



Travel expenses and hospitality guidance

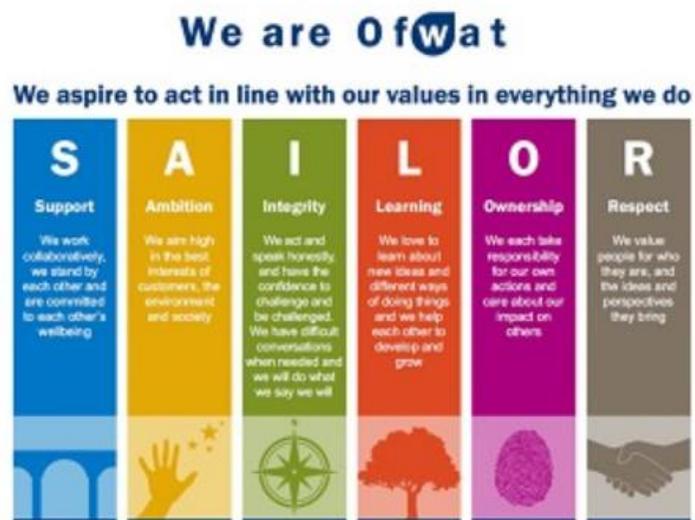
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1. Introduction

Ofwat prides itself on having strong, committed, professional people who work together well to deliver our mission and goals, within a positive and supportive working environment.



We put our values at the forefront of everything we do. Our values are:

These values and behaviours underpin everything we do, and have a massive impact on our ways of working and culture,

and to the way that we approach and apply this Policy. In running Ofwat we spend public money and as such we have a responsibility to do so wisely. This principle along with our values drives how we use our resources, including in the way we use travel and hospitality as outlined in this policy.

2. Aim

This policy is designed to help us meet our business objectives, through:

- Providing a framework within which to exercise appropriate judgement on the use of travel and hospitality arrangements.
- Ensuring all travel-related expenditure represents value for money, and is valid and auditable.
- Ensuring that people are correctly reimbursed for their travel expenses.
- Ensuring that we meet the requirements of HMRC.
- Ensuring appropriate use of hospitality.

3. Scope

This policy applies to **all Ofwat employees and non-executive directors**. Interim staff and consultants will need to make their own accommodation and travel arrangements, they will be reimbursed within the limits outlined in their contract for services.

We are all expected to comply with the provisions outlined in this policy. Repeated breaches of the provisions may result in disciplinary action.

4. Further advice

If you have any questions relating to expense policy or are uncertain about the propriety of a particular event or situation please speak to a member of the People or Finance Hubs or the relevant budget manager.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. Responsibilities of our people

- To exercise practical judgement in the use of our resources, including in relation to the use of travel and hospitality using the framework in this policy
- To exercise practical judgement in booking travel and accommodation requirements, ensuring that best value for money is obtained.
- To ensure that all expenditure incurred is within the scope of this guidance.
- To submit claims only for expenditure incurred for valid business purposes, within the timescales identified.

5.2. Responsibilities of resource managers and budget holders

- To exercise practical judgement in the use of our resources, including in relation to the use of travel and hospitality using the framework in this policy
- To ensure that our people are aware of the content of this policy.
- To provide advice to people wishing to incur expenses.

5.3. Responsibilities of the People and Finance Hubs

- To provide advice and support on all aspects, and the application, of this policy to ensure that it operates effectively and fairly.
- To provide advice to budget holders on the application of the policy.
- To monitor and report on expenditure in relation to this policy.
- To be the Ofwat point of contact for Redfern.

6. Booking and cancellation

Bookings in respect of air and rail travel and accommodation must be made by individuals through the Redfern website.

Travel tickets can either be printed by yourselves and claimed from the ticket printer in the Birmingham office, or you may collect rail tickets from the Ticket on Departure machines at national rail stations. The preference is to collect from the station as no fees are charged should you change your plans, administration charges are made for cancellations if the tickets are already printed from the ticket printer at Birmingham.

To collect from Ticket on Departure machines simply key in the booking reference provided in the Redfern email booking confirmation and any magnetic strip card in your name.

In exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of you resource manager/project manager (accepting that in some circumstances this may need to be retrospective), you may have no alternative but to make your own travel arrangements.

Any out of pocket expenses incurred will be reimbursed on submission of receipts, and submitted as an out of pocket expense claim through Time@Work. Reimbursement will be made in line with the maximum rates outlined within this policy. Any claims totalling over £50 must be submitted within one month of the expenditure being incurred and all other claims submitted within three months.

