

# Accommodation and Travel Support for Parliamentarians

December 2023

This paper considers how legislatures across the UK and internationally provide accommodation and travel support for members.

This paper forms part of the evidence base for the Independent Remuneration Board's review of Member's Remuneration and Personal Support. Workstream Two of this review focuses on the Residential Accommodation Expenditure Allowance and travel provisions set out in Chapters Four and Five of the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances.

The role of parliamentarian is unique in that it often requires members to spend part of their week away from their main home. As such many legislatures make provision for members to claim the costs of accommodation close to the parliament itself. Travel costs for members are also commonly covered, for journeys to parliament and within constituencies.

This paper provides an insight into how these provisions are designed and operate. Direct comparison of the monetary value of such support is challenging, as each parliament will be making decisions related to the economic context in which they operate. This comparison however, can support discussions about the model of support that Members of the Senedd may require in the Seventh Senedd and the principles on which such support should be designed and reviewed.

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# 1. Executive Summary

The role of a parliamentarian is unique in that it often requires members to spend part of their week away from their main home. As such many legislatures make provision for members to claim the costs of accommodation close to the parliament itself. Travel costs for members are also commonly covered, for journeys to parliament and within constituencies.

This paper provides an insight into how these provisions are designed and operate across a number of UK and international legislatures. Direct comparison of the monetary value of such support is challenging, as each parliament will be making decisions related to the economic context in which they operate. Comparison however, can support discussions about the model of support that Members of the Senedd may require in the Seventh Senedd and the principles on which such support should be designed and reviewed.

A number of legislatures have been reviewed for this paper including the four UK legislatures, New Zealand, Victoria (Australia), Ireland, Canada, Norway, Denmark and Sweden. Based on information available online, it is clear that systems for the reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs incurred by parliamentarians are complex.

Of the examples reviewed for this paper, accommodation and travel allowances are often provided for in legislation, with relevant remuneration bodies making decisions about the levels that such allowances are set at, any criteria for claiming reimbursement and how the system will operate.

There do not appear to be any significant differences between single member and multi-member constituency electoral systems. Each parliament reviewed has a system in place with its own unique elements, centred around a general consensus that members should be reimbursed for reasonable accommodation and travel costs incurred as a result of fulfilling their parliamentary duties, including being able to stay overnight near to parliament if they normally live beyond a commutable distance.

Some parliaments combine different elements of travel and accommodation into a single allowance, while others have a multitude of allowances covering accommodation while attending parliament, accommodation in constituencies or other domestic locations, domestic travel and international travel and accommodation.

There are some common features across the example parliaments covered in this paper:

- Provisions for accommodation when attending parliament, either through allowances or properties owned by the parliament. This often has options for members to either lease a property (continuous accommodation) or stay in hotels (commercial accommodation).
- Eligibility for support for accommodation when attending parliament being linked to the distance of a member's primary residence or constituency from parliament.
- Reimbursement of some associated costs for members who rent a property to attend parliament; although what is included differs quite significantly. Most parliaments reimburse utility, phone and broadband costs.
- Some provision for spouses/ partners and dependants to travel to visit members at their secondary residence.
- The rate of any accommodation allowance being indexed using the rental market in a central area to parliament.
- A requirement that any travel and overnight stays claimed must be in relation to members fulfilling their parliamentary functions.
- Additional travel and accommodation provisions for office holders, including ministers, speakers and leaders of opposition parties.
- Prior approval being required for any international travel, but not always from parliamentary services. In New Zealand, approval is required from a relevant office holder within the member's party.
- Provision of a free rail pass to members

There are also a number of less common features that are noteworthy:

- Nordic nations seem unique in that they have apartments owned by parliament that eligible members are provided with for the duration of their term in office.
- A small number of parliaments reviewed provide members with the option of designating a home in their constituency as their second home in place of a home near to parliament, the costs of which can be reimbursed.
- Denmark's system has a particular focus on public transport usage. Consideration of public transport informs allocation of parliament-owned housing and what travel costs can be reimbursed.
- Some of the systems reviewed take the geographical size of constituencies into account when setting allowance levels for travel costs. Members with larger constituencies are entitled to a larger allowance in these cases, to enable them to travel around their constituency. These systems also allow members to claim costs for overnight

accommodation in their constituency if it's deemed reasonable, which is often linked to being over a particular distance from their home.

- There are very different approaches to support for those with caring responsibilities or who are disabled. From the available information it is not always clear what such additional support is provided, beyond provisions for spouses/ partners to claim some limited travel and accommodation costs. Some systems note that anyone with additional needs can discuss this on a one-to-one basis. Some of the Nordic examples consider caring responsibilities and health issues when determining the allocation of parliament-owned property.
- A small number of the examples included take attendance at parliament into consideration, with a penalty to those who do not attend for a defined number of days per year.
- New Zealand makes specific provision for uprated allowances in certain circumstances, including large events and unavoidable late bookings, which can impact on hotel rates.

## 2. Introduction

The Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd (the Board) makes independent decisions on the pay and direct support for Members of the Senedd. The Board makes decisions on the basis of three guiding principles:

1. Our decisions should be appropriate within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances of Wales.
2. Our decisions should support the strategic purpose of the Senedd and facilitate the work of its Members.
3. Our decisions should be robust, clear, transparent, sustainable, inclusive and represent value for the taxpayer.

Ahead of each new Senedd term, the Board makes a new Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances. This Determination sets out the system of financial support and remuneration for Members. Each year an annual review considers whether any changes are needed to any allowances, with the exception of Members' Salaries (unless there are exceptional circumstances).

### **Thematic Reviews**

The Board are currently undertaking a programme of thematic reviews, which look in more detail at elements of the Determination. This work is particularly important in the context of proposed Senedd reform, which could significantly change the size and make-up of the Seventh Senedd.

There are five reviews:

- Simplification
- Ways of Working
- Staffing Support
- Support for Political Parties' Allowance (PPSA)
- Members Remuneration and Personal Support

The Review of Members' Remuneration and Personal Support covers a large proportion of the Determination with discrete areas of focus, it has therefore been split into three distinct workstreams:

- Workstream One: Members' Pay and Conditions
- Workstream Two: Residential Accommodation Expenditure and Travel
- Workstream Three: Members Leaving Office

This paper focuses on Workstream Two, and brings together information on accommodation and travel support provided to members across a number of different parliaments. The paper considers a number of distinct types of support:

- Financial support for accommodation when attending parliament
- Financial support for accommodation for other parliamentary purposes
- Financial support for travel to parliament and for other parliamentary purposes



## 3. Residential Accommodation Expenditure Allowance and Travel – Senedd

Chapter Four of the Determination on Member's Pay and Allowances provides for "reimbursing Members for expenses which they necessarily incur in connection with the performance of their Member's duties, including staying overnight away from their main homes."

### Overnight stays in Cardiff

Depending where their main home is located, Members are eligible for a Residential Accommodation Expenditure Allowance (RAE) to enable them to stay overnight in the Cardiff area.

