



December 2013

Key Findings  
from the  
Annual User  
Survey  
2013

# CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Key Findings.....	3
<i>Summary.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Advice and guidance from IPSA.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Payment card and direct payments.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Completing claims.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Processing of claims by IPSA.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Online payroll tools.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>MPs' use of business costs and expenses.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Further comments.....</i>	<i>15</i>
User Recommendations.....	16
Annex A – Personal Data.....	19
Annex B – Survey Methodology.....	20
Annex C – Full Survey Data.....	21

# INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of IPSA's second Annual User Survey.

We carried out the survey over a three week period in June and July 2013. As part of the survey, we asked 18 questions covering:

- the guidance we provide;
- the changes introduced for paying business costs and expenses;
- the experience of claiming;
- new online payroll tools introduced in 2012/13; and
- IPSA's processing of claims.

In 2011, the National Audit Office (NAO) carried out a survey asking MPs about IPSA and its work. IPSA decided to conduct a similar survey on an annual basis to monitor opinion and gather feedback.

Where appropriate, questions from the NAO survey were repeated, enabling us to make direct comparisons and to measure our progress.

In 2012, we only issued the survey to MPs. This year, we decided to extend those surveyed to MPs and their nominated proxies, who are also regular users of our systems. We did this to capture a wider range of opinions and feedback and to allow us to have a better understanding of the needs of our users. As a result, the number of responses received rose from 128 to 271 – 102 from MPs and 169 from proxies.

# KEY FINDINGS

## 1. Summary

1.1 The 2013 survey results show a mixed perception of IPSA's administration with some areas of clear improvement and others where some more work is needed. The survey received positive feedback in the following areas:

- MPs and staff are now spending less time completing claims compared to 12 months ago.
- The quality of advice provided by IPSA has improved.
- IPSA's new payroll tools have been well received.
- MPs and proxies feel the process of claiming has become easier.

1.2 The following are areas which MPs *and* staff would particularly like to be improved:

- The speed at which IPSA processes claims.
- The opening hours of the MP support line.
- The complexity of the online expenses system.
- The quality of IPSA's website.

1.3 The survey also identified a significant difference between the opinions of MPs and of their staff. Staff demonstrated higher satisfaction than MPs across all categories with an average difference of 20 percentage points.

1.4 We go through the details of the survey below, grouped into six themes.

## 2. Advice and guidance from IPSA

### Guidance

2.1 64% of MPs and 84 % of staff find the guidance on the Scheme 'very' or 'fairly' useful (see **Chart 1**), compared to 74% of responses in 2012.

*'It would be helpful to have a better search engine for the website (section for MPs), one for example that enabled a search of the bulletins.'* - Staff

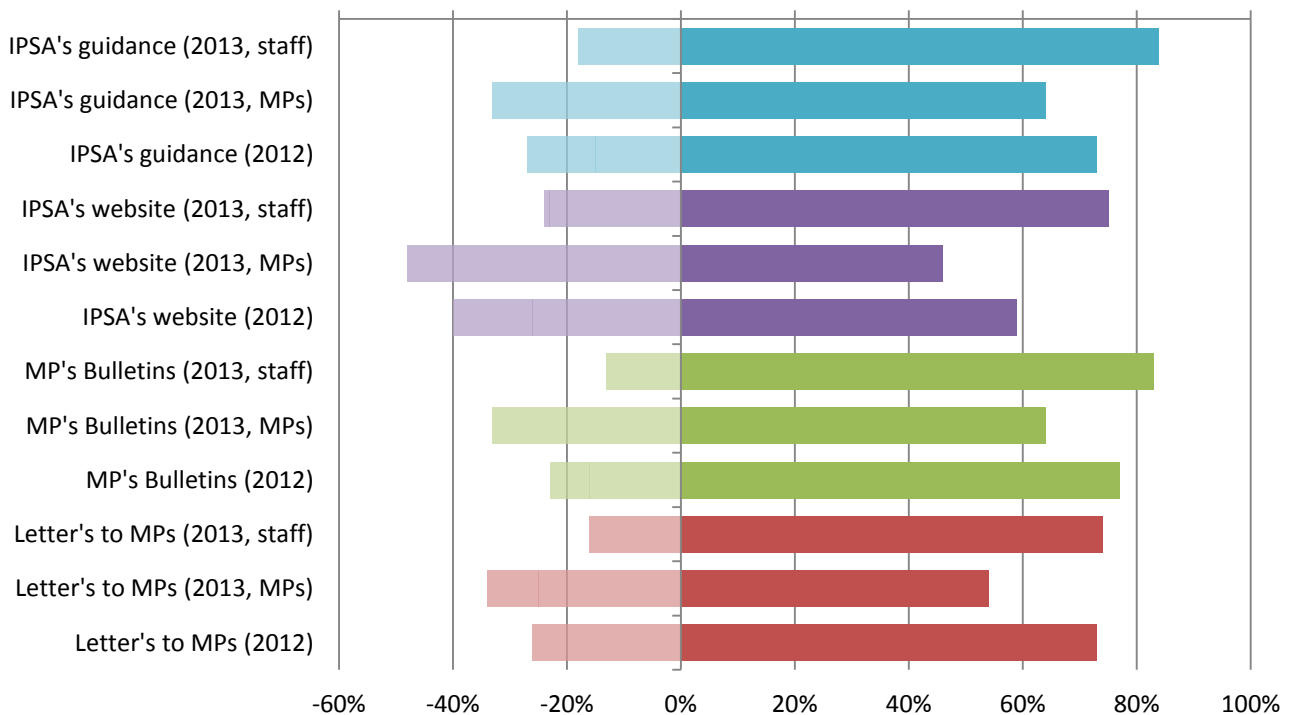
2.2 IPSA's website is received differently by MPs and their staff. 46% of MPs find it 'very' or 'fairly' useful, compared to 59% of responses in 2012. However, staff were much more favourable, with 75% responding positively.

2.3 53% of the free text responses in this section requested further improvements to IPSA's website, particularly to make it easier to navigate. 14% of respondents asked for the search function to be improved.

2.4 Bulletins and letters are well received by staff. 83% find bulletins useful and 74% find letters useful. MPs responded less favourably, with a third of responses stating they were 'not very' or 'not at all' useful.

### Chart 1

#### Usefulness of guidance on the rules and expenses system



Faded bars represent the number of MPs who responded with 'not very' or 'not at all' useful. Solid bars represent the 'very' or 'fairly' useful.

*Advice*

2.5 59% of MPs and 86% of staff find the advice provided over the phone to be ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ useful (see **Chart 2**), compared 71% of responses in 2012.

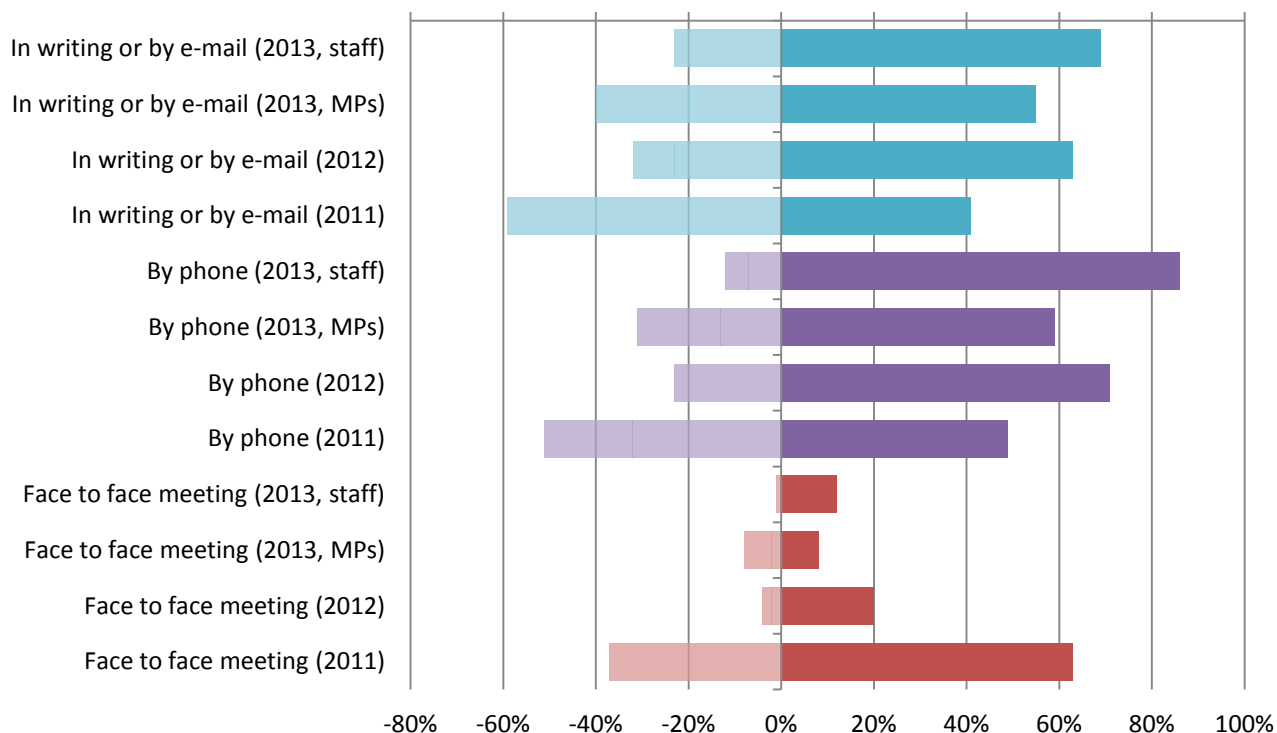
2.6 Satisfaction with written advice has remained about the same, with 55% of MPs and 69% of staff find it to be ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ useful, compared to 63% in 2012.

2.7 A number of responses stated that the volume of information and the various means IPSA uses to communicate with MPs and staff can be overwhelming.

*‘The problem is we don’t have time to wade through lots of literature. I find it easier, quicker and more effective to ring an IPSA adviser who are always very helpful.’ - Staff*

**Chart 2**

Usefulness of advice when contacting IPSA



*Speed of Response*

2.8 Satisfaction with the speed of response by phone is divided. 68% of staff answered positively, compared to only 39% of MPs (see **Chart 3**).

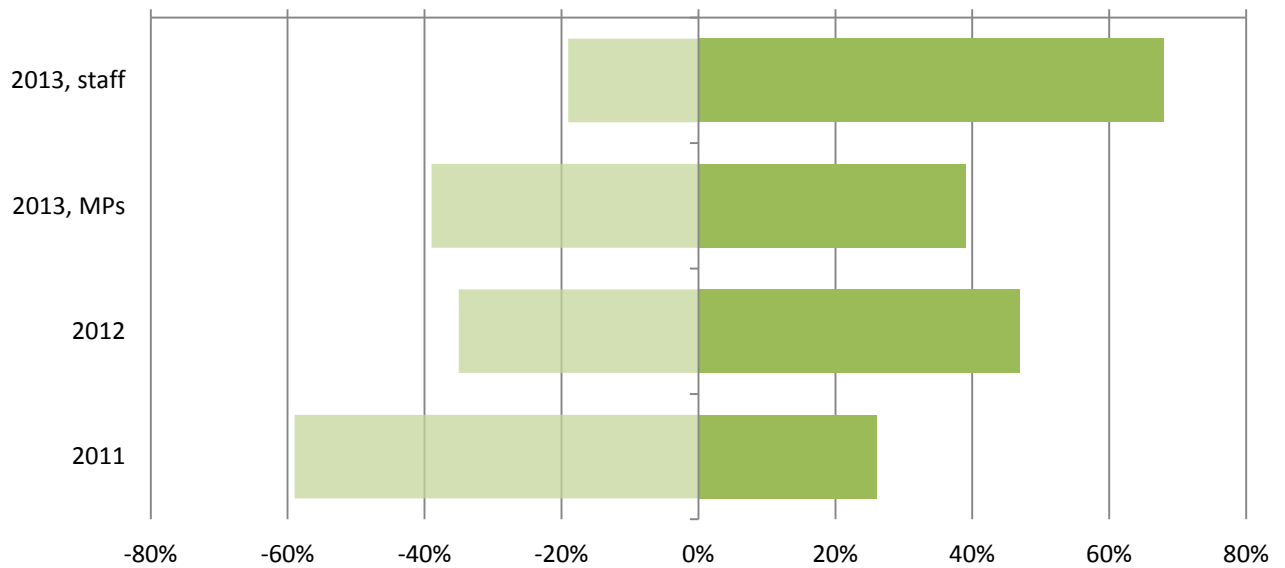
2.9 Only 36% of MPs and 41% of staff are satisfied with the speed of responses given in writing (see **Chart 4**), compared to 47% of users in 2012.

