

## **Flexibility between OCE and Staffing**

A few costs can be claimed either under OCE or the Staffing budget, such as pooled staffing resources and staff training. This provides MPs with a degree of flexibility in their budgeting, which can be helpful when some of these costs – parliamentary research services, for example – can run into thousands of pounds.

## **Insurance**

Employers and public liability insurance and employment practice liability insurance for MPs is provided by the House of Commons. You do not need to arrange separate cover or claim from IPSA for this insurance.

Please visit our website [www.theipsa.org.uk](http://www.theipsa.org.uk)

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### **Useful contacts:**

IPSA information line – 020 7811 6400

E-mail – [info@theipsa.org.uk](mailto:info@theipsa.org.uk)

Twitter - @IPSAUK 

# **Office Costs Expenditure**

A quick guide: what you need to know and  
how we will support you.

This is not a comprehensive statement of the rules and has no status other than an explanatory one. Full details on the Office Costs Expenditure budget can be found in the current edition of The Scheme of MPs' Business Costs and Expenses ('the Scheme').

## **What is the Office Costs Expenditure budget for?**

The Office Costs Expenditure (OCE) budget is provided to meet the costs of equipping and running your constituency offices and surgeries. The OCE budget covers costs that are not available from other budgets in the Scheme, or other sources, such as the House of Commons.

With some specific exceptions, you have discretion over what you claim under OCE, provided that the items claimed for are in support of your parliamentary functions.

### **Exclusions**

Specific items which you are not allowed to claim are:

- alcoholic drinks;
- stationery provided by the House of Commons;
- newsletters;
- material containing a party logo or emblem (other than a website); and
- personal accountancy or tax advice.

### **Constituency offices**

You are able to rent a constituency office or offices to support you in your parliamentary functions. You must register your constituency office with us by submitting a **Property Rental Form**, which can be found on our website. You must also send us a copy of the tenancy agreement, lease or licence. A constituency office must be located within the constituency or within 20 miles of it. If you require further details about this process, please contact us.

There is an option on the Property Rental Form to ask us to pay the rent directly to your landlord, to avoid you needing to complete a claim each month. You can also request a loan to cover your deposit on the same form, but this does not come from your Office Cost Expenditure budget (please see the leaflet on 'Managing your finances').

Claims for the following items will only be allowed once the office has been registered with us:

- rent;
- energy and water bills;
- business rates;
- contents and buildings insurance; and
- rental and usage costs for telephone and internet access.

You can rent your office from a political party, but you must provide a valuation of the market rate for the contract which has been prepared by a valuer regulated by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). This market rate cannot be exceeded. The cost of the independent valuation is claimable under the OCE budget.

You and your staff can work routinely from home, and register the home as an office providing it complies with HMRC guidelines. Once registered, you and your staff can claim a proportion of the costs incurred for doing parliamentary work at your home office. Please see HMRC guidance for further information or contact us regarding the process.

If you share an office, only the appropriate proportion of the office costs can be claimed.

If you move offices, removal costs can be claimed from the uncapped Contingency budget instead of your Office Costs Expenditure budget. No pre-approval is required.

You must negotiate a clause within your contract to allow you to extricate yourself from the contract within two months in case of a change in circumstances. This is because the 'winding-up' period for departing MPs is for two months after an MP leaves Parliament.

### **Start-up supplement**

New MPs have a start-up supplement of £6,000 added to their Office Costs Expenditure budget in the financial year they are elected. It is designed to help new MPs meet the costs of setting up one or more constituency offices.

### **Budgets 2017-18\***

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| London Area MPs                       | £28,375 for the 10 months of 2017-18 (£26,850 per annum for a full year)* |
| MPs representing other constituencies | £26,125 for the 10 months of 2017-18 (£24,150 per annum for a full year)* |

\*New MPs will receive 10 months of each budget in 2017-18, to cover from June 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. The Office Costs Expenditure budget also includes a £6,000 Start Up supplement for the first financial year after a new MP is elected