

**HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTORATE  
PAY AND EMPLOYMENT UNIT**



Department of  
**Health, Social Service  
and Public Safety**

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agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

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Date: 22 January 2010

Dear Colleagues

**Regional guidance on relocation, removal and excess travel expenses for  
doctors in training.**

Please find attached a regional guidance document on relocation, removal and excess travel expenses for doctors in training. This guidance document applies to staff covered by the 'Hospital, Medical and Dental Staff and Doctors in Public Health Medicine and the Community Health Service (NI)' Terms and Conditions of Service.

This guidance was developed through consultation with the British Medical Association (BMA). The aim of the guidance is to provide clarification and to improve consistency for employers in the interpretation of the terms and conditions of service relating to relocation, removal and excess travel for doctors in training. It will be subject to review in January 2011.

The guidance does not replace the Terms and Conditions of Service and should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 314 and 315 of the Terms and Conditions of Service and with Section 26 of the General Conditions of Service.

The new guidance should help ensure that the process is effectively managed across all Trusts.

Copies of this circular can be obtained from the Department's website at [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Best'.

**David Best**  
**Assistant Director of HR**

# **Regional Guidance on Relocation, Removal and Excess Travel Expenses for Doctors in Training**

## **Regional Guidance on Relocation, Removal and Excess Travel Expenses for Doctors in Training**

### **Introduction**

1. This guidance document applies to staff covered by the “Hospital Medical and Dental Staff and Doctors in Public Health Medicine and the Community Health Service (NI)” Terms and Conditions of Service.
2. The aim of the guidance is to provide clarification and to improve consistency for employers in the interpretation of the terms and conditions of service relating to relocation, removal and excess travel for doctors in training.

### **Key Principles**

3. This guidance does not replace the terms and conditions of service. The guidance should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 314 and 315 of the Terms and Conditions of Service and with section 26 of the General Conditions of Service.
4. While this document provides guidance for Trusts, each case should always be considered on its own merits.
5. A guiding principle is that doctors should not be financially disadvantaged by reasonable costs incurred through a move either in the interests of the service or to further their professional training. However, they are also not expected to profit materially from reimbursements in respect of removals, relocation and excess mileage.
6. The scope and level of financial assistance should normally be determined and agreed prior to the doctor taking up post.

### **Eligibility**

7. Doctors may be eligible to claim assistance for relocation expenses (removal of personal belongings and effects), removal expenses (sale and purchase of a house), or excess mileage expenses (practitioners on rotational training programmes who are eligible to claim removal/relocation expenses but who choose to travel the greater distance).
8. The relevant terms and conditions of service should be taken into account in determining eligibility for relocation, removal and excess mileage expenses. For ease of reference these are set out at Annex A.

9. In order to be eligible for relocation, removal or excess mileage the doctor must be:
  - (i) required to move house/accommodation; and
  - (ii) be on a rotational training programme (defined as a series of two or more planned placements).
10. The new residence should be within a reasonable daily travelling distance of the new place of work, and the old residence should not be within a reasonable daily travelling distance of the new place of work, in order to be eligible for removal/relocation expenses. A reasonable daily travelling distance within Northern Ireland **may be** up to 40 miles (one way) measured using standard mileage charts. This is not prescriptive and in determining what is reasonable the employer should take into account all the circumstances of each case including the specific route, current status of infrastructure, overall journey time, mode of transport, and overall additional cost to the doctor. It may therefore be the case that a doctor travelling a distance of less than 40 miles is provided with assistance, depending on the circumstances.
11. The required to move house test may be satisfied if the daily travelling distance from home to the new place of work is **normally** greater than 40 miles (one way). 40 miles should not be used in a prescriptive manner, and in determining what is reasonable the employer should take into account the circumstances of each case including the specific route, current status of infrastructure, overall journey times, mode of transport, and overall additional cost to the doctor. It may therefore be the case that a doctor travelling a distance of less than 40 miles is provided with assistance, depending on the circumstances.
12. Employers may take into account the length of the contract when considering eligibility for the payment of relocation, removal or excess mileage.
13. Employers may set a reasonable ceiling on the maximum amount payable during the period of the training programme. Eligible doctors may be required to formally declare all previous re-imbursements claimed for excess travel, relocation and removal expenses whilst with other Trusts in Northern Ireland. Normally only one claim for removal/relocation expenses would be paid during the course of the doctor's training programme.
14. Doctors who as a result of taking up employment either need to relocate to a new area which results in them having to move home or incur extra daily travelling expenses should be considered under paragraph 4 of the General Conditions of Service. Support under paragraph 4 is at the discretion of the employer.
15. FTSTAs will not normally be deemed eligible for excess travel under paragraph 315 of the Terms and Conditions of Service unless they can provide evidence that they are part of a rotational training programme (defined in paragraph 9 (ii) above). Employers should consider whether FTSTAs would be eligible for the reimbursement of removal/relocation expenses under paragraph 4 of the General Conditions of Service.

