Welcome from Mairi Pearson, Head of Allowances

Thank you for your interest in applying for this key role within the Scottish Parliament’s Allowances Office, which forms part of the Finance Group.

The Allowances Team is responsible for administering the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme and makes all payments in accordance with the provisions made within the Scheme.

The Allowances Team consists of a diverse group of professional staff who excel in working as part of a collaborative, forward thinking team. Together we play a key role in supporting parliamentary business as well as enhancing the Parliament’s reputation in everything we do.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our parliamentary service so that we can benefit from the broadest range of perspectives, backgrounds, skills and experience as we tackle the challenges and opportunities ahead. We would therefore particularly welcome applications from disabled people and members of the black and minority ethnic communities.

We also operate a wide variety of work patterns, successfully balancing lifestyle choices with business requirements. Although our normal working week is 37 hours all requests for flexible working will be seriously considered.

If the opportunity to work for the Scottish Parliament in this challenging role excites you, and you have the right skills and experience, we would love to hear from you.
About the role

The Allowances Office is responsible for providing a customer focussed service for the validation, payment and subsequent reporting of expense payments for Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). In doing so it is governed by the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme (the Member’s Expenses Scheme).

The office is split between ‘Allowances’ and ‘Travel & Expenses’, but staff can be involved in all areas of work. All members of the team deal on a daily basis with MSPs, MSPs support staff, SPCB staff and external suppliers.

You will be responsible for the accurate recording and processing of claims under the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme within the office service level agreements and providing Members and their support staff with guidance on the Scheme.

The Allowances Administrator role will work partly in support of the Allowances team and partly in support of the Allowances Operations Manager, who they will report to. You will be required to work flexibly, shifting your focus, depending on workload and demand levels, to meet office needs. You will be required to liaise with Members, members’ support staff, SPCB staff and outside suppliers on a daily basis.

We are looking for an enthusiastic Administrator to make a positive contribution to the work of our team. If you are seeking to develop your experience and want to work in a dynamic and constantly evolving environment, this may be the opportunity for you.

The ideal candidate will have good practical administrative experience and knowledge, coupled with excellent IT skills as well as experience of data entry in a financial environment. Coupled with this you will possess a passion for meeting customer requirements and expectations.

Responsibilities for the role across the office will include:

- Provide general administrative support for the office.
- The processing and recording of incoming mail, on a rota basis.
- The accurate recording and processing of claims under the Reimbursement of Members’ Expenses Scheme and SPS Staff Handbook using our payment system or corporate card to ensure compliance with the Scheme or Staff Handbook as well as HMRC rules.
- The issuing of remittance advice notes in relation to the BACS payment runs, on a rota basis.
- Liaising with Members, Members support staff, SPS staff and outside suppliers to resolve any issues on the payment of claims and provide guidance on a daily basis.
- The provision of induction training to Members and Members’ support staff on aspects of the Reimbursement of the Members Expenses Scheme.
- Assisting Finance Office colleagues as required in reconciling corporate card payment transactions, as well as other payments made through the payment system.
- Support Members and Members’ staff in relation to mobile phone billing.
- Process payments on behalf of Members, in particular utility payments, by corporate card.
- Process monthly Lyreco and Sodexo costs for Members and their staff seeking Members authorisation of the costs and processing the consolidated invoice.
- Provide assistance to the Allowances Operations Manager in the implementation of agreed office projects.
About the role

Anna Stewart, Allowances Administrator

“Having joined the Allowances Team three and a half years ago, with fairly limited administrative experience, I have found it be a very busy but friendly office.

Since being here I have improved my knowledge in IT and finance, as well as built my knowledge about the everyday running of the Scottish Parliament. My overall confidence has improved over time and because it is a busy office I have learned to prioritise my work and use my time effectively, which has been invaluable.

The opportunity to liaise with other departments in the Parliament as well as work with Members and their staff has also been fantastic for both learning more about the organisation and generally improving my communication skills. Through dealing with Members about the rules of the Members Expenses Scheme or suppliers on the payment of invoices, my role continues to be interesting, with no two days the same.

