

Member support staff salaries

Statement of the Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd under section 14(4) of the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010

Decision of the Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd

On 30 November 2023, the Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd ("the Board") made decisions in relation to the salaries of staff employed by Members of the Senedd under sections 20(2) and 24(1) of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

The Board's decisions are as follows.

1. That all support staff employed by Members of the Senedd are paid an additional, non-consolidated sum of £600, pro-rata to reflect their contracted working hours as at 30 November 2023. The payment will be made as part of January salaries, or as otherwise arranged by the Senedd Commission.
2. That the salary described as "Band 3 Pay Point 1" in Table 2 of paragraph 7.1.5, and Table 3 of paragraph 8.2.6, of the Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances 2023-24 (March 2023) is increased to £23,088 with effect for the period of 1 December 2023 until 31 March 2024.
3. That support staff employed on "Band 3 Pay Point 1" during November 2023 who remain in employment on 30 November 2023 are paid an additional, non-consolidated sum, to be calculated individually in respect of each member of staff. The amount will be equivalent to the difference between the gross monthly salary received by the member of staff for November 2023, and the gross monthly salary that would have been received if they had been in receipt of the Real Living Wage in November 2023. The payment will be made as part of December salaries, or as otherwise arranged by the Senedd Commission.

Requirements under the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010

Under normal circumstances, the Board makes provision for the reimbursement of costs incurred by Members (or by groups) in employing staff not more than once for each financial year (as outlined in section 14(2) of the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010 ("the 2010 Measure")).

In accordance with section 14(3) of the 2010 Measure, the Board is of the opinion that there are exceptional circumstances which make it just and reasonable for the restrictions imposed by section 14(2) of the 2010 Measure not to apply.

The Board has considered the current economic circumstances and in particular that the UK has experienced a period of exceptionally rapid inflation which continues to have a significant impact on the cost of living. The Explanatory Notes to the 2010 Measure expressly provide that a period of exceptionally rapid inflation is an example of exceptional circumstances.

It is the Board's opinion that these exceptional circumstances make it just and reasonable for the Board to determine that an additional payment be made to all support staff.

The Board has also considered the publication by the Living Wage Foundation of the Real Living Wage on 24 October 2023. The Board notes that this is the first occasion on which the Real Living Wage has exceeded some support staff salaries, meaning that those on Band 3 Pay Point 1 are receiving a salary below the Real Living Wage.

It is the Board's opinion that these exceptional circumstances make it just and reasonable to determine:

- an increase in the Band 3 Pay Point 1 salary for the period of 1 December 2023 until 31 March 2024 , and
- an additional payment to support staff who have received the Band 3 Pay Point 1 salary in November 2023, equivalent to the difference between the gross monthly salary received by the member of staff for November 2023, and the gross monthly salary that the member of staff would have received if they had been in receipt of the Real Living Wage in November 2023.

In coming to these decisions, the Board had regard to its guiding principles set out in the Board's Strategy for 2021 – 2026, as well as the economic data and inflationary pressures referred to above. Specifically, in line with the Board's guiding principle of ensuring its decisions are appropriate in the context of Welsh earnings, information on current salary trends in Wales and the UK was considered by the Board.

This statement constitutes a written statement to the Senedd Commission for the purposes of section 14(4) of the 2010 Measure.