- **Inner area** is the area within the boundaries of the South Wales West, South Wales Central and South Wales East electoral regions, with exception of those included in the intermediate area.
- The **Intermediate area** is the constituencies of Gower, Neath, Swansea East and Swansea West.
- **Outer area** is the area within the boundaries of the Mid and West and North Wales electoral regions.

Members whose main home is located in the inner area are not routinely eligible for RAE, but may in exceptional circumstances apply to the Members Business Support team (MBS) for reimbursement of the cost of hotel stays in the Cardiff area.

Members whose main home is located in the intermediate area may claim a maximum of £7,920<sup>1</sup> for overnight accommodation in the Cardiff area each year. The maximum that can be claimed per night is set for all hotel accommodation at £110. Alternatively, Members may use the allowance towards the costs of a rental property and/or bills in the Cardiff area.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures are based on the 2023-24 Determination on Member's Pay and Allowances

For Members whose main home is located in the outer area, there are a number of options available.

- Option A: Renting a furnished property

Members must rent a property in the Cardiff area<sup>2</sup> and can claim up to £11,760 towards rent (including any management charge or ground rent; based on £980 per month)

Members may also claim a number of 'associated costs' such as council tax, utility bills, broadband, TV license, insurance and any enhanced security measures.

Members who can "demonstrate having caring responsibilities for a dependent who is normally resident with them in the Cardiff area may in addition claim up to £1,735 a year to cover the higher cost of suitable accommodation.

- Option B: Expenses in relation to a home provided at the Member's own expense

Members may claim the associated costs as under Option A.

- Option C: Expenses in relation to other overnight accommodation

With prior written approval from MBS, Members may instead claim hotel costs. The maximum that can be claimed for the year is the same as under Option A, and the nightly cap is applied as with any other hotel stay.

- Option D: Transitional

Sets out provisions for Members who were Members immediately before the dissolution of the Third Assembly and have not ceased to be Members since. This enables eligible Members to claim costs against rent or mortgage interest.

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<sup>2</sup> Cardiff area means any point within a five mile radius centred on the Senedd/ Tŷ Hywel

## Overnight stays outside Cardiff

Members may claim the costs of an overnight stay in relation to the performance of their duties when it is necessary for them to stay somewhere other than their main home or Cardiff accommodation.

The maximum nightly amount is capped at £174 for London and £110 elsewhere. Members may separately claim the cost of an evening meal and parking.

For an overnight stay outside the UK, prior written approval is required from MBS.

Any accommodation related to Committee business is not covered by the Determination.

## Travel

Provisions for Members' travel are set out in Chapter Five of the Determination. Three types of travel are dealt with:

1. Travel within Wales
2. Travel elsewhere in the UK but outside Wales
3. Travel outside of the UK

For all travel, Members are expected to travel by the most cost effective means, taking into account the actual cost of the travel and cost of any overnight stay expenses. Members are also expected to have regard to the Senedd's Environmental Management System, which aims to encourage the use of public transport, bicycles or communal transport.

### Travel within Wales

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Members may claim for travel between their main home, the Senedd and constituency or regional offices and when travelling to enable the performance of the Member's duties by any reasonable route.

- Mileage is payable for travel by personal car, motor cycle and bicycle at HMRC approved mileage rates.
- Taxi costs can be claimed "if it was not reasonably practicable for the Member to travel other than by taxi"; Members are reimbursed the actual costs.

- Hire car costs can only be claimed in exceptional circumstances and with prior approval by MBS; Members may claim the actual costs.
- Train costs can be claimed based on actual costs; Members are expected to travel by standard class unless there is a demonstrable need not to.
- Air travel can be claimed based on actual costs.

### Travel outside of Wales

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Up to 2023-24, travel outside of Wales required prior approval. Proposals as part of the annual review of the Determination for 2024-25 include removing this requirement. Travel must be undertaken to enable the performance of the Member's duties and the same levels of allowance and general principles apply as with travel within Wales.

### International travel

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Members must apply to MBS to travel outside of the UK, sending a business case explaining the rationale for visiting that particular country, the number of overnight stays required and how the trip is necessary to enable the performance of the Member's duties.

Members may claim the actual costs of travel expenses incurred and are entitled to a subsistence allowance subject to a maximum of the cost of the return air fare plus five nights' accommodation, meals and incidental travel.

### Travel by partner and children

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Members may claim for the cost of their partner and/or any child under the age of 18 making a journey by public transport between Cardiff and their constituency or region, or Cardiff and the Member's main home. 12 single journeys may be claimed each year. Claims can also be made for mileage for such journeys by car.

### Travel by Members' Staff

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Members may claim for up to 18 total return journeys per year, by public transport or the mileage for travel by car, for staff between Cardiff and the Member's constituency or region.

## 4. Accommodation and Travel Support: Other UK Legislatures

Provision for the reimbursement of some accommodation and travel costs are made in all three of the other UK legislatures. This chapter provides an overview of these arrangements as set out in the published schemes and determinations.

### UK Parliament: IPSA

Provision for the reimbursement of accommodation and travel costs are set out in the *Scheme of MPs Staffing and Business Costs*<sup>3</sup>.

#### Accommodation costs

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The “accommodation costs budget” is designed to meet the costs incurred by MPs due to working from two permanent locations. These provisions are set out in Chapter Four of the Scheme. Hotel costs incurred under travel and subsistence are addressed in Chapter Nine.

Accommodation costs are not payable to London area MPs or to MPs who occupy ‘grace and favour’ accommodation in London by virtue of any other office they hold.

MPs may claim for accommodation costs for one of the following at a time:

- Hotel accommodation
- Rental payments and associated costs
- Associated costs only where the MP owns their property

MPs may claim for accommodation costs in relation to one property at one location, which may be in the London area or the MP’s constituency.

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<sup>3</sup> IPSA *The Scheme of MPs’ Staffing and Business Costs 2023-24 (revised July 2023)*  
[https://assets.ctfassets.net/nc7h1cs4q6ic/1RGgHNYfnvqhVRXIFTZvDk/583a6973a70ff7707f6ea0686928a6fd/Sixteenth\\_Edition\\_of\\_the\\_Scheme\\_2023-24.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/nc7h1cs4q6ic/1RGgHNYfnvqhVRXIFTZvDk/583a6973a70ff7707f6ea0686928a6fd/Sixteenth_Edition_of_the_Scheme_2023-24.pdf)

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Associated costs include:

- Utility bills
- Council tax
- Ground rent and service charges
- Buildings insurance (for those who own their property)
- Purchase, installation and maintenance of 'routine' security measures beyond those supplied by the House of Commons
- Installation of a landline telephone line, line rental and usage charges
- Installation of a broadband connection and usage charges

Associated costs **do not** include cleaning, gardening, purchase or maintenance of furniture, home contents insurance, television services or television licenses.

In the 2023-24 Scheme, accommodation cost budgets were as follows:

- Accommodation (Rental or Hotel) London: £26,840
- Accommodation (Rental or Hotel) Outside London: £19,090
- Accommodation Associated Costs Only (Non-London MPs): £6,330

If an MP opts to stay in a hotel rather than rent a property, a nightly cost limit is applied. MPs may group together a number of nights during a single stay, where the costs varies on different nights, and claim the full amount if the average per night does not exceed the nightly limit. The nightly cap in 2023-24 is £210 for London.

