

## Changes to the Online System

Last weekend, we implemented a number of planned changes to the system:

### Associated Expenditure

MPs who own their own property but who are not claiming mortgage interest subsidy can now claim associated expenditure (paragraph 5.2(c) of the Scheme). There is a two stage process to register for this. First, on the homepage update your address under 'MP/MP staff'. Secondly, go to 'New Claim Form', then select 'REGISTRATION: Accommodation Status'. Fill out the form, typing the first line of the address in the 'Details' field, and selecting 'Associated Expenditure Only' in the 'Accommodation Status Location' field, and submit to us in the usual way. You will need to print out and send us the barcode. You should also send us a copy of **one** of the following pieces of documentation:

- 1) Letter from The Land Registry confirming your ownership of the property
- 2) Copy of your current mortgage interest statement.

### Travel

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)).

### Staff Hotel Claims

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). These claims can be made by selecting one of the new categories found under 'Travel and Subsistence', rather than from GAE.

### **Staff Subsistence Claims**

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. These claims can be made by choosing 'Staff Food and Non-Alcoholic Drinks MP STAFF', found under 'Travel and Subsistence'.

### **Interns and Volunteers**

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)). Before claiming these you will need to register each intern by going to 'REGISTRATION: intern/volunteer'. Under 'Details' you should enter the intern's name. You will also need to submit a 'Model Volunteer Intern Agreement' form, available on our website under 'Information for MPs and Staff'. Once the online form and paper agreement have been submitted and approved, you can then claim expenses. If the intern for whom you are claiming expenses no longer works for you, please state this on the online form in the 'Notes' section. Please note, expense claims for interns come from the staffing budget rather than from travel and subsistence.

### **Meals for Late Sitings**

When the House sits past 7.30pm, MPs may claim for meals which are not eaten on the Parliamentary estate. However please note that these may be taxable.

### **Telephone Claims**

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.

### **Travelcard**

Additional expense types have been added to travelcard forms, which now cover the following areas:

- Season tickets
- Public transport tickets

- Oyster
- Parking
- Tolls
- Congestion.

## Miscellaneous

New expense types have been added to the 'Miscellaneous' category for disability assistance. These cover additional travel and hotel costs for staff.

If you are unsure how to submit a claim, please contact our information team on 020 7811 6400 or email [info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk](mailto:info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk)

## Taxi Claims

Please note that any claims for taxis by either an MP or a member of staff must be accompanied by details of why a taxi, rather than public transport, was necessary. When the House sits beyond 11pm, a taxi may be taken to a London Area residence, subject to an upper limit of £80 for each journey (section 7.34 of the Scheme). The reason should be stated in the claim form.

All other taxi claims must be accompanied by an explanation stating that either:

- Alternative methods of transport were impracticable due to pregnancy, disability, illness or injury of the MP or staff member,

OR

- No other reasonable method of transport was available for all or part of the journey. Where this is the case, full details must be given (section 7.13 of the Scheme).

## Pro-Rating of Claims

Please note that we are only able to reimburse MPs for costs incurred from 7 May onwards.

Where a billing period covers this date and earlier, for example from 1 May to 31 May, this should be pro-rated before being submitted, in order that we can process your claim as quickly as possible.

For example, you wish to claim for a constituency office phone bill covering the period 1 May to 31 May 2010. Only 25 of those days are covered by the IPSA Scheme. Therefore you should only claim for 25 days of the bill. If you are a returning MP, claims for the remaining portion should be submitted to the House of Commons.

## Hiring venues for surgeries

We have received a number of claims for the cost of hiring a venue for constituency surgeries, made under the General Administrative Expenditure (GAE) budget. However, these claims should be made under the **Constituency Office Rental Expenditure (CORE)** budget, which covers not only the cost of maintaining constituency offices, but also of providing surgeries (Section 9.1 of the Scheme). The GAE budget can be used for hiring venues for any other purpose, such as meetings, but claims for the cost of hiring venues for surgeries will be returned if they are submitted under the GAE budget.

## Evidence requirements

We have received a number of claims that, though allowable, are not supported by the appropriate evidence. In order for us to process your claims as quickly as possible, please take a moment 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.

## 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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto:info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk)

**Post:** IPSA, 7th floor, Portland House, Bressenden Place, London,  
SW1E 5BH

**Website:** [www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk](http://www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk)