



# Travelling on County Council Business

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## Document summary

Guidance on claiming reimbursement for business travel.

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## About this document:

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<p><b>Accessibility help</b></p> <p>Zoom in or out by holding down the CTRL key and turning the mouse wheel. CTRL and click on the table of contents to navigate. Press CTRL and Home key to return to the top of the document Press Alt-left arrow to return to your previous location. References shown in <a href="#">blue text</a> are available on the Intranet and/or Czone. References shown in <a href="#">underlined blue text</a> are hyperlinks to other parts of this document.</p>	

# Travelling on County Council Business

## Key points

- Employees authorised by their manager to travel on County Council business, including training, are entitled to claim reimbursement of the costs associated with their business journeys.
- Employees may be reimbursed for business mileage, public transport and taxi fares, and associated tolls, fees or other business expenses. In limited circumstances, this may include subsistence costs.
- In all cases, travel must be for legitimate business purposes, and must be approved by the employee's line manager. Separate guidance exists, for managers approving travel claims.
- The following guidance describes what is allowable and what is not allowable when considering a business travel claim.

## 1. Key phrase definitions

### 1.1. *Ordinary commuting:*

- Ordinary commuting means any travel between a permanent workplace and home or any other place that is not a workplace.
- Ordinary commuting is NOT a business journey and cannot, under any circumstances, be included in a business travel claim.
- Ordinary commuting is also commonly known as "normal commuting" or "home to work travel" in this document, this type of travel is collectively referred to as ordinary commuting
- The definition of ordinary commuting applies equally to an employee with two or more permanent workplaces as it does to an employee with one workplace.

### 1.2. *Permanent workplace:*

A permanent workplace is a place that an employee attends regularly for the performance of their duties of employment. Even if an employee attends a workplace on only one or two days per week, if it is on a regular basis, then the workplace is a permanent workplace. It is possible for an employee to have two or more permanent workplaces concurrently. Indicators that would point to a workplace being a permanent workplace include:

- The employee regularly performs a significant part of their duties there;
- Colleagues or clients would expect to be able to contact the employee at the workplace;
- The employee has a workspace and support services at the workplace which they regularly use;
- Attendance at the workplace is regular or follows a pattern;

- The employee does not attend the workplace solely to undertake specific tasks such as attendance at a specially arranged meeting;
- Is for all or almost all of the period for which they hold or are likely to hold that employment
- If it is a temporary re-location, the duration is expected to or does exceed 24 months.

### 1.3. *Temporary workplace:*

- A workplace is a temporary workplace if an employee goes there only to perform a task of limited duration or for a temporary purpose even when the employee attends it regularly. An example is attendance at meetings or workshops or to undertake projects that do not form part of the employees routine work activity normally undertaken at the permanent workplace.
- An employee could, whilst at a temporary workplace, undertake some routine work activities under “agile” working arrangements. This applies if it is convenient for business efficiency purposes but where attendance at the workplace is not an objective requirement of employment.

## 2. Journeys allowable for business claims

2.1. Journeys that qualify for business travel are journeys that are “on the job” as opposed to journeys that are “to the job”. Business travel is allowable only where the journey is in the actual performance of the employee’s duty or where it is necessary in a real sense for the employee to attend the particular place on that occasion to perform the duties of their employment. The following points will help clarify what is allowable business travel:

- Any journey from a permanent workplace going to a temporary workplace or any other location that the employee has to attend for work purposes;
- Any journey from a temporary workplace or any place the employee has to attend for work purposes to any other temporary workplace or place the employee has to attend for work purposes;
- Any journey commencing at home or any place that an employee does not have to attend for work purposes to a temporary workplace or other location that the employee has to attend for work purposes – **but not** to a permanent workplace;
- Any journey between permanent workplaces (where an employee has two or more permanent workplaces) where attendance at both permanent workplaces was a requirement of employment on that day.

## 3. Journeys not allowable for business claims

3.1. Business travel cannot be claimed against the following types of journey:

- Any journey undertaken that is ordinary commuting;
- Any journey undertaken that is a private journey;
- The part of a journey undertaken within an allowable business journey that is for a private purpose (eg travel from one temporary workplace to another that included a detour for a private purpose).
- Any travel between unrelated employments.

