

Appendix 4

The
Electoral
Commission

Guidance for Electoral Commissioners on claiming fees and travel and subsistence

November 2011

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1 Introduction

1.1 In response to growing levels of interest and scrutiny in the activities and cost of public bodies, fees and expenses for Commissioners are now published on the Commission's website every quarter. The information is collated to show clearly the purpose for which expenditure was incurred, in chronological order, by the event for which expenses were incurred. Please see the website (About Us/How we are run/Commissioners) for an example: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/100596/Commissioners-Q1-10-11.pdf

1.2 It will help us if you complete your fee and travel and subsistence claims with that in mind. Succinct but informative claim forms also avoid the need for us to check with either Commissioners or other staff regarding missing or incomplete details of any claim.

1.3 There are upper limits for expenditure for expenses, but you are asked at all times to make every effort to book travel, accommodation, and utilise subsistence as economically as possible. You may not be reimbursed if you incur costs above the limits in the guidelines (and appended at the end of this guidance), and will be expected to pay any difference. We will make every effort to help you with early booking, or finding comparative costs, wherever possible.

Travel Framework

1.4 The Commission has set up a travel framework whereby service providers make provision for online bookings on accommodation, air and rail tickets and car hire. Should you be willing to use the travel framework directly, Finance and Procurement staff will provide some assistance in setting up your account with the service provider, and either staff in devolved offices or in the Secretariat can help you manage your bookings. Staff will where possible to make advance hotel bookings on your behalf in order to avoid last minute booking, which can be both time-consuming and costly. Staff, either in the Secretariat or in devolved offices, can also book your travel, although those Commissioners with a variety of commitments to juggle often appreciate the flexibility of making their own travel arrangements. In the latter case, Commissioners are expected to travel as economically as possible.

1.5 For more detail on all aspects of travel and subsistence policy, for example travelling by car, and taxi use, please refer to the policy itself (included in your induction pack and available on the Commission's intranet site).

2 How to claim fees

2.1 Overview

2.1 Fees are paid to the Electoral Commissioners on the basis of a daily rate. The daily rate for the Commissioners is fixed by resolution of the House of Commons.

2.2 The relevant resolution of the House of Commons provides that an Electoral Commissioner shall be paid at a rate equivalent to Band 4 of judicial salaries, currently £359 per day, and £180 per half day.

2.3 Fee claims are completed for each calendar month for which you have a claim, and submitted to the Secretary to the Commission Board as soon as possible after the end of the month in question. They are processed according a tight deadline given by the Treasury, who require them by approximately the 8th of each month. Once received at the Commission they are checked, countersigned and scanned by the Secretary to the Commission Board, and sent to Treasury for a further check. Treasury then approve them for payment, whereupon we send them to the Treasury's payment arm, Xafinity Paymaster, with a copy to the NAO, to be paid.

2.4 The fees are paid direct into your bank accounts from the Consolidated Fund, by Xafinity Paymaster, and you are sent separately a BACS remittance advice.

2.5 Commissioners' fees are included in the Treasury's published accounts, and ours, which are published annually. We also publish fees and travel and subsistence costs on our website for each quarter.

2.2 Calculation of fees

2.6 As Commissioners you must keep a record of work undertaken for the Commission (or events attended in your capacity as a Commissioner) and provide a short description of your activities, including location, and times, on your fee claim form. Please refer to the published expenses on the website for examples. A reminder of the sort of information to include is also at the section on fee claim forms below.

2.7 Time spent on preparation and reading may also be claimed. As a general rule of thumb, preparation for any meeting is expected to take about half a day, unless it is an exceptional meeting, or circumstances, in which case it is worth indicating briefly on the form what they are. Where you have units of time of less than either a whole or a half day, give start and finish times and we will aggregate those into the nearest whole and half days (a whole day being about 7.5 hours and a half day 3.5-4 hours). Paymaster do not pay for less than half a day.

2.8 Attendance at events such as Commission Board meetings and all day training courses and events will usually count as one day, whether or not the total time spent on that day is less than, or exceeds, 7 hours. There are exceptions where the meeting has been particularly short, and where attendance has been by telephone or video-conference.

2.3 Fee claim forms

2.9 Please complete the Commissioner's fee claim form (see example of completed form at Annex B) for each calendar month and submit the form (by post) to the Secretary to the Commission Board. If an activity crosses a month, please split the activity accordingly across two fee claim forms. Forms must be signed by the claimant.