*‘Open the phone lines during all office hours. It is simpler, easier, and faster to ask a person for guidance than wade through yet more reading material.’ - Staff*

2.10 However, this may be a sign of a change in expectation as the results do not reflect the actual response rate. In the 12 months prior to the 2013 survey, 94.7% of correspondence was answered within 5 working days, compared to 93.1% in the 12 months preceding the 2012 survey. This means that satisfaction has fallen even though performance has improved. At present over 80% of written correspondence is answered within 3 working days.

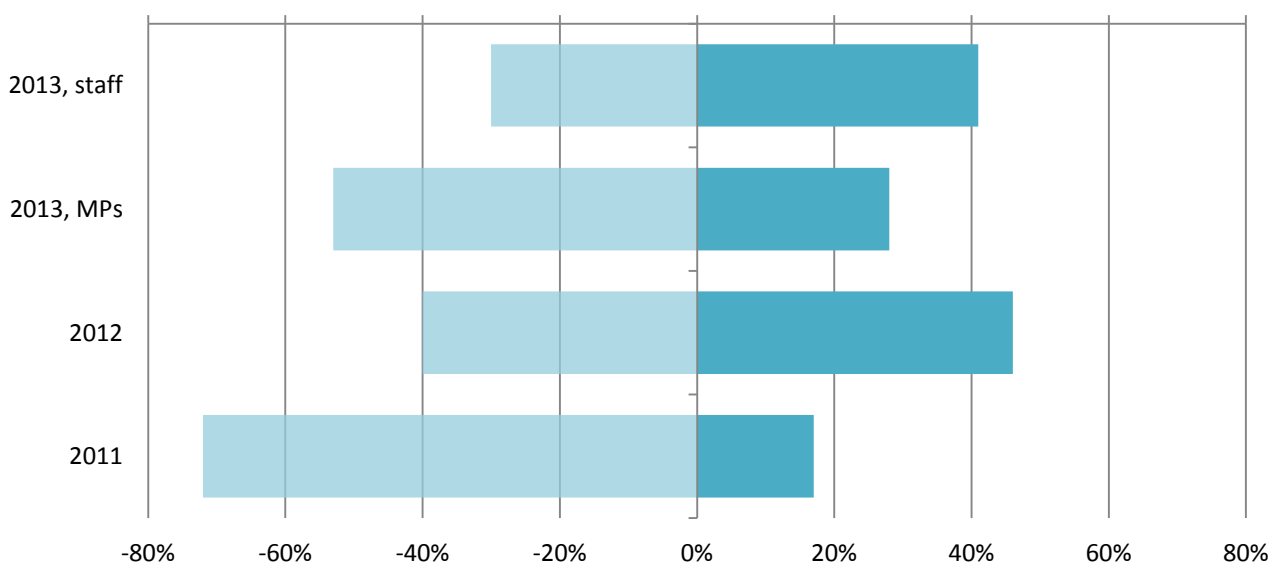
### Chart 3

#### Speed of response given by phone



### Chart 4

#### Speed of response given in writing



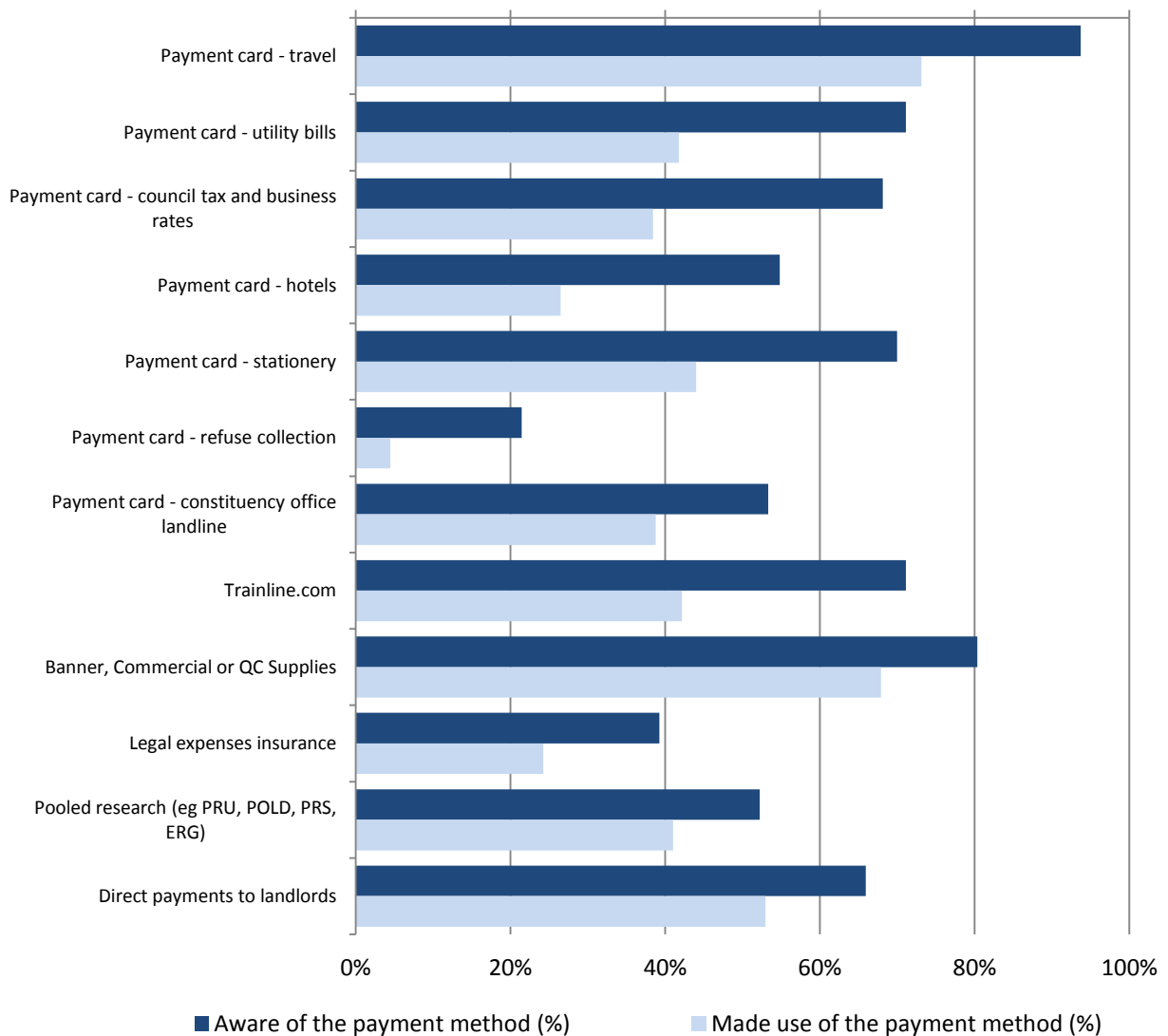
### 3. Payment card and direct payments

3.1 Reported awareness of direct payment options has increased, with the greatest increase being awareness of paying for hotels on the Payment Card. Reported uptake also increased across all options for MPs. The largest increase was also for hotel payments on the Payment Card.

3.2 It is worth noting that direct payment to stationery suppliers, introduced this year, has both the second highest awareness from staff (90%) and fourth highest from MPs (63%). It also has the highest reported uptake of all direct payment options from staff (79%) and second highest from MPs (50%). This suggests that the launch of these services was particularly effective and could be used to inform future efforts to encourage uptake of direct payments.

**Chart 5**

Awareness and uptake of payment methods





- 3.3 The average lag between awareness and uptake across all payment options is broadly the same at 18 percentage points for MPs and 22 for staff, compared to 22 in 2012. This can be seen more clearly in **Chart 5** above. The most pronounced lag is the use of the Payment Card for council tax and business rates; 68% of respondents are aware of this option but only 38% make use of it. This could relate to an issue raised in a number of free text responses that suppliers of some services, for which the Payment Card can be used, do not accept credit card payments.
- 'Our local authority and electricity supplier do not accept credit card payments.'* - Staff
- 'Extend the use of the of the payment card to include more office expenses.'* - Staff
- 3.4 The responses to Question 6 (*Which of the following statements describes your understanding of payment cards or direct payments?*) contain an interesting anomaly. Only 38% of MPs stated that they know about payment options and are using all the options suitable to them, compared to 62% of proxies, despite the previous answers showing the same levels of awareness and uptake.
- 3.5 In addition, 31% of MPs say they do not know about some or any of the options, with a further 13% saying they know about the options but need more help to use them, compared to 21% and 8% of staff respectively.
- 'A clear bulletin listing what is acceptable so that we can pin it to the office wall - some of these expenses are infrequent and it's easy to forget.'* - MP
- 3.6 Despite the expansion of direct payments, the free text responses showed a strong demand for a further increase in direct payment options, with 34% requesting this.
- 'A statement sent to MPs and certainly to their proxies each month confirming when and from which budget the payment has been taken would be of great assistance in budget monitoring during the year.'* - Staff
- 3.7 21% felt that the information regarding direct payment options was poor and cited the need for better information on what was available and how to make use of it. 10% used the opportunity to raise concerns about the Payment Card reconciliation process. A further 9% outlined difficulties with tracking budgets that include direct payments and requested more regular and more accurate budget reporting.
- 3.8 A minority of responses expressed a preference not to use any direct payment options at all.

## 4. Completing claims

4.1 The results of the survey demonstrate that major improvements have been made to the process of making claims, with 38% of MPs and 61% of staff reporting that submitting claims has become easier over the last 12 months, compared to 12% and 4%, respectively, who feel that it has become more difficult.

*'System is much easier and user-friendly than it was and much less time consuming.'*- Staff

4.2 30% of MPs and 52% of staff reporting that they spend less time making claims than they did a year ago, compared to 11% and 2%, respectively, who are spending more time submitting claims.

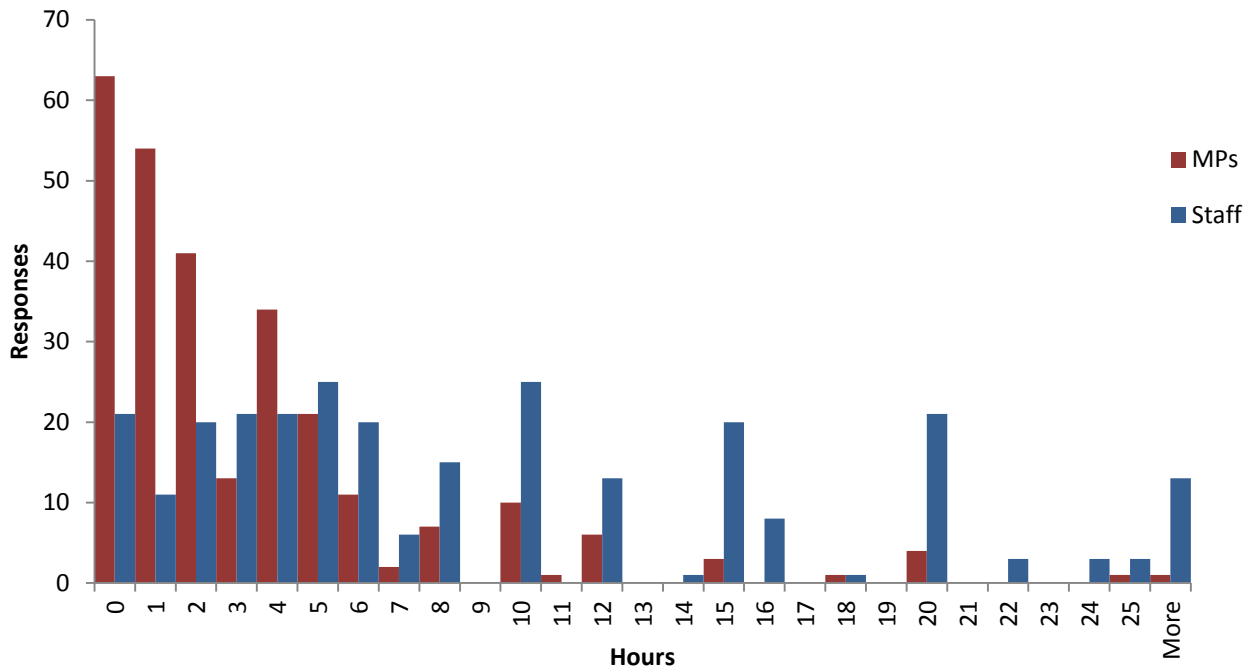
4.3 The average number of hours that it was estimated that MPs and their staff spend making claims has also fallen considerably.

4.4 It was reported that MPs spend on average 2 hours per month making claims and their staff spend 6 hours, compared to over 4 hours and 13 hours in 2012. See **Chart 6** below for a more detailed breakdown.

