

Members' Allowances Survey 2008

The Members' Allowances survey draws together in one place information on member allowance schemes across councils in England. The 2008 survey is the latest such survey and received responses from 324 authorities (84%). It requested details of the basic allowance, special responsibility allowances, dependent carers allowance, childcare allowance, travel allowance, bicycle allowance, subsistence allowance and access to pension schemes.

All councillors are entitled to receive a basic allowance and, where they hold offices of special responsibility as set by their council, they are also entitled to a special responsibility allowance. Authorities also have the discretion to pay additional allowances such as dependent / carer's allowances, travel allowance and subsistence allowance, and to allow councillors 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.

Some of the main findings are summarised below:

- Councillors' basic allowance in 2008 averaged £6,099 per annum and ranged from and average of £4,194 in shire districts to £9,978 in shire counties. It also varied regionally from £5,040 in the East of England to £9,739 in London.
- The average leader's allowance was £17,753 and ranged from £11,490 in shire districts to £37,486 in London boroughs. Across the regions, the average leaders' allowance varied from £13,481 in the East of England to £37,486 in London.
- Among cabinet / executive members, the average allowance was £9,710 and ranged from £6,083 in shire districts to £22,028 in London boroughs. This allowance also differed across the regions ranging from £7,684 in the North East to £22,028 in London.

- 89.5 per cent of authorities offered a dependent carers' allowance at an average hourly rate of £7.83. 72.2 per cent offered a childcare allowance and the average hourly rate offered was £7.03.
- Around half of authorities (52.2 per cent) offered councillors access to a pension scheme.