



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Financial Assistance for Political Parties Scheme 2016

**REVISED SCHEME LAID BEFORE THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY  
UNDER THE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR  
POLITICAL PARTIES ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2000**

# Financial Assistance for Political Parties Scheme 2016

In exercise of the powers conferred on it by section 1 of the Financial Assistance for Political Parties Act (Northern Ireland) 2000 the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission makes the following Scheme.

## 1. Introduction

(1) In this Scheme –

a member of the Assembly shall be regarded as connected with a political party if he or she is a member of that party;

the singular includes the plural;

“authorised purpose” means the purpose of assisting members of the Assembly, who are connected with that party, in performing their Assembly duties;

“the Commission” means the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission;

“member” means a member of the Assembly;

“opposition political party” means a political party which does not have a member who holds a Ministerial office, was entitled under section 18(2)–(6) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to select a Ministerial office and nominate a person to hold it at the time when the nominations were made and has chosen to be recognised as part of the Official Opposition

and

“year” means a period of 12 months starting on 1 April.

(2) For the year commencing on 1 April 2016 and for future years financial assistance to political parties for the purpose of assisting members of the Assembly who are connected with that party to perform their Assembly duties shall be payable by the Commission in accordance with Articles 2 to 4.

## 2. Claims for Financial Assistance

(1) Payment of claims for financial assistance shall be subject to a political party complying with such guidance as may be issued by the Commission from time to time.

(2) As soon as practicable after 31st March in each year, the Commission will engage the services of an independent auditor to certify that all financial assistance received by a political party under this Scheme in the preceding year under this Scheme was used exclusively for authorised purposes or (where applicable) by that party in the administration of its Whips’ Office.

(3) Where any payment of financial assistance under the Scheme has been made to a political party and it subsequently appears to the Commission that that party was not entitled to the financial assistance (or part of it), the Commission may by notice in writing require the party to repay the financial assistance (or part of it).

### 3. Amount of Financial Assistance

(1) Subject to Article 4, the financial assistance payable in a year to each political party shall be:

- (a) £24,320 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party for authorised purposes where that party has only one member and no opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;
- (b) £23,710 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party (which is not an opposition political party) for authorised purposes where that party has only one member and an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;
- (c) £30,440 in respect of the costs incurred by an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, for authorised purposes where that party has only one member;
- (d) £48,550 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party for authorised purposes where that party has two or more members and no opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;
- (e) £47,340 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party (which is not an opposition political party) for authorised purposes where that party has two or more members and an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;
- (f) £60,770 in respect of the costs incurred by an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, for authorised purposes where that party has two or more members;
- (g) Where during any year financial assistance is payable to any political party under Article 3(1)(a) or (d), £3,040 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party for authorised purposes in respect of each member who does not hold a ministerial or junior ministerial post;
- (h) Where during any year financial assistance is payable to any political party under Article 3(1) (b) or (e), £2,960 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party for authorised purposes in respect of each member who does not hold a ministerial or junior ministerial post;
- (i) Where during any year financial assistance is payable to any opposition political party under Article 3(1)(c) or (f), £3,800 in respect of the costs incurred by an opposition political party for authorised purposes in respect of each member;
- (j) £15,200 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party in the administration of its Whips' Office where that party has more than two but fewer than eleven connected members and no opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;
- (k) £14,820 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party (which is not an opposition political party) in the administration of its Whips' Office where that party has more than two but fewer than eleven connected members and an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;
- (l) £19,020 in respect of the costs incurred by an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, in the administration of its Whips' Office where that party has more than two but fewer than eleven connected members;
- (m) £22,800 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party in the administration of its Whips' Office where that party has more than ten but fewer than twenty-one connected

members and no opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;

- (n) £22,230 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party (which is not an opposition political party) in the administration of its Whips' Office where that party has more than ten but fewer than twenty-one connected members and an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;
- (o) £28,540 in respect of the costs incurred by an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, in the administration of its Whips' Office where that party has more than ten but fewer than twenty-one connected members;
- (p) £30,400 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party in the administration of its Whips' Office where that party has more than twenty connected members and no opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;
- (q) £29,640 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party (which is not an opposition political party) in the administration of its Whips' Office where that party has more than twenty connected members and an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, is recognised in the Assembly;
- (r) £38,050 in respect of the costs incurred by an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, in the administration of its Whips' Office where that party has more than twenty connected members;
- (s) Where during any year financial assistance is payable to any political party under Article 3(1) (j), (m) or (p), £500 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party to administer its Whips' Office in respect of each member who is connected with that party who does not hold a ministerial or junior ministerial post;
- (t) Where during any year financial assistance is payable to any political party under Article 3(1) (k), (n) or (q), £490 in respect of the costs incurred by a political party to administer its Whips' Office in respect of each member who is connected with that party who does not hold a ministerial or junior ministerial post;
- (u) Where during any year financial assistance is payable to any opposition political party under Article 3(1) (l), (o) or (r), £630 in respect of the costs incurred by an opposition political party to administer its Whips' Office in respect of each member who is connected with that party.

- (2) The Presiding Officer may give written notice to the Finance Office that he or she no longer wishes to be treated as connected to the party of which he or she is a member.

#### **4. Changes in party membership**

- (1) Where during any year a new political party has been formed or a party is recognised by the Assembly as an opposition political party, as defined in this Scheme, the financial assistance payable to that party under Article 3 shall be calculated proportionately.
- (2) Where during any year a member ceases to be connected with a political party, the financial assistance payable to that party under Article 3 for the remainder of the year shall be decreased accordingly.

- (3) Where during any year a member becomes connected with a political party, which already has representation in the Assembly, the financial assistance payable to that party under Article 3 for the remainder of the year shall be increased accordingly.
- (4) Where during any year a member becomes connected with a political party, which was not previously represented in the Assembly, the financial assistance payable to that party under Article 3 shall be calculated proportionately.
- (5) For the purposes of this Article vacancies of members during any year arising during a period of dissolution and election of the Assembly shall not be taken into account.

## **5. Revocation**

- (1) The Financial Assistance for Political Parties Scheme 2015 is revoked.