

Sanctuary Group

Title: Travel, Subsistence, and Expenses - Group Procedure

Business functions: Applicable to all functions across Sanctuary Group

Author: HR Services

Other Contributors: Corporate Shared Service Centre
Group Procurement

Authorised by: Group Director - Corporate Services
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Sanctuary Group:
Sanctuary Group is a trading name of Sanctuary Housing Association,
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Objective

To detail the procedure required for booking travel and accommodation, and the processes which must be followed to claim reimbursement of expenses incurred when travelling on Sanctuary Group (Group) business.

Document applies to

All members of staff employed by or carrying out work for the Group who may incur expenses while travelling on Group business, or who may need to book travel and accommodation for the purposes of their work.

Review

Date	Details
March 2022	Updates to Appendix 2 to reflect updated private mileage rates and increased hotel price allowances. Section 2.2 updated to remove the minimum two day notice period previously required for rail travel.
May 2021	Appendix 2 updated to reflect electric vehicle rates.
April 2021	Car buyout rates updated in Appendix 2 , effective 1 April 2021.
May 2020	Formal review - with the following changes: • Car buyout rates updated in Appendix 2 - Expenses categories and allowances, effective 1 April 2020. • Updates made throughout to reflect business processes in relation to booking travel and the approval required. • Other minor amendments and formatting changes. • Removal of the Travel, Subsistence, and Expenses - Group Policy, as this procedure now sits under the HR - Group Policy.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Business mileage picture examples

Appendix 2 - Expenses categories and allowances

Appendix 3 - Risks and review criteria

1. Expenses

- A summary of those expenses which may be reimbursed are detailed below and summarised within **Appendix 2**.
- The Group reserves the right to withhold payment where expenses claimed for are outside of the provisions of this procedure and the associated policy.

2. Travel

- On occasions, it may be necessary for staff to travel to a location other than their normal place of work. In these instances, the Group reimburses reasonable expenses, depending on the mode of transport used. Line managers must approve any business journey in advance.
- Before booking travel, you should consider whether travel is necessary. Other forms of communication should be considered, for example, video conference, telephone, or Webex.
- If travel is considered essential, all directors, managers, and employees are responsible for selecting the most environmentally friendly and cost-effective travel option to ensure the Group delivers on both its social and economic objectives.

2.1 Travel by car:

- Business mileage is reimbursed in accordance with the following:
 - a) Employees with a company car must complete a mileage return by 'creating an expense report' on the HR Portal. Information required includes the amount of business and private mileage; **Appendix 1** - Business mileage picture examples.
 - b) With the exception of business mileage, all other expenses require receipts. The employee must complete the online expenses report, print a copy, attach the receipts and send it to their line manager for them to countersign.
 - c) The line manager will need to 'approve' or 'reject' the expenses claim online by logging on to the HR Portal. The paper copy of the expenses form and attached receipts must then be forwarded to Corporate Shared Service Centre (CSSC). As fuel, repairs and maintenance costs are paid for by the company, no additional payment is made for business mileage.
 - d) Employees in receipt of a Company Car Buy Out allowance must claim the business mileage rate relevant to their scale, as listed in **Appendix 2**. They must complete an online expenses report on the HR Portal following the process above, claiming business mileage only.
- If you use your own car for business purposes, including protected Essential Car User (ECU), you must claim mileage at the appropriate standard mileage rate, as stated in **Appendix 2**. You must complete an online expenses report on the HR Portal, claiming business mileage only.
- Should you be required to drive on Group business, a hire car or pool car can be provided for this purpose, as an alternative to using your own vehicle.

- Before using your own car for company business, you must ensure that you have an appropriate and road-worthy vehicle that is suitably maintained, insured and taxed. Any additional cost charged by your car insurance company for business will not be covered by the Group. If using your own vehicle, please refer to the [Driving at Work - Group Procedure](#) for details.
- Car sharing is encouraged where this can be practically arranged. [Click here to access the Car Sharing pages on Solis.](#)
- The Group reimburses car parking charges that are incurred whilst on company business, but not those payable at the normal place of work. Likewise, the cost of any congestion charge or toll road fees are reimbursed. Valid receipts are required.
- Should you regularly travel into the London congestion zone and you have a commercial vehicle, you must inform Fleet Services, who can add you to the Fleet Automated Scheme, which removes the need to pay for each journey directly. Please note that company cars are automatically added to this list.
- Any speeding fines or parking tickets, incurred whilst on company business, are the responsibility of the driver to pay.
- The [Driving at Work - Group Procedure](#) provides further information regarding the driver documentation required for company vehicles and employees using their own car for Group business, and further information about driving whilst on company business.

