

# JUST Centre policy on remuneration for research participants

This document sets out the JUST Centre policy on paying research participants, with the proviso that there needs to be some room for making decisions on case-by-case basis when there are tensions and grey areas. In cases such as these, the Centre Leadership Team will make a judgement in a fair and transparent way.

Because the University of Manchester holds the fieldwork budget for the whole Centre, the payment process has to be managed by the JUST Admin team and must follow rules and regulations set out by the University of Manchester Finance Department, which in turn closely follows UKRI and HMRC rules.

## How much and who?

We have consulted UKRI guidance on the amounts to pay participants. In accordance with this guidance, the JUST policy is as follows:

- The Centre should not pay people who are participating in a professional capacity during their paid work time. However, if they work for a poorly funded organisation and it seems right to pay, then we should consider it, subject to a discussion with the Centre leadership team. This will be on a case-by-case basis.
- There will be no individual payment for completing an online survey but including a prize draw for respondents is encouraged.

## Rates of remuneration<sup>1</sup>

- Participants who we interview or who attend a focus group (i.e., as 'data subjects') should be given a **voucher** to thank them for their time. This is a post-hoc 'thank you' not an incentive or inducement. A £27.50 payment for a one-hour session is our policy. This can be extended to be an hourly rate for £27.50 for an activity that is less than 6 hours and requires little or no preparation, for example taking part in an interview or a focus group or reviewing documents or videos.
  - The default option for vouchers will be a Love2Shop e-voucher.
- Where co-researchers from communities are involved for longer periods of time, then we would pay:
  - £82.50 for a half day meeting or activity with time needed to prepare.
  - £165 for a whole day meeting or activity with time needed to prepare.

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<sup>1</sup> Rates correct as of 4<sup>th</sup> June 2026, information available: (available here: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/payment-for-public-partners/guidance-on-payment-for-public-partners/>).

- Payment here should be made via Manchester Claims Form for Direct Deposit rather than a voucher.

**With regards to reimbursing research participant/co-researcher costs (e.g. for travel):**

- We aim to situate data collection activities in places where participants can walk or cycle, but costs are incurred for travelling to the event then we will reimburse them. Expense claim forms can be used for this and are available the researcher you are working with. Travel should be by public transport wherever possible.
- We also aim hold activities in local places where we can pay for room hire and catering to support local businesses/organisations that are stakeholders in our place-based research.
- When thinking about catering and other spends as part of field work, we aim to follow JUST's sustainability policy ([JUST Sustainability policy.pdf](#)).

**Practical issues re. paying participants**

As a charitable organisation, UoM/JUST cannot donate funds to another charities.

Our preference is to use ethical and sustainable voucher schemes (so not Amazon, for example). At present the best options available at UoM are Love to Shop, Sainsbury's and Asda, but we will be watching (and hoping) for changes over the next year.

We agree that cash payment is the most fair and ethical approach, but there are several practical problems that make it almost impossible. If this is needed for some participants, then a case should be made to the Centre Manager and we will try to overcome the obstacles.

For longer term involvement, then participants can be paid via one-off fee claim (FP7 or FP20), which involves a new starter check list and gets HMRC involved (can affect people who claim benefits, so needs some care).

Again, for longer term involvement we can explore the feasibility of paying for something/service in kind that fairly covers the time given by members of an organisation to the research process. It cannot be a charitable donation.

We will take digital exclusion and personal circumstances into account when making decisions about payment methods (see above point about tensions and grey areas).

Finally, we will always try to find the best option available for participants, but as the systems and regulations at the University of Manchester for paying research participants are far from ideal and there are logistical and administrative obstacles that make some options unfeasible.