

National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH)

Expert by Experience Paid Engagement Guidelines

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1. What is NCCH's approach to Expert by Experience Paid Engagement?

The National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH) recognises and values that the engagement of individuals (including carers) with lived experience is critical to NCCH's work. Individuals who are willing to share their perspective, specialised knowledge, and experience can create an inclusive space to reduce stigma and discrimination, inform better understanding and learning, which results in more effective translation of research into better health outcomes. In addition, our work tries to remove the barriers which low income can create, and to ensure that all individuals who want to contribute their personal and professional experience to NCCH can do so.

Therefore, the expertise and expert contributions of those with lived experience have equal value to other NCCH stakeholders, and NCCH is committed to supporting paid involvement (referred to as 'paid engagement') of individuals with lived experience (referred to as 'Expert by Experience').

This Expert by Experience Paid Engagement Guidelines document outlines what you can expect from NCCH and what we ask of you as an Expert by Experience. NCCH aims to ensure your experience of working with us is rewarding and enjoyable, and so these guidelines are here to help! However, if you decide not to continue in your involvement with NCCH at any time, please just let your NCCH contact know.

To ensure transparency these Guidelines set out clearly

- What do we mean by 'Expert by Experience' and what is Expert by Experience Paid Engagement
- Who is Paid Engagement for, and which type of activities are paid for

- How much, how, and what does payment cover, for an Expert by Experience
- How might being paid affect an Expert by Experience, and considerations if being paid is not an option
- Out of pocket expenses
- What types of support mechanisms are offered and what to expect from the NCCH as an Expert by Experience

Lived Experience engagement takes many forms and NCCH recognises that there may be barriers to paid engagement for individuals with lived experience including potential impacts on: benefits entitlement; tax implications; and employment laws. So NCCH will respond to what individual Experts by Experience require, by allowing for a range of approaches to support meaningful engagement. To support this aim, we have a series of documents including:

- Expert by Experience Paid Engagement Guidelines
- Experts by Experience Paid Engagement Policy (detailed guidelines on expenses/tax implications, and Policy Guidance for NCCH Staff)

And

- Appendix A - Expert by Experience Support Rider (to understand availability & support)
- Appendix B - Expert by Experience Agreement Template
- Appendix C - Expert by Experience Paid Engagement Invoice Template
- Appendix D -Expert by Experience Expenses Claim Form

2. What do we mean by the term 'Expert by Experience'?

NCCH knows that the term 'lived experience' includes a wide range of experiences or perspectives, and recognises that individuals with lived experience may refer to themselves as 'Patient and Public Voice (PPV) Partners' or as 'Service Users', and so to ensure that our language is clear both to individuals who recognise these terms and those who do not identify with these terms, NCCH will refer to individuals with lived experience as 'Expert by Experience'. This definition is not a reference to a person's role title, but to the way in which they provide expertise to NCCH and its partners, and as such 'paid engagement' is seen as a payment for their expert contribution, whether this expertise is based on lived experience, professional experience, or both.

Additionally, for us at NCCH, the term 'individuals with lived experience' describes individuals who contribute to the NCCH's work in an individual capacity, rather than as paid representatives of other organisations. Those fulfilling this role as a part of an existing work contract should inform NCCH, so it can be discussed and formalised with potential partner organisations.

3. What is Expert by Experience Paid Engagement?

Paid engagement differs from our formal contracts for employed staff, freelance and contracted workers (aka 'associated personnel'), or commissioned pieces, which are covered by our NCCH recruitment policies. 'Paid engagement' is defined as an activity whereby an individual is invited by NCCH to share their expertise or participate in an activity, for which NCCH receives an external benefit from seeking Expert by Experience participation. For example, these benefits might include delivering project outcomes, creating resources, receiving funding, etc.

4. Who is Paid Engagement for?

NCCH will pay individuals for this work who are:

- working in a freelance or self-employed capacity

- unwaged (but with settled status)
- on a part-time wage that does not cover the time spent on engagement.

AND are eligible for paid engagement because they:

- have been invited by NCCH to make a contribution to its work;
- do not already hold a formal paid NCCH employee role;
- do not already contribute through a Trustee role for NCCH
- are not funded by another organisation, group or council to represent it in engagements with NCCH
- have settled status or leave to remain.

5. Which type of activities are paid for?

Examples of paid engagement

Paid engagement activities may take a number of formats, this may include (but not limited too):

- participating as a member of an Advisory or Assessment Panel, Programme Review Committee or Research Committee
- chairing a committee
- participating in roundtables or workshops
- participating in meetings either face-to-face or via telephone/video conference
- providing written correspondence such as input on a piece of work
- representational activities where an individual presents, speaks or appears in an event or forum on behalf of NCCH
- participating in training or development activities
- preparation, travel or reading time (as agreed by NCCH in advance)

Examples of unpaid activities

The payment of engagement fees or reimbursements of out-of-pocket expenses will not be made where activities do not meet the definition of engagement. This includes:

- open public invitations to attend meetings, forums, or presentations by NCCH
- attendance at social events, functions or launches
- ad hoc communication and discussions with NCCH
- where an individual is a professional consultant, contracted to advise on and/or facilitate other activities or matters at NCCH
- when participants do not attend scheduled meetings or complete activities

6. How much and how will I be paid?

Experts by Experience will be paid for their contribution based on an hourly 'Freelance' (self-employed) rate of a minimum of £30 per hour, OR for longer term engagement on a 'PAYE Casual Workers' rate of a minimum of £20 per hour. Please note; variable rates apply based on level of responsibilities, so final rates will be fixed by agreement.

