



## Research Ethics Participant Reimbursement Guidelines (Version 1, 12 July 2019)

This document aims to provide guidelines concerning acceptable payments for participation in research projects.

### 1. Payments to adults.

From April 2019, the UK minimum hourly wage is £6.15 for individuals aged 18-20, rising to £7.70 for those aged 21-24, and £8.21 from 25 onwards<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore suggested that the following pricing plan be applied (possible exceptions follow):

- Up to 15 minutes (including briefing and debriefing) - £1.50
- Up to 30 minutes (including briefing and debriefing) - £3.00
- Up to 45 minutes (including briefing and debriefing) - £4.50
- Up to 60 minutes (including briefing and debriefing) - £6.00

This is slightly above the UK hourly minimum wage for 18-20 year olds, though is not so far above it so as to represent undue inducement. It remains at the discretion of the experimenter whether travelling expenses are also paid. If participants are coming from the local community, we can expect that additional 2<sup>nd</sup> class travel expenses may be needed as an enticement to participate.

Exceptions to the above payment guidelines are where a study requires participants to undergo the kinds of procedures that require significant physical effort (e.g. exercise regimes), physical discomfort (e.g. substance ingestion, blood sampling); or intense psychological effort (e.g. stress testing). In such cases it is understood that the investigator(s) may wish to provide higher hourly payments to reflect the greater involvement of the participant, though should not offer payments that would induce an otherwise unwilling person to take part. Investigators conducting such tests may need to justify the hourly rate/total payment to the ethical reviewers.

It goes without saying that members of the research team should not be paying themselves to undertake their own research – this is 'gross misconduct'.

NIHR resources suitable for considering issues in paying people and calculating the costs for health and social care research involving patients, carers and the public can be found on the INVOLVE website <http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment/involvement-cost-calculator/>. This webpage also links to guidelines on how payment for involvement in research may impact on the benefits people receive as a result of the Welfare Reform Act (2012).

Please keep a record of any payments made to participants.

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<sup>1</sup> According to: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates> checked June 2019

## **2. Payments to children and young people.**

Several different methods can be employed:

- Gift vouchers to schools.
- Gift vouchers to parents/children
- The use of other (non-payment) 'rewards' (e.g. stickers).

Payment should be limited to a token gesture of appreciation and that if payment is for reimbursement of costs, then it should be fair and not become an inducement. A further recommendation is that if a child does receive payment then this should occur after testing has been completed to prevent it from becoming an inducement (to the child or parent). Such compensation should however be discussed at the informed consent process. Two payment policies in line with the kinds of research that we typically conduct are identified below.

### **a. Institution-based.**

In such studies the researcher is collecting data with children and young people within an institutional setting (School, detention centre, hospital, nursery etc.) which has provided written consent for the research to take place. In such cases the parents/guardians should also have provided their written consent, and the children given their verbal (and wherever possible written) assent. There should be no mention of payment to the Institution at this stage. After the research has been conducted however, it is possible to provide the Institution with a modest recompense as a 'thank-you' gesture – this could be in the form of vouchers (e.g. book tokens) commensurate with the involvement of the Institution. Following completion of the study the minors could also be provided with some sort of token of appreciation (e.g. sticker, badge, certificate etc.) for their participation. If recompense will be offered to the Institution after the research has been completed then the amount should be justified to the ethical reviewers.

### **b. Non-institution-based**

In such studies the researcher may be conducting research with children and young people in their home-setting, within a youth or community group, or the young people may have travelled to the University site. In such cases it may be extremely difficult to obtain volunteers for participation (especially in the latter scenario) unless some form of financial recompense is made at the outset. This should reflect travelling and time expenses and not act as an inducement for parents to encourage their children to take part. Full information as to the payment should be outlined at the information/consent stage. Following completion of the study, rewards should be in the form of vouchers that are in a sealed envelope with the child's name written on, it should be explained to the parents that the token represents appreciation of the child's involvement. Researchers will have to justify the amount chosen to the ethical reviewers. As the current minimum wage for under 18 year olds is £4.05 per hour<sup>1</sup> then under normal circumstances we should not be providing more than this for a young person. It is understood that some studies may have different requirements that could justify a higher payment rate, explanation and justification for this must be clearly stated in the ethics application.

## **3. Students paying participants**

Undergraduate and postgraduate (taught) students should not be allowed to pay participants to take part in their dissertation research.