

Joint Statement of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) and the Compliance Officer for IPSA with regard to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

Purpose of the Joint Statement

1. This Joint Statement, prepared in accordance with section 10A of the Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 (“the Act”), sets out how the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (“IPSA”) and the Compliance Officer for IPSA (“the Compliance Officer”) will work with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards (“the Commissioner”).
2. IPSA is a statutory body, independent from Parliament, Government or Political Parties, created by the Act in order to establish and administer an expenses scheme for MPs. IPSA’s MPs’ Expenses Scheme came into effect on 7 May 2010.
3. The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 created the role of the Compliance Officer, whose duties are to investigate allegations that an expense claim has been wrongly paid to an MP and, on request, to review a decision by IPSA not to pay, in whole or in part, an expense claim.
4. The Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards is appointed by the House of Commons to advise the Committee on Standards and Privileges and individual Members of Parliament on the interpretation of the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament, and on questions of propriety. The Commissioner’s responsibilities include the registration of financial interests held by MPs and the investigation of allegations that MPs might have breached the Code of Conduct or related Rules.

Working with the Commissioner

5. Where either IPSA or the Compliance Officer considers that an MP’s conduct justifies it, they shall refer that MP, with the relevant evidence, to the Commissioner for him to decide whether to inquire into a potential breach of the Code of Conduct or related Rules.
6. Where, in the course of his duties, the Commissioner requests information from IPSA, that information shall be provided as soon as practicable in accordance with IPSA’s duties as a public body.
7. Where, in the course of his duties, the Commissioner requests information from the Compliance Officer, that information shall be provided as soon as practicable in accordance with the Compliance Officer’s duties as a statutory office holder.

8. The Compliance Officer shall inform the Commissioner when he or she initiates a substantive investigation in respect of any MP.
9. Where the Compliance Officer receives a complaint that, in the judgement of the Compliance Officer, is a matter for the Commissioner, the Compliance Officer shall pass the complaint to the Commissioner. Where a complaint appears to the Compliance Officer to be a matter both for the Compliance Officer and the Commissioner, the Compliance Officer shall either:
 - a. complete his or her investigation and then pass the complaint, with the statement of the Compliance Officer's findings, to the Commissioner once any legal proceedings related to the investigation have concluded; or
 - b. if the Compliance Officer decides not to investigate that part of the complaint falling under his or her remit, pass the complaint to the Commissioner.
10. No decision of IPSA or the Compliance Officer shall bind the Commissioner. No decision of the Commissioner shall bind IPSA or the Compliance Officer.

Signatures



Andrew McDonald, CEO, IPSA



Martyn Taylor, Compliance Officer for IPSA

8 September 2011