



# Payment for Involvement Guidance

Bristol City Council Adult Social Care

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# 1. Introduction

These guidelines have been developed by Bristol City Council Adult Social Care to be used by Adult Social Care officers within Bristol City Council. This can be effectively thought of as expensing people for their time. The focus within this guidance is on monetary payment and voucher payment.

This guidance cannot provide individual advice about payment for involvement and how this might impact on an individual's personal financial situation, but this document brings together helpful information and signposts further resources and support.

## 2. Aims and objectives

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. Payment for involvement 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, Adult Social Care are showing that they value and recognise everyone's time and experience. Nobody is expected to contribute for free (although some people may choose to do this).

This guidance aims to provide a process by which to offer payment for involvement and applies to people aged 16 and over.

## 3. Legal and regulatory statements

### Employment Statement

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Bristol City Council do not view people with lived expertise involvement and 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.

Payment for involvement may affect individual's personal tax and benefits situation. Everyone's financial circumstances are different, and this guidance cannot advise on specific situations.

This guidance recommends informing individuals being paid for their involvement to seek personal advice from whoever they would normally speak to about benefits, for example, a Work Coach, Citizen's Advice or the Jobcentre.

This guidance also recommends informing the individual to notify their Jobcentre, Work Coach, tax or benefits authorities of their participation. This is sometimes called "service user involvement" and is not the same as work.

On advice from the Avon, Somerset & Gloucestershire DWP branch, we have been advised that while the payments from this work would be classified as 'unearned income', these payments would be considered as "payments which would constitute a disproportionate administrative burden to take into account - for example, charitable income payments" and therefore would be an exception to the general rule and should not to be taken into account in a Universal Credit assessment:

- Paper reference DEP2021-0349
- 160\_Unearned\_income\_v11\_0
- [https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0349/160\\_Unearned\\_income\\_v11\\_0.pdf](https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0349/160_Unearned_income_v11_0.pdf)

As the payment period may be over a month or more, we anticipate that Jobcentre Plus will treat these payments as averaged over the payment period. See DMG Chapter 48 paras 4080-81 and for a cycle of work para 48094.

The Department for Work and Pensions legislation exempts 'service users and carers' from the application of notional earnings and treats reimbursed expenses for service user involvement as ignored (see ADM Chapter H3, paras 3160 and 3241)

Service users can withdraw from involvement activities at any time to attend 'employment-related' activities.

The Department for Work and Pensions legislation for persons who receive Employment and Support Allowance on exempt work now allows earnings at the higher level of Permitted work without time limit (see Memo DMG 7/17).

## Procurement and Legal Statement

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This guidance can be used for amounts that amount to under £25,000. This is due to the rules around procurement within Bristol City Council. The only cost incursion is the management fee for the fiscal host, not the overall Payment for Involvement spend. Spend under £25,000 does not constitute a key decision, all spend should be under the financial scheme of delegation. However, procurement and legal advice should always be sought for individual projects.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

This guidance has been created by the Transformation and Commissioning Team to sit alongside the [Co-Production policy](#).

This guidance recommends use of a fiscal host to facilitate the payment for involvement. The fiscal host recommended is Social Change Nest – Open Collective. The fiscal host acts as a 3rd party to the council to administer the payments.

Open collective's fees are 6% of any funding held on Adult Social Care's behalf and we enter into a formal legal service agreement with Social Change Nest – Open Collective.

There is an internal Bristol City Council route to facilitate these payments through ABW. This route is used for payment for employment opportunities such as apprenticeships. Contact [abwenquiries@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:abwenquiries@bristol.gov.uk) to find out more.

The reason we chose to recommend the Open Collective route is due to:

- Payment by Bristol City Council directly (via the ABW method) may be viewed as employment which would have an impact on people's benefits entitlement.
- There is a high administrative need placed on budget holders via the ABW route when people who are participating in a project are submitting expenses regularly.

## 5. Scope

This guidance is for use within Adult Social Care only and is to be used only within Adult Social Care project work. Any questions can be sent to [adultcommissioning@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:adultcommissioning@bristol.gov.uk)

# 6. The Guidance

Following the steps below is the recommended course of action.

## I. Project Planning

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Base payment recommendation is the real living wage (as can be found here : [What is the real Living Wage? | Living Wage Foundation](#)). Local rates for payment for involvement by VCSE organisations and the ICB vary between £15 per hour - £25 per hour. Other projects and organisations are also looking at creative reimbursements, promoting skills for progression in the workplace as an example. [Independent Futures](#) is a great example of leading on this. When wanting to pay for involvement via money, the guidance for the cost here is £15 per hour for involvement, but if leading co-production or facilitating then £20-25. It should always be above the real living wage. You will want to consider what is necessary to be competitive. You will also want to offer different ways of being paid for your involvement i.e. monetary, vouchers, charity donation or no payment, this guidance focuses on monetary and voucher payment.

Work out how many people might be involved, how long the project is planned to run for and how much might therefore will need to be held by the fiscal host. If this is a one off payment and not part of a larger ongoing project, it may be worth contacting Adult Commissioning and providing an internal charge-back to an already existing project.

