

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE 29th MARCH 2010
Item 7 – Review of Dependants Allowance

**REVIEW OF BABYSITTING ALLOWANCE FOR ATTENDANCE BY
EMPLOYEES AT EVENING MEETINGS – EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS**

We have a number of comments on this. The first relates to the title of the report. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a “babysitting allowance” for staff attending evening meetings. The allowance concerned is a dependant’s allowance and is worded in such a way as to make it clear that it extends beyond childcare, For the information of the Committee, we paste in below an extract from the Personnel Management Handbook setting out the terms of the allowance.

Attendance at Evening Meeting

In order to ensure that no employee is prevented from attending evening meetings when required and where there is genuine need, a dependant’s allowance is payable. An hourly dependant’s allowance will be paid for the duration of the evening meeting and up to one hour after to allow for travelling time. The hourly dependant’s allowance paid is the actual cost incurred by the employee and should not exceed £4.00. Each claim will be based on the dependant’s needs and therefore no specific limits have been set on the dependant’s age. In addition, travel expenses will be reimbursed where it has been necessary for the employee to go home prior to the evening meeting to set up any care arrangements. The payment will compensate the actual cost incurred. Where employees have used their own transport to set up their arrangements, they will be reimbursed the cost of the petrol used. These payments will be taxable.

[Personnel Services Committee 3 Feb 1986]

The report proposes an increase in the maximum payable to £5.80 per hour, the national minimum wage. We have argued, and achieved agreement, that the Council should seek to ensure that external providers of services to the Council should be encouraged to pay the London Living Wage of £7.60 per hour. In our view, staff should be encouraged to employ carers for their dependants at the London Living Wage and the maximum figure should, therefore be £7.60 per hour rather than £5.80.

In the case of staff with children, it is possible that more than one child may need to be looked after. In the case of dependants with medical problems or other special needs a carer with particular skills or qualifications may be needed. Either situation may push the hourly rate above a pre-set ceiling. We, therefore, request that managers should have discretion in such cases to authorise reimbursement of the actual expenditure concerned.

John Snelling
Employee Side Secretary