Note: all driving documentation must be valid. Should any documentation be invalid, mileage expense claims will not be paid.

2.2 Travel by rail:

- Where it is more practical, you may travel by rail when on company business.
- The procedure for booking rail travel is:
 - a) If originator is a self booker, then booking can be made directly with Click Travel using their Click Travel login details.
 - b) If the originator is not a self-booker, they should complete the Rail Ticket Booking form ([click here to access the Rail Ticket Booking Form](#)).
 - c) Originator sends their Rail Booking Form to their booking coordinator who will make the booking on their behalf.
 - d) Confirmation from Click Travel is sent to Originator.
- If you wish to book rail travel through a booking coordinator, you must give as much notice as possible.
- Rail tickets can be sent to the person making the journey through first class post or Ticket on Departure (TOD) free of charge. Rail Tickets should only be sent via special delivery if it is short notice and there is no TOD machine at a station.
- You are expected to travel by standard class.
- If you (the originator) have a discount card such as Young Person's Rail Card this should be identified when completing the Rail Ticket Booking Form. You must ensure the card is readily available to show to ticket inspectors.

2.3 Rail cancellations and amendments:

- Certain ticket types are non-refundable but can be amended for a small fee. If tickets need to be cancelled/amended, you should contact your booking coordinator. If you booked the ticket yourself, you should arrange the amendment/cancellation.
- In the event that you are ill on the day you have planned to travel by train, and you have booked a ticket through a booking coordinator, you should contact your manager as soon as possible who will liaise with the booking coordinator regarding cancellation.

2.4 Travel by air:

- For journeys exceeding 250 miles one way, you may travel by air if agreed in advance by an appropriate Director.
- If you have a Government Procurement Card (GPC) or a member of your team has a GPC, the GPC cardholder should make the booking directly with the relevant airline in the first instance and should follow the process below.
- Alternatively, you can make the booking through Click Travel if you have access as a self-booker, or you can forward the form to your booking coordinator who will make the booking on your behalf (see procedure below).
- The procedure for requesting a flight is as follows:
 - a) Originator completes the Flight Booking form on Solis ([click here to access the Flight Booking Form](#)) and sends it to their line manager.
 - b) Line manager approves form and sends to the Senior Budget Holder.
 - c) Senior Budget Holder approves form and returns to originator.
 - d) Booking coordinator/self-booker (originator) makes the request directly with the relevant airline, or via Click Travel using their login details.
 - e) Confirmation from Click Travel is sent to originator.
- It is the responsibility of the booking coordinator/self-booker to select the cheapest option that meets the travel requirements.
- You are expected to travel in standard class.
- You must take the booking confirmation/itinerary with you to the airport, together with a valid passport.

2.5 Flight cancellations and amendments:

- Passengers who fail to turn up at the airport without notifying the airline may have their return flight cancelled automatically. Most flights are booked as budget tickets, and are non-refundable. If a change to flight times is required, charges should be discussed with the appropriate budget holder before making the changes through the booking coordinator or through Click Travel.

2.6 Travel by taxi:

- A taxi may be used where it is not possible to reach your destination via another method. Any journeys must be agreed in advance by your line manager and claimed back via expenses. Where possible, you should use public transport.

