

Data Release

Friday, 23 March 2007

Members' Allowances the latest figures according to a Local Government Analysis and Research survey

- In winter 2006, the survey of all 388 local authorities in England was conducted and a total of 257 authorities responded (66.2%).
- The survey collected information on basic allowance, special responsibility allowances, dependant/carers allowance, travel allowance, bike allowance, subsistence allowance and access to pension schemes.
- All local authorities in England have independent remuneration panels that review their allowances and provide advice on authorities' schemes. Allowances are intended to recompense properly the time necessary and the level of responsibility of the roles of councillors, whilst incorporating a strong public service discount.
- All data are ungrossed and relate to the figures reported by authorities. Response rates for individual questions vary.

Key findings

All 19,689 councillors in office in 2006 are entitled to a basic allowance and those councillors who hold offices of special responsibility, as set by their authority, are also entitled to a special responsibility allowance. Authorities also have the discretion to pay additional allowances such as dependant/carers allowance, travel allowance and subsistence allowance, and to allow councillors access to pension schemes.

Where the cost of living is highest, so are the allowances. Where the responsibilities and time taken to do the job are greatest, so are the allowances. Strong public service elements are incorporated into the rates and, again, variations take into account distinctions between types of authority and geographical location.

Basic allowance:

- Overall, councillors' basic allowance for 2006 averaged £5,648 per annum, ranging from £3,991 in shire districts to £9,512 in metropolitan districts. There was also wide variation regionally, from £4,729 in the East Midlands to £9,227 in London.

Special responsibility allowance:

- The average leaders' allowance was £16,356, ranging from £11,065 in shire districts to £31,784 in London boroughs. Regionally, the average allowance ranged from £12,632 in the East Midlands to £21,685 in Yorkshire and Humberside.
- Cabinet/executive members received an average allowance of £9,243, ranging from as little as £5,994 in shire districts to £17,634 in London boroughs. There were also regional variations, ranging from £6,273 in the North East to £12,262 in Yorkshire and Humberside.
- Overall, the average number of cabinet/executive members per authority was 6.9; it was highest in metropolitan districts, unitary authorities and authorities in the North East (7.9, 7.8 and 8.3 respectively) and lowest in shire districts and the East of England (6.4 and 5.9).
- The overall average allowance for Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny was £5,686, ranging from as little as £3,721 in shire districts to £10,738 in London boroughs. There were also regional variations, ranging from £4,299 in the South East to £9,967 in Yorkshire and Humberside.
- Overall, the average number of Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny per authority was 2.6; it was highest in unitary authorities, metropolitan districts and authorities in the North West (3.8, 3.7 and 3.5 respectively) and lowest in shire districts and the East of England (2.1 and 1.6).
- Chairs of planning committees receive an average allowance of £5,172, ranging from £3,824 in shire districts to £9,978 in London boroughs, and Chairs of licensing committees receive an average allowance of £4,064, ranging from £3,034 in shire districts to £8,066 in London Boroughs.

Other allowances:

- 84.0% of authorities offered dependent carers' allowance and 64.2% offered childcare allowance. The overall average hourly rate was £6.84 and £5.96 respectively.
- The majority of authorities also offered both travel (92.6%) and subsistence allowance (87.9%); however, fewer authorities offered a bike allowance (54.1%).
- Less than half of authorities (42.4%) offered their councillors access to a pension scheme.

National Census of Local Authority Councillors in England 2006 – extracts from the Executive Summary:

- 86.9% of councillors cited wanting to serve the community as their reason for wanting to become a councillor and 93.5% thought that listening to local views was the most important thing for them to do.
- Councillors spent an average of 21.9 hours per week on council/political business, with the largest proportion (20.7%) spending between 16 and 20 hours and the smallest (1.4%) spending between 41 and 45 hours. There were variations between types of authority, with the average number of hours per week spent on council and political business varying from 17.8 hours in shire districts to 29.3 hours in metropolitan districts.
- Councillors holding a position of leading responsibility spent on average 25.1 hours per week, compared to 18.1 hours for those not holding a senior position
- 53.7% of councillors held one or more positions of leading responsibility within the council. Of those, most were Cabinet/Executive members (15.1%), Chair/Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny (12.6%) and Chair/Vice-Chair of Regulatory (10.6%).
- 49.5% of councillors reported that they received a special responsibility allowance. The figure ranged from 44.8% in shire districts to 57.7% in shire counties. Regionally, the proportion of councillors receiving a special responsibility allowance varied from 46.2% in the South West to 54.5% in the North East.

Notes:

1. The Survey was conducted by Local Government Analysis and Research on behalf of the Local Government Association and Improvement and Development Agency.
2. Full survey results are available:
www.lgar.local.gov.uk
3. For further details, please contact Jonathan Evans: jonathan.evans@lgar.local.gov.uk
4. Further reading:

National Census of Local Authority Councillors in England 2006:
<http://www.lgar.local.gov.uk/lgv/core/page.do?pageld=23372>

Independent Members' Remuneration Panels and the Basic Allowance:
<http://www.laria.gov.uk/content/features/70/feat8.htm>

Key questions and answers about councillor allowances:
<http://www.lga.gov.uk/Briefing.asp?lsection=761&id=5X3D65-A780DDA5&ccat=120>
5. Summary results:

Summary Table

	Sample size		Average allowance:												
			Basic	Leader of the authority		Cabinet/Executive members			Chair of Overview and Scrutiny			Chair of Planning Committee		Chair of Licensing Committee	
	No.	%	£pa	£pa	No.	£pa	No.	Avg. No.	£pa	No.	Avg. No.	£pa	No.	£pa	No.
Type															
London Borough	22	67%	£9,227	£31,784	21	£17,634	22	7.3	£10,738	22	3.4	£9,978	21	£8,066	17
Met District	19	53%	£9,512	£25,690	18	£12,161	19	7.9	£8,394	19	3.7	£7,787	18	£6,001	17
Shire County	23	68%	£8,941	£25,665	23	£14,912	23	7.4	£9,929	22	3.2	£6,070	17	£4,074	2
Shire District	165	69%	£3,991	£11,065	153	£5,944	132	6.4	£3,721	160	2.1	£3,824	157	£3,034	144
Unitary	28	60%	£7,406	£20,338	26	£11,748	26	7.8	£7,853	27	3.8	£6,962	27	£5,818	27
Region															
East Midlands	28	62%	£4,729	£12,632	27	£7,181	21	6.8	£4,481	27	1.8	£3,936	27	£2,816	22
East of England	37	69%	£4,917	£13,709	34	£8,593	31	5.9	£5,181	37	1.6	£4,702	35	£4,227	30
London	22	67%	£9,227	£31,784	21	£17,634	22	7.3	£10,738	22	3.4	£9,978	21	£8,066	17
North East	13	52%	£5,777	£14,409	11	£6,273	12	8.3	£4,892	12	2.9	£3,772	13	£3,295	11
North West	37	80%	£5,720	£17,052	37	£8,126	35	7.8	£4,775	37	3.5	£4,604	35	£3,682	31
South East	50	68%	£4,824	£13,751	49	£7,884	43	6.5	£4,299	48	2.5	£4,256	43	£2,778	40
South West	33	65%	£5,263	£15,369	28	£9,368	25	6.9	£5,636	31	2.7	£4,500	32	£3,596	24
West Midlands	27	71%	£5,526	£15,141	25	£8,486	24	6.6	£6,021	26	2.6	£6,088	25	£4,695	23
Yorkshire & Humberside	10	45%	£8,164	£21,685	9	£12,262	9	7.1	£9,967	10	2.7	£7,952	9	£6,628	9
Grand Total	257	66%	£5,648	£16,356	241	£9,243	222	6.9	£5,686	250	2.6	£5,172	240	£4,064	207

Summary Table Cont.

	Other allowances:							
	Dependent carers'		Childcare		Travel	Bike	Subsistence	Pension scheme
	No.	£/hr	No.	£/hr				
Type								
London Borough	18	£5.75	10	£5.56	18	9	20	14
Met District	14	£5.27	10	£5.17	17	8	13	13
Shire County	22	£7.15	19	£5.84	22	17	22	13
Shire District	136	£6.96	104	£6.05	155	89	146	56
Unitary	26	£7.40	22	£6.07	26	16	25	13
Region								
East Midlands	21	£6.82	21	£5.89	28	12	26	13
East of England	33	£7.38	27	£6.22	36	29	31	14
London	18	£5.75	10	£5.56	18	9	20	14
North East	10	£6.38	6	£5.77	12	5	12	4
North West	29	£6.09	23	£6.15	35	17	33	19
South East	46	£7.97	34	£5.72	46	33	45	16
South West	30	£6.09	24	£6.38	30	16	29	11
West Midlands	20	£5.97	14	£5.47	25	13	23	13
Yorkshire & Humberside	9	£7.14	6	£6.18	8	5	7	5
Grand Total	216	£6.84	165	£5.96	238	139	226	109