### **Additional support for MPs with dependants**

MPs with dependants are able to have their accommodation costs budget increased where they are staying in rented accommodation or hotels with dependants, up to a maximum of three uplifts. This does not apply when an MP is claiming only associated costs for a property that they own.

The Scheme defines dependants as follows:

*"For the purposes of this Scheme, MPs will be deemed to have caring responsibilities for a dependant where they:*

*Have parental responsibility for a dependant child of up to the age of 18 and/  
or*

*Are the primary carers for a family member in receipt of one of the following benefits:*

*a. Attendance Allowance*

*b. Disability Living Allowance at the middle or highest rate for personal care*

*c. Personal Independence Payment at the standard or enhanced rate for daily living or*

*d. Constant Attendance Allowance at or above the maximum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or basic (full day) rate with a War Disablement Pension"*

In the 2023-24 Scheme, the accommodation uplift for MPs with dependents is £6120 per year. For rental accommodation, an MP can have up to a maximum of 3 uplifts.

### **Responsibility for rental contracts**

MPs are responsible for checking the terms and conditions of their contracts, including any service charges, penalty clauses or other clauses that could result in additional costs. MPs are required to notify IPSA immediately when a rental agreement commences, ends or renews, or if there are any changes to the contract.

MPs are also expected to negotiate a clause in their rental agreement to allow them to give two months' notice in the event of a change in circumstances, such as leaving Parliament. They are only able to claim for rent and associated costs during the winding-up period after leaving Parliament.

### **Other support with rental agreements**

MPs may apply to IPSA for a loan to cover any deposit payable at the commencement of a tenancy; this is not deducted from the accommodation costs budget. The value of such a loan

may not exceed the lower of the deposit which is stipulated in the rental agreement or one quarter of the appropriate annual accommodation costs budget for the location.

MPs are responsible for securing the return of the deposit and repaying the amount in full to IPSA no later than one month after the date on which the tenancy comes to an end or the end of the winding up period.

### London Area Living Payment

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The London Area Living Payment is intended to contribute to the additional costs living in the London area and is payable on a monthly basis. It can only be claimed by London Area MPs. An Additional London Area Living Payment is available for outer London Area MPs.

In the 2023-24 Scheme, the value of these payments was as follows:

- London Area Living Payment: £4,435
- Additional London Area Living Payment: £1,575

### Travel and Subsistence Costs

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MPs may claim for travel and travel-related subsistence costs when incurred in support of their parliamentary functions. IPSA will pay for claims relating to:

- Journeys between London and the MPs constituency
- Journeys within the MPs constituency
- Travel to another UK location
- Journeys to and from other countries in Europe

No other international travel can be claimed unless Parliament is recalled.

MPs cannot claim for commuting costs (i.e. the journey between the constituency office and constituency residence or the journey between Westminster and their London Area residence). Non-London area MPs can choose to claim for travel to Westminster from outside of London daily instead of claiming accommodation costs.

MPs may claim for journeys by their spouse or partner and dependants between their constituency and London, or the travel of any required carer other than their spouse or partner.



MPs staff may claim for the same journeys as MPs except for travel to and from countries in Europe.

Public transport costs are limited to the rate of an economy class ticket. For rail travel MPs may claim for the cost of an 'anytime standard open' ticket. Mileage rates for cars, motor bikes or bicycle will be paid at HMRC rates.

Taxi costs may only be claimed when a journey by taxi is necessary. The Scheme notes what is regarded as necessary:

- No other reasonable method of transport is available
- Alternative methods are impracticable due to pregnancy, disability, illness or injury of the MP or staff member
- MPs have been working on parliamentary business after 10pm.

Hire cars may be used only where there is no reasonable alternative; MPs may claim the cost of hiring the vehicle, any fuel used and insurance purchased.

Hotel costs can be claimed when an MP has travelled as part of their parliamentary activities and it would be unreasonable for them to return to any residence in London or their constituency. Claims for hotels in London may only be made under travel and subsistence budgets when MPs have been working after 10pm on parliamentary matters. Claims are subject to a nightly cap of £210 in London / Europe and £150 in the rest of the UK.

Subsistence rates are also subject to a maximum cost of £25 per overnight stay.

## Scottish Parliament

Details of the accommodation and travel allowances for Members of the Scottish Parliament are outlined in the Members' Expenses Scheme.<sup>4</sup>

### Accommodation Costs

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Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) are able to claim for the costs of accommodation in Edinburgh when the performance of parliamentary duties requires them to stay in Edinburgh. Eligibility for this is dependent on which group a MSPs main residence falls within. There are three groups into which the constituencies and regions are organised, based on distance from Edinburgh.

MSPs whose main residence is in Group Two (akin to the intermediate area applied in the Remuneration Board's Determination on Members Pay and Allowances), may claim the costs of overnight accommodation for each night they are required to be in Edinburgh.

MSPs whose main residence is in Group Two but who are disabled or have caring responsibilities for dependents are treated as if they are in Group Three. A Presiding Officer whose main residence is in Group Two will be treated as if it was in Group Three.

MSPs whose main residence is in Group Three (akin to the outer area applied in the Remuneration Board's Determination on Members Pay and Allowances), may either claim the costs of overnight accommodation for each night they are required to be in Edinburgh **or** may lease a property in Edinburgh. MSPs who lease a property can claim for the following costs:

- Rent
- Council tax
- Water
- Utilities
- Telecommunications

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<sup>4</sup> Scottish Parliament *Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme* <https://www.parliament.scot/msps/-/media/d4b710e056344fa18b0d98accd801e7b.ashx> / Current rates are detailed on the Scottish Parliament website: <https://www.parliament.scot/msps/members-expenses/allowances-rates> [Accessed Dec. 2023]

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- Contents insurance
- Factoring charges excluding common repairs

MSPs who have a residence in Edinburgh may not apply for the above costs unless they can demonstrate that it would be unreasonable for them to use said residence.

2023-24 rates for Edinburgh accommodation provision are £19,700. The overnight rate is £215 (inclusive of dinner, bed and breakfast).

### Overnight accommodation outside Edinburgh

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MSPs may claim for the cost of overnight accommodation outside Edinburgh but within the UK “for each night when the performance of parliamentary duties prevents the member from using the member’s main residence or any other residence.”

Generally, MSPs may not claim for overnight accommodation within the constituency or region that they represent unless that constituency or region is listed in Annex B of the Members’ Expenses Scheme or “in the case only of members returned either from the Cunninghame North Constituency or from the West of Scotland region, the requirement for overnight accommodation arises in connection with the performance of parliamentary duties on an island in the Cunninghame North constituency.”

2023-24 rates for overnight accommodation outside Edinburgh excluding Greater London were £215 (including dinner, bed and breakfast) and for Greater London and outside the UK were £250 (including dinner, bed and breakfast).

### Travel

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MSPs may claim for travel that is undertaken in the performance of their parliamentary duties within the UK. They may claim for journeys between any places at which parliamentary duties are performed or between such places and their residence or overnight accommodation. Staff travel is covered in the same situations (commuting journeys are not covered).

Any travel outside of the UK requires application before any travel takes place.

In 2023-24 reimbursement rates for mileage were in line with HMRC rates.

## Northern Ireland

The salaries and expenses for members of the Northern Ireland Assembly are set out in the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland). As there is currently no Executive in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Assembly is operating under Determinations set by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reduced salaries and expenses.

For comparison, the below is drawn from the 2020 Determination<sup>5</sup>, which provides an understanding of the model and level of travel and accommodation support that would be in operation under normal circumstances.

MLAs are entitled to two travel allowances:

- Annual constituency travel allowance
- Annual Assembly travel allowance

The value of the allowance is determined by reference to the constituency the member represents.

The constituency travel allowance, allows for travel within the member's constituency, and ranged from £250 to £1250 in 2020.

The Assembly travel allowance, allows for travel from the member's constituency to the Assembly and ranged from £600 to £6200 in 2016. To be entitled to the full allowance, the member must attend the Assembly for 72 or more working days a year. The allowance is reduced by 1% for each working day less than this the member attends.

There are no provisions in the Determination for overnight accommodation.

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<sup>5</sup> Northern Irish Assembly *Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 as amended by the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) (Amendment) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2020*  
[http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/your\\_mlas/determinations/assembly-members-salaries-and-expenses-determination-northern-ireland-2016-as-amended.pdf](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/your_mlas/determinations/assembly-members-salaries-and-expenses-determination-northern-ireland-2016-as-amended.pdf)

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## 5. Accommodation and Travel Support: International Examples

Many parliaments provide for the reimbursement of accommodation and travel costs incurred by parliamentarians in relation to their parliamentary duties. The model and scale of this support can vary significantly, with a number of the Nordic nations in particular operating a very different model that includes the provision of accommodation that is owned by the parliament.

This section of the paper outlines the support available in a number of parliaments. While direct comparison of the exact monetary value<sup>6</sup> of this support is challenging given the different economic contexts in which parliaments are operating, these examples provide insights into how such support can be designed, and the principles on which decisions can be made. The electoral system in operation in each of these examples is noted, to aid consideration of whether proposed changes to the Senedd's electoral system, namely a shift to larger, multi-member constituencies, may need to inform decisions about RAE and travel allowances for the Seventh Senedd.

### Ireland – The Oireachtas

**Electoral System:** *Members are elected to multi-member constituencies of 3-5, under STV*

Members of Dáil Éireann (TDs) are entitled to an annual Parliamentary Standard Allowance (PSA). This is made up of two elements<sup>7</sup>:

- Travel and Accommodation Allowance (TAA)
- Public Representation Allowance (PRA)

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<sup>6</sup> Where the information is available, rates of various travel and accommodation allowances have been included in the currency as listed in the source material. Direct comparison with rates in UK legislatures should be done with caution. Such comparison would be based on current exchange rates, but also may not fully account for the specific economic contexts in which the different legislatures are operating, or the geographic area that elected representatives cover.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/members/salaries-and-allowances/parliamentary-standard-allowances/> [Accessed 24.10.23]

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Under the PSA, TDs may claim the following accommodation and travel expenses – rent, rates, and other such charges in relation to an office or offices.

The Travel and Accommodation Allowance (TAA) covers travel to and from Leinster House, overnight accommodation, travel within the constituency and other travel for parliamentary purposes. The amount of TAA that a TD can claim is based on the distance that their normal place of residence is from Leinster House, by the shortest practicable route. TDs are placed in one of thirteen bands:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Distance</b>	<b>TDs (Annual)</b>	<b>Office Holders (annual)</b>
Dublin	<25km	€9000	€6300
1	>25km but <60km	€25,295	€22,011
2	<90km	€27,315	€24,435
3	>90km but <120km	€28,665	€26,055
4	>120km but <150km	€29,669	€27,260
5	>150km but <180km	€30,015	€27,675
6	>180km but <210km	€30,350	€28,076
7	>210km but <240km	€30,685	€28,478
8	>240km but <270km	€31,365	€29,295
9	>270km but <300km	€32,035	€30,098
10	>300km but <330km	€32,715	€30,915
11	>330km but <360km	€33,395	€31,731
12	>360km	€34,065	€32,535

TAA is based on 150 days attendance at Leinster House. Members must register their attendance for at least 120 days annually to retain their full allowance. A reduction of 1% is applied for each day less than 120 days attended.

At the end of the year each Member must certify that the amount paid to them was applied in respect of expenses incurred for the purpose specified in the regulations. Monthly and annual statements of the amount of Parliamentary Standard Allowance each TD has received are published on the Oireachtas website.

## New Zealand

**Electoral System:** *Mixed member proportional system electing 120 seats; single member constituencies. Each voting area is covered by a general electorate and a Māori electorate; each electorate choose a member of Parliament to represent them and also have party vote.*

Details of accommodation and travel support for members of the New Zealand Parliament is set out in two places:

1. The Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members) Determination.<sup>8</sup>
2. The Speaker's Directions.<sup>9</sup>

The Determination includes clauses that define "home base" and "parliamentary purpose".<sup>10</sup>

### "Home-base"<sup>11</sup>

- A member's home-base is Wellington if their constituency is predominantly in the Wellington commuting area or the member lives permanently in the Wellington commuting area.
- If the MP is the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, a Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, the member's home base is the place that the member maintains and would normally live when not engaged on ministerial or parliamentary purposes in Wellington.
- Any other case is the place where the member normally lives when not engaged on ministerial or parliamentary purposes in Wellington.

**"Parliamentary purpose"** means an "activity undertaken by a member (or, as applicable qualifying electoral candidate) in the performance of their role and functions as a member of

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<sup>8</sup> Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members) Determination 2023 <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2023/0195/latest/whole.html#LMS876387> [Accessed 18.12.23]

<sup>9</sup> Speaker's Directions 2023 <https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/parliamentary-rules/directions-determinations/speaker-s-directions-2023/> [Accessed 18.12.23]

<sup>10</sup> Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members) Determination 2023 <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2023/0195/latest/whole.html#LMS876387> [Accessed 18.12.23]

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Parliament (including an activity undertaken by the member as a member of a party, provided it is not electioneering or directly related to the administration or management of a party).<sup>12</sup>

### Wellington Accommodation for Members

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A Member of Parliament may claim Wellington accommodation expenses if their primary place of residence is outside the Wellington commuting area and they are not provided with a residence at the public cost.

Rates are based on estimated market rentals for “suitable properties” in central Wellington, with a contribution to, but not full reimbursement, of other property-related expenses such as utilities, cleaning, and gardening services.

Members may choose to claim for continuous accommodation (rent) or non-continuous accommodation (hotel). The rates in the 2023 Determination are as follows<sup>13</sup>:

- Continuous accommodation: \$36,400 per year
- Non-continuous accommodation: actual and reasonable expenses claimed to a nightly maximum of \$260 (commercial premises) and \$70 (other premises), with an annual cap of \$36,400

The Determination makes provision for shared accommodation, with the total amount payable to a member reduced proportionally based on how many people are sharing the accommodation.