3. Hotel accommodation

- Where there is a need to stay overnight on company business, hotel accommodation may be booked, subject to the limits stated in **Appendix 2**.
- The procedure for booking hotel accommodation is:
 - a) If originator is a self booker, then the booking can be made directly with Click Travel using their Click Travel login details.
 - b) if the originator is not a self-booker, they should complete the Hotel Booking form on Solis ([click here to access the Hotel Booking Form](#)).
 - c) Originator sends their hotel booking form to their booking coordinator who will make the booking on their behalf.
 - d) Confirmation is sent from Click Travel to the originator.
- In exceptional circumstances, accommodation may be:
 - booked directly and the cost reclaimed via the expenses process; or
 - booked directly using a valid GPC.
- Bookings should be made on a 'bed and breakfast' or 'dinner bed and breakfast' rate, where available.
- Where a hotel has a restaurant on site and the hotel offers bill-back, dinner can be billed back to the Group through Click Travel subject to the meal limits stated in **Appendix 2**. Whilst having an evening meal on company business, only one alcoholic drink can be billed back.
- Where it is not possible to book a room with dinner and breakfast included, you can pay for any meals by one of the following ways:
 - if you are a regular traveller with a GPC, you may use this to pay for meals; or
 - if you are not a regular traveller and do not have a GPC, you would need to pay for any meals yourself and submit an expense claim with valid receipts attached.
- Note that in cases where you need to be reimbursed for an evening meal through expenses only one alcoholic drink will be reimbursed.
- You should take a copy of the booking confirmation for reference when checking in and out of the hotel.

3.1 Incidental expenses:

- Any incidental expenses not included in the original booking confirmation for example, room service charge, 10 per cent tip for meals, telephone calls, Wi-Fi (for business purposes if not included in the room rate) are subject to the limit stated in **Appendix 2** and must be settled separately by the guest on checkout.

3.2 Hotel parking:

- If hotel parking is not included in the original booking confirmation, any hotel parking costs incurred on company business can be claimed back through expenses and receipt(s) should be attached to the expenses form.

3.3 Staying with a friend/relative:

- Where you are able to stay with a friend/relative, rather than use hotel accommodation, the cost of a small gift or meal for the friend/relative, up to the value stated in **Appendix 2**, may be reimbursed in place of accommodation costs.
- Your meal costs may be reimbursed in addition to this where receipts are provided.

3.4 Hotel cancellations and amendments:

- Minimum cancellation notices are stated in the booking details from Click Travel.
- Any failure to notify of cancellations prior to the stated time limit may result in the hotel charging the full rate for the stay. You should either contact your booking coordinator or Click Travel to advise of a cancellation.
- Bulk bookings of ten or more hotel rooms can be made by contract and a minimum requirement of seven days' notice is usually required for cancellation.

4. Meals and drinks

4.1 Breakfast:

- Where a hotel does not provide breakfast, or you are required to leave home before 7am for company business, the cost of breakfast may be claimed via reimbursement through expenses.

4.2 Lunch:

- When working away from the normal place of work and lunch is not provided, it is expected that you will make the same arrangements as for a normal working day (for example, take a packed lunch, purchase lunch locally, etc.). The cost of lunch is therefore not normally reimbursed.
- On the rare occasion that you do not leave for work from home (for example, stays at a hotel the night before an event) and would normally prepare a packed lunch, the cost of lunch may be claimed.

4.3 Evening meal:

- When staying overnight on company business, or it is impossible to reach home before 8pm, the cost of an evening meal may be claimed.

4.4 Refreshments:

- When a car journey exceeds two and half hours, if you have not made a claim for a meal as stated above, you are encouraged to take a short break with refreshment.

4.5 External meetings and refreshments:

- Where possible, meetings should be held on Group premises in the first instance.
- Should this not be possible and there is a requirement to hold a meeting at an external venue, this must be authorised by a Group Director. In addition, any requests for refreshments at an external meeting venue must also be approved by a Group Director. For details of how to book an external meeting room, please refer to Solis.

5. Other costs and expenses

- Other costs and expenses such as training and conferences, professional qualification fees, or decant costs are covered in **Appendix 2**.
- All of these costs must be pre-agreed with the relevant Director prior to expenditure.

6. Claiming expenses

- All expenses must be reclaimed within a period of three months of expenditure.
- Any expenses incurred over three months prior to the expenses claim must also be approved by a relevant Director.
- Any expenses incurred whilst on company business must be claimed in line with the rates outlined in this procedure and **Appendix 2**.
- Expenses (including any business mileage) should be claimed, as follows.

6.1 Company car drivers and permanent hire car drivers who have a fuel card:

- At the end of each month, the driver must complete an expense claim by 'creating an expense report' on the HR Portal (select 'My Services', then 'Travel and Expenses', then 'Create Expense Report'). Information required includes the amount of business and private miles and any other expenses to be re-claimed.
- For all non-mileage claims, you must provide valid receipts to accompany the claim. You must complete the online expenses report, print a copy, attach the receipts and submit it to your line manager for them to countersign.
- The line manager will also need to 'approve' or 'reject' the expenses claim online by logging on to the HR Portal and selecting it from their 'Approvals' list. The paper copy of the expenses form and attached receipts must then be forwarded to the CSSC by the expenses cut-off date of each month.

- If the expenses do not require proof via receipts, you do not need to print the expense claim and the line manager will only need to 'approve' or 'reject' via the HR Portal.

Note: Any expense claims that are rejected by the manager via the HR Portal will need to be deleted, created again and re-submitted by the driver as they cannot be amended (although the previous claim can be 'copied' as a start point).

6.2 Company car/permanent hire car drivers on long-term sickness:

- Company car/permanent hire car drivers who are on long-term leave such as long-term sickness, but excluding maternity leave, are responsible for submitting monthly claims, as usual, to confirm personal mileage expenditure.
- You must complete the business-appropriate expenses form which can be found on the Forms pages on Solis. The mileage return form must be countersigned by your senior manager and forwarded to the CSSC by the expenses cut-off date for each month.

6.3 Permanent hire car drivers who do not have a fuel card:

- If you are provided with a permanent hire car and do not have a fuel card, you will need to reclaim fuel costs by completing an expenses form on the HR Portal.
- This form allows you to reclaim your business mileage for the preceding pay period and any other expenses in line with **Appendix 2**.

6.4 Privately owned vehicles (including Car Buy-Out):

- If you are using your own vehicle for Group business, you will be reimbursed for any business mileage and any other expenses as appropriate (in line with the **Appendix 2**).
- This also applies if you are in receipt of car buy-out allowance as well as standard mileage rate users. Car buy-out users should claim their business mileage in accordance with the appropriate rate as detailed in **Appendix 2**. Business mileage can be claimed by 'creating an expense report' on the HR Portal.
- If the expenses have receipts, you must complete the online expenses report, print a copy, attach the receipts and submit it to your line manager for them to countersign, as per process outlined above.
- If the expenses do not require proof via receipts, you don't need to print the expense claim and the line manager will only need to 'approve' or 'reject' via the HR Portal.
- If you do not have access to the HR Portal, you should complete the relevant expenses form specific to your business unit on the Forms page on Solis.
- Expenses that do not fall within the current accommodation and meal limits will be highlighted during the 'create an expense report' process when completing an expense report via the HR Portal.

- You should agree any exceptions with your manager in advance of submitting the claim, as once rejected, a claim cannot be amended and resubmitted and must be created again (although the previous claim can be copied as a start point).

7. Management responsibilities

- Managers are responsible for ensuring this procedure is followed and in particular for:
 - checking that claims are valid and in line with the limits allowed;
 - ensuring receipts are provided for each expense that has been claimed;
 - confirming that the business mileage claimed is the shortest of the mileage between their home and the final destination and their normal place of work and the final destination;
 - striking through any blank lines on expenses forms, authorising and forwarding to the CSSC (authorised forms must not be passed back to the employee); and
 - ensuring expense claim forms are sent promptly to the CSSC once they have been authorised.

Note: Any expense claims of £500 or above must be approved in addition by a Director.

8. Central responsibilities

- All claims through the SAP HR Portal are subject to central analytical review. This is typically done through reporting by cost centre/employee. Claims will also be reviewed in conjunction with any claims through GPC.
- All claims through the SAP HR Portal are also subject to random selection. Typically, a sample of 10 per cent is selected per pay period. The claim will be reviewed for adherence to this policy and procedure and feedback will be provided to Management.
- All paper based claims are reviewed centrally to ensure they meet this procedure, prior to processing. Feedback will be provided to management where claims are not able to be processed.
- Where expenses are subject to central review, the risk categories set out in **Appendix 3** will be used to identify non compliance.

9. Data Protection

- In line with the [Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations 2018](#), you must be mindful when printing travel documents containing personal data.