Following paid engagement activities, the Expert by Experience will be asked to submit separate forms for Paid Engagement Fees and out-of-pocket Expenses. We provide an invoice template for

Paid Engagement Fees and also a separate Expenses Claim Form. Any payment will be made by direct deposit to bank account within six weeks of submission.

Alternatively, Experts by Experience can opt to be on a PAYE Casual Worker Rate, paid through the NCCH Payroll System (PAYE), this is a lower rate due to the additional rights you receive as a casual worker and the administration involved in NCCH automatically deducting Tax and National Insurance contributions on your behalf through PAYE. This is a useful option for those who may be engaged in longer term Paid Engagement (or go over £1000 HMRC threshold and do not want to register themselves for HMRC self-assessment tax returns).

This option requires a 'right to work' check and completion of a payroll form with your bank and tax details. For the avoidance of doubt the Expert by Experience on a PAYE Casual Worker Rate will not be classed as an NCCH employee, but classed as having 'worker' status under employment law. For more information on this please talk to NCCH's General Manager.

7. What does payment cover?

Payment is per hour of engagement, but the maximum time that may be remunerated in one day is eight hours. This includes travel time to and from the engagement activity. Payment for preparation time, reading, and travel time for attending meetings is to be agreed in advance with NCCH, and should be included in the commitment of hours submitted for payment. In cases where Experts by Experience are paid for attending meetings and NCCH cancels a meeting with less than 24 hours' notice, individuals will still be paid for time already committed.

Our commitment to paid engagement (for those on Freelance rates) also extends to cover up to one missed pre-agreed session every six months during the engagement process due to illness or unforeseen circumstances. Any session missed thereafter will not be covered as we have set our fees at a rate on a par with a reasonable Freelancers rate which covers personal sickness.

8. How might being paid affect me?

NCCH understands it is important to be aware of, and will support Experts by Experience in understanding the potential tax and benefit implications of paid engagement. There is a risk that benefits can be stopped in certain circumstances if you fail to get permission for earnings, earn over the limit, or fail to inform job centre of activity. We are not benefits experts and we can't advise on all specific situations. We recommend that you consult a benefits advisor if you are unsure. More details and helpful guidance on this can be found within NCCH's Experts by Experience Policy.

HMRC states amounts outside of 'out-of-pocket' expenses may be classed as earnings, and as such 'paid engagement' may affect state benefits or liability for tax and national insurance by the Expert by Experience. Therefore, Experts by Experience have the choice if they want to be paid for their engagement.

For example, if claiming the Expert by Experience 'freelance' hourly rate it is important to note that you will be responsible for your own tax and national insurance on any paid engagement. You will be liable for tax on this income if your total self-employed income for the year exceeds HMRC's personal allowance of £1000.

It is your responsibility to understand how any payment from us may affect your or your household's state benefits (including pension) and your liability for tax and national insurance. However, NCCH can discuss with the Expert by Experience in advance, so both NCCH and the

Expert by Experience can take into account personal circumstances and vary payments depending on these circumstances.

For example, NCCH can support Experts by Experience (unwaged, on a low wage, part-time wage) with potential tax and benefit implications by paying in instalments over a number of months. And/or NCCH can provide a support letter to help you with providing information to the Department for Work and Pensions and JobCentre Plus.

9. What if I don't want to or can't accept payment?

NCCH advocates and encourages the payment of Experts by Experience for their time and as an acknowledgement of the value of lived experience contributions in NCCH's work. However, we recognise there may be many reasons why someone is unable to, or would prefer not to receive payment (even if they are eligible) based on their personal views or individual circumstances. Therefore, despite NCCH's advice as set out within our policies and guidelines, it is entirely your choice whether to accept payment. Experts by Experience may choose to be paid for one activity and not for another, or not at all! All choices will be respected by NCCH. Any money that would have been paid will remain in NCCH budget to support future Lived Experience budgets.

If an Expert by Experience doesn't want to or can't accept Paid Engagement, then NCCH can explore alternative options to support your participation and recognise your contribution in a way that works for you, for example we offer other avenues including the offer of training, skills development, and mentoring. Please note we do not tend to offer vouchers in exchange for paid engagement as anything over £30 and cash exchangeable, can be seen as income and subject to tax by HRMC, as well as potentially impacting on benefits. We always offer expenses separately to payment, so we can still reimburse these for you, if needed.

10. What if I'm not eligible for Paid Engagement?

As visa restrictions may affect an individual's ability to be paid for their engagement, NCCH will consider how it can involve Experts by Experience without settled status or leave to remain, by offering training, skills development, and mentoring to help support individuals prepare to become economically active in the UK once their status is confirmed. Also, we offer expenses separately to payment, so we can still reimburse expenses for any Experts by Experience, if needed.