This has all been with excellent support from a great team from the start and comprehensive training that has helped me to learn my role. Anyone in this role will find it interesting, rewarding and at the end of the day they’ll be working with a fantastic team who’ll be supportive and encouraging.”
Skills, Knowledge and Experience

To be successful in this role you will be able to provide evidence to demonstrate the following:

**Communication skills, including digital communication**
- Able to communicate with a range of audiences through different mediums
- Ability to explain / pass on complex or detailed information accurately and clearly
- Use communication to build relationships, ensure smooth processes and promote information sharing
- Excellent IT skills (including standard Parliament Microsoft applications) and the ability to pick-up and work with new and bespoke packages

**Organising and delivery**
- Good time management and ability to prioritise your workload to meet deadlines
- The ability to balance and prioritise competing demands with the foresight to plan ahead and to anticipate workload peaks
- Able to consistently deliver your work to the highest standard of quality and accuracy
- The ability to provide a wide range of administrative and secretariat support services

**Teamwork and interpersonal skills, including**
- The ability to form effective and supportive working relationships within your team
- An awareness of how issues may impact or involve other areas of the organisation
- The ability to build and sustain effective working relationships with colleagues in other Parliamentary Offices and an awareness of when to collaborate with those colleagues to achieve successful outcomes

**Flexibility and adaptability**
- Flexible attitude and a willingness to acquire new knowledge and skills
- The ability to be flexible, to adapt to changing circumstances and to use your initiative
- Ability to suggest improvements to working practices

**Parliamentary and political awareness**
- Awareness of how the Scottish Parliament works with an ability to quickly build-up and maintain knowledge relevant to your role
- Ability to work in a political environment ensuring issues such as confidentiality are maintained
About us

The parliamentary service of over 500 people is a high-achieving and professional organisation. We are not civil servants; we serve the Parliament and its Members and not the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body is responsible for providing the Parliament with the property, staff and services required for the Parliament’s purposes, in accordance with the Scotland Act 1998. It is made up of five Members elected by the Parliament and the Presiding Officer.

The Corporate Body delegates the day-to-day running of the Parliament to Sir Paul Grice, our Clerk/Chief Executive. Paul is assisted by his Leadership Group in setting the strategic direction for the parliamentary service and for creating the conditions that helps to promote a positive workplace culture. You can view the Organisational chart and you can read about the Parliamentary offices.

Our vision is clear: To make a positive difference to the lives of the people of Scotland. This means putting people at the centre of everything we do.

Our performance framework helps us to communicate and implement our strategic priorities through the parliamentary service. The strategic plan sets out our aims and priorities and the delivery plan contains the activities that deliver the strategy. They provide a set of shared priorities for everyone across the parliamentary service and cover matters such as improving parliamentary scrutiny, developing and investing in our staff, aligning public engagement with parliamentary business and providing high quality support to our elected Members. Each of the aims is equally important as they are inter-related. This means that we cannot achieve one without the others and that every one of our colleagues plays an important role in delivering them.

We attach great importance to the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (D&I) and our commitments form a central part of our working culture.
We are committed to providing a great working environment where people enjoy coming to work and feel valued for their contribution and excel in their chosen careers. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity and we have a zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment or victimisation of any kind. We recognise that improving employee engagement has a positive and significant effect on organisational performance. We know that ideas generated by colleagues can help shape the future direction of our services and contribute to the successful delivery of our goals, and our inclusive leadership style guides us in this approach.

We are committed to building a workforce which reflects the diversity of the people of Scotland. We are proud to be an equal opportunities employer that values and respects the people who work for us. We seek to ensure all job applications are treated fairly, with respect and without bias. We positively encourage applications from suitably experienced candidates regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital status, or pregnancy and maternity. We particularly welcome applications from female and black and ethnic minorities (BME) candidates who are under-represented at this level. All appointments will be made on merit.

We are committed to agile working and currently operate a wide variety of work patterns and arrangements across the parliamentary service. We will be pleased to consider applications from candidates wishing to work flexibly and all requests will be seriously considered. Please include clearly any information about your preferred working arrangements in your application.
How to apply

Applications

The first stage of the recruitment process requires you to complete an application form (full details of which can be found on our (Recruitment Page)) demonstrating your Skills, Knowledge and Experience for the role.

Your completed application should be submitted to jobs@parliament.scot by Wednesday, 14 November 2018.

The next stage will be an interview where you will be asked to provide evidence of the skills, knowledge and experience as identified on Page 5.

Please note that interviews may take place week commencing 3 December 2018, however, this date may change.

Closing date for applications: Wednesday, 14 November 2018.

For informal enquiries, please contact Kirsten Knox, Allowances Operations Manager by email or telephone:

Kirsten.knox@parliament.scot
0131 348 6830
Summary of terms and conditions of employment

Salary

Minimum starting salary £21,837 per annum, paid monthly by bank credit transfer. You will progress at the rate of one scale point per year on the anniversary of taking up the appointment grade.

