



PRACTICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY ALLOWANCE

TRAVEL SCHEME FOR BURSARY HOLDERS FUNDED BY THE CARE COUNCIL FOR WALES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Social work qualifying training places great importance upon students being able to develop skills, apply knowledge and have their competence assessed within appropriate practice learning opportunities. To make best use of the practice learning opportunities available, students will be required to access placements across Wales and will often need to undertake additional travelling as part of their practice learning experience.
- 1.2 A practice learning opportunity (PLO) will normally be treated by the Care Council as referring to days spent in practice training in social work, as required by the Care Council in its "Approval and Visiting of Degree Courses in Social Work (Wales) Rules 2004" or its Assuring Quality in the Diploma in Social Work or by the Requirements for a Social Work Qualification made by another UK Regulatory Council.
- 1.3 The Practice Learning Opportunity Allowance (PLOA) has been introduced as a contribution towards the placements expenses that students will incur as an integral part of their social work training.

2. Who is entitled to claim the allowance?

- 2.1 The Practice Learning Opportunity Allowance is available to all students who have been assessed as eligible for the Care Council bursary, and not against the eligibility criteria for the tuition fees.
- 2.2 Students undertaking the course over more than three years will not receive the annual allowance for any year within which they do not undertake a practice learning opportunity.

3. How much is the allowance?

- 3.1 Eligible students on an undergraduate degree course or postgraduate Masters degree course will receive £500 per annum as a contribution towards practice learning opportunity costs. This £500 initial allowance is paid with the first instalment of the Social Work Bursary.

- 3.2 Students who have expended their £500 allowance in any given year on eligible expenditure relating to their practice learning opportunity will be entitled to claim for reimbursement of costs in excess of £500 to the maximum of the daily limit.
- 3.3 To be entitled to such reimbursement students must demonstrate to the Care Council that the initial £500 allowance has been spent on eligible practice learning expenditure.

4. What will the allowance cover?

4.1 The allowance will cover:

- Travel costs incurred travelling to and from a student’s home/accommodation to their practice learning opportunity. This would normally include one pre-practice learning opportunity visit and one post-practice learning opportunity visit per practice learning opportunity.
 - Travel costs incurred whilst undertaking a practice learning opportunity e.g. home visits to service users.
 - Accommodation Costs incurred specifically to undertake a practice learning opportunity e.g. Bed & Breakfast costs or renting accommodation.
- You may claim this expenditure by filling in the Daily Expenditure sheet of the Initial £500 and Travel Claim forms.
 - Students can claim up to a maximum of £50 per day for all private transport, parking and accommodation costs.

4.2 The allowance will **not** cover:

- Travel to university/college;
- Recall days;
- Car repairs, purchase, MOT tests, RAC/AA membership etc;
- Car Rentals and Leases;
- Plane Travel
- Taxi costs

5. Mileage Rates

5.1 Claims for the use of private motor vehicles will be paid at the following rate:

Motorcars:	30p per mile
Motorcycles:	15p per mile
Bicycle:	5p per mile

6. Passenger Supplements

6.1 Students travelling by private vehicle can claim a passenger supplement of 2p per mile per passenger for up to two Care Council bursary aided students carried. Claim forms must show the names of passengers and their bursary reference number. Please note that where students travel together only the driver can claim.

7. Other Eligible Expenses

7.1 Claims can also be made for the following:

- Parking fees can be claimed for within the daily travel limit of £50, for travel to and from the practice learning opportunity and whilst undertaking work directly relating to the practice learning opportunity e.g. visits to the home of service users/carers.
- Charges for tolls, tunnels, bridges and congestion charges incurred during the practice learning opportunity will be reimbursed in addition to the daily travel limit of £50.
- Public transport costs. Claims for public transport will:
 - Reimburse the actual cost of the journey taken, as shown on ticket;
 - Require rail travel to be at lowest available price, using return tickets and standard rates.

Claims can be made for the cost of conveying a bicycle by train for use whilst undertaking a practice learning opportunity.

Receipts/tickets MUST BE attached with the claim for each item of eligible expense claimed. The Care Council CANNOT REIMBURSE any claim for the above unless corresponding receipts or tickets have been attached.

8. Insurance Undertaking

- All students in receipt of bursary funding must have completed Section 7 of the Social Work Bursary application form, named "Insurance Cover Undertaking". Students will need to complete this Section irrespective of whether they intend to use a private motor vehicle for the purposes of the practice learning opportunities.
- It is a condition of payment of private transport claims that students have insurance cover for the following risk:
 - (a) claims relating to travel to and from permanent home address, term-time address, placement address and placement lodgings address:

- bodily injury to, or death, of third parties;
- bodily injury to, or death, of any passengers; and
- damage to the property of third parties.

(b) If the vehicle is used during the course of the practice learning opportunity, the cover must in addition include the following:

- damage to, or theft, of the vehicle; and
- an endorsement that the policy covers use for business purposes by the student personally.

- It is the student's responsibility to see that their insurance policy covers these risks and is properly endorsed for the use of the vehicle in the course of training and that receipt of a mileage allowance is not deemed to constitute use for hire or reward. The Care Council will not pay for any additional cost of insurance for business use.
- The Care Council will not accept liability in the event of any accident, damage, injury or death resulting from the use of a student's vehicle. Mileage allowance will only be paid if the insurance conditions are fulfilled. Although it is the student's responsibility to check that their policy meets the requirements, the Care Council reserves the right to examine the policy at any time.

