



Volunteer Expenses Policy

Updated March 2024

Volunteers are a very important and valued part of Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST). BOST acknowledges that it is good practice to reimburse a volunteer for reasonable and genuine out of pocket expenses incurred in the course of their volunteering and recognises that expecting volunteers to cover their own expenses could be a barrier to people with low incomes or little spare cash.

BOST will offer to reimburse reasonable and genuine expenses incurred while volunteering as follows

- Travel, including to and from your place of abode to the place of volunteering for volunteers on low incomes where covering this expense could be a barrier to them volunteering.
- Meals and or refreshments when volunteering for 5 or more hours
- Administration costs e.g. postage, stationery, phone calls (Where it's agreed that a volunteer needs to use a personal mobile phone or landline as part of their role).

Only actual costs incurred can be reimbursed, expenses do not represent a financial reward or any compensation for loss of time. Payment of expenses does not change the recipient's status as a volunteer.

BOST will pay expenses via BACs straight into a bank account. Expenses should be claimed monthly. We do understand that for cash flow reasons some volunteers may need payment more often than this and this can be arranged with the Volunteer Manager. Volunteers should not let more than 2 months lapse between claims.

Meals and Refreshment Expenses

Volunteers participating for 5 or more hours at one time will be eligible for a meal deal from Sainsbury's or Tesco's. This will be purchased by the session leader.

Volunteers must not purchase refreshments themselves for reimbursement unless agreed in advance with the Volunteer Manager or group leader.

Travel Expenses

Many of our volunteers walk or cycle to volunteering and several have use of a Freedom Pass. We will however pay for any travel costs incurred to and from where people are volunteering or if they need to travel as part of their role where volunteers are on benefits, homeless or unemployed and aren't eligible for a Freedom Pass or a Freedom Pass doesn't cover their travel expenses (e.g. the bus would take too long and they need to use a train or tube). We will also consider covering travel expenses for those not on benefits, unemployed or homeless but where financial difficulties would mean covering travel provides a barrier to volunteering. This will be decided on a case by case basis.

Activities likely to incur expenses for volunteers should be authorised by managers in advance. BOST can accept no liability for expenses that result from activities not agreed beforehand with managers.

Method of Travel

BOST encourages anyone claiming expenses to try and find the most cost effective and cheapest method possible, without putting their safety or wellbeing at risk.

Public Transport - If a volunteer is entitled to any kind of travel concession such as a senior citizen rail card, a Freedom Pass or Student Pass, this must be used to help minimise costs to BOST. Where possible we ask volunteers to book as early as they can and to choose the best value option. BOST will pay for standard class travel only. Travel should be 'off peak' wherever possible. Where the use of prepay 'oyster' cards or similar electronic tickets for public transport are cheaper per journey than paying cash then they may be used. Weekly or monthly bus or train tickets are only to be paid for if they are the cheaper option and has been agreed in advance by the BOST Volunteer Coordinator. Where a free bus journey (e.g. using a Freedom Pass) would take so long it would be prohibitive to the volunteer getting to volunteering BOST will consider covering the cost of a tube or train journey instead. This would be decided on a case by case basis and must be agreed with the BOST Volunteer Coordinator in advance of the travel taking place.

BOST will reimburse travel expenses for fares covering Zones 1-4. Any other expenses will be at the discretion of the Volunteer Manager and must be agreed in advance of submitting a claim.

Details of current fares can be found here: <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/>

The maximum that can be claimed for travel to and from volunteering is £10 a day, unless agreed by the Volunteer Manager.

Car / Motorcycle - BOST will not pay car or motorcycle mileage or cover costs of the Congestion Charge, ULEZ or parking.

Taxi - As a rule taxi costs may not be claimed for unless in exceptional circumstances and with prior authorisation of the Volunteer Coordinator or group leader. Exceptional circumstances may include but are not limited to situations where it is cheaper for a number of volunteers to share a taxi, if a volunteer has a particular health or mobility restriction or where it would be unsafe for a volunteer to take another form of transport.

Claim form and Receipts

Please ask the Volunteer Coordinator for a claim form. Actual costs will only be reimbursed on production of a receipt with the claim form. It is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure in advance of incurring costs that a receipt can be obtained. This includes instances where no physical ticket or receipt is provided (e.g. cashless payments). When using public transport in London, volunteers should register their Oyster or contactless card with the TfL website so that they can provide a breakdown of the travel and costs incurred with your expenses claim form.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/fares/contactless-and-oyster-account>. Volunteers must not claim for the 'top-up' cost of the card. A journey history can be accessed and printed from the website at <https://oyster.tfl.gov.uk/oyster/entry.do>. If the Oyster card is not registered with the TfL website a journey statement can be printed from any London Underground office and details the last 10 journeys (tube, bus or DLR) made on the Oyster card, and the costs of these journeys on pre-pay. Volunteers must complete and sign a Volunteer Travel Expenses Claim Form for any travel expenses. Original receipts / tickets must be attached to the form for it to be approved. For pre-pay Oyster cards or other contactless payment, statements from your online account can be sent electronically and the expense form electronically signed and submitted.

Payment via bank transfer (BACS) will be paid within 20 working days of a correctly filled expenses claim form being given to the Volunteering Manager or group leader.

Childcare and carer costs

Unfortunately we are not able to cover formal or informal childcare expenses or pay for respite care to volunteers with caring responsibilities. We are happy to help volunteers talk to organisations who can give advice about finding help caring.