

We all remember the outrage following the MPs' expenses scandal. In the aftermath, Parliament created the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, IPSA, to overhaul the system.

Since the general election in May, IPSA has been regulating MPs' expenses. It has done so rigorously and independently. There have been a number of firsts. For the first time there is independent regulation of MPs' expenses. For the first time the public were given a chance to have their say on what the rules should be. And for the first time, there will be regular and routine publication of what MPs claim in expenses.

These changes are a watershed for accountability and openness when it comes to how MPs spend your money. They are also a first step in restoring the public's confidence.

Openness is central to our approach. On Thursday, you will be able to see the results of that openness. We will actively publish details of 22,000 claims for expenses made by 576 MPs between the election and the end of August. We then intend to publish subsequent claims routinely every two months. We will actively publish details – including the value, when the MP paid out the money and on what. These details will show constituents how their money is being spent. We won't be publishing individual receipts. This would be a mammoth task, costing over £1million. We are confident the new approach to publication is sufficiently robust and transparent. It will, I hope, help rebuild public trust in how MPs' claims and receive expenses.

Our job is to deliver a system that you can have confidence in. We want a system which gives you, the taxpayer, proper assurance that your money is being used appropriately and at the same time allows MPs to get on with their jobs. There is no magic wand. But we are working to achieve this through a system of new rules, impartially and fairly applied, which allow MPs to claim back legitimate expenses incurred in carrying out their parliamentary business; independent oversight; openness and transparency; and, of course, MPs playing their part and taking responsibility.

And how is the new system working? MPs have been thoughtful and proper in making their claims. Where we have queried a claim, it has been the result of a misunderstanding as people adapt to the new scheme. Progress *is* being made. The public *can* feel more confident that they are getting value for money.

Although the new approach is now working, we can always improve. We didn't get everything right when we started out. So, we will soon be launching a thorough review of the Scheme to look at how we can improve it. If you have an opinion on MPs' expenses or what the rules governing them should be, we want to hear it. We want to know what you think is fair and how things can be improved. We will be launching the formal consultation on our website ([parliamentarystandards.org.uk](http://parliamentarystandards.org.uk)) early in the new year. Let us know then what you think.