

MEETING	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE	17 NOVEMBER 2020
SUBJECT	REMUNERATION FOR ELECTED MEMBERS
PURPOSE	To seek the observations of the Committee in order to respond to the (draft) Annual Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for 2021/22.
RECOMMENDATION	Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider any responses they wish to submit as a response to the consultation on financial remuneration • Consider how to promote the process of care reimbursement claims and respond to the requirements of the care principles noted in Appendix 1.
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BACKGROUND

1. The annual report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (February 2021) was published in draft form on 28 September 2020. A summary of the report is submitted to the Democratic Services Committee in order to receive the observations of the members, which will form a response to the draft consultation by the Panel. There is a need to respond to the consultation by 23 November 2020. A link to the full report can be viewed via the link below.

[Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report - February 2021](#)

2. MAIN MATTERS

- 2.1 The main points that derive from the report are as follows:

The basic salary in 2021/22 for elected members of principal councils will be £14,368 and it will be operational from 1 April 2021 (an increase of £150 from the 2020/21 basic salary of £14,218).

- 2.2 The Panel has noted the below considerations (amongst others) when coming to the conclusion on the increase:

- 2.3 To put this into the context of other Welsh elected members, between 2013 and 2020, the basic salary for elected Members in a Local Government increased by 7.9% (£13,175 to £14,218), whilst the salary of a Senedd Cymru Member increased by 31.1% (£53,852 to £70,625), and the salary of a UK Parliament Member increased by 23.4% (£66,396 to £81,932).

- 2.4 Therefore, the salaries of the back bench members have significantly fallen behind any reasonable measure of inflation.
- 2.5 When elected roles are undertaken, a level of personal commitment is expected towards the community which goes beyond the defined hours for which financial remuneration is given.
- 2.6 The duties delivered should enable all members to complete their core non-operational responsibilities to govern their council and to represent the people living in their ward.
- 2.7 The situation expressed overall by councillors and officers is that the basic work load delivered by every elected member is substantial and is more than three days a week".
- 2.8 It is also noted that the Panel, like every other year, clearly notes that the salary will be paid by every principal authority in Wales from 1 April 2021 to all of its elected members unless any individual member will personally, and in writing, opt to receive a lower sum.
- 2.11 **The levels of higher salaries in 2021/22 for elected members of principal councils are noted below, and they will be operational from 1 April 2021**

Roles in Gwynedd	2021/22	2020/21
Leader	£49,974	£49,450
Deputy Leader	£35,320	£34,950
Executive members	£30,773	£30,450
Committee Chairs (who receive financial remuneration)	£23,161	£22,918
The Leader of the largest Opposition party	£23,161	£22,918

- 2.12 The Panel has noted that higher salaries will increase at the same rate (1.06%) as basic salaries.
- 2.13 Additionally, it is noted that Executive members work hours equating to full-time of around 40 hours a week, although it is acknowledged that this may not necessarily be 9 to 5.
- 2.14 **The salary for the Head of the Civic Department is £23,161 and the deputy head of the Civic Department has been set on £18,108 and is operational from 1 April 2021.**
- 2.15 The above increase will also increase at the same rate (1.06%) as basic salaries.

3. THE REIMBURSEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS NECESSARY CARE COSTS

3.1 All relevant authorities must provide for the reimbursement of necessary contributions for the necessary care of dependent children and adults (provided by informal or formal carers) and for personal assistance needs as follows:

- **Reimbursement of formal care costs (registered with Care Inspectorate Wales) in full.**
- **Reimbursement of informal care costs (unregistered) up to the highest rate equal to the Real Living Wage at the time the costs were incurred.**

3.2 The panel notes that the number of people who claim a reimbursement for personal costs or care costs remain very low, and the Democratic Services Committee is encouraged to promote the provision.

3.3 Furthermore, additional expectations have been placed on local authorities, under the guidance of the Democratic Services Committee, in the context of promoting care reimbursements, see Table 7 in Appendix 1.

3.4 The guidance of the Democratic Services Committee is sought with regard to the relevant actions.

4 RECOMMENDATION

Members of the Committee are asked to:

- Consider any specific observations in response to the consultation
- Consider how to promote the process of making care reimbursement claims.

APPENDIX 1

Table 7

The principles of the Panel in terms of personal care and support and advice on how to do this.