For hotel bookings, you will receive email confirmation of the booking and you are advised to present the email confirmation to the hotel upon your arrival.

In the event that you need to contact Redfern directly, please use the following:

- Rail enquiries: rail@redfern-travel.com
- Hotel enquiries: hotels@redfern-travel.com
- Air enquiries: biztravel@redfern-travel.com
- For emergency traveller assistance and support outside of office hours please contact Redfern on 01274 726424.

The above details can be found on the Redfern home page.

Should you need to book a taxi you can book this yourself, where there is a clear business need, and claim back the expense through Time@Work.

Full details on the limits that apply to bookings are outlined in the following sections.

Cancellation and delays

Tickets for travel can generally be cancelled on the same day as purchase without any fee being incurred. Beyond that, it is likely that an administration fee will be incurred. Should you need to cancel your travel or accommodation arrangements then this can be done by following the instructions through the Baskets Manager on Redfern. If the train tickets have been

printed off in-house, providing the cancellation is on the same day as purchase, then these can be fed back into the ticket machine and voided. The instructions are on the Redfern screen on the stand alone machine at Centre City Tower.

‘Open’ or ‘Anytime’ rail tickets not collected from fast track collection points within 28 days of the original travel date will automatically be credited to Ofwat’s account. If you have booked an ‘Advance’ ticket which is no longer required you are able to request a rail exchange for a like for like journey within 28 days of travel date. To request a rail exchange please complete the [rail exchange form](#) and follow the instructions detailed on the form.

In the event that your journey is severely disrupted or delayed, instructions will be given by the train operator on how to make the claim. In these circumstances Redfern will be unable to process a claim as the issue lies with the operator.

7. Travel

Ofwat has invested in effective tele- and video-conferencing facilities which mean that you can use these facilities from your Surface Pro and/or iPad as well as from some of our meeting rooms. Prior to booking your travel, please consider and discuss with the meeting organiser whether or not you can achieve the same outcome via these facilities rather than incurring travel, particularly for shorter meetings. Should you need to travel, the following framework applies. Please also note the details at Appendix 3 in relation to tax and National Insurance liabilities. This is particularly relevant if you travel regularly and/or have two permanent workplaces.

You will need to book any overseas travel and accommodation via Redfern as outlined throughout this guidance, and you are responsible for arranging your own travel insurance, which Ofwat will reimburse for the period of your travel.

For any travel and accommodation, should your expenses exceed those outlined below, prior approval is required from the relevant budget holder.

Non-executive directors

Non-executive directors are entitled to be reimbursed reasonable travel and subsistence expenses for performing work as a member of the Ofwat Board. This includes travel and overnight accommodation costs for attendance at any location per the terms and conditions of their employment contract.

Further details around taxable expense arrangement for non-executive directors are included in appendix 3.

Rail

Where possible rail travel is the preferred option for business travel and we expect that you take the opportunity to work during rail travel which falls within normal working hours. For advice on connecting your laptop remotely, please see the relevant IT policy. You should always book the ticket which represents the best value ticket, taking advantage of any discounts available. Where possible, to achieve value for money, you should:

- For travel between London and Birmingham, consider travelling on the Chiltern line rather than via Virgin.
- Consider whether it is possible to travel during off peak times.

- Identify your departure/return times to avoid the need for an 'anytime return' ticket at greater cost.
- Book your tickets as far in advance as possible in order to secure the best rates.

Standard class rail travel must be used by all staff. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal - People can approve first class travel, which should usually be in advance of booking the ticket. Exceptional reasons include making reasonable adjustments for employees. Otherwise, staff are free to upgrade their standard fare ticket independently and at their own expense.

Should you hold any type of Railcard you should utilise this in conjunction with booking are still expected to book travel arrangements in line with the points above.

Missed rail journey

All effort must be made to ensure that you arrive on time to catch any pre-booked rail journey on a time restricted ticket. In the event a train is missed you should first consider whether you are likely to be travelling the identical route within 28 days. If so, you are able to request a [rail exchange](#) as detailed in the cancellations and delays section above.

Alternatively, a loss and write off form must be completed and should include information regarding the circumstances leading to the financial loss e.g. overrunning of external stakeholder meeting or request of Ofwat management.

Travel bookings through the Redfern system can be made from any location once logged on to the Ofwat system and also via an iPad.

