



The Community Resilience Fund: Payment for Involvement Guidance

Introduction

All residents and VCSE representatives were offered payment for taking part in the CRF process. We understand that there are often financial barriers enabling people to take part in community activities, so we put measures in place to allow everyone to participate wherever we could.

We developed this guidance to make sure everyone was informed about the payment being offered, to create an equitable, transparent and inclusive process for participation.

We worked with [Social Change Nest](#) to set up an account on [Open Collective](#) which we could use to pay residents for their time and reimburse their expenses. Participants could submit their requests after each meeting, and we would aim to process requests within a week of submission.

Please note, this guidance was developed specifically for the CRF and is not a council wide endorsed approach. Legislation may have changed since the publishing of the guidance and further research is advised if you are looking to develop your own guidance.

Payment for involvement guidance

These guidelines have been developed by Bristol City Council for anyone involved in the Community Resilience Fund as experts by experience. It sets out who we can offer payment for involvement to, in what circumstances, rates and methods of payment, and information about expenses.

We cannot provide individual advice about payment for involvement and how this might impact on your personal financial situation, but this document brings together helpful information and signposts further resources and support. It is each person's individual responsibility to understand the impacts of receiving payment for involvement.

This guidance applies to people aged 16 and over.

Why do we offer payment for involvement?

We want to give greater power to communities to make decisions that affect them. We value diversity of knowledge and experience. We want to remove barriers to participation. Paying people removes financial barriers which might stop people taking part. It means a broader range of people may be able to take part.

By offering payment for involvement, we are showing that we value and recognise everyone's time and experience. Nobody is expected to contribute for free (although some people may choose to do this).

Service User Involvement/Participation vs Employment

Bristol City Council do not view service user involvement or participation to be the same as paid employment. People involved are not staff and do not work for the organisation. There is no contract of employment between the participant and the Council, and we do not consider participation to be a means to assess capability for work.

What will we offer payment for involvement for?

We offer payment for involvement in the Community Resilience Fund decision-making group meetings. This is because taking part requires significant time and commitment and we will make use of your experience and knowledge. You'll be working as a team to make decisions.

How much will I receive?

All members of the decision-making groups will be given money or vouchers for each meeting they attend, in recognition of their time.

Payment of £32.70 will be made following each meeting. Participants will receive a maximum of 5 instalments of £32.70, depending on the number of meetings attended. This is at the rate of the Real Living Wage.

Meetings will take place between 2 and 6 weeks apart.

Participation involves:

- Attending at least three meetings, each lasting three hours;
- Working as a group, led by a facilitator, to discuss and make decisions about allocating the Community Resilience Fund;
- Participants might choose to do reading or preparation at home.

This is called payment for involvement or payment for participation and is not the same as work.

Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed in addition to this payment.

Who will receive payment for involvement?

We offer payment for involvement to anyone who takes part in a decision-making group, who is doing so in their own time and not as part of a job they are already paid to do. If you are doing this role within your paid role, we can reimburse your organisation for your time.

Accepting payment is optional.

How will I receive payment for involvement?

Payment for attending the meetings can be made in money, vouchers or a donation to a local charity of your choice.

Monetary payments

Money will be paid to participants by Social Change Nest, which is an organisation supporting Bristol City Council with the administration of payments via an online system called Open Collective.

Participants need to go onto a webpage and submit a claim/request for their time and any expenses, such as travel and/or childcare. You will need to upload receipts to this system as evidence of expenses. This video shows you [how to submit your request for payment](#).

Requests will be approved by the Community Resilience Fund team and Bristol City Council and then you will be paid by The Social Change Nest (this is the name that will appear in your account when you receive the money).

You can request this payment after each meeting. Payments will take a few days to arrive once approved.

Vouchers:

We will also offer vouchers, which will be given after each meeting. Vouchers will be sent electronically but if required, they can be printed for you.

Donation:

If you do not want to receive payment for involvement, we can donate the equivalent money to a local charity or community group of your choice, on your behalf.

To assist people who receive welfare benefits which have earnings limits, payment for involvement is voluntary so you can refuse it or ask to receive a lower rate. Please let us know if this applies to you.

Expenses

We will pay for the following reasonable expenses in addition to the payment for involvement:

- Bus tickets;
- Parking costs when free parking is not available;
- Mileage costs at a rate of 45p per mile;
- Taxi (if this is the only option);
- Childcare costs;
- Costs of a translator or interpreter;
- Costs of a personal assistant or support worker.

