Members’ Allowances

Wandsworth Council has a scheme for the payment of a range of allowances. The Scheme is based on the recommendations of an independent panel and is made under the Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) Regulations 2003.

The allowances are designed to provide some compensation to Members for the heavy workload and incidental expenses associated with the role of a local authority councillor. The Regulations specify the type of activity for which an allowance may be paid; party political activities are specifically excluded.

You may at any time give notice in writing to the Chief Executive that you wish to renounce any part of your entitlement to allowances paid under the Scheme. Such a renunciation can subsequently be withdrawn or amended. However, a withdrawal or amendment cannot have retrospective effect.

**A basic allowance** is paid to you automatically each month, unless you choose not to receive it. The current basic allowance is £10,597 per year. It is intended to recognise the time devoted by you to casework and meetings with constituents and to cover incidental costs, such as the use of your home, Broadband/WiFi and telephone.

The Scheme allows for the payment of a **Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)** to certain office holders in recognition of the heavy additional workload they carry. Again, this allowance is paid automatically each month. A list of the roles which attract a special responsibility allowance and the rates payable is included as part of the Scheme.

**Travelling expenses** may be claimed for official Council duties outside the Borough. There is provision within the Scheme to refund certain travel costs of Councillors with mobility-related disabilities.

You may claim an allowance if you have to arrange **for the care of children or certain other dependants while you are attending formal meetings** (i.e. Council and committee meetings). The maximum rate payable is currently £9.26 per hour. The allowance is claimable in respect of children aged 15 or under or in respect of other dependants where there is medical or social work evidence that care is required. The allowance can only be paid as reimbursement of incurred expenditure against receipts.

Allowances are paid direct to your nominated bank account on the 15th of each month and are taxable. For tax purposes, Members are treated in the same way as any other individual who holds an office or is an employee. Income Tax will automatically be deducted under P.A.Y.E. The amount of tax deducted depends on the code number issued by your own tax office. **It is your responsibility to declare income from allowances.**
Most allowances are also liable for National Insurance contributions unless you are above the state pension age. If this is the case, you must provide proof of age. If you have another employment, you may be able to defer payment of National Insurance contributions. Information on how to do this is available via the gov.uk website.

If you are claiming any kind of benefit or are retired, you may find that being paid allowances will affect your entitlement to benefits. The exact way your entitlement may be changed depends on the particular benefit being received. In general, the amount of earnings taken into account when calculating benefit is the full amount of all allowances you are entitled to receive, irrespective of whether or not you choose to receive it (see above).

All allowances are treated as earnings from employment when calculating entitlement to benefits.

If you are claiming benefits, including Housing and/or Council Tax Benefit, you must declare to the administering body [which in the case of Housing and/or Council Tax Benefit will be this Council, or if you live outside of the borough the relevant local authority for the area] the receipt or entitlement to allowances. Do not wait until an allowance is actually received. To avoid confusion, you should make it clear that you are referring to allowances paid for Council duties and that you are a Member of a local authority.

Regulations require records to be maintained of each payment made to each member and for those records to be available for inspection by local government electors in borough. The Council is required to publicise these inspection rights at various times during the year. The local press have traditionally been interested in Members’ Allowances. A summary of the allowances paid is reported each year. Payments are regularly audited.