

Consultation responses

We have today set out details of how MPs' expenses will be published and made changes to rules to allow MPs to pay incidental expenses to interns. This follows consultations conducted in June and July. The outcome of a consultation on the powers and processes of the new Compliance Officer was also published today.

Publication of claims

IPSA has announced that claims will be routinely published from September using the following approach:

- All expenses claims – paid or refused – after the MP has been notified of the outcome.
- An anonymous list of MPs' staff paid from public funds, at least annually, listed in terms of their job function, including salaries expressed in ranges of £5,000 (no staff members, including connected parties, will have their exact salary published). Names of staff will not be included. However, IPSA will publish names of connected parties employed by MPs and paid from the public purse.
- The date, origin and destination of MPs' journeys claimed from the taxpayer. However, IPSA will not publish the time the journey was made.
- The first alphabetical block and the first numerical block of the postcode of MPs' addresses (eg OX1, rather than the full postcode).
- The amounts claimed under the security budget for the House of Commons as a whole, not any details relating to individual MPs. Standard security measures such as alarms on offices are not met from this budget, and IPSA would publish this expenditure by MPs, but not information about the provider or product.
- The amounts claimed under the disability budget for the House of Commons as a whole, not any details relating to individual MPs.

The first batch of claims will be published after the House has returned in September.

While MPs get used to the new online system, we will allow a period of grace until 10 September, during which submitted claims which are not allowed will be returned to MPs for them to correct,

with an explanation of why the claim is not allowed. Claims returned to MPs during this period will not be routinely published.

This approach will be taken unless there has been a clear attempt to transgress the rules. In this situation the claim will be refused and published. After this period of grace, all refused claims will be published as outlined above.

Changes to the scheme

The results of the consultation on changes to the scheme have also been released today. These changes address anomalies in the scheme and include provisions to allow:

- MPs who own their property but who are not claiming mortgage interest subsidy will be allowed to claim for associated expenditure;
- where more than one MP travels in the same car, only one of the MPs will be able to submit a claim for the cost of each journey;
- MPs may claim reimbursement of the costs of an evening meal (excluding alcoholic drinks), only where they are required to be at the House of Commons because the House is sitting beyond 7:30pm, the changes mean this meal does not need to be eaten on the Parliamentary estate; and
- MPs may submit claims for the incidental expenses of interns and volunteers if they meet the conditions set out in paragraph 8.7 of the revised scheme.

The online system will be updated to support these changes on 16 August, and claims can be backdated to the 7 May.

Copies of the revised scheme are available from the Vote Office and on IPSA's website.

Compliance Officer

MPs and the public can now contact the Compliance Officer for complaints they have about the expenses scheme being abused.

The Compliance Officer will have the power to gather evidence and to decide whether hearings with MPs are held in public. He has the discretion to make his own findings and to publish them.

The Compliance Officer has two functions: MPs can ask him to review a decision by IPSA to refuse an expense claim, and the Compliance Officer can investigate allegations that an MP has been paid an amount under the expenses scheme that the MP should not have been paid. When investigating, the Compliance Officer can look at the actions of IPSA as well as the MP.

The Compliance Officer is entirely independent of IPSA's executive functions.

The publication and Compliance Office procedures will become effective once the relevant sections of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 are commenced by the Government.

Deadline for making claims

Members will be aware that under the rules of the expenses scheme, claims for reimbursements need to be made within 90 days of expenses being incurred. On 5 August, 90 days will have passed since the MPs' Expenses Scheme came into operation on 7 May.

In recognition of the scale of the change from the old system to the new, we are extending the period for submitting claims for expenses incurred since the General Election.

For any expense incurred between 7 May and 3 July, the deadline for making a claim is now extended to 1 October.

For any claim for expenses incurred after 3 July, the normal 90 day deadline will continue to apply.

For example:

- Expense incurred on 7 May: claim to be made no later than 1 October
- Expense incurred on 7 June: claim to be made no later than 1 October
- Expense incurred on 7 July: claim to be made no later than 5 October
- Expense incurred on 7 October: claim to be made no later than 5 January

5 steps to making a claim

Some Members have expressed concern that claims they have submitted have not been paid. All claims which we have received have been or are being processed. But our records suggest some Members may not be completing all stages of the process correctly. For reference, below are the five stages to making a claim:

1. Log on to the system with your username, and passcode (your pin and the code from your security token.) For extra security, you will be asked to enter your expenses login name (which starts with the first two letters of your first name) and your password (this starts with a capital letter and a number).
2. Click on 'new claim/form' and fill out the details for the claim you wish to make.
3. Click 'check', to make sure all details are entered correctly and then click 'submit'. This sends the claim to IPSA.
4. Click 'home' and then click on the 'submitted' button and select the form number for the relevant claim. Select the print icon at the bottom right of the screen and follow the prompts to print the document.
5. Attach the relevant documents, such as receipts, to the form you have just printed and then submit to IPSA in the post, or using the drop box in Portcullis House.

Security of data

On the morning of Wednesday 14 July an internal administrative report was temporarily available on the secure expenses website. We removed the report immediately when it was

discovered. Following this, we notified the Information Commissioner, ordered immediate changes to be made by our IT contractor and will have these changes audited by a third party.

No sensitive personal data were made available to the public; the report was available only for a short period of time and it was accessed by only 5 MPs and 6 nominated proxies. We have written directly to these individuals.

We take data security very seriously. We have reported the incident to the Information Commissioner and we are awaiting further guidance from the Commissioner's office.

Travelcard update

We thought it would be useful to make clear to Members the requirements for handling travelcard expenses. Statements are loaded onto the online system for proxies to manage and Barclaycard will post a hard copy of the statement to Members for their records. This hard copy is not a separate bill for which a claim needs to be made.

The only action Members or their proxies need to take is to complete the online travel reconciliation statement, which confirms journeys paid for on the travelcard were for Parliamentary business, and send in receipts.

The statements you receive do not need any extra action and are only for your records.

Documentation centre

We will be closing the documentation centre at 1 Parliament Street on Friday 30 July. You can present documents and collect travelcards at the centre until then. After that date, you can return documents to IPSA through the post, or the IPSA drop box in Portcullis House. If you have not yet collected your travelcard and would like to have it posted to you, please email us confirming which address you wish us to send it to.

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, SW1E 5BH

Website: www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk