



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Information Management and Governance  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

foi.officer@parliament.scot

15 November 2023

Dear Requester,

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: 2023-693606**

We acknowledge your request for the following information:

**1. *Re ministers who have received ministerial severance payments***

- *Thanks for providing the number (31)*

*But my original request was*

- *How many*
- *Which ones (name)*
- *How much have they received tax free*

*So please provide me with*

- *Which ministers?*
- *How much?*

**2. *Process for authorisation of hotel and other expenses***

*I was appalled (but not surprised) to note that “during sitting times and business days members are not asked to provide any further evidence to support their need”*

*I enclose the relevant note in your reply.*

- *This is unacceptable in any governance protocol.*

*I wish you to provide me with the rationing for the lax practice – I will ask Audit Scotland to investigate this practice.*

Your request was received on 19 October 2023 and has been handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOI(S)A).

Responding to each part of your request in turn, the position is as follows.

**1. *Re ministers who have received ministerial severance payments***

- *Which ones (name)*

- *How much have they received tax free*

The SPCB is required by statute to pay an Officeholder resettlement grant to an individual who -

- (a) stops being the holder of a pensionable office, and
- (b) is not appointed as the holder of a pensionable office during the following 90 days.

Information about the calculation used to determine resettlement grants is set out in para 4 of Schedule 2 to the Scottish Parliament Pensions Act 2009 which can be accessed here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/1/schedule/2>. A copy of the schedule is enclosed.

Any payments made are calculated in line with the standard formula set out under the legislation.

As these payments are dependent on Officeholders' salaries, we have also enclosed a copy of current MSP salaries information, which is publicly available on the Scottish Parliament website at the following link:

<https://www.parliament.scot/msps/msp-salaries>

These payments follow the same rules as redundancy payments, where the first £30,000 is not taxable and the remainder is taxed according to standard rates.

To assist, we have provided two illustrative examples below:

- A Cabinet Secretary resigning on the date of your request would receive a resettlement grant worth 25% of their final salary. As their final salary would be £50,849 per annum, this payment would be for £12,712.25. As this payment falls below the £30,000 threshold, it would not be taxable.
- A Minister resigning on the date of your request would receive a resettlement grant worth 25% of their final salary. In this case, their final salary would be £31,854 per annum, so the resettlement grant they receive would be for £7,963.50. As this payment falls below the £30,000 threshold, it would not be taxable.

We are unable to provide names of individuals who have received Officeholder resettlement grants or the specific amounts paid to each individual as this is the personal data of the former Officeholders receiving such payments and so it cannot be disclosed without their agreement. We consider this information to be exempt from disclosure in terms of section 38(1)(b) of FOI(S)A for the reasons set out in the attached refusal notice.

## **2. Process for authorisation of hotel and other expenses**

*I was appalled (but not surprised) to note that “during sitting times and business days members are not asked to provide any further evidence to support their need”*

*I wish you to provide me with the rationing for the lax practice.*

The Reimbursement of Members' Expenses Scheme has been in place since the establishment of the Parliament in 1999 and the eligibility of Members to be reimbursed for staying overnight when attending Parliament in Edinburgh to carry out their parliamentary duties has been a part of the Scheme since that time. The reason for this provision is to enable those Members whose homes are not within a reasonable commutable distance to stay in Edinburgh on business days to carry out their parliamentary duties as is described in the Annex to the current version of the Scheme.

A current version of the Members' Expenses Scheme is enclosed. The Scheme is also available at the following link on our website:

<https://www.parliament.scot/msps/-/media/d4b710e056344fa18b0d98accd801e7b.ashx>

As previously stated, we would question any stay that did not correlate with the Member attending Parliament to undertake their parliamentary duties.

You may wish to note that Members' Expenses, including overnight stays in Edinburgh for parliamentary business, are audited both internally by our own Internal Auditor and externally by Audit Scotland on an annual basis.

In keeping with our FOI procedures, this information may also be posted on the Parliament's disclosure log (usually within 24 hours). For further details on the Parliament's Disclosure Log and the information released under FOI, visit:

<https://www.parliament.scot/about/information-rights/foi-request-disclosure-log>

The supply of information under FOI does not constitute permission for its use in a way that would infringe copyright

<https://www.parliament.scot/about/copyright>

We would welcome feedback or comment on how we handled your request. Please feel free to contact the Head of Information Governance at

[foi.officer@parliament.scot](mailto:foi.officer@parliament.scot)

If you are not satisfied with our handling of your request, you can ask us to review our decision within 40 working days. Please find below Annex A, which provides further information.

We are currently working remotely and so would ask you to contact us by email at [foi.officer@parliament.scot](mailto:foi.officer@parliament.scot)

Yours sincerely,

Linda Forrest  
Information Compliance Officer



## REQUESTS MADE UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002

### How we handle FOI requests

Information on how we handle FOI requests is available on the Parliament's website at:

<https://www.parliament.scot/about/information-rights/data-protection/privacy-notice/information-rights-freedom-of-information-request-handling>

Alternatively, please contact the Public Information & Resources Team to request a copy.

<https://www.parliament.scot/contact-us>

### Review

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which we have dealt with your request for information, you can ask us to review our decision and actions. You must do this in writing (or other permanent form) within 40 working days of the date of this letter, stating the reasons for your dissatisfaction, and we will respond within 20 working days of receipt. A request for a review should be made to the Head of Information Governance:

Post:  
Head of Information Governance  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP  
Telephone: 0131 348 5281

We welcome calls using the Text Relay service or in British Sign Language through Contact Scotland BSL: <https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

E-mail: [foi.officer@parliament.scot](mailto:foi.officer@parliament.scot)

### Application to the Scottish Information Commissioner

If, on the outcome of any review, you are still dissatisfied, or if we are unable to resolve any other complaint, then you can contact the Scottish Information Commissioner:

Post:  
The Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner  
Kinburn Castle  
Doubledykes Road  
St Andrews  
Fife  
KY16 9DS

Email: [www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal)

Telephone: 01334 464610

Fax: 01334 464611

Website: [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info)

A decision by the Scottish Information Commissioner may be appealed on a point of law to the Court of Session.

### **Copyright in relation to information provided**

The supply of information under FOI does not constitute permission for its use in a way that would infringe copyright. Where relevant you should obtain permission from the copyright holder before any such use.

### **Feedback or comment**

We would welcome feedback or comment on how we handled your request. Please contact the Head of Information Governance.

### **Data Protection**

If you wish to find out more about how we use your personal data then you can access our Privacy Notice at the following link:

<https://www.parliament.scot/about/information-rights/data-protection/privacy-notices/information-rights-freedom-of-information-request-handling>

### **Complaints**

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which we dealt with your enquiry, then you may wish to raise the matter with Public Information and Resources.

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### **How to contact us**

Post: The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Telephone: 0131 348 5000  
0800 092 7500 (Public Enquiries)  
0131 348 5395 (Gàidhlig)

We also welcome calls using the Text Relay service or in British Sign Language through Contact Scotland BSL: <https://contactscotland-bsl.org/>

E-mail: [info@parliament.scot](mailto:info@parliament.scot)