

Recognition Through Payment Policy

October 2026

Many of the challenges facing society today cannot be solved by one person, organisation, or sector alone. At Leeds Institute for Societal Futures, we bring together people from communities, organisations, industry, and research to share knowledge, learn from one another, and find solutions together. We believe that research has the greatest impact when it includes the people it is intended to benefit. We work to create opportunities for people with different experiences, skills, and perspectives to contribute to our activities. We also recognise that taking part in research and related activities is easier for some people than for others. We are committed to working in a fair and inclusive way, ensuring that as many people as possible can share their knowledge and expertise. This policy explains how we enable everyone to make an effective contribution and when we may provide additional support to help people contribute meaningfully to our work.

Policy Purpose

This policy explains how and when we recognise people outside the University who voluntarily contribute their time, expertise, and experience to our work. We believe that the best outcomes come from working together, and offering people a small payment to cover the cost of their time and in recognition of the expertise they are providing is one way we can enable maximum accessibility with this work. Offering recognition through payment to certain communities enables more people to get involved and appreciates the value of different skills, knowledge, and lived experiences.

When we engage external communities in our work via this policy, we are not employing them to deliver work for us or asking them to be responsible for the outcomes of any activity. Instead, we engage communities outside the University because we recognise that our activities require a diversity of lived experience, ideas and knowledge to fully unpack the complex societal challenges we are working on, and to do this we need to provide the enabling means for all voices to contribute.

This policy sets out clear and consistent principles for when and how we offer recognition payment. In doing so, it helps us put our values of curiosity, co-creation and catalyst into practice. This ultimately helps demonstrate our final value of change-making by shaping better futures in research and education. It also explains our approach to paying external contributors who take part in and help shape our activities.

What We Mean By...

We want all stakeholders to feel clear and confident in their understanding of what we do, how they can be involved in our activity, and how they can add value by contributing their knowledge and expertise.

Key Terms	**Definition**
Transdisciplinary	Bringing together people with different types of knowledge, expertise, and experience to work on a shared challenge. This includes academic researchers from different subject backgrounds, practitioners, policymakers, community organisations, cultural partners, industry representatives, and people with lived experience. The aim is not simply to combine perspectives, but to create new understanding and solutions that cannot be achieved by any one group working alone.
Co-production/Co-creation	Working together from the start as equal partners to design, deliver, and use research and other activities. Everyone has input into shaping what is done, how it is done, and what difference it hopes to make.
Equitable	Rather than approaching stakeholders with equality where everyone is treated the same, an equitable approach is recognising when different stakeholders need different things to be able to participate and acting accordingly to provide these. It also involves involving the right people at the right times throughout a project lifecycle, for example, only involving people when it is meaningful for all parties and trusting each other to lead autonomously or in smaller groups when most appropriate.
Unsalaried	An individual is not receiving any payment through an employer, organisation or project to take part in our activity whilst giving their time, knowledge, expertise, or lived experience.
Contribute	Helping shape, develop and direct our activities and research by sharing time, knowledge, expertise, skills, or lived experience.

Participate	Accessing our services and benefitting from support and training we offer. Individuals are taking part in our activities aimed at benefitting others.

Our Principles

Co-production, accessibility, and inclusion are embedded into everything we do. Our core values have therefore shaped our approach to this policy:

Curiosity – understanding through diverse perspectives, knowledge, and expertise

We recognise that innovation and creativity emerge when academic expertise is combined with lived experience, professional practice, policy insight, cultural knowledge, and community perspectives. Recognition through payment helps ensure these diverse range of voices can contribute meaningfully to transdisciplinary research.

Co-creation - enabling genuine co-creation and partnership

We use recognition through payment to support some non-University contributors who otherwise would not be able to make an active input in our co-creation journey due to limited or precarious income. By recognising the time, expertise, and experience that partners bring, we foster equitable collaboration and build trusted, long-term relationships.

