

Press Releases November 2010

25 November 2010

In response to a campaign by Unlock Democracy and a number of other similar bodies, asking why IPSA has chosen not to publish MPs' receipts and invoices, we have issued a letter explaining why we have taken this approach.

ENDS

You can contact the IPSA press office on 020 7811 6418.

www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk

22 November 2010

IPSA has today published its first Annual Report and Accounts.

The report, which has been presented to Parliament, includes two sets of accounts – one to cover the period since IPSA officially came into existence (for accounting purposes) on 12 October 2009, and one which also covers the earlier period of IPSA's set-up and implementation.

The annual report charts IPSA's progress to date, from its creation by Parliament last year, through its set-up phase, to the point where it is operating successfully and processing thousands of expenses claims each week.

As at October 2010, IPSA had processed over 45,000 claim lines, and paid out £6.5m in expenses to 629 MPs.

ENDS

You can contact the IPSA press office on 020 7811 6488.

www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk

18 November 2010

IPSA set to publish MP expense claims

IPSA has today announced that the first proactive and routine release of details about MPs' expense claims paid under the new, independent regime will be issued on 2 December.

IPSA's dedicated publication website – which will be www.parliamentary-standards.org.uk - will go live at 10am on 2 December, and will include details of 22,000 claims made by 576 MPs.

For each claim, IPSA will publish proactively the MP's name, constituency, the budget the claim is made from (such as General Administrative Expenditure), and the type of expense (such as travel) and a description of the claim. For travel claims, IPSA will publish the start point and destination for each journey and the class of travel.

The first round of publication will cover claims made and reimbursed between 7 May and 31 August.

As previously announced, claims made up to and on the 14 September which were not paid will not be published proactively. This recognises that during the initial stages of the new regime, MPs, their staff and, indeed, IPSA staff, took time to familiarise themselves with the new rules and system. Details of all claims made from the 15 September onwards will be published proactively, including those not paid.

IPSA will be routinely publishing MPs' expenses in cycles, three months in arrears, every two months, meaning the next set covering September and October 2010 will be available in early February 2011. Each publication cycle is likely to include a number of older claims where reviews, late submission of evidence, or investigations may have affected the timeliness of the reimbursement or otherwise of an expense claim.

We will also be publishing data on MPs' office rental and staffing costs once a year, and will do this after the end of the financial year in which the costs were incurred.

IPSA will not be publishing receipts proactively –the cost of preparing tens of thousands of receipts for publication would be more than £1 million a year and would not provide value for taxpayers' money.

IPSA has today issued its publication policy, which can be found at www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk. This sets out in detail what we will publish, how and why. Our website also shows examples of how the details will be presented.

IPSA was created by Parliament in reaction to the collapse of public confidence in how MPs claim and receive expenses. In May 2010, IPSA introduced independent validation of MPs expenses for the first time and ended the allowance system, and introduced an approach in which MPs are reimbursed for reasonable costs incurred in carrying out their parliamentary duties.

ENDS

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www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk

11 November 2010

Information Commissioner's Ruling following data breach on 13 July 2010

IPSA takes data protection very seriously. We are committed to ensuring robust data security.

In the early days of establishing IPSA we appointed an independent security specialist to conduct external penetration testing of the IT systems and website. We made it a priority to get security accreditation and have full RMADS (Risk Management and Accreditation Document Set) accreditation following an independent security assessment.

Following a data breach on 13 July, data was accessed by 11 MPs or their offices. IPSA took urgent action to remove the data and reported the incident to the ICO immediately.

In the days after reporting the incident to the ICO, IPSA took further urgent steps to strengthen its systems and processes, including:

- Restricting the number of staff who have access rights to move and release data reports;
- Introducing technical changes to prevent a repeat of this incident;
- Reviewing user accounts and introducing new ones with a hierarchy of privileges;
- Completing an independent security accreditation exercise, and has been awarded RMADS accreditation;
- Appointing an independent auditor to review its system security;
- Strengthening internal monitoring activities to identify members of staff who view data reports;
- Heightening the authorisation requirements for staff being able to access and change IT systems;
- Providing ongoing training of staff emphasising the importance of data security.
- Contacting each MP setting out the action they needed to take if they read or kept the data. In response, none said they had retained the data.

The formal Undertaking on the ICO's website sets out the following commitments, all of which IPSA has already actioned of its own accord:

- Changes made to the system administrator accounts should be reviewed regularly.
- Appropriate changes to the system are introduced so as to ensure that the 'reports' field cannot be left blank.

- Breach notification procedures will be reviewed and communicated to all MPs and staff.
- The data controller shall implement such other security measures as, and when, it deems appropriate to ensure that personal data is protected against unauthorised and unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction, and/or damage.

4 November 2010

IPSA has today announced changes to its management structure.

Scott Woolveridge has been appointed Director of Operations, taking over from interim Director, Kate Mathers.

IPSA has also announced the departure of Adrian Rickard, interim Director of HR. Adrian was appointed on an interim basis to advise on the staffing of the new organisation.

4 November 2010

Further to the statement below, IPSA would like to clarify the position on its Annual Review.

Preparatory work on the review of the Scheme is now underway and we are gathering data to inform our discussions.

We will be engaging with interested parties soon and will then host a public consultation. In the meantime if you would like to send us comments and feedback on the Scheme please email schemeconsultation@parliamentarystandards.org.uk