

Information for MPs

This leaflet is designed to guide you through the services IPSA offers to enable you to begin to claim expenses. It provides information on:

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Full expenses rules and supporting guidance are available on the IPSA website www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk. The site also gives you more help on the online expenses system, see the “*Information for MPs and their staff*” section.

Advice and assistance from IPSA

General enquiries about the rules and the online expenses system

Phone: IPSA Information Line: 020 7811 6400

Normal opening hours: 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.

From 7 May - 21 May 2010: 8.00am to 8.00pm, including Saturdays and Sundays.

Specific enquiries

You can get personal advice about the practical application of the expenses rules by emailing or writing to IPSA. In this way, IPSA can provide a better service by keeping track of the exchanges we have with you. IPSA will help guide you to make the right decisions about the application of the expenses rules.

Email: info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk

Postal: IPSA

7th floor

Portland House

Bressenden Place

London

SW1E 5BH

Expenses in your first few days...

You will probably incur expenses before being able to first log-on to the expenses system. Please make sure you keep your receipts for these expenses so that you can submit your claim later.

Hotel accommodation - if you are a non-London area MP (see section 5.4 of the expenses Scheme) you may claim hotel accommodation in London up to a maximum cost of £130 per night (£105 outside London).

Booking travel and accommodation - for assistance in making travel arrangements contact the Houses of Parliament Travel Office - 020 7219 4232.

Travelling to London - you may claim the travel expenses for you and eligible family members. Before claiming travel for eligible family members, you must submit documentation to IPSA about those family members (see pg 12). Please make sure that you keep your receipts.

Advances - for some items IPSA may provide you with funds in advance of a receipt. You may make this type of claim by submitting an unpaid invoice rather than a receipt. You will need to claim this type of claim in the normal way through the online expenses system. Please see page 12 for further information.

Loans - IPSA may make loans available for deposits MPs may have to pay for rented accommodation and constituency offices. Please see page 13 for further information.

Submitting claims to IPSA - all claims must be submitted to IPSA using the online expenses system within 90 days of incurring the expense. Once you have submitted the claim online you need to send IPSA your receipts and claim report within seven days.

Sending receipts to IPSA - you may post receipts and the claim report to our postal address (see back cover of leaflet) or use the IPSA post box at Portcullis House.

IPSA cannot be held responsible for any receipts or other documentation which may be lost in the post. It is your responsibility to ensure receipts or other documentation you send arrive at IPSA.

The new expenses rules - talks for MPs

IPSA is hosting a series of 45 minutes talks, in Westminster, to provide information on the new expenses scheme for MPs. IPSA staff will also be happy to answer general questions about the rules. Questions and advice relating to the practical application of the expenses rules relating to personal circumstances should be put in writing to IPSA, either by email or post.

Party	Day	Date	Time	Venue	New/ returning MP
Liberal Democrats	Tues	11-May	9.30am	Grimond Room, Portcullis House	New
Liberal Democrats	Wed	12-May	9.30am	Grimond Room, Portcullis House	Returning

Party	Day	Date	Time	Venue	New/ returning MP
Conservatives	Wed	12-May	2.30pm	Grand Committee Room, Westminster Hall	New
Labour (TBC)	Wed	12-May	4.30pm	TBC	New
Labour (TBC)	Thurs	13-May	9.30am	TBC	New
Labour (TBC)	Thurs	13-May	11.00am	TBC	Returning
Conservatives	Tues	18-May	11.30am	Grand Committee Room, Westminster Hall	Returning
Labour (TBC)	Tues	18-May	6.00pm	TBC	Returning
Other parties	Wed	19-May	9.30am	Jubilee Room, Westminster Hall	New
Other parties	Wed	19-May	11.00am	Jubilee Room, Westminster Hall	Returning

The online expenses system

IPSA selected the new online expenses system both with ease of use and value for money in mind. In particular, it will help you by:

- Guiding you to choose the right category of expense
- Automatically assessing your eligibility to apply for a particular category of expense
- Providing instant online messages about any additional information or action you should provide in support of an item of expense
- Providing reports on cumulative expenditure against each expenses budget
- Automatically preventing an expense budget from becoming overspent
- Providing instant warnings if an expense claim brings the relevant expense budget close to its upper limit for the year.

In short, we have sought to provide a system which will help MPs by enabling them to submit their expenses correctly.

RSA secure log-in token

The RSA secure log-in token provides an extra layer of security when logging on to the expenses system. This helps ensure that your personal details are safe and secure.

Once you have completed your induction session you will be issued with two RSA tokens: one for you with a gold coloured tag and one for your chosen member of staff (proxy) with a silver coloured tag. Please ensure that you keep them safe at all times. It is not possible to log-on to the expenses system without your token.

