

Volunteer Expenses Policy



Meet Lynn, a regular volunteer in our Warrington office.

Christian Aid recognises and values the enormous contribution that volunteers make to its work. We therefore believe that no volunteer should be out of pocket as a result of giving their time.

Volunteers are strongly encouraged to claim their out-of-pocket expenses to enable their volunteering and help Christian Aid to accurately measure the cost of involving volunteers.

In this policy, you'll learn what volunteers can claim as expenses and how to submit their claim.

Who can claim?

Christian Aid volunteers can claim out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the course of their volunteering, so long as they've been agreed in advance with their Volunteer Manager. Most roles will not need to claim expenses. However, for those that do, these should be agreed during the volunteer's settling in period. These will typically be occasions where volunteers are under instruction of Christian Aid.

Paying expenses is a natural part of the volunteer journey and good practise. It helps remove barriers for volunteers on low income or with little spare cash. Volunteers should always be offered the opportunity to claim their costs, even if they have previously chosen not to. This can avoid any embarrassment and enables consistency. A volunteer can of course decline claiming for expenses.

Volunteers who receive state benefits should notify their benefits advisor before claiming expenses. For more information, see the [Citizens Advice guidance](#).

What may be claimed?

Claims should only be made for actual expenses incurred. Any reimbursement above this could be considered taxable income. It may also create an employment relationship with the volunteer, and could affect eligibility for benefits.

Fares on public transport



Travel by public transport should be by the cheapest fare, normally second class and, where possible, off-peak. Although Christian Aid does not set a maximum travel distance, the volunteer role manager may decide on reasonable limits.

Where a volunteer uses a travel pass, they should work out the average amount and submit a photocopy of the pass. Volunteers using Oyster cards in London can obtain a statement giving details of their last eight journeys from London Underground ticket offices; alternatively, volunteers paying with debit cards may submit a bank statement with the cost and date of the journeys highlighted.

Car and motorcycle mileage



As part of Christian Aid's commitment to reducing carbon emissions, we strongly encourage people to use public transport where possible. Volunteers are encouraged to discuss their travel options with their Volunteer Manager.

Where travel by private vehicle is necessary, mileage will be reimbursed at 42p per mile for cars and at 24p per mile for motorcycles. Volunteers will need to record the start and end points of their journey and the total miles travelled.

Parking costs



We will reimburse reasonable parking costs for car and motorcycle travel where public transport is not practical. As always, we expect volunteers to explore the most economical option available.

Bicycle mileage



Travel by bicycle is a great way to reduce carbon emissions. Volunteers travelling by bicycle, will be reimbursed 20p per mile.

Meals when volunteering away from home



A meal allowance can be claimed if the following criteria are met:

- The volunteer is away from home for more than 4 hours
- No alternative food or refreshments are provided

This allowance should reimburse actual expenditure and will require a receipt. Depending on the length of time volunteering, this can cover multiple meals during the day. Food and refreshments claims should not total more than £40 for a 24 hour period. We are unable to reimburse the cost for meals taken at home during their volunteering hours. As always, we encourage volunteers to discuss and agree meal expenses with their Volunteer Manager in advance.

Costs incurred when volunteering from home

We may agree to reimburse home-based volunteers expenses to meet reasonable additional household costs, such as heating and lighting. In this case the individual must regularly volunteer from home for at least a day per week (7 hours). This will be reimbursed at 60p per day.

Other out-of-pocket expenses

Other necessary expenses such as postage, photocopying, telephone calls, etc may be reimbursed where the volunteer and their Volunteer Manager. Claims for internet data in excess of the volunteer's normal allowance would need to be evidenced and approved in advance where possible.

Gifts

Gifts must never be used as a substitute for reimbursing genuine expenses. Staff may offer light refreshments, Christian Aid merchandise, or small tokens of appreciation where appropriate. Volunteers rightly expect us to be responsible stewards of donated funds. An appropriate gift may be given to mark a significant occasion, such as a volunteer's departure after long service or an important life event.

Regular gifts or those of significant value should be avoided as this could suggest a contract with a volunteer. It's also important to avoid giving gifts that volunteers could financially benefit from. Cash, vouchers, or items that may increase in value could affect a volunteer's benefit entitlement or tax position.

How to claim?

Christian Aid is happy to accept claims on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. However, other than in exceptional circumstances, claims should be made within three months

Volunteers should complete and sign the [volunteer expenses claim form](#), attaching any receipts and tickets as evidence. Ideally, this should be via email, with scans or digitally copies of receipts attached.

The form should then be submitted to their Volunteer Manager, who will authorise the claim and pass it along to the finance team for processing.

Note, first time claims may take up to one month to process, as the volunteer will need to be set up on our payment system. For subsequent claims, payment will be made via BACS transfer within two weeks from approval by volunteer manager.

Claims can only be paid into a volunteer's personal bank account, not into a business account.



Christian Aid volunteers may be offered expenses from churches or organisations. For example, in return for a speaking engagement. Volunteers should not accept these expenses and may suggest that the money be donated to Christian Aid.

Financial Support

We appreciate the importance of financial wellbeing and the impact of cost-of-living challenges. We encourage volunteers to speak to their Volunteer Manager or Christian Aid [volunteering team](#) if they are concerned that financial situation may impact their volunteering.



For further support we recommend reaching out to local [Citizens Advice](#) who can offer advice and signposting. Individuals can check if they are eligible for any cost-of-living support on appropriate government websites for [England](#), [Scotland](#) & [Wales](#).