VOLUNTEER EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

PRN-149: VOLUNTEER EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that volunteers are not financially disadvantaged as a result of undertaking approved volunteering activities on behalf of the organisation.

The organisation values the contribution of volunteers and is committed to reimbursing reasonable, authorised, and evidenced expenses incurred while carrying out volunteering duties.

This policy aims to:

Promote equality of opportunity in volunteering.

Remove financial barriers to volunteering.

Ensure fair and consistent reimbursement arrangements.

Support transparency and accountability.

Protect organisational funds.

Provide clear guidance on claiming expenses.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

All registered volunteers.

Volunteer Coordinators.

Managers responsible for volunteer oversight.

Employees involved in processing expense claims.

The policy applies only to expenses incurred while undertaking authorised volunteering activities on behalf of the organisation.

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3. Policy Statement

The organisation is committed to ensuring that volunteers are not out of pocket as a result of their volunteering activities.

Volunteers may claim reimbursement for reasonable expenses that:

Are directly related to volunteering activities.

Have been approved where required.

Are supported by appropriate evidence.

Comply with this policy.

The organisation does not provide payment for volunteering time or services.

Expense reimbursement does not create an employment relationship.

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4. Principles

The organisation will ensure that expense arrangements are:

Fair

Applied consistently across all volunteers.

Transparent

Claims and payments are clearly recorded.

Accountable

Expenditure is subject to appropriate oversight.

Accessible

Volunteers are supported to claim legitimate expenses.

Proportionate

Controls reflect the value and nature of claims.

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5. Eligible Expenses

Reasonable expenses may be reimbursed where they are necessary for approved volunteering activities.

Examples may include:

Travel expenses.

Public transport costs.

Mileage expenses.

Parking charges.

Approved subsistence costs.

Postage expenses.

Pre-approved activity costs.

Expenses must be directly related to volunteering duties.

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6. Travel Expenses

Volunteers may claim reasonable travel expenses incurred while:

Visiting service users.

Attending training.

Attending meetings.

Participating in volunteer events.

Undertaking approved organisational activities.

The most cost-effective and practical travel options should be used where possible.

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7. Public Transport

Volunteers may claim the actual cost of:

Bus fares.

Train fares.

Tram fares.

Underground travel.

Where possible, receipts, tickets, or evidence of purchase should be retained.

Standard class travel should normally be used.

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8. Mileage Claims

Volunteers using their own vehicle for approved volunteering activities may claim mileage at the organisation's approved mileage rate.

The applicable rate should be reviewed periodically and align with organisational financial procedures.

Mileage claims should include:

Date of journey.

Start location.

End location.

Purpose of journey.

Total mileage travelled.

Mileage must only be claimed for authorised volunteering activities.

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9. Volunteer Vehicle Responsibilities

Volunteers using their own vehicles must ensure they maintain:

A valid driving licence.

Appropriate vehicle insurance.

Vehicle roadworthiness.

A valid MOT certificate where required by law.

The organisation reserves the right to request evidence where appropriate.

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10. Parking Costs

Reasonable parking charges incurred during approved volunteering activities may be reimbursed.

Volunteers should:

Use economical parking options.

Retain receipts or payment evidence where available.

Penalty charges and fines will not be reimbursed.

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11. Subsistence Expenses

Volunteers may claim reasonable subsistence expenses where:

Activities extend over a significant period.

Refreshments or meals are necessary.

Approval has been obtained where required.

Claims should remain reasonable and proportionate.

Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

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12. Training and Development Expenses

Expenses associated with attending approved volunteer training may be reimbursed, including:

Travel expenses.

Parking charges.

Approved subsistence costs.

Attendance should be authorised through normal volunteer arrangements.

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13. Communication Costs

In exceptional circumstances, volunteers may claim approved communication expenses where volunteering duties require:

Telephone calls.

Postage costs.

Printing.

Claims should be agreed in advance wherever possible.

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14. Activity Costs

Occasionally, volunteers may incur costs while supporting approved activities.

Examples may include:

Community activity fees.

Materials required for approved group activities.

Event-related expenses.

Prior approval should generally be obtained before expenditure is incurred.

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15. Non-Reimbursable Expenses

The organisation will not normally reimburse:

Fines or penalties.

Personal purchases.

Unauthorised expenditure.

Alcohol.

Membership subscriptions unless specifically approved.

Costs unrelated to volunteering duties.

Loss of earnings.

Childcare or dependent care costs unless separately approved under an organisational scheme.

Exceptions must be authorised by management.

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16. Approval Requirements

Where practical, volunteers should seek approval before incurring significant expenses.