You will also be given a leaflet providing further guidance on using the token.

Replacing the token

If the token is lost please contact the IPSA Information Line immediately. There will be a charge for replacing the token of £127.58 (plus VAT).

Making your first claim

You will be able to start making claims once you have received your log-in details. These will be sent to your parliamentary email address once you have completed an IPSA induction session at the New Members' Reception Area.

You will receive your log-in details by 21 May 2010. Please contact IPSA if you have not received them by then. See back cover for our contact details.

Nominating a proxy

You may nominate a member of your staff as a proxy. He/she will be able to log your claims on to the expenses system for your approval. However, he/she will not be able to submit claims on your behalf. This is something only you can do.

You can nominate a proxy by emailing IPSA with the following information:

- Name of proposed proxy – they must be a staff member and registered on the IPSA payroll system
- The parliamentary email address for the proxy

Send this information to: info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk

In the subject header mark the email 'Proxy nomination'. Once approved, we will email the proxy his/her log-in details for the online expenses system.

Getting set-up to make claims

You will need to register on the expenses system any:

- accommodation you wish to rent
- constituency office you wish to rent
- dependants on whose behalf you wish to claim
- disability which means you require additional assistance
- security needs beyond those of other MPs
- vehicles for which you wish to make mileage claims

Once you have registered this information online you will need to provide evidence before being able to claim a number of these expenses, see the table below:

Providing documentary evidence to claim certain expenses

- Before you can claim for the expenses listed below you will need to provide relevant documentary evidence, which must be checked and validated by IPSA.
- The IPSA Documentation Team will be based at Portcullis House from 24 May until 18 June 2010, 9.00am-4.00pm. You will need to bring in the required documentation to the team who will take copies and return the originals to you.

- The copied documentation will then be checked there and then and you will be advised as soon as possible which expenses claims you are entitled to make.

If you have the required documentation ready before 24 May, please contact the IPSA Information Line.

Expense	Evidence required for pre-approval
<p>Mortgages (returning MPs only)</p> <p>This must be for the property for which you claimed until 6 May 2010.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mortgage agreement which shows address of mortgaged property • mortgage statement showing mortgage and interest rate at the time of valuation • professional valuation (from a valuer regulated by RICS) <p><i>All required</i></p>
<p>Rented accommodation</p>	<p>Rental agreement, signed by the MP and landlord – which must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP’s name • address of rented property • details of any deposit • dates of the rental period • the amount of rent payable • name and address of the person or body to whom the rent is payable <p><i>All required</i></p>

Expense	Evidence required for pre-approval
<p>Constituency office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lease agreement • professional valuation (from a valuer regulated by RICS) if the office is rented from a constituency association or political party <p><i>All required</i></p>
<p>Additional rent for MPs with caring responsibilities:</p> <p>Those with a dependent child up to the age of five years. Eligibility - all MPs.</p> <p>Those with a dependent child in full-time education, up to the age of 21 years. Eligibility - only MPs who are the sole carer.</p> <p>Those with responsibility for caring for any family member in receipt of a benefit allowed in the scheme. Eligibility - all MPs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original birth certificate or • original passport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the above, a letter from the educational institution confirming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the name of the child - details of the course - duration of their studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an original letter from the relevant government department confirming entitlement to the benefit, including the name and address of the family member in question and the dates the payment relates to

Expense	Evidence required for pre-approval
Travel	
For spouse or partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marriage certificate or • certificate of civil partnership or • utility bill to prove co-habitation
For dependent children under 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • original birth certificate or • original passport
For dependants where MP is sole carer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an original letter from the relevant government department confirming entitlement to the benefit, including the name and address of the family member in question and the dates the payment relates to.

Advances

In some cases IPSA will provide you with the funds in advance of your needing to settle the relevant invoice or bill.

You will need to claim in the normal way through the online expenses system. You may claim for the following via invoice:

- Payments of rent on residential or office accommodation
- Service charges

- Expenditure on the services of pooled staffing resources
- Purchase of items of office furniture
- Purchase of computers, printers, photocopiers, fax machines and multi-functional devices
- Purchase of televisions
- Costs incurred in the production of websites
- Pre-booked hotel stays

Loans

IPSA may make loans available for deposits MPs may have to pay for rented accommodation and constituency offices. Full details of the terms and conditions for loans are provided in the loan agreement form.

Applying for a loan

You will need to complete a loan agreement and application form. These are available:

- online at the IPSA website (you do not need log-in details to download this form)
- in the IPSA induction pack, given to all MPs who have completed an induction session at the NMRA.

You must submit the following documents with your loan application:

- Completed and signed loan agreement and application form
- Your rental agreement. For the purpose of this loan application this may be the draft rental agreement

- Your rental agreement (or draft rental agreement) must clearly show:
 - the name and address of the landlord
 - the details of the property to be rented, including its address
 - a schedule showing details and amount of any deposit payable (and when due)
 - a schedule of all rental amounts and when they are to be paid
 - that you are (or will be) the lessee
 - all other terms and conditions of the lease arrangement.

In cases where the constituency office premises are to be rented from a political party or constituency association, a valuation must be provided from a qualified independent assessor as to the market rate for the contracts and that market rate must not be exceeded.

Once you have finalised your tenancy agreement you must provide this (or a certified copy) to IPSA and evidence (a receipt) that you have paid the deposit to your landlord. Where you provide the original lease document to IPSA, IPSA will make a copy for its records and return the original to you.

How to submit your application:

- Bring the required form and documentation to the IPSA Documentation Team at Portcullis House from 24 May until 18 June 2010, 9.00am - 4.00pm.
- If you have the required documentation ready before 24 May, please contact the IPSA Information Line.

Further details regarding the loan can be found in the Scheme and on the loan agreement and application form.

Travelcard

The IPSA Travelcard allows you to charge certain travel expenses directly to it. You will still need to log these on the online expenses system and send your receipts to IPSA.

If you incur any travel expenses before collecting your Travelcard you will need to claim via the online expenses system. In all instances please remember to keep your receipts and send them to IPSA with a claim report.

Collecting your Travelcard

Your Travelcard will be available for collection from the IPSA Documentation Team at Portcullis House from 24 May until 18 June 2010, 9.00am – 4.00pm.

If you urgently require your Travelcard before 24 May please contact the IPSA Information Line.

Houses of Parliament Travel Office

For assistance in making travel arrangements please contact the Houses of Parliament Travel Office, operated by Hillgate Travel. Please phone 020 7219 4232.

Disability assistance

There are two types of disability assistance available to MPs:

- Contributions to disability support staff costs, special equipment (including IT equipment), certain travel costs and other costs arising. These are the responsibility of IPSA. Contact the IPSA Disability Support Adviser via the IPSA Information Line on 020 7811 6400 to apply for this assistance and for advice on the initial application process.
- Physical adaptations to your Westminster office. These are the responsibility of the House and you should contact the House Facilities Department. See the New MPs' Guidebook for contact details.

Information regarding your staff

Staff salaries and pay ranges

The House will continue to administer the salaries of re-elected MPs' current staff up to and including May. We are working closely with the House so that the transition is as straightforward as possible.

Staff contracts

Copies of the IPSA model contracts for MPs' staff, along with model job descriptions and accompanying pay ranges are included in the IPSA induction pack. The pack also includes supporting guidance. All these materials are available on the IPSA website www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk

We strongly recommend that you follow the model contracts as closely as possible, allowing for your own circumstances. Contracts will need to be approved by IPSA before they are signed and must be signed and submitted to IPSA before a member of staff can be put on the payroll. It will be much easier to work through the administrative process if you have used the model contracts.

In order for staff to be paid by IPSA at the end of June signed contracts must be submitted to IPSA before 15 June 2010.

Staff training

IPSA will be providing training for your staff on both the expenses rules and the online expenses system. These will be half day sessions held in London and regionally across the UK. Travel to these events can be claimed from your budget.

Locations for training:

- Belfast
- Birmingham
- London
- Bristol
- Manchester
- Leeds
- Edinburgh

Further information regarding dates, venues and how to book will be posted on the W4MP website (www.w4mp.org) and will be sent to you and your staff.

Further information on using the online expenses system

Tutorials and guides for the expenses system can be found on the IPSA website www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk

If your staff need to log your expense claims before they attend the staff training sessions we recommend that they view these guides.

Some key dates

IPSA Documentation Team present at Portcullis House	Monday 24 May – Friday 18 June, 9.00am – 4.00pm
Travel cards available – IPSA Documentation Team Portcullis House	Monday 24 May – Friday 18 June, 9.00am – 4.00pm
MP staff training	Throughout June
First claims will be published on the IPSA website	July
IPSA pay dates for MPs and their staff	Last working day of each month
Cut off dates for payroll runs	15th of each month, or the Friday before if 15th is over a weekend

How to contact IPSA

IPSA website www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk

IPSA Information Line

Should you or your staff have any general queries regarding your salaries or expenses please email or call. For specific advice regarding your personal circumstances you will need to email or write to IPSA.

Email info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk

Phone 020 7811 6400

Opening times 08.00 until 20.00 from 7 May until
21 May 2010 - everyday

From 24 May, normal office hours will be 08.00 to 18.00
Monday to Friday

Address

IPSA
7th floor
Portland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5BH

Logging onto the expenses system:

www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk