

Childcare and Carer Costs Policy

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1.0 Introduction

This policy outlines the approach taken by Metropolitan Housing Partnership (MHP) when paying child care expenses to customers (tenants, residents, service users, leaseholders etc) attending MHP meetings and events. The policy also covers the payment of carer costs for customers who have responsibility to care for a person with special needs.

2.0 Legislative/ regulatory context

2.1 The Tenant Services Authority has set out standards that they will apply when regulating registered housing providers.

2.2 Number one of these is how providers will be judged on 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment'. This states that registered providers will offer all tenants opportunities to be involved in the management of their housing. This must include opportunities to:

- influence housing related policies and how housing related services are delivered
- be involved in scrutinising performance in delivering housing-related services

2.3 Registered providers must offer tenants support so they are more able to be effectively engaged, involved and empowered.

3.0 Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all member organisations within MHP.

3.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and procedures.

4.0 Policy statement

MHP's vision is:

'Working with residents for better homes and stronger communities'.

To support this, MHP actively promotes, encourages and supports customers to get involved in working to improve services. All sections of the community are encouraged to become involved and those with caring responsibilities will be actively supported to have equal access to involvement opportunities.

5.0 Partnership approach

5.1 MHP will pay childcare and carer expenses to customers for dependant child/children and persons with special needs for whom the individual is a principal carer.

- 5.2 The child/children and person with special needs must be registered at the same address as the customers on MHP's Customer Management System.
- 5.3 These costs will only be paid to enable the customer to attend a meeting or event agreed by MHP, to which the individual has been invited, and where responsibility to care for the child/children and person with special needs will prevent their attendance.
- 5.4 Childcare and carer expenses will only be paid when usual childcare/carer arrangements provided by a member of the household, e.g. professional organisation, a partner, spouse, grandparent or sibling, are not available.
- 5.5 Childcare expenses will not normally be paid for school age children during school hours unless agreed with an involvement officer under special circumstances.
- 5.6 Childcare and carer expenses will be met by MHP using the following guidelines:

1st Child (up to 16 years)	Per Hour – <i>as per MHP corporate rate</i> (This will be equal to, or greater than the minimum wage)	Per day – £50 maximum payable per day	Overnight stays/conferences- £25 per night
Subsequent Children (up to 16 years)	Decreasing for the second child by 50%, and then by 50% for each subsequent child	Decreasing for the second child by 50%, and then by 50% for each subsequent child	Decreasing for the second child by 50%, and then by 50% for each subsequent child
Persons with special needs	Rate to be negotiated with Involvement staff	Rate to be negotiated with Involvement staff	Rate to be negotiated with Involvement staff

5.7 For the purpose of this policy, MHP may require the meeting/event attendee claiming carer costs for an individual with special needs, to provide evidence of the individual's condition and their caring responsibilities. It may also be necessary for involvement staff to contact local or national voluntary agencies, such as 'Sense' for example, to establish if there is average hourly rate payable to a carer, looking after an individual with a particular condition.

6.0 Promoting the policy

6.1 MHP will help customers to understand this policy by providing them with the following:

- A copy of the written policy on request. If translation and other formats requested please refer to the [translation and alternative formats policy](#).
- A verbal explanation of the policy. A verbal summary of the policy should be given at relevant meetings and events and to individuals as necessary, particularly newly involved residents or service users

6.2 The policy will also be actively promoted in all relevant publicity and notices of meetings and events and from time to time in partnership newsletters and websites.

7.0 Making payments

Claimants must fill out MHP's expenses claim form and attach invoices and receipts.

8.0 Ofsted regulations for child care

Whilst it is not the responsibility of MHP to advise customers of Ofsted regulations relating to childminders, MHP staff should actively advise customers that they are able to contact Ofsted for information and advice on childcare.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Care-and-local-services/Childcare>

9.0 Confidentiality

This policy is written in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act. (For more information please refer to the [Confidentiality Policy](#).)

10.0 Equality and diversity

In the implementation of this policy, MHP will adhere to Equality and Diversity Policy, and as such will not discriminate against any resident on grounds of their ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, disability, age, and religion. (Please refer to the [Equality and Diversity Policy](#))

11.0 Complaints and appeals

If any person believes that they have not been treated in accordance with this policy, or they are unhappy about anything related to the policy, they may complain through the Customer Feedback procedure. (Please refer to the [Customer Feedback Policy](#).)

12.0 Training

12.1 There are 2 MHP e-learning modules on customer involvement, introduction to customer involvement and promoting customer involvement, which are part of the corporate training programme for staff. These set out all the ways we involve our customers and what resources are available. These are backed up with a corporate workshop which helps staff understand their role in what we are trying to achieve.

12.2 For staff whose role is customer involvement, there are a further 3 e-learning modules which give more information and details on how to develop our aims.

13.0 Support for staff

Staff will also be supported with involvement activities for their roles at their one to ones and annual reviews.

14.0 Risk

The Tenant Services Authority will monitor how we empowered and involved our customers as part of any inspection. Involving our customers is a cross-cutting theme across all of our services. Where we have not fulfilled our obligations we risk a number of sanctions including losing development funding and having our board supervised.

15.0 Monitoring and evaluation / Quality assurance

15.1 We will monitor our achievements by completing a 'Resident Involvement Impact Assessment' for each of our member organisations and one for MHP overall.

15.2 We will also have various surveys on our services and resident satisfaction which will also help us gauge how this policy is working.

16.0 Author

This policy and policy guidance was drawn up by: the Resident Involvement Working Group.

Comments, queries and feedback and help
We always welcome comments and feedback. Please contact the author/s or the manager of department.

Consulted with Resident Involvement Working Group 04/03/10, the NRG

17.0 Date for review

This policy was approved by on

The policy and policy guidance will be reviewed in 3 years after commencement, unless there is a significant change in legislation in which case it may be reviewed earlier.