

# **INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL REVIEW PANEL CONSULTATION ON MEMBERS' OFFICE COST, TRAVEL AND CHILDCARE EXPENDITURE**

**DEADLINE FOR RESPONSES:  
5 PM ON FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2015**

A copy of this consultation document can be accessed on the IFRP website ([www.ifrp.org.uk](http://www.ifrp.org.uk)), by email ([info@ifrp.org.uk](mailto:info@ifrp.org.uk)) or by writing to the IFRP at:

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The Consultation Document can be made available in large type on request.

## Foreword

The Independent Financial Review Panel ('the Panel') was established in July 2011 to independently set the pay, allowances and pensions of Members and office holders of the Northern Ireland Assembly ('the Assembly'). Our remit includes a range of subjects, including Members' Salaries and Allowances paid to office holders within the Assembly and Executive, Pensions, Office Costs Expenditure paid to Members to support their work in constituencies, and travel and subsistence expenditure.

The Panel publishes a Determination setting out its assessment of what monies should be paid to Members and any restrictions on how they can be paid or spent. We normally only publish one Determination per Assembly Mandate. Once the Panel publishes its Determination, Members have no right of appeal. Enforcement of the rules in the Determination is a matter for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission ('the Commission') which incorporates them into a Financial Support for Members Handbook ('the Members' Handbook') setting out detailed financial controls. We are now starting to develop our Determination for the next Assembly which is scheduled to begin in May 2016. It is our intention to publish this well in advance of the start of the new Assembly so all existing Members and those who might consider running for election to the Assembly can see what will be available to them should they be successful.

In developing its Determination, the Panel is required by law to:

- Secure for Members a level of remuneration which fairly reflects the complexity and importance of their functions and does not, on financial grounds, deter people with the necessary commitment and ability from seeking election to the Assembly;
- Secure for Members adequate resources to enable them to exercise their functions as Members of the Assembly; and
- Ensure probity, accountability and value for money with respect to the expenditure of public funds.

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## **Contents**

	Page
Introduction	
1 Current system of Office Cost Expenditure (OCE)	5
2 Proposed changes to the current Office Cost Expenditure (OCE)	6
3 Constituency Office Expenses (COE)	7
4 Overall Limit on Constituency Office Rent	8
5 Shared Constituency Offices	8
6 Multiple Offices	10
7 Use of Home Office	10
8 Lease Terms	10
9 Constituency Office Opening Hours	11
10 Constituency Office Signage	11
11 Office Usage	12
12 Constituency Reports	13
13 Constituency Office Equipment and other Miscellaneous Expenses	13
14 Governance and Administration of Constituency Office Expenses	14
<i>Consultation Questions</i> on Constituency Office Expenses (COE)	17
15 Travel and Subsistence Expenses (TSE)	19
16 Proposed changes to the current Travel and Subsistence Expenses (TSE)	22
<i>Consultation Questions</i> on Travel and Subsistence Expenses (TSE)	25
17 Current system for Members Childcare Expenses	26
<i>Consultation Questions</i> on Childcare Expenses	26
18 Next Steps	
Additional Comments	27
 <u>List of Graphs/Maps/Tables</u>	
Graph 1: 2014/15 Member Total Mileage Expenses (£)	20
Graph 2: 2014/15 Member Taxable Mileage Expenses (£)	20
Graph 3: 2014/15 Member Non-Taxable Mileage Expenses (£)	20
Map 1: Constituency Centroids	22
Table 1: Maximum amount payable for Office Cost Expenditure	6
Table 2: Maximum rent payable based on IFRP Proposals	10
Table 3: Revised rates for Travel Expenses	23
 <u>Annexes</u>	
Annex A: Definition of Associated and Connected Persons	30
Annex B: MLA Travel Expenses (Mileage) -2013/14 & 2014/15 by Constituency Area	31
Annex C: Current examples of admissible and inadmissible expenditure	36
Annex D: Current categories of Office Cost Expenditure	39

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY MEMBERS' OFFICE COST AND TRAVEL EXPENDITURE

## CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

### Introduction

In order to inform its deliberations, the Panel carried out research into the way in which monies paid to Members are used. As part of that process the Panel drew information from a range of sources, including external benchmarks. As part of its preparation for a Determination on Members' Salaries and expenses for the new Assembly starting in 2016, the Panel has been consulting widely on a range of issues.

The Panel has already published consultation papers on the following:

1. Assembly Members' Pension Scheme: February 2014, which closed in **April 2014**;
2. Consultation on NI Assembly Members' Constituency Office Rents which closed in **September 2014**;
3. Consultation on the Employment of Assembly Members' Staff, which closed in **March 2015**;
4. Consultation on Prior Disclosure of Interests, which closed in **March 2015**; and
5. Consultation on Northern Ireland Assembly Members' Salaries and Office Holders Allowances, which closed in **May 2015**.

This final consultation focuses upon issues relating to:

- Members' Travel Allowances;
- A large number of other issues where Members currently claim for the reimbursement of expenses; and
- The general structure and administration of the systems for Members' expenses and measures to ensure "probity, accountability and value for money" in line with the Panel's duties under Section 2.2 (a) of the Act<sup>1</sup>.

When this consultation has been completed, the Panel will draft its Determination for the period 2016-2021 with a view to publishing it later this year to assist those considering continuing in office / seeking election to be able to see the elements of salary and expenses available to them well in advance of any elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly ('the Assembly').

Further information on publications or previous Determinations made by the Independent Financial Review Panel can be accessed using the following link:

<http://ifrp.org.uk/>

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<sup>1</sup> **Section 2 (2) a** Assembly Members (Independent Financial Review and Standards) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

## **Constituency Office Cost Expenditure**

### **1 Current System of Office Cost Expenditure (OCE)**

- 1.1 At present Members are entitled to claim Office Costs Expenditure (OCE) to obtain research, secretarial and administrative support for their work in the Assembly and in their respective constituencies. They are also entitled to claim separately for travel expenses
- 1.2 OCE is not an automatic entitlement. It can only be paid to a Member who has actually incurred allowable expenditure and is designed to reimburse costs incurred in their duties as elected members of the Assembly. It is not permitted to be used for party political activity.
- 1.3 The Panel considers that the purpose of OCE should be to meet the expenditure wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred by a Member on research, secretarial, clerical or administrative assistance and the provision of any equipment, facilities or services or utilities associated with the Member carrying out his/her Assembly duties. It should not be used for any other purposes including:
  - Party political activity or any activity relating to party administration; and
  - Work supporting other elected persons, including Local Councillors, Members of Parliament ('MPs') and Members of the European Parliament ('MEPs').
- 1.4 Assembly duties are defined in the Panel's 2012 Determination<sup>2</sup> as "the undertaking of any task or function which he/she may reasonably be expected to carry out in his/her capacity as a Member of the Assembly including
  - (a) attending a sitting of the Assembly;
  - (b) attending a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of the Assembly of which he/she is a Member or which he/she is required to attend by virtue of the fact that he/she has a responsibility for a Bill or other matter under consideration by the committee or sub-committee or for any other valid reason relating only to the business of the committee or sub-committee;
  - (c) undertaking research or administrative functions which relate directly to the business of the Assembly;
  - (d) establishing and maintaining a constituency office or offices;
  - (e) providing an advice service to constituents;
  - (f) attending meetings for the purpose of representing electors in Northern Ireland including meetings with a constituent or constituents;
  - (g) attending, with the approval of the Commission, any ceremony or official function or national or international conference as a representative of the Assembly but not including attendance that relates wholly or mainly to that Member's role as a party spokesperson or representative."

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<sup>2</sup> Northern Ireland Assembly Members' Salaries, Allowances, Expenses and Pensions Determination 2012

- 1.5 In its 2012 Determination, the Panel reduced the total amount which could be claimed under OCE by 3% per year, which was similar to the reductions applied to other areas of public sector expenditure following the 2010 Spending Review.

Table 1 below details the **maximum amount payable for OCE** for the financial years April 2012 – March 2016

Year	Maximum amount payable
<b>2012-13</b>	£73,583
<b>2013-14</b>	£71,378
<b>2014-15</b>	£69,238
<b>2015-16</b>	£67,161

## **2 Proposed changes to the current OCE**

- 2.1 The Panel has spent the last three years looking in detail at the expenses system and at comparable systems in other legislatures. At times it has been suggested that the role of this Panel is confined to setting the overall quantum of expenses and leaving Members to decide how to spend the money with few restraints, as ultimately they are accountable to the electorate for what they do. We disagree. The Assembly spends over £35m on Members' allowances across a Mandate, and the issues of value for money and probity in the area of public expenditure are important matters. The Panel acknowledges that many Members seek to make best use of the monies provided to them and give an excellent service to the community. However, the Panel is concerned that:

- ;on first election Members are suddenly responsible for purchasing a range of services and hiring staff with limited guidance or assistance in circumstances where they may not have the skills or experience to secure value for money
- There has been a lack of consistency among Members in the use of public funds on issues ranging from staff salaries to rents for constituency offices;
- There is general and genuine public concern on issues of probity including employment matters;
- While all the Party Leaders have signed up to a series of ethical principles on the use of expenses, a small number of Members appear to interpret the rules in the most liberal way possible to justify claims for expenditure; and
- Current practice in processing claims has led to honest differences in interpretation between the Panel and employees of the Commission ('the Secretariat') who administer the OCE scheme.

- 2.2 The Panel is keen to develop a better model for expenses for Members by:

- Integrating all the expense streams into a common set of proposals;
- Standardising the amount of expenditure permitted in categories like office rents and the conditions that must be met before expenses will be reimbursed in areas like employment practices including staff salaries and payments for certain services;

- Supporting Members and the Secretariat with systems that are clearer and simpler to operate. This will include giving Members flexibility, and introducing simple methods for claiming constituency office expenses, travel, and employment of support staff; and
- Creating future arrangements which ensure that the Panel will be consulted on matters requiring their consideration and interpretation before payments are authorised and paid.

2.3 The Panel's overarching aims are to ensure that:

- Members receive the services and support they require to carry out their duties;
- Members and the Secretariat will be relieved of a major burden in relation to staffing and administration;
- The public will have greater confidence in the system; and
- Systems developed will be clear and transparent, and value for money in the use of public expenditure will be clearly demonstrable.

2.4 The Panel is therefore considering changing the whole system for members' expenses and replacing the existing payments with three new allowable expenses, to be known as:

- Constituency Office Expenses (COE);
- Travel and Subsistence Expenses (TSE); and
- Employment Support Expenses (ESE)<sup>3</sup>

The Panel has already consulted on the Employment of support staff by Members, which closed on 11 March 2015. This paper will therefore focus on COE and TSE.

Within these new expenses payments, the Panel proposes to set out clear and simple rules to:

- Cap expenses in critical areas such as rents and staff salaries;
- Introduce new rules to increase probity and value for money;
- Introduce simpler administration arrangements; and
- Improve transparency and auditability of expenses.

### **3 Constituency Office Expenses (COE)**

3.1 The Panel is minded to allow to each Member an amount of up to £13,500 COE to support his or her constituency office. The purpose of COE would be to cover any costs associated with the rental and running costs of a constituency office in supporting a Member in carrying out his or her duties. This would include all office furniture and equipment and General Office Costs. In addition to this amount, the Panel is currently in discussions with the Commission to evaluate the provision of certain services centrally to Members; for example,

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<sup>3</sup> To include costs for ERNI

electronic equipment, phones and stationery. This would mean that each Member could receive a standardised package of:

- IT, including a computer and printer
- Certain Office Equipment; and
- Mobile Telephones with a generous data and minutes package

all provided centrally by the Assembly at no charge. The Panel also proposes that all equipment provided could remain the property of the Assembly.

- 3.2 This is expected to be more cost effective by allowing Members to benefit from the Assembly's central purchasing powers. It would also significantly reduce any associated administration with Members not having to make local purchases and account for them, and by assisting Assembly staff in managing billing arrangements.

#### **4 Overall Limit on Constituency Office Rent**

- 4.1 The Panel published a consultation on Office Rentals, which closed on Friday 19 September 2014<sup>4</sup>. Having further considered this issue, the Panel now wishes to consult on some possible proposals for the next mandate.
- 4.2 Office rentals would be paid from within the new COE. The Panel's earlier research indicated a large variation in office rentals paid by Members and the sizes of offices occupied by Members. Prior to the establishment of the Panel, the Commission sought to control this by having an independent valuation carried out of all premises. Under the current Determination, Members are permitted to claim the rental valuation, with an additional 10% and a further £1,600. In practice, this meant that almost all rents fell within these allowable limits. Such an approach does not address the view of the Panel that many rented premises are not value for money. The Panel is concerned that several constituency offices have been costing up to three times more rental than the average paid by Members.
- 4.3 Following careful consideration, the Panel is of the view that an overall rental limit of not more than £8,000 per annum should be set for the premises rented by a Member as a constituency office. We believe that each Member would be able to obtain a suitable office within their constituency for such a maximum sum per year. The Panel has estimated that this change could, at the start of the mandate, save the Assembly £16k on independent valuations and that other rental limitations set out further in this document could result in considerable additional savings based upon new leases.

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<sup>4</sup> Consultation on NI Assembly Members' Constituency Office Rents, <http://ifrp.org.uk/consultation/>



## **5 Shared Constituency Offices**

- 5.1 At present Members share offices or are co-located with a wide range of other politicians. These include:
- MEPs;
  - MPs;
  - Other Members; and
  - Local Councillors (some of whom are also employees of the Member).
- 5.2 It is the Panel's view that these arrangements may give rise to anomalies in that different groups of elected representatives can claim expenses from different bodies operating different rules. This can mean that, in a small number of cases, the net rent claimed for premises may exceed the established fair market rent and may facilitate the acquisition of an asset for a person or political party or other body. There is also the risk of the cross-subsidisation of work where facilities funded by the Assembly may currently be used for other representative or political purposes. There are existing rules intended to prevent this but these are very hard to enforce.
- 5.3 The Panel is of the view that this situation may not always ensure the proper use of public funds and is beyond the spirit and intent of the 10 Principles agreed by the Party Leaders. The Panel is seeking to put a mechanism in place to ensure that where members share premises no more than a fair share of rent is paid by the Assembly. The Panel therefore proposes to introduce rules that will provide a Member sharing premises with another Member an allowable rental limit of not more than £6,000 per annum for each Member in the premises.
- 5.4 The Panel is also of the view that where a Member shares premises with an MP, MEP or Councillor (including a councillor who works for them as an employee) the allowable rental limit will be set at not more than £4,000 per annum for each Member in the premises. The Panel is proposing that offices will be regarded as shared premises if Members occupy an office within 100m of another elected representative from the same party. The Panel is further recommending that what constitutes shared premises shall be determined by prior approval from an authorising officer in the Secretariat.
- 5.5 Some Members also rent their constituency office from either a connected or associated person<sup>5</sup>. This can give rise to significant public concern that public money is being diverted for political purposes or otherwise in the financial interests of Members and their associates. The Panel is of the view that all Members will be alert to this risk and will wish to ensure that all rental arrangements are open and transparent and can be seen to be fair. The Panel is therefore proposing that where any benefit from the payment of rent on a Member's office accrues to a connected or associated person, the allowable rental limit will be set at not more than £4,000 per annum.

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<sup>5</sup> Definitions of connected and associated persons are provided at Annex A

- 5.6 Circumstances may arise where several of these conditions may apply at the same time – for example, where a Member is co-located with another Member and an MP and a Councillor or where an Member shares accommodation with an Member and an MEP in premises owned by an associated or connected party. In these circumstances, the Panel propose that the Member will be entitled to the lower allowance in any given case as set out in the table below:

**Table2: Maximum rent payable based on IFRP Proposals**

<b>Occupancy of Premises</b>	<b>Maximum Rent Payable</b>
Single MLA	£8000 each
Two MLAs	£6000 each
MLA and Councillor	£4000 each
MLA and MP	£4000 each
Any MLA in Premises owned by associated or connected party	£4000 each

## **6 Multiple Offices**

- 6.1 The Panel has also considered the matter of multiple offices. Some Members rent more than one office in their constituency, and during 2014 there were 124 constituency offices for which rent was paid. On examination, the Panel has not been able to identify a clear rationale for this, noting that some constituency offices are only a short distance apart and some Members are spending a high percentage of their entire OCE on rents. The Panel is also aware that all Members have available to them another office at Parliament Buildings The Panel is proposing that a Member may only claim expenses for rent in respect of one office in his or her constituency.

## **7 Use of Home as an Office**

- 7.1 In addition to the provision of a fully equipped office at Parliament Buildings, some Members have in the past used an office at their home address. The Panel is aware that this approach would have lower costs than renting premises. Few Members may have the facilities or wish the intrusion into their home life entailed by this arrangement. However, the Panel is of the view that some Members may consider such arrangements may suit them and therefore we propose that where a Member voluntarily uses his or her home as a constituency office base, he or she may claim a flat rate expense of not more than £2,000 from their COE to defray the costs incurred.

## **8 Lease Terms**

- 8.1 On occasions some Members have leased premises and then spent significant amounts from OCE on improvements/repairs to those premises. The Panel is of the view that this may not demonstrate value for public money. It is the Panel's opinion that any landlord letting premises should do so having firstly brought the premises into a state where they can reasonably be occupied and that any tenant spending public money on renting should take care to ensure

that premises are reasonably habitable and suitable. The Panel is also of the view that a tenant spending money on repairs or modifications is effectively improving the assets of the owner at the public's expense. This may be of particular concern where the landlord is a connected or associated person.

