

Sayfor Surrey

Fire Brigades Union, Surrey



Dear members,

Ref. New travel and meal rates

As you will all be aware, the service and FBU started negotiation on a new SOP over 18 months ago, to bring together all the various claim expenses rates under one SOP; Allowances and Reimbursements SOP. The purpose of the SOP was as follows;

- To cut have a “one stop” SOP containing all payments, claims and reimbursements
- To cut down the administrative burden on support staff of processing the claims
- To ensure the final SOP would not cost or save the service any more money as a whole than the current arrangements at that time
- To provide an automatic linking mechanism so that allowances would stay current rather than needing regular re negotiation to prevent them devaluing

18 months ago work started to achieve this all encompassing SOP.

In July 2010, draft version 12 of this SOP had been produced and I felt as lead FBU negotiator on this issue that this version was ready for full membership consultation to agree it as is, refuse it or agree it with minor changes. I took the SOP to the Surrey Executive Committee who endorsed my view and therefore it was tabled at the Surrey Area Meeting in July 2009. The area committee gave provisional agreement on the SOP but we still needed to make minor adjustments to a couple of points which service managers were in agreement to work on to reach full agreement.

It was then decided by the service that the SOP needed to be put before the county council for approval as it contained financial payments. This happened in July 2009.

Between July 2009 and May 2010, the FBU constantly chased the service to chase the council to speed up this verification process. Eventually at Workforce Planning Tactical Group in April, the council agreed the SOP with the proviso that an equality impact assessment was carried out to ensure no staff groups were disadvantaged as a result of implementing the SOP. The FBU welcomed this condition as it would highlight the last 2 points within the SOP which required further work to reach full agreement.

Paul Greenwood and I were invited to a meeting with 2 ACO's on the 27th May to bottom out the final points and to hopefully get the SOP agreed and implemented. However, at the meeting we were presented with a new version of the SOP (version 13) which we had not only never seen before but were also unaware was being written as no-one from either the service or the county has mentioned that any changes needed to be made to the provisionally agreed version 12.

Version 13 was dramatically different to anything we had seen before. Some of the detrimental changes are listed below;

- No RDS entitlement to Surrey Allowance
- No Surrey Allowances link to the NJC pay scales so it will never change from £1,213 pa
- No agreement to maintain CPD on promotion
- No link for standby and spoilt meals to RPI
- Introduction of a flat mileage rate of 40pm
- No link for mileage rates to be linked to NJC

In short, version 13 had turned into a cuts exercise to save the service money at our member's expense.

For more details on any of the issues contained in Sayfor Surrey, see your Branch Rep.

We took version 13 to the Surrey Executive Committee a few days later. The EC were unanimous in their decision to reject this version of the SOP.

I subsequently wrote to SMT to formally reject the SOP and request that;

- NJC travel and meal rates are introduced until an agreement could be reached on the SOP
- To ditch version 13 and reinstate version 12 as the base document to progress to full agreement

The service has not ditched version 13.

Yesterday the Surrey Executive Committee and Area Committee met and discussed the issue again.

The EC proposed an immediate return to NJC rates for travel and meals as previously stated in the letter to SMT. The Area Committee fully endorsed this proposal and were clearly frustrated that the rates they had provisionally agreed a year ago had been reneged upon whilst the cost of fuel had risen 20% in 2 years and RPI is running at approximately 5%.

I informed the service yesterday that from today, the FBU in Surrey is invoking its right to NJC mileage and meal rates as a condition of service in the absence of any local agreements on such reimbursements.

So as of today any journeys made in your own car for service activities (other than home to work allowance), e.g. Out duties, medicals, training courses etc should be claimed at the current NJC rates set out below;

Engine Capacity	451 – 999cc	1000 – 1199cc	1200 – 1450cc
Casual User rates	46.9ppm	52.2ppm	65ppm

Claims should be made in the normal way using the appropriate rate above.

As of today, all spoilt meals incurred within service specified meal periods; breakfast lunch and evening meals should be claimed by submitting a receipt for the replacement meal; as per Grey Book.

We are still hoping to reach agreement on version 12 of the SOP but at least now these negotiations can continue as long as is necessary without our members losing out on NJC reimbursements.

Please note that the above rates are only effective from today and cannot be used for claims prior to today.

If any member finds that their claims as laid out above, are not being authorised or paid; contact me immediately.

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Yours fraternally

Vinny.

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