- There was a pronounced difference in the way this question was answered by MPs and proxies, with MPs providing lower estimates for staff time than proxies and proxies providing lower estimates for MP time spent than the MPs.
- Overall 83% of responses reported time spent by the MP as between 0 and 5 hours per month, with 23% stating that the MP spent no time making claims.
- 44% of responses reported staff time as between 0 and 5 hours, with 8% stating that staff spent no time making claims.
- 2% of MPs and the staff of 16% of MPs were reported as spending more than 20 hours per month on submitting claims.

## Chart 6

### Average hours spent submitting claims per month



The quoted average is the median, in line with the 2011 NAO survey.

4.5 We asked what would make submitting claims easier still and 27% said that the online system should be faster, less complicated and more reliable; 12% requested a reduction in the amount of paperwork involved in making claims and 10% expressed a desire for more static information to be pre-filled on claim forms.

*'Some of the paperwork seems unnecessary. For example, when submitting routine mileage claims, where there is no supporting documentation, why is it necessary to print off and post the form to IPSA.'* - Staff

4.6 On the question of where most of the time was spent when claiming, the responses were very similar to last year. 23% said they spent most of the time collating, printing and submission of paperwork and receipts; 16% said it was reconciling the Payment Card; 13% said filling in mileage claims

*'Really irritating and time consuming adding constituency station to every line of every travel claim. Why can't it just default to your home station.'* - MP

## 5. Processing of claims by IPSA

### *Speed of Processing*

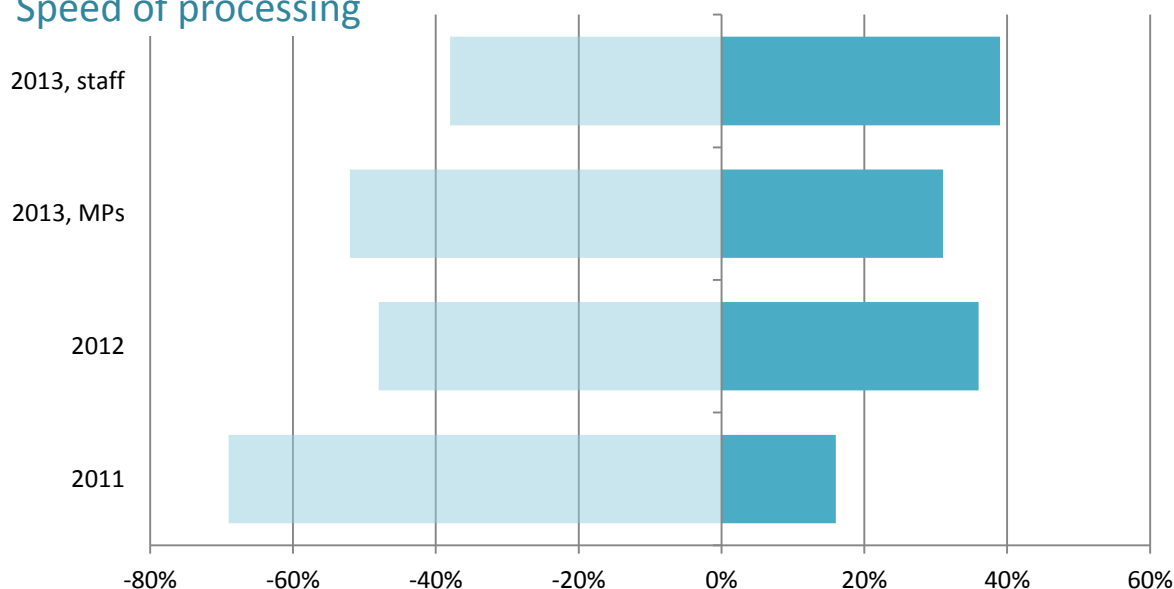
5.1 Satisfaction at the speed of processing remains largely unchanged (see [Chart 7](#)).

5.2 52% of MPs said they are ‘fairly’ or ‘very’ dissatisfied with the speed of processing, while only 31% are ‘fairly’ or ‘very’ satisfied. Speed of processing and payment was also the main area of desired improvement identified in the free text responses. 38% reported faster processing as the main improvement IPSA could make.

*‘Some claims are processed in a week or so, others take more than a month with no queries from IPSA to explain delay. As this money is paid from our personal finances, there should be minimum delay in reimbursement once a claim has been made.’ - MP*

5.3 The average time from receipt of evidence for a claim to reimbursement in the 12 months prior to the 2013 survey was 9 working days. The low satisfaction therefore reflects a high level of expectation. In addition, nearly half of the total expenditure on business costs and expenses is paid by non-reimbursement methods and therefore does not require the MP to pay from their own funds in the first instance.

**Chart 7**  
Speed of processing



### *Accuracy and Repayments*

5.4 The results of the survey show an imbalance between perception and reality. 80% of staff and 57% of MPs are ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ satisfied, compared to 69% of respondents in 2012.

5.5 However, the actual accuracy of processing claims for this period was 99.5%.

*Queries about Claims*

5.6 The level of satisfaction among MPs with how IPSA handles queries about claims remains low. 27% of MPs responded that they were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with how IPSA handles queries, while 47% were 'very' or 'fairly' dissatisfied, up from 26% of users in 2012.

5.7 Staff were more favourable, with 58% responding that they were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with how IPSA handles queries and only 19% were 'very' or 'fairly' dissatisfied.

*'Help and advice from Payroll has in my experience always been excellent' - Staff*

5.8 There remains a high level of dissatisfaction with IPSA's reasons for querying claims, with only 17% of MPs and 31% of proxies feeling that 'all' or 'most' of the queries were reasonable.

*'I try to do my expenses in the mornings so it would be helpful if the line was open then, rather than when the House is sitting.' - MP*

*Areas for Improvement*

5.9 Alongside the speed of processing claims, the free text responses highlighted several areas where users would like to see IPSA's processes further improved.

*'The team on the phone are great; they do all they can to assist and help. However, they also seem to be let down by a clunky process. It takes ages to get resolution on many items; particularly the trouble I've had toward the end of the year with reconciliation of claims and balance.' - Staff*

5.10 The improvements receiving the most support were longer opening hours for the MP Support Line (12%) and better access to information on status of claims during and after processing (10%).

5.11 Other improvements suggested include reducing paperwork, enabling proxies to print barcode forms and clearer remittance notifications.

5.12 Some of the desired improvements, such as pre-filling static information for regular claims, are already features of the system, suggesting a need for further explanation and training.

## 6. Online payroll tools

6.1 The questions on payroll were a new addition for the 2013 survey and relate to online tools introduced throughout the past 12 months.

