

FOI DOF/2026-0013

Request

Please confirm:

1. If Special Adviser salaries have increased at any time since the restoration of the Assembly in February 2024 and if so, by how much.
2. The current annual salaries of Special Advisers in The Executive Office, broken down by those for the First Minister and those for the deputy First Minister.

DoF response

1. I can confirm the department holds the information requested.

Special Advisers are paid within designated pay bands. These pay bands are uplifted annually in line with the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) pay award, which was 3% in 2024 and 6% in 2025. Where eligible, Special Advisers receive a pay increase equivalent to the average NICS pay award for that year.

In 2024, Special Advisers were not eligible to receive a percentage pay increase because they did not have sufficient service during the relevant reporting year. However, where an individual Special Adviser's salary fell below the revised minimum for their pay band following the uplift, their salary was increased to the new band minimum.

For the 2025 pay award, the average salary increase in the NICS was 6.67%. To qualify for the 2025 pay award, Special Advisers had to meet the same eligibility criteria as other civil servants:

- In post on the effective date of the pay award (1 August 2025),
- Satisfactory performance review,
- 90 days' service in the relevant reporting year (2024/2025)

Special Advisers who met qualifying criteria received a 6.67% salary increase for 2025. Special Advisers who did not meet the eligibility criteria did not receive a 6.67% pay increase. However, where an individual Special Adviser's salary fell below the revised minimum for their pay band following the uplift, their salary was increased to the new band minimum.

More information on Special Adviser pay is published on the Department of Finance website: [Special Advisers Annual Report 2023-24 and 2024-25](#)

2. Please see the table below for the current annual salaries of Special Advisers in the Executive Office, including Ministerial assignment:

Name	Salary from 01-Aug-2025 (£)	Minister
Ronan McGinley	87,469	First Minister
John Loughran	74,669	First Minister
Clíodhna Nic Bhranáir	66,336	First Minister
Alastair Ross	87,469	Deputy First Minister
Ashleigh Perry	69,336	Deputy First Minister
Matthew Morrison	65,919	Deputy First Minister

ANNEX B - INTERNAL REVIEWS

An Internal Review request examines the response based on applied exemptions, search adequacy, or response timeliness.

It is not the following, which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of the original FOI request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new FOI request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new FOI request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

To make an Internal Review request:

- **Clearly state:** That you want an internal review of a previous FOI response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline:** Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response:** The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.
- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.