Advice should always be sought from the Home Office in this regard, and Asylum seekers who wish to contribute voluntarily must still speak to their case owner to ensure there is no detrimental impact on their claim.

11. What if my Paid Engagement work increases?

If your engagement as an Expert by Experience expands over time, for example the nature of the involvement work increases and/or your expertise is required for multiple programmes of work, then NCCH will re-evaluate and discuss with you your employment status for your paid engagement, and if you should become classed as a PAYE Casual Worker. This means you will be offered a PAYE Casual Workers Agreement and Rate and paid through the National Centre for Creative Health payroll system (PAYE) as highlighted in Section 6.

12. Will I be paid out-of-pocket expenses?

NCCH does not expect Experts by Experience to be out-of-pocket as a result of participating in activities for NCCH and will ensure that they are paid or reimbursed an amount that is consistent with reasonable expenses actually incurred while carrying out their commitments. As a guideline,

this may include travel, accommodation, meals and transport (including taxis, car hire, petrol reimbursement and/or parking fees).

When inviting an individual to undertake a paid engagement activity, NCCH will provide information on the type and limit to out-of-pocket expenses eligible for reimbursement in-line with rates set out in our Expert by Experience Paid Engagement Policy and limited to the amount shown on receipts. For example (agreed in advance) we can offer reimbursement of; care and support costs; data and online access; postage & telephone costs; refunds for the cost of meals (if food isn't provided during an in-person event)

In the first instance, NCCH will arrange travel and accommodation where required on behalf of Experts by Experience in relation to their paid engagement activities. However, out-of-pocket expenses can also be agreed in advance with NCCH, and receipts should be kept and provided to NCCH for reimbursement within four weeks. NCCH may decline to reimburse an expense claimed with no supporting receipt, and expenses over £20 with no supporting receipt will need to be explained, as well as the reason why a receipt has not been provided.

As standard practice, NCCH sends all information electronically, however Expert by Experience participants can opt at any point to receive hard copies of documents. No reimbursement for printing expenses will be provided where an Expert by Experience has received information electronically and has freely chosen to print the material themselves, unless NCCH has not left an adequate window of 48 hours to read the material sent.

Specific needs: Experts by Experience may claim allowances for expenses relating to specific needs incurred when carrying out approved commitments. The circumstances in which Experts by Experience can claim expenses for specific needs may include: audio equipment or support from a signer, braille transcription, special transport for individuals with disabilities, etc.

More detailed information on expenses can be found in our NCCH Expert By Experience Paid Engagement Policy.

13. What types of support mechanisms are offered?

NCCH believes in the access and provision of appropriate support for Experts by Experience, as the need for additional types of support should not prevent anyone from being able to undertake paid engagement.

From the outset NCCH will make it clear if an activity is paid, as well as provide a:

- Description of the type of activity
- Expected time commitment
- Timeline for the activity
- Desired outcomes

If the Expert by Experience engagement is part of a larger group engagement (i.e an Advisory Group) NCCH will provide or co-produce a Terms of Reference with the group as well as offer a Support Rider. Otherwise, NCCH's process is to have an initial meeting with any individual who is invited to participate as an Expert by Experience, and together will fill out a Support Rider/or alternatively use any type of pre-existing Access Rider which the Expert by Experience would like to share as a way to understand availability, capacity, support, and any additional advice which may be required. After the meeting, an individualised contract of engagement inclusive of details and payment will be drawn up to be signed by both the Expert by Experience and NCCH.

In a Nutshell, what you should expect from NCCH Expert by Experience process is:

- An introduction to the organisation and one-on-one (1:1) meeting about the process of engagement, and/or a Terms of Reference for group engagement.
- An overview of co-production and your Expert by Experience role/responsibilities
- A personalised and detailed Expert by Experience Agreement inclusive of details and payment
- A named contact at NCCH who you can contact at any time with any queries/questions
- Appropriate support to enable you to take part in Expert by Experience activity via completion of a Support Rider/or sharing of an existing Access Rider
- Reimbursement of reasonable expenses
- Paid engagement fees if eligible, and you wish to claim them

14. How does the Expert by Experience Paid Engagement Policy & Guidelines continue to develop?

Developing policy around paid engagement for Experts by Experience is an ongoing process. We know it's not perfect, but with each version, we aim to make meaningful improvements based on feedback and evolving needs. We will continue to reflect on these guidelines and policy with our Expert by Experience participants, and NCCH commits to review these every year. We hope you will join us as we continue to refine and improve our Expert by Experience Paid Engagement Policy and Guidelines to better serve our NCCH audiences.

15. What if I am not sure of anything?

Please do ask if you have any questions, are unsure about anything, or would like more information. You can email our General Manager, Alexis Butt on info@ncch.org.uk. We're happy to help!

16. 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.

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.

In recognition of best practice, NCCH is part of the Arts and Social Outcomes Network and is signed up to a **Fair Pay & Lived Experience Manifesto** (2023) <https://artshomelessint.com/research/fair-pay-and-lived-experience-resource-and-manifesto/>