



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## APHA Briefing Note 08/21

# Movement Assistance Scheme Policy Update and Guidance

Date issued: 18 March 2021

## Purpose

To update certifiers of Export Health Certificates (EHCs) on the [Movement Assistance Scheme](#) policy change that comes into effect from 1 April 2021.

## Background

Under the Movement Assistance Scheme (MAS), the Government reimburses certifiers for some of the direct costs of certifying agri-food goods being moved from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI). This means traders will not incur a certification cost.

Certifiers can currently claim certification costs up to £150 (excluding VAT) for each non-equine EHC, or up to £500 (excluding VAT) for each equine EHC. These caps cover the cost of inspecting and certifying goods, with the additional allowance for reasonable mileage expenses included.

## Action

Defra has announced today a MAS policy change for certifiers of EHCs that affects what can be claimed under certification costs.

From 1 April 2021, certifiers of EHCs will no longer be able to claim mileage expenses. Instead, certifiers of EHCs can claim for time spent on travel, based on the certifiers existing charge out rate. The amount claimed by the certifier for time spent on travel will form part of the total certification cost. Time spent on travel can only be claimed if it is not already included in the certifiers existing charge out rates. The total costs claimed per certificate remains as per the caps outlined above (£150 (excluding VAT) for each non-equine EHC, or up to £500 (excluding VAT) for each equine EHC).

The certification completion date entered on EHC Online will dictate whether a certifier is able to claim mileage or time spent on travel.

*For example:*

- If a certifier enters the certification completion date on EHC Online as 31 March but submits their invoice on 1 April, only mileage can be claimed
- If a certifier enters the certification completion date on EHC Online as 1 April and submits their invoice on 1 April, only time spent on travel can be claimed

Certifiers must include time spent on travel on their invoice to the Government to qualify for reimbursement of these costs. If a certifier processes multiple certificates in one site visit, the time spent on travel should only be charged once.

There is currently no policy change to the certification cost cap, though the Government is continuing to monitor the performance of the scheme to determine how to best provide ongoing support to traders.

This agreed arrangement has been made following the feedback Defra has received from the certifier industry. To follow good industry practice, certifiers should claim for time spent on travel rather than miles travelled.

Certifiers should continue to follow the existing reimbursement and invoice process for claiming EHC certification costs until 31 March 2021.

**Please note:** In order to submit an invoice eligible for reimbursement through MAS, certifiers should include all details listed on [Vet Gateway](#) (for claims up to and including 31 March) or the [sample invoice](#) (for claims 1 April onwards).

## Supporting Certifiers

The following resources provide certifiers of EHCs with further information on the policy change and how to claim certain certification costs:

1. [Frequently Asked Questions](#): are designed to answer questions on the policy change and the process for claiming EHC costs
2. [Sample Invoice](#): details what certifiers should include on invoices when claiming EHC costs from 1 April 2021
3. [Process Flow](#): confirms the steps certifiers of EHCs should follow when checking EHCs and submitting invoices for claiming certification costs

# 1. Frequently Asked Questions

## 1.1 Reimbursement of Certain Certification Costs and Invoice Process

### **Before I invoice the UK Government for the reimbursement of certain certification costs, are there any steps that my business needs to follow?**

Yes. Refer to the [process flow](#) included within this document, and [Vet Gateway](#) for the steps you will need to take before submitting invoices for reimbursement.

### **How do I obtain a Purchase Order (PO) for an invoice?**

- After your first EHC request, you will be contacted by APHA (via the email address registered in EHC Online for the EHC) with the details we need to set you up as a supplier
- You will then be provided with a Purchase Order (PO) number via email to the address in EHC Online, which you must include on your invoice. This may take up to 10 business days
- Queries regarding the PO number should be raised with APHA at: [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk) or on +44 (0)20 80265644

Further guidance on the reimbursement process is available on the [Vet Gateway](#).

### **I would like to claim certification costs. What do I need to include on my invoice for reimbursement by the Government?**

For details of what to include to 31 March, refer to [Vet Gateway](#). From 1 April, refer to the [sample invoice](#).

### **Do I send one invoice per EHC?**

No. You should batch EHC's into a single invoice. You should submit an invoice weekly, or at least monthly. For details of what to include to 31 March, refer to [Vet Gateway](#). From 1 April, refer to the [sample invoice](#).

### **Where do I send the invoice to?**

Invoices should be sent to [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk).

### **How long will it take for my invoice to be reimbursed?**

If all the required information is provided on the invoice, payments should be made into the bank account provided on your invoice, within 10—15 working days from submitting the invoice.

### **How will I know if my invoice has been accepted?**

Usual government payment timelines apply. If there is an issue with your invoice, you will be contacted via email within five working days. If there are no issues with your invoice, you can expect to receive payment into the bank account provided on your invoice, between 10—15 working days from submitting the invoice.

### **How will I know if my invoice has been rejected?**

An email will be sent to the email address that you used to register on EHC Online. The email will explain why the invoice cannot be processed and if required, what additional information is needed.

