



Black Dog
Institute

Lived Experience Paid Participation Policy

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Overview

Black Dog Institute recognises the significance and value of ensuring its work is informed by the specialised and expert knowledge of people who have lived and/or living experience of mental health challenges and/or suicide. The involvement of people with lived experience helps build understanding, reduce stigma and discrimination, improve quality, and results in more effective translation of research into better health outcomes. Involvement also provides individuals with the opportunity to role model recovery while living a meaningful and contributing life.

Policy Statement

Black Dog Institute is committed to supporting paid participation by people with a lived and/or living experience in its work.

Paid participation and reimbursement of expenses should always be agreed by Black Dog Institute and the person with lived and/or living experience in advance of any participation taking place.

This policy sets out clearly how much we will pay, when and for what, so that individuals understand Black Dog Institute's position prior to engaging with us. In doing so, we ensure clarity for all parties in relation to the remuneration of those engaged by Black Dog Institute in a lived experience capacity as well as any out of pocket costs associated with their engagement. It also commits Black Dog Institute to plan and budget for lived experience participation.

Black Dog Institute reviewed several key documents to inform the development of this policy. A list of these documents is provided in Appendix A.

Language

The Black Dog Institute commits to using person-centered language in line with an empowerment approach, with terms like 'person', 'individual', 'people with a lived and/or living experience' and 'people accessing mental health services.'

The Institute also recognises that many people with a lived experience of mental health conditions refer to themselves as consumers, and that this term has an important and meaningful history.

However, to ensure that our language is clear both to people who recognise the term 'consumer' and those who do not identify with an established mental health consumer movement, the Black Dog Institute refers to people with a lived and/or living experience of mental health challenges, their families and support people.

Within our suicide prevention work, we understand lived experience of suicide to refer to people who have experienced suicidal thoughts, survived a suicide attempt, cared for someone through suicidal crisis, or bereaved by suicide.

We acknowledge that the term 'lived experience' as outlined here encompasses a wide

range of experiences or perspectives. We commit to seeking to, within the best of our abilities and resource constraints, match individuals' experiences with appropriate participation activities.

Example: if an activity requires insights about the experience of recovery after a suicide attempt, individuals who have firsthand experience of suicide attempt would be recruited.

Black Dog Institute also acknowledges that the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples differ significantly from mainstream definitions of lived experience. Specifically, we adopt the below working definition as set out and developed by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Centre:

A lived experience recognises the effects of ongoing negative historical impacts and or specific events on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It encompasses the cultural, spiritual, physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of the individual, family or community.

People with lived or living experience of suicide are those who have experienced suicidal thoughts, survived a suicide attempt, cared for someone through a suicidal crisis, been bereaved by suicide or having a loved one who has died by suicide, acknowledging that this experience is significantly different and takes into consideration Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ways of understanding social and emotional wellbeing.

Black Dog Institute also commits to ensuring, within the best of our abilities we reach a representative range of voices when engaging people with a lived experience. This may include processes to engage with (and is not limited to) people who have lived experience and are:

- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex identified
- culturally and linguistically diverse
- older people
- young people
- people with a physical or intellectual disability.

Definition and Scope

What do we mean by 'paid participation'?

Lived experience paid participation is defined as an activity whereby a person with lived and/or living experience (as defined through the previous section) is personally invited by Black Dog Institute to participate in an activity through which their experiences are specifically required.

Black Dog Institute will initiate invitations to undertake activities, making it clear upfront whether the activity attracts paid participation, and describing the format, expected time required, period of the activity, and outcomes required of the individual.

For this policy therefore, this definition is not a reference to a person's role title, but to the way in which they are engaged to provide input to Black Dog Institute's activities through their own lived experience.

Who is eligible for participation payments?

Black Dog Institute will provide participation payments to individuals where it is seeking particular advice based on their lived and/or living experience, to contribute to the work of the Institute. Where payment for participation is intended to be made by Black Dog Institute, it will be discussed with the participant in advance of any activity that may be considered eligible for payment. Black Dog Institute recognises and respects the right of an individual to opt not to be paid for undertaking a lived experience activity.

Payment of participation fees will be made when individuals:

- are invited by Black Dog Institute to make a significant contribution to its work
- do not already hold a formal Black Dog Institute role (i.e., the Lived Experience Resource Network Manager)
- are not funded by another organisation, group or council to represent it in engagements with the Black Dog Institute.

When people will be paid

Participation activities may take a number of formats depending on the purpose and outcome sought, such as:

- participating as a member of an Advisory or Assessment Panel, Program Review Committee or Research Committee
- chairing a committee
- participating in roundtables or workshops
- participating in meetings either face-to-face or via tele/videoconference
- providing written correspondence such as input on a piece of work
- representational activities where an individual presents, speaks or appears in an event or forum on behalf of Black Dog Institute
- participating in training or development activities which relate to the project they

are working on in their capacity as a Lived Experience Advisor

- speaking to media about a topic related to their lived experience when invited by Black Dog Institute.

Please note: Anyone invited by Black Dog Institute to be involved in media opportunities are invited with the understanding that the opportunity is not compulsory and choice to take part is of the complete discretion of the person being invited. Black Dog Institute follows Australian Government Fair Work Rights and Obligations Act and legislation related to protections at work – coercion, undue influence or pressure.

When people will not be paid

The payment of participation fees or reimbursements of travel costs will not be made where activities do not meet the definition of paid participation. This includes:

- open invitations to attend forums or presentations by Black Dog Institute
- attendance at social events, functions or launches
- ad hoc communication and discussions with Black Dog Institute
- where an individual is a professional consultant, contracted to advise on and/or facilitate other mental health or suicide prevention activities or matters at Black Dog Institute
- for preparation, travel or reading time (unless agreed by Black Dog Institute in advance)
- when participants do not attend scheduled meetings or complete activities
- for participation in training or learning and development session for an individuals own personal development or interests.

Examples:

Would be paid:

- A person with lived experience is invited to be a Lived Experience Advisor on a Research Project team and contributes to decision-making about the research process.
- A person with lived and/or living experience is invited as a Community Presenter to speak at a conference or at a specific organisation
- A person with lived and/or living experience is invited to join a Lived Experience Advisory Panel or Steering Committee and are paid for the meetings they attend.
- An individual who had been engaged as a Lived Experience Advisor on a research project co-presents the research findings at a conference, and for the time they work on preparing the presentation.
- A person with lived and/or living experience who works as a peer worker is invited to participate in a Black Dog Institute roundtable in their capacity as an individual with lived and/or living experience. They are not paid by their organisation for their attendance and are not attending to speak about their peer worker role.

Would not be paid:

- A person with lived and/or living experience who works for a mental health organisation is invited to participate in a Black Dog Institute roundtable in their capacity as a representative of their employer, as an individual lived and/or living experience, and is paid by their employer during their attendance.
- A person with lived and/or living experience participates in a qualitative interview or focus group as a research participant.
- An individual voluntarily delivers a presentation in their community.

Research

Due to the nature of conducting research, requirements for ethics approval and the need to avoid methods which may prove coercive in nature, paid participation does not apply when people with lived and/or living experience participate in research activities such as individual or group consultations, focus groups or surveys. The Institute commits to specifying upfront if an activity is research participation.

Volunteering

Black Dog Institute has a thriving volunteer program and values the significant contribution our volunteers make to the organisation. Volunteering is defined as 'time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain'. Volunteering is an activity that has benefits both for the volunteer and the organisation.

For the purposes of this policy, volunteering is excluded from paid participation scope due to the nature of the activity whereby meaning is created for the volunteer through the contribution of time, energy, effort and/or skills, and remuneration is not expected for these activities.

The Institute commits to specifying upfront if an activity falls under our volunteer policy or paid participation policy. See the Black Dog Institute Volunteer Program Policy for more information.

Payment rates

Individuals will be remunerated for their contribution based on the role they are invited to perform. From time to time, the type of activity performed may vary and the payment rate will be applied based on the type of services performed.

Payments will be calculated pro-rata (hourly) on the basis of a five hour day. This will be based on the following payment rates.

Rates Table

Activity	Daily Rate (5 hours or more)	Hourly Rate
General participation <i>(e.g. member of a committee, advising on a research project team)</i>	\$430	\$86
Senior participation <i>(e.g. chairing a committee)</i>	\$572	\$115

Unless agreed in advance with Black Dog Institute, specific payment for preparation time is not included, and should not be included in the number of hours submitted for payment.

The maximum time that may be remunerated in one day is five hours. This includes travel time to and from the participation activity.

Example: an individual spends 2 hours travelling to a participation activity, 5 hours undertaking the participation activity, then 2 hours travelling home. They are eligible for the daily rate reflecting remuneration for a maximum time of 5 hours in one day.

Where participants will be paid for attending meetings, should Black Dog Institute cancel a meeting with less than 24 hours' notice given, participants will still be paid.

Children and young people

Although there is no agreed upon definition of 'young' people, individuals who are 17 years of age or younger are required to provide parental and/or guardian consent for their participation in Lived Experience activities. Participation activities for children will be specifically designed with the participants' wellbeing as a priority. Children and young people will receive the same remuneration as adult participants.

Review of rates

These paid participation rates are derived from the [Australian Government Remuneration](#)

[Tribunal Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part Time Public Office Determination](#), as “Offices that are not specified”. As the applicable determination and the rates are amended periodically, the Black Dog Institute Executive will review payment rates on at least an annual basis.

Out of pocket costs

Black Dog Institute does not expect people with lived and/or living experience to be out-of-pocket as a result of participating in activities for Black Dog Institute. Expenses incurred while carrying out Black Dog Institute activities will be paid or reimbursed. As a guideline, this may include travel, accommodation, meals and transport (including taxis, car hire, petrol reimbursement and/or parking fees).

When inviting an individual to undertake a paid participation activity, Black Dog Institute will provide information on the type and limit to out-of-pocket expenses eligible for reimbursement.

Travel and accommodation arrangements

Black Dog Institute will arrange travel and accommodation, through their travel provider where required, on behalf of people with lived experience in relation to their paid participation activities. Travel and accommodation arrangements will comply with the existing Black Dog Institute Travel and Business Expense Policy.

