

# OVH Customer Empowerment Expenses and Reimbursement Policy

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| Originator:                              | Policy and Strategy Team   |
| Executive Management Team Approval Date: | 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2022 |
| Review date:                             | June 2023                  |

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| <b>1</b> | <b>Introduction</b>  |
| 1.1      | The Customer Empowerment Expenses and Reimbursement Policy aims to present a clear framework for expenses and reimbursements available to One Vision Housing’s (OVH) residents who are participating in any activities covered under the Customer Empowerment Strategy.  |
| 1.2      | <p>Application of this Policy ensures compliance with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The formulation of their landlord’s housing related policies and strategic priorities</li> <li>○ The making of decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including the setting of service standards</li> <li>○ The scrutiny of their landlord’s performance and the making of recommendations of their landlord about how performance might be improved</li> <li>○ The management of their homes where applicable</li> <li>○ The management of maintenance and repair services, such commissioning and undertaking a range of repair tasks, as agreed with landlords, and sharing in the savings made</li> <li>○ Agree local offers for service delivery.</li> </ul> |
| 1.3      | <b>Access and Communication</b>  |
| 1.3.1    | OVH is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to everyone. OVH will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real may exist, that may make it difficult for people to work for OVH or use its services.  |
| 1.4      | <b>Equality, Diversity and Human Rights</b>  |
| 1.4.1    | OVH is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out its duty with positive regard for the following core strands of equality; Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Gender Identity / Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation and Religion and / or Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity.   |

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| 1.5.2    | OVH also recognise that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic circumstances, employment status, class, appearance, responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.  |
| 1.5.3    | OVH will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within context of current Human Rights legislation. Staff and others with whom we work, will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998).   |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Statement of Intent</b>   |
| 2.1      | OVH recognises that effective customer empowerment is important to meet its objectives.  |
| 2.2      | This Policy ensures residents who choose to take part in OVH’s formal empowerment structures will not be out of pocket as a result of their involvement.   |
| 2.3      | Accessible expenses and reimbursements are likely to encourage residents to get involved in helping OVH to continuously improve its business in the future.  |
| 2.4      | The purpose of this Policy is to provide residents with clarity in regards to what OVH will reimburse and encourage residents’ empowerment.  |
| 2.5      | OVH provides a separate funding for Resident Associations.   |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Policy</b>  |
| 3.1      | OVH will reimburse residents for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of their involvement in our corporate activities.  |
| 3.2      | OVH will also consider paying residents in advance for certain expenses i.e. subsistence payments. Advance payments will be made at the discretion of the Performance and Customer Insight Team Leader.  |
| 3.3      | Listed below are the key areas for reimbursement. This is not an exhaustive list, and other areas of out of pocket expenses will be considered:  |
| 3.4      | <b>Public Transport</b>  |
| 3.4.1    | OVH will reimburse the cost of all standard class public transport tickets.  |
| 3.5      | <b>Taxis</b>   |
| 3.5.1    | OVH will pay the cost of Taxis if booked or arranged when public transport is not feasible or in the cases of vulnerable tenants. OVH will also consider paying for Taxis in case of emergencies or where tenants have been called to attend urgent meetings. The decision to pay for Taxis will be at the discretion of the Performance and Customer Insight Team Leader. |