Catalyst - enabling meaningful involvement

We seek to create opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute their expertise and perspectives, but we prioritise recognition through payment for contributors who are not otherwise salaried for their involvement, or whose organisation has a smaller yearly income, in order to ensure that engagement and contribution to our work is shaped by the value of an individual's knowledge, skills, and lived experience rather than personal circumstances. We acknowledge and appreciate the time and resource offered by salaried contributors and those from larger organisations when engaging with us to further our Institute's ambitions and societal impact.

Change-making - turning expertise into positive outcomes

We value contributions that help our research make a meaningful difference. By remunerating some forms of expertise, we support the involvement of individuals whose insights strengthen transdisciplinary research and increase its potential to benefit communities, policy, practice, and society.

Who is eligible for payment?

Whether someone is eligible for payment depends on the reason they are contributing to our work. We do not usually offer recognition through payment to people who are involved in our activity as part of their salaried employment or organisational role. This includes people whose involvement is supported by their employer because of shared interests, objectives, or professional responsibilities, such as academics, industry partners, and staff from public sector organisations. In these cases, we would be working based on mutual benefit providing as much value to those contributors through our activities as we would be receiving through their knowledge, experience and expertise.

We recognise that not everyone has the same opportunity to participate in this way. Some contributors give their time and expertise without being paid elsewhere, may need to give up other paid work to take part, or may experience a greater financial impact from their involvement. To recognise and support these contributions, we offer recognition through payment to eligible contributors, including:

- Public contributors sharing their lived experience
- Freelancers and self-employed individuals with an annual taxable turnover of less than £90,000. This is aligned with the UK VAT registration threshold.
- Micro and small voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations with annual unrestricted funds of £20,000 or less.

Contributions recognised through payment

Some contributors play a key role in helping us plan, develop, deliver, and improve our work. We recognise that their expertise, perspectives, and lived experience are often essential to making our activities relevant, inclusive, and effective.

Payment may be offered where people are making a significant contribution to our work, including:

- Taking part in discussions that help shape student education and learning activities.
- Sharing views and experience that contribute to the development of programmes, projects or curricula.
- Sharing experiences, needs, or perspectives to help us understand an issue or identify priorities
- Contributing lived experience, specialist knowledge, or expertise to research activities
- Providing advice or targeted input that informs planning and direction

These contributions by non-University communities have no direct responsibility for the delivery, implementation or outcome of any of our activity. We value advice, insight and feedback to support our team progress work around research, engagement, and education. We strive to maintain ongoing relationships to embed co-design, collaborative and diverse expertise into all our work, and provide recognition through payment to support this.

Recognition through Payment for Contributions to Research and Innovation and Shaping Student Education

To support a fair and consistent approach, we have developed the following payment rates, informed by practices used across similar research, engagement, and education organisations and aligned with our commitment to meaningful involvement.

Eligible contributors may receive the following payment which is all-inclusive of the gesture we want to extend for the valuable experience and expertise shared and any expenses incurred to engage with our activity:

- **£200** for a full-day (six hour) in-person activity
- **£100** for a half-day (less than six hour) in-person activity

Recognition through Payment for Contributions to Student Education by Guest Contributors

When people attend student learning sessions as guest contributors, we apply the same eligibility principles set out in this policy.

Eligible contributors may receive:

- **£200** for a two-hour in-person session, inclusive of any preparation
- **£100** for a one-hour in-person session, inclusive of any preparation

Most of our teaching activities involve interactive two-hour sessions, including group discussions, short presentations, and activities led by the contributor.

To support participation, all student education guest contributors, including those who are **not** eligible for recognition through payment as per this policy, can also claim expenses. The maximum amount available is:

- **Up to £45** for contributors based within the Yorkshire and Humber region
- **Up to £100** for contributors travelling from outside the region

For the purposes of this policy, 'Yorkshire' is defined as the geographic area encompassing the administrative regions of **North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, and the East Riding of Yorkshire** (including the City of Kingston upon Hull).

Non-University contributors have been adding value to our student education programme design since the Institute began in September 2025. To recognise this, we will honour retrospective recognition through payment to any eligible contributors who participated in an educational development session prior to this policy being in place. We invite any eligible contributors to claim these retrospective recognition payments by the end of 2026.