### **I am also dealing with EHCs to NI at the same time as EHCs to other destinations (such as the Republic of Ireland (ROI)). How should I allocate costs and what should I claim?**

You should only invoice for time spent on the NI EHCs (up-to the cap based on your existing charge out rates), for example:

- If you complete six EHCs over a six-hour period and the end destination for all EHCs is NI, and your standard charge out rate is £45 per hour—then a reimbursement claim for each EHC should be made for £45 each. From 1 April you should include time spent on travel as part of the certification cost.
- If you complete six EHCs over a six-hour period, your time was equally spent across the six EHCs, and only two of those EHC's were for NI—using your standard charge out rate (e.g. £45 per hour), you would make a claim for two EHC's at £45 each. 2/6 of your travel time would be apportioned to these EHC's

It is important that you apportion your time accurately, only including the time spent on NI EHCs into your claim. We reserve the right to inspect records to validate claims. From 1 April you should include time spent on travel as part of the certification cost

- If you complete one EHC, and the end destination is NI, and it takes two hours to complete—using your standard charge out rate (e.g. £45 per hour), you would make a claim for one EHC at £90 each. From 1 April you should include time spent on travel as part of the certification cost

### **I certify for exporting and moving goods from GB-EU, GB-ROI and GB-NI. Can I be reimbursed for certifying from GB to EU, ROI and NI?**

No. The MAS scheme only covers movements from GB where the end destination is NI.

### **Can I claim for the reimbursement of expenses?**

Up to 31 March 2021, reasonable mileage expenses will form part of the additional allowance cost that can be reimbursed, in line with Defra's expenses policy / HMRC rates. From 1 April, no mileage costs can be claimed, instead certifiers can claim for time spent on travel.

### **Can I claim for the reimbursement of travel time?**

From 1 April 2021, time spent on travel can be claimed for as part of the certification cost.

### **Should I keep records of invoices and any supporting documentation?**

Yes. You should keep full and accurate records for a period of six years. Under the terms of the scheme we retain the right to inspect records to validate claims.

### **Is the MAS reimbursement and invoicing process the same for Local Authorities (LAs) and Official Veterinarians (OVs)?**

Yes. The invoicing process is the same for LAs and OVs.

### What is the reimbursement cap for certification costs?

Reimbursements will be subject to a reasonable cap of £150 excl. VAT for non-equine EHCs and £500 excl. VAT for equine EHCs.

Until 31 March, reasonable mileage expenses will be reimbursed in line with [HMRC's approved mileage rates](#). From 1 April, certifiers of EHCs can claim for time spent on travel within the total certification cost.

### Will there be changes to the reimbursement cap for certification costs?

The Government continues to monitor the performance of MAS to determine how to best provide ongoing support to traders. Defra will continue to communicate with certifiers on any changes that may impact them.

### Is there a specific reimbursement and invoicing process for plants?

Yes. The process for plants is different because APHA are responsible for conducting these checks (unless you are enrolled in the PHEATS scheme). APHA will not invoice you for issuing a Phytosanitary Certification where the end destination is NI.

### Is there a specific reimbursement and invoicing process for equines?

No. The process is the same. The only difference is that the certification cost cap for equines is set higher (£500) to reflect the additional costs incurred.

### If I have a problem with invoicing or the reimbursement process, who do I contact?

Queries regarding the payment of invoices or PO queries should be raised with APHA at [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk) or on +44 (0)20 80265644.

### Will the MAS helpline answer questions on invoicing and reimbursements?

The MAS contact helpline is not able to answer any queries about reimbursement of certifier costs.

Queries regarding the payment of invoices or PO queries should be raised with APHA at [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk) or on +44 (0)20 80265644.

## 1.2 Claiming Time Spent on Travel from 1 April 2021

### What date can I start to claim back time spent on travel?

From and including 1 April 2021, certifiers of EHCs can charge for the time spent on travel, based on their charge out rate.

**Please note:** The certification completion date entered in EHC Online will dictate whether you are able to claim time spent on travel. If the certification date entered is 1 April 2021 onwards, then time spent on travel can be claimed.

### Why can certifiers no longer claim mileage?

There has been a policy change following feedback from the certifier industry. To follow good industry practice, certifiers should claim for time spent on travel rather than miles travelled.

### **How do I work out time spent on travel?**

Certifiers should use their charge out rate for calculating time spent on travel.

### **How do I claim back time spent on travel?**

Certifiers should include time spent on travel on their invoice they submit to the Government for certification reimbursement. Refer to the [sample invoice](#) for more details on what to include on your invoice from 1 April 2021. Certifiers must include all the information detailed on the sample invoice to ensure payments are made promptly.

For details of what to include to 31 March, refer to [Vet Gateway](#).

### **Do I have to create two invoices; one for certifying costs and a second for time spent on travel?**

No. Certifiers must submit all PDF invoices on a monthly basis and include all EHCs that have been completed and any claim for time spent on travel.

### **Is the charge for time spent on travel included in the overall certification cost cap?**

Yes. Up to and including 31 March, the £150 (excluding VAT) for each non-equine Export Health Certificate (EHC), or up to £500 (excluding VAT) for each equine EHC certification cost includes an additional allowance of mileage.

