

Overview document on all payments to members from Houses of the Oireachtas [2 Oct,2009]

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1. Salary information

Pre 2009

Parliamentary salaries are payable monthly in arrears, on the last day of each month. There are three annual rates of salary:

1. **€100,191 basic** salary of;
2. €103,389 i.e. 1st Long Service Increment [LSI] (after 7 years combined service has been completed); and
3. €106,582 i.e. 2nd Long Service Increment (after 10 years combined service has been completed).

The salary rates quoted are rates effective from 1/9/2008. Members who are promoted to ministerial positions are automatically reverted to the basic salary rate. A ministerial allowance paid on top of the Member's salary is paid from his/her assigned Department.

2009 and current position

Section 2 of the Oireachtas (Allowances to Members) and Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices Act 2009 provided that Long Service Increments would **not** be paid to those members of the Houses of the Oireachtas who would normally have qualified for an LSI on or after 13 May 2009.

Long Service Increments will not be paid to any member of the Houses of the Oireachtas after the next general election so all members will be paid the basic salary of €100,191. Similar provisions will apply to members of the European Parliament who, being eligible to do so, opt to continue to be paid the same salary as TDs.

Salary for all Members is taxed the same as all other PAYE workers.

2. Specified Positions

The following allowances paid for holding higher level positions or carrying extra roles are paid in addition to salary: scheduled positions in the Dáil and Séanad, Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Whips/Convenors, Rapporteurs and Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

2.1 Allowance Rates TDs

The Houses of the Oireachtas pays the following allowances to Deputies holding these posts

Ceann Comhairle	€125,005
Leas Ceann Comhairle	€ 54,549

The following allowances are paid by the respective Departments to the officeholders

Taoiseach	€185,392
Tánaiste	€145,134
Minister	€125,005
Minister of State	€ 54,549

Specified positions in Dáil Éireann (Annual Amounts)

Assistant Government Whip	€16,027
Opposition Whip	€20,023
Whip to Labour Party	€16,027
Whip to Progressive Democrats	€ 6,380
Whip to Green Party	€ 6,380
Whip to Sinn Fein Party	€ 6,380
Assistant Whip to Fine Gael	€10,241
Assistant whip to Labour Party	€ 6,380

Specified Positions on Oireachtas Committees (Annual Amounts); New Rates from 22nd July 2009

Chairperson to Oireachtas Committee	€10,016
Vice-Chairperson	€ 0
Chairperson to Sub-Committee	€ 0
Whips to Committees	€ 0
Houses Commission Member	€16,018

2.2 Allowance Rates Senators

The salary rates for Senators are as set out below and as with Deputies all Senators elected after the next elections LSI's will no longer apply and they will be paid the basic salary rate.

Basic:	€70,134
1st LSI:	€72,371
2nd LSI:	€74,608

The Houses of the Oireachtas pays the following allowances in addition to salary to Senators holding the posts below;

Cathaoirleach	€49,255
Leas-Chathaoirleach	€27,112
Leader of the Seanad	€21,525

Specified Positions in Seanad Éireann (Annual Amounts)

Deputy Leader of the House	€ 10,241
Opposition Leader	€ 10,241
Government Whip	€ 6,380
Assistant Government Whip	€ 4,452
Opposition Whip	€ 6,380
Leader of an independent Group	€ 6,380
Leader of the Labour Group	€ 6,380
Whip to an independent Group	€ 4,452
Whip to the Labour Group	€ 4,452

3. Travel and Overnight Allowances

Under Article 15.15 of the Constitution “*The Oireachtas may make provision by law for the payment of allowances to the Members of each House thereof in respect of their duties as public representatives and for the grant to them of free travelling and such*

other facilities (if any) in connection with those duties as the Oireachtas may determine”.

Since 1938 under the Oireachtas (Allowances to Members) Acts, Members of the Oireachtas may claim certain travel and overnight expenses within Ireland, subject to such conditions as the Minister for Finance may prescribe. Members submit a declaration that the travel has been undertaken. The overnight and daily allowance rates have remained unchanged since 2001.

