

P-06-1473 Reduce Members of the Senedd's expenses bill

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Reference: SR24/9547-17

Petition Number: P-06-1473

Petition title: Reduce Members of the Senedd's expenses bill

Text of petition: With the current financial situation faced by every family in Wales, I propose that as being a Member of the Senedd is their job, expenses claimed by Members of the Senedd should exclude expenses that every other household in Wales faces, so no more paying utility bills, council tax, rent or home improvements. Travelling expenses should only be to the value of the equivalent cost on public transport and any hotel stays should be paid at Travelodge rates.



1. Background

1.1. Members expenses and allowances

The allowances Members are able to claim, including expenses for travel, accommodation and subsistence, are set out in the Determination. The Determination is set by the Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd. The Determination sets out the details of what expenses Senedd Members can claim, the maximum levels that can be claimed for different expenses and general rules and principles Members must follow when making any expense claims. The Determination is reviewed on at least an annual basis and can be subject to further periodic reviews by the Independent Remuneration Board.

1.2. The Independent Remuneration Board

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd is an independent body responsible for setting the salaries of Members as well as their other allowances such as staffing, travel and office costs.

The board was set up following an independent review of all aspects of financial support available to Senedd Members in 2008. It made 108 recommendations including that an independent body should be set up to make determinations about the levels of financial support to Senedd Members.

In 2010, the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010 was passed which established the Independent Remuneration Board.

The Board is made up of a Chair and four Board members who are appointed by the Senedd Commission for a term of five years.

The Board publishes its Determinations following consultation with those likely affected by it. The Board's website sets out how the views of the public are taken into account in its work. It states that all its proposals are published and the Board 'will consider all responses before agreeing the way forward'. It provides details on how members of the public can contact the Board.

The Board is required to act in an open and transparent manner and to publish annual reports on its activities which it must lay before the Senedd. The annual reports, Board meetings, agendas and further information about its operation are available on its website.

In addition to setting the Determination on Members pay and expenses it also undertakes thematic reviews of the financial support provided to Senedd Members.

2. Welsh Parliament action

The Senedd Commission is responsible for administering and paying to Senedd Members allowances and expenses in accordance with the Determination set by the Independent Remuneration Board. It is required by the Government of Wales Act 2006 to 'give effect' to any determination made by the Board.

Claims for allowances made by Members from 2008 onwards are published online on the Allowance Publication System.

Senedd Members are required to abide by a Code of Conduct. In relation to expenses and allowances, the Code states that:

- Rule 8: Members must comply with the rules made from time to time by the Clerk and the Chief Executive of the Senedd on the use of resources provided to Members by the Senedd Commission;
- Rule 9: Members must not misuse payments, allowances or resources made available to them under a determination of the Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd.

Any complaints of alleged breaches to the Code are investigated by the Senedd Commissioner for Standards and subsequently the Senedd's Committee on Standards.

Responding to questions about Senedd Members allowances and expenses in Plenary on 22 May 2024, Hefin David MS, Senedd Commissioner for budget and governance stated:

The Senedd draft budget contains an amount set for issues of Members' expenses that the remuneration board has requested us to set aside. The good news for you is that most Members don't claim the maximum expenses to which they're entitled. I think it's worth us broadcasting that loudly: Members don't claim the maximum expenses to which they're entitled. And that gives us quite a lot of headroom to make up for contingencies.....

3. Welsh Government action

Responsibility for Senedd Members pay, allowances and expenses rests with the Senedd Commission and not the Welsh Government. However, costs incurred by Senedd Members in a role as a Welsh Government Minister for ministerial functions on behalf of the Government such as ministerial visits will be paid for by the Welsh Government.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.