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| 3.6    | <p><b>Childcare</b></p>   |
| 3.6.1  | <p>OVH will make reasonable payments towards childcare provision, to allow for residents to get involved. The amount payable will be at the discretion of the Performance and Customer Insight Team Leader and will aim to represent value for money (VFM).</p>   |
| 3.7    | <p><b>Car Mileage</b></p>   |
| 3.7.1  | <p>OVH will reimburse car mileage costs at the following rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.35p per mile – less than 1000cc.</li> <li>• 0.40p per mile – less than 1800cc but greater than 1000cc.</li> <li>• 0.45p per mile – 1800cc or greater.</li> </ul>   |
| 3.7.2  | <p>OVH consulted on car mileage rate with customers and there are no taxable implications in relation to proposed rates. The amount payable will be at the discretion of the Performance and Customer Insight Team Leader and will aim to present value for money (VFM).</p>  |
| 3.8    | <p><b>Refreshments and Subsistence</b></p>  |
| 3.8.1  | <p>Hot and cold drinks and light refreshments for meetings will be provided and food may be provided at the discretion of the responsible officer, if the meeting and /or activity takes place during a typical meal time.</p>  |
| 3.9    | <p>In the event of residents attending conferences and/or meetings where meals are not provided, OVH will fund the cost of meals subject to an agreement prior to the event. The payments for lunch will only applicable if the event is an all-day event and/or is run over lunch time. The amounts payable are reflective of those rates available to staff as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £5.50 for breakfast</li> <li>• £7.50 for lunch and</li> <li>• £9.50 for dinner / evening meal.</li> </ul> |
| 3.10   | <p><b>Car Parking</b></p>   |
| 3.10.1 | <p>OVH will reimburse the cost of any car parking upon the production of valid receipts.</p>  |
| 3.11   | <p><b>Interpreter / Signer</b></p>  |
| 3.11.1 | <p>OVH will provide alternative form of communication such as an interpreter or signer, where necessary.</p>  |
| 3.12   | <p><b>Care allowance</b></p>  |
| 3.12.1 | <p>OVH will make reasonable payments towards the cost of any care or support worker required for a resident to attend a meeting. OVH will reimburse residents who act as carers for a substitute carer while they attend a meeting. The amount payable will be at the discretion of the Performance and Customer Insight Team Leader and will aim to represent VFM.</p>   |

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| 3.13     | <b>Loss of earnings</b>   |   |
| 3.13.1   | OVH will liaise with the residents in advance to ensure their availability before arranging a meeting or an activity. However, subject to a prior agreement, OVH will make reasonable payments in relation to the loss of earnings. Any payment in relation to the loss of earnings would be at the discretion of the Performance and Customer Insight Team Leader. |   |
| 3.14     | OVH have consulted on all expenses rates with customers and there are no taxable implications in relation to proposed rates. The rates will be reviewed annually in line with the Policy review schedule.   |   |
| 3.15     | <b>Training</b>   |   |
| 3.15.1   | OVH will not reimburse training costs without prior agreement from the Performance and Customer Insight Team Leader.  |   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Implementation</b>   |   |
| 4.1      | Where necessary, the Customer Voice Officer will provide awareness training to staff to ensure consistent implementation of this Policy throughout OVH.   |   |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Performance</b>  |   |
| 5.1      | Effective operation of this policy will be monitored through budgetary control meetings between the Performance and Customer Insight Team Leader and Director - Governance and Compliance.  |   |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Consultation</b>   |   |
| 6.1      | The Tenants Policy Review Group was consulted about this Policy on 10/06/2022.  |   |
| 6.2      | All OVH Staff were also consulted in the development of this Policy.  |   |
| <b>7</b> | <b>Review</b>   |   |
| 7.1      | This Policy will be reviewed annually, in consultation with the Tenants Policy Review Group and in line with good practice recommendations  |   |
| <b>8</b> | <b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>   |   |
| 8.1      | Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?   | Yes   |
| 8.2      | When was EIA conducted and by who?  | EIA Test conducted by the Policy Officer and Policy and Strategy Manager in May 2022.   |
| 8.3      | Results of EIA  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration is given to method of payment; this will be addressed in the implementation of the Policy</li> </ul> |

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|                                |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Policy will be publicised to ensure awareness amongst staff and residents.</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>9</b>                       | <b>Scheme of Delegation</b>  |  |   |
| 9.1                            | Responsible committee for approving and monitoring implementation of the policy and any amendments to it | Executive Management Team  |   |
| 9.2                            | Responsible officer for formulating policy and reporting to committee on its effective implementation    | Director - Governance and Compliance   |   |
| 9.3                            | Responsible officer for formulating, reviewing and monitoring implementation of procedures               | Director – Governance and Compliance   |   |
| <b>10</b>                      | <b>Amendment Log</b>   |  |   |
| <b>Date of revision:</b>       | <b>Reason for revision:</b>  | <b>Consultation record:</b>  | <b>Record of amendments:</b>  |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2019 | In line with the Review Schedule   | See section 6  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A reference to TPAS has been removed.</li> </ul>                         |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2021    | In line with the Review Schedule   | See section 6  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no significant changes to the Policy in this review</li> </ul> |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2022     | In line with the Review Schedule   | See section 6  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change of job titles throughout the Policy</li> </ul>                    |