



The Methodist Church Plymouth & Exeter District

Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District - Expenses Policy

As a District we recognise that we rely on both salaried and voluntary personnel, drawing on expertise of both ordained and lay people. Where anyone in these groups incurs additional costs as a result of carrying out agreed District business the District will meet claims for appropriate expenses.

All expenses should be claimed within a reasonable time on a District expenses form. Where expenses are significant, monthly claims should be completed (unless other arrangements are agreed in advance with the Treasurer) and submitted by the 15th of the following month. These will then be paid at the end of that month.

Where the amounts are smaller (under £50/month) please submit quarterly, again by the 15th following the quarter end. For these purposes the quarter ends are in August, November, February and May.

Particular care should be taken to ensure all expenses for the Methodist financial year (to 31 August) are claimed by the end of September following the year end.

If there is a significant delay in claiming expenses, without reasonable cause, the District reserves the right not to reimburse the amounts claimed.

All claims will be checked and need approval from an appropriate District Officer before being paid. Where a claim is considered inappropriate or does not have all the relevant supporting documentation the District may withhold payment until such time as the claim is agreed, amended or withdrawn.

Travel

Within the District the cost of mileage or public transport (standard class) will be met as follows:

Train, bus fares and parking - on receipt of the relevant ticket or other evidence of cost incurred.

Mileage - at the rates agreed by Conference:

This is currently 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles, then 25p per mile thereafter.

Details of the journeys made (date, start point and destination) and reason for them should be entered on the expenses claim form. If the mileage claimed differs significantly from that calculated through Google or other similar mapping programs the District finance team may query this.

When travelling outside the District on approved business, reasonable costs not reimbursed by the Connexional Team or other organisations will be met from District funds.

If travel by train or bus would be practical and cheaper, this should be the preferred option. Advance booking will often significantly reduce the costs of travel and is encouraged, particularly on longer journeys outside the District which are usually planned in advance.

Where two or more people attend the same event, consideration should be given to car sharing. An additional 5p per mile can be claimed for mileage where two or more travel together.

Meals and Hospitality

The cost of meals when on District business should not normally be claimed, particularly if there is time and opportunity to make alternative arrangements. The District does not normally offer subsistence payments to those who are away from home for significant periods.

The costs of reasonable hospitality, when engaging in the normal course of work, may be claimed. However, these should not be excessive or frequent. All claims should identify the number of people attending and the reason for this expense - plus a receipt for the costs incurred. Any contentious claims will be referred to the District Chair

When the District hosts an event or meeting, it may be appropriate to provide refreshments. On such occasions the District will reimburse claims for reasonable agreed expenditure. A record should be kept of the number of people attending and hospitality provided (e.g. coffee and biscuits or lunch). This should be detailed on the claim. Receipts or invoices covering the costs incurred should also accompany any such claim.

Overnight Accommodation

This will normally only apply to preauthorised travel outside the District. Accommodation will be paid for overnight stays in a B&B, Travelodge or equivalent, where it is not reasonable to expect the representative to return home on the same day or the event lasts more than a day. Invoices must support any claim.

Training and Events

All attendance at events and training costs should be agreed in advance and the finance team notified. Where accommodation is included as part of the cost, this should be authorised in the same way.

Telephone and Broadband

In line with HMRC guidance, round sum allowances for telephone or broadband will not be paid. However, reasonable and proportionate claims for additional telephone costs incurred may be made. All such claims should be supported by a copy of the relevant itemised bills highlighting the amounts claimed.

Photocopying and Printing

This should be recharged to the District at cost. Where copying is outsourced to a church the rates should be agreed in advance and the District billed direct. Using the District Office for copying (we are currently charged rates of 1.9p and 5.26p plus paper by The Mint for this) should be considered.

Where small amounts of printing/copying are done and the cost is not easily identified, claims can still be made at the rates of 3p (B&W) or 6p (colour) per sheet.

Where larger amounts of copy/ printing are needed it may be more appropriate to recharge the cost of paper and ink cartridges.

Other Expenses

Other costs necessarily incurred on District business may be claimed when supported by the relevant receipt or invoice and approved by an appropriate District Officer.