



My Ref: E107/1/92

31 January 2012

Ms Eimear Lavelle
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Party Leader's Allowance

Dear Ms Lavelle

I refer to your letter of 17th January 2012 requesting “*details of the terms of the annual party leaders allowance, the amount that is paid to parties and to Independent Members of the Oireachtas*”, including “*the conditions and terms laid down in respect of usage of the monies provided under the scheme.*”

The Party Leader's Allowance is provided for in the Oireachtas (Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices) Act, 1938, as amended by the Oireachtas (Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices (Amendment) Act, 2001.

The allowance is paid to the parliamentary leader of a qualifying party in relation to expenses arising from the parliamentary activities, including research, of the party. Payments are made in respect of members of the party elected to Dáil Éireann and members elected/nominated to Seanad Éireann at the last preceding general election, or a subsequent bye-election or, in the case of Seanad Éireann, nominated to it after the last preceding general election.

The conditions governing entitlement to payment of the allowance are set out in the Act. Section 10(14) of the Act as amended by the 2001 Act, prescribes 11 different categories of relevant expenditure, including research, which is regarded as expenses arising from the parliamentary activities. These are set out at Appendix I. The primary restriction in the Act on the use of the allowance is that it may not be used in respect of election expenses.

Under the legislation, the amounts paid to the parliamentary leader of a qualifying party are calculated on the following basis:

TDs	Opposition Parties €	Government Parties €
First 10 members	71,520	47,680
11 members to 30	57,214	38,143
More than 30 members	28,616	19,077
Senators	€	
First 5 members	46,766	46,766
Over 5 members	23,383	23,383

The legislation provides that, in the case of a qualifying party forming part of the Government, allowances due in respect of TDs of that party are reduced by one third.

The legislation also provides that payments may be made to a member of Dáil Éireann, who at the last preceding general election or at a subsequent bye-election was elected as a member other than as a member of a qualifying party. Such qualifying Independent TDs are entitled to an annual rate of €41,152. A similar provision in the Act provides for an annual payment of €23,383 for Independent Senators.

The current annual amounts payable in respect of each of the parties of the 31st Dáil, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Labour, Sinn Féin, Socialist Party and People before Profit, and Independent TDs, are set out at Appendix II. The current annual amounts payable to qualifying Independent members elected/nominated to Seanad Éireann at the last preceding general election, or at a subsequent bye-election, are also specified. The methodology used for calculation of the allowances for each qualifying party is set out in Appendix III.

The amounts of the allowances paid to date in respect of each party and each Independent TD and Senator is at Appendix IV. Payments specified in respect of qualifying members of Dáil Éireann are for the period 25 February 2011 to 31 December 2011. Having regard to members of Seanad Éireann, in the case of elected members, the allowance was payable from 26 April 2011. In the case of members nominated by the Taoiseach, the allowance was payable from 20 May 2011.

The allowances are generally payable monthly in arrears into a bank account specified by the beneficiary of the allowance. Funding received under the Party Leader's Allowance legislation is not subject to tax.

The 2001 Act gives a statutory oversight role in relation to the Party Leader's Allowance to the Standards in Public Office Commission. This requires inter alia each party leader to prepare a statement of expenditure from the allowance, to have it audited by an independent auditor and furnish it with the auditor's report to the Standards in Public Office Commission within 120 days of the end of the financial year for which the allowance has been paid. In the event of the accounts not being furnished by the specified date, the subsequent allowance is withheld. Based on the accounts submitted the Commission is required to make a report to the Minister for Public Expenditure and

Reform in relation to the use of the Party Leader's Allowance and cause a copy of the report to be laid before the Oireachtas. Allowances paid to Independents are not subject to these oversight provisions.

I would like to inform you that the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Mr Brendan Howlin, TD, intends to bring proposals in relation to a review of the allowance to Government shortly.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Watt', written in a cursive style.

Robert Watt
Secretary General
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Relevant expenditure for the purposes of the Party Leader's Allowance

Expenses arising from parliamentary activities, including research includes expenditure on the following categories—

1. the general administration of the parliamentary activities of a qualifying party,
2. the provision of technical or specialist advice likely to be required in connection with legislative proposals or potential parliamentary initiatives,
3. research and training
4. policy formulation,
5. the provision of consultants' services, including the engagement of public relations consultants,
6. polling or public attitude sampling in connection with parliamentary debates or initiatives,
7. the purchase of support services for a parliamentary party from the party,
8. the payment to a parliamentary leader of any salary or honorarium in respect of duties arising from his or her activities as such leader as distinct from those of a member of Dail Eireann or a holder of a ministerial office,
9. the payment to another person of any salary or honorarium in respect of duties arising from the person's activities in a parliamentary party,
10. the provision for, or recoupment of, transport and personal expenditure incurred by a parliamentary leader, officers or a parliamentary party spokesperson as a result of their parliamentary party function,
11. entertainment.