## Relocation/Removal Expenses

16. Removal/relocation expenses are payable where the doctor meets the criteria outlined in paragraphs 9, 10 and 11 above. Applications for removal expenses should be considered from eligible practitioners where the doctor is a homeowner. Practitioners should be required to provide evidence that they are home-owners at the time of accepting the appointment. Applications for relocation expenses should be considered from eligible practitioners where the doctor is not a householder.
17. Reimbursements should not be made until the doctor takes up appointment, and only upon receipt of original receipts and documentation. Doctors should normally obtain written confirmation of their eligibility for the reimbursement of relocation/removal expenses from the employer before making any firm arrangements.
18. If a doctor's partner/spouse is eligible to claim relocation or removal expenses, only one will be eligible to receive expenses.
19. Practitioners may be required to sign an undertaking that they may be required to repay a proportion of any removal expenses received if they leave their post prior to the end of the contracted period. The proportion will be in accordance with the worked element of the contract of employment against the total length of that contract of employment/training programme.
20. Entitlement to removal expenses for house sale and purchase will normally be dependant upon the move being completed within 12 months of taking up the post.
21. Doctors who are occupying rented accommodation immediately prior to beginning their employment with the Trust, and who meet the eligibility criteria outlined in paragraphs 9, 10 and 11 above should be considered for the reimbursement of the cost of removal of furniture (where appropriate) and personal effects based upon receipt of 3 quotations, with the lower amount being paid up. Employers may set a limit on the maximum amount payable.
22. Doctors living in hospital accommodation may have to relocate each time they change posts during a rotation. These practitioners should be treated in the same way as those occupying rented accommodation (see paragraph 21 above).
23. Eligible doctors who are purchasing their first house are not entitled to claim removal expenses, but should be treated in the same way as those occupying rented accommodation (see paragraph 21 above).
24. Expenses should only be reimbursed from a UK point of entry.

### **Excess Mileage in lieu of removal**

25. Doctors who meet the eligibility criteria outlined in paragraphs 9, 10 and 11 above (as defined under paragraph 315 of the Terms and Conditions of service) may choose not to move home but to travel daily the greater distance between their home and the hospital. The doctor must be employed within a rotational training programme, and must meet the 'required to move' house test. Doctors would normally be expected to have obtained the approval of the Trust prior to taking up the post.
26. The mileage that may be paid under these circumstances is the difference between the mileage from home to their designated base of work and the mileage from home to the new place of work (as set out in para. 315 of the Terms & Conditions of Service).
27. Designated base of work – this is usually but not always the first hospital on the rotation. Doctors may elect to have one of the other hospitals on their rotation as their designated base of work (if this is closer to their home address).
28. Payment of excess travel costs should not be agreed where, in the judgement of the Trust, the journey time and/or distance involved is likely to be detrimental to the safety of the practitioner, and/or to the satisfactory performance of the practitioner's duties. In such circumstances, the Trust may wish to seek alternative arrangements which will address the needs of both the doctor and the service.
29. Employers should take into account the circumstances of each case when deciding whether to pay public transport or standard mileage rates. HSS (TC8) 12/2001 sets out the criteria to be used when deciding which rate is appropriate.