You will need to keep receipts for any expenses you incur to provide as evidence. You will then be reimbursed.

All expenses will be paid through the Open Collective online system.

We can reimburse you for expenses even if you do not wish to receive payment for involvement. Expenses are not considered the same as earnings or payment.

How might payment for involvement affect me?

Payment for involvement may affect your personal tax and benefits situation. Everyone's financial circumstances are different and we cannot advise you on specific situations. We have collated some guidance to explain the possible impacts. [This helpful guide](#), produced for Disability Rights UK, explains how payment for involvement could affect your benefits and what you need to do before taking part.

We recommend seeking personal advice from whoever you normally speak to about benefits, for example, a Work Coach, Citizen's Advice or the Jobcentre.

We also advise informing your Jobcentre, Work Coach, tax or benefits authorities of your participation. This is sometimes called "**service user involvement**" and is not the same as work.

We are happy to provide a letter explaining the nature of your participation and how it differs from work for you to give to your Work Coach/ Jobcentre. You could give this directly to your Work Coach/Jobcentre or send it to your Jobcentre via recorded delivery.

Participants will also be able to download evidence of payment from the Open Collective system, if they want a record of this.

We will be flexible with our approach to payment to try and meet your needs and work with you to find alternatives, if possible.

We recognise that your personal financial circumstances are private. We aim to find the balance between making sure you have the information and support you need, without asking you to share any information you may not wish to.

Please let us know if you are unsure about anything, have any questions or need more information. We are happy to help!

Further advice and support

Below is a list of organisations and resources where you may be able to find further advice and support relating to your specific financial circumstances.

Jobcentre Plus Offices

- 100 Temple Street, Redcliff, Bristol, BS1 6AG
- 382-386 Two Mile Hill, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 1BZ
- 1-15 Monks Avenue, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 0UD
- 17-19 Kent Street, Bedminster, Bristol, BS13 7TE
- 59 Whitchurch Lane, Bishopsworth, Bristol, BS13 7TE
- 31 High Street, Shirehampton, Bristol, BS11 0DX
- Somerset Hall, Somerset Street, Bath, BA1 1TS
- 39 South Parade, Yate, South Glos, BS37 4BB
- 28 Old Street, Clevedon, BS21 6BY
- Regent House, High Street, W-S-M, North Somerset, BS23 1JF
- Brendan House, 3 Upper High Street, Taunton, TA1 3RL

Benefit Advice for service user involvement

We would advise you to contact organisations or visit their websites to book an appointment, or check drop-in times, as these could vary.

Organisations for support in Bristol

Citizens Advice Bureau

48 Fairfax Street, Bristol, BS1 3BL

Advice Line: 03444 111 444 Mon-Fri, 10:00am-1:00pm

North Bristol Advice Centre

2 Gainsborough Square, Lockleaze, Bristol, BS7 9XA
T: 0117 9515751
<http://www.northbristoladvice.org.uk/get-advice>

Talking Money

1 Hide Street, St Phillips, Bristol, BS2 0BH
T: 0800 121 4511
mail@talkingmoney.org.uk

Kingswood Civic Centre

High Street, Kingswood, BS15 4AR
Thursday 9.30am-12.30pm

South Bristol Advice Services

Cover the following postcodes: BS3, BS4, BS13, BS14 & some parts of BS1
The Withywood Centre, Queens Road, BS13 8QA
T: 0117 985 1122
admin@southbristoladvice.org.uk

National organisations

HM Revenue and Customs

[The HMRC website](#) provides information about [welfare benefits](#), [income tax allowances](#) and further forms of financial support

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

You can find your local CAB on the [Citizens Advice Bureau website](#) which also gives lots of information to help you make financial decisions

NIHR guidance

[NIHR's guidance for members of the public](#) includes a section with information on welfare benefits regulations

Disability Rights UK

[Disability Rights UK website](#) includes information and advice on benefits. You can contact 0330 995 0400 to access paper copies of their factsheets and publications

Turn2Us

[Turn2Us](#) is a charity providing financial information and support, including a [benefits calculator](#), a ['find an advisor'](#) tool, and free helpline: 0808 802 2000.

Local sources of support

[Bristol City Council provides the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service.](#) Housing associations and community organisations may also offer similar services