- 3.2. Any journey that is really an ordinary commuting journey cannot be changed into a business journey simply by arranging a business appointment somewhere on the way. To qualify for a business journey, attendance at the particular place must be necessary for the performance of the duties of employment and not just a matter of personal convenience.
- 3.3. Where a journey is between home and a permanent workplace, the miles equivalent to the ordinary commuting mileage must be deducted from any mileage claimed for reimbursement. This is a policy requirement of the Council and is common with most local authorities.
- 3.4. Similarly to the point above, an employee with more than one permanent workplace undertaking an ordinary commuting journey cannot arrange to stop at one permanent workplace whilst commuting to another for the purposes of changing the status of the journey to a business journey (permanent workplace to permanent workplace). The only exception being where attendance at both permanent workplaces on the same day was a necessary requirement of employment and not a matter of personal convenience.
- 3.5. An employee whom, by reason of their employment, is required to attend their permanent workplace out of normal work hours or for an emergency cannot claim the journey as business travel. The journey is ordinary commuting regardless of the frequency or circumstances of the occurrence.

#### **4. Before you travel**

- 4.1. All employees approved for business travel must familiarise themselves with the content of the [Policy on the Safe Use of Motor Vehicles on County Council Business](#), available on the Intranet.
- 4.2. Before undertaking a business journey employees should seek authorisation from their line manager who must be satisfied that the journey is necessary and for an appropriate business purpose.
- 4.3. In discussion with their manager, employees should consider whether there is another means of carrying out the work without travelling. For example, the employee might attend a meeting remotely, via video conferencing, rather than in person.
- 4.4. If the employee is travelling using a car or motorcycle, they must hold a valid driving licence for the vehicle used and have appropriate insurance cover that includes business use. It is the responsibility of the employee's line manager to confirm the validity of the licence and insurance information provided by the employee and these should be checked regularly and at least annually.
- 4.5. The employee's line manager is responsible for ensuring that the employee is allocated to the correct rate of business mileage reimbursement, by completion of a [TRAV10 travel authorisation form](#), available on the intranet.
- 4.6. Employees are allocated to East Sussex County Council local travel schemes and are designated as either Optional or Contracted users. An employee's terms and Conditions determine which scheme is appropriate. If in doubt, further information can be sought from the departmental personnel team. A definition of Contracted User and Optional User is included at [Appendix 1](#) for further clarity.

- 4.7. An exception to the above exists for staff employed on Soulbury Terms and Conditions whom are still eligible for mileage reimbursement at the NJC Car Allowance Scheme. If this applies further information can be obtained from the Payroll Governance Team.

## **5. Impact of agile and flexible working arrangements**

- 5.1. Employees required by the nature of their employment to be agile or flexible workers must still have a primary work location identified as their permanent workplace. This location will be the place they would be expected to undertake the bulk of their duties had they not been designated as agile or flexible.
- 5.2. In respect of these workers their home is not a permanent workplace and must not be considered as such when determining business travel. The requirement to work from home, even if it is regular, is for either personal or business convenience and is not an actual requirement of employment.

## **6. Home workers**

- 6.1. An employee's home can only be considered as a permanent workplace if it is an actual requirement of employment to work from home. In such circumstances the home must be adapted as an appropriate workspace and this must be confirmed by the eligibility to receive the Home Workers allowance.

## **7. How to claim reimbursement of travel and business expenses**

- 7.1. For all types of travel expense, employees claim reimbursement by completing a claim form, which is then verified and authorised by their line manager. The claim forms, as well as the accompanying guidance notes, are available on the intranet, along with the guidance notes for managers authorising claim forms.
- 7.2. The payment of business expenses due to employees is made via the corporate payroll system only.
- 7.3. It is essential that claims are completed fully and accurately. Claims that fail minimum validation requirements will be rejected and returned to the claimant/authoriser for correction and re-authorisation. Payment may be delayed as a result.
- 7.4. All claims must be submitted for payment within **3 months** of undertaking the business journey or expense occurrence. However, March claims, which are to be paid in the next month (April), must be submitted at the end of March, or as soon as possible afterwards, to enable accurate budget monitoring each financial year.
- 7.5. The council has a principle of reimbursing business and travel expenses at the lowest possible cost and by reference to business efficiency. Please consider this when deciding an appropriate travel option.

## **8. Claiming mileage reimbursement for travel by car or motorcycle**

- 8.1. Employees using their own vehicle or a leased vehicle can claim reimbursement of the business mileage recorded for each allowable journey.
- 8.2. Employees must ensure that business mileage claimed for reimbursement excludes any ordinary commuting or private miles that may have formed part of the overall business journey.

- 8.3. Business miles claimed for reimbursement should be determined by reference to the AA route planner over the shortest route. Each journey start and end points should be specified by reference to post codes. The mileage determined by the AA route planner should be reduced to account for any ordinary commuting or private journeys. The AA route planner is available on the internet.
- 8.4. An employee may choose to travel over an alternative route for personal reasons, but that does not change the requirement to determine the mileage by the AA route planner.
- 8.5. In exceptional circumstances only the AA route planner mileage can be overwritten where a road incident has caused a significant increase in anticipated mileage. Any change must be supported by evidence to satisfy the authorising line manager.
- 8.6. Due to an HMRC requirement, all claims for business mileage reimbursement should be supported by VAT receipts as proof that the claimant has purchased the fuel used for business travel purposes. Business mileage claims not supported by a VAT receipt will not be processed for payment. Please refer to [Appendix 2](#) for more detailed information relating to this requirement.

## **9. Claiming mileage reimbursement for travel by bicycle**

- 9.1. Business journeys can be undertaken by bicycle and claimed in exactly the same manner as cars or motorcycles. This includes use of the AA route planner.
- 9.2. The reimbursement rate for bicycle mileage can be found at [Appendix 1](#)
- 9.3. Employees considering the use of a bicycle for business purposes should familiarise themselves with the “Cycling for Work” policy document located on the intranet.

## **10. Claiming for travel by public transport and taxis**

- 10.1. Claimants should, whenever possible, obtain a warrant for travel on public transport. Travel warrants are for rail travel between two stated stations, on a specific date. They should be exchanged for a rail ticket at a ticket office, before starting the journey. Each department has one or more people who can issue employees with rail warrants - your line manager can let you know who to contact.
- 10.2. Consideration of the time of travel should be made before requesting a rail warrant to determine if an off peak travel ticket is appropriate for the journey.
- 10.3. Where it is not possible to obtain a rail warrant, employees can purchase a standard class travel ticket and claim reimbursement as a business expense.
- 10.4. In circumstances when a travel warrant has not been utilised receipts should be obtained and attached to the claim form to support the expense claimed for reimbursement.
- 10.5. In respect of travel by bus, warrants are not available and employees should buy tickets from available outlets or on the bus. The ticket should be retained and used as a receipt to support the claim for reimbursement of the expense.
- 10.6. Taxi fares are allowable for reimbursement in circumstances when public transport alternatives are not available or reasonable due to the circumstances of the business journey. As with any other journey, employees should seek authorisation from their line manager in advance, and should obtain a receipt for submission along with their claim form.

## 11. Claiming for emergency out of hours travel

- 11.1. Out of hours travel to your normal workplace can be reimbursed by the Council provided that it is an emergency and the journey has been approved by your manager.
- 11.2. Regardless of the emergency circumstances of the journey, the HMRC do not allow tax relief for the journey – it is regarded as ordinary commuting despite the circumstances, timing or frequency.
- 11.3. If these circumstances apply, a separate claim form should be submitted for authorisation and payment and the claim should be clearly appended “emergency home to work travel”.
- 11.4. If the emergency business journey was not ordinary commuting – because it was to a business location that was not the permanent workplace – reimbursement with full tax relief applies and without the normal home to work reduction to determine the reimbursable miles due. In these circumstances a separate claim form is not required.

