



DORSET FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2015/16

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1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The payment of allowances to elected members of local authorities is governed by the Local Government (Members' Allowances England) Regulations 2003 ("the Regulations").
- 1.2 Following consideration of recommendations made by the local independent remuneration panels of the three constituent authorities, Dorset Fire Authority ("the DFA") at their meeting on 30 September 2003 approved the making of a Members' Allowances Scheme, which came into effect on 31 December 2003.
- 1.3 Combination with the Wiltshire Fire Authority will take effect from 1 April 2016. It will be necessary for any new combined Fire Authority to agree a new scheme.
- 1.4 This revised scheme is for the financial year 2015/16.

2. ENTITLEMENT TO ALLOWANCES

2.1 This scheme provides for the payment of:-

- ◆ a basic flat rate allowance, payable to each elected member;
- ◆ special responsibility allowances, payable to specified office holders with additional significant responsibilities;
- ◆ a co-optees' allowance;
- ◆ travel allowances for duties undertaken within the county;
- ◆ a dependent carers' allowance
- ◆ travel and subsistence allowances for duties undertaken outside the county.

3. BASIC ALLOWANCE

- 3.1 The basic allowance (£3,550) is payable in equal monthly instalments. It is intended to recognise the time devoted by members to carry out their work as members of the DFA, including preparation for and attendance at meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as in-county subsistence and use of members' homes and private telephones.
- 3.2 Where a member is suspended or partially suspended for his/her duties as a member of the DFA in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000, or regulations made under that part, the part of Basic Allowance payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld.

4. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES (SRAs)

(NOTE: No member may receive more than one SRA)

4.1 SRAs are payable in addition to the basic allowance and are also paid in equal monthly instalments.

4.2 The Authority has authorised the payment of SRAs as follows:-

Chairman of the Authority (Basic Allowance x 2)	£7,100
Vice-Chairman of the Authority (Basic Allowance x 1)	£3,550
Chairman of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee (Basic Allowance x 1)	£3,550
Members of the Combination Oversight Board (Basic Allowance x 0.5)	£1,775
Leader of the Second Largest Group (Basic Allowance x 0.3)	£1,065

4.3 Where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his/her duties as a member of the DFA in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000, or regulations made under that part, the part of SRA payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld.

5. CO-OPTEEES' ALLOWANCE

5.1 Where such a member is suspended or partially suspended from his/her duties as a member of the Authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000, or regulations made under that part, the part of co-optees' allowance payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld.

6. TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

6.1 Members may claim a single rate travelling allowance of 45p per mile for undertaking approved duties within the county and travelling and subsistence allowances for undertaking approved duties outside the county. (In future the rate will be adjusted automatically in line with the HMRC approved minimum.)

6.2 The rates for travelling and subsistence allowances are set out on the reverse of the members' claim forms, a copy of which is attached.

6.3 Travelling allowance (and subsistence allowances for out of county duties) is claimable for the following duties:-

- a) attendance at meetings of the DFA, and of those committees, sub-committees, panels and working groups of which the claimant is a member, or has a right to attend, under the Authority's Standing Orders;
- b) attendance at meetings of the DFA if not a member, but if expressly invited to attend by the Clerk;
- c) duties undertaken by members appointed by the DFA to serve on outside bodies;

- d) attendance at conferences, seminars and training events authorised by the Authority;
 - e) attendance at briefing meetings and other events for members convened by the Chief Fire Officer, or the Clerk;
 - f) exhibitions, official openings and visits to premises, or similar events, to which members have been invited by the Chief Fire Officer or Clerk;
 - g) attendance at consultation meetings with the public or other organisations arranged by the Chief Fire Officer or Clerk.
- 6.4 a) Travelling allowances may not be claimed for political group meetings.
- b) Travelling allowances may not be claimed for meetings to which members of only one political group have been invited.
- 6.5 If any member is in any doubt about a particular duty please check with Helen Whitby, Principal Democratic Services Officer at County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester on 01305 224187 or h.m.whitby@dorsetcc.gov.uk.
- 6.6 Members who claim subsistence allowances for out of county duties are required to certify that the amounts claimed (up to the permitted maximum) have actually been incurred. A declaration to this effect is included on the reverse of the claim form.
- 6.7 Where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his/her duties as a member of the DFA in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000, or regulations made under that part, the part of travelling and subsistence allowance payable to him/her in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended shall be withheld.

7. DEPENDENT CARERS' ALLOWANCE

- 7.1 A dependent carers' allowance of up to £7.50* per hour, i.e. actual expenditure incurred up to a maximum of £7.50* per hour, will be paid for care of dependants, whether children, elderly people or people with disabilities, while a member is on DFA business where travelling allowances are payable. The allowance will not be payable to a member of the claimant's own household. Members who claim a carer's allowance are required to certify that the amounts claimed (up to the permitted maximum) have actually been incurred by signing the declaration on the reverse of the claim form.

*Note: (a) The dependent carers' allowance is set at 110% of the minimum wage rounded to the nearest 50p.

(b) The national minimal wage is normally increased from 1 October each year and the dependent carers' allowance will therefore increase from that date.

8. SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS

- 8.1 Claims for allowances should be made on the claim form, supplies of which will be provided to members of the Authority. The current rates are set out on the reverse of the claim form.
- 8.2 Claims should be made on a monthly basis and submitted to Helen Whitby, Principal Democratic Services Officer, Dorset County Council. The declaration on the reverse of the claim form must be completed.

9. FORGOING ALLOWANCES

- 9.1 Members may, if they wish, forgo all or any part of their entitlement to basic allowance or special responsibility allowance by giving notice in writing to the Clerk.

10. TAXATION OF ALLOWANCES AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

- 10.1 Basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, co-optees' allowance and carers' allowance are subject to the normal PAYE and National Insurance regulations.
- 10.2 Tax will normally be deducted at the basic rate (currently 20%), unless other instructions are received from HM Inspector of Taxes. All DFA PAYE arrangements are dealt with by HM Revenue & Customs, Pay As You Earn, P O Box 4000, Cardiff, CF14 8HR (Telephone. 0300 200 3300), under the reference 503 B2163. Their website is www.hmrc.gov.uk. With effect from 1 April 2015 National Insurance contributions are only due when allowances exceed £672 per month.
- 10.3 National Insurance contributions are not due from any person over state pensionable age, for whom a "nil liability" card must be obtained from the Contribution Agency and sent to the Treasurer of the DFA.
- 10.4 In order to avoid over-payment of income tax and National Insurance contributions, claims for payment of allowances should be submitted at the end of each month.

11. COMMENCEMENT

- 11.1 This scheme shall have effect from 1 April 2015.

12. ENQUIRIES

- 12.1 Please contact the following officers if you have any queries about this scheme:-

General Enquiries and Entitlement to Allowances

Helen Whitby, Principal Democratic Services Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Dorset County Council, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester telephone (01305) 224187 or e-mail h.m.whitby@dorsetcc.gov.uk.

Taxation and Social Security

Mark Stone, Payroll Officer, Corporate Resources Directorate, Dorset County Council, telephone (01305) 224035 or email m.w.stone@dorsetcc.gov.uk.