

House of Commons Guidance on Pay Rates for Members' Staff (with effect from 1 April 2005)

Members who have taken on new staff after 31 July 2001 are required to use standard contracts issued by the Department of Finance and Administration and to pay staff in accordance with the attached pay rates. Both the contracts and the pay ranges have been approved by the Speaker's Advisory Panel on Members' Allowances. The pay ranges are based on 37.5 hours net per week.

The pay ranges

There is a floor and a ceiling on the pay for each job type. To find out the pay range for a particular member of staff you should pick the job description which fits best. (It is possible that none of the job descriptions will be an exact fit). You will need to choose an appropriate pay level to meet the particular case. For example, the top end of the pay range allows for experience and good performance to be rewarded, while the bottom end will be appropriate for a less experienced employee. There is also scope to adjust salaries to reflect pay levels locally.

Choosing a pay level

The tables include ranges of recommended starting pay for new employees. We recommend that new staff outside London with little relevant experience should be paid at the bottom of this range, particularly if pay rates in the locality are low. But you may want to pay a little more for a new employee with some relevant experience, and to staff based in London or other areas where pay rates are higher. We recommend that new starters should only be paid in excess of recommended starting pay if they are fully experienced - for example, a researcher with many years' experience transferring from another Member.

Budgeting

You are advised not to allocate the whole staffing budget initially. When budgeting, you should bear in mind that the staffing budget will have to pay for employers' National Insurance Contributions (very roughly, 12% of gross pay), plus any overtime or staffing cover not provided under the scheme for Temporary Secretarial Assistance. (However, you may transfer money out of the Incidental Expenses Provision for staffing purposes).

Bonuses

You may pay bonuses to your permanent staff, provided that you can afford these out of the Incidental Expenses Provision or the staffing budget. Bonuses should not exceed 15% of gross annual salary.

Uprating

The Staffing Budget will be reviewed annually and increased in line with the Average Earnings Index figure for the relevant year. The pay ranges will also be recalculated to reflect this increase.

1. Secretaries/Office Managers:

Junior Secretaries should have a polite and courteous manner and good keyboard skills. In addition to this **Office Managers/Executive Secretaries and Senior Secretaries** need excellent organisational and planning skills; good interpersonal and customer service skills; the ability to use e-mail, Word etc; the ability to prioritise and work to deadlines and an understanding of the political environment.

Office Managers/Executive Secretaries should:	Pay Ranges (with effect from 01.04.05)	Recommended Starting Pay*
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the full range of secretarial and administrative support	£19,099 to	£19,099 (provinces)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage the office, overseeing budgets, supervising other staff and volunteers etc	£35,882	to £26,044 (London)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deal with telephone enquiries and visitors• Draft and sign letters on a range of issues• Respond to e-mails and letters• Manage the diary and arrange engagements		

They may also deal with some constituency casework and provide secretariats to special interest groups. They may delegate keyboard work to others.

Senior Secretaries should:	Pay Ranges (with effect from 01.04.05)	Recommended Starting Pay*
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide secretarial/administrative support	£15,627 to	£15,627 (provinces)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deal with telephone enquiries and visitors	£27,201	to £20,256 (London)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft and sign letters• Respond to e-mails and letters• Manage the diary and arrange engagements		

They might also manage the office and/or undertake some casework.

Junior Secretaries should undertake:	Pay Ranges (with effect from 01.04.05)	Recommended Starting Pay*
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photocopying	£12,732 to	£12,732 (provinces)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Filing	£22,571	to £16,784 (London)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening and dispatching mail• Dealing with simple correspondence and straightforward enquiries by phone or via e-mail• Keeping office records• Other straightforward office duties as required		

*Starting pay outside London is likely to vary considerably with local employment market conditions

2. Caseworkers:

Caseworkers need excellent interpersonal and customer service skills, a broad knowledge of welfare legislation, good organisational skills and a methodical approach to record keeping.

Senior Caseworkers should:

	Pay Ranges (with effect from 01.04.05)	Recommended Starting Pay*
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide information, advice and support for individuals on a range of financial, health, housing and other social issues• Liaise with government agencies, the voluntary sector and others to resolve problems• Correspond with constituents or meet with them• Develop knowledge on specialist areas• Analyse patterns of enquiries and produce reports• Keep records of client contact	£15,627 to £26,622	£15,627 (provinces) to £20,256 (London)

If they have a special area of interest, they may also provide secretariat services for relevant meetings and/or provide briefings etc.

Caseworkers should:

	Pay Ranges (with effect from 01.04.05)	Recommended Starting Pay*
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide information, advice and support for individuals on a range of financial, health, housing and other social issues• Liaise with government agencies, the voluntary sector and others to resolve problems• Correspond with constituents or meet with them• Draft simple letters as required• Keep records of client contact• Assist with office administration as needed	£12,153 to £22,571	£12,153 (provinces) to £16,784 (London)

They may also undertake some general administrative/secretarial tasks such as managing the diary.

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3. Research/Parliamentary Assistants:

Research/Parliamentary Assistants are likely to be graduates. They need good research skills, the ability to think analytically, good communication skills and a good understanding of the political environment.

Senior Research/Parliamentary Assistants should:	Pay Ranges (with effect from 01.04.05)	Recommended Starting Pay*
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake research, usually from secondary sources, on complex and difficult subjects• Analyse, interpret and present the results eg for parliamentary questions, briefing notes for committees, articles or press releases• Liaise with the political party, lobby groups etc.• Deal with the media	£24,887 to £35,882	£24,887 (provinces) to £29,517 (London)

They might also progress some casework and/or deal with a range of correspondence independently.

Research/Parliamentary Assistants should:	Pay Ranges (with effect from 01.04.05)	Recommended Starting Pay*
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake research from readily available sources• Analyse, interpret and present the results eg for parliamentary questions, briefing notes for committees, articles or press releases• Deal with routine constituency correspondence independently	£12,732 to £30,674	£12,732 (provinces) to £17,362 (London)

In addition they might also:

- Deal with a range of visitors
- Progress casework by forwarding to other agencies
- Undertake some administrative tasks

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