- 8.2 The Panel recognises that, on taking up new premises, a Member may have to spend a reasonable amount on minor adaptations. We therefore propose that in the first year of each Assembly, Members may draw an initial additional expense amount to set up an office and/or refresh the decoration. This amount shall be offset against COE over the subsequent 4 years within the mandate by a lower maximum COE, provided such arrangements are made through a prior approval system and do not exceed £2000.
- 8.3 This is different from a situation where, in the past, large amounts have been expended on improvements and/or repairs. The Panel is therefore proposing that to qualify for reimbursement of rent, all leases signed by Members for the new mandate from 2016 to 2021 should be non-repairing leases i.e. that any major structural or other repairs or adaptations to the premises must fall to the landlord and not the tenant.

## **9 Constituency Office Opening Hours**

- 9.1 The Panel accepts that the purpose of Members' constituency offices is to support each Member in providing a service to the public. However, the Panel has noted that:
- there is sometimes no clear statement of the hours during which offices are open to the public; and
  - where there is, it often appears that typical hours are from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, with closures during lunch and weekends. The Panel is of the view that this may make it more difficult for members of the public to access or contact the office.
- 9.2 The Panel is considering introducing a condition for the payment of rental expenses which entails:
- a minimum requirement that the office is open to the public for 30 hours per week outside public holiday periods;
  - a requirement that the office is open on at least one evening per month from 5pm to 8pm and one Saturday or Sunday in each month for a minimum period of 4 hours; and
  - all constituency office opening hours and office addresses are to be published on the Assembly website, along with full contact details and all phone numbers for which the reimbursement of any charges are sought by the Member.

## **10 Constituency Office Signage**

- 10.1 The Panel draws attention to the requirement that constituency offices are funded by the Assembly to support the work of Members in meeting constituents and serving their needs, and are not for party political activities.

The existing Members' Financial Handbook sets out rules on the signage Members may display on their constituency offices.

- 10.2 However, the Panel has noted that a number of practices seem to have developed where, for example, some political parties now publicly advertise that 'they' provide a wide network of 'advice centres'. In reality, these are MLAs' Constituency Offices funded by the Assembly Commission. All activities carried out within them should relate wholly and exclusively to the MLAs' work as elected representatives in carrying out their Assembly Duties<sup>6</sup>.
- 10.3 The Panel is of the opinion that there must be a clear division between expenses to support the work of Members in carrying out their Assembly duties, which may be reclaimed from the Commission, and activities connected with any other political or representative roles those Members may have. In this context, the Panel is proposing certain changes in relation to signage for constituency offices in order that the premises will qualify for reimbursement of rent. The Panel's proposals are:
- that all signage must adhere to a standard style guide with a plain single background colour and the name and title of the Member e.g. "John Smith MLA" along with the phrase 'Constituency Office' in a single contrasting colour;
  - the outer appearance of all constituency offices must be welcoming to all sections of the community and, specifically, there should be no display of flags, party or political emblems or memorials on the outside of the building or within the grounds in which the building is situated; and
  - the only logo which can be used in signage or on any display in the window or on the exterior of the building or in the grounds of the building is that of the Northern Ireland Assembly Flax logo.
- 10.4 There are existing rules on the size and design of signage but in the past some Members have avoided these by paying for the signs themselves or having their party do so. The Panel is proposing that in the future if the signage on premises does not comply with the conditions above then the payment of rental expenses cannot be claimed.

## **11 Office Usage**

- 11.1 The Panel notes that the existing Members' Handbook sets a number of restrictions on the use of constituency offices by Members. The Panel therefore proposes to introduce rules on the funding of rental costs that will prohibit the claiming of expenses for the use of the premises for:
- any party political activities;
  - use by other representatives who are not Members; and
  - the sale or promotion of party materials or materials for other bodies e.g. clothing, books, souvenirs and lottery tickets.

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<sup>6</sup> Assembly Duties as defined in Northern Ireland Assembly Members' Salaries, Allowances, Expenses and Pensions Determination 2012 <http://ifrp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Determination-2012.pdf>

- 11.2 The current Members' Handbook also provides that during Assembly election periods Members may use the offices for campaigning purposes subject to the payment of a nominal rent. The Panel wishes to continue to allow this and proposes that at such times a reduction be made in rent expenses claimable by the Member of £40 per day for use of the premises for electoral campaigning purposes.

## **12 Constituency Reports**

- 12.1 The Panel is of the view that the production of one annual Constituency Report is a desirable mechanism for engaging with and informing constituents on issues that have been addressed as part of a Member's work representing them. However, the Panel does not consider that producing a paper publication and distributing that widely to homes throughout the constituency offers value for money and as such should not be funded by COE. The Panel favours the use of electronic media. The Panel therefore proposes that, where a Member wishes to produce a Constituency Report, it should be placed on a designated Members' webpage on the Assembly website. The Report should meet criteria set down by the Secretariat, to include:

- The sole purpose of the report should be to explain the work of a Member in their role as a Member and, as such, its format must include the Assembly's Flax logo;
- No Party Emblem may be included;
- The Report should not include ANY material of a party political nature including any position held by a Member within a Party or reference to Party contacts, councillors, addresses or websites. It must not give any exposure to, or include any explanation of, any party political opinion on any matter;
- The report must be a summary of work undertaken or issues raised by a specific Member. Therefore there should be no reference, passing or otherwise, to other actions or inactions of other Members or Ministers;
- The report must only update constituents with factual information on matters that the Member has personally dealt with at the Assembly or in the constituency; and
- Photographs may be included so long as they are directly related to the permissible content of the report. Contact information for a Member may be included. References to councillors or Party representatives within the constituency report are not permissible.

## **13 Constituency Office Equipment and other Miscellaneous Expenses**

- 13.1 Members currently spend significant sums of money on office equipment, IT and printers and a wide range of goods and services. Some examples of what is currently allowed / not allowed are shown at Annex C. They also sometimes enter into expensive supply and maintenance contracts on information technology ('IT') and photocopiers. The Panel is not convinced that all this expenditure is strictly necessary or that the way in which these items are procured always provides value for money.

13.2 The Panel is currently exploring, with the Commission, the practicalities for the central provision of a range of electronic equipment for each Member including a computer or laptop, suitable printers, scanners and mobile telephones. The Panel is of the view that the direct provision of equipment for constituency offices would standardise provision and eliminate the current claims in this area of expenditure, and would ensure that all Members had access to an adequate level of electronic equipment at the best possible price. The Panel would further propose that by providing a centralised service, all equipment provided would remain the property of the Assembly Commission; that Members should maintain an inventory of such items; and that Members would be required to return each item to the Assembly when a Member leaves office or have the costs recouped from any termination payments.

13.3 The Panel is proposing the removal of the following items of admissible expenditure:

- Newspapers and subscriptions;
- Advertising (other than for jobs);
- Website set-up and maintenance; and
- Hiring, leasing or renting vehicles<sup>7</sup>.
- Televisions & Satellite News TV Subscriptions – service provided by the IT to be supplied by the Commission
- All IT Printers and Copiers not supplied by the Commission under proposed arrangements outlined above

The Panel also proposes that the current complex web of rules on what is and is not permitted is replaced by a much simpler reference guide.

## **14 Governance and Administration of Constituency Office Expenses**

14.1 The administration of expenditure is the responsibility of the Commission. The Commission already produces guidance for Members in the form of the Members' Handbook<sup>8</sup>. The Panel recommends that this guide be revised to take account of the changes to the expenses regime proposed by the Panel.

### **14.2 Constituency Office Bank Account**

14.2.1 The changes that the Panel wishes to introduce would place responsibility for the management of COE on each Member. It would be necessary for each Member to open and maintain a Constituency Office Bank Account into which the Commission would pay a regular monthly amount as claimed by the Member and approved by an authorising officer of the Commission. The Member would be responsible for maintaining records including receipts and disbursements from the account.

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<sup>7</sup> With the exception of hiring a vehicle to assist the relocation of furniture and/or equipment from one office to another.

<sup>8</sup> Breakdown of categories of current OCE within the Members Handbook is included for information at Annex D.

14.2.2 In accordance with the revised Members' Handbook, Members will be able to claim costs for a range of services in relation to the functioning of their constituency office. These services relate to admissible costs for rents, rates, utilities and insurance. It is the Panel's intention that a list of admissible and inadmissible expenditure in relation to running costs would be produced to facilitate each Member in keeping a full account for audit purposes. If expenditure does not comply with a revised list of admissible expenditure in relation to running costs<sup>9</sup>, it would not qualify for payment from COE. Where it is later detected that payments have been made in non-compliance with these requirements, it is proposed that those monies would be recouped by deductions from any future payments. Payments may be recouped from any monies payable to the Member.

