

Contracts of employment and related issues

A1. Job Descriptions

IPSA has implemented a tool that enables MPs to create job descriptions for new staff. This is based on three types of role (job families): Administrative, Executive and Research. MPs can choose roles for their staff at different levels and there are a number of different job titles that can be used for each role, depending on their needs. The tool enables jobs descriptions to be created from previously defined activities. Therefore not all the activities in an area have to be used in a role.

A2. Starting salaries for new employees

The salary bands for the roles are determined by IPSA and staff must be paid a salary within the appropriate band for the role. This is paid out of the staffing budget. The salary bands for 2017 -18 can be found [here](#).

Ideally, MPs will advertise all job opportunities for their offices, but it is ultimately up to each individual MP what kind of process they go through to hire new staff. When doing so, they can choose to advertise a salary range that covers all or some of the range for the role, or a specific salary. Once an appointment has been made, the MP must determine the salary for the individual. The MP should take into consideration the role, the experience and skills required for the role, the experience of the individual appointed and the skills/salary balance of the overall office. For example it would not be expected to give a new employee a salary in the upper half of a pay scale who has very limited skills relevant to the role advertised.

ACAS has guidance on good recruitment practice. <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1371>

A3. Contract tool

IPSA has implemented a contract tool that enables MPs to create contracts of employment for their staff. A variety of different contract types are available and each contract can be created with full or part-time options. Guidance on how the contract tool should be used is provided separately.

The options are:

Type of contract	When it should be used
Permanent	When there is an ongoing need for a role and this is 'business as usual'. This can be created as full-time or part-time. This will be the most usual type of contract used within the office.

Fixed term	<p>This must be used when you require someone for a defined period of time. This could be to cover for a maternity leave, a period of sickness or to undertake a specific piece of work. They should not be used to ‘trial’ an employee where the intent is for a role to be permanent. The probationary period should be used to determine the suitability of the employee.</p> <p>These can be used for relatively short periods of time especially where the hours of work are regular.</p> <p>Please note: In the context of employment law, the period of time employees must have worked continuously in order to qualify for certain statutory rights is called the qualifying period, which is currently two years. Rights enjoyed after this period include the right not to be unfairly dismissed as well as the right to claim statutory redundancy pay if dismissed due to redundancy.</p> <p>In addition, an employee who has had a series of fixed term contracts lasting for more than four years continuous service is deemed to be a permanent employee. If this situation arises, the employee should be moved to a permanent contract.</p> <p>This can be created as full-time or part-time.</p>
Term-time	<p>This is a permanent contract that is created specifically for those individuals who are only required to work when the House is sitting, or who wish to work when their child(ren) are at school. This is a specific type of part-time contract. The actual salary paid for these roles includes a payment equivalent to the amount of holidays that are accrued across the year and this total amount is paid in 12 equal instalments across the year. Therefore the staff member must take their annual leave during the recess/school holidays.</p> <p>This can be created as full-time or part-time.</p>
Employed Intern	<p>This is a particular type of fixed term contract provided to someone who is new to the field of work, or who is wishing to gain some paid work experience within the office of an MP. The intern usually undertakes general activities within the office and gain experience of all areas. The period of employment is usually between 3 and 12 months, but must be no longer than 12 months. Employed internships are believed to be a way for individuals to develop the skills and experience that may aid future employment opportunities. The weekly hours of work for this contract must not exceed 37.5.</p> <p>There is a specific pay range for this type of employee. If, at any point, they are offered a permanent or fixed-term role in the office the intern must be transferred to an appropriate contract type and paid on the relevant pay scale.</p>
Apprentice	<p>An apprentice is a member of staff who attends works alongside undertaking a specific training programme. There are usually two contracts signed for this type of employee, one between the employer and the education establishment which outlines the training provided for the apprentice and, a contract of employment between the MP and the apprentice. It is for the MP to decide the appropriateness of the contract between them and the education establishment.</p> <p>There are particular pay scales for this type of employee that should be followed. Apprenticeships are for fixed periods of time and vary depending on the type of apprenticeship.</p>

Casual	<p>These are workers who will be engaged by the MP on an 'ad-hoc' basis either for a very short-period of time or, for very short periods that may occur on an irregular basis. The terms and conditions for casual workers are slightly different than for other types of contract, but the worker will still accrue annual leave and can be paid for this on a regular basis.</p> <p>If the pattern of work begins to become regular, either full-time or part-time, it is recommended that the worker is moved to an employment contract on either a fixed-term, or permanent basis.</p>
Volunteers	<p>MPs are enabled to engage volunteers to assist with some basic office activities. Volunteers are not paid a wage or salary. If a volunteer receives any type of reward or payment other than expenses, this may be seen as a salary and they could be classed as an employee or worker. It is permissible to reimburse receipted expenses for travel and/or reasonable subsistence.</p> <p>IPSA does expect MPs to enter into a basic agreement with the volunteer which enables IPSA to reimburse the expenses. Any agreement is NOT a contract of employment and should not be treated as such. The Model Volunteer Arrangement form can be found here.</p>

A4. Transferring staff from fixed-term to permanent contracts

A member of staff may initially start work on a fixed-term contract. If the staff member agrees to accept a permanent role it is not necessary to issue a new contract. The fixed term to permanent letter should be completed [here](#) outlining the changes is sufficient.

A5. Transferring staff from casual employment to a fixed-term or permanent contract

The relationship between an MP and a casual worker is not as formal as that between the MP and other members of staff. If a casual worker is offered a role within a MP's office, they must be provided with a new contract of employment (fixed term or permanent). If the job title is changing IPSA should also be provided with a new job description.

A6. Extending a fixed-term contract

A fixed-term contract may need to be extended. If the staff member agrees to the extension it is not necessary to issue a new contract. The fixed term contract extension form should be completed [here](#) outlining the changes is sufficient.

A7. More than one role

When a member of staff works for more than one MP they have separate employment arrangements for each role. They will have an individual contract with each MP they work for.

When a member of staff formally has more than one role with the same MP, it is a requirement for the MP to prepare different part-time contracts of employment, one for each role. All staff benefits are the same.

An employee may be occasionally asked to undertake activities that usually fall in another job role. This is acceptable if this is on an occasional basis or forms only a very small part of the activities undertaken. If this becomes a regular occurrence or becomes a significant part of the role (over 20%), then separate contracts should be prepared and sent to IPSA.

A8. Employment with a different employer

A staff member might have a part-time role within an MP's office and another part-time role elsewhere. This is permitted, but the staff member must let the MP know in case there is a conflict of interest, or to ensure that the member of staff receives their statutory entitlements relating to work and rest periods.

A9. Right to work in the UK and security clearance

As the MP is the employer it is up to them to confirm the identity of the staff member, and confirm and record their right to work in the UK. The MP has also to ensure each member of staff has the appropriate level of security clearance to work with them.

A10. Paying salaries into bank accounts

IPSA will only pay MPs' staff salaries into a UK bank account. If a member of staff does not have one, they should open one as quickly as possible to minimise any delay in payments. IPSA will make all necessary deductions on behalf of the MP including national insurance and tax.

A11. National Insurance Number (NINO)

As well as a UK bank account, staff must have a valid UK National Insurance number. If, at the time of appointment, the member of staff doesn't have an UK NI number they must apply for one as soon as possible. There is guidance for this on www.gov.uk. The staff member must tell the MP they have applied for one and let them have the NI number as soon as it arrives. This will be passed on to IPSA.