7.1. London Underground

Ofwat holds a number of Oyster cards for loan for business travel on the London Underground.

If you require an Oyster card for your journey, it is advisable to check whether one is available – check with business support (via the Ask Portal) prior to booking. Should an Oyster card not be available for your travel, Underground tickets can be purchased via the Redfern system or Zonal stations can be added as a destination and departure when booking your train journey.

7.2. Taxi

In general, people should use public transport (train, tube, bus), or walk rather than use taxis where this is reasonable and practical. You will however, need to exercise practical

judgement and may decide to use taxis in circumstances such as:

- If you have heavy luggage.
- If it is after 9.00pm (or earlier at the strategic resource manager's discretion) or before 7.00am.
- Where several people are travelling to the same destination and therefore a taxi may represent best value.
- Where it would not be reasonable to ask you to use public transport, for example on safety grounds.
- Where public transport is not available within walking distance of the destination or would take an unreasonable amount of time.
- Where you have a disability or short term injury which means other forms of transport are difficult.
- In any event, only the actual cost of taxis will be reimbursed and receipts must be provided. Tips will not be reimbursed.

7.3. Car

Occasionally it may be necessary to travel on Ofwat business using your own private vehicle. Before doing so, you will need to ensure you are able to meet the following requirements:

- You hold a valid driving licence.

- Your insurance policy covers you for business travel.
- You will not attempt to recover any money from Ofwat because of any excess clause in your policy.

Before claiming motor mileage you will be required to complete an insurance declaration form. This form can be found within Time@Work (Forms -> Create Form -> Car Insurance Declaration.)

Any parking or road traffic fines or penalties incurred are your personal responsibility and will not be reimbursed by Ofwat.

7.4. Parking

There may be occasions when you will need to incur parking charges that you would not normally incur as part of your travel to work.

Where this is the case, you may claim these charges via the usual expenses claim process as outlined in Appendix 1. Note that Ofwat will not reimburse costs associated with penalty notices or parking fines of any type.

7.5. Air

Air travel should only be used for journeys within the UK where no alternative public transport is available.

Air travel in and outside the UK must be by Economy Class only. The only exception to this is where a long haul flight in excess of 8 hours is likely to be followed by a meeting or work without the opportunity for reasonable rest. Business Class travel must be authorised by the Chief Executive.

You are not entitled to collect frequent flyer points/air miles when you fly on business travel.

8. Accommodation and subsistence

Booking for accommodation must be carried out through Redfern, as outlined in Section 6 above.

Generally, we will take advantage of the rates offered by value hotels such as Travelodge and Premier Inn, depending upon availability. In any event you will be offered a range of hotels that represent best value for money within the limits (target rates which are reflected in the Redfern system) outlined in Appendix 2.

Upon departure from the hotel, you will not be required to pay the bill, Redfern will invoice Ofwat directly. If however, you incur additional costs outside the approved terms of the booking (e.g. room service, evening meal), you will need to arrange to settle those costs directly with the hotel. We will reimburse you for any receipted additional expenditure via the

expenses claim process within Time@Work, and within the limits outlined at Appendix 2.

Should you need to stay away from home on business travel and are able to stay with friends or relatives you may claim a fixed rate allowance as outlined in Appendix 2. This is a taxable allowance and we have agreed to pay the cost of any tax or National Insurance liability that it may attract. We will reimburse the amount immediately, and then gross up and deduct the amount we have already reimbursed through the following months' payroll. You will need to provide the address of the location you are staying on your Time@Work expenses form.

Meal allowances as outlined at Appendix 2 cover the cost of purchasing meals and non-alcoholic beverages whilst away from home on business travel. All claims will be paid on the basis of actual expenditure, on production of receipts, within the prescribed limits. Tips and the costs of subsistence (with the exception of breakfast/dinner for those required to stay away from home overnight) when working from either the Birmingham or London office will not be reimbursed.

On an exceptional basis it may be agreed by the Principal – People, that subsistence can be provided for staff whilst working in the office (e.g. weekend or late night working

during peak work periods). In these circumstances the cost of any subsistence provided is considered a taxable expense.

9. Costs of caring for dependents

We acknowledge that there may be occasions when we ask you to extend your working hours or work on a day that you do not normally work, and that you may incur additional expenses as a result. We will reimburse reasonable extra expenses up to the amount outlined in Appendix 3, via the usual expenses claim system.

