claimed have been actually and necessarily incurred and are supported by receipts where appropriate
- That the travel has occurred

3.10 By means of assurance, the Line Manager should undertake a review of one trip per claim.

3.11 Authorising managers should pass any travel claims with receipts to Administration staff for holding.

Time Limits for Submission of Claims

3.12 Travel claims should always be submitted promptly and not accumulated.

3.13 Claims will be paid for up to three months, since the first period of travel took place. However, on occasions management will require the immediate (and monthly) submission of travel claims.

Late Claims

3.14 Travel claims must be submitted promptly. Claims submitted later than three months from the date incurred will not be accepted. Staff wishing to appeal a late submission must provide a written explanation outlining any exceptional circumstances to their Line Manager. Such appeals will be considered by the Senior Leadership Team.

4. Vehicle Documentation

4.1 When using your vehicle to perform your duties, employees must ensure they possess a valid driving licence, Ministry of Transport (MOT) certificate and motor vehicle insurance that which covers business travel. Staff members must ensure these documents are current and valid when using their vehicle to carry out activities on behalf of the Children's Court Guardian Agency.

4.2 Staff members must also ensure they are fit and able to drive safety and that they obey the relevant laws e.g. speed limits. Staff members **must** tell their Line Manager immediately if there is a change in their status to drive for any reason.

5. Mileage Allowance and Rates

5.1 When staff members use their vehicle to make journeys to carry out their job, they will be reimbursed the cost at the appropriate rates that are set out in Appendix I, on the submission of fully validated travel claim through HRPTS.

5.2 When calculating the miles travelled when using a motor vehicle, you must use the AA route planner https://www.theaa.com/route-planner/route identifying the shortest route between destinations.

5.3 To comply with the most efficient and economic principle, staff members are encouraged to share transport arrangements when two or more staff are travelling to the same destination. The individual driving may claim passenger rate for the other individuals (names should be included on the travel claim).

5.4 Reasonable parking costs will be reimbursed where these occur for travelling on business purposes. Receipts must be provided (attached to the printed out copy of the travel claim and passed to the Authorising Manager who passes these will then be passed to Administration for storage).

6. Eligible Mileage

6.1 Staff members will be reimbursed for miles travelled in the performance of their duties which are in excess of the home to agreed work base return journey. Normally, the miles eligible for reimbursement are those travelled from the agreed work base and back. However, if the journey starts at a location other than the work base (e.g. starts from home) then the mileage eligible is calculated using the example shown below –

Example	
Home to Work	is 15 miles
Amount that can be claimed	0 miles

- Home to location is less than 15 miles – Cannot claim mileage as less than home to work
- Home to location is more than 15 miles – Mileage must be reduced by the home to work miles (15 miles)

6.2 To ensure compliance with this, staff members should clearly indicate on the claim “Comment Box” that the home to base mileage has been deducted from the miles being claiming. They should also clearly indicate the purpose/business rationale for the travel and passengers being claimed. e.g. state passenger names, purpose of the engagement, etc. On-line calendar schedules should clearly reflect details and nature of the travel and the estimated time out of the office. (NB: Lone Working Policy).

6.3 Where public transport is used for business purposes, the cost of bus and standard rail fares may be claimed on production of associated receipts.

7. Subsistence Allowances

7.1 Staff members may be reimbursed for the extra costs of meals, accommodation and travel arising as a result of official duties away from home.

Night Subsistence

7.2 When you are required to stay overnight in a hotel or other commercial accommodation with the prior agreement of the Children’s Court Guardian Agency, the overnight costs will be reimbursed as follows –

- The actual, receipted cost of bed and breakfast (where this has not been pre-paid through the Agency’s travel contract), up to the normal maximum limit set out in Appendix II; plus
- A meals allowance, to cover the cost of a main evening meal and one other day-time meal at the rate set out at Appendix II.

7.3 The Children’s Court Guardian Agency is included in the HSC Regional Travel Contract and uses this contract to book flights, accommodation and other travel related costs for staff travelling inside and outside of Northern Ireland.

7.4 If you are staying in accommodation provided by the Agency or host organisation you are entitled to an allowance to cover meals which are not provided free of charge (up to the total set out at Appendix II).

7.5 Where accommodation and meals are provided without charge to the individual e.g. on a residential training course, an incidental expenses allowance at the rate set out at Appendix II will be payable.

Day Subsistence

7.6 A meal allowance is payable when you are absent from home on official business and more than five miles away from your work base, by the shortest practicable route. Day meals allowance rates are set out in Appendix II. These allowances are not paid where meals are provided free at the temporary place of work.