The salary range for this post is shown below:

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<tr>
<th>Minimum Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3 (max)</th>
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<tr>
<td>£21,837</td>
<td>£23,199</td>
<td>£25,641</td>
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Hours

The way the Parliament works means that different groups of staff work varying hours and patterns. You may have to work longer hours when Parliament is sitting and reduced hours during recess periods. For this reason we have very progressive flexible working hours (FWH) arrangements. You will be required to work within these arrangements.

Notwithstanding your individual working pattern, if you are employed on a full time basis, you will be contracted to work 1623.6 hours per year. This is the equivalent to a 37 hour week, excluding breaks, annual leave and public and privilege holidays. If you work on a part-time basis, you will be required to work the number of hours specified in your appointment letter.

Annual Leave

Your annual leave allowance will be 30 days. Our annual leave year runs from 1 September to 31 August. If you take up your appointment during the course of the leave year, your annual leave allowance will be proportional.

In addition, you will also receive 11.5 days public and privilege holidays. They are normally taken at fixed times of the year. If you are required to work on a public or privilege holiday overtime arrangements will apply.

If you work on a part-time basis, your annual leave and public and privilege holiday entitlement is pro-rated.

As with working hours, there may be restrictions on annual leave when Parliament is sitting. In any event you may not take annual leave unless it has been agreed, normally in advance, with your line manager. The annual leave allowance is 30 days.

Pension

Unless staff choose otherwise we offer the opportunity to join the Civil Service pension arrangements, which include a valuable range of benefits. We will make substantial employer contributions towards the Civil Service pension. More information can be found on the Civil Service Pensions website.
Age

The SPCB does not operate a retirement age policy. This means that there is no upper age limit beyond which you would be automatically retired and you are free to continue in employment for as long as you wish subject to the normal rules concerning Performance, Attendance and Conduct.

Travelling and Other Expenses

We pay travelling and other expenses if you incur them whilst on official duty. However, we will not reimburse the cost of normal daily travel between home and office.

Unless we have stated otherwise in the advert, we do not reimburse travel or other expenses you incur in attending an interview or assessment with us. We are happy to explore alternative arrangements if this causes you difficulty.

Probation

You will be on probation for six months. Confirmation of your appointment is dependent on the satisfactory completion of this probation period, taking into account your job performance, conduct and attendance.

Outside and Political Activities

As an employee of the SPCB, you may not take part in any activity that would in any way conflict with the interests of the Parliament or be inconsistent with your duties and responsibilities.

You may not take part in national political activities, although you may seek permission to take part in local political activities. If permission is granted, it will be subject to the observance of general rules relating to possible conflicts between your official responsibilities and your political activities.

Health and Safety

The SPCB is committed to promoting health and safety as a priority issue. Its aim is to take appropriate and reasonable steps to ensure that it conducts its business in such a way that employees and other people who may be affected by its work are not exposed to risks to their health and safety.

General Data Protection Regulation

For further details on how we will process your personal data please refer to the HR Workers Privacy Notice and SPCB Recruitment Privacy Notice.

Suggestions

We want all applicants to feel that they have been treated fairly, even if they are not appointed. If you have any comments or suggestions about the way in which this recruitment campaign has been handled, we would really like to hear from you.

Referees

Please do not send references or testimonials with your form. If you are successful, we will approach previous and/or current employers for a reference. We can only make a formal offer of employment once we have received these references. If you have no employment history we may approach any school, college or university you have attended.
Health Assessment and Security Clearance

If you are successful at interview you will be asked to complete a health assessment form. If necessary, we may ask you to attend a medical assessment. Assessments are carried out by our occupational health supplier in the Parliament building. The reason why we carry out a health assessment is to make sure that the job you have applied for is suitable for you. It is also to find out if we need to carry out any adjustments to help you do the job.

Security clearance is required for this post. If you are successful we will ask you to complete a security questionnaire. This form will explain our security vetting policy. We can only make a formal offer of employment once the security clearance process is complete.

Visa and Work Permits

There are no nationality restrictions on who the SPCB employs.

You must however check whether there are any restrictions on your stay or your freedom to take or change employment in the United Kingdom before you apply for a post. If you are successful at interview we will make a complete enquiry into your eligibility to work in the United Kingdom.

Please note that this document is provided for information only and does not form part of the SPCB’s terms and conditions of employment.
Go to our staff handbook for full details of our terms and conditions of employment.