Volunteer Expenses Policy

https://mk-cat-rescue.org/docs/volunteer-expenses-policy/

Our rescue relies primarily on foster carers, supported by additional volunteers who help with transport, trapping, events, cleaning, fundraising, and administrative tasks. This policy ensures that no volunteer is out of pocket for their essential expenses, and sets out how claims must be submitted through our chosen digital platform, ExpensesPlus.

The Cat Rescue holds central stock of food, litter, toys and other essential consumables. Volunteers—particularly foster carers—should request what they need from this stock before making purchases. A monthly supply run (‘milk run’) takes place on the first Saturday of each month. Please check availability before purchasing.

Volunteers are never expected to subsidise the charity or absorb costs due to obligation or ‘nice person guilt’. All volunteering related expenses should be claimed so that the organisation can accurately record the true cost of operations. If volunteers do not wish to keep their reimbursement, they may donate the reimbursed amount back to the rescue. This donation can be Gift Aid eligible.

Vet bills are paid directly via our account with MK Vet Group. Fosterers must not settle vet bills themselves. All treatment plans must be agreed with the trustees prior to commencing treatment.

1. Purpose of the Policy

Fosterers often incur the majority of costs when caring for cats on our behalf. This policy ensures:

- Volunteers are reimbursed for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred while performing their duties.
- Reimbursements comply with HMRC rules that only actual costs can be reimbursed, supported by receipts.
- All claims are processed consistently through ExpensesPlus, our digital expense management system.

2. Principles

- Volunteers are not paid for their time, only reimbursed for approved costs.
- All expenses must be directly related to volunteering, reasonable, unavoidable, and supported by receipts or logs.
- Claims must be submitted through ExpensesPlus using the volunteer’s own login.

3. Reimbursable Expenses

3.1 Animal Care Consumables

Fosterers may claim the cost of essential supplies, including food, kitten milk replacer, prescription diets, litter, hygiene items, cleaning supplies, toys, scratchers, bedding, and other welfare necessities.

3.2 Veterinary Travel&Medical Support

Reimbursable vetrelated expenses include mileage (HMRC approved), public transport fares, and parking fees. Medication or supplements require prior approval unless in an emergency.

3.3 Home Based Volunteering Costs

Foster carers may claim additional, volunteering specific costs such as increased phone usage or extra utility usage directly related to fostering. Baseline household costs cannot be claimed.

4. Reimbursable Expenses for Other Volunteers

Includes transport volunteers, trapping/field volunteers, and event/admin volunteers for travel, consumables, postage, printing, stationery, and related costs.

5. What Cannot Be Reimbursed

Flat rate allowances, stipends, gifts/vouchers, luxury items, general household bills, and unreceipted purchases (except mileage logs) cannot be reimbursed.

6. Claiming Expenses via ExpensesPlus

- All claims must be submitted through ExpensesPlus.
- Volunteers will receive a unique login.
- Claims must include receipts or logs and be submitted within 30 days.
- Pre approval is required for high value items.

7. Limits, Caps & Reasonability

Monthly caps may apply to consumables or travel. Exceptions may be made for sick, special needs, or neonatal animals.

8. Recognition of Volunteers

Recognition may include thank you cards, emails, or occasional low value tokens. High value or regular gifts cannot be offered.

9. Policy Review

Reviewed every two years or earlier if guidance or operational needs change.