

Costs associated with AV referendum

In Bulletin 36 we set out that costs associated to campaigning on the AV referendum cannot be claimed from us. Subsequently we have been asked about claiming for the use of telephones in the AV campaign.

As you know, the expenses Scheme is designed to reimburse costs incurred by MPs in carrying out their parliamentary functions only. Guidance supporting chapter six (para 6.6) of the Scheme, sets out that “MPs may only claim for telephone calls that relate to their parliamentary work”.

Costs which could be construed as campaign expenditure within the scope of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 are not included within the definition of parliamentary functions and, as such, the costs of any phone calls made to campaign on the referendum should not be claimed from IPSA.

Reward and recognition

In Bulletin 36, we advised you that MPs can claim modest reward and recognition payments for their staff. We have been asked to set out how we at IPSA interpret that for our own staff. IPSA’s own reward and recognition scheme provides shopping vouchers up to a value of £20 for an individual award, or £15 per head for a team award (such as a team lunch).

Several MPs have requested guidance on the appropriate level of reward and recognition payments. This is a discretionary award and so the precise level of such payments (or indeed, whether to make them at all) is left to an MP’s judgment, but paragraph 7.3f of the Scheme makes clear that these payments must be modest.

When deciding whether to make an award and at what level, MPs should consider that these are not routine payments but a means of acknowledging excellent performance or effort on a particular project or piece of work; that modest should be given its ordinary, dictionary meaning of “moderate in size” and “not extreme or excessive”; and that we will not pay bonuses to staff members.

On the advice of HMRC, we will process requests for payments in cash through the payroll. To request these payments, MPs should use the ‘reward and recognition payment’ form which is available on our website. Reward and recognition awards in other forms (such as vouchers) should be awarded and then a claim submitted using the online expenses system. The claim must be

supported by a receipt and a statement (in the notes field) of the particular project or piece of work which is being recognised. We cannot make reward and recognition payments as an advance.

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