Accommodation costs may be claimed for up to four weeks after a person ceases to be a member of Parliament.

### **Special provisions for additional office holders<sup>14</sup>**

The Determination makes provisions for an official residence, continuous accommodation payment or reimbursement arrangement for the Prime Minister, and (if their primary place of residence is outside the Wellington commuting area) the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Ministers.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



If the holders of these additional offices do not take up official residences, their continuous accommodation payment is capped at \$52,000 per year (2023 Determination). If they opt for non-continuous accommodation, a nightly cap of \$350 is applied.

### Non-Wellington accommodation<sup>15</sup>

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Provision is also made for members and additional office holders to claim accommodation costs outside Wellington when they are engaged in activities for parliamentary purposes and cannot reasonably be expected to travel to their home base by conventional means or safely. This is generally regarded to be 80km from their primary place of residence.

Members are reimbursed actual and reasonable expense, including breakfast and internet services but excluding other meals, laundry and parking. There are nightly caps in place, with higher rates for additional office holders.

### Increases in accommodation expenses in certain circumstances<sup>16</sup>

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The Determination also makes provision for higher accommodation expense claims in certain circumstances. The relevant clause applies if the cost of accommodation is higher as a result of a shortage of suitable accommodation because of a cultural, sporting or diplomatic event, a lack of suitable accommodation in particular centres within the amounts specified, a premium payable for late booking due to unexpected engagements or travel conditions, and the unavailability of suitable accommodation within specified amounts for a member or their family due to disability.

Uplifts are subject to a limit of between \$90 and \$110, and “must be specified to apply on one or more occasions; or during a period not exceeding 3 months.”

### Members’ family travel and accommodation<sup>17</sup>

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Provision is made for a member’s family to travel and stay with them.

With regards accommodation, if a member or additional office holder opts for non-continuous accommodation, they may be paid the actual and reasonable expenses of one or more family

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

members to accompany them but the specified nightly amounts apply to the aggregate of the accommodation expenses of the member and family member(s).

With regards travel, Members may claim up to 20 one-way trips in a year, increasing to 30 for a specified member. There is no limit on the number of trips by the Prime Minister's spouse/partner or children under 18.

### Qualifying electoral candidates<sup>18</sup>

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Provisions are made for qualifying electoral candidates. This includes those who seek re-election and those who appear to have been elected on the basis of election night results. "The provision of services between polling day and the official election results enables those candidates to participate in processes related to the formation of a government and the making of arrangements at Parliament, commence representation of their constituencies and other parliamentary duties, and, where applicable, participate in parliamentary induction after the election. The position is similar if there is a by-election."

### Travel for Members<sup>19</sup>

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Under section 23 of the Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Services) Act 2013, the Speaker makes Directions to provide services and support funding for Parliament and parliamentary parties.

All funding under the Directions must only be used for parliamentary purposes, which is defined similarly as in the Determination covering members' accommodation, as "the performance by a member of Parliament or qualifying electoral candidate of their role and functions as a member of Parliament or qualifying electoral candidate."

Under these Directions a member may cover scheduled domestic travel services, travel by taxi or rental car, vehicle-related operating costs for travel by private car (mileage, road tolls and parking expenses).

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<sup>18</sup> Members of Parliament (Accommodation Services for Members and Travel Services for Family Members) Determination 2023 <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2023/0195/latest/whole.html#LMS876387> [Accessed 18.12.23]

<sup>19</sup> Speaker's Directions 2023 <https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/parliamentary-rules/directions-determinations/speaker-s-directions-2023/> [Accessed 18.12.23]

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For non-scheduled domestic travel services, prior approval is required from relevant persons, but not Parliamentary Services. For example, a party leader must gain approval from their whip, a member must seek approval from their leader or whip.

Applications must include an itinerary, details of the parliamentary purpose for which the travel is undertaken, details of any person accompanying the member and information about how travel costs for any accompanying person will be met.

#### International travel and accommodation<sup>20</sup>

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Costs can be claimed for international scheduled travel services, internal travel when overseas, accommodation, meals, preparatory costs, expected hospitality costs and gifts.

The amount reimbursed of the cost of the fare for international travel is tied to length of service.

<b>Number of complete parliaments served</b>	<b>Number of complete years served</b>	<b>Percentage of fare payable</b>
Less than 1	Less than 3	Nil
1	3-5	25
2	6-8	50
3	9-11	75
4 or more	12 or more	90

Prior approval is required for international travel. The appropriate person is as follows:

- Speaker: approval from Deputy Speaker
- Party Leader: approval from the Speaker
- Party Whip: approval from the Speaker and party leader
- Member: approval from Speaker and party leader or whip

Applications must detail an itinerary, parliamentary purpose, any personal purpose to the travel, details of any person accompanying the member, a breakdown of anticipated cost of the travel,

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<sup>20</sup> Speaker's Directions 2023 <https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/parliamentary-rules/directions-determinations/speaker-s-directions-2023/> [Accessed 18.12.23]

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details of how the travel costs will be met and how costs for any accompanying person will be met.

A party leader may have the costs of their spouse or partner's international travel and accommodation funded. The Leader of the Opposition may have the costs of international travel and accommodation funded up to the maximum total per parliamentary term of \$150,000 if the travel is for official purposes and they have notified the Prime Minister of the purpose and date of travel.

## Parliament of Victoria

**Electoral System:** *Voters elect one member of parliament to represent them in the lower house (Legislative Assembly) across 88 electoral districts using preferential voting*

Details of the travel and accommodation allowances for Members of the Parliament of Victoria are set out in Members of Parliament (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2023.<sup>21</sup>

Travel and accommodation support is split into a number of allowances<sup>22</sup>:

- Parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance – supports regional members who choose to maintain a residence in metropolitan Melbourne to carry out their public duties while in Melbourne
- Travel Allowance – covers costs of accommodation, meals and incidentals for Members when they are required to stay overnight within Australia to perform their duties
- Commercial transport allowance – covers transport costs for a Member's travel within Australia to perform their duties

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<sup>21</sup> Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal *Members of Parliament (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2023*  
<https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/Members-of-Parliament-%28Victoria%29-Determination-No.-01-2023.pdf> [Accessed 19.12.23]

<sup>22</sup> Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal *Members of Parliament (Victoria) Guidelines No.01/2023*  
<https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/Members-of-Parliament-%28Victoria%29-Guidelines-No.-01-2023.pdf>

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- International travel allowance – covers costs of transport, accommodation, meals and incidentals for Members when they travel outside of Australia to perform their duties
- Motor vehicle allowance – available for Members who do not elect to be provided with a motor vehicle

### Parliamentary accommodation allowance<sup>23</sup>

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To be eligible for this allowance, a Member's home base must be outside a radius of 80km from Melbourne centre (or outside the metropolitan area and the Member satisfies the relevant clerk that the shortest practicable route by road exceeds 80km). The rate in the current Determination is \$26,609.