Approval may be required for:

High-value claims.

Unusual expenses.

Overnight travel.

Special activities.

Event-related purchases.

Approval arrangements should be communicated clearly.

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17. Expense Claim Process

To claim expenses, volunteers should:

Step 1

Complete the appropriate expense claim form.

Step 2

Provide supporting evidence where available.

Step 3

Submit the claim within the required timescale.

Step 4

Obtain approval from the designated manager or Volunteer Coordinator.

Step 5

Await reimbursement through approved payment arrangements.

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18. Expense Claim Timescales

Volunteers should submit claims as soon as reasonably practicable.

Claims should normally be submitted within:

Three months of the expense being incurred.

Late claims may be considered at management discretion.

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19. Supporting Evidence

Evidence may include:

Receipts.

Tickets.

Invoices.

Parking receipts.

Online booking confirmations.

Where receipts are unavailable, an explanation may be required.

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20. Approval and Verification

Expense claims should be reviewed to ensure:

The claim is genuine.

The expense relates to volunteering activities.

Supporting evidence is appropriate.

Approval requirements have been met.

Queries should be resolved before payment is authorised.

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21. Reimbursement Method

Approved claims will normally be reimbursed via:

Bank transfer.

Approved organisational payment method.

Cash reimbursements should be avoided wherever possible.

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22. Financial Controls

Expense reimbursement arrangements will be subject to:

Financial procedures.

Internal controls.

Audit arrangements.

Budget monitoring.

Appropriate records must be maintained.

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23. Equality and Inclusion

The organisation recognises that financial barriers can affect participation in volunteering.

Expense arrangements are intended to:

Promote inclusion.

Encourage wider participation.

Support accessibility.

Remove financial disadvantage.

The organisation will seek to make reimbursement processes accessible and straightforward.

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24. Fraud Prevention

Expense claims must be:

Honest.

Accurate.

Complete.

False claims may result in:

Recovery of funds.

Volunteer management action.

Referral under Fraud, Bribery and Corruption procedures where appropriate.

The organisation operates a zero-tolerance approach to fraudulent claims.

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25. Record Keeping

Records should be maintained relating to:

Claims submitted.

Supporting documentation.

Approvals.

Payments made.

Audit activity.

Records must be stored securely and retained in accordance with organisational procedures.

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26. Volunteer Support

Volunteers should be informed of:

Available reimbursement arrangements.

Claim submission processes.

Supporting documentation requirements.

Timescales for payment.

Support should be provided where volunteers require assistance completing claims.

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27. Volunteer Expenses Flowchart

Volunteer Undertakes Approved Activity

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Expense Incurred

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Receipt or Evidence Retained

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Expense Claim Form Completed

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Claim Submitted

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Manager / Coordinator Review

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Approved?

No → Clarification Requested / Claim Rejected

Yes

↓

Payment Processed

↓

Records Maintained

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28. Case Study

Scenario: Volunteer Travel to Wellbeing Visits

A volunteer provides weekly companionship visits to two service users and travels by bus.

Expenses Incurred

Weekly bus fares.

Travel to mandatory volunteer training.

Action Taken

Tickets are retained.

Expense claim form is completed monthly.

Claims are reviewed and approved.

Outcome

Expenses are reimbursed promptly, ensuring the volunteer is not financially disadvantaged.

Learning Point

Clear reimbursement arrangements reduce barriers to volunteering and support volunteer retention.

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29. Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

Responsible for:

Approving the overall framework for volunteer expense reimbursement.

Providing governance oversight.

Directors

Responsible for:

Ensuring implementation of the policy.

Monitoring expenditure.

Maintaining financial control arrangements.

Managers and Volunteer Coordinators

Responsible for:

Reviewing and approving claims.

Providing guidance to volunteers.

Maintaining records.

Volunteers

Responsible for:

Submitting accurate claims.

Retaining supporting evidence.

Following organisational procedures.

Reporting errors promptly.

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30. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The organisation will monitor:

Number of claims submitted.

Reimbursement timescales.

Volunteer satisfaction.

Budget expenditure.

Audit findings.

Compliance with financial procedures.

Fraud or irregularity concerns.

Monitoring findings will be used to improve volunteer support and financial management processes.

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31. Review Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed:

Annually.

Following significant financial reviews.

Following audit recommendations.

Following legislative or regulatory changes.

Following volunteer feedback.

Related Policies

Volunteer Management Policy

Financial Management and Internal Controls Policy

Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Prevention Policy

Volunteer Recruitment, Induction and Supervision Procedure

Health and Safety Policy

Lone Working Policy

Records Management and Record Keeping Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy