



Department of

Finance

An Roinn

Airgeadais

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Special Advisers Annual Report

2021/2022 and 2022/2023

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SPECIAL ADVISERS

Special advisers are a critical part of the team supporting Ministers in the work of government. They bring a political dimension to the advice and assistance available to Ministers that the impartial permanent Civil Service cannot. This role protects the Civil Service from politicisation and helps the Executive achieve its goals.

Special advisers are fully integrated into the machinery of government and are part of the team working closely alongside other civil servants to deliver Ministers' priorities, but they hold a unique position in that their work focuses on providing political input and advice on key policy issues, and networking and building relationships to support cross-party working across the Executive. special advisers are not employed by their political party, but as temporary civil servants, under Article 3 of the Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 as amended. They are subject to the same terms and conditions as civil servants, as contained in the Staff Handbook, and share the responsibility of all civil servants to support the work of the Executive as a whole.

In line with Section 6 of the Civil Service (special advisers) Act (Northern Ireland) 2013, the Department of Finance is required to publish an Annual Report, detailing the number and costs of special advisers.

This Report covers the 2021/2022 financial year and up to 28 October for the 2022/2023 year, when Ministers and, by corollary, special advisers ceased to hold office.

Pursuant to the Functioning of Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2021, the relevant interests of special advisers are published separately and updated on a regular basis.

SPECIAL ADVISER PAY POLICY

The Scheme for the Remuneration of special advisers - [Remuneration of Special Advisers - revised June 2021.pdf \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](#) - sets out that responsibility for determining pay lies with the Department of Finance, as the Department with overall responsibility for determining pay policy and conditions of employment for all NICS employees. There are three pay bands for special advisers as set out below.

August 2021	
Pay Band 1	Up to £56,104
Pay Band 2	£56,105 - £71,406
Pay Band 3	£71,407 - £84,122

Pay bands are reviewed annually from 1 August and revalorised in line with relevant revalorisation of pay implemented for the NICS. There is no progression on a scale or spine with defined increments for special advisers. Annual pay increases are based on the average NICS salary increase, subject to satisfactory performance, and capped by the maximum of the pay band. Eligibility for a pay increase is in line with NICS rules on length of service, etc.

The average NICS increase is due to be applied to other civil servants for the 2022 pay award after June 2023 and thereafter increases to the Special Adviser base pay will be applied.

SPECIAL ADVISER SALARY SETTING

The Finance Minister has no involvement in the setting of salaries for special advisers. A pay band is assigned according to the level and scope of the responsibility required for the post and an individual's salary is determined by officials in the Department of Finance, on consideration of a CV.

Whilst the default is for new appointees to be paid salaries at the base of the pay band, a higher starting salary within the relevant band may be awarded to reflect the skill-set and expertise an individual brings to the role.

No special adviser will earn more than a Minister in the Executive, or more than the highest level under the published pay scale applicable to an Assistant Secretary (Grade 5) in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Special advisers qualify for severance if their employment terminates because their appointing Minister ceases to hold the Ministerial Office in which they were employed to assist, including if their appointing Minister moves to another Ministerial appointment. Special advisers who leave their post will not receive severance if they take up paid public post for the duration of the period which is covered by the severance.

NUMBER OF SPECIAL ADVISERS

At 31 March 2022 there were sixteen special advisers working across the whole of government, and at 28th October 2022 there were eight in post.

OVERALL COSTS OF SPECIAL ADVISERS

The Special Adviser pay bill for the financial year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 was £1,353,210.81. This includes £150,150.74 paid in severance payments to special advisers in this period.

The pay bill for the year 01 April 2022 to 28 October 2022 was £533,360.91. This includes £146,149.92 paid in severance payments to special advisers in this period.

2021/2022 Financial Year

Special Advisers in post 2021/2022

Department	Name	Pay Band (PB)	Salary (If PB 2 or 3)
Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	Mark Beattie	1	
Communities	Ronan McGinley	1	
Economy	Alastair Ross	2	£65,000.00
Education	Peter Martin	2	£60,000.00
Finance	Eoin Rooney	1	
Health	Mark Ovens	2	£61,002.00
Infrastructure	Tanya McCamphill	1	
Justice	Claire Johnson	1	
Justice	Patricia O'Lynn	1	
Executive Office	Dr Philip Weir	3	£79,303.00
Executive Office	Emma Little Pengelly	3	£78,000.00
Executive Office	Lee Reynolds	2	£63,000.00
Executive Office	Dr Dara O'Hagan	3	£79,303.00
Executive Office	Stephen McGlade	3	£79,303.00
Executive Office	John Loughran	2	£68,119.00
Executive Office	Richard Bullick	3	£78,000.00

Terminations 2021/2022

Department	Name	Termination Date
Peter Martin	Education	14 June 2021
Emma Little Pengelly	Executive Office	14 June 2021
Lee Reynolds	Executive Office	14 June 2021
Patricia O'Lynn	Justice	24 October 2021
Stephen McGlade	Executive Office	04 February 2022
Dr Dara O'Hagan	Executive Office	04 February 2022
John Loughran	Executive Office	04 February 2022
Philip Weir	Executive Office	04 February 2022
Richard Bullick	Executive Office	04 February 2022

Salary Costs 2021/2022	£845,575.96
Employer National Insurance Contributions	£100,409.14
Employer Pension Contributions	£257,074.97
Severance Costs	£150,150.74
Overall Total	£1,353,210.81

SPECIAL ADVISER GENDER AVERAGE SALARY FOR 2021/2022

- 11 males – average salary - £62,004.00
- 5 females – average salary - £62,814.00

NB - Patricia O'Lynn covered a period of maternity leave for Claire Johnson in DoJ.

2022/2023 Financial Year

Special Advisers in Post 2022/2023 (up to 28 October 2022)

Special Advisers in Post 2022/2023 (up to 28 October 2022)	Name	Pay Band (PB)	Salary (If PB 2 or 3)
Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	Mark Beattie	1	
Communities	Ronan McGinley	1	
Economy	Alastair Ross	2	£66,086.00
Education	Peter Martin	2	£61,002.00
Finance	Eoin Rooney	1	
Health	Mark Ovens	2	£61,002.00
Infrastructure	Tanya McCamphill	1	
Infrastructure	Dr Dara O'Hagan	3	£79,303.00
Justice	Claire Johnson	1	

NB – Tanya McCamphill left on 7 May 2022, and Dr Dara O'Hagan was in the DfI SpAd position from 16 May 2022 to 27 October 2022.

Salary Costs 2022/2023	£277,946.90
Employer National Insurance Contributions	£33,845.26
Employer Pension Contributions	£75,418.83
Severance Costs	£146,149.92
Overall Total	£533,360.91

SPECIAL ADVISER GENDER AVERAGE SALARY FOR 2022/2023

- 6 males – average salary - £57,613.00
- 3 females – average salary - £53,376.00