



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# INCIDENTAL COSTS OF PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. Under the provisions of the Assembly Members (Salaries and Expenses) Determination (Northern Ireland) 2016 ('the Determination') each Member is provided with two allowances to cover the costs of travel incurred in exercising his or her functions as a Member. These are the Annual Constituency Travel Allowance and the Annual Assembly Travel Allowance. The Annual Constituency Travel Allowance covers the travel by a Member within his or her constituency on Assembly business. The Annual Assembly Travel Allowance covers travel to and from the constituency to Parliament Buildings for Plenary or Committee business. These allowances are annual flat rate amounts which are paid through the payroll. They also cover accommodation and subsistence costs.
- 1.2. However, there can be occasions where a Member may be required to undertake travel associated with a wider role within the Assembly. This might include representative attendance at a Parliamentary forum such as the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA). The primary costs of such travel (for example, flights and accommodation) are met directly by the Assembly Commission. However, Members may also incur incidental costs when undertaking such travel and there is no provision under the Determination to recover these incidental costs.
- 1.3. Travel associated with a Member's wider role within the Assembly is referred to as "**Parliamentary Travel**". The incidental costs of such travel may be recovered by Members in accordance with this framework.

## **2. WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL?**

- 2.1. Travel by a Member to attend a Committee meeting at Parliament Buildings is not Parliamentary Travel and any costs associated with attending meetings of this kind in Parliament Buildings are explicitly excluded from this framework. However, a Member may occasionally attend a Committee meeting at an external location or participate in a Committee visit or research trip to a location other than Parliament Buildings. Certain aspects of travel associated with attendance at such events outside Parliament Buildings can be considered as Parliamentary Travel.
- 2.2. In addition, Parliamentary Travel also includes travel to attend meetings or events associated with membership of other Parliamentary bodies such as the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) or the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association. Parliamentary Travel may include certain accommodation costs and subsistence costs associated with this travel.
- 2.3. Therefore, Parliamentary Travel has a narrow definition that does not extend beyond the situations set out in the two preceding paragraphs.
- 2.4. Parliamentary Travel **does not** include any form of travel undertaken by a Member to or from Parliament Buildings as part of his or her functions as a

Member. Similarly, travel undertaken by a Member on Assembly business within a Member's constituency is not considered as Parliamentary Travel. The specific provisions of the Determination cover these types of travel.

- 2.5. Parliamentary Travel **does not** include travel associated with a Member's involvement in party political activity, including engaging in political talks on matters related to institutional structures such as the Executive. It does not include travel related to membership of an "All-Party" group. It does not include travel to an event or function where a Member attends at the request of a third party (for example, if a Member received an invitation to attend an event simply because he or she is a Member or a party spokesperson on a particular topic). Parliamentary Travel does not include travel to an event where a general invitation has issued to many or all Members, such as attending a conference, etc.
- 2.6. The incidences of Parliamentary Travel set out above are not intended to be definitive. Whether or not an event is associated with a Member's wider role within the Assembly, and thus whether the incidental costs of travel to such an event are recoverable, will be determined by the Finance Office on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.7. Arrangements for Parliamentary Travel undertaken by Members (including any accommodation requirements) should almost exclusively be arranged and paid for centrally by the Finance Office's Travel Team. This includes flights, trains, taxis, hotel accommodation, etc. for both group and individual travel arrangements. However, it is recognised that there may be exceptional circumstances where it is not practicable for every Parliamentary Travel expense to be pre-paid. This document sets out a framework within which a Member may be reimbursed for incidental costs that he or she necessarily incurs while travelling on Parliamentary business, and which are not recoverable under the Determination.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, this framework provides only for the reimbursement of incidental costs incurred by a Member. It does not provide for any reimbursement of incidental costs incurred by a Member's support staff.

### **3. PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL - ADMISSIBLE COSTS**

- 3.1. As noted above, travel arrangements for Members should, as far as practicable, be made by the Finance Office's Travel Team. Parliamentary Travel may be organised on a Member's behalf by a Committee Clerk or Secretariat official who is responsible for co-ordinating the trip or visit. Costs associated with this travel will be paid for centrally as part of the Travel Team's service. However, it is recognised that some costs may be incurred by a Member during a trip or, in exceptional circumstances, because they cannot be pre-arranged. These costs are likely to include car parking fees, toll charges, bus fares, tram fares, taxi fares or subsistence costs. Where it is anticipated that such costs may arise, a Member **must** apply to the Finance Office for approval prior to travelling. This

is to ensure that the anticipated incidental costs can be reimbursed under this framework.