Any childcare expenses that you may incur in respect of work-related training are exempt from tax and will be paid through the normal expenses claim system.

In all other circumstances, the amount will be grossed up for tax and NI liability and reimbursement made with your salary.

10. Government Procurement Card (GPC)

A Government Procurement Card (GPC) is a commercial charge card issued by Ofwat which enables some of our people to purchase low value goods and services. GPC cards will only be issued to a small number of people as follows:

- Certain staff working as part of the Compliance & Assurance programme who regularly make purchases on behalf of Ofwat; and
- Key other people who regularly need to make other purchases on behalf of Ofwat.

10.1 Application

If you work within one of the above areas, you will need to make an application for a GPC using the GPC nomination form and Barclaycard application form. It will need to be approved by the relevant budget manager and forwarded to the Finance Hub.

If the application is accepted a GPC will be issued by Barclaycard to Finance in around ten working days. A member of the Finance Hub will then issue your card and upon receipt you must sign to confirm that you understand your responsibilities in relation to using it.

10.2 Usage

When making purchases on behalf of Ofwat, generally you should follow the Procurement Guide and raise a requisition using the Internet Purchase Order System (IPOS). Where this is not appropriate, your GPC may be used for purchase as follows:

- Stationery (Business Support only)
- Kafevend/Booker orders (Business Support only)
- TV licensing
- Purchase of alternative hot drinks/milk (Business Support only)
- Publication subscriptions
- Professional subscriptions
- Couriers (Business Support only)
- Oyster card top ups

Note that in line with the GPC Pan Government Policy, the GPC may not be used for travel and subsistence purposes.

Any deliberate misuse of the GPC is likely to result in disciplinary action.

10.3 Certification of expenditure and receipts

Barclaycard issue a statement of transactions monthly, to you as the cardholder. The Finance Hub will notify you when these transactions have been uploaded into [Time@Work](#).

You will then need to review each transaction and complete the expenditure code, project code, and reason for purchase on the GPC [Time@Work](#) form. You should scan and attach all receipts before submitting the form.

The GPC form should be completed and submitted within 10 days of availability. Regular failure to submit the forms and receipts promptly will result in Finance considering suspending the GPC from further use.

10.4 Unauthorised transactions

Should you identify any unauthorised transactions on the statement, you should immediately notify a member of the Finance Hub.

You are required to personally contact Barclaycard to lodge an unauthorised transaction complaint and progress to resolution.

10.5 Lost or stolen cards

Lost or stolen cards should immediately be notified to Barclaycard on 0844 822 2100. Finance must also be informed as soon as reasonably possible.

11. Hospitality and gifts

11.1. Acceptance of hospitality and gifts

It is an important part of our work to develop contacts and build good working relations with a range of outside organisations. In doing so, we are also expected to observe high standards of integrity and comply with the Civil Service Code, [Cabinet Office guidance on civil servants receiving gifts and hospitality and the Bribery Act \(2010\)](#). Further guidance can be sought from the Finance Hub.

The Code states that: **civil servants must not accept gifts or hospitality or receive other benefits from anyone which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity**. The supporting [Cabinet Office guidance](#) is built around three key principles:

- [purpose](#);
- [proportionality](#); and
- [conflicts of interest](#).

With this in mind, as outlined in our [Code of Conduct](#), no gift or hospitality should be accepted, however modest from any third party, including contractors and potential contractors, if it would, or might appear to, place you under any obligation or compromise your impartiality and integrity.

If it would be impolite to refuse a small gift (other than advertising material such as calendars and diaries), this should be logged in the Gifts and Hospitality register kept by the Finance Hub. Such gifts will be raffled for the Wateraid charity annually.

Before deciding to accept an offer of hospitality, you should consider the real reason for the contact, the frequency, the cost and the body concerned.

Senior employees will inevitably have working lunches/dinners with key stakeholders from time to time. These can be accepted and must be declared and will be made publicly available under our Freedom of Information Act publications scheme. Other offers of hospitality should be declined.

Whenever you accept or decline gifts or hospitality, you should notify this in writing to the Principal – Finance for inclusion on the hospitality register that is held within Finance. This sets out the date, name of the host organisation, type of gift or hospitality offered, whether accepted or declined, the reason for accepting the gift and hospitality and an estimate of the value of the gift or hospitality.

In line with Cabinet Office transparency requirements, we will publish details of gift and hospitality registers for Board members and members of our Senior Leadership Team.