## 12. Claiming for other business expenses

- 12.1. Employees claiming reimbursement of allowable expenses, for example, parking fees, tolls or other associated expenses should, where possible and practicable, obtain receipts to support the expense claimed.
- 12.2. Expenses related to subsistence are generally not allowable. However, where an employee is required to be away from their permanent workplace outside working hours, such as an overnight stay as part of a training course, they may be entitled to claim for a meal. Such costs must be agreed in advance by their line manager, with a view to minimising the expense to the Council. Allowable subsistence payments must exclude the reimbursement of alcohol.
- 12.3. It is acknowledged that in some circumstances it is not possible to obtain receipts (for example some river crossing tolls) but this does not prevent the expense from being claimed or paid.
- 12.4. Claimants should make every effort to obtain receipts and to attach them to claim forms prior to authorisation and submission.
- 12.5. The following expense types are **NOT** allowable business expenses and must not be claimed for reimbursement:
  - Fines associated with parking fees for not having a valid ticket;
  - Fines or excess charges for travelling on public transport without a valid ticket;
  - Fixed cost penalty notices associated with motoring offences – eg speeding;
  - Excess leased car charges;
  - Any additional cost incurred to upgrade motor insurance to cover business use;
  - The cost of any fuel used for private purposes;
  - Any expense incurred that is not wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred in performance of an employee’s duties.



### 13. Leased vehicle users

- 13.1. Employees whom lease vehicles through the Council's leased car schemes are treated in exactly the same way as employees using their own vehicles for business mileage and expenses reimbursement and the same rules apply.
- 13.2. All leased vehicles are subject to annual assessment in accordance with the HMRC company car legislation which may result in a benefit in kind being determined for the user. If this applies the benefit will be reported to the employee via a statutory document, P11D issued annually in July in respect of the previous financial year.
- 13.3. Leased vehicle users may check their benefit in kind status at any time by utilising the calculator tool located at the HMRC website.

### 14. Declaration by claimant when submitting a travel claim

- 14.1. An employee who undertakes a business journey must be able to confirm the following statements are true before they are able to submit a claim for reimbursement – so these points need to be considered before they actually travel:
  - Mileage over the shortest possible route, fares and other expenses have been necessarily incurred whilst on official County Council business.
  - The additional expenditure incurred is supported by receipts
  - The claimant holds a current and valid driving licence applicable to the vehicle being used
  - The vehicle insurance is current and indemnifies the County Council against any third party liability whilst on official duties
  - The vehicle is roadworthy and well maintained and where necessary the claimant possesses a current MOT certificate
  - The claimant has notified my line manager of any driving offences I have incurred.
- 14.2. By signing the **Declaration by Claimant** field on a travel claim form, the employee is confirming that they satisfy all the bullet points noted at 12.1 above and that they have considered the other relevant points noted in the document Policy on the Safe Use of Motor Vehicles on County Council Business.

### 15. Exceptional arrangements for employees with two or more permanent workplaces

- 15.1. Existing employees whose contractual work arrangements require them to have two or more permanent workplaces concurrently may be entitled to receive a workplace travel allowance for reimbursement of additional ordinary commuting costs associated with attendance at a secondary workplace, where an employee would otherwise suffer a significant financial detriment..
- 15.2. The additional ordinary commuting journey must be significant to enable the travel allowance to apply. For example, employees who are required to attend County Halls at both Lewes and Kingston as permanent workplaces may satisfy the criteria.
- 15.3. The amount paid is not business mileage and the workplace travel allowance will be subject to income tax and national Insurance.

- 15.4. Employees who are contractually obliged to work at two more permanent workplaces and are approved by their manager to receive the travel allowance will receive the payment monthly via the payroll.
- 15.5. The reimbursement rate applied will be that determined by the HMRC as the approved mileage rate. The additional ordinary commuting mileage will be determined as the difference between the ordinary commute to the employees secondary permanent workplace less the ordinary commute to the primary workplace. The journey distances will be determined by reference to the AA route planner.
- 15.6. The value of the workplace travel allowance will be determined as an annual value, calculated by the number of anticipated attendances at the secondary permanent workplace reduced by expected periods of absence from work to account for annual leave or public holidays. The value will be “grossed up” to account for the tax and National Insurance due and divided by 12 to determine a flat rate allowance payable monthly.
- 15.7. Employees entitled to the workplace travel allowance who choose to travel by public transport can do so but are required to purchase travel tickets themselves. Rail warrants cannot be utilised for the journeys.
- 15.8. Employees in receipt of the workplace travel allowance are not entitled to submit claims for mileage reimbursement in respect of these additional commuting journeys or claim for reimbursement of the expense of travelling by public transport
- 15.9. Entitlement to the workplace travel allowance will be reviewed annually or from the date of any significant change to working arrangements applies.