## II. Contact Adult Commissioning Team

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Their contact details are [adultcommissioning@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:adultcommissioning@bristol.gov.uk).

Request to be a project under the 'Co-Production Projects: Adult Social Care, Bristol City Council' collective.

You will need to provide a project name to describe your project and you will need to request the Adult Commissioning team to add the relevant nominated two officers as admin.

## III. Contact Legal Services and Procurement

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Their contact details are [legal.support@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:legal.support@bristol.gov.uk) and [procurement.support@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:procurement.support@bristol.gov.uk).

This is to notify Legal Services of the use of the contract currently in place. The reference for that contact should refer to 'Arranging & Confirming a Formal Legal Service Agreement - Open Collective (PA02.143)'.

This is to notify procurement of the cost of the payment for involvement to ensure that it meets under £25,000 spend.

## IV. Raise a Purchase Order Request

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You will need to email [bssfinanceservices@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:bssfinanceservices@bristol.gov.uk) to request a purchase order number. You can do this by emailing the following information:

- Supplier ID number, if known : 1061856
- Supplier name: The Social Change Nest CIC

- Supplier address: All Saints Church Hall, Carnegie Street, London, N1 9QW
- Cost centre: (INSERT)
- Product code: (INSERT)
- Show price on order (Yes or No): (INSERT)
- Contact and office address: (INSERT)
- Description of goods or services to be shown on PO: (INSERT)
- Price, excluding VAT: (INSERT)
- ProContract reference or reason for exemption: (INSERT)
- Spend Control Panel (SCP) reference or reason from exemption: (INSERT)

You will need to wait for a purchase order number to be generated. Once it has been generated BSS Finance will let you know the Purchase Order number.

To find out more about raising a purchase order here:

[Raise a purchase order \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

## V. Contact Open Collective (Social Change Nest CIC)

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Their contact details are [info@opencollective.com](mailto:info@opencollective.com).

You will need to request they invoice Bristol City Council for the money you want them to hold for the project. Remember, you will need to account for the management fee within this. They will need to submit their invoice with the relevant Purchase Order number. Please note that once the invoice is submitted from Open Collective with the relevant Purchase Order number, the finance team only pays invoices at the end of the month so there may be a 30 day wait for the money to appear in the project pot.

You will also need to supply Open Collective with an information pack, evidence letter, expenses policy and a copy of the '[Adult Social Care Safeguarding Standard Operating Procedure, Pathways, and Guidance](#)' ready to be able to provide to Open Collective. Please see the appendices for a link to downloadable templates. The two officers previously nominated to Adult Commissioning will manage the payments.

You can find out more about how Open Collective works here: [Welcome | Open Collective Docs](#).

The current contract with Open Collective runs until February 2026. This can be renewed.

## VI. Contact Department for Work and Pensions

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Contact the local Department for Work and Pensions Senior Partnership Manager to notify them about the project, how many people might be involved, how long the project is planned to run for and how much might be involved. Do not include names of people involved as they will have to consent to this first.

This will be needed as there currently isn't national guidance around payment for involvement and it is decided by locality.

Use the phrasing of "payments which would constitute a disproportionate administrative burden to take into account, for example, charitable income payments" when describing the payment for involvement.

## VII. Recruitment

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When recruiting individual volunteers to join the project, information is needed to be provided to them to explain what payment for involvement is and what its impact may be. Find a template for this information in the appendices.

There will need to be various methods for payment for involvement offered such as monetary, voucher, charity donation and no payment.

It is also recommended to provide them with an evidence letter signed by the project lead that they can keep for their records. A template for this can be found in the appendices.

Depending on the type of payment for involvement chosen, undertake the following actions:

### Monetary Payments

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Provide the individual volunteers with the 'How to - Open Collective Payment' document. Please see the appendices for a link to downloadable template.

Once the individuals are set up on the system, they will be able to submit their expenses which will then come to the nominated officers to approve. The officers will need to review and then approve or unapproved depending on the submitted expense.

Money will then be paid to the individual volunteer within a couple of days.

### Voucher Payments

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Black Hawk currently hold a contract with Bristol City Council to provide vouchers. They can be found here: <https://blackhawknetwork.com/uk-en>. To set up an account for vouchers, they will need to be contacted to arrange a new account within the larger Bristol City Council network.

At this current time, vouchers can be provided easily that can be used at Aldi, Asda, Farmfoods, Iceland, Morrisons, Sainsburys and Tesco. If you would like to find out more about this then contacting the Benefits Service is recommended as they use Blackhawk vouchers often.

Once set up, vouchers will be able to be electronically sent to the individual volunteers as payment for their involvement.

Following this process should elicit a smooth payment for involvement experience.

## 7. Monitoring and evaluation

This guidance will need updating for when the contract with Social Change Nest – Open Collective expires.

This process for payment for involvement also needs to be consistently checked and updated according to the latest guidance. This guidance should be considered a living document that can be added to, however a record of changes will need to be kept.

## 8. Related policies and information sources

To find out more about Social Change Nest: [Public Bodies – The Social Change Nest](#)

To find out more about Open Collective: [Welcome | Open Collective Docs](#)

## 9. Appendices

There are downloadable templates of the evidence referred to throughout this policy. [These downloadable templates can be found here.](#)