

Huw Irranca-Davies

Chair

Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Senedd Cymru

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Dyddiad | Date: 23 01 2024

Inquiry into UK-EU Governance

Dear Huw,

Thank you for your letter on the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee's inquiry into UK-EU governance. Your letter requested a response from the Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd ('the Board') to recommendation 18 of the report:

The Senedd Commission and the Remuneration Board should continue to provide appropriate and sufficient support to Members of the Senedd and the Senedd Committees to enable them to directly engage with EU institutions and stakeholders in order to ensure that key issues of importance to Wales are raised directly in Brussels.

The Board recognises Members' important role in engaging with and maintaining links with EU institutions and stakeholders, and the Board's role in supporting Members with this work. As such the Board agrees with this recommendation.

Provisions for travel and accommodation by Members of the Senedd ('Members') outside of the United Kingdom are set out in sections 4.5, 5.15 and 5.12 of the [Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances](#) ('the Determination'). These provisions enable Members to seek reimbursement for visits to Brussels and the EU institutions, subject to the requirements below and the general principles set out in the Determination.

Members are allowed to claim reimbursement of the costs of travel and accommodation outside of the United Kingdom where such travel:

- would benefit the individual in their role as a Member of the Senedd and the wider Senedd;
- would allow them to gather new ideas that would benefit the Senedd;
- would enable them to promote Wales and the work of the Senedd, and to enhance the reputation of the Senedd in an international context.

Claims for reimbursement of such costs are subject to a maximum of five nights stay and the submission to the Members' Business Support Team of a business case for the travel and a visit report for publication on the Senedd's website.

Section 16 of the Determination sets out that the reimbursement of travel costs incurred by Members on committee business is a matter for the Senedd Commission, not the Determination.

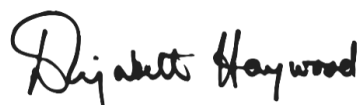
The Board is required by the National Assembly for Wales (Remuneration) Measure 2010 (section 3) to keep the Determination under review to ensure it continues to provide the financial support required by Members in order to perform their duties as Members. The Board is currently consulting on a number of [proposed changes to the Determination](#), to take effect in 2024-25. In light of feedback from Members the proposals include amending the Determination's provisions on international travel and accommodation to allow one business case for international travel to be submitted jointly by more than one Member, instead of requiring each Member to submit an individual business case. The proposals also include the insertion of additional wording into the Determination to clarify that all Members' travel and accommodation costs incurred on committee business are a matter for the Senedd Commission, not the Determination; this is not a material change but clarifies existing arrangements. The Board is therefore not proposing any new or different restrictions on Members' ability to seek reimbursement of the costs of visits to Brussels.

The consultation on these and other proposed changes to the Determination runs until 26 January 2024. The Board will consider responses to the consultation and publish a final Determination for 2024-25 in March 2024.

In advance of the Seventh Senedd the Board is undertaking a full review of all aspects of the Determination. This work is split into five thematic reviews. On behalf of the Board I am leading a review of Members' Remuneration and Personal Support. The draft Terms of Reference for this review, recently shared with Members for consultation until 9 February 2024, includes provisions to support Members' accommodation and travel requirements (see the Terms of Reference in Annex A of the [update letter](#) shared with Members following the Board's meeting on 29 & 30 November). I look forward to engaging with Members and political groups in 2024, as part of this exercise, to gauge views on any changes need to existing provisions.

The Board would welcome any evidence from Members on any changes needed to the Determination's provisions on travel and accommodation, where such costs do not relate to committee business. Any feedback provided will be considered as part of the current review of the Determination for 2024-25 and the wider review of Members' Remuneration and Personal Support, for the Seventh Senedd.

Best wishes,



Dr Elizabeth Haywood,
Chair, Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.