7.7 A day meals allowance is payable only when an employee spends more on a meal/meals than would have been spent at their place of work. You are therefore required to certify, when claiming, on each day a meals allowance is claimed where a receipt is not available.

7.8 Normally, when claiming a lunch meal allowance, you would be expected to be away from your work base for more than 5 hours and covering the normal lunch time period of 12 noon to 2.00 pm. To claim an evening meal allowance, you are expected to be away from your work base for more than ten hours and unable to return to work or home before 7pm. You can qualify for both a lunch and evening meal allowance in some circumstances

8. Pre-Booked Travel

8.1 All travel arrangements must be pre-booked. These will be made through administration support in CCGANI who liaise with the HSC Regional Travel provider.

Travel in Respect of Case-Related Activity

8.2 All travel and hotel accommodation for case related activity must be reviewed by the Guardian Services Manager and approved by the Assistant Director.

8.3 The staff member should complete the **Pre-Authorisation Travel Form** at **Appendix III** and email it to their Guardian Services Manager (Line Manager) for review.

8.4 Court-directed travel, must be justifiable and Guardians should establish if the journey is essential, as this is an inevitable ‘additional expense’ to the Agency’s budget. In terms of expenditure, the Agency should always attempt to seek the most economic method of travel.

8.5 Upon approval by the Guardian Services Manager, the completed **Pre-Authorisation Travel Form** request form should be forwarded to the Assistant Director for authorisation. All information should then be forwarded to the Administration Staff so that this travel request can be progressed. Where possible, the relating court direction should also be included.

8.6 Alternative funding through the Court should be sought if possible (eg Legal Aid).

8.7 Approval must be sought from the Permanent Secretary if the travel is outside the British Isles. [outlined in R Pengelly Letter ref RP834 dated 27 September 2016].

Travel in Respect of Training/Meetings/Other Agency Business

8.8 All local travel and accommodation undertaken for training, meetings, or other Agency business must be approved in advance by the Head of Corporate Services.

8.9 Approval will be considered on the basis of operational need, value for money, and alignment with Agency business requirements. Local overnight accommodation will not normally be approved, but requests will be considered in exceptional circumstances, where a clear business justification is provided and where alternative arrangements (including same-day travel) are not reasonable or practicable. Any exceptional approval for local overnight accommodation must be explicitly authorised in advance by the Head of Corporate Services.

8.10 The staff member should complete the **Pre-Authorisation Travel Form** at **Appendix III** and forward to the Head of Corporate Services. If approved, this will be forwarded to the Administration Staff so that this travel request can be progressed.

9. Booking Taxis

9.1 Where taxis are required in the course of the work of Children's Court Guardian Agency, the approval of the Head of Corporate Services or Chief Executive is required **<u>before</u>** booking takes place.

9.2 The Children's Court Guardian Agency is included in the regional Transport Services contract, and as such are obliged to use the designated taxi company on account.

9.3 All requests for a taxi must complete **Appendix IV** and submit for approval by the Head of Corporate Services or Chief Executive in advance of booking. Should, completion of the form not be possible due to short-notice, an approval email will be accepted.

9.4 The authorising manager will forward the completed request form to Administration staff to enable them to complete the booking.

9.5 Administration staff will record details of the expense on the Agency's Taxi Register, for monitoring purposes.

10. People with a Disability

10.1 People with a disability will be supported with appropriate travel arrangements to enable them to fully engage in any business duties that require travel. These arrangements will be agreed in consultation with the individual in advance of the travel. The Agency will consider any requests for reasonable adjustments from members of staff with a disability, who may be travelling for Agency business.

11. Equality Screening

11.1 This Policy has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and for compliance with human rights and disability legislation.

12. Review

12.1 This Policy is subject to review after three years or earlier if necessary.

REIMBURSEMENT RATES

In line with circular references:
• HSC (AfC) (5) 2024
• HSC(F) 14-2024

HSC/BSO Payroll Service Centre have detailed the following breakdown of for travel reimbursement.

AFC Staff (effective from 01.04.2024)

- For AFC the primary rate of will be 58 pence per mile, while the secondary rate will be 30 pence per mile.
- The primary rate (of 58 pence per mile) should be paid for the first 4500 miles and the secondary rate (of 30 pence per mile) should be paid thereafter.
- Public transport rates are 30 pence per mile, as advised by the Department of Health.

