

Draft PART 6 - MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2024

Introduction

1. Members' and co-optees' allowances are governed by legislation -*The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003*. This can be accessed on the City Council's web site.
2. Local authorities can only adopt Allowance Schemes after considering recommendations made by an independent panel. This current scheme will take effect from 6 May 2024, after consideration of the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on 12 December 2023. A copy of the Panel's report (and the decision taken by the Full Council) can be accessed on the [Council's website](#).
3. The previous Scheme was adopted by the Full Council in November 2020.
4. The Allowances Scheme covers:
 - basic allowance (paid to all Councillors);
 - special responsibility allowances (paid to some Councillors);
 - travel allowances and travel policy;
 - dependant carers allowances;
 - pensions (for Councillors);
 - co-optees allowances.
5. The principles (as appropriate) of the officers [Expenses, Benefits and Travel Policy](#) apply to councillors and co-optees.
6. In accordance with the regulations, at the end of a financial year, details of all allowances paid and claimed (travel and dependant carers) by Councillors and co-optees, for the preceding year, will be published on the [Council's website](#).

Basic Allowance

7. The Basic Allowance is the allowance that every Councillor in Bristol is entitled to. It is intended to realistically remunerate Councillors for time spent on Council business including attending meetings/briefings and conducting ward work i.e. all duties the public would expect a Councillor to carry out. The Basic Allowance also covers incidental costs (such as the use of their homes) and all subsistence when travelling within the UK.

Co-Optees' and Independent Member's Allowance

8. An allowance is payable to persons appointed to serve as co-optees, including statutory appointments and Independent Members of the Audit Committee (one of whom also chairs the Values and Ethics Sub Committee). The allowance recognises the time devoted by such persons, for example, in preparing for and attending/chairing meetings they are appointed to.

Special Responsibility Allowances

9. These are discretionary payments intended to recognise the responsibility, accountability, time and effort required from those Members of the Council who perform duties significantly over and above what might reasonably be expected of them through the Basic Allowance.

Payment of Allowances

10. All allowances will be paid automatically on the last working day of each month, apart from payments for attendance at Appeal Committees, Licensing Sub Committee hearings and Public Safety and Protection Sub Committee hearings which will be paid as set out in the schedule at Appendix A.
11. Allowances are treated as income and therefore subject to any tax, National Insurance deductions and/or benefits relative to earnings. Detailed information regarding taxation etc. can be found in the officers [Expenses, Benefits and Travel Policy](#).
12. A Councillor or co-optee may, by notice in writing to the Monitoring Officer, forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance.
13. Co-optees will be paid (pro-rata) following the return of the correct paperwork. Details of payments to Councillors (including those with a Special Responsibility Allowance) can be found in the schedule at Appendix B.
14. Claims for expenses (over and above the basic and special responsibility allowance) must be made by completing submitting the expense claim electronically via the Council's Itrent payroll system.

Travelling Allowances and Travel Policy

15. Travelling allowances are payable for approved duties only (see Appendix D) both within the city and outside of Bristol. A car parking permit for College Street carpark will be issued or alternatively Members can be issued with an annual bus pass on request. All other travel arrangements are subject to the [Expenses, Benefits and Travel Policy](#), where appropriate.

Reasonable Adjustments - Use of Taxis within Bristol

16. Councillors / co-optees are entitled to use taxis for the purposes of carrying out their approved duties where this has been agreed as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. Requests for approval should be made to the Head of Democratic Engagement.

International travel policy

17. The International Travel Policy for Members can be found at Appendix E.

Subsistence (Food and Drink)

18. In line with Bristol City Council's policy for officers, no subsistence expenses will be paid for trips within the UK.

Out of pocket expenses

19. In line with Bristol City Council's policy for officers, claims for the cost of reasonable out of pocket expenses can be made when travelling outside of Bristol on Council business and subject to the Monitoring Officer's approval. Examples of expenses that will be reimbursed include public transport, parking fees (but not fines) and taxi fares. For travel within the United Kingdom, Councillors may not claim for food and drink.

Dependant Carers' Allowance

20. Any Councillor or co-optee who is responsible for the care of any dependant person¹ is eligible to be paid an additional allowance per dependant, per hour in respect of the performance of any approved duty (see Appendix D). The Dependant Carer's Allowance is also payable for travel time, not exceeding 1 hour before and 1 hour after, the performance of the approved duty. The payment is not payable to a member of the claimant's household and payment of this allowance will be subject to provision of receipts to evidence payments made. The maximum rates of such allowances are paid as per the Living Wage Foundation on submitted receipts; and are subject to the Member observing the protocol on the claims procedure and eligibility criteria as set out in Appendix C.

Pensions

21. Councillors must make their own pension provision.

Income Tax

22. Income Tax is payable on all allowances (basic, special responsibility, co-optees, attendance and carers).
23. Councillors are reminded to keep their own records of expenses claims and reimbursements for income tax purposes.
24. Councillors are advised to seek their own independent tax and financial advice as necessary.

¹ A dependant could be a spouse, partner, child, grandchild, parent, or someone who depends on you for care.

National Insurance

25. National Insurance contributions are payable on all allowances (basic, special responsibility, co-optees, attendance and carers). As with employees, a 12% Contribution is paid on all earnings over £792 per month and 2% for earnings over £4167 per month. Employees over State Pension Age do not pay National Insurance.
26. There is an annual maximum for contribution liability for people with more than one job and, in some instances, Members in this position may be entitled to a refund of contributions; alternatively they may apply to defer payment of contributions in their capacity as a Councillor. See guidance notes for the [Deferment of National Insurance payments](#).

