

## Support for Residents to Get Involved

### 1. Expenses

Solon will pay out-of-pocket expenses for travel and other reasonable costs, so that you can come to meetings, training courses and other events.

#### Travel costs

We would encourage residents, where possible, to use public transport. We will repay bus and standard class train fares. We will need to see your ticket (we can copy it and give it back if you still need it). If you need to travel by train, we can book tickets for you.

We will also pay petrol costs at 40p per mile (this is the same as staff) if you use your car to come to meetings or events or 24 p per mile for motorcycles. You will need to make a note of the actual distance you have travelled.

If you need to use a taxi to attend a meeting or event, we can book one for you. All taxis should be booked through Solon on our account.

We will pay parking costs but not parking fines. We will need to see your ticket or a receipt.

If you need a carer or personal assistant to travel with you then we will meet that person's travel costs as well.

#### Child and adult care costs

For large events, we will usually provide a crèche. For other meetings, we will pay reasonable childcare costs for children under 16 as well as care costs for dependant adults.

For child care we will pay the national minimum wage (£5.93 per hour from October 2010). For dependant adults, we will pay the same, or the cost of a professional carer if required.

Child or adult care is not payable to family members living in the same household.

Child care is not normally payable for children of school age during school hours.

#### How do I get paid?

Expenses are paid in cash at each meeting or event. You will need your ticket or a receipt.

For petrol costs, you will need to provide the actual number of miles travelled and fill in a mileage claim form (available from the Resident Involvement Coordinator).

For child / adult care costs, you will need to fill in a care claim form, which includes a section to be filled in by the person providing care. We can send you a form to fill in before the event. If we do not receive a form signed by the carer (for claims paid where a form has not been filled in) we will not pay any more care claims.

If you need to claim an unusually large amount, we may not be able to pay this on the day. Please let us know in advance if you think this will affect you.

#### Tax and benefits

Expenses paid to residents are not classed as earnings. They cover out of pocket expenses, and should not affect residents' benefits, but may affect their tax position. The tax-free mileage allowance is 40p per mile (24p for motorcycles) up to 10,000 miles. Claims are subject to audit by internal and external auditors. Also, HM Revenue and Customs inspect paid claims from time to time. We strongly advise residents to check their position.

## **2. Training**

Training will be offered to residents who are, or who want to be, involved in shaping and monitoring Solon's services.

This will range from introductory 'taster' courses to comprehensive training packages for activities like Resident Scrutiny. The training plan will be developed in conjunction with residents.

Training sessions will be arranged at times to suit residents. This could include evenings and weekends.

Expenses will be paid as detailed above and other support provided as detailed below.

Where possible training will be delivered by Solon staff. If it is more appropriate or cost effective, or staff lack the skills, external training providers will be used.

## **3. Other Support**

If you need assistance to attend events or get involved in other ways, we will do our best to help.

All meetings, training and other events will be held in accessible venues.

Accessible transport can be provided if needed.

If you need a carer to support you in your involvement, we will cover their costs as detailed above and make sure they are able to support you effectively.

If you need other support, like an interpreter (including sign language), a hearing loop, large print documents etc we will do our best to provide this.

If English is not your first language, we can translate documents for you – we will discuss and agree with you which documents will be translated.