



# Bedfordshire

## Fire & Rescue Authority

### SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2024/25

**Effective From: 1 APRIL 2024**

*Please note the allowances payable will be adjusted to reflect any increase in pay to Local Government staff, if agreed, so the figures below remain current but do not include any increase for 2024/25 which may follow.*

#### **Basic Allowance**

£3,787.60 per annum.

Payable to all Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) Members to cover their time commitment on FRA duties and any miscellaneous expenses incurred in pursuit of that business, not otherwise covered under the Members' Allowances Scheme, such as office stationery, etc.

The Basic Allowance has been based on an estimated time commitment of 20 days to cover agendas, reports and attendance relating to scheduled meetings of the FRA, and attendance at budget workshops, station visits, training and official functions, at a daily rate.

This rate was revised in line with the Local Annual Government Pay Settlement awarded 1 April 2023; the current rate is £189.38.

Members can receive no more than one Special Responsibility Allowance.

The FRA agreed on 28 March 2023 that for 2024/25 the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances will be updated in accordance with the Annual Local Government Pay Settlement with effect from 1 April 2024. However, the figures below reflect the Special Responsibility Allowances and the Annual Government Pay Settlement for 2023/24 as no increase for 2024/25 has been agreed as yet.

#### **Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)**

In addition to the duties of a basic Member, the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Members undertake additional responsibilities including: attending regional meetings, LGA meetings, audit meetings, etc, together with ad hoc Appointment Panels, Statement of Accounts signing, etc, and taking decisions in between meetings of the FRA.

The Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee presides at meetings of the Audit and Standards Committee and acts as a substitute Member with regard to ad hoc Appointment Panels, etc, and consultation on decision making between meetings of the FRA.

Additional allowance to reflect responsibilities of post:

<b>Post-holder</b>	<b>Allowance (per annum)</b>
<i>Chair of FRA</i>	£15,160.80
<i>Vice Chair of FRA</i>	£5,681.88
<i>Executive Member</i>	£1,136.16
<i>Chair of Audit and Standards Committee</i>	£1,136.16

The Special Responsibility Allowances apply from the date of the Annual Meeting.

### **Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

#### **Travel**

As payable to non-uniformed (Green book) personnel.

#### **Cars**

Member's own car (excluding motor cycles for which rates can be supplied on request) is **45p\*\* per mile** for all engines sizes providing a VAT receipt is submitted via the BFRS iTrent ESS Time and Expense system.

#### **Notes**

Members are required to travel by the shortest possible route. Reasons for not using the shortest route should be noted on claim forms by Members.

Following discussion with HM Revenue and Customs on the payment of VAT on travel claims submitted to the Fire Authority, it will be necessary for all travel claims to be accompanied by a VAT receipt for the purchase of petrol/diesel:

- Dated just before or during the period of claim; and
- For at least the amount of fuel required to have undertaken the mileage for which reimbursement is being claimed.

**If a VAT receipt is not provided, reimbursement will be made minus the VAT element which is dependent on the fuel type and engine size of the vehicle, the net\* rates are detailed below:-**

Mileage	Rate**	VAT	Net*
Petrol up to 1400cc	45p	2.0	43.0
Petrol 1401-2000cc	45p	2.0	43.0
Petrol over 2000cc	45p	4.0	41.0
Diesel up to 1600cc	45p	2.0	43.0
Diesel 1601cc to 2000cc	45p	2.0	43.0
Diesel over 2000cc	45p	2.0	43.0

(VAT rates correct as at 1 April 2023 but liable to change)

*Car Sharing* - Members should combine journeys with other Members or Officers, wherever practical. In such cases the vehicle attracting the lowest mileage rate is to be used.

*Motor Vehicle Insurance* - It is essential that a Member's own motor vehicle insurance policy covers them when using their own vehicle on approved duties. The Authority cannot provide this cover. Motor vehicle insurers adopt different approaches and Members should contact their own insurer and advise them that the insured vehicle may be used in connection with their duties as a Councillor and cover is required for this. The mileage rate paid to Members using their own car on approved duties includes an element for motor vehicle insurance. The insurer's approach in relation to cover for travelling to and from an approved duty should also be ascertained to avoid misunderstanding.

*Parking fees, tolls, etc*, will be paid on the provision of receipts/tickets as proof of expenditure.

### Public Transport

Rail (standard class only), bus and taxi (taxi where no other means of transport available) - fares reimbursed as incurred, subject to tickets/receipts being submitted wherever possible.

The rates for travel by public transport shall not exceed ordinary fare, or available cheap fare.

Taxi – will be reimbursed against a receipted sum, the amount of the actual fare and any reasonable gratuity paid will be reimbursed in cases of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available. In any other case, the amount of the fare for travel by appropriate public transport will be paid instead.

### Eligible Duties for Claiming Travel Allowance

Approved Duties ie:

- All official FRA meetings, and all Committee, Panel, etc, meetings as a Member of that Committee, Panel, etc;
- Other meetings or events relating to the business of the FRA and authorised by the FRA or by the Chief Fire Officer or Secretary/Monitoring Officer;

- Briefing sessions in respect of official FRA, Panel, attended by office-holders in relation to the responsibilities for which they receive SRAs; and
- Meetings of all outside bodies to which the Member is appointed by the FRA, except where those bodies have their own expenses schemes.

### **Subsistence**

No allowance will be payable for day-to-day subsistence. Refreshments will normally be provided at meetings.

However, Members may claim direct reimbursement of actual expenditure incurred on non-routine subsistence, eg when away overnight on FRA business, subject to receipts being submitted.

### **Overnight Accommodation**

Overnight accommodation for conferences and other approved duties will be arranged by the Democratic Services on 01234 845000.

### **General Notes to Scheme**

- (1) Allowances are only payable for the period during which a Member holds office and Members may be required to refund any over-payments of allowances made to them.
- (2) A Member may be paid no more than one Special Responsibility Allowance.
- (3) Where a Member of the FRA is also a Member of another authority, that Member may not receive allowances from more than one authority in respect of the same duties.
- (4) Any Member may choose to forgo all or part of his or her entitlement to allowances by giving notice in writing to the Monitoring Officer.
- (5) If used, indexation will apply as follows, subject to any decision of the FRA:
  - (a) Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances to be increased on 1 April each year by the same percentage as the salaries of the FRA's Professional (ie non-uniformed) Staff.
  - (b) Car mileage allowance is in line with the casual user mileage rate paid to non-uniformed officers and will change automatically from time to time as those rates change.
- (6) Travel Allowances must be claimed before the end of the financial year in which they become payable, or within six months, whichever is the shorter.