

Professional Subscriptions

This document outlines the Scottish Prison Service Policy in relation to re-imbusement of Professional Subscriptions and Membership Fees.

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Unlocking Potential - Transforming Lives.



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Directorate Owners:

Corporate Services, Human Resources

Policy Scope:

All Scottish Prison Service Employees

Links to Other Policies:

[Personal Performance Management System \(PPMS\)](#)

Approved by:

Head of Human Resources

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1.0 Introduction

This policy sets out the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) criteria for the payment of Professional Subscriptions and Membership Fees.

This policy supersedes any and all previous SPS policies on the payment of Professional Subscriptions and Membership Fees.

For the avoidance of doubt, this includes all Governors and Managers Actions notices, Notices to Staff, Letters of Appointment Salary Determinations and Recruitment and Retention Allowance related documents, including any other document which refers to the payment of personal Professional Subscriptions or Membership Fees.

2.0 Policy Statement

SPS is committed to the continuous professional learning and development of our people, and to having skilled and professional people at the core of what we do. We recognise the many benefits of membership of professional bodies to individuals and to the SPS.

SPS will therefore cover the costs of an individuals' professional subscription or membership fee where it is an essential requirement of their role or, is necessary to support the work they do.

Please note that professional subscriptions required as part of SPS funded professional development courses, will be considered as part of your application for further education/development.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all SPS employees. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy does not apply to workers engaged on a casual basis or to contractors.

This policy applies solely to professional subscriptions and membership fees paid to organisations recognised by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as allowable and does not include costs such as medical indemnity or professional insurance costs. To view a list of HMRC approved organisations and learned societies, follow the link here: [Approved Professional Organisations and Learned Societies](#).

This policy is not contractual and can be revoked or amended at any point subject to three months written notice from SPS.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Director of Corporate Services** – has overall responsibility for approving the Professional Subscriptions and Memberships Policy and for ensuring the required budgetary arrangements are in place.
- **Head of Human Resources** – is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and for monitoring associated expenditure. The Head of Human Resources is also responsible for the appeals process contained within the policy.
- **Head of HR Central Services** – is responsible for ensuring that this policy is updated as necessary and that all applications meet the eligibility criteria. The Head of Central Services is also responsible for maintaining a central log of all approved applications.
- **Managers** – are responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied and that applications meet the eligibility criteria. Managers are also responsible for reviewing applications annually to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of the policy.
- **Employees** – are responsible for adhering to the requirements of this policy and for ensuring that they provide the appropriate evidence in support of any application for reimbursement.

5.0 Eligibility Criteria

Where membership of a professional body is deemed to be necessary for an employee to carry out their duties, and/or where the requirement for membership is stated as an essential requirement in their job description, SPS will reimburse the payment of reasonable and appropriate costs.

In normal circumstances, only one professional subscription or membership fee will be paid per employee. Approval for payment for membership of more than one professional association will only be made in circumstances where the duties of the post span more than one professional discipline and are not covered by a single professional association.

6.0 Application for Reimbursement of Payment

Applications for reimbursement must be made on the [‘Professional Subscription/Membership Application’ form](#). Applications must be supported by the relevant line manager and authorised by the Governor or Branch Head [or delegated nominee] in consultation with the local HR Business Partner (HRBP). HRBP’s have the necessary delegated financial authority to approve expenditure from the central professional subscriptions budget. All application forms and required evidence must be submitted to the local HRBP for authorisation and onward transmission to the Employment Relations & Reward team (ER&R) for review, who will then forward to the Pay, Pensions and Relocation Services team (PPRS) for processing.

Employees must provide evidence annually, in advance of the new financial year, that there is a continuing requirement for their Professional Subscription/Membership Fee to be paid. Discussions on eligibility criteria should form part of Continuous Professional Development discussions within the Personal Performance Management System (PPMS) process, and discussions throughout the year with line managers to demonstrate that professional development has taken place and continues to be undertaken.

Employees must provide a copy of the professional subscription or membership fee invoice; a copy of the receipt for payment; and, a copy of the relevant part of HMRC’s approved list showing the name of the qualifying professional body. SPS will reimburse payment of fees directly to employees via payroll. Reimbursement of professional fees is considered as ‘benefits in kind’ for tax purposes and therefore SPS has a statutory obligation to report such benefits to HMRC, via the P11D process. However, employees are ultimately responsible for reporting their own income and payment of taxes to HMRC.

7.0 Non Standard Arrangements

7.1 New Entrants

Employees who are new to SPS and have already paid their annual fees or are in the process of paying in instalments will be eligible for reimbursement from the first day of the month following the date of commencement of employment. For example, where an employee paid their annual calendar year subscription in January and joined SPS on 15th March, three quarters of the fee will be reimbursed.

7.2 Leavers

Where fees have been reimbursed and an employee leaves employment, SPS will recover payments on a pro rata basis, as a lump sum, from final salary payments. For example, where an annual professional fee is payable from January and an employee leaves in April, SPS will recoup two thirds of the fee which was reimbursed to the employee. In exceptional circumstances and at the sole discretion of SPS, there may be occasions where fees are not recouped.

8.0 Appeals Process

Where an application for payment of a fee is not agreed, an employee can appeal against the decision by submitting a completed ['Professional Subscription/Membership Fee Appeal'](#) form within 7 calendar days of receiving notification of the decision. Appeals should be submitted to the Head of Human Resources, SPS HQ, copied to the local HRBP.

Appeals will be considered on written evidence provided only, by the Head of Human Resources [or nominee] and a response will be provided, in writing, normally within 14 calendar days. The decision will conclude the appeal process and there is no further right of appeal, nor any recourse to the Grievance Procedure.

Further Information:

The SPS recognises that from time to time employees may have questions or concerns relating to Professional Subscriptions. In certain situations employees' rights and obligations regarding Professional Subscriptions may change. In these circumstances the SPS will abide by any statutory obligations.

The SPS wishes to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible. Employees are encouraged to seek clarification on any issues with the appropriate Line Manager in the first instance.

Sustainability

Improving our environmental performance and doing things in a more sustainable way should be seen as integral to our core business practices.

In line with the SPS Sustainable Policy and to demonstrate compliance with the Scottish Government's commitment to improving environmental and sustainable development performance, please be mindful if printing this document – keeping paper usage to a minimum (print only version), printing on both sides, and recycling.

Equality Statement

The SPS is an equal opportunities employer where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We are fully committed to equality, diversity and human rights and to ensuring our culture, working environment, policies, processes and practices are free from bias. This policy applies to all employees regardless of protected characteristics, and, subject to any eligibility criteria, length of service, grade, working pattern or operational status.

Inclusive Communications

It is our ambition to ensure that SPS documents are readable, accessible and engaging for staff.

In formatting this document, good practice principles around engagement and inclusive communications have been adhered to.

If you require this document in an alternative format please contact Human Resources.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years from the date of publication or sooner where required by business needs or legislative changes.

All Professional Subscriptions/Memberships will be centrally recorded for monitoring purposes. All costs attributable to Professional Subscriptions/Memberships will be recorded in line with SPS Financial Policies and Procedures.

Human Resources Policy and Guidance in SPS

SPS policies take into account current legislation, rules, regulations and best practice guidance from a range of professional and public bodies, including the following:



UK Civil
Service
Management
Code



UK Legislation



EU
Legislation



ACAS



CIPD Best
Practice