11.2. Visitor hospitality

On occasions where you have visitors calling on official business, tea/coffee is provided via the self-service machines in meeting rooms, and is the responsibility of the meeting organiser (who must also ensure the room is left clean and tidy after the meeting.). Generally lunch will not be provided, unless there is no alternative but to hold the meeting/event over the lunchtime period with no opportunity for a break. For large external meeting, business support can make the necessary arrangements to provide a basic sandwich lunch – once the organiser has gained approval of the relevant project manager to code the expense to that project.

There may also be occasions where you judge that it is appropriate to take a visitor out for lunch or dinner. Where this applies, the amounts outlined in Appendix 2 will apply and reimbursement will be made on submission of receipts.

11.3. Provision of refreshments for internal events

Generally lunch or other meals will not be provided where all of the attendees are Ofwat employees.

Exceptionally, provision may be made as follows, and the limits outlined in appendix 2 will apply:

- any whole organisation events, where catering may be provided should the event take place over a normal meal period; and
- Board or associated committee meetings.

11.4. Issue of gifts

In general gifts of any description should not be bought using public funds.

There may be rare occasions when it is felt appropriate for Ofwat to donate a gift to an outside individual. An example would be to thank someone from any outside organisation for work undertaken on our behalf. The Finance Director and the budget holder must approve any such proposal.

Appendix 1 - Expenses claims

Claim forms

Claims for travel and subsistence should be submitted through Time@Work. Claims over £50 should be submitted within one month of the expenditure being incurred. For all other claims should be submitted within three months of the expenditure being incurred.

Claimant's responsibilities

If you are claiming expenses, you are responsible for ensuring that:

- All expenditure incurred was within the scope of this guidance.
- Receipts have been collated for submission.
- All relevant sections of the claim form have been completed.
- All the amounts claimed related to Ofwat duties.
- Where necessary following up delays in authorisation of your claim for payment with your resource manager (for claims in excess of £50) or project manager.

Certification officer's responsibilities

If you are authorising expenses, you are responsible for ensuring that:

- You approving or query claims with the claimant promptly (within 1 week of submission).
- The claim is in accordance with this guidance.
- All the amounts claimed related to Ofwat duties.
- All relevant sections of the claim form have been completed.
- The expenses are coded accurately to the expenditure type and project.
- All the information provided on the form is complete, correct and accurate.
- Receipts have been provided where appropriate.

Payment of claims

Claims will be paid directly into the employee's nominated bank account within two weeks of the claim being certified.

Appendix 2 - Travel expenses and hospitality rates

	Description	Rate (inc. VAT)
Accommodation	London	£165.00 (Target rate: £115.00)
	Elsewhere	£115.00 (Target rate: £75.00)
	London conference where staying at the same venue	£200.00
	Overseas	Paid on actual expenditure for accommodation and meals. No limits have been set but only reasonable levels of expenditure will be reimbursed.
	When staying with relatives or friends (taxable)	A flat rate allowance of £25.00 per night.
Meals	Breakfast (when the official journey begins pre-6am)	£8.00
	Hotel breakfast (when accommodation has been booked room only)	£10.00
	Lunch (when away from the office for more than 7 hours and no official food is provided, please note times on claim)	£8.00
	Dinner (when away from the office for more than 12 hours and no official food is provided, please note times on claim)	£25.00

	Description	Rate
Mileage allowance – all cars	Standard Rate – up to 10,000 miles	45p per mile (from 1 April 2012)
	Reduced Standard Rate – Over 10,000 miles	25p per mile
	For each passenger	5p per mile
Mileage allowance – Motorcycles	All motorcycles	24p per mile
Mileage allowance – Pedal cycle	Pedal cycle	20p per mile
Caring for dependents	Hourly rate	£5.75
	Maximum 24 hour period	£57.50
Hospitality – London	Buffet (for internal events)	£21.50
	Lunch	Up to £33.00
	Dinner	Up to £43.50
Hospitality – Elsewhere	Buffet (for internal events)	£17.00
	Lunch	Up to £28.50
	Dinner	Up to £39.50

^[1] The cost of subsistence (with the exception of breakfast/dinner for those required to stay away from home overnight) when working from either the Birmingham or London office will not be reimbursed

Appendix 3 - Contracted place of work and taxable expenses

People who work from multi-site locations

1. Your contract will state your base office. This is either Birmingham, London or in a few cases both. If you regularly work in excess of three days a month in both the Birmingham and London office, irrespective of your contracted place of work, you are considered by HMRC to have two permanent workplaces. If you have two permanent workplaces, overnight stays in those places are taxable. However the frequency of travel is not the only factor we need to consider in some circumstances the following will also need to be considered:

- if you have an office, desk or support service at either location;
- does your job role require your regular attendance at either workplace or a significant part of your duties take place at either workplace;
- people expect to contact you at either workplace;
- you have substantive work tasks at each workplace; and
- you attend for 40% or more of your contracted working time at the workplace, which may be a

particularly strong factor in determining whether or not a location is a second permanent workplace.