2.10 Claims should be completed and sent to the Secretary to the Commission Board as soon as possible after the end of the calendar month, and in any event no later than the date notified to you by Secretariat. We are required by Paymaster to send them checked fee claims by approximately a week into the next month. Payment by Paymaster will normally be made on the last day of the following month, provided the forms have been received by the Secretariat by the cut-off date. Treasury require signed copies in order to make payment. The following information should be included in your fee claim form for each entry:

- Day worked (ie the date for which you're making the entry)
- Start and finish times
- Nature of activity (meeting, preparation, teleconference, briefing)
- Location
- Topic/title of meeting Key participants (eg Minister for Northern Ireland, Head of Office, Scotland)
- If claiming for preparation (reading) please state for which meeting or event

2.4 Travelling time

2.11 You may claim fees for time spent travelling to the Commission's offices. Claims made for time spent travelling should be recorded as 'travel' and include start and finish times, ie when you left home and when you arrived at the meeting venue). However, since one day's claim will apply to Board meetings (however long, or short, the day), this is most likely to have an effect on travel to other meetings. In other words, a day's claim is the limit one can make, regardless of the length of the day.

2.5 Informal dinners – fee claim

2.12 Since Commissioners usually travel to London the evening before a Commission Board meeting, there is an opportunity to get together to discuss Commission matters informally over dinner. On these occasions the Chair has agreed with Commissioners that fees may be paid for the evening (at half a day) but that such events will **not** also be eligible for subsistence. You can therefore submit a fee claim for the evening but are expected to pay for your own meal.

2.13 On occasion, the Commission may hold a dinner for both the Executive Team and Commissioners, at which attendance would be expected. In that case the Commission would pay, either by invoice or by Commissioners' claims, up to the limit for dinner in the Commission's Travel and Subsistence policy. (In August 2011, the upper limit for a day's food consumption is £30 – see Annex A below.) Any alcohol consumed must be paid for separately and cannot be reimbursed.

2.14 If you do not meet for an informal dinner, you will not normally be claiming fees for working, and may therefore claim subsistence in the normal way for your evening meal.

3 Claiming expenses

3.1 The Commission will either pay direct, or reimburse you, for the reasonable actual costs of travel, accommodation, meals and certain other expenses incurred while travelling on Commission business, within the limits set out in the travel and subsistence policy.

3.1 Expense Claims

3.2 You must claim only for the actual cost of expenses incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of your duties on Commission business. The only exceptions are where you claim the flat rate Incidental Costs Allowance for miscellaneous overnight expenses.

3.3 Commissioners are asked to submit a claim using the Commission's finance system, eBis, as soon as possible after the end of the calendar month, and in any event by no later than the date notified to you by Secretariat. All expenses claims should include the following:

- Date of travel and mode of travel (including mileage)
- Where you travelled from and to
- Type of expenditure (dinner, travel)

3.4 In addition to that, please ensure that all receipts or invoices needed to support your claim are scanned and attached to your on-line submission. The originals should be sent to the Secretary to the Commission Board.. A separate guide to making a travel and subsistence claim using eBis is attached at Annex D.

3.2 Lost/No Receipt

3.5 If you are unable to obtain a receipt, such as from a car park machine, for travel on Commission business, or have lost your receipt, you must submit your claim as normal and provide a note of explanation with the claim itself.

3.6 If you are using a personal Oyster card, you should register it for online use with Transport for London, and download a Journey History Report, which covers journeys made in the preceding 8 weeks, to support your claim.

3.3 Authorisation of Claims

3.7 Commissioners' claims are certified by the Secretary to the Commission Board. These claims are reviewed monthly by the Chair.

3.8 Details of all expenses paid to Commissioners, Executive Team and the Heads of the Commission's offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are published online every quarter.

3.9 The Electoral Commission will not reimburse the expenses you claim unless your claim is supported by the necessary evidence and the person responsible for authorising the payment has confirmed their approval of the claim.

3.10 It is your responsibility to get and keep receipts for any expenditure, and to keep a record of any car mileage you subsequently claim for.

3.4 Travel

3.11 The HMRC designation of the Commission's London office as your usual place of work means that ordinarily you would not be able to claim for costs of travel to London, or an overnight stay, without it being a taxable benefit. However, the Commission has advised HMRC that it has agreed to assume the tax liability. A written statement to that effect can be provided for use with your own accounts if required.