Appendix II

Party Leader's Allowance – total annual amounts payable

Summary	€
Fine Gael	€2,678,403
Labour	€1,789,783
Fianna Fail	€1,674,403
Sinn Fein	€1,084,354
Socialist Party	€143,040
People Before Profit	€143,040
Independent TDs and Senators	€897,876
Total	€8,410,899

Appendix III

Calculation of the annual amount of the Party Leader's Allowance payable to the parliamentary leader of the qualifying parties of the 31st Dáil

Fine Gael

Category	No. of TD's	Rate	Due
First 10 Members	10	€71,520	€715,200
11 to 30	20	€57,214	€1,144,280
31 and over	46	€28,616	€1,316,336
sub-total			€3,175,816
Less 1/3 Government Party deduction			€1,058,605
Total	76		€2,117,211
Category	No. of Senators	Rate	Due
First 5 Members	5	€46,766	€233,830
over 5	14	€23,383	€327,362
Total	19		€561,192
Overall Total Due			€2,678,403

Labour

Category	No. of TD's	Rate	Due
First 10 Members	10	€71,520	€715,200
11 to 30	20	€57,214	€1,144,280
31 and over	8	€28,616	€228,928
sub-total			€2,088,408
Less 1/3 Government Party deduction			€696,136
Total	38		€1,392,272
Category	No. of Senators	Rate	Due
First 5 Members	5	€46,766	€233,830
over 5	7	€23,383	€163,681
Total	12		€397,511
Overall Total Due			€1,789,783

Fianna Fail

Category	No. of TD's	Rate	Due
First 10 Members	10	€71,520	€715,200
11 to 30	9	€57,214	€514,926
31 and over	0	€28,616	€0
Total	19		€1,230,126
Category	No. of Senators	Rate	Due
First 5 Members	5	€46,766	€233,830
over 5	9	€23,383	€210,447
Total	14		€444,277
Overall Total Due			€1,674,403

Sinn Fein

Category	No. of TD's	Rate	Due
First 10 Members	10	€71,520	€715,200
11 to 30	4	€57,214	€228,856
31 and over	0	€28,616	€0
Total	14		€944,056
Category	No. of Senators	Rate	Due
First 5 Members	3	€46,766	€140,298
over 5	0	€23,383	€0
Total	3		€140,298
Overall Total Due			€1,084,354

Socialist Party

Category	No. of TD's	Rate	Due
First 10 Members	2	€71,520	€143,040
11 to 30	0	€57,214	€0
31 and over	0	€28,616	€0
Total	2		€143,040
Overall Total Due			€143,040

People Before Profit

Category	No. of TD's	Rate	Due
First 10 Members	2	€71,520	€143,040
11 to 30	0	€57,214	€0
31 and over	0	€28,616	€0
Total	2		€143,040
Overall Total Due			€143,040

Independents

Category	No. of TD's	Rate	Due
	15	€41,152	€617,280
Category	No. of Senators	Rate	Due
	12	€23,383	€280,596
Overall Total Due			€897,876

Party Leader's Allowance - amounts paid to December 2011*

Party	Total €
Fine Gael	2,250,522.74
Fianna Fáil	1,462,769.98
Labour	1,462,570.11
Sinn Féin	893,432.68
Socialist Party	120,902.86
People Before Profit	120,902.86
Independent TDs	
F McGrath	34,783.20
M Lowry	34,783.20
M O Sullivan	34,783.20
S Ross	34,783.20
Michael Wallace	0.00
Michael Healy Rae	34,783.20
Noel Grealish	34,783.20
Stephen Donnelly	34,783.20
Luke Flanagan	34,783.20
John Halligan	34,783.20
Mattie McGrath	34,783.20
Catherine Murphy	34,783.20
Thomas Pringle	34,783.20
Tom Fleming	34,293.30
Seamus Healy	34,783.20
Independent Senators	
D Norris	15,913.41
F Quinn	15,913.40
R Mullen	15,913.40
John Crown	15,913.40
Sean Barrett	15,913.40
Martin McAleese	3,247.63
Fiach Mac Conghaill	14,394.35
Eamon Coghlan	14,394.35
Dr. Katherine Zappone	14,394.35
Mary Ann O'Brien	14,394.35
Marie-Louise O'Donnell	14,394.35
Jillian van Turnhout	14,394.35

*Members of Dáil Éireann - Total amount paid for the period 25 February 2011 to 31 December 2011.
Members of Seanad Éireann – Total amount paid for the period 26 April 2011 to 31 December 2011 in the case of elected members and from 20 May 2011 to 31 December in the case of members nominated by the Taoiseach