*'The time sheets have worked well where used. However the staffing budget is not always up to date - particularly regarding contingency.'*  
- MP

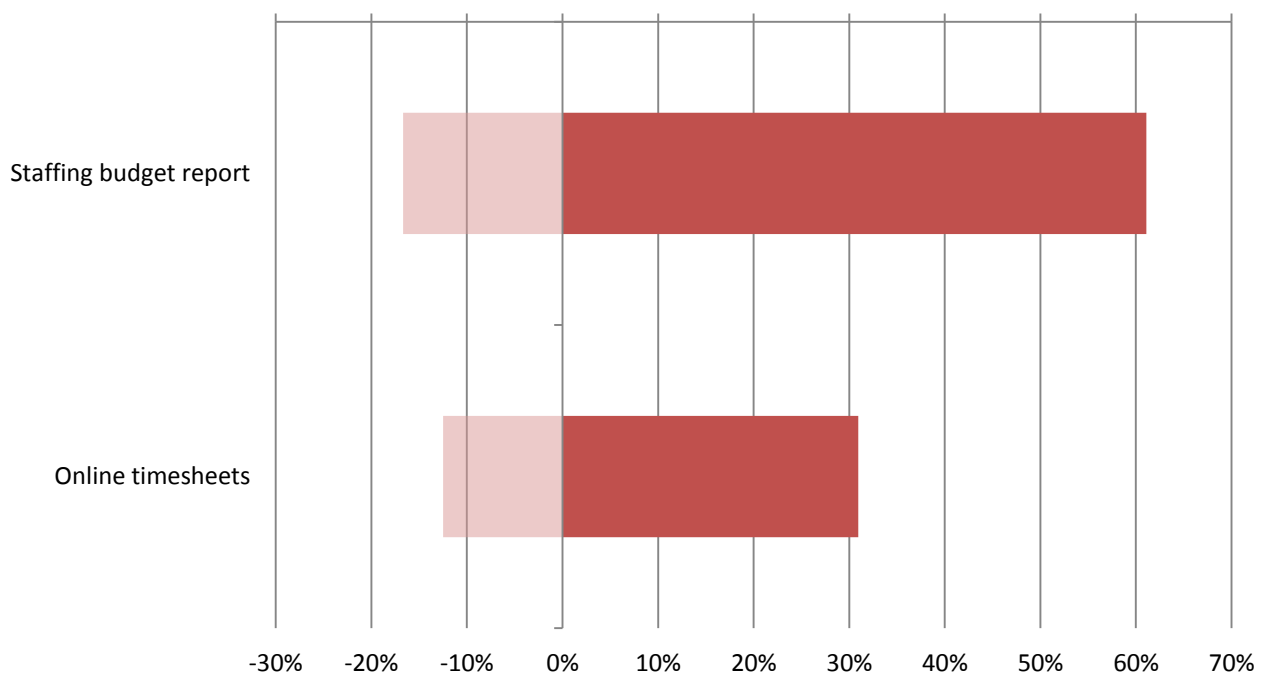
6.2 The responses show that these tools have been well received (see **Chart 8**), with 61% of respondents 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the Staffing Budget Report. Only 31% reported that they were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the Online Timesheets, although a further 43% responded that this question was not relevant to them.

*'My role in the office includes all staffing and recruitment, including budgeting. However IPSA have refused to allow me access to the staffing reports - which means that I need to rely on the busy MP to access the reports, save copies for me, and pass them on to me.'* - Staff

6.3 The free text responses, however, suggest that there were further improvements which could be made. 22% of responses reported that the Staffing Budget Report was difficult to use and that not all of the information was up to date. A further 13% highlighted technical difficulties experienced while trying to make use of the online tools.

6.4 The major theme amongst proxies was for greater access to the online Payroll functions for office managers, with 15% requesting that a nominated staff member receive the same access as the MP.

**Chart 8**  
Online payroll tools



## 7. MPs' use of business costs and expenses

7.1 These questions were made available to MPs only.

7.2 The percentage of MPs saying they do not claim for some business costs and expenses remains largely unchanged, with 92% responding that they decided not to claim for some costs for which they believe they could have been reimbursed.

*'What I don't claim for is meals on late night sittings, simply because I am not sure that this is appropriate and I would not want to be highlighted as someone who claims.'*  
- MP

7.3 The reasons given were as follows:

- (a) It was only a small claim – 60%
- (b) It would take too long – 53%
- (c) The claim process was too complicated – 49%
- (d) I was concerned about claims being published – 43%
- (e) I was worried the claim would be rejected – 15%
- (f) I wasn't sure if it was claimable – 13%
- (g) I wasn't sure what amount I could claim for – 12%
- (h) Other – 28%

7.4 Those answering 'Other' were invited to provide more details. Six of the 32 responses said they did not claim for expenses that they did not believe should be claimable (in particular late sitting meals). Three of the 32 stated that they did not feel IPSA supported the legitimacy of their claims when under public scrutiny.

## 8. Further comments

8.1 The final question in the survey gave MPs and proxies the opportunity to express any comments, further to the previous questions, about IPSA's administration of the Scheme.

8.2 A significant number of responses reiterated and expanded on points made in previous questions.

- 27% requested longer opening hours for the MP Support Line.
- 9% reported that the IT system is too slow and cumbersome.
- 8% stated that the process of making claims was too complicated.
- 6% repeated that processing and repayment times are still too slow.

8.3 A significant number of respondents (14%) used this as an opportunity to acknowledge the improvements made to IPSA's administration, praise IPSA's staff and express support for the Scheme.



# USER RECOMMENDATIONS

Set out below are all the recommendations on improvements made by MPs and proxies in the free text responses. They are grouped by the category they refer to rather than the question they were answering. These are not weighted.

## *Advice and Guidance*

- Improve IPSA's website
  - Simpler layout
    - Arrange guidance according to categories on e@w
  - Update content and guidance regularly
  - Improve search function
    - Make bulletins searchable
  - Clearer access to downloadable forms
  - Checklist guides (e.g. for MPs changing accommodation)
  - Better FAQs section
- Increase MP Support Line opening hours
  - Direct line to Payroll team
- Simpler language in guidance and bulletins
  - Hyperlinks in bulletins to relevant sections of website
- More personalised communication
  - More face-to-face meetings
  - Address MPs by name in writing, not as Dear MP
  - Direct means of contact when communicating with specific IPSA staff
- Single, comprehensive source of guidance rather than multiple channels
  - Less duplication of guidance

## *Direct Payment*

- A clear, up to date list of direct payment options on website
  - Occasionally send a reminder copy in a bulletin
  - Better explanation of the pros and cons of direct payment options
- Extend the use of the Payment Card to more expense types.
  - Alternatives for suppliers who do not accept credit cards
  - Raise the transaction limit
  - Introduce a Proxy Payment Card
- Extend range of direct payment options
  - Including all regular direct debits (e.g. telephones)

- Itemised, monthly direct payment report
  - Including budget allocations and remaining allowances
- Where MPs often claim for things that can be paid directly, proactively inform them of the direct payment option
- Faster direct payment setup

## Completing Claims

- Make the IT system more user friendly
  - Increase the response time
  - Improve compatibility with different internet browsers (esp. Chrome)
- Make filling in forms easier
  - Reduce the number of dropdown boxes
  - Separate lists for MP/Staff/Intern expense types
  - Introduce expense type for office sundries
  - Allow multiple small claims for same item on single line (e.g. newspapers)
  - Remove requirement for splitting utility bills
- Save standard claims and auto-fill details
  - Auto-fill constituency station for travel claims
  - Auto-fill nominated home/office address for mileage claims
- Hold occasional 'Expenses MOTs' to help teach MPs' staff how to make the best use of the online expenses system
- Simplify Payment Card reconciliation process
- Reduce the volume of paperwork
  - Allowing electronic submission of evidence
  - Remove requirement for submitting barcode form for mileage claims
  - Remove requirement for evidence with every claim for regular claims
  - Replace universal submission of evidence with random checks
- Allow Proxies to print barcode forms once MP has authorised claim
- Return to a paper-based system
- Abolish the '90 day' rule

## Processing Claims

- Faster processing and reimbursement
- Deal with issues with claims proactively
  - More consideration of claims on an individual basis
  - Telephone MPs' offices before returning/querying a claim
  - More flexibility on missed deadlines for legitimate claims
- Introduce a named Account Manager for each MP, who handles all of their claims

- Regular updates on processing status of claims
  - Automatic email confirming receipt of barcode form and evidence
- Better remittance notes and payment notifications
  - Distinguish between notifications of payments made to MP and payments made to suppliers on MP's behalf
  - Include claim form numbers on remittance slips
  - Remittance slips for payments to MPs' staff
  - Copies of remittance slips sent to Proxies

## Payroll

- Send an 'Essential Guide' to new starters
- More flexible job descriptions
- Acknowledge receipt of changes to staff details
- Greater access/permissions for Proxies and Office Managers
  - Require Office Manager to sign-off timesheets
- Monthly rather than weekly timesheets
- Allow paper timesheets
- Provide a staff leave chart for MPs' staff
- Make the Staffing Budget Report available in a non-zip format

## Other

- Improve the working relationship between IPSA and MPs/MPs' staff
  - Invite staff who handle their MP's claims to visit IPSA and see the volume of work IPSA staff deal with
  - Take a less distrustful/suspicious attitude towards queried claims
  - Make letters from IPSA senior management less officious and confrontational
  - Stand up for MPs in public when they are challenged over legitimate claims
- Better Summary of Expenditure report
  - Set out summary by form number
  - Allow for tables to be arranged by month and budget category
  - Include up to date budget limits and usage
- Provide more context with published lists of claims
- Introduce a small petty-cash allowance to cover minor, incidental office costs
- Replace the current expenses system with an allowance based system
  - Introduce a single flat rate payment to cover salary and expenses
- Abolish IPSA

## ANNEX A – PERSONAL DATA

The survey did not ask respondents for their personal details and, therefore, the responses to the survey were anonymous. Individuals could not be identified from the responses, unless any personal data was entered into the free text fields.

At the beginning of the survey, MPs and their proxies were informed that the survey would be conducted anonymously and that we may disclose quantitative or qualitative data, including in response to a Freedom of Information request. Where any of the data might identify an individual, respondents are aware that we would withhold that information

## ANNEX B – SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey was built using Snap Surveys (Snap) software and uploaded onto the Snap website. A link to the survey was included in an email to MPs from Andrew McDonald, inviting them to take part in the survey. A further reminder email was sent after 2 weeks. This collected a total of 271 responses; 102 from MPs and 169 from proxies.

The survey was closed after 3 weeks and the results downloaded from the Snap website and imported into the Snap software. The survey analysis took place both in Snap and in Excel.

In addition to quantitative analysis on 15 fixed questions, responses to 9 free text fields were grouped into categories and tallied, allowing those responses to be weighted. All responses from free text fields that were specific suggestions for improvement have been included in the MPs' Recommendations section and are not weighted.

Where figures are quoted, they are given in the same form as the 2011 NAO survey in order to maintain consistency and aid comparison.

## ANNEX C – FULL SURVEY DATA

### Advice and guidance from IPSA

1. *IPSA provides MPs with guidance on the business costs and expenses rules and the system for making claims. How useful are the guidance, website, bulletins and letters provided by IPSA?*

	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Not relevant	Responses
IPSA's guidance	18%	58%	17%	6%	1%	[270]
IPSA's website	9%/24%	55%/60%	22%/14%	11%/4%	3%/0%	[271]
MP	13%	50%	27%	6%	3%	[271]
Bulletins	4%/19%	42%/56%	34%/23%	14%/1%	6%/1%	[271]
Letters to MPs	21%	55%	17%	4%	4%	[271]
	15%/24%	49%/59%	25%/12%	8%/1%	4%/4%	[271]
	13%	53%	18%	5%	10%	[271]
	10%/15%	44%/59%	25%/14%	9%/2%	12%/9%	[271]

*Please use the space provided to suggest ways in which our guidance, website, bulletins and letters could be made more useful to you.*

[74 free text responses – 30 MPs/44 Proxies]

2. *In the last 6 months, how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with the speed of response when contacting IPSA using each of the following channels?*

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not relevant	Responses
In writing or e-mail	6%	30%	20%	20%	19%	5%	[271]
	6%/7%	22%/34%	14%/24%	22%/18%	31%/12%	4%/6%	
By phone	24%	33%	12%	11%	16%	4%	[271]
	10%/33%	29%/35%	14%/11%	13%/9%	26%/10%	8%/1%	

*Responses are given in each instance as a combined figure followed by the breakdown for MPs and staff. Some percentages may add up to more or less than 100% due to rounding.*

3. In the last 6 months, how useful was the advice provided by IPSA when you have contacted us through each of the following channels?