The Department of Health, in February 2023, issued a circular introducing new rates for leased vehicle owners from 1 April 2023 as shown in the table below. These rates will be reviewed and updated quarterly in line with the DoH circular for fuelled vehicles. Electric rates will be updated in line with the HMRC Advisory Electric Rates.

Type of Vehicle Leased via the HSC Scheme with NHS Fleet Solutions		Rate to 31st March 2023		Rate as of 1st April 2023	Rate as of 1st June 2023	Planned rates as of 1st September 2023
		First 3,500 miles per annum	Above 3,500 miles per annum	All miles claimed	All miles claimed	All miles claimed
Agenda for Change Employees	Private Lease of all Fossil Fuel Types Including Hybrid	56ppm	30ppm	15.6ppm	14.2ppm	13.8ppm
	Private Lease of a Wholly Electric Car	56ppm	30ppm	9ppm	9ppm	9ppm
	Business Lease of All Fossil Fuel Types including Hybrid	17.2ppm	17.2ppm	15.6ppm	14.2ppm	13.8ppm
	Business Lease of a Wholly Electric Car	17.2ppm	17.2ppm	9ppm	9ppm	9ppm
Medical & Dental Employees	Private Lease of all Fossil Fuel Types Including Hybrid	56ppm	30ppm	15.6ppm	14.2ppm	13.8ppm
	Private Lease of a Wholly Electric Car	56ppm	30ppm	9ppm	9ppm	9ppm
	Business Lease of All Fossil Fuel Types including Hybrid	17.8ppm	17.8ppm	15.6ppm	14.2ppm	13.8ppm
	Business Lease of a Wholly Electric Car	17.8ppm	17.8ppm	9ppm	9ppm	9ppm

APPENDIX II

SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

Night allowances: first 30 nights	Actual receipted cost of bed and breakfast up to a maximum of £55 (subject to the provisions of paragraph 18.3 if this is exceeded for genuine business reasons).
Meals allowance	Per 24-hour period: £20.00
Night allowances in non-commercial accommodation	Per 24-hour period: £25.00
Night allowances: after first 30 nights	Maximum amount payable: £35.00
Day meals subsistence allowances	Lunch allowance (more than five hours away from base, including the lunchtime period between 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm) £5.00 Evening meal allowance (more than ten hours away from base and return after 7:00 pm) £15.00
Incidental expenses allowance (this allowance is subject to a tax liability)	Per 24-hour period: £4.20
Late night duties allowance (this allowance is subject to a tax liability)	Per 24-hour period: £3.25

PRE-BOOKED TRAVEL AUTHORISATION FORM

This form must be completed and authorised by the Assistant Director (for Guardian travel) or Head of Corporate Services (training/meeting/other business travel), prior to the booking of travel.

PRE-TRAVEL AUTHORISATION FORM	
Name of Individual Travelling: **(as per passport)**	
Reason for Journey: **(include case ID, if applicable)**	
Case-Related Activity Travel	
Reviewed by Guardian Services Manager (Line Manager):	Approved: ☐ Not Approved: ☐
Reviewed for Authorisation by Assistant Director:	Authorised: ☐ Not Authorised: ☐
Authorised by: **(add signature)**	
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Training/Meetings/Other Business Travel	
Approval by Head of Corporate Services (comment)	Approved: ☐ Not Approved: ☐
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS REQUEST FORM	
Flight Requirements	
Departure Airport:	
Date of Outbound Flight:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Time of Flight Outgoing:	
Arrival Airport:	
Date of Return Flight:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Time of Flight Return:	
Special Requirements:	
Accommodation Requirements	
Hotel Name & Address/Area:	
Room Type & No of Nights:	
Arrival Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Departure Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Car Hire	
Size of Car:	
Named Driver:	
Pick Up Point:	
Drop off Point:	
Train Ticket	
From:	
To:	
Heathrow Express ☐ **Gatwick Express** ☐ **Stansted Express** ☐	
Please pass to Pre-Authorisation Form to CCGANI Administration to complete Booking of Travel	

APPENDIX IV

TAXI REQUEST FORM

This form must be completed and submitted for approved by the Head of Corporate Services or Chief Executive prior to the booking of any taxi journey.

TAXI REQUEST FORM	
Name of Individual Travelling:	
Reason for Journey:	
Date of Journey:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Pick up Address:	
Pick up Time:	
Venue Address:	
Return journey required? ***(tick if YES)***	☐
Pick up Address:	
Pick up Time:	
Venue Address:	
Requested By:	
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Authorised By:	
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Please pass to Administration to complete Booking of Taxi	