Members who are resident within 24.135 kms [15 miles] of Leinster House receive a daily allowance, payable in connection with attendance at Dáil Éireann or Séanad Éireann. This daily allowance is currently **€55** [reduced from €61.53 on 24th August 2009].

Members who live more than 24.135 kilometres from Leinster House are entitled to either:

- A flat daily allowance, payable in connection with attendance at Dáil Éireann **or** Séanad Éireann ; or
- An overnight allowance and
- A mileage allowance.

The current overnight allowance is **€126** [reduced from €139.67 on 5th August 2009]. The Oireachtas (Allowances to Members) Acts allow payment of an overnight allowance as follows:

- Payment in respect of the preceding night while attending the Dáil, Séanad or Committee thereof.
- Overnight allowances on any day the Dáil, Séanad or Committee sits irrespective of adjournment time.
- Attendance of two or more Oireachtas Members at a meeting held in Leinster House to discuss parliamentary business to a maximum of five such meetings per annum.
- Attendance at Leinster House for the purposes of using its facilities, subject to a maximum of 25 overnights per year.

The current allowances are (inclusive rate per km is given): **Reduced from 5th March 2009**

Official kilometres per year	Rate per kilometre
Up to 6,437 km	€0.5907
6,437 + km in year	€0.2846

4 Constituency Travel Allowance [CTA]

A non-taxable annual expense allowance to compensate Deputies for travel they are obliged to make within the constituency by virtue of their position as public representatives i.e. between clinics on week-ends and during the evenings between constituency meetings. This annual allowance is paid monthly in arrears, together with the salary cheque. The rate of the allowance depends on the geographic size of constituency that the Member represents (see below).

A	B	C
€2,500¹	€5,000	€8,000
Cork North-Central	Clare	Carlow-Kilkenny
Cork South-Central	Cork East	Cavan-Monaghan
Dublin Central	Cork North-West	Cork South-West
Dublin Mid-West	Donegal North-East	Galway East
Dublin North	Donegal South-West	Kerry South
Dublin North-Central	Galway West	Laoighis-Offaly
Dublin North-East	Kerry North	Longford-Westmeath
Dublin North-West	Kildare North	Mayo
Dublin South	Kildare South	North Leitrim-Sligo
Dublin South-Central	Limerick East	Roscommon-South Leitrim
Dublin South-East	Limerick West	Tipperary South
Dublin South-West	Louth	Waterford
Dublin West	Meath East	Wexford
Dún Laoghaire	Meath West	
	Tipperary North	
	Westmeath	
	Wicklow	

4.1 Constituency Telephone Allowance

A constituency telephone allowance, up to a maximum of **€5,700** [reduced from €6,348.69] per annum is paid to all Dáil Members. Committee Chairpersons and Whips in Dáil Éireann are entitled to an additional **€1,100** [reduced from €1,269.74]. There is also an additional **€600** [reduced from €635] paid to the Chairman of PAC. The Telephone Allowance is paid quarterly in arrears (March, June, September and December). Senators are also paid a telephone allowance which is **€4,300** [reduced from €4,761.52] per annum. An additional telephone allowance is paid to the Cathaoirleach of the Seanad of **€1,100** [reduced from €1,269.74].

The allowance is not paid to Ministers' and Ministers of State's telephone where their telephone costs are met entirely from their Department's budget. Where these costs are not met by the Department a Minister may claim the allowance on certification from the Department that this is the case.

Costs incurred by Members over and above this allowance must be met by the individual Member. Mobile phone costs are not covered.

All telephone allowance changes are effective from 5th August 2009.

¹ rates with effect from 5th August 2009.

4.2 Members' Mobile Phones — Direct Purchase and Reimbursement Scheme

This scheme allows Members to purchase their mobile phone and car-kit directly from their local dealer. The mobile phone vendor is responsible for all technical support and advice. This allowance covers hardware only. Expenses arising from mobile phone calls are met from within their own resources.

