

ASCRU Public Involvement and Engagement: Payment Policy

The NIHR Policy Research Unit in Adult Social Care (ASCRU) recognises that to support active public involvement and engagement in the Unit, people need to be compensated for their time and have access to resources for travel and other reasonable expenses.

ASCRU's payment policy applies to any **public advisor** involved in the Unit's activities. This includes people who use social and health care services, potential users of care services, carers as well as people from organisations that represent people who use services.

Key requirements

ASCRU commits to ensuring that:

1. Details of the payment available for each activity will be set out when advertising opportunities within ASCRU and time agreed in advance of starting the activity
2. ASCRU's public involvement team will advertise opportunities for involvement activities openly and that there is a balance of people taking up these opportunities
3. Payments for ASCRU are processed in a timely manner
4. All details provided to ASCRU to manage payments and expense reimbursements will be managed in line with Data Protection requirements.

Who is eligible?

Public advisors within the ASCRU's Public Involvement and Engagement Group (PIEG) are eligible for a payment for their activities. Public advisors involved in ASCRU activities outside of the PIEG are also eligible for a payment for their activities.

Public advisors can ask for their payments to be made by voucher (for example a supermarket or high street voucher) if they prefer this to a bank transfer.

Individuals involved in ASCRU who receive a full-time salary from public funds (for example a social care professional) are not eligible for a payment for their activities.

How are payments made?

Payments for ASCRU will be managed by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and personal and confidential information (such as name, address and bank details) will be required from ASCRU's public advisors.

When an individual joins ASCRU as a public advisor they will be asked to complete a bank details form. This is a confidential document and will only be used to set the individual up on the LSE's financial system so expenses and payments can be processed when needed.

ASCRU will keep this form until the end of the Unit (currently December 2023). If a public advisor leaves ASCRU, their details will be confidentially deleted once all outstanding payments have been made.

When public advisors are invited to contribute to an ASCRU activity or research project, they will be told in writing the payment that is being offered (see below for a list of payment rates) and the expenses they can claim.

When an activity (such as a meeting or contribution by email) is completed:

the individual will be asked to:

- Provide a completed expenses form for any expenses with a photograph or scan of their receipts to ascru@lse.ac.uk

the ASCRU researcher will be asked to:

- Provide a completed activity form with supporting documents by email to ascru@lse.ac.uk.

ASCRU's Manager will then process payment.

Payments take about four to six weeks to process.

Tax and National Insurance

Payments through the LSE for public advisors involved in research units or grants are processed based on guidance from HMRC (EIM71105) on [Research volunteers, lay participants and participants](#) which notes that there will be no tax or national insurance liability on the LSE or the individual where "the sums received do no more than reimburse the individual's reasonable costs of participating".

Public advisors receiving state benefits

For public advisors receiving state benefits, a payment or expense reimbursement might affect their benefits claim. Public advisors will be advised to contact the free, confidential [NIHR INVOLVE's Benefit Advice Service for NIHR Organisations](#) for personal advice on how payment of fees and expenses might affect their benefits. They can be contacted by emailing involve@nihr.ac.uk or by calling 02380 595628 stating they are based in ASCRU.

ASCRU's public involvement team cannot provide expert advice but can support public advisors in the process of getting advice.

Rates of payment

Payment for activities will be based on LSE rates (which reflect NIHR INVOLVE rates). ASCRU's public involvement team will advise which payment rate applies when asking for volunteers for particular activities.

Activity	Payment	Description
Involvement in meetings	PIEG meetings	£150 This covers preparation and participation for a PIEG meeting
	Project advisory or steering groups	£75 £150 For a half-day (or less) meeting, £75 will be offered to cover participation and attendance. It is expected that most meetings will be two hours or less. Where a meeting is to last longer than half a day or requires substantial preparation, £150 will be offered,
	ASCRU Management Group meetings	£50 Management Group meetings last one hour. £50 will be offered to cover participation and preparation
Involvement in reviews	Review of documents	£50 Of no more than 25 pages
	Review of documents	£75 Of between 26 and 50 pages
Other tasks	Various	£25 Involvement in a task or activity requiring little or no preparation and about one hour of time
	Various	£50 Involvement in a task or activity requiring some preparation and about two hours of time
	Various	£75 Involvement in a task or activity requiring preparation and about half a day of time
	Various	£150 Involvement in one-off all-day meetings such as observing a project meeting or contributing as part of a group to a meeting

Eligible expenses

ASCRU will:

- Make arrangements for reasonable travel (such as standard train fares for participation at meetings) and expenses directly for each public advisor. This is to follow LSE requirements for travel bookings, and also to avoid public advisors waiting

for reimbursement of their expenses

- Arrange taxis if needed in certain circumstances. LSE policies do not allow use of taxis except in certain circumstances and any required bookings will be made by ASCRU to avoid issues with reimbursement of expenses
- Make arrangements for individuals who are required to accompany a public advisor to a meeting (paid or unpaid carer, a personal assistant or a support worker)
- Make all necessary arrangements to support public advisors with communication and information needs, including providing information in alternative languages and formats where needed
- Ensure all in-person meetings take place after mid-morning to allow time for people to travel to meeting venues.
- Arrange accommodation where needed and agreed through ASCRU for example if an unreasonably early start is required to participate in a meeting
- Ensure refreshments and lunch are available for in-person meetings and try to keep any costs that an individual might incur small
- Provide and post out printed copies of documents if an individual prefers this to electronic documents to avoid printing costs being incurred by a public advisor
- Provide freepost envelopes if any documents need to be posted to the Unit (including documents that need to be returned for secure shredding), although try to use email or electronic means as far as possible
- Ensure MS Teams, Skype or freephone numbers are used for involvement in telephone calls or meetings
- Make arrangements (as above) for any training or development activities that are organised or suggested by ASCRU.

Where meetings are taking place remotely a fixed amount of £5 per meeting to cover the cost of telephone calls, paper, printing ink and paper, internet connection and other home sundries.

Any other reasonable expenses will be reimbursed for public advisors. These will be agreed in advance on a case-by-case basis. This could include, for example, carer replacement costs, time for a support worker or carer to accompany a public advisor to a meeting, specific needs to ensure an individual can participate fully in an activity/meeting or refreshments during travel to and from meetings and breakfast/evening meals for overnight stays.

Queries and further information

Any queries on this payment policy can be addressed to:

ASCRU Manager

Email: ascru@lse.ac.uk

Phone: 020-7955-6238