

This week's news:

Claims after April 1

The new edition of the MPs' Expenses Scheme comes into effect from 1 April. Any claims you submit which have a transaction date of 31 March or before will be subject to the rules in the previous edition of the Scheme. Costs incurred on 1 April or after, are subject to the new rules we issued last week.

The transaction date will continue to dictate from which year's budget we deduct your claim. The transaction date is the date you paid or, if you are claiming an advance using an invoice, the date on the invoice.

From 1 April, you will see some changes in the online claim forms to reflect the new edition of the Scheme. For example, a new Office Costs Expenditure (OCE) form will replace the GAE and CORE forms. For your convenience, you will be able to use these new forms to make claims for costs incurred on or before 31 March. Some of the expense types on the new form will be broader than on the old form, so please select the expense type which best matches your claim.

If you have a claim which spans both financial years which you wish to apportion between your annual budgets, you should give the 2010-11 portions a transaction date of 31 March or earlier, and the 2011-12 portion a transaction date of 1 April or later.

Obviously, as we go through this transitional period there may be questions which arise, if so, please contact us and we will be very happy to help you.

Council tax and business rates

In April, you can, if you wish, pay your council tax and business rates for the coming year in one payment.

If you would like to do this, we will raise the transaction limit on your payment card to £2000 for April. If your business rates or council tax is more than this, please contact us.

Credit with your utility company

You may have built up a credit with your utility company if your regular direct debit to them has exceeded what you have used. If you have built up a credit on an account paid for by IPSA, please make sure that your utility company offsets it against your future bills.

IPSA website

We are working on improving our website. You will notice changes to the content, look and structure soon. These changes are intended to make it easier to find what you are looking for and the website more pleasant to use. We will continue making improvements over the coming months.

Contacting IPSA

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

Email: info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk

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

Website: www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk