



# NSA policy on expense claims and credit/debit card use, for staff members and officeholders

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## 1. NSA policy on expense claims and credit/debit card use

It is NSA policy to reimburse employees and officeholders for reasonable expenses, necessarily incurred, in connection with their roles at NSA. Employees and officeholders should be neither financially advantaged nor disadvantaged when incurring expenses; it falls within the responsibility of the individual concerned to ensure costs are reasonable and considerate of time available and acceptable levels of comfort. For staff, read this document alongside the NSA Employee Handbook.

For staff who hold an NSA credit card or regional officeholders who hold an NSA debit card, expenditure should be in line with this expenses policy – i.e. expenses should not be incurred on a card that could not be claimed back if an individual's own money was used. Other appropriate use of an NSA card is covered towards the end of this document, as is circumstances in which a card would be revoked.

NSA credit cards are issued to staff members who hold a position that involves regular and/or significant spending – for example, staff members who travel frequently for meetings/events and staff members making bookings on behalf of others, such as block booking accommodation for Trustees or Next Generation activities. Staff members who do not have an NSA credit card are not expected to incur out-of-pocket expenses to a level that would cause personal hardship while waiting for a monthly expense claim to be processed. If an unusually large expense is needed by a staff member without an NSA card, the Association Manager can make the payment on an NSA card on their behalf, or their line manager can sign off an extra/interim expense claim.

NSA debit cards can be issued to regional managers and/or regional event organisers incurring regular and/or significant costs.



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## 2. Making a claim

### 2.1. Process for claiming expenses – for employees

- Staff members should submit a maximum of one claim per calendar month (unless an unusually large expense has been incurred and an additional claim has been agreed by their line manager). Claims must be submitted using the NSA Expenses Claim spreadsheet.
- Claims should preferably be submitted within one month of the expense being incurred and always within three months. Claims submitted more than three months after an expense has been incurred will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may not be paid. At the end of the financial year (31<sup>st</sup> December), expenses must be claimed within the first half of January.
- Each out-of-pocket expense on the spreadsheet is numbered. Receipts (hard copies or digital) must be provided to support each item, numbered to match the spreadsheet. **A VAT receipt is required where the expense includes VAT.** Claims without receipts must instead have the best documentary evidence obtainable and payment will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Cells shaded in grey on the NSA Expenses Claim spreadsheet do not have to be completed. Staff can complete these cells if they wish, but should leave them blank if in any doubt.
- The spreadsheet and supporting receipts must be sent to the NSA Bookkeeper. Other staff members should not be cc'd, to avoid duplication in the system.
- Claims will be put into batches to be approved by the NSA Operations Director twice per month (in line with the fortnightly payment run); the payment run is approved by the NSA Chief Executive and/or two signatories acting on behalf of the Board. Payments are made directly into an employee's bank account and a remittance advice provided.

### 2.2. Process for claiming expenses – for officeholders

- This policy applies to expense claims from NSA Head Office and your region. NSA Head Office can help if you are unsure if an expense is claimable from Head Office or your region.
- Expenses claims can be submitted as and when but ideally within three months of the expenses being incurred and always within two weeks of the end of the financial year on 31<sup>st</sup> December. Claims submitted outside this will be considered but may not be paid.
- Claims should preferably be made using the NSA Expenses Claim spreadsheet. Other formats will be accepted but may delay a claim if information required is not included. When claiming expenses from Head Office for the first time, please provide your bank details. Receipts (hard copies or digital) must be provided to support each item on an expense claim. **A VAT receipt is required where the expense includes VAT.** Claims without receipts must instead have the best documentary evidence obtainable and payment will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Claims should be submitted to the NSA Bookkeeper and will go through the standard NSA approval process ahead of the fortnightly payments run. Once added to a payment run, an expense claim payment is made by BACS transfer and a remittance advice provided.

