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MP hits out at cost of inquiries

By Rebecca Black

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A DUP MP has slammed the price of public inquiries which are costing hundreds of millions in public money.

East Derry representative Gregory Campbell, pictured, was speaking after it emerged to date public inquiries have cost more than £250 million – with £15 million of that spent in just the past six months.

The inquiry into the death of murdered Lurgan solicitor Rosemary Nelson is costing around

£1 million a month and has cost £5,698,636 between October 2007 and March 2008.

The inquiry into the death of loyalist prisoner Billy Wright inside the Maze prison is costing on average

£800,000 per month and since October has cost the taxpayer £3,911,088.

The bills are an even mix of expenses for administration, salaries, legal fees and accommodation.

The inquiry into the death of Robert Hamill, who was beaten to death in Portadown, Co Armagh on April 27

1997, is costing around £400,000 a month and has cost £2,705,350 between October and March. It is thought

these costs are mainly administrative

Meanwhile the Saville inquiry is described as costing £2,355,549 per month, made up mostly of legal costs.

The figures were contained in an answer to a parliamentary question asked by Mr Campbell.

"We are going to be looking at costs of at least £9 million per month for these inquiries and that's before we can get started on the 48 inquests which are backlogged because of the controversial nature of the deaths," he said.



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