



Councillors' Allowances

Jennifer Salisbury Jones

Data Analyst, TaxPayers' Alliance

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New research by the TaxPayers' Alliance reveals the full cost of payments to local councillors - two thirds of a billion pounds over three years. Many councillors receive modest allowances appropriate to the work they do in representing local taxpayers but the variation in what is paid to those in similar roles is significant. In an era of increasing pressure on local authority resources, it is essential that every penny is spent wisely and above inflation rises in payments to councillors are difficult to justify.

The key findings of this research are:

- A total of £699 million has been paid to councillors over the past three years.
- At least 238 councils raised the basic rate of allowances paid between 2012-13 and 2014-15.
- Between 2012-13 and 2014-15 the total bill for allowances and expenses has gone up in at least 208 councils.
- If no council had paid above the median value of allowances in each type of authority, at least £113 million would have been saved between 2012-13 and 2014-15.
- The largest percentage increase in the rate of basic allowances between 2012-13 and 2014-15 was 83 per cent in Waverley Council - from £2,454 to £4,501.
- In 2014-15 the highest rate of basic allowance was paid by Moray Council - £16,722
- In 2014-15 the highest rate of special responsibility allowance was paid by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea - £54,769

[Click here for the full research](#)

[Alternative link](#)

All councillors in the UK are entitled to a basic allowance. Additionally, those who hold positions within the council are usually entitled to special responsibility allowances (SRAs). Councillors are also able to claim for incidental expenses such as mileage and subsistence on top of this, while arrangements for IT or carers' allowances vary from council to council.

This does not include directly elected mayors.

In 2014-15:

In the East Midlands

- Nottinghamshire had the highest basic allowance - £12,906
- High Peak had the lowest basic allowance - £3,002
- Leicestershire had the highest special responsibility allowance - £36,228

In the East of England

- Essex had the highest basic allowance - £11,500
- Cambridge had the lowest basic allowance - £2,782
- Essex had the highest special responsibility allowance - £53,500

In London

- Croydon had the highest basic allowance - £11,239
- Kingston upon Thames had the lowest basic allowance - £7,646
- Kensington and Chelsea had the highest special responsibility allowance - £54,769

In the North East

- Durham had the highest basic allowance - £13,300
- Hartlepool had the lowest basic allowance - £5,825
- Sunderland had the highest special responsibility allowance - £37,667

In the North West

- Manchester had the highest basic allowance - £16,043
- South Ribble had the lowest basic allowance - £1,523
- Manchester had the highest special responsibility allowance - £40,067

In Scotland

- Moray had the highest basic allowance - £16,722
- Clackmannanshire had the lowest basic allowance - £16,216
- Edinburgh had the highest special responsibility allowance - £33,123

In the South East

- Kent had the highest basic allowance - £12,805
- Eastbourne had the lowest basic allowance - £2,808
- Surrey had the highest special responsibility allowance - £43,000

In the South West

- Wiltshire had the highest basic allowance - £12,412
- West Somerset had the lowest basic allowance - £2,733
- Dorset had the highest special responsibility allowance - £31,608

In Wales

- All Welsh councils paid a basic rate of £13,300 in 2014-15
- Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf had the highest special responsibility allowance - £39,700

In the West Midlands

- Birmingham had the highest basic allowance - £16,267
- Staffordshire Moorlands had the lowest basic allowance - £2,902
- Birmingham had the highest special responsibility allowance - £50,352

In Yorkshire and Humber

- Leeds had the highest basic allowance - £14,929
- Richmondshire had the lowest basic allowance - £2,950
- Leeds had the highest special responsibility allowance - £37,483

[Click here for the full research](#)
[Alternative link](#)

Sources and Methodology

Total allowances was defined as the total value of payments of the basic allowance plus the total of any special responsibility allowances (SRAs) paid to councillors in a financial year. Total allowances and expenses covered the totals of basic and SRA payments plus any transport, subsistence or other expenses. Many councils define IT or transport payments as allowances rather than expenses, but in order to maintain consistency all payments aside from the basic and SRA allowances were considered expenses.

In the first instance, as much of the data as was available was obtained from council websites. However, due to the poor maintenance of online records, requests were sent under the Freedom of Information Act to over 200 councils.

Where possible, the rates of members' allowances payable were obtained from the schemes of members' allowances for each year. The totals for payments made to members were calculated from the records of payments made, or, if not available, from the council's annual accounts and financial statements. Where a scheme of members' allowances was not available for a given year, rates payable were deduced from the amounts paid to councillors.

The total value of payments above median values were obtained as follows: median values were calculated for each type of local authority which were then subtracted from what each authority of that type had paid, before summing the total of the overpayment for those councils which had paid more than the median.

This report does not consider allowances paid to councillors in Northern Ireland due to poor availability of clear data for the given period as a result of the reorganisation of April of 2015.

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Table 1: Key findings

Year	Total allowances paid (£)	Total allowances plus expenses paid (£)	Total allowances above median (£)	Total allowances plus expenses above median (£)
2012-13	227,258,620	234,471,765	37,596,908	37,634,533
2013-14	226,913,428	235,495,999	37,835,738	37,202,171
2014-15	222,744,508	229,967,496	37,093,228	37,628,493
	676,916,556	699,935,260	112,525,875	112,465,197

The tables below give information both for the notable payments in each region and a breakdown of English councils by authority type.