9. Conditions of Payment

- Expense claims over and above the £500 basic allowance, will normally be paid on a monthly basis, in arrears.
- Expense claims cannot be paid in advance.
- **All expense claims must be verified by the PLO supervisor.**
- Expense claims will be processed according to the date they are submitted or re-submitted to the Care Council.
- Checks may be carried out on private transport mileage claims using a mileages verifying process.
- Checks may be carried out on public transport fares and any other aspect of the scheme.
- **The Care Council will check, and where appropriate, amend mileage rates, arithmetic calculations and number of miles claimed.**
- In circumstances where an overpayment has occurred, future expense claims will be used to reduce/offset such overpayments.

10. How to apply for the allowance

- 10.1 Students who have been awarded a Care Council bursary will receive a basic £500 payment for each year within which they undertake a practice learning opportunity. The £500 will be paid in the first term of each academic year. Once students have spent this amount on eligible practice learning expenditure, they are eligible for additional payments.
- 10.2 Each year, students will need to follow the same process to demonstrate how they have spent the £500 allowance before claiming for additional expenditure. This is done through the completion and submission of an Initial £500 form.
- 10.3 To claim for additional expenditure, students must submit a completed Travel Claim Form. Expenditure for renting accommodation should also be included on the Initial £500 and Travel Claim Forms. Both forms must be verified by the student's placement supervisor.
- 10.4 Claims should be sent to the Student Funding Team, Care Council for Wales, Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW.
- 10.5 **Under no circumstances must verifying officers return forms to students for onward transmission.**
- 10.6 Claims will take up to 28 working days to be processed by the Care Council.

Detailed guidance notes on completing the forms are attached.

11. How to check that the Care Council have received the forms

- 11.1 If you include your email address on the front covers of both Initial £500 and Travel Claim Form, we will e-mail you a confirmation of receipt of your form, once it is received in the Student Funding office.

12. Further Information

- 12.1 If students have any queries about their expense claims, they are invited to contact the Care Council for Wales by e-mail at studentfunding@ccwales.org.uk or write to the Student Funding Team, Care Council for Wales, Southgate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW.

Travel Forms Guide:

Both forms are very similar in appearance and operation - the key difference is that:

- The Initial £500 form is used to demonstrate how you have used the £500 allowance that was paid with the first instalment of your Social Work Bursary;
- The Travel Claim form is used to claim for any expenditure in excess of the initial £500.

If you anticipate exceeding the £500 initial practice learning opportunity allowance within an academic year you will need to record your expenditure on the Initial £500 form from the first day of your practice learning opportunity. **If your total expenditure on a practice learning opportunity is less than £500 in any one given academic year, then you will not need to submit any of the forms.**

You will only need to fill in the Initial £500 once, but you can submit as many Travel Claim forms as you require. It is recommended however, that you claim either every 4 weeks, or once you have filled in all the rows on one sheet. Once you have demonstrated expenditure up to the £500, you must use the Travel Claim Form to record and claim for any additional expenditure. You can submit the Initial £500 and a Travel Claim Form at the same time, but you cannot submit a Travel Claim Form without first submitting the Initial £500 form.

Guide to completing and submitting the forms:

Front Cover:

- Fill in your name, bursary reference number and relevant addresses;
- Dates, number of days and claim total will be done automatically on your behalf once you have completed the Daily Expenses sheet;
- Declarations and email address cannot be filled in until the rest of the form has been completed and printed out.

Daily Expenses:

- Record a day's expenditure per line.
- Fill in each relevant column, depending on the mode of transport you have used to travel and for any parking charges/accommodation costs/passenger costs/additional costs that have been incurred.
- Write the name and bursary reference number of any passengers (if any).

Finally:

- Once the Daily Expenses sheet has been completed, the total will be displayed on the front cover automatically.
- Print out the Front Cover and Daily Expenses sheet.
- Sign the declaration on the Front cover.
- Place all receipts/tickets in the receipts envelope provided and then seal the envelope. Please ensure that you complete all the details requested on the front of the envelope before attaching to the form.

- Take the form, together with a pre paid envelope to your PLO supervisor to be signed and stamped; **your supervisor is responsible for sending your forms off to the Care Council.**

Before submitting your forms, use the following checklist:

Final Check

- The form 'Initial £500' has been completed to record expenditure up to £500, and the Travel Claim Form for any excess expenditure.
- Receipts have been placed in the envelope provided and securely attached to each form where parking fees, accommodation costs, public transport costs and additional costs are being claimed for.
- The declaration has been read, and the form signed and dated before passing onto the PLO supervisor for verification.
- Claim forms and receipts have been photocopied, so that a duplicate copy is at hand in the event of the form getting lost in the post.
- Make sure you've included your e-mail address if you wish to receive confirmation that the Care Council has received your form.
- The claim has been checked for accuracy before submission, as inaccurate claims will be returned.
- Your claim has been handed to your PLO supervisor for verification along with a pre-paid envelope for forwarding on to the Care Council.

If you have any questions or queries that aren't answered here, you can ask the Student Funding Team directly on:

Phone: 0845 070 0249
Fax: 029 2078 0674

Minicom: 029 2078 0680
Email: studentfunding@ccwales.org.uk

Forms should be sent to:

Student Funding Team
 Care Council for Wales
 7th Floor, Southgate House
 Wood Street, Cardiff
 CF10 1EW