

We welcome feedback on the Bulletin. Please email comments and suggestions to info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk.

Upgrade to the Online System

The online expenses system will be unavailable on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 August, whilst we undertake a planned upgrade. The upgrade will provide the following additional options when using the system, identified as a result of our recent consultation and in response to concerns expressed by MPs and staff members:

- MPs who own their own property but who are not claiming mortgage interest subsidy can claim associated expenditure (paragraph 5.2(c) of the Scheme);
- MPs who are eligible for accommodation expenses can claim for journeys between any point in the constituency (or a home or office within 20 miles of their constituency) and Westminster or a London Area home (paragraph 7.2(a));
- MPs may claim travel and subsistence expenses for the cost of an overnight hotel for a member of their staff, where the staff member has necessarily travelled in assisting the MP in his or her Parliamentary functions, or in undertaking relevant training. Such claims may be made only when it is unreasonable to expect the staff member to return to any residence. The limits are set out in paragraph 5.22 (paragraph 7.32);
- MPs may claim reimbursement for subsistence expenses for their staff members if the staff member necessarily stays overnight in a hotel to assist the MP in his or her Parliamentary functions, or if the staff member is undertaking training. Expenditure is limited to £25 for each night for food and non-alcoholic drinks;
- MPs may register and submit claims for the incidental expenses of interns and volunteers if they meet the conditions set out in paragraph 8.7 (paragraph 8.2(f));
- MPs may claim for meals for late sittings which are not eaten on the Parliamentary estate;
- CORE telephone rental and telephone usage are consolidated into a single expenses type to allow claims to be submitted which cover both in a single bill;

- Additional expense types have been added to travelcard forms, which now cover the following areas:
 - Season tickets
 - Public transport tickets
 - Oyster
 - Parking
 - Tolls
 - Congestion.
- New expense types have been added for disability assistance, covering additional travel and hotel costs for staff.

These and a number of other changes will be implemented this weekend, meaning any claims relating to the above issues can be made from Monday 16 August. If you have any queries regarding how to make claims, please contact our information line on 020 7811 6400 or email us at info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk.

Evidence requirements

We have received a number of claims that, though allowable, are not supported by the appropriate evidence. In order that we can process your claims as quickly as possible, please take a minute to review the evidence requirements for each expense claim, which can be found on our website under 'The Expenses Rules'. In cases where we accept invoices as proof of payment, these must include the date and amount of the transaction, and be **signed and dated by the MP**. Signing and dating the invoice will be accepted by us as a declaration that the invoice has been paid. Please note **you do not need to sign and date receipts**, which are, in themselves, proof that a payment has been made.

In addition, please note that any claims for taxis need to be accompanied by an explanation of why a taxi was needed. This should be made in the 'notes' section of the claim form. Where you have stated that no other reasonable form of transport is available, please give details.

Internal Mail

Currently, **items placed in the House of Commons internal mail will not be delivered to IPSA**. If you wish to send claims or correspondence to IPSA you should do so via Royal Mail or the drop box in the Members' Centre.

IPSA *can* receive mail sent through the Government Mail service, but the House of Commons' agreement with Government Mail does not currently allow for items placed in the internal mail to be forwarded to IPSA. This is, of course, a matter for the House, but we have asked whether this arrangement may be changed to allow us to receive post through the internal mail. If this happens, we will notify MPs in this newsletter.

IPSA Model Contracts

We have been made aware of a typographical error in the IPSA model fixed-term and permanent contracts, where section 3 (Duration) and section 4 (Probationary Period) have references to section 24, which should be references to the notice provisions in section 23. We have now corrected these and amended versions are on our website. This in no way affects contracts that have already been signed, and you do not need to take any action.

Payment of Expenses and Salaries

IPSA's online expenses and finance systems have been set up to enable approved expenses to be paid into MPs' bank accounts **throughout** the month. This means that there is no monthly or weekly cut-off date. Please note, however, that the monthly cut-off date for IPSA's **salary** payroll is the 15th, or if this falls on a non-working day, the last working day before that.

IPSA Bulletins, Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions in the Members' Centre

Paper copies of these Bulletins, our latest Scheme guidance document and our frequently asked questions are now available from the Members' Centre in Portcullis House. Alternatively, these can be found on our website.

Contacting IPSA

Phone: IPSA Information Line: 020 7811 6400
(Opening hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday)

Email: info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk

Post: IPSA, 7th floor, Portland House, Bressenden Place, London,

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