

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Relocation Policy

Department/Service	Human Resources
Accountable Director	Chief People Officer
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Queries about interpretation and application of policy	wah-tr.hrenquiries@nhs.net
Target Organisation	Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust

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What this Policy Covers

- The policy is part of the Trust's recruitment and retention strategy to recruit, attract and retain colleagues with the right skills the Trust offers a relocation package. This policy provides the criteria for relocation expenses, the terms of payment and the process for making claims.
- The policy aims to balance the Trust's requirement to attract and recruit the most suitable candidates with the need to ensure that any relocation expenses paid by the Trust are reasonable.

Policy In Process

Eligibility

- This policy is applicable to staff applying for **Band 5-9 roles on Agenda for Change contracts where job roles are featured on the Difficult to Recruit list (Appendix 1** - this list will be reviewed annually in line with the national shortage occupation list) or where there has been approval from the Trust Management Executive Committee by submitting the 'Application to Pay Relocation Expenses' (**Appendix 4**).
[Relocation Policy Supporting Documents](#).
- Medical and Dental Staff are covered by the Medical & Dental Relocation Policy.
- There is a separate policy to cover relocation expenses for international recruitment of Nurses, Allied Health Professionals, Healthcare Scientists and Pharmacists. This policy is in accordance with national guidelines.
- The costs involved in relocation may vary depending on factors such as the individual's geographic location. This guidance will normally apply but in exceptional circumstances this may be varied to meet relevant individual circumstances. This requires prior approval of the Chief People Officer and the Chief Finance Officer.
- New employees **who are Band 5-9 in roles classed as 'difficult to recruit' can claim up to a maximum limit of £8,000** for costs directly arising from appointment and subsequent relocation.
- The maximum amounts that can be claimed are:
 - Property Sale Expenses (£4,000 Limit).
 - Property Purchase Expenses (£4,000 Limit).
 - Temporary Accommodation Expenses (£1,000 Limit). The relief for temporary living accommodation applies where the employee intends to move to permanent accommodation to complete the relocation. For an employee who lives in a hotel until the old home is sold and a new home bought, or who moves into a rented house at the new location for the same reason, the hotel and the rented property represent temporary living accommodation.
 - Miscellaneous Expenses (£1,000 Limit).

- The combined cost of all types of expenses must not exceed the total value of the allowance specified under this policy. Where these costs continue to the extent that the total agreed package is exhausted, the employee will be expected to meet any additional costs incurred, which will include a deduction from salary where hospital accommodation is occupied. It should be noted that any payments are only intended to contribute to the reasonable costs of the associated relocation, and it is not expected that the employee profits materially from any reimbursements received.

HMRC

- Employees are advised to check personal tax implications with their tax office or Independent Financial Adviser.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) regulations. It is the responsibility of the employee to seek advice from HMRC if they are unsure of the tax liabilities of a relocation package.
- HMRC currently define certain relocation costs up to £8,000 as exempt from reporting and paying tax and National Insurance. These are called 'qualifying' costs and include:
 - the costs of buying or selling a home
 - moving costs
 - certain things for a new home
 - bridging loans.
- These are only qualifying costs when:
 - a new employee is moving area to start a job with you
 - an existing employee is changing their place of work within your organisation
 - the employee's new home is reasonably close to the workplace and their old home is not (see general conditions section for further detail)
 - the costs are paid before the end of the tax year that's after the one in which the employee started their job.

Application Process

- Relocation expenses require authorisation by the Divisional Director of Operations/Director. All relocation expenses are charged to the department/ service budget. The decision to pay Relocation Expenses should be discussed at Divisional Management Meetings with the involvement of HR Business Partner and Finance Business Advisor.
- The manager in consultation with the Divisional Director of Operations/Director will determine the value of the relocation package. For AFC staff this is up to a maximum of **£8,000**.
- It should be stated on any recruitment authorisation form if the post is considered to be 'a difficult to recruit to vacancy' and that a relocation package will be considered. Please see **Appendix 1** for the list of 'difficult to recruit to vacancies' which will be reviewed annually.

