

# IPSA's Strategy 2018 - 2022

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## Our aims

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IPSA is the independent body that regulates and administers the business costs and expenses, and decides the pay and pensions of the 650 elected Members of Parliament in the United Kingdom. We were created by the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009, as the world's first independent regulator of MPs' financial remuneration.

We have three aims:

### **To assure the public that MPs' use of taxpayers' money is well regulated**

We regulate MPs proportionately and effectively by setting rules that support compliance, and by making independent, fair and transparent decisions in line with our fundamental principles.

We provide assurance to the public by consulting them on our rules, operating transparently and publishing accessible information about MPs' business costs.

### **To resource and support MPs appropriately to carry out their parliamentary functions**

We support MPs by making accurate payments promptly, providing clear advice and guidance about MPs' responsibilities for public money in line with IPSA's Scheme of rules, and by continuously improving our systems and processes to make them more efficient and effective.

### **To enable our staff to be a high-performing, professional team**

We develop our staff by giving each person the tools, training and support to perform professionally and achieve excellence in a strong team that is underpinned by respect and trust.

## Our strategy to date

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In 2009, we were set up to devise and implement a new regime for the regulation of MPs' business costs and expenses that was independent of Parliament, government and the political parties. We achieved that in time for the start of the new Parliament in May 2010. Our strategy at that time focused on developing robust rules and a transparent, evidence-based system for handling claims and paying MPs, in order to assure the public that MPs' expenses were well regulated and that MPs were remunerated appropriately and independently.

During the 2010 Parliament we established and consolidated the principle of the independent regulation of MPs' pay and business costs. From 2012, we consulted widely to determine a fair salary for MPs and, in the light of our research and the evidence presented to us, we increased MPs' salaries to £74,000 a year from May 2015, linking subsequent adjustments to the annual change in average earnings across the public sector.

From 2013, we consolidated our regulatory approach and continued to improve the support we provided to MPs. We listened to what MPs needed from us to help them to do their jobs effectively. In 2014, we therefore extended the hours of our information phone lines, and allowed MPs to use their IPSA payment card for a wider range of eligible costs.

In 2015, we delivered our part in the first General Election since IPSA's creation. We helped 184 new MPs to understand their financial responsibilities and budgets, and supported the same number of departing MPs to wind up their financial affairs with no outstanding sums owed to the taxpayer.

In our second Parliament from 2015 we continued to improve our approach to both the regulation and administration of MPs' business costs. In 2016, we consulted on our Scheme and launched a new simpler set of rules in April 2017. We also upgraded our systems and processes, resulting in a new website, an account management support model for MPs, which built on the experience of the General Election, and a new online interface and expenses system for MPs and their staff. Such changes helped us to provide good support during the unexpected General Election of June 2017.

Now, in 2018, we have a transparent regulatory regime that provides assurance to the public that MPs are paid fairly to perform their parliamentary duties and are regulated independently. We also have more modern IT systems and processes that can support us and MPs more effectively. During the 2017 Parliament, we will build upon these foundations to become a world-class regulator and exemplary service provider.

## Our strategy for this Parliament

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IPSA has established itself as an effective regulator and administrator of MPs' pay and business costs. We have worked to assure the public that MPs' use of taxpayers' money is well regulated and to resource and support MPs appropriately to carry out their parliamentary functions. We will continue to do so, becoming an organisation that achieves excellence, responds well to change, leads in our field, innovates for the benefit of our users and provides ongoing assurance to the public.

To achieve these goals, our focus in our third Parliament will be on five strategic priorities.

### A strong and supportive regulatory environment

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We will continue to regulate through our current, simplified Scheme so that MPs can use their discretion, within a regulatory environment with clear rules that support compliance and value for money. To that end, we aim to review our Scheme no more than once a Parliament, so that MPs have a consistent set of rules that they can apply with confidence, although we will be responsive to external events as necessary.

We will monitor the operation of the Scheme to ensure that it is implemented effectively, and to assure ourselves that MPs are complying with the principles and rules.

We will consider further flexibility in 2019 by piloting a simpler and less burdensome way for MPs to claim constituency mileage, rather than requiring them to claim for individual journeys. If the pilot is successful, we may explore other ways in which we can simplify our approach to regulation, while retaining high compliance among MPs.

