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Volunteer Co-ordinators' Newsletter

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Voluntary Sector News

BUDGET RESULT FOR VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Volunteer drivers will be able to claim a higher level of expenses to cover their costs. The announcement follows sustained calls for better support for volunteer drivers by voluntary organisations, Volunteering England, the Community Transport Association and other civil society organisations and will be welcomed by thousands of volunteer drivers across the country that provide a vital community service.

All drivers who use their vehicle for work or volunteering will now be able to claim 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles, an increase from the current rate of 40p. In addition, an allowance of 5p per passenger per mile that is already available to business drivers will be extended to volunteers.

FOR VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS THIS MEANS:

- Setting new budgets for volunteer expenses especially for community transport schemes
- Changing Volunteer Policies and/or Transport policies

REIMBURSING LESS THAN 45P? An organisation can reimburse less than these rates if it chooses to. But if your organisation's budget will allow you to, we would recommend reimbursing at the full rate because they have been calculated to reflect average driving costs, and this should mean that volunteers are not out-of-pocket after volunteering for you.

EXPENSES BEST PRACTICE: The three main principles of your volunteer expenses policy should probably be:

1. Where possible, make sure that volunteers are fully reimbursed for their costs and are not out-of-pocket after volunteering.
2. Don't give more money than your volunteers have spent. This could be regarded as a 'payment' and affect tax, state benefits or even the legal status of a volunteer.
3. Create a simple and efficient system so that expenses are quickly reimbursed and volunteers are encouraged to claim.