Benefits

27. The contributions paid by Members count towards the full range of contributory benefits.

ICT Equipment and Telephony

28. Members will be provided with necessary ICT equipment and telephony to enable them to fulfil their duties.
29. International calls on Council business can only be made by exception.

Future Changes

The basic councillors' allowance, special responsibility and co-optees allowances will be automatically increased in line with any national pay award to local government officers on 1 April where applicable.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Special Responsibility Allowances
- Appendix B: Political Group Leaders and Whips Allowances
- Appendix C: Dependant Carers Allowances Scheme
- Appendix D: Approved Duties
- Appendix E: International Travel Policy for Members

Appendix A: Schedule of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) 2024 - 2025

All Councillors are entitled to the basic allowance of **£16,681**

SRAs are paid over and above the basic allowance. Only one SRA can be claimed at a time.

The co-optees' allowance is **£678 per annum** paid pro-rata from the date of their appointment, except for the Independent Members of the Audit Committee who receive **£1,736 per annum** plus travel expenses and the Chair of the Value and Ethics Sub Committee who receives **£1,157 per annum**.

SRA £ (in addition to the basic allowance)	SRA RECIPIENT	No of SRAs
33362	Leader of the Council	1
16681	Deputy Leader	1
25022	Policy Committee Chairs	7
8341	Policy Committee Vice Chairs	8
25022	Lord Mayor	1
21685	Political Group Leaders (Dependent on Group size - see Appendix B)	5
10842	Political Group Whips (Dependent on Group size - see Appendix B)	5
8341	Deputy Lord Mayor	1
	Chairs of Regulatory Committees: Development Control A Development Control B	2
	Audit Committee Chair	1
	Human Resources Committee Chair	1
	Health Sub Committee Chair	1
12511	Finance Sub Committee Chair	1
	Total SRAs payable	35

Additional Payments:

- (i) Chairs of Policy Task Groups - £2000 upon submission of the Group's report of recommendations to the parent committee
- (ii) Licensing - £75 per session on completion of a minimum of 2 sessions
- (iii) Public Safety and Protection - £75 per session on completion of a minimum of 2 sessions
- (iv) Appeals - £75 per session on completion of a minimum of 2 sessions

Note:

The number of some posts may vary according to the outcome of the election and political make-up of the Council.

Appendix B : Political Group Leaders and Whips Allowances

Political Group Leader

The special responsibility allowances for Political Group Leaders are determined in accordance with the table below, effective from 6 May 2024.

Group Leader	Governance Element (30% BA)	74%+ (52+ members) (100% BA)	73% - 51% (51-36 members) (75% BA)	50%-31% (35-22 members) (50% BA)	30%-15% (21-11 members) (25% BA)	14% - 4% (10-3 members) (12.5% BA)	Less than 4% (2 members) (0% BA)	Total	
Leader of Group	5,004	£16,681						£21,685	
			£12,511					£17,515	
				£8,341					£13,345
					£4,170				£9,174
						£2,085			£7,089
						£0		£5,004	

Political Group Whip

The special responsibility allowances for Political Group Whips are determined in accordance with the table below, effective from 6 May 2024.

Group Whip	Governance Element (15% BA)	74% + (52+ members) (50% Group Leader)	73%-51% (51-36 members) (50% Group Leader)	50%-31% (35-22 members) (50% Group Leader)	30%-15% (21-11 members) (50% Group Leader)	14%-4% (10-3 members) (50% Group Leader)	Less than 4% (2 members)	Total	
Group Whip	£2,502	£8,340						£10,842	
			£6,255					£8,757	
				£4,170					£6,672
					£2,085				£4,587
						£1,043			£3,545
						£0		£2,502	

Appendix C : Dependant Carers' Allowance Scheme

A claim can be made:

- (a) When a carer has been engaged to enable a Councillor to carry out an approved duty;
 - (i) where charges are levied on an hourly basis, Members may claim actual and necessary costs incurred for the period of the approved duty (including time travelling, time taken by a Member to 'drop-off' or 'pick-up' a dependant, or by a carer engaged by a member to look after a dependant in the member's home – this would normally not exceed 1 hour before and 1 hour after) for each dependant;

or

- (ii) where charges are levied by a provider for a fixed period or session, Members may claim the cost of any such fixed period/session or periods/sessions incurred for the period of the approved duty (including time travelling time taken by a Member to 'drop-off' or 'pick-up' a dependant) for each dependant;
- (b) A carer will be any responsible adult who does not normally live with the member as part of his/her family;
- (c) An allowance will be payable if the dependant being cared for:
 - (i) is a child under the age of 14; or
 - (ii) is an elderly person; or
 - (iii) has a recognised physical or mental disability who normally lives with the Member as part of that Member's family and should not be left unsupervised.

APPENDIX D: Approved Duties

Claims can be made for these allowances in respect of the following (extract from the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003):

- (a) the attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or sub- committee of the authority, or of any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body;
- (b) the attendance at any other meeting, the holding of which is authorised by the authority, or a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority and at least one other local authority within the meaning of section 270(1) of the Local Government Act 172, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee, provided that:
 - (i) where the authority is divided into two or more political groups it is a meeting to which members of at least two groups have been invited;or
 - (ii) if the authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two members of the authority have been invited;
- (c) the attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the authority is a member;
- (d) the attendance at a meeting of the executive or a meeting of any of its committees, where the authority is operating executive arrangements;
- (e) the performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened;
- (f) the performance of any duty in connections with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
- (g) the performance of any duty in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at any school approved for the purposes of section 342 of the Education Act 1996 (approval of non- maintained special schools); and
- (h) the carrying out of any other duty approved by the authority , or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees or sub-committees.

Appendix E: International Travel Policy for Members

To follow