

POLICY ON ALLOCATION OF REMOVAL AND ASSOCIATED EXPENSES

Introduction

1. This Policy has been produced to inform managers and employees of the Trust's policy on Removal and Associated Expenses.
2. All Removal and Associated Expenses are subject to the prior written approval of the Director of Human Resources and are payable at the Trust's discretion. There is no automatic entitlement. The actual assistance given will be a matter for agreement between the Trust and the prospective employee.
3. The Trust will need to satisfy itself that:
 - 3.1 the removal of the employee's home is necessary and that the arrangements proposed are reasonable;
 - 3.2 the expenses reimbursed and allowances paid are those which have been necessarily incurred and supported by the appropriate invoices/estimates;
 - 3.3 the expenses in respect of which payment is made are not recoverable in full or part from any other source;
 - 3.4 the employee is a "householder" who has occupied unfurnished accommodation of more than one main room, rented or owner occupied" (i.e. in their previous NHS or other approved employment).

Senior Medical Staff

4. Medical Staff in Consultant & Associate Specialist grades are reminded that it is a contractual requirement to maintain their private residence within a distance of 10 miles by road from their base. In exceptional circumstances, where this requirement cannot be met, approval must be sought, through the HR Director to reside outside the 10 miles limit. Removal and Associated Expenses will not be reimbursed to Medical Staff if the clinical commitment of the new post can be carried out from a current main residence.

Other Medical Staff

5. Other Medical Staff must ensure that they will be able to meet their clinical commitments on time from their proposed new home before the reimbursement of Removals and Associated Expenses can be approved. Where appropriate, Medical Staff in rotational appointments will be encouraged to find a house convenient for two or more legs of the rotational appointment. If this means living more than 10 miles or 30 minutes from their base, this matter must be discussed with the Medical Staffing Department and approval sought from the HR Director.

Compulsory Residence Posts

6. A single employee taking up a compulsory resident post does not meet the criteria of 'required to move house to take up post'. However, an employee who loses existing household status when taking up a compulsory resident post may be entitled to removal expenses if they take up a subsequent non-resident post with the Trust with no break in service.
7. A married employee, or employee with equivalent responsibilities, would be entitled to removal expenses when taking up a compulsory resident post - on the basis it would be reasonable that the family should move home to be in the same area. A six months compulsory resident post alone would not attract removal expenses as the Trust provide, at an abated rental, married accommodation.

Comparable Properties

8. In the matter of reasonable agreement the Trust has, in particular, to consider the comparability of the properties.
9. Where there is a demonstrable improvement in the standard of accommodation, the Trust relates the payment of certain expenses to a notional purchase price or rent. This notional price is assessed independently by local Estate Agents who value the employee's previous property in relation to the new environment. The notional price is used to calculate payment in respect of such expenses as stamp duty and land registry fees on the purchase. It is also used in consideration of claims for excess rent allowance and advances of salary for assistance with house purchase.

10. The Trust may only be expected to place an employee in broadly comparable accommodation to that of the previous area and the cost of any demonstrable improvement in the standard must be met by the employee.

Procedure

11. Applicants should complete a Removals and Associated Expenses application form to be submitted to the HR Director who will consult with the Divisional Director/Executive Director to establish eligibility, and the upper limit of entitlement. The HR Director will confirm in writing the amount payable and advise the Deputy Director of Human Resources who will send claim forms and details of the procedure to follow for claimants, in the 'Guide to Removal and Associated Expenses' (Appendix 1).
12. Appointing managers are not authorised to give verbal agreement to eligibility. Any expenses incurred before written authority is given are at the applicant's risk and can only be reimbursed if eligibility is established.

Limits of relocation expenses

13. The Trust has determined that removal expenses will be subject to upper limitations, according to the status of the new employee. This is determined as follows:-

Householder and married)	
Householder and single with)	up to £8,000 upper limit
equivalent responsibilities)	

Undertakings

14. Trust will require any employee who is receiving payment of removal expenses to sign an undertaking that should they leave the service of the Trust within a period of two years they must be called upon to refund the whole or part of the expenses paid, as the Trust may decide. This condition does not apply to Junior Medical and Dental staff.

Eligibility

15. Consideration may be given to the reimbursement of removal expenses for the following groups of staff:

- 15.1 Employees taking up appointments in Consultant, Associate Specialist and Staff Grade posts or a full-time appointment in the grades of Specialist Registrar and Senior House Officer. The Specialist Registrars are subject to the scope and eligibility of the Oxford Deanery policy.
- 15.2 Employees in the grades of House Officer, Senior House Officer and Specialist Registrar who transfer on, or just before, the expiry of their NHS appointments to full-time posts in the House Officer, Senior House Officer and Specialist Registrar grades for the purpose of gaining further experience.
- 15.3 Non-medical employees in senior posts as approved by the Director of HR who live 30 miles from their work site or whose daily travel exceeds 3 hours. A loose guide is for the traveller to relocate to within 10 miles of their base.