	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Not relevant	
In writing or e-mail	18%	45%	17%	12%	8%	[268]
	11%/23%	44%/46%	20%/16%	20%/7%	6%/9%	
By phone	32%	44%	9%	10%	6%	[271]
	14%/43%	45%/43%	13%/7%	18%/5%	11%/3%	
Face to face meeting	6%	5%	1%	3%	85%	[257]
	8%/4%	0%/8%	2%/0%	6%/1%	84%/86%	

## Payment cards and direct payments

4. In total 70% of MPs' business costs and expense claims can now be paid direct to suppliers or by using the payment card. Which of the following payment options are you aware of?

Description	Percentage of respondents per option
Payment card for travel	94%
Payment card for utility bills	71%
Payment card for council tax and business rates	68%
Payment card for hotels	55%
Payment card for stationery	70%
Payment card for refuse collection	21%
Payment card for constituency office landline	53%
Travel booked through the trainline.com	71%
Stationery bought directly from Banner, Commercial or QC	80%
Legal expenses insurance	39%
Pooled research (e.g. PRU, POLD, PRS, ERG)	52%
Direct payments to landlords for accommodation or office rent	66%
None of the above	3%
	[270]

5. Which of the following payment options have you used? [Please tick all that apply]

Description	Percentage of respondents per option
Payment card for travel	72%
Payment card for utility bills	41%
Payment card for council tax and business rates	38%
Payment card for hotels	26%
Payment card for stationery	44%
Payment card for refuse collection	4%
Payment card for constituency office landline	38%
Travel booked through the trainline.com	42%

Stationery bought directly from Banner, Commercial or QC	67%
Legal expenses insurance	24%
Pooled research (e.g. PRU, POLD, PRS, ERG)	41%
Direct payments to landlords for accommodation or office rent	52%
None of the above	4%
	[268]

6. Which of the following statements describes your understanding of payment cards or direct payments?

Description	Proportion of respondents
Did not know about some/any of these payment options	26%
Do know about payment options and am using all the options suitable to me	53%
Do know about payment options but need further help	10%
I do not wish to use any payment card or direct payment options	3%
None of the above	9%
	[265]

How can IPSA assist you to make the most of the payment cards and direct payment options?

[67 free text responses – 27 MPs/40 Proxies]

## Completing Claims

7. Thinking about the changes made to the business costs and expenses system in the last twelve months, how have these changes affected the ease of completing claims?

Description	Proportion of respondents
Much easier	11% 6%/14%
Easier	42% 32%/47%
No change	37% 46%/31%
More difficult	5% 9%/3%
Much more difficult	2% 3%/1%
Not relevant	4% 4%/4%
	[271]



*What changes to the expenses system would make it easier to submit your claims?*

[97 free text responses – 45 MPs/52 Proxies]

8. *In the last 6 months, how much time on average have you and/or your staff spent making claims for business costs and expenses? Please write the average number of hours spent per month in the boxes below.*

MP, hours per month  
 2 [median]  
 3.5 [mean]

Staff, hours per month  
 6 [median]  
 9.6 [mean]

[One response to this question was discounted because it gave the average time spent by the MP as 2000 hours per month]

*Which aspect of submitting claims takes most time?*

[176 free text responses – 60 MPs/116 Proxies]

9. *How does your answer to the above compare to the amount of time you were spending a year ago?*

Response	Proportion of respondents	
A lot less time now	7%	3%/9%
A little less time now	37%	27%/43%
About the same amount of time now	46%	57%/40%
A little more time now	4%	8%/1%
A lot more time now	2%	3%/1%
Not relevant	4%	2%/6%
	[271]	

## Processing of Claims by IPSA

10. In the last 6 months, how many of IPSA's queries about your claims do you think have been reasonable?

Response	Proportion of respondents	
All of them were reasonable	10%	7%/12%
Most of them were reasonable	15%	10%/19%
Some of them were reasonable	29%	24%/32%
None of them were reasonable	24%	36%/17%
None of my claims have been queried recently	13%	14%/13%
Not relevant	8%	10%/8%
	[271]	

If you think any of IPSA's queries have been unreasonable, please explain briefly why.

[99 free text responses – 42 MPs/57 Proxies]

11. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of IPSA's current service in relation to your business costs and expenses claims?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not relevant	
Speed of processing	4%	32%	20%	28%	15%	0%	[271]
Accuracy of reimbursement of claims to you	35%	37%	17%	3%	5%	4%	[271]
How IPSA handles any queries about your claim	13%	33%	21%	19%	11%	4%	[271]
How IPSA handles collection of repayments from you when required	6%	15%	19%	4%	7%	50%	[271]
	3%/5%	28%/34%	16%/23%	30%/27%	22%/11%	1%/0%	
	31%/37%	26%/43%	24%/13%	4%/2%	11%/1%	4%/4%	
	4%/18%	23%/40%	23%/20%	27%/14%	20%/5%	4%/4%	
	1%/9%	8%/20%	21%/18%	4%/4%	12%/4%	55%/46%	

12. How could IPSA improve the service it provides in relation to your expenses claims?

[92 free text responses, 38 MPs/54 Proxies]

## Payroll services

13. Which of the following payroll services have you used?

Description	Proportion of respondents
Staffing budget report	68%
Online timesheets	32%
None of the above	26%
	[268]

14. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of IPSA's current service in relation to your business costs and expenses claims?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not relevant	
Staffing budget report	19% 10%/24%	42% 40%/44%	19% 21%/17%	8% 15%/4%	9% 11%/7%	4% 3%/4%	[198]
Online timesheets	13% 6%/17%	18% 16%/20%	13% 15%/13%	5% 6%/4%	8% 5%/10%	43% 52%/40%	[168]

15. How could IPSA improve the service it provides in relation to payroll services?

[101 free text responses – 42 MPs/59 Proxies]

## MPs' use of business costs and expenses

16. *In the last 12 months, have you ever decided not to claim any expenses for which you believe you could have been reimbursed?*

Yes	No
94	8

17. *Which of the following, if any, were reasons for not claiming a business cost or expense?*

Response	Proportion of MPs
The claim process was too complicated	49%
It was only a small claim	60%
It would take too long	53%
I wasn't sure if it was claimable	13%
I wasn't sure what amount I could claim for	12%
I was concerned about the claim being published	43%
I was worried the claim would be rejected	15%
Other	28%
	[94]

*If you selected other, please provide further details*

[32 free text responses – 32 MPs]

## Further comments

18. *Please use the box below if there is any further comments you would like to make about IPSA's administration of the MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses*

[142 free text responses – 55 MPs/87 Proxies]