No further breakdown is available for Scotland and Wales as they only have a single council type.

This report does not consider Northern Ireland.

Rises in Payments to Councillors

Table 2: Councils with the largest percentage increase in basic allowance 2012-13 to 2014-15

Council	Percentage rise (%)	2012-13 basic rate (£)	2014-15 basic rate (£)
Waverley	83	2,454	4,501
Swale	43	3,343	4,779
Northamptonshire	28	7,086	9,054
Sevenoaks	24	4,247	5,253
Lincolnshire	23	8,184	10,100

Table 3: Councils with the largest percentage increase in total allowances and expenses paid 2012-13 to 2014-15

Council	Percentage rise (%)	Total allowances plus expenses paid 2012-13 (£)	Total allowances plus expenses paid 2014-15 (£)
Waverley	77	205,886	364,385
Swale	41	268,826	380,126
Surrey	31	1,417,291	1,860,177
Runnymede	26	156,143	196,807
Boston	22	157,340	191,612

Rates of Basic Allowance Paid in 2014-15

Table 4: Councils with the highest rate of basic allowance in 2014-15 by region

Region	Council	2014-15 basic allowance (£)
East Midlands	Nottinghamshire	12,906
East of England	Essex	11,500
London	Croydon	11,239
North East	Durham	13,300
North West	Manchester	16,043
Scotland	Moray	16,722
South East	Kent	12,805
South West	Wiltshire	12,412
Wales	See note ¹	13,300
West Midlands	Birmingham	16,267
Yorkshire and Humber	Leeds	14,929

Table 5: English councils with the highest rate of basic allowance in 2014-15 by authority type

Type of authority	Council	2014-15 basic allowance (£)
English Non-Metropolitan District	Bolsover	9,902
London Borough	Croydon	11,239
English Metropolitan District	Birmingham	16,267
English Unitary	Durham	13,300
English County	Nottinghamshire	12,906

¹All Welsh councils paid a basic rate of £13,300 in 2014-15

Table 6: Councils with the lowest rate of basic allowance in 2014-15 by region

Region	Council	2014-15 basic allowance (£)
East Midlands	High Peak	3,002
East of England	Cambridge	2,782
London	Kingston upon Thames	7,646
North East	Hartlepool	5,825
North West	South Ribble	1,523
Scotland	Clackmannanshire	16,216
South East	Eastbourne	2,808
South West	West Somerset	2,733
West Midlands	Staffordshire Moorlands	2,902
Yorkshire and Humber	Richmondshire	2,950

Table 7: English councils with the lowest rate of basic allowance in 2014-15 by authority type

Type of authority	Council	2014-15 basic allowance (£)
English Non-Metropolitan District	South Ribble	1,523
London Borough	Kingston upon Thames	7,646
English Metropolitan District	Trafford	6,266
English Unitary	Rutland	3,770
English County	Cambridgeshire	7,700

Total Allowances and Expenses Paid in 2014-15

Table 8: Councils with the highest total allowances and expenses paid in 2014-15 by region

Region	Council	2014-15 allowances and expenses paid (£)
East Midlands	Nottinghamshire	1,511,791
East of England	Essex	1,572,102
London	Greater London Authority	1,677,064
North East	Durham	2,037,836
North West	Cheshire East	1,366,159
Scotland	Highland	1,737,104
South East	Surrey	1,860,177
South West	Wiltshire	1,851,579
Wales	Flintshire	1,366,000
West Midlands	Birmingham	2,409,078
Yorkshire and Humber	Leeds	2,144,061

Table 9: English councils with the highest total allowances and expenses paid in 2014-15 by authority type

Type of authority	Council	2014-15 allowances and expenses paid (£)
English Non-Metropolitan District	Basingstoke and Deane	589,431
London Borough	Croydon	1,456,862
English Metropolitan District	Birmingham	2,409,078
English Unitary	Durham	2,037,836
English County	Surrey	1,860,177

Table 10: Councils with the lowest total allowances and expenses paid in 2014-15 by region

Region	Council	2014-15 allowances and expenses paid (£)
East Midlands	Oadby and Wigston	163,147
East of England	Great Yarmouth	182,471
London	Kingston upon Thames	639,403
North East	Hartlepool	264,483
North West	Barrow-in-Furness	124,872
Scotland	Clackmannanshire	335,558
South East	Hastings	96,088
South West	West Somerset	153,002
Wales	Isle of Anglesey	589,000
West Midlands	Redditch	144,698
Yorkshire and Humber	Ryedale	126,131

Table 11: English councils with the lowest total allowances and expenses paid in 2014-15 by authority type

Type of authority	Council	2014-15 allowances and expenses paid (£)
English Non-Metropolitan District	Hastings	96,088
London Borough	Kingston upon Thames	639,403
English Metropolitan District	Solihull	539,642
English Unitary	Rutland	182,537
English County	Dorset	698,313