

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority Chairs' Committee

4th September 2009

Open for the purposes of FOI

Report of the Treasurer

Carers' Allowance for Members

Recommended that

- i) It be acknowledged that the current carers allowance is unrealistically low in relation to care costs and that it should be increased to make the Authority more inclusive and to avoid individuals being penalised because of their caring responsibilities.**
- ii) That the allowance be changed to meet actual evidenced costs which are unavoidably incurred due to the formal business of the Authority.**
- iii) Members consider setting a cap on the daily rate allowable.**
- iv) That the arrangements be back dated to 28/07/09.**
- v) That authority be delegated to the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Executive to vary these arrangements in exceptional circumstances.**

1. The Police Authority expenses scheme limits payments for carers to £25 per day. At the recent seminar, it was pointed out that in some cases this can be seen as wildly inadequate given the costs of care and the time some members have to be away from those they care for.
2. It is important that the scheme should not exclude those people in the community who could make a genuine contribution to the work of the Authority but are prevented from applying because of caring responsibilities. Equally, fairness dictates that those who still manage to make that contribution in spite of challenging personal circumstances should not be financially penalised.
3. It is, therefore, proposed that the allowance be changed to cover actual unavoidable care costs that are demonstrably incurred as a result of the official business of the Authority. This would include attendance and travel time for Police Authority meetings, committees, working groups, seminars and other official meetings. It would not cover private study and preparation time.
4. It is difficult to estimate the total overall costs of such a proposal given that few individuals are involved and that circumstances are changing, but it is expected that costs should be contained within the current allowances envelope. It may also be helpful for members to consider whether there should be a cap on the daily allowance such that actual costs are met up to perhaps £100 per member per carer per day. It is also important to recognise that the allowance is intended to reimburse actual caring costs incurred and not to put the member in any better a position than if he or she was not involved in Police Authority work.
5. In the event of exceptional circumstances not envisaged when these allowances were set, it may be helpful to delegate authority to the Chair and the Chief Executive to make any appropriate amendment where that would be in the best interests of the Authority.

Contact for further information:

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