

General Election Guidance for MPs' Staff

1. Can I campaign during the dissolution period?

Yes, but it is important that it is not during paid work time. You can:

- campaign outside your normal working hours (e.g. in the evenings and at weekends);
- take annual leave;
- take unpaid leave;
- use any time off in lieu you've accrued (for example, if you have done overtime for which have not been paid)

This is because MPs are not allowed to use any taxpayer-funded business costs and expenses, including staff time, travel, and office equipment for any election campaigning. To do so would be an illegal campaign donation under electoral law.

2. What work can I do for my MP during the dissolution period?

You may continue to do parliamentary work for your MP. The House of Commons has issued detailed guidance on handling casework and other issues relating to work during the dissolution period: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/commons/governance-office/publications1/>

You may not campaign for your MP, the party or any other candidate on paid IPSA time or using IPSA-funded equipment and accommodation. It is for your MP to judge what work you should do, in line with the House of Commons guidance, but you must be careful not to do anything that could be construed as electoral campaigning during your normal working hours.

3. What happens to my salary during dissolution?

You will be paid your salary as normal during the dissolution period (unless you take unpaid leave), on the last working day of the month. If you are taking unpaid leave, your MP will need to tell us in advance and by the payroll deadline (the 15th of the month), so that your salary can be adjusted.

4. Can I claim travel during dissolution?

Yes, staff will be able to claim as normal during dissolution but only if the travel is for parliamentary purposes. IPSA will not fund any campaign costs.

If you are normally based in Westminster and need to travel to do parliamentary work in the constituency office during dissolution, you can also claim travel and subsistence costs relating to this (see question 6 below).

5. I help my MP manage his or her claims for business costs; what do I need to know about the rules during the dissolution period?

MPs have received their own guidance about what they can and cannot do during dissolution. This can be found on our website:

<http://www.theipsa.org.uk/media/1978/general-election-2017-guidance-for-mps2.pdf>.

For the most part, MPs can claim as normal for their business costs during the dissolution period; the overriding principle, as ever, is that MPs cannot claim for any funds to do with election campaigning. All claims must be for expenditure required to carry out an MP's parliamentary functions and not for any electoral activity.

This means that if MPs use their IPSA-funded offices for any activities connected with the election, they may only claim from us that proportion of the rent, utilities and other costs which relate to their parliamentary activity. It is up to the MP to claim the correct amount from IPSA, either by changing the amount claimed by reimbursement, or by sending a cheque to IPSA to repay an amount that is not claimable.

If the MP plans to purchase office supplies or equipment which will be used both for parliamentary functions and for campaign purposes, only the proportion which relates to their parliamentary functions may be claimed. Neither the IPSA payment card nor the direct payment options should be used for procuring anything which will be used either wholly or partly for campaign-related purposes.

Further guidance is available here: http://www.theipsa.org.uk/media/1968/campaign-activities_guidance.pdf

6. If I work in Westminster, what happens to me during dissolution?

Members of staff who work in Westminster will no longer be able to work there during dissolution (please see the House of Commons Dissolution guidance for details: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/commons/governance-office/publications1/>). If there is no urgent work for you to do, you may consider taking annual leave. If you are required to carry out parliamentary work, you can either work from home or work from the constituency office.

If you work from the constituency office, you can claim the cost of your travel from London to the constituency, or for journeys between your home and the constituency office. If you need to stay overnight in the constituency, you can claim for hotel costs and subsistence. You may also claim for subsistence if you stay in someone's home (e.g. friends or family) whilst in the constituency.

Keep in mind that you would only be able to claim for such costs for those nights that directly relate to parliamentary work, and not if any of your activities relate to election campaigning for the MP or party. If you are campaigning at weekends or taking unpaid or annual leave on some days, the hotel stay for those nights is not claimable.

7. Who is my employer during the dissolution period?

There will be no change to your relationship with your MP during dissolution. Your MP will continue to be your employer.

