



TOUCHSTONE

PAYING SERVICE USERS AND CARERS POLICY

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POLICY ON PAYING SERVICE USERS AND CARERS FOR SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT AND COPRODUCTION

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This document is intended to ensure consistency and good practice in the offering of payment of expenses to service users and carers.

This policy is consistent with NHS England Good Practice guidance “Working with our Patient and Public Voice” <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/patient-and-public-voice-partners-expenses-policy-oct-17.pdf>

2. **PRINCIPLES**

People using mental health services and their carers have expertise from their own experience and a valuable contribution to make to the development and delivery of services. Offering payment, in some circumstances, and expenses, in all cases, is a way of recognising people’s expertise and contribution to mental health and other services, as well as strengthening service user and carer involvement and living the values of coproduction.

Involvement and coproduction support personal development and confidence building and should be encouraged as standard as a route to both achieving Touchstone’s values as well as supporting the espoused wishes of the involved person. This could be about employment or volunteering or just being connected and purposeful.

There should be absolute honesty and transparency about what can be paid for and what cannot. This policy sets out the framework for this relationship of trust.

Financial transactions with service users should be safe and discrete and honour our values of integrity and respect.

3. **COPRODUCTION**

Coproduction is not just a word, it’s not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find a shared solution. In practice, it involves people who use services being consulted, included and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them. Touchstone wish to recognise those who coproduce solutions with us as part of this policy.

4. **INVOLVEMENT AGREEMENTS**

All service users/carers who are being paid to undertake ongoing pieces of involvement work for Touchstone should understand their role and any responsibilities they might have. In order to clarify for the organisation and the service user/carer what the purpose of the involvement is, an involvement agreement should be entered into and signed by both parties. Appendix 1 is an example involvement agreement that should be used for this purpose and appendix 1.1 is a blank agreement to be completed with service users/carers.

5. **PAYMENTS**

Payments may only be made for the following activities:

- Attendance at monthly Service User Involvement meetings (News4You) including for chairing and minuting meetings
- Involvement in recruitment, Quality Assurance Framework audits, Policy/Budget Review Groups, Formal Service Review and Compliment and Complaint panels.
- Attendance at Board training events
- Delivering a presentation/training **on behalf of Touchstone**
- Participation in consultation initiatives for which Touchstone receives funding for that purpose
- Any other activity as agreed with Touchstone service users/carers

Recipients of payments will be responsible for declaring any monies to the relevant bodies such as the Department for Work and Pensions/HMRC.

6. **INVOLVEMENT RATES**

- News4You attendees will be paid £5.00
- All other involvement will be paid at the rate of £15.00 per half day and £30 for a full day. For the purposes of this policy, a half day is up to 4 hours and a full day is over 4 hours.

7. **EXPENSES**

All reasonable out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed, where attendance at an activity/meeting is requested by Touchstone. Carers' costs cannot be met.

Service users/carers will be encouraged to use public transport wherever possible. Payment for taxis should be discussed and agreed in advance with Touchstone staff. A rate of 45 pence per mile will be paid for service users/carers travelling by car. This will cover travel from home to the agreed destination and back again.

Touchtone will also pay a cycle rate of 20p per mile.

All reimbursements must be supported by a valid receipt.

Appendix 2 is an 'at a glance' chart showing involvement fees and expenses entitlement.

Please note: - Reimbursed travel expenses are viewed as “income” by the Department for Work & Pensions and should be declared. Pre-booked taxis that are paid for by Touchstone are not classed as income in this way.

8. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF SERVICE USERS/CARERS**

It is the choice of each individual to accept or waive a payment.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a claim for attendance may only be authorised when a service user/carer has attended for at least 50% of the meeting/activity. This does not apply if the meeting is cancelled at short notice or, there are not enough attendees to continue.

It is the responsibility of the individual receiving a payment to inform the relevant agency of any earnings that may affect their benefits or income tax status. For a full understanding of any entitlement or responsibility under Permitted Work rules, see appendix 3.

Wherever possible individuals should provide evidence of actual expenses incurred.

Each individual receiving a payment will sign a receipt form to confirm that they have received the monies owed (see appendix 4).

9. Service users were involved in the development of this policy.

Agreed: May 2020

Appendix 1

An example of an Involvement Agreement

Name of Project/Activity/Meeting
Purpose/Aims of project/activity/meeting The aim of the project is to.....
Timescale and commitment of the project/activity/meeting For instance: The (activity) will take place over 6 months The (activity) is ongoing
Where project/activity/meeting will be held
Role of participant and experience/skills required For instance: To contribute <i>your views and ideas</i> , based on your experience, to meet the aims of (the activity) To <i>represent</i> the views and ideas of service users to meet the aims of (the activity)
Responsibilities of participant For instance: To participate in regular meetings (state regularity) To let (relevant member of staff) know if you are unable to attend a meeting To tell (relevant member of staff) if you have any issues or concerns or if there is anything you don't understand

Responsibilities of member of staff leading the project/activity/meeting

For instance:

To discuss appropriate support and make sure it is provided (eg pre-meetings, debriefing etc.)