3.12 You are expected to book the most economical travel available.

If you have a Railcard of any description, you are expected to use it to benefit from any reductions in the costs of any travel booked by you, or on your behalf, on Commission business.

3.13 The costs of first class travel will not be reimbursed unless it was the most economical or only possible means of travel on that occasion. In that

case you will be asked briefly to set out the circumstances. You may upgrade to first class travel at your own expense.

3.14 The exception to this is travel by sleeper. For those of you with access to a train sleeper service, there are occasions on which that service is more economical than the equivalent flight or day-time rail service when the saving on an overnight hotel stay is taken into account. If using a sleeper avoids an overnight stay, travellers are entitled to expect a level of privacy and comfort as close as possible to a hotel room. A first class sleeper fulfills this requirement and, because of the cost of hotels, is still likely to be more economical than one-way travel plus an overnight stay. If using a sleeper travelling to London, unless there are Commission-business reasons which require otherwise, you would be expected to travel home using the most economical method of travel available. The overall test is whether a claim is reasonable and justifiable.

3.15 Meetings of the Audit Committee are usually arranged on the day before Commission Board meetings, to save on travel costs for those Commissioners who are on both bodies. Likewise, a number of informal Commissioner Reference Groups with a short-term specific remit will often meet on or around Commission Board dates, to make best use of Commissioner attendance. If you are a member of such a reference group it may be worth checking with the member of staff who organises it, or with Secretariat, whether a meeting is planned so that you can factor it into your travel arrangements.

3.16 You are asked to avoid using taxis wherever possible. If circumstances have made it necessary or unavoidable, please give the reason in your claim and, if sharing with another Commissioner, indicate who in addition to the other usual information (from, to, when). (Please refer to the Commission's Travel and Subsistence policy for further detail on taxi use.)

3.17 If you use your car to claim mileage we will need to receive a copy of your car insurance which includes business use.

Annex A - Rates

Limits on expenses reimbursement

Reimbursement will be made for actual expenditure, supported by receipts, up to the threshold of:

	London	Elsewhere
Accommodation (Where not able to use Travel Framework) Hotel, - Bed & Breakfast	£130.00	£90.00
Meals: A maximum per day to cover all meals – breakfast, lunch and dinner – if not already included in the price of the accommodation.	£30.00	
Overnight incidental costs allowance	£5.00	
Your own car (with valid business use insurance)		
First 10,000 business miles in a financial year:	45p per mile	
Each mile over 10,000 business miles in a financial year:	25p per mile	
Passengers (all business mileage)	5p per person per mile	
Motor cycles		
Pence per mile	24p	
Bicycles		
Pence per mile	20p	

ANNEX B



Part-time Electoral Commissioner's Fee Claim Form

			Please complete in block capitals & use black ink, as the form may be photocopied. Please note that in some circumstances Tax & National Insurance may be payable. Please claim any travel & subsistence expenses separately.			
Name of payee						Ref: _____ _____
Start Time Finish Time Worked Date			Activity Details of Claim		Target	Fee payable
14:00	18:00	- 11/07/2010	Meeting preparation/reading			£180
18:30	22:00	- 14/07/2010	Commission Dinner			£180
09:00	15:30	- 15/07/2010	Commission Board			£359
09:30	12:00	- 19/07/2010	Preparation for reference group meeting			£180
14:00	16:30	- 20/07/2010	Reference Group meeting (via teleconference from devolved office)			£180
		-				£
		-				£
		-				£
		-				£
		-				£
		-				£
		-				£
		-				£
		-				£
Payable Total						£1,079

Please note that the claimant must sign the claim and the claim authorised by a senior member of staff with budget authority.

DECLARATION

I declare that:

1. I have not knowingly made any false statement in preparation of this claim
2. That all fees I claim on this form have been actually and necessarily disbursed on service for The Electoral Commission.

3. No other claim, in respect of any of these items included in this account have been made or will be made against the Electoral Commission or any other Public funded body.

Signed & Certified by Claimant 
Dated: 30/072010

CERTIFICATION

(This must be the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer or the Secretary to the Commission & after the certifying Officer has signed the form, it should NOT be returned to the claimant.).

I, the Certifying Officer, declare to the best of my knowledge the activities discharged for which fees are claimed were necessarily undertaken on official business for the Electoral Commission.

Payment authorised by Certifying Officer:
Dated:/...../.....

Name (in block capitals):
Job

Title: