

Consultation on changes to the MPs' and MEPs' Pension Schemes (same sex married couples)

Today we are launching a consultation on changes to the MPs' and MEPs' Pension Schemes to provide for benefits to the survivors of MPs and MEPs who are in a same sex married couple. This is in advance of the commencement of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 at the end of March.

The consultation proposes that the survivors of these relationships should receive benefits calculated in the same way, and in the same circumstances, as pensions paid to surviving civil partners. We propose that the changes will be made and the new Schemes laid before Parliament before 13 March 2014, the date on which it will be possible for same sex couples to give notice of their intention to marry.

We also propose to make changes to the Schemes to ensure that the survivor of a same sex marriage whose partner has legally changed gender will retain the expectation of survivor benefits they would have received if they had remained in an opposite sex marriage. We propose to make these changes later this year, before the gender recognition elements of the Act are commenced.

The consultation is open until 9 February and the full consultation document is available on our website www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk.

Consultation on the Annual Review of the Scheme

The consultation on the Annual Review of the *MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses* closes on 19 January. We invite you to respond to the consultation before it closes to make sure your views are heard. You can download the consultation document by [clicking here \(.pdf\)](#), or take our online survey by [clicking here](#). Hard copies of the consultation document are still available in the Vote Office. You can make a written response by email to schemeconsultation@parliamentarystandards.org.uk, or by post to IPSA's usual address.

Self-certified sickness absence – MPs' staff

We would like to remind MPs that staff self-certified absences (up to 7 days) have to be reported to Payroll as soon as possible so that we can keep accurate records and calculate sickness entitlements correctly. For absences lasting over 7 days, a doctor's certificate is required. Forms for self-certification purposes can be found on HMRC's website following this link: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/sc2.pdf>

Remittance advice slips

You may be missing some remittance advice slips for payments processed in December. This was due to a system change within our Finance department, which prevented the remittances being generated when payment was made. We have now resolved the problem so you will again receive a remittance advice slip each time we make a payment. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

We are in the process of emailing out the remittances from December, but if you wish to confirm if a payment was made for a claim form, please log onto the online expenses system, select 'Custom Reports' and then 'My reimbursements' to find out which claims have been paid to you last month.

Transaction Dates

You may have experienced some difficulty recently in selecting transaction dates on claim forms on the online expenses system. This may relate to compatibility issues with Internet Explorer 10 and we are working to resolve this. In the meantime, if this happens, please type in the transaction date instead.

Phone: IPSA Information Line: 020 7811 6400 (Normal opening hours 1pm-5pm, Mon to Fri)

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