- If a role is not on the list at **Appendix 1** but is difficult to recruit to then **Appendix 4** must be submitted to the Trust Management Committee for consideration.
[Relocation Policy Supporting Documents](#)
- Relocation expenses must be signed off by the Divisional Director of Operations at the recruitment authorisation stage (ATR). The advert should state that a relocation package may be paid. Relocation expenses must be signed off at the ATR stage and will not be approved retrospectively.
- Fixed term contracts will only be eligible for a relocation allowance in exceptional circumstances:
 - at the discretion of the Chief People Officer
 - where the term of the fixed term contract is extended beyond two years
 - where a new substantive contract is offered within the same service
 - where it is demonstrable that repeated "short-term" contracts extend the colleague's service beyond two years.
- The employee should be the identified individual claiming the relocation expenses. Any part of the relocation expenses claimed and paid from another source e.g. through a partner's employer, cannot be reimbursed.
- Any claims relating to Relocation Expenses must be made using the Trust's '**Relocation Expenses Application Form**' **Appendix 3** and accompanied by relevant receipts.
[Relocation Policy Supporting Documents](#)

General Conditions

- The Trust will normally require an employee to relocate to **within 30 minutes' travel time** by car or within 10 miles' distance by road to their new base, or to within the stipulated distance for on-call purposes, and the move should normally reduce the distance from home to base by at least 50%. This would usually be www.rac.co.uk/route-planner shortest distance. However, individual circumstances may be considered.
- Eligible candidates are required to confirm, when accepting their post their intention to relocate.
- As relocation expenses are paid from public money, employees are required to sign an agreement (**Appendix 2**) stating that **if they leave the Trust within 24 months of their starting date then they will be required to repay relocation expenses as per the repayment schedule.**
- If the employee decides to leave within 24 months of receiving a relocation package, the manager must email wah-tr.epayadmin@nhs.net and the Finance Team will contact the employee as soon as the leaver form is submitted in order to discuss the repayment plan. Recovery will commence before the employee leaves the Trust's employment. The aim will be to recover as much as possible from the final 2-3 months of salary with the remaining amount invoiced and due within 30 days of employee leaving.

The repayment schedule is as follows:

Time	Repayment
Within 12 months	100% of relocation expenses repaid
Over 12 months to 18 months	50% of relocation expenses repaid
Over 18 months to 24 months	25% of relocation expenses repaid

- No reimbursement of relocation expenses will be made until the approval process has been completed and the agreement signed.
- A maximum limit of **£8,000** will be imposed for any combination of claims arising from the appointment and subsequent relocation of an individual employee. Eligible candidates will be advised of the specific limit applicable their role on appointment. The maximum amount of Relocation Expenses paid will be determined by the Divisional Management Team prior to advertisement.
- The Trust will report the provision of any allowance that exceeds £8,000 at year end via the real time information gateway or P11D. Relocation expenses will not be paid for second homes.
- Employees will only be allowed to claim Relocation Expenses within an overall **time limit of 12 months** of taking up their appointment. Claims outside of this period will not be paid unless in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Chief People Officer. The Trust must be satisfied that the applicant is making all reasonable efforts to relocate or, there are circumstances which, it is accepted, prevent an early relocation.
- In paying relocation expenses the Trust will consider the reasonableness of the arrangements in all circumstances.

Relocation Expenses Covered

Eligible employees may apply for relocation expenses to a maximum value of £8,000.

The maximum amounts that can be claimed are:

- Property Sale Expenses (£4,000 Limit)
- Property Purchase Expenses (£4,000 Limit)
- Temporary/Interim Accommodation Expenses (£1,000 Limit – see below for details)
- Miscellaneous Expenses (£1,000 Limit).

Any specific limits to individual's entitlement will have been set out in their offer of employment.

All expenses must be evidenced with receipts in accordance with Trust expense policy.

Legal Costs

- Payments will be reimbursed against solicitor's fees on sale and purchase; incidental legal expenses, i.e. stamp duty, land registration, search fee, mortgage application and surveys.
- Before legal expenses are agreed, three competitive quotations must be obtained and provided when submitting a reimbursement claim. Reimbursement will be limited to the lowest quotation, although the employee has the discretion to use any of the three quotations.
- Payment may be made against expenses incurred in setting up rental arrangements.
- Abandoned Purchase: If you incur expenses in relation to a proposed purchase which later does not take place, due to factors which are entirely outside your control, such expenses will be reimbursed where supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

Estate Agent Fees

- Before estate agent fees are agreed, three competitive quotations must be obtained and provided when submitting a reimbursement claim. Reimbursement will be limited to the lowest quotation, although the employee has the discretion to use any of the three quotations.

Temporary/ Interim Accommodation

- Where an employee has taken up the post before their previous home is sold or has not found suitable rented family accommodation and has left the family behind.
- The cost of single hospital accommodation will be reimbursed or, if not available, the cost of a reasonable long stay rented accommodation.
- Such payments will be reimbursed for a limited time of twelve months unless the maximum allowance claimable is reached earlier.
- Where an employee has taken up a post and has moved with their partner/family before their previous home is sold and is incurring continuing costs on the previous property: The cost of hospital partner/family accommodation will be reimbursed or, if not available, the cost of comparable temporary accommodation. Such payments will be reimbursed for a limited time of twelve months unless the maximum allowance claimable is reached earlier.

Removal Expenses and Storage

- All removal and storage expenses will be subjected to three quotes and the cheapest quote will be reimbursed.

Preliminary Visits and Relocation Visit

- Up to three approved preliminary visits may be made prior to taking up the appointment.
- A maximum of three night's accommodation for the individual in total will be arranged by the employing department.
- Payment of subsistence expenses, meals etc. will be restricted to those within the Expenses Policy and claims must be accompanied by appropriate receipts.
- Repayment will be made upon commencing appointment.

Daily Travel Payments

- If suitable temporary accommodation is not available, you may travel daily from your old area to your new post with the Trust (with the exception of when you are on-call duty). This will be for a maximum of six months.
- Your excess travel will be reimbursed.
- This arrangement will be subject to the approval of the Divisional Director of Operations.
- Either standard class rail fares or mileage at public transport rate will be payable.
- In addition to the above, if your family is temporarily remaining in the old area, you will be reimbursed the cost of a return journey home at weekly intervals for a maximum of four months. Either standard class rail fares or mileage at public transport rate will be payable.

Journey from Old Home to New Home

- The cost of one journey from your old to your new home will be met for you and your dependants. “Dependants” in this context mean members of your or your partner’s immediate family who normally live with you and are dependent upon you (i.e. not earning their own living).
- Payment for this journey will be made at public transport rate for a motor vehicle plus passenger allowance for each dependant.

Return Visit to Oversee Removal

- Where it is necessary for you to make a return visit to oversee the removal from your home you will be allowed unpaid leave to a maximum of five days and travelling expenses at public transport rate.

Miscellaneous Expenses for New Residence

- Expenses may be claimed where domestic goods intended to replace items used at the old home which are not suitable for use in the new home. For example, replacement of a washing machine equivalent to that was left at the old residence. Examples of miscellaneous expense include: washing machine, tumble drier, fridge, freezer, dishwasher, TV, kettle, oven, microwave, mattresses, bedding, bed frame, sofa, vacuum cleaner.

Additional Information

Legitimacy of claims (Fraud/False Claims)

- Unfortunately, fraud, bribery, and corruption, as well as theft, does occur throughout the NHS. All employees have a duty to ensure that public funds are protected.
- If an employee or manager suspects that there has been a potential act of fraud, bribery or corruption against the Trust or the wider NHS, or has seen any suspicious acts or events, they must report the matter to the Trust’s Counter Fraud Team (contact details can be found on the Trust’s public website and/or intranet) or report the matter to the NHS Fraud and Corruption Reporting Line on 0800 028 4060

- Alternatively reports can be made through the online reporting tool at <https://cfa.nhs.uk/reportfraud>. Advice is also available from the Director of Finance and the Trust's Counter Fraud Team.

Appeals

Appeals against decisions made under this procedure will be subject to the Trust Grievance Procedure.

Implementation Plan

This policy will be available on the Trust Intranet.

A policy briefing will be developed for Divisional Management Boards, Directorate Meetings and Worcestershire weekly.

[HR Key Documents Supporting Documents](#)