### 2.3. Paperwork for debit and credit cards

- When an NSA debit card is used, a receipt for the amount must be sent to the individual managing the region's accounts as quickly as possible, and always within one month. **A VAT receipt is required where the expense includes VAT;** a debit card receipt is not sufficient so please make sure to ask for an itemised receipt.
- NSA staff members with a credit card will be provided with a copy of the monthly credit card statement, at which point they must submit a spreadsheet with the following columns and a receipt for each item on the statement. **A VAT receipt is required where the expense**

**includes VAT.** Details on the spreadsheet are checked as part of the payment run approval process, at which point any issues will be raised with a card holder's line manager.

- Date of expenditure (as per the statement)
- Details of expenditure / reason
- Gross amount (as per the statement), nett and VAT amounts
- Budget heading and nominal code (left blank if in any doubt)

## 3. Claimable expenses

**3.1. Travel.** NSA will reimburse the reasonable costs of amounts expended on travel in the performance of the duties of an employee or officeholder. Employees and officeholders should travel by the most cost-effective mode of transport taking into account journey time and the nature of the journey as well as the monetary cost.

**3.1.1. Own car.** The mileage allowance is set by reference to HMRC rules on approved mileage allowance payments. For cars, this is currently 45p/mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p/mile once more than 10,000 miles has been claimed in the HMRC tax year.

**Additional criteria for employees and Trustees only:** If an employee or a NSA Trustee registered with Companies House carries any other employees or Trustee in their own vehicle on business travel, the driver can claim an extra 5p per business mile.

**Additional criteria for employees only:**

- As per HMRC rules, mileage must be claimed from your place of work. For employees contracted to work from NSA Head Office, all mileage claims must be to and from WR13 6PH, regardless of whether you actually started from your own home. For employees contracted to work from home, all mileage claims are to and from your home address.
- Where an employee uses their own vehicle, the employee should ensure the vehicle is in good working order, fully insured, taxed and MOTd and that the driver is covered by breakdown assistance. This does not apply to employees with a company car or using a company car; separate guidance is issued alongside use of a company car.

**3.1.2. Other vehicle costs.** In addition to mileage, road and bridge toll costs, congestion charges and parking may be claimed, where incurred due to business needs and where the claim is accompanied by a VAT receipt. Parking fines, speeding fines, clamping fees and maintenance costs are not reimbursable.

**3.1.3. Taxi.** Employees are expected to use taxis only when other options are not available, where it is cost effective to do so or for reasons of personal safety such as late evening travel. Officeholders may use taxis where they deem it appropriate. Employees and officeholders must obtain a receipt.

#### 3.1.4. Rail

- **Employees:** Employees should, as far as possible, travel standard class and book sufficiently in advance to obtain the best possible prices. Advance booking of trains to reduce costs and travelling outside peak times should be considered where possible. First class travel may be considered where advance booking makes the cost comparable to standard class. Booking confirmation or tickets clearly stating the price are sufficient to accompany the expenses claim. NSA encourages the purchase of an annual Railcard where employees are eligible. The cost of the Railcard may be claimed from NSA.
- **Officeholders:** Officeholders should generally travel standard class but may wish to consider first class where they deem it appropriate and the cost incurred is not more than 25% more than standard class. NSA encourages the use of Railcards where officeholders are eligible.

**3.1.5. Tube, Docklands Light Railway, bus or tram.** Employees and officeholders should retain tickets where possible. Where Oyster cards are used, the employee or officeholder should provide evidence of the cost incurred, for example by printing off their online statement or printing off the journey cost provided by the Oyster fare finder. Contactless cards may be used but evidence of cost of travel must be provided.

**3.1.6. Plane.** Employees should, whenever possible, run flight bookings past their line manager sufficiently in advance to obtain the best possible prices. Air travel should be by economy class. Booking confirmation or tickets clearly stating the price are sufficient to accompany the expenses claim. Flights for officeholders are typically made by NSA Head Office.

**3.1.7. Travel visas and foreign currency.** Officeholders and employees may claim for travel visas (eg ESTA applications) incurred on behalf of NSA business. If foreign currency is required it should normally be bought in advance of an overseas trip. Currency should only be bought at an airport Foreign Exchange Bureau or through an ATM abroad in exceptional circumstances, due to the inflated charges incurred. NSA will reimburse all costs associated with currency conversion on receipt of appropriate receipts or credit card statements. If proof of currency conversion rate is not provided, the average published exchange rate for the duration of the trip will be used.

**3.1.8. Car hire.** Employees and officeholders should book through the NSA's account for car hire. NSA will reimburse car hire expenses (including fuel purchases) for journeys taken while on NSA business in the UK, including to or from UK airports, where:

- public transport is unavailable or impractical (including where not time or cost effective)
- to accommodate disability or accessibility needs
- using public transport could raise safety or security concerns
- for long-enough journeys that the cost and ease of hiring a car is less to NSA than an individual claiming the journey at 45p/mile.

NSA will reimburse car hire expenses for journeys taken on NSA business while overseas. Receipts must be obtained and submitted in all situations.

**3.2. Overnight accommodation.** Overnight accommodation may be booked before a meeting or event where either the distance is too great to travel the day of the event or, when travelling by rail or air, the combined cost of off-peak travel and a hotel the day before is cheaper than peak travel on the day. The same is true for overnight accommodation on the evening of a meeting or event, although two nights' accommodation would only be deemed necessary in specific circumstances. Accommodation for larger NSA events is booked en bloc for all employees and paid for directly by NSA Head Office; other accommodation is booked by

employees themselves, checking with their line manager if there is any uncertainty about whether overnight accommodation is justified.

**3.2.1. Hotel accommodation.** NSA will cover costs for overnight accommodation.

- The budget for employees and officeholders for non-city accommodation is £90 including VAT but excluding breakfast costs. Employees should use their own discretion when booking accommodation in inner cities/London but to a maximum of £130 including VAT but excluding breakfast costs. In emergency situations expenditure outside limits can be considered as long as justified.
- When breakfast is not included in the cost of the hotel, NSA will either reimburse the cost of breakfast at the hotel, or you can claim for breakfast purchased elsewhere. Hotel breakfast where you have resided can be claimed up to £10 including VAT, if bought elsewhere the cost to be reimbursed is up to £7.50 including VAT. Any booking in excess of the above amounts will need to be approved by your line manager.
- Standard class accommodation should always be chosen.
- Employees and officeholders should take into account the location of the hotel as regards the cost of taxis and the time required to travel to and from the hotel.
- You must personally settle the bill for all costs outside the above, such as spa use or mini bar.
- VAT receipts must always be obtained and submitted; booking confirmations are not sufficient.

**3.2.2. Staying with friends or relatives.** If employees or officeholders have friends or relatives that can provide accommodation instead of a hotel, you may claim £25 per night inclusive of breakfast. Journeys that require you leaving before 6.30am breakfast will be reimbursed up to £7.50.

**3.2.3. Staying with spouse/extension of trip for personal reasons.** As an employee, if you would like your spouse or family to join you while you are staying away on NSA business, or you would like to extend a trip for personal reasons, you must seek approval from your line manager in advance to ensure it is deemed appropriate. Any additional costs will be discussed at that point and steps put in place to exclude them from expenses claims. Officeholders should have a similar discussion with the NSA Chief Executive and, unless agreed otherwise, take steps to ensure NSA does not incur additional costs.

**3.2.4. Accommodation abroad.** Employees asked to represent NSA overseas must discuss accommodation booked abroad with their line manager before booking. NSA is likely to book accommodation on behalf of officeholders asked to represent NSA overseas but, if this is not the case, bookings should be discussed in advance with the Chief Executive.

### 3.3. Subsistence

**3.3.1. Meals while away overnight.** On overnight trips on behalf of the NSA an evening meal will be reimbursed along with one drink, which may be alcoholic. For employees and officeholders, the cost should be less than £20 including VAT and you must personally settle the bill for additional food and drink outside this. VAT receipts must always be obtained and submitted. As outlined above, when breakfast is not included in the cost of the hotel, NSA will either reimburse the cost of breakfast at the hotel, or you can claim for breakfast purchased elsewhere. Hotel breakfast where you have resided can be claimed up to £10 including VAT, if bought elsewhere the cost to be reimbursed is up to £7.50 including VAT. A non-alcoholic drink will be reimbursed as a mid-morning, lunchtime and

mid-afternoon refreshment for both officeholders and employees. Officeholders and employees may claim lunch up to £10 including VAT.

**3.3.2.** Meals where there is no overnight stay involved. The following is applicable:

- Where journeys require leaving home before 6.30am a light breakfast will be reimbursed. For employees and officeholders, claims of up to £7.50 including VAT will be reimbursed.
- A non-alcoholic drink will be reimbursed as a mid-morning, lunchtime and mid-afternoon refreshment.
- Officeholders and employees may claim lunch up to £10 including VAT.
- Evening meals relating to any one-day trip would not normally be reimbursed unless the travelling required results in employees or officeholders not getting home until after 8.30pm and them eating away from home. In these circumstances evening meals should be kept to below £12 including VAT and alcoholic drinks are not eligible.
- VAT receipts must always be obtained and submitted.

**3.3.3. Service charges.** Where a gratuity / service charge is included in the bill it will be reimbursed. Other tips are at the discretion of the diner and claims will not be reimbursed.

## **3.4. Entertainment**

**3.4.1. Business entertaining by NSA employees.** Employees should only entertain visitors and guests where it is likely to assist the NSA in its objectives. In general, entertainment counts as business-related if its purpose is to discuss a particular NSA project, event or policy. By contrast, entertainment of NSA acquaintances won't count as business-related if its purpose is primarily social – even if there's some discussion of business-related topics in the course of the entertainment. Amounts claimed should be reasonable and appropriate. In all cases employees should retain all invoices and receipts. Individual's names and organisations should be listed on the expenses claim. Officeholders are not expected to entertain visitors or guests for NSA business.

**3.4.2. Group entertaining**

- Where officeholders and employees come together as a wider group, for example when staying overnight as part of an NSA event, the most senior NSA employee attending (or an individual delegated by the NSA Chief Executive) will determine what expenses (meals and drinks) can be put on a communal tab and paid for by NSA. These situations should be approached with care and consideration of the use of members' money employed.
- NSA appreciates that where employees or officeholders are representing NSA at a wider industry event, for example when invited to an industry dinner, the cost of entertainment can exceed usual guidelines. In these situations, extreme care and consideration of the use of members money should be employed and approval from your line manager should be sought beforehand.
- When employees are together outside of the office and are both eligible for expense claims, it is preferable for a single payment to be made, rather than individuals paying separately. All receipts must have names of employees added to them and on the expense claim form.

### 3.5. Employee-only expenses

- 3.5.1. Mobile phone expenses.** Employees who are regularly out of the office and/or are required to use a mobile phone for website and social media responsibilities have two options:-
- a) An NSA phone, fully paid for and insured by NSA.
  - b) To use their own phone and have NSA contribute an annual amount towards their monthly bill and insurance costs via their salary. Employees choosing this option must ensure any damages or faults with their phone are dealt with as quickly as possible so they are not without a phone for any period of time and, therefore, are recommended to have insurance.

The choice between the two options is usually made at the point the employee joins NSA, but can be raised with a line manager latterly if circumstances change. For option B, the annual amount offered is £327, paid via employee salaries in 12 monthly installments. This is usually paid pro rata for employees working part-time hours and this is made clear before payments begin to be made. NSA appreciates that some employees use personal mobile phones to receive verification codes to log into online services, such as online banking and social media services. NSA will not contribute to the cost of a personal mobile phone for this use, but any employee uncomfortable with using their personal phone for this purpose should raise the matter with their line manager. Information on appropriate use of mobile phones, personal use of mobile phones in work hours and phone safety while driving is included in the Employee Handbook.

- 3.5.2. Employees with a contract to work from home.** The following applies to employees with a contract to work from home and is in relation to running a home office. No expenses for working from home can be charged by employees with a contract to work from Head Office, even if they have permission from their line manager to occasionally work from home.
- **Landlines.** Employees who have a contract to work from home are not expected to have a landline and therefore cannot charge for landline expenses, unless agreed at the point of employment for specific reasons.
  - **Internet.** Employees who have a contract to work from home must ensure they have reliable internet access. NSA will usually contribute an annual amount towards this, paid monthly via their salary, to be agreed at the point the employee joins NSA. The annual amount offered is £327, paid via employee salaries in 12 monthly installments. This is usually paid pro rata for employees working part-time hours and this is made clear before payments begin. Employees must ensure any damages or faults with their internet access are dealt with as quickly as possible, so they are not without internet access for any length of time.
  - **Stationery and equipment.** Where practical, employees who have a contract to work from home are encouraged to share stationery supplies with NSA Head Office, collecting items when visiting Malvern. Where this is not possible, employees can buy supplies locally or online and charge the item on an expenses form if a VAT receipt has been obtained. Items of equipment, including IT equipment, may be purchased for employees' use at work or home. However, all such purchases must be approved by a line manager prior to any purchases being made. All such equipment remains the property of NSA and must be returned to the company upon termination of employment.
  - **General costs.** NSA does not make a contribution to expenses linked to working from home such as electricity or heating, but employees who have a contract to work from home are encouraged to investigate tax relief options offered by HMRC.

- 3.5.3. Eye tests.** As per the Employee Handbook, employees regularly using a display screen (computer monitor) are entitled to a financial contribution to a biennial eye test and any glasses required for screen work. NSA will contribute up to £25 towards the eye test and up to £25 including VAT to glasses once within a 24-month cycle, to be reimbursed via an expense claim if accompanied by receipts from a qualified optician.
- 3.5.4. Subscriptions.** NSA will pay subscriptions to approved professional bodies on behalf of employees where an employee is requested to take up membership by NSA. This must be approved by your line manager before taking out.
- 3.6. Refunds and cancellations.** In the event of plans changing or being cancelled, refunds on trains, accommodation or anything else should be obtained wherever possible. If there is a cancellation with costs incurred, NSA will pay for these as long as reasonable effort to seek a refund has been made.

## 4. Other uses of debit and credit cards

- 4.1. Approvals and typical use.** Use of an NSA debit or credit card for items not covered within the expenses policy must be approved in advance by the region or an employee's line manager. Typical use includes:-
- Promotional items for the gate/stand at NSA events.
  - NSA Next Generation activities.
  - Subscriptions for online services, paid monthly or annually e.g. Zoom.
  - Office/meeting sundries e.g. milk, biscuits etc.
  - Smaller IT purchases e.g. computer screens, keyboards etc.
- Credit card statements are reviewed monthly by the Honorary Treasurer and Operations Director. Debit card transactions are reviewed within regular bank statements check.
- 4.2. Incorrect use.** Employees and officeholders with a debit/credit card are trusted to take particular care that they do not use the card in error or pay for something that is not in line with the expenses policy. If a mistake does occur, the individual managing the region's finances or the employee's line manager must be informed straight away and action taken to repay the money. If the individual makes a regular expense claim, the option exists to knock off any amount owed from the next expense claim. If errors are made on a regular basis, the suitability of an individual to have a debit/credit card will be reviewed.