### **Administrative process**

30. Employers should draw up their own procedures which will facilitate doctors in training in applying for the appropriate level of expenses. They should also clearly indicate the level of reimbursement available. This should normally be made available to the doctor before any contract of employment is entered into. Claim forms and procedures should be included in the documents provided to the doctor.

### **Appeals**

31. Employers should have a clearly set out appeals procedure to cover cases of disagreement.

## ANNEX A

### Para 314 of the Terms and Conditions of Service

*'The provisions of Section 26 of the General Council Conditions of Service shall apply.'*

### Para 315 of the Terms and Conditions of Service

*"Practitioners who are required to move house during a rotational training programme may receive reimbursement of removal expenses in accordance with Section 26 of the General Council Conditions of Service.*

*Practitioners who might be reimbursed for moving house in such circumstances may, however, choose not to move home on taking up the second or subsequent posts in a rotation but to travel daily the greater distance between their home and the hospital. Similarly if the practitioner has a home convenient to the hospital in which the second or subsequent post in the rotational appointment is to be held the practitioner may elect to travel the extra distance to the hospital in which the previous post(s) are held.*

*In such cases, the practitioner may be paid excess travelling expenses at the appropriate rate according to the circumstances in which the practitioner's vehicle is used".*

### Section 26 of the General Conditions of Service

#### REMOVAL AND ASSOCIATED EXPENSES PROVISIONS

- 1. The application of this Section to hospital medical and dental staff, or doctors in community medicine and the community health service, or dentists working in the Community Dental Service and Dental Public Health is subject to modifications set out in their respective Terms and Conditions of Service.*

#### CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH REMOVAL EXPENSES ARE PAYABLE AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 2. Assistance with removal and other expenses shall be granted to employees who needs to move their home or incur extra daily travelling expenses as a result of being required by their employing authority to transfer to a new headquarters or on taking up a post which is regarded as suitable employment as an alternative to redundancy.*
- 3. Assistance shall also be granted to employees who are required to change employing authority, or who otherwise have to move home or incur extra daily travelling expenses, in order to satisfy the requirements of their normal professional training.*
- 4. Assistance may also be granted, at the discretion of the employing authority, to employees who as a result of taking up employment with the employing authority*



*either need to move their home or incur extra daily travelling expenses. In exercising their discretion, employing authorities shall apply the principles of the General Terms and Conditions Equal Opportunities statement (Section 7).*

5. *The scope and level of financial assistance to be provided should be determined by the employing authority, in agreement with the prospective employee, prior to the post being accepted. In providing assistance, employing authorities should ensure equity between one category of staff and another, while balancing their own interests with the needs of prospective employees.*
6. *In agreeing the assistance to be provided, the employing authority shall have regard to all the individual employee's circumstances, including the need to re-house dependents and the comparability of new and previous accommodation.*
7. *Employing authorities may require employees to repay all or part of the reimbursements and grants paid if they leave the employing authority within 2 years of the appointment which gave rise to the expenses.*

#### ASSISTANCE WHICH MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE

8. *The employing authority may meet any reasonable cost incurred in relation, including: reasonable expenses incurred in the search for accommodation in the new area; reasonable vouched expenditure incurred in the purchase and sale of property; the removal of furniture and effects and continuing commitments in the old area; grants to cover general and miscellaneous removal costs; assistance with additional housing costs in the new area, etc.*
9. *The employing authority shall clearly indicate to the employee the level of assistance that will be provided, the aspects of removal costs that will be reimbursed and, where applicable, the upper limit of payment in all usual circumstances.*
10. *The employing authority shall stipulate in the agreement reached with the employee the procedure to be followed and the costs that will be reimbursed in circumstances where an employing authority has entered into an agreement with solicitors or others to provide house purchase/conveyancing services, private structural surveys, estate agency services and/or a removal service at preferential cost.*