Where a person with lived experience is required to make an early start (e.g. before 8AM) or attend an activity in the evening (e.g. after 6PM), overnight accommodation will be arranged. In other circumstances, the need to obtain overnight accommodation shall be determined by Black Dog Institute and the person with lived experience, having regard to the safety and wellbeing and local conditions applicable in the area.

Example: A workshop is to be held in Sydney from 10am to 4pm. Flights and overnight accommodation are arranged for an individual who lives in Perth due to the length of travel. Another individual who resides in Melbourne is provided with flights only (no accommodation).

Out of pocket costs for meals, taxis and parking

Out of pocket travel costs are to be agreed in advance with the Black Dog Institute and include taxi fares, parking expenses and reasonable costs for meals where an overnight absence from home is required and meals are not otherwise catered for. Out of pocket expenses must comply with the existing Black Dog Institute Travel and Business Expense Policy. Receipts should be kept for all expenditure and provided to the Institute for reimbursement within two weeks of the expenditure.

Cabcharge vouchers are available upon request, and once used a copy, photo or the original receipt along with the tear off stub must be returned to Black Dog Institute for accounting verification.

Printing

Black Dog Institute will offer to provide hard copies of electronic documents to representatives, leaving adequate time to read the material. Where a representative chooses to receive information by email and prints this material, no reimbursement for printing expenses will be provided.

Payment process

Following the conclusion of paid participation activities, the claim form should be submitted to Black Dog Institute within four weeks.

Payment claims – payment by direct deposit to bank account

A claim for paid participation should be submitted to the nominated Black Dog Institute contact using the claim form that will be provided.

Where an individual does not have an Australian Business Number (ABN), they are required to provide a completed Australian Tax Office (ATO) Statement by Supplier Form.

This is required by the ATO otherwise Black Dog Institute will need to withhold 47% of the funds as income tax. Black Dog Institute is required to keep these forms on file in case of audit.

As part of Black Dog Institute's finance processes and to assist with fast and accurate payments, every individual is required to provide a photo, scan or screenshot of their bank account number, name and BSB from a statement or online account. This needs to be submitted the first time a paid participation claim is made by the individual or whenever they update bank details for a payment. There is an option to forego this step, however it is then the responsibility of the person submitting the claim to ensure their details are correct.

Claims for pre-approved out-of-pocket expenses should be submitted using the 'Other' section of the claim form. Photos or hard copies of official tax invoices (include an ABN and GST details) are required for reimbursements.

Payment claims – payment by gift card

For paid participation payments (but not out-of-pocket expense reimbursements) less than \$200, payment may be made using an electronic gift card. Payment via gift card for amounts greater than \$200 will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Individuals' should inform the nominated Black Dog Institute contact of their preferred payment method.

Taxation, Centrelink and Veterans Affairs Payments

All paid participants are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of their legal obligations to inform relevant government departments such as Centrelink, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Australian Tax Office of any income received.

If a paid participant is receiving a Centrelink or Department of Veterans Affairs payment there will be obligations to inform those departments of any income received, including payments from Black Dog Institute for paid participation.

It is the responsibility of the paid participant to enquire and keep up-to-date with the

relevant departments as to how the amount of fees paid as a paid participant may affect their entitlement or benefit.

Paid participants are encouraged to seek independent advice on their own individual taxation circumstances as taxation obligations can vary from individual to individual.

Ad hoc requests

Any requests for financial support for participation outside of these guidelines, including on financial hardship grounds, will be considered at the discretion of Black Dog Institute on an ad hoc basis. Should an individual wish to make such a request they should do so by emailing their nominated contact in the first instance outlining their request.

Disputes

Any disputes over payments are to be discussed with the nominated contact in the first instance, and then if not resolved presented to a member of the Black Dog Institute Management Team for their determination.

Accountability

To ensure accountability on our goal of valuing lived experience across the work of the Black Dog Institute, activity and expenditure related to engagement activity, paid participation, research activities involving lived experience and volunteering are reported on in the annual report to demonstrate our commitment.

Person responsible for review

The person responsible for engagement, recruitment, performance and first point of contact is the Lived Experience Resource Network Manager.

Document History

The Owner of this document is: Director, Policy and Research Operations.

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0.1	06-06-16	Rachel Green	Document creation
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0.7	30-06-17	Nicole Cockayne	Revision
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6.0	18-01-24	Nicole Cockayne	Approved by Executive Management

For access to supporting documents, reach out to the BDI Lived Experience Team

Documents considered to inform the Black Dog Institute's Paid Participation Policy include:

- Australian Government Remuneration Tribunal: Consolidated Determination on Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-Time Public Office, available at: <http://www.remtribunal.gov.au/offices/part-time-offices>
- National Mental Health Commission Paid Participation Policy, April 2020, available at: <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/about/policies>
- NHMRC Statement on Consumer and Community involvement in Health and Medical Research, July 2016, available at: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/statement-consumer-and-community-involvement-health-and-medical-research>
- National Communications Charter, available at: <https://lifeinmind.org.au/the-charter>