- 3.2. Only those pre-approved incidental costs incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in carrying out Parliamentary business can be reimbursed. All claims for reimbursement must be submitted in an approved manner and be accompanied by original receipts, invoices or tickets.

### **PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL - PUBLIC TRANSPORT OR TAXI FARES**

- 3.3. Where it is necessary for a Member to make a journey by bus, tram, train, tube or taxi whilst undertaking Parliamentary Travel, a Member can recover the actual cost of the journey. With regards to the mode of transport used, a Member must demonstrate that value for money has been considered particularly with regard to the use of taxis. Where appropriate, reimbursement will be for standard or economy fares only. Claims for public transport costs or taxi fares must be accompanied by a receipt.

### **PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL - USE OF A PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLE (EXCESS MILEAGE)**

- 3.4. Every Member receives two Travel Allowances to cover the cost of travel within his or her constituency and the cost of return journeys to and from the constituency to Parliament Buildings. There are limited additional circumstances in which a Member may need to use his or her privately-owned vehicle. For that reason, only limited mileage costs may be reimbursed.
- 3.5. In setting the rates of Travel Allowances that are payable to Members for carrying out their functions as a Member, the Independent Financial Review Panel assessed a number of factors. This included the number of journeys that would reasonably occur to and from a constituency to Parliament Buildings. Naturally, this would include attending Plenary sittings and Committee meetings. However, it is recognised that Members may be required to travel to locations other than Parliament Buildings to carry out Parliamentary business which takes place outside their constituencies, or which requires a journey greater than the distance from the constituency to Parliament Buildings. The additional costs of such travel are not reflected in the Travel Allowances payable under the Determination.
- 3.6. Under this framework, a Member may claim the mileage associated with travel to a location outside his or her constituency or the mileage for journeys which are greater than the distance of a return journey from the Member's constituency office to Parliament Buildings. For example, a Member from North Antrim attends a Committee meeting in Enniskillen and travels in his or her privately owned vehicle. The Assembly Travel Allowance provides for the Member to travel from his or her constituency to Parliament Building to attend Committee meetings. In the example of travel to Enniskillen, the mileage between the Member's constituency and Enniskillen that is over and above the mileage between the Member's constituency and Parliament Buildings can be reclaimed as "excess mileage". If a Member is seeking reimbursement for

excess mileage costs associated with Parliamentary Travel, he or she must apply to the Finance Office in advance of travel for advice and assistance on the admissibility of the claim and with the calculation of the appropriate mileage.

- 3.7. It is up to each Member to calculate and claim for excess mileage. In order to make a claim for such mileage, a Member must first calculate the total number of miles for the round trip and then deduct the return mileage from the constituency office to Parliament Buildings to give the excess mileage. To assist Members in calculating the appropriate amount of mileage, a database of return mileage from each constituency office to Parliament Buildings is maintained by the Finance Office and is available on the Finance Office's pages of AsslSt or by using the following link:

<http://assist.assemblyni.gov.uk/media/5951/201808-constituency-office-list-003.pdf>

- 3.8. Excess mileage will be paid at the current rate per mile approved and published by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as the approved mileage allowance payments (AMAP) for business mileage in a privately owned vehicle. The current rate is 45p per mile.
- 3.9. The Assembly Commission requires that all Members who wish to use their own vehicles should have the appropriate level of insurance to do so. This principle is widely applied by many commercial and public sector organisations in the administration of their expenses regimes and represents generally accepted best practice. In order to make a claim for excess mileage a Member **must** certify that their motor insurance policy covers the use of his or her vehicle for business purposes and provide a copy of the certificate of insurance for verification. Where a Member does not hold the appropriate level of insurance cover, excess mileage claims will not be reimbursed.

### **PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL - CAR PARKING FEES / TOLL CHARGES**

- 3.10. Where a Member undertakes Parliamentary Travel and uses a privately owned vehicle, the incidental costs associated with the journey may be claimed, such as car parking fees or toll charges. Claims for car parking charges must be accompanied by a receipt. However, toll charges may be claimed without the presentation of the receipt if these have been paid for electronically. In this case, a copy of an extract of a bank or credit card statement should be provided as confirmation of the actual charge incurred. Car parking fines, speeding fines or other motoring penalties may not be claimed.

### **PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL - SUBSISTENCE**

- 3.11. Where a Member undertakes Parliamentary Travel and subsistence costs are not met by the event host or cannot be paid for centrally, subsistence costs may be claimed subject to the presentation of receipts. The maximum amounts of subsistence in respect of expenditure that has actually been incurred that can be reimbursed are set out in the table below.

<b>Type of Subsistence</b>	<b>Maximum Recoverable Amount</b>	<b>Conditions of Reimbursement</b>
Over 5 hours	£5	This limit is payable when a Member is away for more than 5 hours and the Member necessarily has to pay for one meal.
Late meal and over 5 hours	£15	This limit is payable when a Member is away for more than 5 hours and is still working after 8pm and the Member necessarily has to pay for one meal.
Over 10 hours	£10	This limit is payable when a Member is away for more than 10 hours and necessarily has to pay for two meals.
Late meal and over 10 hours	£20	This limit is payable when a Member is away for more than 10 hours is still working after 8pm and necessarily has to pay for two meals.
24 hours and 2 meals	£20	This limit is payable when a Member is away overnight and necessarily has to pay for two meals in that day, one of which must be the main evening meal. In these circumstances, only two meals are claimed because the price of breakfast is included in the price of the hotel that the Member is staying in and the hotel has been paid for directly by the Finance Office.
24 hours and 3 meals	£25	This limit is payable when a Member is away overnight and necessarily has to pay for all three meals during that day.

- 3.12. It is important to note that these amounts are the maximum amounts that may be reimbursed on the presentation of itemised receipts. They are not automatic entitlements or flat-rate payments. Only those actual costs which have been incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively by the Member in carrying out Parliamentary business will be reimbursed.
- 3.13. No costs for alcoholic beverages will be reimbursed.
- 3.14. Costs that have been incurred outside the UK will be converted to a Sterling equivalent at the rate of exchange applicable on the day of purchase.

#### **4. PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL - HOW TO MAKE A CLAIM**

- 4.1. As noted above, approval to incur and recover the costs associated with Parliamentary Travel must be sought in advance from the Finance Office.
- 4.2. Where it is necessary for a Member to undertake Parliamentary Travel and it is anticipated that incidental costs will be incurred that cannot be paid for centrally in advance, a Member must contact the member of Secretariat Staff who is co-

ordinating the trip to discuss the nature and amount of incidental costs, which are likely to occur. A CTS1 form will be completed and forwarded to the Finance Office for approval. A copy of this form is attached at Appendix 1 for ease of reference. The member of Secretariat staff will notify the Member as to whether approval has been granted or not.

- 4.3. Following completion of the Parliamentary Travel, a Member can apply for reimbursement of the approved costs by completing a CTS2 form. A copy of the form is attached at Appendix 2 for ease of reference. The completed CTS2 form should initially be submitted to the member of Secretariat staff who was co-ordinating the trip, for approval. They will verify that all the documentation is in order and that the expenditure has been pre-approved properly. Once this is complete, the claim form will be passed to the Finance Office for payment.
- 4.4. On completing the CTS2 form, Members must ensure that the first page of the claim form is completed in full and signed.
- 4.5. The reverse of the form must also be completed including:
  - a. Details of the journey;
  - b. Where excess mileage is being claimed - the total number of miles travelled; the miles for a journey from Parliament Buildings to the constituency office; the excess miles claimed (total miles less normal journey);
  - c. Details of any toll charges incurred;
  - d. Details of pre-approved transport expenses - such as car parking charges, public transport costs, coach, taxi, train, tram or tube fares. **All claims must be supported with valid VAT receipts;**
  - e. Details of pre-approved subsistence expenses, including the duration of the absence, details of the meals purchased (i.e 'breakfast', 'lunch', or 'dinner', not a list of individual items purchased) and the amount being claimed, up to the maximum amount for each period. **All claims must be supported with valid VAT receipts.**
- 4.6. On the first occasion that a Member uses a privately-owned vehicle and wishes to make a claim for excess mileage, a copy of the current insurance certificate showing that the vehicle is covered for business use must be submitted to the Finance Office. A copy of the certificate will be retained for verification purposes for future claims. Once the certificate expires, a request will be made for an updated certificate.
- 4.7. If a Member has a query regarding the details of this framework or regarding a particular claim, please contact the Finance Office Reporting and Compliance Manager (Lynne McBride 028 90 521694) for assistance and clarification

## Parliamentary Travel - Members (MLA) Expenses Claim Pre-Approval of associated incidental costs

Where possible all arrangements for Parliamentary Travel should be made and paid for centrally by the Finance Office. **In exceptional circumstances**, where central booking and payment is not possible, clarification must be sought from the Finance Office as to whether incidental travel and subsistence costs are admissible and will be reimbursed. This approval must be sought prior to travel.