Members are reimbursed the cost of the equipment by completing a claim form and submitting receipts. The reimbursement is on a fully vouched basis in respect of the equipment; (subject to the overall amount not exceeding €750 every eighteen months). Monies not claimed in a given 18 month period cannot be carried over to a subsequent period.

4.3 Constituency Office Grant [COG] [paid to TDs only]

As part of their role as a public representative Members often maintain offices to provide a point of public access for their constituents. Such offices have to meet basic health and safety and normal comfort requirements for visitors and staff working in them. Where a Member of Dáil Éireann incurs expenses in establishing and equipping such accommodation for his or her secretarial assistant elsewhere than in Leinster House, he or she may claim a once-off Constituency Office Establishment Grant of €8,000 per annum [reduced from €8,888.17 from 5th August 2009]. The allowance is a once-off and may not be claimed a second time. This allowance is payable on receipt of a signed Declaration Form and may be drawn down in stages.

4.4 Constituency Office Maintenance [COMA] [paid to TDs only]

To help Members maintain their public offices as set out above a Constituency Office Maintenance Allowance of €8,000 per annum [reduced from €8,888.17 from 5th August 2009] is paid bi-annually in arrears (January and July each year). The allowance covers expenditure such as:

- * rent, rates and other such charges, electricity and heating
- * cost of improvements carried out during the year
- * purchase of desks, chairs, filing cabinets
- * maintenance payments for photocopiers
- * annual insurance premium - fire and theft
- * public liability insurance for rented or leased property
- * general cleaning
- * office stationery and newspapers.

The maintenance allowance is paid on receipt of a signed claim form which is issued to Members bi-annually.

4.5 Special Secretarial Allowance

The Oireachtas (Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices) (Special Secretarial Allowance) Regulations 2005 provide that Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas are entitled to a special secretarial allowance (SSA) to meet the costs arising from the purchase of certain secretarial equipment and services in connection with their Parliamentary duties. The Special Secretarial Allowance for all TD's and Senators was introduced in 1998 under Section 16 of the Oireachtas (Allowance to Members) and Ministerial, Parliamentary, Judicial and Court Offices (Amendment) Act 1998. The Minister for Finance sets the rates of the allowance.

Improvements to the Special Secretarial Allowance scheme were introduced for Members in 2004 following the completion of the Deloitte and Touche International Benchmarking report. The rationale for the scheme, at that time, was to bring support staff numbers for Members into line with those applying in comparable parliaments. In summary, Deputies received one additional head of staff i.e. a Parliamentary Assistant giving them two staff and Senators received an additional 0.5 head of staff bringing them up to one full time head of staff. Alternatively, Members also had the option of drawing down, instead of extra staff, a combination of vouched and unvouched allowances. Where a Member opts for the vouched/unvouched allowance alternative as set out in the scheme details below. The vouched element is paid direct to the supplier of the service and not the Member. The unvouched element is paid direct to the Member. Ministers do not have the option of appointing a Parliamentary Assistant and must opt for the vouched/unvouched allowance. These improvements were introduced by the Minister for Finance under statutory instruments SI 688/2004 and SI 84/2005 following agreement on the guidelines for the scheme.

Processing Invoices under SSA

Payment is made on foot of receipts of original invoices accompanied by a claim form signed by the Deputy certifying that the claim is in respect of expenditure wholly and exclusively incurred for the purposes of facilitating their parliamentary duties in accordance with section 2(2A) of the Oireachtas (Allowances to Members) Act 1962. The invoices are further checked to ensure that the expenditure in question is not already provided for under another statutory scheme

What can the special secretarial allowance be used for?