Ofwat will only pay for overnight accommodation (including breakfast and an evening meal) at an office which is not your base office where it is strictly necessary to support the effective and efficient conduct of Ofwat business. While we trust staff to exercise reasonable judgement, our general presumption would be that if your home is within a reasonable commuting distance of a non-base office in which you are working you would travel home after work unless there was a compelling business reason to stay overnight. Overnight accommodation will be paid at the normal travel and subsistence rates and if you have two permanent workplaces these expenses are taxable.

2. Ofwat will pay the travel costs between the London and Birmingham offices for all our people. If you have two permanent workplaces these expenses are taxable unless you can provide evidence to the Finance Hub at the time the expenditure is incurred that you have worked at both locations on the day of travel.

Non-executive directors

Non-executive directors are entitled to be reimbursed reasonable travel and subsistence expenses for performing work as a member of the Ofwat Board.

3. This includes travel and overnight accommodation costs for attendance at any location per the terms and conditions of their employment contract.
4. HMRC rules consider our non-executive directors as non-office holders and therefore all expenses incurred when travelling to either the London or Birmingham office are considered taxable.

Other taxable expenses

5. When working away from home on Ofwat business, if instead of staying overnight in a hotel you choose to stay with friends and family, you are entitled to claim a flat £25 overnight allowance. This payment is treated as a taxable expense.
6. On an exceptional basis it may be agreed by the Principal – People that subsistence can be provided for staff whilst working in the office (e.g. weekend or late night working during peak work periods). In these circumstances the

cost of any subsistence provided is considered a taxable expense.

Payment of Tax and National Insurance liabilities

7. Ofwat has agreed to meet the cost of Tax and National insurance attracted by travel expenses outlined in this policy. HMRC rules dictate that these expenses must be processed through the PAYE system (payroll) to ensure that the Tax and National Insurance liability is settled in the correct tax period.
8. Any reimbursement of taxable expenses and the respective Tax and National Insurance liability paid by Ofwat are considered by HMRC as taxable pay as a benefit is being received. This may therefore impact on any entitlement to state benefits being claimed (e.g. universal credits).
9. There is no effect on your net pay for the processing of taxable expenses by Ofwat unless a percentage based deduction for attachment of earnings is made from your monthly salary (e.g. student loan).
10. There is no action Ofwat is able to take to negate the possible effect on net pay due to a percentage based deduction for attachment of earnings. HMRC advise that

the person concerned negotiates with the 3rd party to explain the benefit being received is non-monetary and put in place an individual working arrangement. Ofwat is unable to negotiate on an employee's behalf.

Appendix 4: Travel expenses and hospitality – summary

	<p>Rail Travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether it is possible to video conference rather than travel • We'll always book standard class tickets unless first class is cheaper • Consider Chiltern line, off-peak, advance booking, and try to specify travel times.
	<p>Hotels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We'll always try and book value hotels • Target rate in London is £115 • Target rate outside London is £75
	<p>Meals <small>*(The cost of subsistence (with the exception of breakfast/dinner for those required to stay away from home overnight) when working from either the Birmingham or London office will not be reimbursed.</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast £8 (when the official journey begins pre-6am) • Lunch £8 (when you are away from the office on business for more than 7 hours) • Evening meal £25 (when you are away from the office on business for more than 12 hours)
	<p>Mileage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45p per mile • 25p per mile over 10,000 • 5p per mile for passengers



Care for dependants

- £5.75 per hour
- £57.50 for a 24 hour period (max)

If you have incurred expenses while on Ofwat business, you may claim in line with these amounts. See the full guidance for more information and hospitality provisions.

Associated Documents

Code of conduct policy

Document control

Version history

Version	Status	Date	Author	Summary of changes
0.1	Final	September 2016	Samantha Bache	