

This week's news:

Planning for the next financial year

Many of you are already planning for the next financial year and have asked about your budgets. As with all Parliamentary organisations, IPSA has to have its budget confirmed by Parliament and, until that happens, we cannot make any confirmations of, or revisions to, your budgets for the next financial year.

As is common practice across the public sector, you should plan for the next financial year in line with current budgets. Of course, once IPSA has had its funds confirmed we will notify you of any changes to individual budgets, should you want to revisit your arrangements. We expect the House to have completed the process by the end of March.

Paying bonuses

We have been asked whether MPs can request a temporary increase in their staff's salaries, if they are under the budget limit for staffing expenditure. The Staffing Expenditure Budget is not an allowance and cannot be used to pay for bonuses. Trying to use a temporary increase in salary to provide end of year bonuses to staff is not in accordance with the Expenses Scheme.

Applications for any temporary increase in salary will need to be accompanied by a declaration that it does not constitute a bonus payment and that the application is within the rules. You may like to note that the current consultation includes a discussion of whether any other methods of rewarding exceptional performance are appropriate.

Publication of expenses

As we have previously advised, on Thursday 3 February we are publishing the next cycle of MPs' expenses on our dedicated publication website at <http://www.parliamentary-standards.org.uk/>. This will cover claims from September and October, including 'not paid' claims submitted after 14 September. We will publish the following information:

- description of the claim
- transaction date
- amounts (claimed, paid, and, where applicable, not paid)
- reason it was not paid, where applicable
- status of claim (paid, part paid, not paid)

We are also publishing details of claims which have been repaid. These are cases in which a claim has been made, paid by IPSA, but the funds have been returned subsequently by the MP.

Please remember:

Taxis

If you are claiming for a taxi, please remember to explain in the notes why public transport was not practicable for the journey. Taxis may be claimable when no other reasonable method of transport is available for all or part of the journey; or when alternative methods of transport are impracticable due to pregnancy, disability, illness or injury of the MP or staff member.

Accommodation expenses

The evidence you use to support expenses related to your accommodation (such as television licences, bills, council tax or insurance) should always state the address of the property. This is so that we can check that the expense relates to the property which you have registered.

Contacting IPSA

Phone: IPSA Information Line: 020 7811 6400 (Opening hours 1pm-5pm, Monday to Friday)

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