To make sure relevant information (eg minutes of meetings, are sent to the participant in plenty of time

To discuss training needs and make sure they are met wherever possible

To offer an involvement fee and out-of-pocket expenses at the end of each (meeting)

To let the participant carer know if a (meeting) is cancelled

To ensure that staff avoid jargon and explain it where has to be used.

Contact details of member of staff

Signed: Service User/Carer

Date:

Signed: Staff Member

Date:

Touchstone Involvement Agreement

Name of Project/Activity/Meeting
Purpose/Aims of project/activity/meeting
Timescale and commitment of the project/activity/meeting
Where project/activity/meeting will be held
Role of participant and experience/skills required
Responsibilities of participant

Responsibilities of member of staff leading the project/activity/meeting

Contact details of member of staff

Signed: Service User/Carer

Date:

Signed: Staff Member

Date:

















Appendix 2

'At a glance' payment chart

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	Examples	£5 fee	£15 fee	£30 fee	Travel expenses	Other out of pocket expenses considered
		FEES CAN ONLY BE PAID ONCE PER WEEK, REGARDLESS OF THE NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES YOU ARE INVOLVED IN. EXPENSES WILL BE PAID FOR ALL ACTIVITIES.				
RECRUITMENT	-Short listing candidates (full day) -Being on an interview panel (full day)					
BIDDING PROCESS	- Contributing to tendering or bid-writing - Presenting a bid with Touchstone staff			May be full day in some cases		
SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT MEETINGS	- News for You meeting attendance - Service user forums - Chairing/ Minutes Meetings					
BEING A TRAINER	- Providing training to Touchstone staff as part of our in-house training programme. -Providing training to other organisations where this has been organised by Touchstone.			May be full day in some cases		
BEING A RESEARCHER	- Working with Touchstone to carry out community research					

Agreed: May 2020

Review date: May 2023 – N4U/CEO

BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETINGS	- Being a board member					
	- Being an advisor at Board meetings – 1 st 3 meetings only.					
	- Attending sub-committees of the Board of Trustees					
BEING A CONSULTANT	- Working with a Touchstone member of staff to do a specific piece of work - Helping to lead a particular event -Volunteering at a particular event					
CHECKING TOUCHSTONE IS DOING ITS JOB PROPERLY	- Being on a Quality Standards audit team. - Attending a SU Compliments and Complaints panel					
NEWSLETTERS	- Pulling together a newsletter for service users					
GIVING FEEDBACK	- completing a service user questionnaire - speaking to a worker - writing a compliment or complaint					
SERVICE USER CONSULTANT ROLE	- A specific role at Touchstone with a job description.	Weekly payment of £20 excluding travel expenses				

Appendix 3

Permitted Work Rules

It is well known that doing some kind of work is generally good for your physical and mental wellbeing and confidence.

Permitted work can help you learn new skills, help build your confidence and help you start thinking about types of work you could do.

You may be able to do some work if you have a disability, illness or health condition and still have the security of keeping any of the following benefits payments and National Insurance credits:

- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Incapacity Benefit
- Severe Disablement Allowance

Permitted work lets you:

- work for less than 16 hours each week
- earn up to £140 every week after tax
- receive your normal amount of benefit
- build up your skills and experience
- be supported while you work – we call this supported permitted work
- do voluntary work – there is no limit on how many hours a week you can do voluntary work for

There is no limit on the number of weeks you can do permitted work for.

What you must do if you want to work

Before you start any work, whether paid or unpaid, you should [fill in a PW1 form](#) and send it to the Jobcentre Plus office that deals with your benefit. Touchstone will write you a letter explaining the work you will be doing and the hours/payment involved.

DWP will then let you know if the work you want to do meets the permitted work conditions. If you do any kind of work that doesn't meet the conditions, you could lose your benefit.

If you can't tell Jobcentre Plus before you start work, you should [fill in a PW1 form](#) and send it to the Jobcentre Plus office that deals with your benefit as soon as possible after starting work.

[Download and print a copy of the permitted work form \(PW1\)](#) or call Jobcentre Plus on 0800 169 0310 for a copy.

What is supported permitted work?

Supported permitted work is work that is supervised by someone because you have a disability, illness or health condition which means you can't work for more than a few hours per week over a long period of time.

The supervisor is normally employed by a public or local authority, or a voluntary organisation. This could be work done in the community or in a sheltered workshop. It also includes work as part of a hospital treatment programme. There is no limit on how many hours you can do supported permitted work for.

If you think the work you want to do is supported permitted work your professional support worker must fill in the supported permitted work section on the PW1.

If you are getting another benefit because you're not working (for example, Income Support, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction), then you should talk to your Jobcentre Plus work coach before you start any work.

If you get Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction and you're thinking of starting permitted work, you must talk to your local council straightaway, as the amount you get could change.

Appendix 4

This payment is a gross amount. I am responsible for paying income tax, if due and informing any relevant agencies.



I acknowledge receipt of £..... from
Touchstone

for expenses/payment for involvement in the following activity:

.....

Signed Service User/Carer

Date

This payment is a gross amount. I am responsible for paying income tax, if due and informing any relevant agencies.



I acknowledge receipt of £..... from
Touchstone

for expenses/payment for involvement in the following activity:

.....

Signed Service User/Carer

Date