Additional office holders are eligible for a higher rate of allowance:

- Premier: \$53,217
- Deputy Premier: \$46,565
- Any other Minister, President, Speaker, Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Leader of Third Party or Deputy Leader of the Third Party: \$39,910

### Motor vehicle allowance<sup>24</sup>

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The amount a member may claim is tied to the electorate (constituency) that they represent, with a higher allowance for electorates of a larger geographical area (\$23,225 - \$34,994).

### Travel allowance<sup>25</sup>

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Members may also claim a travel allowance to cover actual costs of overnight accommodation, incurred on *parliamentary, committee* or *Ministerial business*, where the location of the overnight stay is at least 28km from their home base. Members may claim for overnight stays in

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal *Members of Parliament (Victoria) Determination No. 01/2023* <https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/Members-of-Parliament-%28Victoria%29-Determination-No.-01-2023.pdf> [Accessed 19.12.23]

<sup>25</sup> Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal *Members of Parliament (Victoria) Guidelines No.01/2023* <https://content.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/Members-of-Parliament-%28Victoria%29-Guidelines-No.-01-2023.pdf>

relation to *electorate business* when this is at least 80km from their home base. Travel allowance is also applicable when there is less than 10 hours between when the Parliament adjourns and commences the next day.

### Commercial transport allowance

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The total allowance available is based on the electorate that the member represents, with a higher allowance available to members representing electorates of a larger geographic area (\$5,195 to \$17,898 per year).

Members can only claim for travel to Parliament if their home base is outside a radius of 80km from Melbourne centre.

### International travel allowance

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Accommodation expenses can only be claimed under this allowance:

- For the days on which business is conducted and when single night accommodation is necessary due to flight connections
- One day prior to the business day
- One day after the business day in those instances where departure on the last day of business is not practical
- For days when travel occurs between places of business
- On weekends where business occurs on the Friday and Monday either side of that weekend
- For the city or town where business is conducted, or for other locations when single night accommodation is necessary due to flight connections

Expenses must not exceed the prices for a four star hotel. Under the current Determination, the maximum allowance per year is \$10,765. Travel expenses may be claimed for travel to or from a Victorian airport.

## Canada – House of Commons

### ***Electoral System:*** *First past the post*

Members of the Canadian House of Commons are provided with resources to facilitate travel within their constituencies, to and from Ottawa and elsewhere as approved by the Board of Internal Economy.<sup>26</sup>

Members' use of travel entitlements are governed by a number of principles<sup>27</sup>:

- Members may only use travel resources in fulfilment of their parliamentary functions.
- Travel entitlements are intended for travel within Canada.
- Members' reimbursement of some expenses will occur when in "travel status", which means they are at least 100km from their primary residence and are travelling between Ottawa and their constituency, within their constituency or the territory or province their constituency is located within, elsewhere in Canada, in and between Washington D.C. or New York and Ottawa or their constituency.
- Members must take the most direct route, and select the most economical, practical and safest means of travel.
- Designated travellers and dependants may use travel points to reunite with the Member at the Member's secondary residence or at another location where the Member is carrying out parliamentary functions.
- Members may not claim for reimbursement of items provided to them at no additional cost during their travels.

Travel allocations for Members take three forms:

1. Travel status expenses account: covers living expenses incurred while in travel status.
2. Member's Office Budget: typically covers travel within the province or territory where the constituency is based.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/MAS/mas-e.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

3. Travel points system: covers transportation expenses incurred by Members in the fulfilment of their parliamentary functions.

#### Travel Status Expenses Account (TSEA)<sup>28</sup>

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When in travel status, Members may charge their accommodation, meal and incidental expenses to the TSEA or the Members Office Budget. The TSEA also covers the costs of a secondary residence that Members may require to carry out their parliamentary duties.

### **Residences**

Members whose constituency is not located in the National Capital Region (NCR), may opt to stay in commercial or private accommodation when in the NCR. Typically Members choose to have their secondary residence in the NCR, however they may choose to have their secondary residence in their constituency and primary residence in the NCR subject to a number of conditions.

Members must declare their accommodation arrangements at the start of each new parliament and provide supporting documentation for their declared residences that clarifies ownership or rental status. When declaring which residence as their primary residence, Members must consider a number of criteria, including:

- The primary residence is occupied by the Member more often than the other residence.
- The primary residence is where the Member most frequently resides on weekends and holiday.
- The primary residence is where the Member's spouse lives most of the time and where dependent children attend school.

Members may claim an accommodation day rate for each day a secondary residence is available for their occupancy, subject to the rate approved by the Board of Internal Economy. This rate is adjusted in line with the private non-commercial accommodation rate of the National Joint Council's Travel Directive.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.



Members may claim rent of furnished or unfurnished homes, one basic phone line, basic cable TV, utilities and one parking space.

### **Accommodation and meals**

When Members and authorised travellers are in travel status, their hotel, motel or private accommodation expenses will be reimbursed at agreed rates.

Commercial accommodation (e.g. hotels) will be reimbursed at actual costs. Private, non-commercial accommodations other than a secondary residence will be reimbursed at the private accommodation rate approved by the Board of Internal Economy (set as above).

Certain conditions apply to any accommodation expense claims:

- Members who maintain a primary residence within 100km of parliament may claim accommodation expenses when required to remain at work for House of Commons or committee business, or due to exceptional or emergency situations.
- Members who declare a primary or secondary residence in their constituency may claim expenses when travelling at least 100km from this residence for parliamentary functions.
- Members may only claim up to seven consecutive nights in each location.
- Generally, designated travellers and dependants may not claim accommodation expenses.

When in travel status a Member may also claim their meal and incidental expenses based on per diem rates approved by the Board of Internal Economy. A number of conditions and restrictions apply:

- Members may claim per diem expenses for all days of travel and for sitting days while in the NCR.
- Per diem expenses must be reduced by the cost of any meals provided for free.
- Members may claim per diem expenses for non-sitting days while in the NCR if they can evidence the parliamentary functions they were performing.
- Members whose constituency is located in the NCR and who maintain a primary residence within 100 kilometres of the parliamentary precinct may claim breakfast and dinner expenses for the days when the House is sitting and the Member works a

minimum of 11 hours, which include transit time to and from the Member's residence (this is charged to the TSEA only).

- While travelling in their constituency (other than between their primary residence and a normal place of work), Members may claim the per diem allowance for meals as a charge against their Member's Office Budget when they are more than 16 kilometres from their primary or secondary residence that is in or near their constituency.
- Generally, designated travellers and dependants may not claim per diem expenses.

#### Members' Office Budget (MOB)<sup>29</sup>

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Accommodation and travel costs for Members may be claimed as above against the MOB.

Employee accommodation and per diem expenses can be claimed against the MOB when they are travelling between Ottawa and the constituency and are more than 100km from their usual place of work, or when they are accompanying the Member on a special trip. A maximum of two weeks' accommodation expenses may be charged per trip.

#### Travel Points System<sup>30</sup>

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The travel points system seeks to ensure that all Members have access to the same travel resources, regardless of where their constituency is based.