### **14.3 Administration**

14.3.1 The Panel is currently exploring with the Commission, the merit of introducing several administrative elements to facilitate the operation of a new system, which include:

- the creation of a 'Members' Advice Office' within Parliament Buildings, to provide guidance and advice to Members on expenditure;
- the introduction of criteria for Members in relation to expenditure above certain limits e.g. decision of the Authorising Officer in the Secretariat for prior approval for certain expenditure such as a contract for any goods or services and for decisions on costs outside the list of approved expenditure;
- the introduction of an approval system required in advance before a Member enters into any agreement e.g. where a Member seeks to purchase a service provided by a self-employed individual over a longer period of time, he or she should take account of strict rules imposed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs ('HMRC') regarding such individuals. This arrangement may, for example, be regarded in law as employment rather than a purchase of a service and may involve the Member in having to account for tax, national insurance and pension payments.
- the introduction of a condition for claiming COE in that ALL relevant documentation in relation to procurement, including original invoices and quotations, must be retained by the Member and may as such be requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and subjected to public scrutiny; and
- the introduction of an external audit of Members' expenditure. The Panel is currently considering a preferred model to include that, from the start of the new mandate, all Members' expenses claimed could be subject to an annual audit by external auditors, through a 20% random sample chosen by the appointed auditors on an annual basis. The audit would include all matters within the Panel's Determination. This would

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<sup>9</sup> A draft list of admissible and inadmissible expenditure is provided at Annex C

require that all Members certify their expenditure as being in accordance with the Panel's Determination on an annual basis and complete appropriate forms with full references to prior disclosure etc. before any payments are made into their constituency office bank account (for which they would be personally accountable) and when submitting employee contracts for payment through payroll or when claiming TSE. Any amount spent by a Member in excess of the limits on COE, ESE, and TSE, would be the sole responsibility of the Member.

14.3.2 It should be noted that the Panel proposes that these rules will apply to ALL purchases including the leases for office accommodation. The Panel proposes to allow Members a degree of flexibility in:

- drawing down a proportion of expenses in advance and accounting for use retrospectively; and
- maintaining a slightly larger petty cash account for small purchases.

14.3.3 The Panel is minded to approve a system of rolling forward a maximum of 5% COE for each year to facilitate each Member in paying constituency office running costs. In effect, this would allow a rollover of up to 5% year on year without any rollover from one Assembly to the next.

#### **14.4 Attendance**

14.4.1 The Panel recognises that attendance at the Assembly is only a part of a Member's duties, but it is an important part. At the moment once a Member is elected, there is no requirement on him or her to perform his or her duties or attend the Assembly, and voters have no way of changing this until the next election. Any failure to discharge such duties may only happen very rarely, but the Panel feels that payments to a Member should be conditional on the performance of his or her duties as a Member and attendance at the Assembly.

14.4.2 The Panel considers it necessary that the attendance of each Member at the Assembly should be recorded. A simple electronic system should be introduced to assist each Member in having his or her attendance recorded. Alternatively each Member may record his or her attendance by signing a register maintained for that purpose. Separate arrangements for Ministers should be maintained. Where there is no record of attendance at the Assembly made by a Member, payments of salary should be suspended after a period of 3 months.

14.4.3 The Panel is proposing that the payment of TSE will be conditional on Members' attendance at Parliament Buildings. The Panel proposes that to qualify for the full amount of TSE, a total of 99 days attendance (i.e. 90% of 110 days) in Parliament Buildings must be registered by the Member in each calendar year (Jan – Dec). The Panel also proposes that a deduction rate of 1% should be applicable per day that the Member does not attend below the 90% threshold. Where attendance falls below 99 days, the Member must repay 1% of the allowance in respect of each day below this number within



two months of the end of the year. Where a member is only a member for part of a year the 99 days will be reduced pro-rata.

- 14.4.4 The Panel proposes to determine a set of rules on attendance that would provide allowance for Members' non-attendance at Parliament Buildings due to illness or, for example, committee business outside Parliament Buildings. Separate provisions are also being considered to allow for maternity and paternity arrangements.

## Consultation Questions on Constituency Office Expenses

Following the information provided on pages 5 to 16, we are now seeking your views in relation to each of our proposals. Please tick the relevant box in the columns to the right and use the space provided at the end of the questions to add any further comments.

Q		Yes	No	No Opinion
1	Do you agree that the current system of Office Cost Expenditure should be replaced with a Constituency Office Expense of no more than £13,500 per Member per annum? (page 7 refers)			
2	Do you agree that an overall limit of not more than £8,000 per annum should be set for all premises rented by Members as a constituency office? ( <b>para 4.3 refers</b> )			
3	Do you agree that where a Member shares premises with another Assembly Member the allowable rental limit should be set at not more than £6,000 for each Member in the premises? ( <b>para 5.3 refers</b> )			
4	Do you agree that where a Member shares premises with an MP, MEP or Councillor (including a councillor who works for them as an employee) the allowable rental limit would be set at not more than £4,000 per annum for each Member in the premises? (para 5.4 refers)			
5	Do you agree that where any benefit from the payment of rent on a Member's constituency office accrues to a connected or associated person, the allowable rental limit would be set at not more than £4,000 per annum? (para 5.5 refers)			
6	Do you agree that each Member may only claim rent expenses in respect of one set of premises in their constituency? ( <b>para 6.1 refers</b> )			
7	Do you agree that where Members voluntarily use their home as their office they should be able to claim a personal allowance of not more than £2,000 in lieu of rent expenses and to defray the costs they incur? ( <b>para 7.1 refers</b> )			
8	Do you agree that all leases signed by Members must be non-repairing leases (i.e. leases under which the landlord is obliged to maintain the premises)? ( <b>para 8.3 refers</b> )			
9	Do you agree with the Panel's proposals on <b>page 11</b> relating to constituency office opening hours?			
10	Do you agree with the Panel's proposals on <b>page 11/12</b> relating to constituency office signage?			

11	Do you agree with the Panel's proposals on <b>page 12</b> to change the rules on the use of constituency offices for electoral purposes?			
12	Do you agree that Constituency Reports should be produced in line with the guidelines on page 13 and in electronic format only?			
13	Do you agree that a range of electronic office equipment and mobile phones should be provided centrally by the Commission to each Member to assist the operation of their constituency office? <b>(page 13 refers)</b>			
14	Do you agree that all equipment would remain the property of the Commission and would be returnable upon a Member leaving office? <b>(page 14 refers)</b>			
15	Do you agree with the Panel's proposal that all expenses claimed by Members under COE would be subject to an annual audit by External Auditors, through a 20% random sample chosen by the appointed auditors on an annual basis? <b>(page 15 refers)</b>			

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Please use the space below to include any further comments you have relating to the Panel's proposals on Members' Constituency Office Expenditure:

## Travel and Subsistence Expenses

### 15 Current Travel and Subsistence Expenses

15.1 Members are currently entitled to claim travel and subsistence allowances for a range of purposes in connection with their duties as a Member and when conducting constituency work. These fall into three broad areas:

- Mileage allowances for travel (and other travel expenses);
- Subsistence allowances for meals; and
- Hotel expenses when staying away from home.

15.2 Travel expenses, including mileage are the highest proportion of these expenses. A Member is entitled to claim payment for travel, which has been incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in carrying out his/her Assembly duties. This commonly would include the following types of journeys:-

- Between a Member's home and Parliament Buildings<sup>10</sup>;
- Between a Member's home and his or her constituency office(s);
- Between a constituency office and Parliament Buildings;
- Constituency travel; and
- Non-constituency travel.

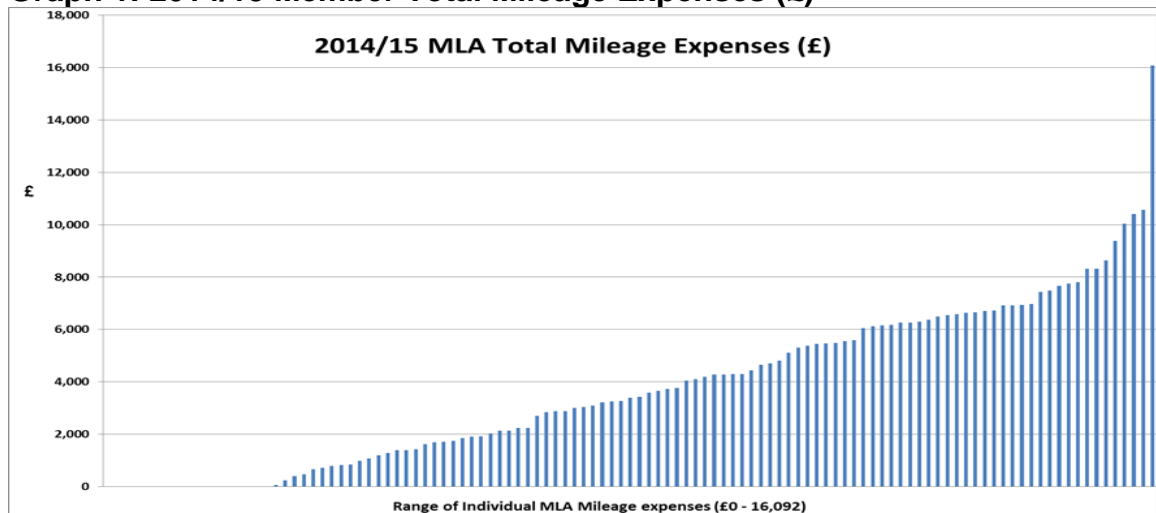
15.3 The Panel has examined the current pattern of claims for mileage allowances in detail. Collectively, such claims amount to some £450,000 per annum or just over £4,500 per Member on average. There are, however, disparities in the amounts claimed, with individual Members claiming between £0 and £16,000 per annum. Such claims cover, for example, travel from a Member's home to Parliament Buildings, Stormont as well as travel within the Member's constituency e.g. to meet constituents or visit sites. However, some Members also claim mileage for travelling each day from their home address to the edge of their constituency i.e. in effect they are paid home to office mileage. These expenses are permitted within the current rules but, as the tables below show, they can be substantial with a small number of Members claiming up to almost £12000 pa in home to office travel expenses.