Payment and Employment Status

We have aligned the recognition payment amount to the University of Leeds Single Pay Spine Point and Grading Structure. This amount equates to spine points at the highest grade level in the structure to reflect the value we place on contributions from diverse expertise, knowledge, and lived experience.

We engage contributors on an independent, voluntary basis and not as employees of the University. To maintain this distinction and ensure compliance with relevant employment and tax requirements, limits may apply to the frequency and total value of payments that an individual can receive through this policy. Where these limits are approached, we may review the nature of the contribution and explore alternative arrangements where appropriate.

Contributors are responsible for their own tax affairs and for managing any welfare benefit conditions. Contributors can decline any recognition payment if they feel it would negatively impact them.

Participation that is not offered payment

We offer a range of activities and opportunities that are open to everyone we engage with. These activities are designed to provide clear benefits to participants, such as

developing skills, building networks, accessing funding opportunities, or supporting professional growth.

In these cases, participation is usually unpaid because everyone involved is expected to gain value from taking part. These activities are offered by the Institute and are always free of charge. Participation is always on a voluntary basis, and we offer mechanisms such as an access fund (outlined below) to enable as many people as possible to participate.

The following activities are primarily designed to help participants learn, develop, collaborate, and build relationships. While these discussions may generate ideas and insights, their main goal is not to create insights or direct content for the Institute. Because of this, taking part in these activities does not usually make you eligible for payment:

- Coaching and mentoring
- Training and skills development
- Capacity building events and initiatives
- Shape Tomorrow Together workshops and related support sessions
- IAA funding opportunities, training, and application support
- Partnership and networking events where participation is voluntary and based on shared interests

Access Fund

We are committed to making our activities accessible to people and organisations beyond the University. We recognise that some individuals may need additional support to take part and benefit from these opportunities. Where possible, we aim to provide support that enables people to engage, develop new connections, and access future opportunities.

The Access Fund reflects our commitment to ensuring that a wide range of people can take part in and help shape our activities. Alongside our capacity-building offer, it supports collaboration across disciplines, sectors, and communities, helping to connect research with real-world experiences and priorities.

The Access Fund can provide support for participation in the non-paid activities listed above for contributors who meet the eligibility criteria set out in this policy. Applications can be made here and will be reviewed by our team.

Funding can be used to help cover participation costs and support access to opportunities. The maximum amount available is:

- **Up to £45** for contributors based within the Yorkshire and Humber region
- **Up to £100** for contributors travelling from outside the region

The Access Fund is also open to unsalaried individuals and VCFSE organisations with an annual income above the standard eligibility threshold. Applications from these organisations will be considered after eligible applications from individuals and organisations that meet the core criteria have been reviewed.

Devolved LISF funds to projects

When funding is allocated to projects through our ‘Shape Tomorrow Together’ research and innovation programme, non-University contributors must be aware that recognition

through payment may approached differently to this policy in terms of rates of pay. The project will have different levels of available funds for recognition through payment to the Institute and will be supported to establish a fair and transparent approach in their own work.

Review

We are committed to ensuring that our approach to participation, recognition, and payment remains fair, inclusive, and fit for purpose. We will review this policy on an annual basis to make sure it continues to support meaningful engagement and reflects the needs of our contributors and partners.
As our work evolves and we collaborate with new communities, organisations, and stakeholders, we will update this policy where needed. All cases of recognition through payment will be considered on a case-by-case basis and decisions can be made at the Institute's discretion. This will help us continue to support inclusive participation, recognise the value of different forms of expertise and experience, and strengthen collaboration in addressing complex societal challenges.

Sources

Here is the list of resources and information which were used to support the production of this policy:

- UCL Co-Production Collective ‘Our Co-producer Payment Policy’
- NIHR ‘Payment guidance for researchers and professionals involving people in research’
- UKRI ‘Guidance on payment for public partners’
- University of Hull Institute for Clinical & Applied Health Research ‘Reward and Recognition Policy for Public Involvement’
- University of York ‘Payments policy for involvement’
- University of Leeds Single Pay Spine and Grading Structure