Members are allocated a minimum of 64 travel points. Members who have more than one dependant are provided with an additional eight points for the second and any subsequent dependants aged 6 to 20. An additional 16 points for trips within Canada are also provided to leaders of recognised parties (excluding the Prime Minister).

Members may use their points for regular trips, defined as "between Ottawa and the Member's constituency; within the constituency; and from Ottawa or the constituency to the provincial/territorial capital in which this constituency is located."

Points can be allocated to authorised travellers, including eligible staff who can assist or represent the Member at events. A half point is deducted for each trip; a trip is defined as being

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

“taken by any means to one destination for a particular purpose and that is direct without any interruption other than a single stop, which must not be longer than 12 hours and not be a layover”.

Travel between the Member’s constituency and Ottawa must be charged to the points system, each trip must be for the purpose of the fulfilment of the Member’s parliamentary functions, and unused travel points do not carry over into the next fiscal year.

Members may use 25 of their points for “special trips”, within Canada. Four of these 25 points can be used for special trips to Washington D.C., and two of those four may be used for special trips to New York. Trips must be to carry out parliamentary functions and a detailed description of the purpose of the trip must be provided. A number of other requirements must also be met including use of the most direct route, no additional stops aside from layovers and points cannot be used for travel related to parliamentary associations or committees.

Depending on the duration of continuous travel and whether travel arrangements are made by Members’ Travel Services, Members are entitled to various classes of air travel. Generally, Members are able to travel by business class.

Mileage costs when travelling outside of a Member’s constituency or the province/ territory in which their constituency is located is covered by the points system (mileage related to travel within a Member’s constituency would typically be charged to the Member’s Office Budget).

All Members are provided with a rail pass, so no travel points are deducted when these free privileges are used.

## Norway

**Electoral System:** 169 MPs are elected from 19 constituencies, each electing between 4 and 20 MPs.

The Storting (Norwegian parliament) owns 143 variously sized furnished flats that can be used by members, free of charge. These are made available to members who live more than a 40km drive from the Storting.<sup>31</sup>

MPs must apply for use of this “commuter accommodation”, stating the reason they need it, with accompanying documentation.<sup>32</sup> The Storting owns two categories of commuter accommodation – family flats and ordinary flats.<sup>33</sup>

Allocation of family flats considers the total number of household members who will live permanently in the flat, the age of the child/ children, the need for public services such as schools/ kindergartens and any other special considerations.<sup>34</sup>

Allocation of ordinary flats considers documented health needs, family circumstances, travel time (including public transport options for the journey), MPs’ length of service, the aim of having the fewest possible moves of accommodation and other special considerations.<sup>35</sup>

Official and commuter travel at weekends are covered in full.<sup>36</sup> Family members of MPs who live more than 40km from the Storting may have up to two private visits covered annually per person.<sup>37</sup> Travel abroad must be approved.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> “MPs’ pay, allowances and other arrangements” <https://www.stortinget.no/en/In-English/Members-of-the-Storting/Financial-support/> [Accessed 19.12.24]

<sup>32</sup> “Guidelines for the allocation of the Storting’s commuter accommodation” <https://www.stortinget.no/en/In-English/Members-of-the-Storting/guidelines-for-the-allocation-of-the-stortings-commuter-accommodation/> [Accessed 19.12.23]

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> “MPs’ pay, allowances and other arrangements” <https://www.stortinget.no/en/In-English/Members-of-the-Storting/Financial-support/> [Accessed 19.12.24]

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

## Denmark

**Electoral System:** *party list system electing 179 Members to multi-member constituencies*

Since 2009, the Folketing (Danish parliament) makes an apartment available to those members whose permanent residence is outside Zealand. The Folketing currently has 90 apartments available, with 5 available for members of the Presidium.<sup>39</sup> Members who are provided with an apartment receive a subsidy to cover the costs of running a double household (DKK 30,280).<sup>40</sup>

If there is accommodation available following the usual allocation of Folketing accommodation, other members may apply for housing. Importance is attached to total travelling time by public transport including waits, number of changes and latest possible boarding time for transport home.<sup>41</sup>

This accommodation must be vacated within 2 weeks of leaving office.<sup>42</sup>

If a member does not have a home made available, they may claim hotel costs for up to 12 nights per year in Copenhagen.<sup>43</sup> Members may also claim up to 12 nights in the constituency in which the member is elected, in connection with meetings in the constituency, if the distance between the constituency and the member's place of residence makes it reasonable.<sup>44</sup>

Members may be reimbursed for public transport and travel expenses in connection with their political work. They receive a free travel card for public transport and while taxis may be used, there are limits on usage.<sup>45</sup>

Members of the Danish parliament can receive reimbursement for driving in their own car between their residence and Christiansborg, their residence and political meetings and political

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<sup>39</sup> "Terms and conditions of Members of Parliament" <https://www.ft.dk/da/medlemmer/medlemmernes-vilkaar#C79346F8A16E45659511D356FE803141> [Accessed 19.12.23] NB: Translated from Danish using Google translate function

<sup>40</sup> Folketing (Parliamentary) Elections Act <https://elections.im.dk/parliament-elections/folketing-parliamentary-elections-act>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Folketing (Parliamentary) Elections Act <https://elections.im.dk/parliament-elections/folketing-parliamentary-elections-act>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

meetings and Christiansborg, if it replaces a domestic flight and is not more expensive than this.<sup>46</sup>

Members who live outside the metropolitan area can be reimbursed for driving in their own car between their place of residence and the nearest provincial airport/ railway station if there is no suitable public transport.<sup>47</sup>

## Sweden

**Electoral System:** *Two-tier list PR system. 310 seats elected in 29 multi-member constituencies. 39 seats decided by national vote totals.*

Members of the Riksdag who have further than 50km to travel from their place of work to the Riksdag are entitled to overnight accommodation. This can include accommodation that the member owns, rents or sublets.<sup>48</sup>

Since July 2022, members may only be reimbursed for private overnight accommodation if the Riksdag Administration is unable to provide overnight accommodation from its own supply, or there are special grounds for doing so, which can include illness, disability, family circumstances or similar conditions involving special housing requirements.<sup>49</sup> The cap for this compensation is SEK 9,000 per month; if electricity is not included in the rent, members also receive SEK 300 per month.