The Special Secretarial Allowance can be used for the following purposes:

1. the purchase of secretarial equipment (other than equipment already provided by the Office under other Regulations),
2. the purchase of secretarial services under a **contract for services** (e.g. a specific project such as research or web design done by a contractor) and
3. the employment of temporary fixed-term employees carrying out secretarial services (i.e. a **contract of service**)

Examples under 1) and 2) above may include;

Advertising Constituency Clinics (advertising Clinic and not Party)

Web Design/Maintenance/Hosting/Registration

Leaflet Printing

Leaflet Distribution

Newsletters

Secretarial Services

Research Work
 Speech Writing
 Preparation of Press Release
 Database Work
 Christmas Cards (advertising Clinic and not Party)
 Office Equipment - Photocopier/Fax etc (not supplied by the Houses)
 Office Furniture (not supplied by the Houses)
 Consultancy

What it may not be used for

The allowance is not payable in respect of –

- expenses relating to accommodation,
- transport, travel or subsistence expenses,
- gifts, donations or entertainment,
- electoral expenses,
- postal or telephone facilities, or
- any particular items of expenditure for which the member has already been fully reimbursed pursuant to a statutory scheme.

The options available to Members of Dáil Éireann are set out below.

	DEPUTIES		SENATORS		MINISTERS/MINISTERS OF STATE
A	Additional staff member	A	Additional 50% allocation of staff		
B	Pooled staff member	B	General purpose vouched parliamentary allowance of [€20,546]		
C	General purpose vouched parliamentary allowance [€41,092]	C	Addition 25% staff allowance and an un-vouched special secretarial allowance of €6,666 per annum	A	General purpose vouched parliamentary allowance [€41,092]
D	Reduced vouched general purpose parliamentary allowance [€11,591] and an un-vouched special secretarial allowance of €8,888 per annum			B	Reduced vouched general purpose parliamentary allowance [€11,591] and an un-vouched special secretarial allowance of €8,888 per annum

4.6 Miscellaneous Expense Allowance [MEA]

This annual allowance contributes towards the cost of miscellaneous expenses. It is designed to cover casual expenses such as, for example, refreshments during meetings with constituents or the rent of casual accommodation for holding clinics. It is paid monthly in arrears, together with the salary cheque. The current annual allowance for TDs is **€5,000** [reduced from €5,482.73 on 5th August 2009].

Senators receive an annual Miscellaneous Expense Allowance of **€3,750** [reduced from €4,112.68].

Any expenditure incurred over and above the allocated miscellaneous expense allowance rates must be met by the Member individually. This relates to all allowances.

Scheme of allowances

Allowance	Paid to	Method of claim	Taxed
Salary	All Members	Paid automatically	Yes
Allowance posts 1. Committee chairmen 2. Commission members No payment is made for Vice –Chairs or committee whips ²	Members holding the posts	Paid in salary	Yes
Travel and subsistence	Members who are not Ministers	Signed declaration forms required	No
CTA	Members who are not Ministers and do not have a state car	Paid automatically in salary unvouched	No
Telephone allowance	Members who are not Ministers	Signed declaration forms required	No
Mobile phone	All Members who claim		No
COG	Deputies who claim	Signed declaration forms required	No
COMA	Deputies who claim	Signed declaration forms required	No
SSA	Suppliers not Member	Vouchers from suppliers furnished in claim by Members	No
MEA	Members who are not Ministers	Paid automatically in salary unvouched	No

5. Foreign travel

Members may be required to undertake foreign travel for a number of reasons. Ireland is a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the British-Irish Parliamentary Association [BIPA] and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Membership of these bodies requires Ireland to send delegations abroad and to receive delegations into Ireland.

² Commission member allowances were reduced; Committee chairperson allowances were halved and committee vice chair, whips and chairperson of sub-committee allowances were abolished on 22 July 2009

Oireachtas Committees also travel abroad for a variety of reasons, for example, the hosting of open forums in Ireland for debates on the Lisbon Treaty or to see how particular systems work in other countries to help the Committee to formulate its own recommendations for changes they would wish to be made to systems here in Ireland.

IPU arrangements

Ireland has been a member of the Inter Parliamentary Union since 1928 i.e. over 80 years. This is the key international cooperation forum between parliaments of the world. It has 153 member states and a further 8 with observer status. Bilateral visits (i.e. involving two countries and of which there are approximately two inwards and outwards each year) and annual multilateral meetings, represent key opportunities for cementing bonds between parliaments and countries.

- During a bilateral visit to any foreign parliament the arrangements are made by the host country.
- Arising from most visits, the total cost may be invoiced to the head of delegation rather than being apportioned per head.
- other than during bilateral visits transport arrangements are in the main organised by the Department. of Foreign Affairs offices in the country being visited.

Committee Travel

Travel (home/foreign) is a feature of the work of Oireachtas Committees. Travel is usually undertaken to attend conferences or to participate in fact finding missions with a view to recommending policy changes in relation to specific items of work on a Committee's Work Programme. The proposed travel must be directly and explicitly linked to an area of work of the committee. Committees have a formal power to travel abroad as part of their terms of reference approved by both Houses. However, a committee must remain within its budget and within the guidelines set out by the Working Group of Committee Chairmen and the agreed travel policy. The overall travel budget for committees is approved by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission. The Committee travel budget was reduced by the commission from €695k to €254k in 2009.

BIPA arrangements

The British-Irish Parliamentary Association was formally established in 1990 as a link between the Parliaments of the United Kingdom and Ireland and consisted of 25 Irish and 25 British parliamentarians from the Upper and Lower Houses of both Parliaments. With effect from 1 February 2001, the membership of the body increased by 18 to include 5 parliamentarians from each of the Assemblies of Northern Ireland and Wales and the Parliaments of Scotland as well as one parliamentarian from each of the Assemblies of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man.

A Steering Committee of 9 members is made up of 2 Co-Chairmen and 2 members from the British and Irish Parliaments as well as 3 members from the remaining Parliaments and Assemblies. The Body has 4 operational committees. Committee A deals specifically with sovereign matters and is made up of 6 members from each of the British and Irish Parliaments. The remaining committees are made up of 16 members drawn proportionately from each representative group and deal with the subjects of European Affairs, Economic

Affairs and Environmental and Social Affairs. Committee reports are presented to the Plenary Sessions of the Body, 2 of which are held each year alternately in the 2 jurisdictions.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which is based in Strasbourg, can be considered the oldest international parliamentary assembly with a pluralistic composition of democratically elected members of parliament. The Council of Europe started with ten member states, which included Ireland and held its first session on 10 August 1949. The Assembly is one of the two statutory organs of the Council of Europe, which also includes a Committee of Ministers (Ministers for Foreign Affairs), usually meeting at the level of their deputies or Ambassadors. It now has 46 member states. The statutory aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity among its members through debates, agreements and common action.

- The Irish parliamentary delegation to the Assembly numbers 8 (4 full members and 4 substitute members).
- Delegates (representatives and substitutes) attend at plenary sessions of the Assembly 4 times a year in Strasbourg and at meetings of the various committees of the Assembly throughout the year. The delegation may be appointed for the duration of a Dáil, or on an annual basis and the credentials of the delegation must be ratified by the Assembly at the opening plenary session each January. The Government Chief Whip appoints the Leader of the Delegation. Membership of the delegation is based on party strengths within the Houses.
- The Assembly adopted Resolution 1348, on gender-balanced representation in the Parliamentary Assembly, in September 2003. Accordingly, national parliament's must ensure that women are included in their delegations to the PACE in at least the same percentage as is present in the national parliament with the aim of including, as a minimum, at least a 30% representation of women.
- It is important to note that Members cannot be replaced mid-term except in circumstances of a General Election or the death of a Member, as laid down in the rules of procedure of the Assembly.
- Full members and substitute members of the delegation are also members of the Assembly's eight Committees which meet during the plenary sessions of the Assembly and also about 6 to 7 times a year in various member state countries. Ireland has one seat on each of the eight committees.

Western European Union Assembly

Following the transfer of the WEU's operational activities to the EU in 2000, the Assembly provides a forum for debate on European Security and Defence Policy and continues to scrutinise intergovernmental cooperation in the field of armaments and armaments research and development carried out within the forums of the Western European Armaments Group and the Western European Armaments Organisation. Ireland became an observer at the PAWEU in the mid 1990's.

The parliamentary delegation to the Assembly numbers 4 (2 observers and 2 substitute observers). **Members observe at the plenary sessions twice a year in Paris and at meetings of the various committees of the Assembly,** throughout the year.

October, 2009