Name of Member :	
Date(s) of travel:	
Destination:	
Purpose of travel:	
<b>Transport Costs Required:</b> Please state what type of costs will be incurred and reason why transport cannot be booked centrally?	
<b>Taxi Fares:</b> Please state how many fares will be required and destination Why it is necessary to use a taxi?	
<b>Subsistence:</b> Please state what the duration of the visit will be and what rate of subsistence will be required.	
<b>Car parking / tolls:</b> Please state if privately owned vehicle will be used and if parking fees or tolls will be incurred.	

**For internal processing purposes only – notification of requirement to be sent to appropriate cost centre, in order to update budget for additional expenditure.**

Signed:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Grade (AG6 or above):	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
(Budget manager)			
Print Name:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Date:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
(Budget manager)			

**Once complete and signed forward the Finance Office (Travel Desk) for approval.**

### Finance Office Approval

The above travel request is Approved  Not approved

Please state reason for approval/non-approval

Signed:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Date:	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
Name	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Grade: (AG6 or above)	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>



For Official Use

Release Ref 

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## Committee / Parliamentary Members (MLA) Expenses Claim

### Claimant details

Please complete in CAPITAL Letters

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ MLA \_\_\_\_\_ Initial(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Committee \_\_\_\_\_

Constituency Office Post Code

B	T					
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**Travel Period** From 

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 To 

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### Declaration

I declare that:

- 1 I made the journey(s) detailed overleaf.
- 2 The expenses shown have been wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred by me on Assembly business.
- 3 Where car parking, bus, taxi or tram journeys are being charged, receipts are attached.
- 4 I have not been reimbursed from any other source for the journey(s) claimed.
- 5 My motor insurance policy covers the use of the vehicle for business purposes.
- 6 Where subsistence is claimed, signed receipts are attached.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Committee Member, MLA)

**When completed and signed claim to be sent to the AG6.**

### Authorisation (AG6 or above)

**Note: The Authorising Office must check that all the information is correct before authorising this claim**

This claim is for: Committee Travel 

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 Parliamentary Travel 

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Excess Miles claimed 

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 @ 45p Amount Authorised for payment £ 

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Car Parking Expenses Amount Authorised for payment £ 

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Subsistence Amount Authorised for payment £ 

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Taxis Amount Authorised for payment £ 

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Pre-approved Expenses (e.g bus, taxi or tram) Amount Authorised for payment £ 

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Cost Centre 

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 Activity code (project Code) 

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I certify that:

- 1 Mileage - Distance claimed is in excess of normal journey and agrees to mileage database on Assist.
- 2 The calculation is correct and the ost code of Constituency Office checked to database.
- 3 Car parking tickets, or associated receipts for bus, taxi or tram journeys are attached to the claim.
- 4 Where subsistence is claimed signed receipts are attached

Authoriser (AG6 or above)

Name

Signature

Authoriser Code

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**When completed and authorised, claim to be forwarded to the Finance Office**

Date forwarded to Finance 

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**Committee Members Expenses Claim Form**

**\*\* Miles as per Member's normal journey from their constituency office to Parliament Buildings - disallowed**

Date	Journey To/From	Total Miles Travelled (1)	Normal journey Miles ** (2)	Excess Miles Claimable (1) - (2)	Car Parking Signed receipts to be attached
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
					£
<b>Total claimed</b>					£

**Subsistence**

I certify that I was away from home for the following period and subsistence was not provided by the event host.

Date from  Date to

Time from  Time to

The following meals were purchased. (Please attached signed receipts)

Meal	Cost*
_____	£ _____
_____	£ _____
_____	£ _____
_____	£ _____

\* Only costs within limits will be reimbursed and not alcohol purchases will be processed.