Members wishing to receive compensation for private overnight accommodation must apply for this ahead of each Riksdag session and submit proof of their costs.<sup>50</sup>

Subsistence rates of SEK 130 per day may also be claimed ("Stockholm allowance") by Members who live more than 50km from Stockholm when they travel and stay the night in Stockholm.<sup>51</sup> Members receive this for the day of travel, the day they return and the days in between.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> "The member's overnight accommodation" <https://www.riksdagen.se/en/members-and-parties/the-members-pay-and-conditions/the-members-overnight-accommodation/> [Accessed 19.12.23]

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> "The members' official journeys" <https://www.riksdagen.se/en/members-and-parties/the-members-pay-and-conditions/the-members-official-journeys/> [Accessed 19.12.23]

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

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Members can also be reimbursed for travel undertaken for parliamentary purposes. When choosing transport, members must take into account the cost, travel time, environmental impact of the journey and security.<sup>53</sup> All members are entitled to an annual train pass; taxi travel is permitted but only when there is no public transport available or there are special reasons such as heavy luggage, medical reasons or saving time.<sup>54</sup>

When travelling on official journeys, members may be reimbursed for hotel stays if this is situated more than 50km from their home or the Riksdag.<sup>55</sup> Subsistence rates apply as follows:

- Day of departure: SEK 440 if the journey is begun at 12 noon or earlier; in other cases SEK 220
- Days between the day of departure and the day of return: SEK 440
- Day of return: SEK 440 if the journey ends at 7pm; in other cases SEK 220

For international travel each member has a maximum amount of SEK 50,000 during an electoral period.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> "The members' official journeys" <https://www.riksdagen.se/en/members-and-parties/the-members-pay-and-conditions/the-members-official-journeys/>. [Accessed 19.12.23]

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

## 6. Conclusion

Systems for the reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses for parliamentarians are complex. Of the examples reviewed for this paper, most are provided for in legislation, with relevant remuneration bodies making decisions about the levels such allowances are set at, criteria for claiming reimbursement and how the system will operate.

There do not appear to be any significant differences between single member and multi-member constituency electoral systems. The systems for reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs in each parliament reviewed have their own unique elements, centred around a general consensus that members should be reimbursed for reasonable accommodation and travel costs incurred as a result of fulfilling their parliamentary duties, including being able to stay overnight near to parliament if they normally live beyond commuting distance.

Some parliaments combine different elements of travel and accommodation into a single allowance, while others have a multitude of allowances covering accommodation near parliament, accommodation in constituencies or other domestic locations, domestic travel and international travel and accommodation.

There are some common features across the example parliaments covered in this paper:

- Provisions for accommodation close to parliament, either through allowances or parliament-owned properties. This often has options for members to either lease a property (continuous accommodation) or stay in hotels (commercial accommodation).
- Eligibility for support for accommodation close to parliament being linked to the distance of a member's primary residence or constituency from parliament.
- Reimbursement of some associated costs for members who rent a property to attend parliament; although what is included differs quite significantly. Most parliament's reimburse utility, phone and broadband costs.
- Some provision for spouses/ partners and dependants to travel to visit members at their secondary residence.
- The rate of any accommodation allowance being indexed using the rental market in a central area to parliament.
- A requirement that any travel and overnight stays claimed must be in relation to members fulfilling their parliamentary functions.
- Additional travel and accommodation provisions for office holders, including ministers, speakers and leaders of opposition parties.



- Prior approval being required for any international travel, but not always from parliamentary services. In New Zealand, approval is required from a relevant office holder within the member's party.
- Provision of a free rail pass to members

Some other points that are less common across the legislatures reviewed, but are noteworthy are:

- Nordic nations seem unique in that they have parliament owned apartments that eligible members are provided with for the duration of their term in office.
- A small number of parliaments reviewed provide members with the option of designating a home in their constituency as their second home in place of a home near to parliament, the costs of which can be reimbursed.
- Denmark's system has a particular focus on public transport usage. Consideration of public transport informs allocation of parliament-owned housing and what travel costs can be reimbursed.
- Some of the systems reviewed take the geographical size of constituencies into account when setting allowance levels for travel costs. Members with larger constituencies are entitled to a larger allowance in these cases, to enable them to travel around their constituency. These systems also allow members to claim costs for overnight accommodation in their constituency if it's deemed reasonable, which is often linked to being over a particular distance from their home.
- There are very different approaches to support for those with caring responsibilities or who are disabled. From the available information it's not always clear what any additional support looks like, beyond provisions for spouses/ partners to claim some limited travel and accommodation costs. Some systems note that anyone with additional needs can discuss this on a one-to-one basis. Some of the Nordic examples consider caring responsibilities and health issues when determining the allocation of parliament-owned property.
- A small number of the examples included take attendance at parliament into consideration, with a penalty to those who do not attend for a defined number of days per year.
- New Zealand makes specific provision for uprated allowances in certain circumstances, including large events and unavoidable late bookings, which can impact on hotel rates.

## 7. Annex A: Comparison of UK Legislatures

The table below provides an at-a-glance comparison of the travel and accommodation allowance rates for parliamentarians across the UK legislatures (based on 2023-24 figures/approaches). As outlined in Chapter 3 above, there are many complexities and nuances to the schemes and Determinations in operation, so this table should be read in addition to the chapter(s) above for a full understanding of how UK parliamentarians are supported.

Northern Ireland has a very different approach to travel and accommodation, in addition to operating under an exceptional Determination while there is no Executive. As such details are not included in the table.

	<b>Senedd</b>	<b>UK Parliament</b>	<b>Scottish Parliament</b>
Accommodation when attending parliament (rental costs)	£7,920 (Intermediate) £11,280 (Outer)	£26,840	£19,700
Associated costs e.g. utilities, broadband	Not capped	£6,330	Not capped
Accommodation when attending parliament (hotel)	£7,920 (Intermediate) £11,280 (Outer) Nightly cap £110	Nightly cap £210	Nightly Cap £215 (DB&B)
Designate constituency home as second residence (rental costs)	Not permitted	£19,090	Not permitted

Uplift for dependants	£1,670 per year	£6,210 per year, per dependant (up to 3 uplifts)	N/A
Additional living payments	N/A	£4,435 (Inner London) £1,575 (Outer London)	N/A
Other Overnight accommodation	£174 (London) £110 (elsewhere)	£210 (London) £150 (elsewhere)	£250 (London) £215 (elsewhere)
Rail travel	Actual costs	Actual costs capped at anytime standard open ticket	Actual costs
Mileage	HMRC rates	HMRC rates	HMRC rates
Taxi usage	Actual costs	Actual costs	Actual costs
International Travel	Permitted with prior approval	Actual costs for travel to Europe; not permitted outside of Europe	Not specifically addressed

## 8. Annex B: Comparison of International Examples

The below table provides an at-a-glance comparison of the main features of the travel and accommodation support available across the international parliaments included in this paper. This is based on publicly available information, so some caution should be exercised when using this simple comparison. It may be the case that some parliaments have elements of their schemes that aren't included in public information.

	Ireland	New Zealand	Parliament of Victoria	Canada	Norway	Denmark	Sweden
Provision for accommodation when attending Parliament (Rental or Hotel)							
Eligibility for accommodation linked to distance from Parliament							
Uplift for Members with caring responsibilities							
Uplift for disabled Members							
Able to designate constituency property as second residence and therefore claim costs							
Attendance at parliament affects accommodation allowance level							
Reimbursement of associated costs e.g. utilities (rented properties)							

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	Ireland	New Zealand	Parliament of Victoria	Canada	Norway	Denmark	Sweden
Provision for accommodation costs for other overnight stays (not at parliament)							
Provision for overnight accommodation within constituency if not reasonable to travel home							
Reimbursement of travel costs							
Reimbursement of international travel and accommodation costs *prior approval is required / usage is limited		*		*			
Allowance rates are uplifted for additional office holders e.g. ministers, speakers and leaders of opposition parties							
Geographic size of constituency affects travel and accommodation allowance levels							