8. What happens if my MP stands down at the Election, or is not returned?

If your MP stands down or is not returned after the Election, you will be made redundant. Your MP is your employer and he or she will need to give you notice of redundancy and manage that process.

Your MP will also be advised by Members' HR, a service which provides HR advice to MPs in their role as employers (membershr@parliament.uk or 020 7219 2080). This helps ensure MPs are aware of their responsibilities as part of the redundancy process, and that you are provided with the correct information about your entitlements.

IPSA manages the payroll function for MPs' staff, so please make sure we have your correct address. We will need to send you a P45 in the post if you are made redundant.

An MP who stands down or loses their seat will have up to two months after the Election to wind up their parliamentary affairs. Whether you will be required to work for the duration of the Winding Up period is for your MP to determine.

You may find IPSA's guidance on payroll issues useful: <http://www.theipsa.org.uk/ipsa-for-mps/guidance/>

9. How much redundancy payment am I entitled to?

If you have completed two years' service with the same MP without a break, you will generally receive a redundancy payment, calculated on the number of completed years of continuous service, age and weekly salary. The amount depends on whether you are on an IPSA contract or not.

If you are not on an IPSA contract, your redundancy payment will be as stated in your non-IPSA contract. If redundancy is not specified in your contract, you will receive your statutory redundancy entitlement (see below). If you are on an IPSA contract, you will be paid double your statutory entitlement.

Statutory redundancy entitlement is calculated based on your length of service (number of full years) and your age. You can use this calculator to find out your statutory entitlement: <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-your-redundancy-pay>

10. What happens to my pension if my MP stands down at the Election, or loses his or her seat?

If you leave your employment with your MP, IPSA will stop paying your pension contributions along with any life insurance benefits provided on behalf of your employer. If you intend to take your pension benefits you will need to contact the provider to inform them.

If you have any other questions, you should contact the pension provider. Contact details for Legal and General's Employee Support Team is 0345 070 8686 (PIN 43). They are open between 8:30am and 7:00pm Monday to Friday and 9:00am to 12:00pm on Saturday.

11. If my MP stands down or loses his or her seat, what do we do with the office equipment?

The Scheme of MPs' Business Costs and Expenses explains that MPs who leave Parliament should make arrangements to dispose of office equipment and furniture purchased with IPSA funds. They may choose to transfer these items to their successor or another MP, or donate equipment to a charity of their choice. If the MP makes a profit from disposing of equipment, they should refund this to IPSA.

MPs should dispose of any equipment safely and securely, in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

12. What happens if I start working for a different MP after the Election?

If you work for a different MP after the Election (either in the same constituency or a different one) this counts as starting a new employment. This means you will still receive a redundancy payment, if you are entitled to one, from your service with your 'old' MP (see question 8 above). However, you will not receive continuity of service benefits – meaning that the years you worked for the previous MP will not be included in a future redundancy calculation.

Strict data protection rules apply if you begin working for a new MP. You must not transfer any constituency case files that you hold from the previous MP to use with the new MP, unless the constituent has consented to your doing so.

13. Can I move from a non-IPSA contract to an IPSA contract before the election?

You can still request to move to an IPSA contract before the Election. However, you should be aware that you would not be eligible for the increased redundancy entitlement (i.e. double statutory redundancy) for a period of six months after you transfer.

14. Where can I find further information?

The House of Commons has also issued dissolution guidance to MPs, which can found here: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/commons/governance-office/publications1/>

Our phone lines are open from 10am to 5pm on Monday to Friday, so please call us on 020 7811 6400 if you have any questions. We will have extended phone line hours after the Election, and from Monday 12 June our lines will be open from 9am to 6pm for a month. You can also email us as normal on info@theipsa.org.uk.

We have also created a new General Election page on our website. You should check back regularly for further information and guidance: <http://www.theipsa.org.uk/general-election/>.