From 1 April time spent on travel can be claimed as part of the overall certificate cost. No mileage can be claimed from this date onwards.

### **From 1 April, will my invoice be rejected if I do not include time spent for travel?**

No. However, if time spent on travel is not included on the invoice, it is assumed that no travel time was required for the certificate and this is the reason for the omission.

### **If the EHC was certified on the 31 March but I do not submit the invoice until the 1 April, can I still claim for mileage?**

Yes. The certification completion date entered on EHC Online will dictate whether you are able to claim mileage or time spent on travel.

For example: If you enter the certification completion date on EHC Online as 31 March but submit your invoice on 1 April you can only claim for mileage.

If you enter the certification completion date on EHC Online as 1 April and submit your invoice on 1 April, you can only claim time spent on travel.

### **Will there be further MAS policy changes that impact the reimbursement process?**

The Government continues to monitor the performance of MAS to determine how to best provide ongoing support to traders. Defra will continue to communicate with certifiers on any changes that may impact them.

## 2. Sample Invoice - For use from 1 April 2021

### Animal Veterinary Practice

Invoice date: XX/XX/XXXX

Purchase Order Number: XXXXXXXXXXXX

**Certifier ID: 666**

**Site attended:** XX1 2BB to XX7 7YY

Date Certified	EHC Serial Number / Time travelled	Time spent	Charge out rate /hour	Net cost of checks	VAT	Total
01/05/2021	xx11	1hr	£58	£58	£11.60	£69.60
01/05/2021	xx22	1hr	£58	£58	£11.60	£69.60
01/05/2021	Time travelled	50 mins	£58	£48	£9.66	£57.66
01/05/2021	<b>TOTAL CLAIM FOR CERTIFICATION AND TRAVEL</b>					<b>£196.86</b>

**Certifier ID: 666**

**Site attended:** XX1 2AD to XX7 7AE

Date Certified	EHC Serial Number / Time travelled	Time spent	Charge out rate /hour	Net cost of checks	VAT	Total
02/05/2021	xx45	90 mins	£58	£87	£17.40	£104.40
02/05/2021	xx47	1hr	£58	£58	£11.60	£69.60
02/05/2021	Time travelled	10 mins	£58	£48	£9.66	£57.66
02/05/2021	<b>TOTAL CLAIM FOR CERTIFICATION AND TRAVEL</b>					<b>£231.66</b>

**Certifier ID: 666**

**Site attended:** XX4 6TE to YY7 9HG

**Equine certification**

Date Certified	EHC Serial Number / Time travelled	Time spent	Charge out rate /hour	Net cost of checks	VAT	Total
02/05/2021	xx99 (Equine)	90 mins	£150	£225	£45.00	£270.00
02/05/2021	xx49	1hr	£58	£58	£11.60	£69.60
02/05/2021	Time travelled	2hrs	£58	£116	£23.20	£139.20
02/05/2021	<b>TOTAL CLAIM FOR CERTIFICATION AND TRAVEL</b>					<b>£478.80</b>

<b>Total invoice</b>	<b>£756</b>	<b>£151.32</b>	<b>£907.32</b>
----------------------	-------------	----------------	----------------

Bank Details: BACS Payment to *Bank name*, Account No: xxxxxxxx Sort Code: xx-xx-xx  
**Registered Office: Animal Veterinary Practice, Vet Road, Vet Town XXX XXX**

### 3. Process Flow - Carrying out EHC checks and invoicing certain certification costs

Certifiers of EHCs should follow the steps below when checking EHCs and submitting invoices for claiming EHC costs.

#### Pre-check Requirements

1. Before [registering for EHC Online](#), certifiers should read through the guidance documents available on the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) Vet Gateway and follow the steps appropriate for their organisation.

#### EHC Checks

2. When requested to conduct an EHC check, certifiers should follow the current process for inspection

3. OV practices/LAs will be contacted via the registered email address in EHC Online when a GB-NI EHC has been requested from their practice to set them up on APHA systems and to provide them with a PO number that should be used when raising invoices.

4. Should the products meet the required standard; certifiers will provide the EHC in the current process

5. The certifier will need to log into EHC Online after the inspection to confirm the checks have been completed, and that the details in EHC Online are in line with the details they have provided on the EHC, incl. date



## Invoicing

6. Organisations should continue to invoice traders as per their arrangements for GB-EU and GB-ROW certificates

7. For GB-NI certificates, these should be consolidated into a single, weekly invoice (Detailing the individual GB-NI EHCs that have been certified and the cost of each certificate)

8. This invoice should also include the PO number provided by APHA and should then be sent to APHA for re-imbusement.

(Invoices should be sent to [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk))

9. Providing all checks are successful, payment will be made to the organisation details that have been confirmed through our payment agents SSCL.

Usual Government payment timelines apply. If there are no issues with your invoice you can expect to receive payment between 10 - 15 days of submitting your invoice.

### Glossary:

**APHA** - Animal and Plant Health Agency

**EHC** - Export Health Certificate

**EU** - European Union

**GB** - Great Britain

**LA** - Local Authority

**NI** - Northern Ireland

**OV** - Official Veterinarian

**PO** - Purchase Order

**ROW** - Rest of World