15.4 This payment is seen by HMRC as a benefit in kind and taxed at the Member's marginal tax rate. Other mileage, mostly from the constituency to Parliament Buildings, is seen by HMRC as the reimbursement of expenses and is non-taxable.

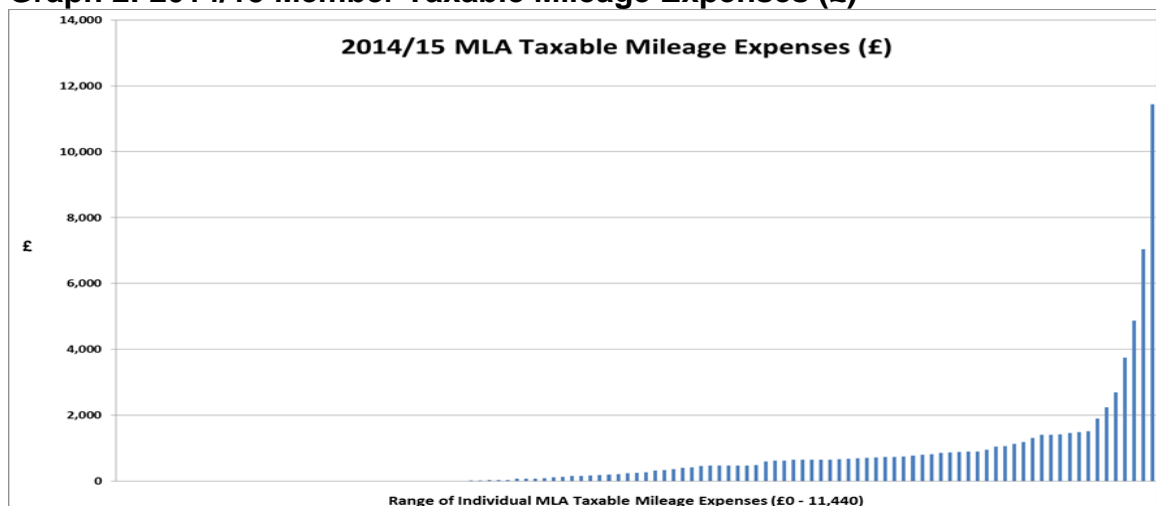
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<sup>10</sup> Parliament Buildings is located on the Stormont Estate, some 6 miles from the centre of Belfast

**Graph 1: 2014/15 Member Total Mileage Expenses (£)**

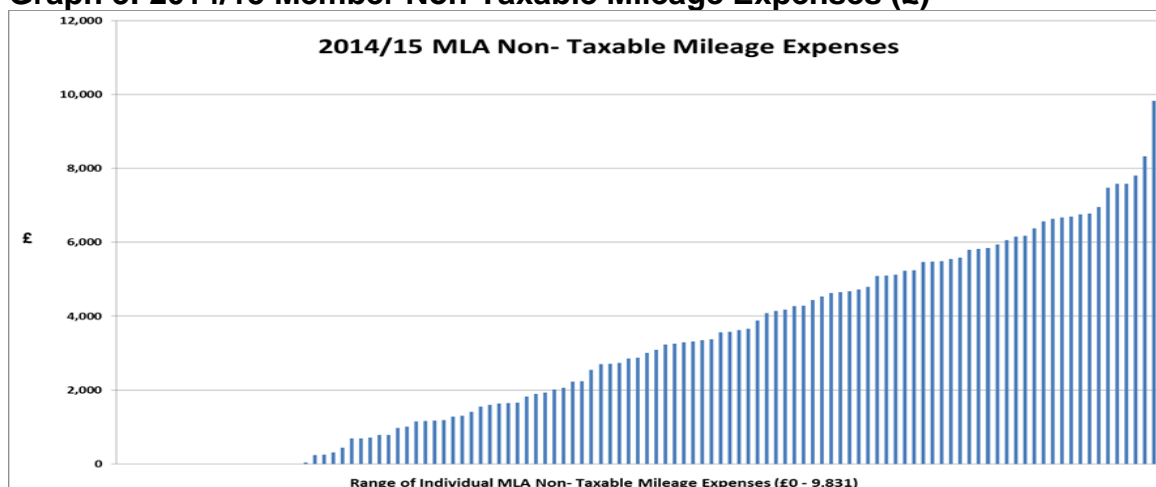


**Graph 2: 2014/15 Member Taxable Mileage Expenses (£)**



The graph below shows the pattern of claims for non-taxable mileage i.e. claims submitted for travel to and from the Assembly and on constituency work.

**Graph 3: 2014/15 Member Non-Taxable Mileage Expenses (£)**



- 15.5 Some variation in the pattern of claims is to be expected. The amount a Member claims will depend upon a wide range of factors including:
- How close their constituency is to Stormont;
  - The geographic size of the constituency;
  - How active they are in visiting premises within the constituency; and
  - How often they travel to Parliament Buildings.
- 15.6 Other factors also impact on this, for example, many Members for Belfast constituencies do not make any claims at all. In addition, if a Member is a Minister he or she is entitled to a Ministerial car which may pick them up at home each day and bring them to Ministerial work or take them direct to Ministerial engagements and/or meetings. This is funded by the Executive and should reduce any claim made by a Member who is a Minister for travel expenses. Ministerial cars cannot be used for constituency work.
- 15.7 Even considering all these factors, the Panel has concerns in relation to the variations between claims from Members made within the same constituency area. The Panel has noted that some Members claim 2 or even 3 times as much as colleagues in the same constituency area. The Panel has also identified further variations in year to year claims with mileage claims seeming to alter where there is no readily identifiable change in the circumstances of the Member.
- 15.8 We have therefore commissioned a detailed analysis of travel expense claims. The table at Annex B shows the overall amount claimed by each Member for travel expenses in 2013/14 and 2014/15 broken down for each constituency. The Panel has also set out at Annex B the mileage that would be incurred by Members travelling from their constituencies to Parliament Buildings on every sitting day. This makes it easier to assess the amount claimed for work within the constituency as opposed to travel to Belfast.
- 15.9 All claims are submitted by Members each month on a claim sheet which is checked by the Finance Office and then paid. From an administrative support view, the Panel understands that a member of Secretariat staff is employed almost full time on this work. Members also have to keep extensive records. Given that these expenses are self-authorised by Members and that there is no limit on the expenditure incurred, there is therefore no real incentive to be frugal with expenditure or live within a clear budget. Members are required to self-record their own travel which makes any financial control or audit difficult. In the Panel's view a better system is required.
- 15.10 The Panel also considers that the payment for home to office mileage is anomalous. Most Members live in their constituency and close to their local office but some do not and therefore are currently entitled to claim to travel many miles at public expense just to get to their constituency every day. The Panel does not believe that this can be justified. This is not the norm in the public or private sectors in Northern Ireland and is regarded by HMRC as a taxable benefit. Members are fully aware of this when they seek election or co-option and we see no logical reason why these allowances should be paid.

The Panel proposes payment of home to office mileage should cease from May 2016. The Panel estimates that this measure alone should save around £74,000 pa or £370,000 across a 5 year Mandate.

15.11 Given the scale of mileage allowance paid to Members, equating to around £2.5m over each mandate, the Panel is of the view that the system needs to be reviewed in order to:

- Simplify the system;
- Improve value for money; and
- Reduce administration costs

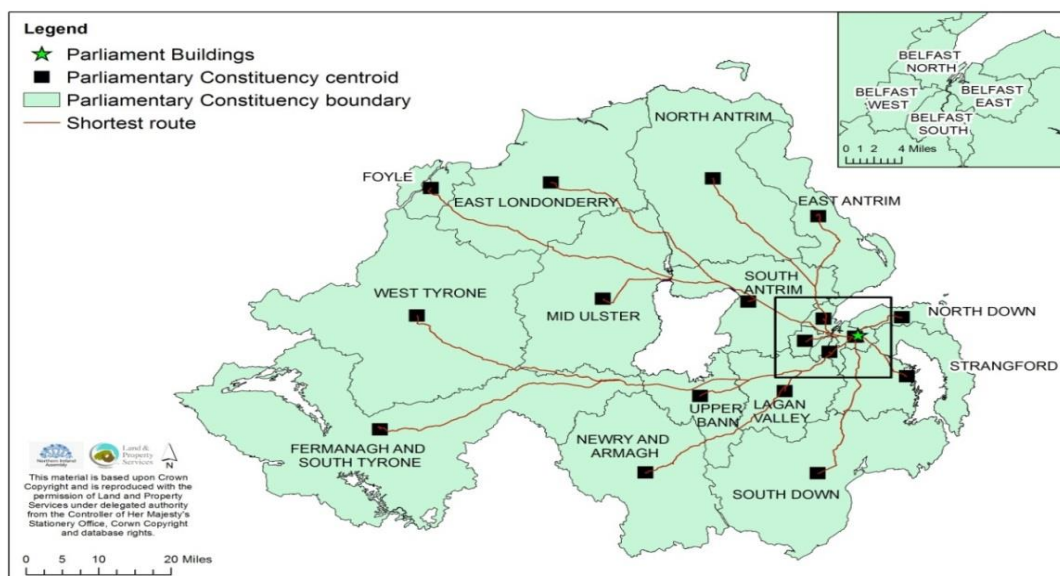
whilst ensuring that Members have access to the resources they need to perform their work.

## 16 Proposed changes to Travel and Subsistence Expenses

16.1 The Panel therefore proposes replacing the current system with a simple flat rate Travel and Subsistence Expense (TSE) for each constituency. This would be set at a level to take account of:

- The distance from constituency centroids (see below) to Parliament Buildings (see map below);
- Attendances at Parliament Buildings (based on an estimated 110 return journeys per annum);
- The land area of the constituency and the occasional journeys that Members may have to travel to meet constituents, who for one reason or another may be unable to visit the constituency office;
- Ministers and office-holders, who are supplied with a car and driver;
- The provision of subsidised meal facilities at Parliament Buildings; and
- No payment for overnight accommodation unless pre-agreed as part of a separate claim for expenses under a budget heading for which IFRP are not responsible (e.g. travel abroad on Assembly business).

**Map 1: Constituency Centroids**



- 16.2 The Panel has sought to determine the size of the allowance for each constituency allowance in as fair and objective a way as possible by considering the distance between the central point of each constituency (the centroid) and Parliament Buildings. The distance from the geographical centre (centroid) of each constituency to Stormont was calculated using ESRI Geographical Information software, and this information was used for the purpose of calculating the constituency TSE. The TSE is based on existing mileage allowances for an estimated 110 return journeys per year from constituency offices to Parliament Buildings, with an amount added for travel within each constituency based on the geographical size of each constituency.
- 16.3 The Panel proposes to introduce the following TSE for each Member from May 2016, replacing the current arrangements for claiming mileage giving auditable details for each journey.

**Table 3: Revised rates for Travel Expenses**

Parliamentary Constituency name	Centroid distance to Parliament Buildings * (Miles)	Derived Annual Parliament Buildings Travel Expense per Member	Proposed Annual Constituency Travel Expense per Member	Total Annual Travel and Subsistence Expenses (TSE)	Monthly payment per Member (TSE)
Belfast East	1	£600	£250	£850	£71
Belfast South	6	£600	£250	£850	£71
Belfast North	8	£600	£250	£850	£71
Belfast West	8	£600	£250	£850	£71
North Down	9	£900	£250	£1,150	£96
Strangford	11	£1,100	£750	£1,850	£154
Lagan Valley	16	£1,600	£750	£2,350	£196
South Antrim	18	£1,800	£750	£2,550	£212
Upper Bann	27	£2,700	£750	£3,450	£288
East Antrim	30	£3,000	£750	£3,750	£312
South Down	30	£3,000	£1,000	£4,000	£333
North Antrim	39	£3,900	£1,000	£4,900	£408
Mid Ulster	43	£4,300	£1,000	£5,300	£442
Newry and Armagh	43	£4,300	£1,000	£5,300	£442
East Londonderry	57	£5,100	£1,000	£6,100	£508
Foyle	71	£5,900	£250	£6,150	£512
West Tyrone	73	£6,000	£1,250	£7,250	£604
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	76	£6,200	£1,250	£7,450	£621



<b>Ministers<sup>11</sup> and Speaker</b>		Any Speaker or Minister utilising an official car for travel purposes would not receive the Stormont Travel Expense but would receive a nominal Constituency Travel Expense ranging from £250 - £1250 dependent on the size of their constituency.
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16.4 As proposed in paragraphs 14.4, the Panel proposes that daily attendances would be recorded at Parliament Buildings for all Members to demonstrate eligibility for TSE, with 1% reduction in annual allowance for each day below 99 attendances. Ministers would be exempt from recording for each complete month in which they hold their office. All payments would be made upon receipt of a completed annual claim form, and paid monthly to the personal account of the Member through the payroll.

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<sup>11</sup> In relation to Non-Taxable travel allowances, we estimated that the loss of 6 Ministers would cost us an extra £18k, so the net impact will be +£18k.

## Consultation Questions on Travel Expenditure

Following the information provided on pages 19 to 24, can we now seek your views below in relation to each of our proposals? Please tick the relevant box in the columns to the right and use the additional space provided at the end of the questions to add any further comments.

Q		Yes	No	No Opinion
16	Do you agree that the payment of home to office mileage for all Members should cease with effect from the start of the New Mandate? (para 15.10 refers)			
17	Do you agree that individual mileage and subsistence claims should be replaced by a flat rate Travel and Subsistence payment, based on criteria set out at paragraph 16.1 for each Member?			
18	If you answered yes to question 17, do you consider the rates detailed in Table 3 on page 23 appropriate?			
19	Do you agree that to qualify for the full amount of TSE, a total of 99 days attendance (i.e. 90% of 110 days) in Parliament Buildings must be registered by the Member in each calendar year? ( <b>page 16 refers</b> )			
20	Do you agree that where attendance falls below 99 days, the Member must repay 1% of the allowance in respect of each day below this number within two months of the end of the year? ( <b>page 16 refers</b> )			

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please use the space below to include any further comments you have relating to Members' Travel and Subsistence Expenditure:

## Childcare Expenses

### 17 Current system for Members' Childcare Expenses

- 17.1 The Panel has been asked by the Assembly Commission to consider the removal of Members' childcare allowance. The Panel is mindful that childcare arrangements and support are currently under review at a National level. Within the Assembly, all Members can currently apply for a contribution towards the cost of the care of their children while they are at work.
- 17.2 In 2012, the Panel determined that an Assembly Member could claim a Childcare Allowance in respect of childcare expenditure which they have incurred for a child or children up to the age of 14. This allowance is taxable.
- 17.3 The current rates are:
- £40 per week until the child reaches 5 years of age or starts school, whichever is the earlier, and
  - thereafter £20 per week until the child reaches the age of 14.
- 17.4 The removal of a childcare allowance for Members would result in savings of approximately £60k based on the anticipated full year costs for the 2014/15 financial year. The Panel previously proposed in their 2012 Report that the Assembly Commission consider other childcare schemes available, including the establishment of a Childcare Voucher Scheme for Members. The panel is now seeking views on whether to remove or retain the existing scheme.

### Consultation Question on Childcare Expenses

Q		Yes	No	No Opinion
21	Do you believe the Panel should continue to provide a childcare allowance to Members based on the rates stated above?			
<b>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS</b>				
Please use the space below to include any further comments you have relating to Members' Childcare Expenses:				

## **18 Next Steps**

The Panel invites your views on the proposals listed above and any other additional comments which you wish to make.

### **18.1 Additional Comments**

*Please use this space to include any additional comments you may have on the proposals outlined in this consultation document. Your response and comments will help inform our decisions for our next Determination.*

Should you wish to respond electronically, please download the consultation proposals by typing or pasting the following link into your internet browser:  
<http://ifrp.org.uk/consultation/>

Alternatively you may send your response to:

Independent Financial Review Panel  
Room 241, Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont  
Belfast BT4 3XX  
E-mail: [info@ifrp.org.uk](mailto:info@ifrp.org.uk)

You may wish to note that the names of respondees and, in some cases, the full response, will be published unless you indicate when you submit your response that you do not wish this to happen.

Are you content that your information is published?

YES

☐

NO

☐

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANISATION (IF APPLICABLE):

\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Please note that it is not essential to include your details. You may respond anonymously if you prefer to do so.*

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

**THE DEADLINE FOR RESPONSES TO THIS CONSULTATION IS  
5PM ON FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2015.**

**RESPONSES RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE MAY NOT BE  
CONSIDERED.**

### **DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION**

The Independent Financial Review Panel may publish, or make available on request, any information provided to it in relation to this consultation exercise. In line with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, information containing personal data will not be disclosed. You should be aware that your response, or an extract from it, may appear in a Report or may be included on a list of evidence submitted. In the event of a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it may be necessary to disclose information which you provide.

If you are providing any information, other than personal data, which you feel is not suitable for public disclosure; you should identify that information and provide reasons against its disclosure. The Independent Financial Review Panel will take this into account when publishing information or when responding to requests for information.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

The Independent Financial Review Panel  
Room 241  
Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
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Belfast  
BT4 3XX

Telephone: (028) 90521930  
E-mail: [info@ifrp.org.uk](mailto:info@ifrp.org.uk)

### **Extract from the Northern Ireland Assembly (Members' Salaries, Allowances, and Pensions) Determination 2012**

#### **Definition of 'connected person'**

A "connected person" in relation to a Member means:

- a family Member;
- a political party of which he is a Member;
- a person with whom the Member is connected within the meaning of section 252(2)(b), (c), (d) or (e) or section 254 of the Companies Act 2006;
- or any person from whom the Member, his family Member, or a political party of which the Member is a Member, derives a financial benefit; and for this purpose "financial benefit" shall not include:
  - any benefit derived by his family Member which arises in connection with the family Member's occupation; or
  - any benefit which arises in connection with any shareholding that is a registerable interest under the Northern Ireland Assembly Code of Conduct and Guide Relating to the Conduct of Members, or, in the case of a shareholding held by a family Member or political party, would be a registerable interest were it held by the Member;

### **Extract from the Northern Ireland Assembly (Members' Allowances) (No. 1) Determination 2015**

#### **Definition of an 'associated person'**

An associated person is

- (a) a political party;
- (b) a Member, employee or officer of a political party;
- (c) an association, whether incorporated or not, the purpose of which is wholly or mainly—
  - (i) the advancement of political opinions;
  - (ii) the advancement of culture or heritage; or
  - (iii) the advancement of religion;
- (d) a person who is, or was within the last five years—
  - (i) a Member of the Assembly, the European Parliament, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives of Ireland) or Seanad Éireann (Senate of Ireland);
  - (ii) a district councillor;
  - (iii) an employee of a Member of the Assembly;
  - (iv) an employee of the Commission;
  - (v) an employee of a Northern Ireland department;
  - (vi) an employee of a district council;
  - (vii) a family Member of a Member of the Assembly; or
  - (viii) a candidate for election to the Assembly.

## ANNEX B

MLA	Party	Constituency	Non-taxable mileage expenses	Taxable mileage expenses	Total mileage expenses	Non-taxable mileage expenses	Taxable mileage expenses	Total mileage expenses	Constituency Office Distance (Miles)
			2013/14 (£)	2013/14 (£)	2013/14 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2014/15 (£)	2014/15 (£)	
BEGGS, Roy	UUP	East Antrim	3,492	905	4,396	3,345	707	4,052	25
DICKSON, Stewart	ALLIANCE	East Antrim	4,256	1,667	5,922	4,086	623	4,708	14
HILDITCH, David	DUP	East Antrim	2,667	1,001	3,668	2,712	951	3,663	25
MCMULLAN, Oliver	SF	East Antrim	7,910	0	7,910	6,955	468	7,423	36
ROSS, Alastair	DUP	East Antrim	1,634	752	2,385	1,172	207	1,379	25
WILSON, Sammy	DUP	East Antrim	3,751	211	3,962	2,697	184	2,881	25
COCHRANE, Judith	ALLIANCE	East Belfast	23	0	23	46	5	51	3
COPELAND, Michael	UUP	East Belfast	4,009	5,014	9,023	3,006	7,036	10,042	4
DOUGLAS, Sammy	DUP	East Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
LYTTLE, Chris	ALLIANCE	East Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
NEWTON, Robin	DUP	East Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
ROBINSON, Peter*	DUP	East Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
CAMPBELL, Gregory	DUP	East Londonderry	6,223	57	6,280	6,173	0	6,173	62
DALLAT, John	SDLP	East Londonderry	5,442	221	5,663	5,098	1,055	6,154	43
McClarty, David	Independent	East Londonderry	54	0	54	0	0	0	55
MCQUILLAN, Adrian	DUP	East Londonderry	6,571	846	7,417	6,154	774	6,928	48
O'hOisin, Cathal	SF	East Londonderry	6,875	1,404	8,279	6,772	882	7,654	54
ROBINSON, George	DUP	East Londonderry	6,043	0	6,043	5,581	0	5,581	62



SUGDEN, Claire	Independent	East Londonderry	0	0	0	4,719	655	5,374	55
ELLIOTT, Tom	UUP	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	8,080	0	8,080	7,805	0	7,805	83
FLANAGAN, Phil	SF	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	11,701	640	12,340	9,831	737	10,568	83
FOSTER, Arlene*	DUP	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	369	800	1,169	253	813	1,067	83
LYNCH, Sean	SF	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	11,273	281	11,554	7,587	1,046	8,633	79
McGAHAN, Bronwyn	SF	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	11,470	109	11,579	8,325	0	8,325	44
MORROW, Maurice	DUP	Fermanagh and South Tyrone	4,701	0	4,701	4,182	0	4,182	43
DEVENNEY, Maurice	DUP	Foyle	0	0	0	3,578	0	3,578	71
DURKAN, Mark H*	SDLP	Foyle	3,888	0	3,888	2,016	0	2,016	73
EASTWOOD, Colum	SDLP	Foyle	5,901	260	6,161	6,749	168	6,917	75
HAY, William**	DUP	Foyle	6,510	0	6,510	2,243	0	2,243	71
McCartney, Raymond	SF	Foyle	9,080	0	9,080	6,640	0	6,640	73
McLAUGHLIN, Maeve	SF	Foyle	7,738	0	7,738	6,060	198	6,258	73
RAMSEY, Pat	SDLP	Foyle	5,785	95	5,880	5,938	320	6,257	72
CRAIG, Jonathan	DUP	Lagan Valley	1,967	243	2,210	1,557	675	2,232	12
GIVAN, Paul	DUP	Lagan Valley	3,946	942	4,887	3,567	734	4,301	12
HALE, Brenda (Mrs)	DUP	Lagan Valley	1,933	479	2,412	1,649	479	2,128	20
LUNN, Trevor	ALLIANCE	Lagan Valley	2,776	1,266	4,042	2,732	472	3,204	12
McCrea, Basil	NI21	Lagan Valley	3,880	27	3,907	3,624	111	3,735	20
POOTS, Edwin*	DUP	Lagan Valley	328	183	510	790	0	790	12
McCREA, Ian	DUP	Mid Ulster	7,016	472	7,488	7,577	742	8,318	47
McGlone Patsy	SDLP	Mid Ulster	5,942	1,574	7,516	5,128	1,416	6,543	46
McGUINNESS, Martin*	SF	Mid Ulster	0	0	0	0	0	0	46
MILNE, Ian	SF	Mid Ulster	3,470	0	3,470	4,679	1,903	6,582	42

Molloy, Francis	SF	Mid Ulster	1,951	0	1,951	0	0	0	46
O'NEILL, Michelle*	SF	Mid Ulster	252	720	972	1,163	684	1,847	42
OVEREND, Sandra	UUP	Mid Ulster	6,673	518	7,191	4,794	655	5,449	42
BOYLAN, Cathal	SF	Newry and Armagh	6,672	698	7,370	5,472	655	6,127	41
BRADLEY, Dominic	SDLP	Newry and Armagh	5,403	0	5,403	2,880	0	2,880	41
BRADY, Mickey	SF	Newry and Armagh	4,806	0	4,806	6,567	1,188	7,755	40
FEARON, Megan	SF	Newry and Armagh	5,568	1,040	6,608	5,464	1,515	6,978	54
IRWIN, William	DUP	Newry and Armagh	5,557	566	6,123	5,090	459	5,549	37
KENNEDY, Danny*	UUP	Newry and Armagh	2,127	497	2,624	1,415	329	1,743	39
ALLISTER, Jim	TUV	North Antrim	4,943	673	5,616	4,433	864	5,297	48
FREW, Paul	DUP	North Antrim	4,533	434	4,966	4,630	475	5,105	30
MCILVEEN, David	DUP	North Antrim	8,231	1,170	9,401	5,546	4,873	10,418	30
McKAY, Daithi	SF	North Antrim	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
STOREY, Mervyn*	DUP	North Antrim	5,407	6	5,414	1,899	0	1,899	48
SWANN, Robin	UUP	North Antrim	4,182	347	4,529	3,880	410	4,289	30
BRADLEY, Paula	DUP	North Belfast	2,357	72	2,429	2,067	71	2,138	10
HUMPHREY, William	DUP	North Belfast	1,066	0	1,066	1,656	36	1,692	6
KELLY, Gerry	SF	North Belfast	1,531	0	1,531	1,191	2,237	3,427	6
MAGINNESS, Alban	SDLP	North Belfast	932	60	992	1,157	30	1,187	6
McCAUSLAND, Nelson	DUP	North Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
NI CHUILIN, Caral*	SF	North Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
AGNEW, Steven	GREEN	North Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
CREE, Leslie	UUP	North Down	1,307	0	1,307	1,277	0	1,277	9
DUNNE, Gordon	DUP	North Down	697	0	697	979	0	979	4
EASTON, Alex	DUP	North Down	1,958	959	2,916	1,937	896	2,832	14
FARRY, Stephen*	ALLIANCE	North Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
WEIR, Peter	DUP	North Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
CAMERON, Pam	DUP	South Antrim	2,907	317	3,224	2,855	401	3,256	11
CLARKE, Trevor	DUP	South Antrim	5,117	662	5,779	5,243	804	6,047	20

