

Involvement Group Expenses and Reimbursement Policy

Please contact the research team if you would like to receive this policy in a different format or a different language. Email: r.c.odonnell@stir.ac.uk

The following policy has been developed in accordance with [National Institute for Health and Care Research \(NIHR\) guidance](#), and following consultation with administrative and research teams at the University of Sheffield and the University of Stirling, and members of the public.

Nature of the involvement

The involvement group brings together members of the public and researchers to share ideas and to help shape a research study looking at how the changes to the alcohol duty (tax) system in the United Kingdom (UK) affect people's alcohol consumption and health.

There are different activities that group members can take part in. These include: attending online group meetings, providing written feedback on documents (such as surveys), and helping us to share the findings of the study. Most of the activities will be carried out online but there may be opportunities for in-person activities.

Duration and frequency of involvement

We will ask group members to take part for approximately 10 hours per year up until the 31st of December 2026. However, the duration and frequency of involvement will vary depending on which activities each individual is involved in.

Rates

Group members will be given £25 worth of Love2Shop vouchers for each hour that they take part in activities. If an activity lasts for more or less than an hour, the value of the vouchers will be proportionate to the time spent taking part (rounded up to the nearest £5). For example, if an activity lasts for 90 minutes, we will give £40 worth of vouchers to each person that takes part. **We can only provide Love2Shop vouchers or vouchers that can be exchanged on the Love2Shop website (www.love2shop.co.uk).**

Additional expenses that are covered

In addition to offering vouchers for involvement, we also offer to cover “out of pocket” expenses.

For remote activities, if a person cannot take part from home (for example, if they do not have internet connection) but they want to take part from a public place, such as a library or internet cafe, we will cover the cost of the activity (for example, the cost of using the internet in an internet cafe) and travel expenses (see Travel section below). However, we will not cover subsistence (meals, snacks and refreshment) costs.

For activities away from home we cover expenses for:

- Travel: standard class rail fares, bus fares, vehicle mileage. In exceptional circumstances, we will cover the cost of alternative methods of travel such as taxi fares, or first-class fares. The following amount per mile will be provided for people using their own vehicle:
 - Cars and vans: 45p
 - Motorcycles: 24p
 - Bicycles: 20p
- Accommodation: on the rare occasion that accommodation is needed, we will book and pay for it in advance. Accommodation will be equivalent to a standard UK business hotel, which will provide comfort and safety. We will not book privately rented accommodation through companies such as Air BnB.
- Subsistence: we will cover the reasonable and necessary costs of meals, snacks and beverages whilst working away. Receipts must be provided for us to reimburse subsistence costs.

Child and adult care and support worker costs

We can reimburse group members for the cost of child or adult care, or for a personal support worker, to enable them to be involved. If a person has care or support worker arrangements in place, we will cover these costs whilst they take part in activities (for example, we will cover nursery costs while a person takes part in an online meeting). If a person does not have care or support worker arrangements in place, we can discuss how to best support them to be involved. **Group members who have child or adult care needs, or who use a personal support worker, should contact the research team to discuss options as soon as possible and before taking part in involvement group activities.**

Costs for people with mobility/hearing/visual impairments

We offer specific support for people with mobility, hearing and/or visual impairments.

Mobility impairments: For in-person activities we will ensure that venues are accessible. We will cover the cost of hire of equipment such as walking aids, wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

Hearing impairments: For both in-person and at-home activities, we will cover the cost of communication support including microphones, hearing/induction loops, talk-to-type conversion (palantype), speech-to-text reporters and sign language interpreters.

Visual impairments: For in-person activities we will ensure that venues are accessible for assistance animals (guide dogs). For both in-person and at-home activities, we will cover the cost of support including a sighted guide, text to speech software and magnification.

Group members who have a mobility, hearing and/or visual impairment should contact the research team to discuss options as soon as possible and before taking part in involvement group activities.

Training costs

We can provide training to group members to help them take part in activities (for example, training to use the internet and computer software). Most training will take place online. We will cover the cost of the training and any additional support a person may need whilst they take part in the training. We will **not** provide shopping vouchers for taking part in training. **Group members who would like to receive training should contact the research team as soon as possible.**

Declining reimbursement

A person may decline reimbursement, or ask for a lower amount, for either a voucher or for “out of pocket” expenses. They should contact the research team to request this.

The process

Vouchers: By default, vouchers will be sent as electronic gift cards via email to group members. People can request to receive paper vouchers or a gift card though the post instead of an electronic gift card, by contacting the research team. People who want to receive their vouchers or gift card through the post will need to provide a postal address. Voucher or gift cards will be processed within one week of an involvement activity being

completed.

For remote activities if a person cannot take part from home: We will reimburse the cost of the activity and travel expenses as a bank transaction. Group members will need to provide a bank account number and sort code so that they can be reimbursed. **If a person does not have access to a bank account, they should discuss this with the research team before taking part in remote activities away from their home.** Reimbursements will be authorised and passed to the payments team within one week of an activity being completed. However, individuals should allow an additional two weeks for the money to reach their bank account.

Additional expenses: Where possible, we will book and pay for additional expenses in advance. This includes:

- accommodation
- some methods of travel (for example, train tickets).

Where it is not possible for us to book and pay for additional expenses in advance, group members can complete an expenses claim form, which can be sent by email or post. The form should be completed and returned with receipts/proof of purchase within three months of the purchase being made. Group members will need to provide a bank account number and sort code so that they can be reimbursed. **If a person does not have access to a bank account, they should discuss this with the research team before taking part in activities that involve making an expenses claim.** Expense claims forms will be authorised and passed to the payments team within one week of an activity being completed. However, individuals should allow an additional two weeks for the money to reach their bank account.

Policy implementation and review

This policy will be implemented by members of the research team who manage and coordinate the involvement group. The policy will be reviewed in August 2024 and annually thereafter until the involvement group disbands.

Contact details

You can contact the research team about this policy or if you have any problems with expenses or reimbursement: Email: r.c.odonnell@stir.ac.uk