## Appendix 1 – Mileage reimbursement rates

Travel Management – Mileage reimbursement rates for Business Travel, Training Travel and Excess Mileage

**ESCC Local Travel Schemes – rates effective at 1 April 2016**

<b>Optional Users</b>	<b>Reimbursement Rate</b>
<b>Optional – Car or Motorcycle</b>	<b>25p per mile</b>
<b>Leased Vehicle</b>	<b>12p per mile</b>
<b>Training</b>	<b>20p per mile</b>
<b>Cycle</b>	<b>15p per mile</b>
<b>Sessional Workers – Adult Social care only</b>	<b>33p per mile</b>

<b>Contracted Users</b>	<b>Reimbursement Rate</b>
<b>Contracted – Car or Motorcycle</b>	<b>45p per mile</b>
<b>Leased</b>	<b>12p per mile</b>
<b>Training</b>	<b>20p per mile</b>
<b>Cycle</b>	<b>15p per mile</b>

### Definitions of Users

The definition of an **Optional User** is:

An employee who may need to use their car from time to time on County Council business (for example during a short period at a set time in the year e.g. assisting with the main exercise undertaken each year for education admission appeals) but for whom it is *not* contractually required that they do so in order to carry out their duties and responsibilities and for whom other forms of transport are usually available.

The definition of a **Contracted User** is someone who:

Could not realistically do the job without having a car because (i) the work requires them to travel frequently, on average at least 3 times a week every week whilst at work; and (ii) either they often have to travel to parts of the County which are inaccessible by public transport or where their work requires them to travel to, and within, predominantly urban areas where, for reasons of business efficiency, management consider that using a car is the most effective method of travelling between appointments.

## **Appendix 2 – VAT receipts for fuel travelling on County Council Business**

- All business mileage reimbursement claims relating to business journeys must be supported by a VAT receipt obtained when fuel for the vehicle was purchased.
- The VAT receipt held in support of the claim for reimbursement should evidence, as a minimum, sufficient fuel purchased to cover the business journeys being reimbursed (please see examples overleaf).
- VAT receipts should pre date business journeys.
- VAT receipts must be attached to claim forms prior to submission for authorisation and payment. It is only necessary to attach VAT receipts to the claim form – you should not write any detail of the VAT receipt onto the claim form.
- Claims for business mileage submitted for authorisation should be rejected if the required VAT receipts are not attached.

### **Examples**

The examples assume that the vehicle averages approximately 400 miles on a full tank of petrol.

1. Business mileage claim covering 10 separate journeys of 12 reimbursable miles  
Total claim mileage = 120 miles. A VAT receipt covering purchase of sufficient fuel to cover 120 miles must be attached to the claim form.
2. Business mileage claim covering several journeys totalling 1000 reimbursable business miles  
Total claim mileage = 1000. VAT receipts covering the purchase of fuel must be sufficient to cover the total of 1000 business miles claimed. Several receipts will be necessary in these circumstances.

### **Notes**

This is only an administrative process designed to achieve the minimum statutory VAT requirements.

- The number of private journeys undertaken between business journeys are irrelevant for this purpose and do not need to be taken into account when considering the VAT receipts.
- The VAT receipts must, as a minimum, be sufficient to cover the number of reimbursable business miles claimed. If fuel is purchased in small value amounts this may require several receipts to be attached to a single claim.
- The equation between fuel purchased and miles will differ significantly between vehicles. The calculation does not have to be exact but does need to be a reasonable estimate to satisfy scrutiny by HM Revenues & Customs.
- VAT receipts must be attached to claim forms prior to submission for authorisation and payment.