FORD, David*	ALLIANCE	South Antrim	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
GIRVAN, Paul	DUP	South Antrim	4,754	516	5,270	4,533	271	4,804	16
Kinahan, Danny	UUP	South Antrim	4,216	351	4,567	3,231	154	3,384	19
McLAUGHLIN, Mitchel	SF	South Antrim	10,444	6,377	16,821	4,652	11,440	16,092	24
LO, Anna	ALLIANCE	South Belfast	645	817	1,462	783	647	1,430	5
MASKEY, Alex	SF	South Belfast	1,750	0	1,750	238	1,462	1,699	5
McDevitt, Conall	SDLP	South Belfast	360	0	360	0	0	0	7
McDONNELL, Dr Alasdair	SDLP	South Belfast	325	132	457	312	76	388	5
McGIMPSEY, Michael	UUP	South Belfast	1,218	629	1,847	1,015	594	1,609	5
MCKINNEY, Fearghal	SDLP	South Belfast	815	644	1,458	1,632	1,404	3,036	8
O Muilleoir, Martin	SF	South Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
SPRATT, Jimmy	DUP	South Belfast	1,476	292	1,768	2,232	467	2,699	4
HAZZARD, Chris	SF	South Down	5,223	421	5,644	2,546	3,744	6,290	22
MCCALLISTER, John	Independent	South Down	5,738	824	6,562	5,232	1,481	6,712	31
MCKEVITT, Karen	SDLP	South Down	4,385	1,141	5,526	4,147	1,310	5,457	44
ROGERS, Sean	SDLP	South Down	4,657	427	5,084	4,279	362	4,641	31
RUANE, Caitriona	SF	South Down	12,865	122	12,986	5,849	644	6,492	44
WELLS, Jim	DUP	South Down	5,309	661	5,970	3,288	475	3,763	44
BELL, Jonathan*	DUP	Strangford	7,198	0	7,198	5,489	0	5,489	6
HAMILTON, Simon*	DUP	Strangford	1,098	88	1,186	441	27	468	5
McCARTHY, Kieran	ALLIANCE	Strangford	3,708	0	3,708	3,258	0	3,258	6
McILVEEN, Michelle	DUP	Strangford	531	65	595	720	0	720	5
McNARRY, David	UKIP	Strangford	3,283	1,301	4,585	3,312	1,129	4,441	11
NESBITT, Mike	UUP	Strangford	1,410	522	1,932	691	126	817	6
ANDERSON, Sydney	DUP	Upper Bann	4,569	195	4,765	4,270	0	4,270	30
DOBSON, Jo-Anne	UUP	Upper Bann	2,284	351	2,635	3,654	618	4,272	27
GARDINER, Samuel	UUP	Upper Bann	1,913	66	1,978	1,829	92	1,921	25
KELLY, Dolores	SDLP	Upper Bann	4,710	2,269	6,979	3,373	718	4,091	25

MOUTRAY, Stephen	DUP	Upper Bann	3,720	351	4,071	3,093	0	3,093	25
O'DOWD, John*	SF	Upper Bann	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
ATTWOOD, Alex	SDLP	West Belfast	334	144	478	1,309	73	1,382	8
McCann Jennifer*	SF	West Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
McCANN, Fra	SF	West Belfast	3,722	0	3,722	0	659	659	6
McCORLEY, Rosaleen	SF	West Belfast	1,544	0	1,544	694	149	843	8
Ramsey, Sue	SF	West Belfast	664	0	664	0	235	235	8
SHEEHAN, Pat	SF	West Belfast	3,253	0	3,253	1,604	1,404	3,008	8
BOYLE, Michaela	SF	West Tyrone	9,135	0	9,135	6,376	0	6,376	76
BUCHANAN, Thomas	DUP	West Tyrone	6,478	1,114	7,592	5,791	857	6,648	68
BYRNE, Joe	SDLP	West Tyrone	6,908	15	6,922	7,475	17	7,492	76
HUSSEY, Ross	UUP	West Tyrone	7,262	320	7,582	6,667	245	6,912	68
McALEER, Declan	SF	West Tyrone	7,591	372	7,962	5,824	900	6,724	68
McElduff, Barry	SF	West Tyrone	9,441	1,069	10,510	6,694	2,693	9,387	68
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>415,817</b>	<b>49,784</b>	<b>465,590</b>	<b>349,154</b>	<b>74,416</b>	<b>423,558</b>	

\* Minister

\*\* Speaker

**Examples of admissible and inadmissible expenditure (as detailed within the Financial Handbook for Members)**

<b>ADMISSIBLE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>INADMISSIBLE EXPENDITURE</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	
Purchase or lease of photocopiers, faxes, scanners, phones and other office equipment.	
Purchase of office furniture	For photocopiers – see below on limits.
Satellite/digital TV – news channels only – installation and subscriptions	Satellite subscriptions for packages other than current affairs or news channels
Purchase of stationery and consumables	No stationery for personal use or circulars
Newspapers and periodicals	
Purchase of hardware and software.	Only software for that is necessary for Assembly duties
Security equipment	
Modest digital equipment	Some types of digital equipment or televisions are admissible however, if appropriate the maximum amount allowable for these types of equipment must not be exceeded (satellite navigation aids, digital cameras and photocopiers). These will be reviewed annually – please contact the Finance Office for advice.
Mobile Phone	
<b>SERVICES</b>	
Professional advice e.g from accountants, or lawyers. NB accountant fees are allowable as a charge against OCE however they are not deductible expenses for tax purposes.	.
	Hospitality or entertainment
Cleaning	
Maintenance services or minor capital works– so long as these are required when first occupying a property or providing they don't go beyond making good dilapidations or meeting statutory obligations under Health and Safety or Disability Discrimination legislation. Two quotations must be provided for work of this nature	Large capital expenditure which adds value to the property, or expenditure which is not deemed value for money. No capital purchases will be permitted in the final year of a mandate unless to replace broken equipment, however this excludes the last six months of a mandate when no capital purchases will be allowed
Decorating	
New flooring	
Maintenance services for equipment	

<b>ADMISSIBLE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>INADMISSIBLE EXPENDITURE</b>
Interpretation and translation services	
Research	
Media services	
Media training	
Consultancy for software and website design.	
Annual Data Protection registration subscription.	
Recruitment services	
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>	
Postage and Stationery	Wreaths, personal greeting messages or cards of well wishes/sympathy, or Assembly Stationery for the use of issuing circulars, or Pre-paid stationery for anything other than Assembly business
Telephone costs	
Television licence	
Printing and distributing costs for contact sheets.	Costs associated with campaigning on behalf of any political party, or surveys or questionnaires or narratives on Assembly work.
	Election campaigning – personal or party related.
Website design and hosting.	
Advertising – e.g. office and surgery information, signage, constituency reports	Advertising that contains any party political message or that makes inappropriate reference to another Member or party or contains emblems.
Subscriptions e.g periodicals, newspapers.	
Data Protection notifications	
<b>SUPPORT COSTS</b>	
<b>SUPPORT STAFF SALARY COSTS AND BONUSES UP TO VALUE OF £500 – In recognition of additional duties etc.</b>	<b>ANNUAL SUPPORT STAFF BONUSES ABOVE £500</b>
Staff Business Travel	
Limited journeys for staff to Parliament Buildings	
	Gross payments to staff that are below the rates as prescribed by the Minimum Wage Act.
Reimbursement of actual volunteer expenses	
Work related training or seminars for support staff	
<b>CONSTITUENCY OFFICE COSTS</b>	

<b>ADMISSIBLE EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>INADMISSIBLE EXPENDITURE</b>
Rent	Rent in excess of independent valuations
	Purchase of property by a Member or rental of an office owned by the Member or a connected party.
Room Hire for surgeries	
Water Rates	
Rates	
Contents insurance – NB the Assembly Commission has appropriate policies in place for Employers and Public Liability cover.	
Office buildings insurance if not covered by rental agreement.	
Utilities	

## **Financial Support for Members Handbook (Dec 2012)**

### **Current categories of Office Cost Expenditure**

1. Support Staff Costs
  - a. Salary costs
  - b. Support staff bonus payments
  - c. Incidental and Ancillary Employment Costs
  - d. Redundancy Payments
  - e. Staff Pooling Arrangements
2. Research Costs
3. Volunteer Expenses
4. Staff Travel – General
5. Staff Travel between Parliament Buildings and Constituency
6. Conferences and Training
7. Constituency Office Costs
8. Rental of a Constituency Office
9. Constituency Office Refurbishment
10. Office Furniture and Equipment
11. Constituency Office Running Costs
  - a. Utilities
  - b. Rates
  - c. Insurance
  - d. Cleaning
  - e. Newspapers and subscriptions
  - f. Postage and stationery
  - g. Petty Cash
  - h. Hospitality
12. Advertising
  - a. General Advertising
  - b. Office Signage
  - c. Assembly Constituency Reports
13. Hire, Lease or rental of cars or vans
14. Purchase or rental of caravans and mobile offices
15. Donations
16. Home Office