Locums

16. Removal and Associated Expenses are not payable to locum medical staff except in the case of practitioners initially engaged for one year or more.

Areas where assistance may be provided

17. Assistance will be offered in the following circumstances:
 - 17.1 Search for Accommodation - The employee may claim up to three nights subsistence allowance, plus the cost of return journeys and travelling expenses at public transport rate. The employee may also claim expenses incurred by their spouse and children as follows:-
 - 17.1.1 Spouse and children over 12 - no more than two-thirds of employee's subsistence
 - 17.1.2 Spouse and children under 12 - no more than one-half of employee's subsistence
 - 17.1.3 Reimbursement is subject to production of satisfactory receipts

17.1.4 Where the Trust offers hospital accommodation, payment for accommodation will be offset against the limits. Decisions on providing hospital accommodation are at the discretion of the Accommodation Officer and will be subject to availability.

Continuing Commitments in the old area

18. A continuing commitments allowance may be given where employees incur regular expenses for mortgage or rent and rates in respect of the old area concurrently with rental of private property in the new area.
19. The following documents should be provided to substantiate the claim:
 - 19.1 Certificate of Monthly Mortgage Payment
 - 19.2 Confirmation of Council Charge payments
 - 19.3 The first two pages of the rental contract
20. The Trust may pay whichever is the least of the Monthly Mortgage Payment or the monthly Rental Charge.
21. If the payment has included a property deposit, the whole of this amount should be repaid to the Trust at the end of the rental period.
22. When the property in the old location is sold or let to tenants, the above arrangements cease.

Visits Home

23. If employees have continuing commitments in the old area, the cost of travelling expenses for one return journey weekly to the home in the old area may be paid at the discretion of the Trust. The reimbursement is restricted to second class rail or coach fare. Alternatively, vehicle mileage may be claimed at public transport rate. Excess travel or a travel allowance paid in lieu of removal must be subject to tax, national insurance contributions via the payroll.

Excess daily travelling

24. Married employees, single householders or other employees with equivalent responsibilities, can claim payment of additional travelling expenses for a limited period at public transport rate, subject to the Trust being satisfied that the person is making every effort to obtain

suitable accommodation in the new area. Excess travel or a travel allowance paid in lieu of removal must be subject to tax, additional insurance contributions via the payroll.

Legal and other Expenses connected with the sale and/or purchase of accommodation or any unsuccessful bona fide attempt to purchase.

25. These may include:

- 25.1 house agent's or auctioneer's fees
- 25.2 mortgage redemption fees
- 25.3 survey fees
- 25.4 stamp duty
- 25.5 land registration fees
- 25.6 incidental legal expenses
- 25.7 electrical wiring test and drains test
- 25.8 plus any VAT payable on the above

26. If a purchase is abandoned the costs may be reimbursed provided the Trust is satisfied that the employee is in no way responsible for the abandonment or that reasons for the withdrawal are entirely reasonable. The employee must supply confirmation from the Estate Agency that the abandonment is not a result of the employee's actions.

Removal and Storage of Furniture

27. Employees may be reimbursed for:

- 27.1 removal of furniture and effects from the old to the new home, including insurance of goods in transit;
- 27.2 storage of furniture and effects for a reasonable period;
- 27.3 travelling and subsistence expenses for the employee, spouse and children.
- 27.4 Travel claims will be reimbursed at public transport rate. Receipts should be produced for subsistence claims.

28. The employee should provide three estimates of the cost of removal from the previous location. The lowest estimate should be used. If a higher priced company is used, the Trust will only pay the amount of the lowest estimate.

Miscellaneous Expenses

29. Miscellaneous expenses are limited to £500 within the overall maximum agreed. This grant is to help with sundry additional expenses including re-fitting carpets, window furnishings and re-direction of mail. The grant is payable only after the employee has taken up the new appointment and occupied permanent accommodation in the new area. Receipts should be produced for all claims.

Taxation

30. All eligible payments made will be set against the agreed limit. Claimants will be responsible for meeting any liability for tax on such reimbursements

Hospital Accommodation

31. Where employees choose (i.e. not as part of their terms of employment) to occupy hospital accommodation on a permanent basis and later are required to vacate it, without having a change of headquarters, they would not be entitled to payment of removal expenses. This does not apply to staff who occupy hospital accommodation as a "temporary" base whilst arranging for a permanent new home who will remain eligible for the reimbursement of Removal Expenses.

Timescale for claiming expenses

32. All claims must normally be made within twelve months of taking up appointment.

Appendix 1 - 'Guide to Removal and Associated Expenses'

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