### Effective management of data and information

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We will utilise new technology to understand better and learn from the large quantity of data we already have about MPs and their spending patterns. We will use data analytics tools to enable us to regulate faster and more intelligently and to turn information into insights that will help us to provide proactive advice and support to MPs and their staff.

We will use our new integrated IT systems to provide MPs with accurate financial information that is accessible at any time, from any device. This will give MPs greater autonomy to access guidance and information about their budgets and their claims.

We will continue to strengthen our data security arrangements to ensure that IPSA is compliant with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation; that we are protected against cyber-attack; and that the sensitive information we hold about MPs, their staff and their families is secure.

## An outstanding employer

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We will be an outstanding employer by challenging and supporting our staff to reach their potential and achieve excellence by setting stretching objectives and providing development opportunities. We will continue to build a professional workforce which has the right type and level of skills and expertise to perform their roles effectively.

We will build in flexibility so that we can respond to unexpected events including snap General Elections, or the consequences of constituency boundary changes or the UK's departure from the European Union. We will recognise and reward excellence and achievement.

## A commitment to transparency and public engagement

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Since IPSA's creation, we have sought views from members of the public on the rules of our Scheme, including on MPs' pay and remuneration. We have taken these views into account before making our decisions.

IPSA already gives people assurance about MPs' costs simply because an independent statutory regulator exists and is working on the public's behalf. We will continue to explain what we do and to promote the overall compliance of MPs with IPSA's rules. We will exploit new analytics tools to present data on MPs' spending in a way that is more visually accessible, to help the public to understand our data, including MPs' high compliance with our rules.

We will assure the public about MPs' costs by continuing to publish all MPs' expenditure on our website as well as regular assurance reports that review MPs' spending. We will also continue to use social media and explore other ways in which we can engage positively with and inform the public about our work to regulate and support MPs.

## Working in partnership

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IPSA is independent of Parliament, government and the political parties. But to be effective, we work collaboratively with many bodies and organisations in areas where we have a shared interest, including the House of Commons, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the Electoral Commission and others. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with all these and other bodies, as well as with the public, in support of our shared interests in supporting democracy and public accountability.

Our remit relates only to the MPs of the House of Commons. But we will continue to share our experience and expertise with those who have a similar role in other legislatures, including the assemblies of Wales and Northern Ireland, the Scottish Parliament, the House of Lords, and local authorities, as well as other legislatures internationally who, like the Australian parliament, are seeking to establish their own versions of IPSA.

## Our values

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Our strategic priorities are underpinned by five IPSA values that, along with our independence and commitment to transparency, inform everything we do. Our values are:

- 1) **Professionalism** – We take pride in and ownership of our work, applying our expertise, independence and judgement to meet our commitments;
- 2) **Respect** – We respect others and strive towards an inclusive working environment;
- 3) **Integrity** – We are independent, fair and transparent in everything we do;
- 4) **Collaboration** – We work together and with others to achieve shared goals; and
- 5) **Improvement** – We continually improve and learn, supporting and encouraging our people to give the best of themselves.

## Our vision

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IPSA is recognised internationally as the first independent body to set, regulate and administer parliamentarians' business costs and remuneration. Over the coming five years, we also aim to be recognised for our professionalism, excellence and continuous improvement.

We will provide high-quality support to MPs, providing them with funds to perform their parliamentary roles and serve their constituents.

We will be an outstanding employer, whose staff work well together and with MPs and other stakeholders, within a trusting, respectful environment that nurtures and supports individuals and helps them to excel in their jobs and their careers.

We will continue to provide assurance to the public that the money claimed by MPs is fairly and transparently scrutinised by an independent regulator. We hope that our regulatory model can provide an example for others around the world.

The way we will achieve the goals in this strategy are set out in our Corporate Plan for 2018-19, and will be set out in our corporate plans for subsequent years, which are available on our website at [www.theipsa.org.uk/about-us/](http://www.theipsa.org.uk/about-us/). The milestones in our Corporate Plan in turn inform the individual objectives of each member of staff.

If you have any comments on our strategy, please contact us at [info@theipsa.org.uk](mailto:info@theipsa.org.uk)