The minimum the Authorities should do		How to do this	Gwynedd actions
1. Clearly note who the care is for	<p>Members who have the main responsibility for caring for a child or adult and/or who have personal support needs where these are not supported under a statutory provision or any other provision.</p> <p>For personal support. This may also include a short-term condition or a recent condition not relevant to the Equality Act 2010, access to work, Personal Payments, insurance or other provision.</p>	<p>A confidential annual review of the needs of individual members and when circumstances change.</p>	<p><i>Consider sending another reminder (see 2 below) in the form of an e-mail, to include offering every member a confidential review of their needs with the Head of Democratic Services.</i></p>
2. Improve awareness	<p>Ensure that prospective applicants, applicants and current members, are aware that a Reimbursement of Care Costs is available to them if their current or future circumstances require that.</p>	<p>Ensure that clear and easily accessible information is available on the website and in materials relating to elections and appointment, in shadowing sessions and in the welcome sessions, and in the members' handbook.</p> <p>Remind current members via e-mail and/or training. Refer to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales leaflets on Payments to Councillors.</p>	<p>Information on the website explains that a reimbursement of care costs is available to members - through the 'Payments to Councillors' IRPW form.</p> <p>An annual e-mail to all members to inform them of the salary change in April and to raise their awareness of the element with regards to the reimbursement of care costs (see</p>

The minimum the Authorities should do		How to do this	Gwynedd actions
			the above April 2021 improvement action).
3. Promoting a positive culture	Ensure that all members understand the reason for the Reimbursement of Care Costs and support and encourage others to claim if required.	Encouragement within and across all parties in the Relevant Authorities to support members to claim. Agree not to publicise or announce any individual decisions not to claim.	<p>The awareness of the political Leaders has been raised, and they have been asked to raise their members' awareness (March 2020 Business Group meeting)</p> <p>The decision of the Democratic Services Committee not to publicise the names of those who claim.</p>
4. Outline the duties approved for the reimbursement of care costs	Meetings - formal (the meetings that the Authority calls) and those that are necessary to the work of the members (to deal with matters of the electorate but not the party matters) and personal development (training and evaluations). Travel - in relation to attending meetings. Preparation - reading and administration is part of the member's role. For some meetings and committees, there is need to do a great deal of reading, analysis or drafting work before or after the meeting.	The approved duties are usually a matter of fact. An interpretation of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Regulations is noted in the Annual Report. "Any other duties approved by the authority, or any duty from an approved class, and undertaken for the purposes of delivering the authority functions or any of its committees or in relation with their delivery."	The guidance may be adapted for travelling costs expenses claims and for maintenance costs expenses claims to strengthen this element of claiming the reimbursement of care/personal care costs in the self-service system.

The minimum the Authorities should do		How to do this	Gwynedd actions
	<p>The members with higher salaries, and additional duties, may have higher costs.</p>		
<p>5. Be as flexible as possible in terms of the various types of support that may be claimed</p>	<p>Members should not lose out subject to the limit set in the Annual Report. Care models and needs vary. Members may use a combination of a number of care options. Care patterns may vary over the civic and academic year. All care is not based on hourly rates (or part of an hour) If a whole session must be paid for, the full cost must be reimbursed even if only part of the session was needed. Members may need to do the following: order and pay for sessions in advance commit to a block contract: week, month or term pay for sessions that were cancelled at the last minute. If the need for care is carried forward to the second session, the cost of both sessions should be reimbursed.</p>		
<p>6. Hold a simple and effective claims process</p>	<p>The members should know how to claim. The claim process should be clear, commensurate and auditable.</p>	<p>Ensure that members understand how to claim and that it is easy to do so Flexibility to receive paperless invoices On-line form</p>	<p>We use the same system as the system to claim travelling and sustenance expenses used by members.</p>

The minimum the Authorities should do		How to do this	Gwynedd actions
		The same form or a similar form to the one used for travelling expenses claims	There is room to improve the arrangements and clarity to members on how to claim. Work to be undertaken by the Democratic and Language Manager and the Support Services Manager.
7. Comply with the rules of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in terms of publicising	The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Framework notes: "In relation to publishing care costs reimbursements, the Panel has decided that the relevant authority should only give the total reimbursed during the year. It will be a matter for each authority to decide on its response to any Freedom of Information requests that it receives. However, there is no intention to reveal the details of any individual claims."		Gwynedd Council has acted on this matter since the option became optional. The Council was progressive in pushing this element in order to promote the reimbursements in their discussions with the Panel.