

Participation Policy

PURPOSE

Fife Gingerbread has a long track record of recognising and compensating people's contributions to our work. This policy is intended to bring a more systematic and up to date approach.

This policy exists to ensure that when providing the expertise of their experience, people benefit themselves, have a degree of choice on how they benefit, and that no harm arises. This helps remove barriers to participation and demonstrates our values in action.

This policy is intended as a guide and Fife Gingerbread reserve the right to apply discretion to participation where appropriate or required.

BACKGROUND

We draw from our values, from working with people experiencing poverty, partner organisation approaches, literature and practice produced by the Scottish Human Rights Commission which includes:

'It is important that ...contributions are recognised as a core part of effective human rights work – and valued on an equal footing with professional efforts and expertise. Payment – whether monetary, or in the form of vouchers or 'in kind' resources – can help to acknowledge the value of these contributions. It can enable people to participate, particularly those who may face financial hardship. And it can help address inequalities in the status and relationship between professional and lived experience expertise.'

VALUES

Fife Gingerbread exists to support families in Fife and champion for change, with a goal of actively contributing to our national mission to tackle child poverty. Our values guide our work (Empowerment-Quality-Respect-Trust-Inclusive). Choice is critical and people will have the opportunity to choose how they benefit from participation. We know that not everyone wants to receive financial compensation.

There are many benefits to participation for people sharing their experiences. People will have the opportunity to benefit from developing skills, confidence and capacity. Creating

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a sense of empowerment and control. Participation will bring the opportunity to increase experience and link to further opportunities.

WHO AND WHAT IS INCLUDED

This policy is intended to compensate people with experience of poverty for their engagement in projects or activities where their expertise is invited and drawn upon.

It is not intended to cover what would normally be considered volunteering activity or unpaid community action. As a general rule, the activities that will be included for the purposes of this policy are those where someone has been asked or supported by Fife Gingerbread to make a contribution to a particular piece of work or activity *on the basis of their experience*.

This may include, but is not limited to,

- Participation in an external advisory group;
- Involvement in a research project;
- Delivery of a speech or similar contribution to an event;
- Contributing to a survey;
- Involvement in media activity.

These payments are separate and are additional to the payment of expenses incurred; the purpose of which is to ensure that participation does not cost people money (e.g. travel expenses).

We would not normally expect to make payments to people when they are participating as part of a role paid by another organisation.

NO HARM ARISES

If mishandled, paid participation may represent a risk to the wellbeing of those who rely on social security benefits. We are clear that there is no obligation for people to participate in our work or to receive a payment when doing so.

Drawing from Scottish Government's approach when providing a gift of thanks for participation, we will also advise the following:

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Unfortunately, the impacts of receiving such a token of thanks on benefits entitlements is complex and difficult and very dependent on individual circumstances – therefore if you are receiving welfare benefits, please get independent advice on any impact on these in advance.

PAYMENTS

We will offer vouchers of the following amounts to acknowledge the value of lived expertise.

£20 – for participation in a focus / research group

£40 – for participation in a 1:1 interview

£50 – for survey prize draws

£50 – when sharing experiences in a public speaking role and/or written contribution

In instances where there is ongoing longitudinal research bespoke participation arrangements will be made that reflect the available budget and lived experience input.

Separately, the Fife Gingerbread Parents Forum participation and contribution will be acknowledge based on attendance at meetings. Members will receive a £50 voucher at the end of each School term where they have attended at least 50% of regular meetings.

OPERATION

Fife Gingerbread staff responsible for areas of work that participants are contributing to will apply this policy using their expertise and judgement, including considering when preparation time is needed by participants. Where exceptions need to be considered this will be discussed with the leadership team.