

Policy name	Business Expenses Policy & Procedure		
Date	April 2025	Next review	October 2025
Note	All Aves Housing Policies will be reviewed annually, more frequently, or as necessary		

Objectives

Employees, workers, contractors and board members are reimbursed for any necessary and reasonable travel, accommodation and other expenses incurred by them in the course of the performance of their duties.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, workers and Board Members.

Guiding Principles

- Claimable expenses must be reasonable, necessary and relevant to the work of Aves Housing. HMRC legislation disallows any expenditure not incurred wholly and exclusively for the purpose of trade, profession or vocation.
- Expense claims must be submitted by the employee who incurred the expenses
- Actions must be taken by the employee to minimise cost without compromising the health and safety of the claimant or any other person
- Expenses must be claimed in a timely manner. This should be monthly or at a maximum, every three months
- Expenses in excess of £500 should be incurred only with the prior authorisation of the Chair of the Board .
- Entertainment of Clients/Staff/Suppliers and contractors must be authorised in advance by the Chair of the Board and CEO jointly if above £100 .

Exclusions

The following is a non-exhaustive list of expenses which may not be claimed for:

- Expenses incurred by spouses or non-employees who accompany employees on their travels
- Fines and parking fees
- Car washing/valeting
- Mileage for commuting to and from the employee's home
- Subsistence food costs during normal office hours
- Childcare other than in exceptional circumstances
- Lost personal property

Definitions

Work Related Expenses:

- Expenses incurred in the course of carrying out an employee's duties

Ordinary commuting:

- Travel between home, or another place you choose to stay at, and your normal place of work.

Business Travel:

- Journeys undertaken in the course of business other than ordinary commuting.

Responsibilities:

- Managers must ensure that employees are aware of, understand and comply with this policy, as well as providing guidance where appropriate on what constitutes a reasonable business expense
- All employees are responsible for making themselves aware of the content of this policy and for ensuring they follow the appropriate procedure

Any attempt to submit a false expense claim or to manipulate the expenses procedure in any way will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and could lead to dismissal.

Procedure

Employees are required to provide receipts covering all expenditure, and without these reimbursements will not be made. A claim form must be filled in and submitted with the receipts cross referenced.

Car, motorbike and bicycle travel rates

Car mileage claims are reimbursed at the rate set by HMRC, currently 45p per mile

Motorbike mileage claims are reimbursed at the rate set by HMRC, currently 24p per mile

Bicycle mileage claims are reimbursed at the rate set by HMRC, currently 20p per mile

Travel Expenses

Public transport; rail, bus and tube.

- Employees are encouraged to use public transport services where possible and avoid driving to meetings and other sites and paying for parking
- Employees are expected to travel at the lowest available rate. This includes making use of off-peak travel and booking in advance for rail travel and other methods of minimizing expenses. Journeys that are covered by a season ticket already held by the employee or board member are non-reimbursable.

Car Travel and Private Vehicles

- Where an employee or board member does use their own vehicle on Aves Housing business, they must hold a current driving license. All private vehicles used on Aves Housing business must be roadworthy and insured for business use. Aves Housing will accept no responsibility for loss or damage to the vehicle, its passengers or other persons arising out of the business use of the vehicle, or for any uninsured loss, excess or loss of no claims discount.

Congestion charge

- Congestion charges incurred in the course of essential business travel other than to the employee's normal place of work will be reimbursed.

Taxis

Aves Housing expects that public transport will be the normal mode of travel. The use of taxis must be exceptional; however, it is acknowledged that there are occasions where a taxi may be necessary. Examples of that are times when public transport is unavailable, where a shared taxi is cheaper than public transport or in the case of emergencies or late night. Where a taxi fare is claimed a full explanation of why a taxi fare was necessary should be given.

Accommodation and Related Allowances

Hotel Accommodation:

This is subject to prior approval from a member of the Chair of the Board.

Private accommodation:

Where the employee is staying away from home, and is able to stay with a friend or family, this would be the preferred accommodation over incurring hotel costs. In such circumstances the employee may claim a meal or gift for the value of £ 5.00.

Subsistence

When an employee is staying away from home on business, the following meal allowance may be claimed:

- Breakfast - must be included in the room rate where possible. Alternatively, it could be claimed for a maximum of £5.00.
- Lunch - maximum of £ 5.00 per employee.
- Dinner - maximum of £ 15.00 per employee.

Telephone and Broadband

Telephone calls

Where the employee has been issued with a company mobile phone the device should be used in the first instance. Alternatively the phone at each Scheme should be used

Broadband

Where it has been agreed that an employee needs to work at home on regular basis, Aves Housing may reimburse the employee for installation and / or rental costs of a broadband internet, in the circumstances that there is no installed broadband internet for personal uses in the employee's home, for the duration of their employment only.

Entertaining and Business Meeting Expenses

Business meetings

- Meetings, training sessions or seminars should always be arranged using Aves Housing own meeting rooms wherever possible to avoid incurring costs of outside meeting room space. For larger meetings or training events, an outside venue may be used where Aves Housing determines appropriate
- Employees would not be expected to claim for lunch where they are attending a meeting or training event at Aves Housing' own offices
- Employees may claim for meals where they are attending a business meeting outside Aves Housing' offices and meals have not otherwise been provided by the meeting organiser. All sums claimed should be reasonable.

Entertaining non-Aves Housing employees

- Employees may be reimbursed for expenses related to the entertaining of non-Aves Housing employees, for example clients or suppliers, where the entertainment is directly related to the conduct of Aves Housing business. Proof of said meeting needs to be submitted .
- Such expenses should be reasonable and necessary
- All such expenses must be agreed beforehand with the Chair or if not available, by another Board member.
- Entertaining expenses are to be reported periodically to the Board in a Register of Gifts.

Childcare and Other Carer Costs

Childcare and other carer costs would not normally be reimbursable business expenses. However, Aves Housing will reimburse these costs for employees who are required to attend approved events with prior approval from the Chair of the Board.

Expenses Claim Form

All claimants need to complete the Expenses Claim Form as below;

- Fill in all the information regarding the period the expense belongs to including claimant name and the unit name
- Enter all the expenses for the period with appropriate details in the description column and amount under the appropriate column
- If it is a mileage claim, please fill in the description column with the travel details such as start and end point
- Next fill in the number of miles claimed for the journey. This cannot include travelling to or from your usual place of work.

Once it is completed it should be approved and signed by the claimant's line manager before it is passed to Finance for processing. Please note that email approval is not acceptable.

The CEO's expenses are signed off by the Chair of the Board and by line managers for all other employees.