

MPs' expense claims – publication policy

1. This document sets out IPSA's policy on the regular and proactive publication of information about the expenditure of public funds by Members of Parliament in accordance with the rules of the Expenses Scheme. Our approach to Freedom of Information requests is discussed briefly in paragraph 21 below.
2. This document is an expansion of the clause on the publication of MPs' expenses in IPSA's Publication Scheme. It supersedes the policy statement on the publication of MPs' expenses that we published in July 2010.
3. We will be publishing various information about this expenditure in regular cycles, as set out below.
 - Every two months we will publish details of MPs' expense claims, as recorded on the online claims system.
 - Annual publication of additional information about MPs' use of public funds. This will include information on residential accommodation, constituency offices, staffing budgets, and the employment of connected parties¹.
 - Annual publication of the total sums paid for additional security measures and disability assistance. These sums are the aggregations of all claims made by all MPs for these categories of expenditure in a single financial year.

¹ A "connected party" is defined as: a spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner of the member; a parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece of the member or of a spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner of the member; or an individual or organisation where there exists a relationship as set out in the Companies Act 2006.

4. In order to protect personal information and ensure IPSA takes due consideration of the personal security of MPs and their staff, we will redact certain information.

Proactive publication of expense claim details.

5. We will publish in a regular two-monthly cycle details of MPs' expense claims. We will publish details of claims processed by IPSA up to three months prior to the date of publication.
6. We will publish claims only after a final determination has been made – i.e. when the claims have been approved for reimbursement, when they have not been approved for reimbursement, and when they have been approved for reimbursement in part. Details of claims that are subject to reviews will only be published once the review has been completed.
7. Each publication cycle is likely to include a number of older claims where, for example, reviews or late submission of evidence may have affected the timeliness of the reimbursement or otherwise of an expense claim.
8. We will publish for each claim type, the information set out below.
 - **For all claims:** MP's name, constituency, financial year, month, date², claim reference numbers, expense type (e.g. Travel, Accommodation, General admin), expenditure type (e.g. public transport – rail, council tax, photocopier hire), short description, details, amount claimed, amount reimbursed, amount not reimbursed³ and the reason why a claim was not reimbursed.

² For most claims, the date will usually be the date of the transaction. For travel claims, the date in the majority of claims will be the same as the date of travel. However, where MPs have booked multiple journeys on a single transaction, or where they have made advance bookings, the date will not necessarily reflect the date of travel. In subsequent publication cycles we will seek to supplement transaction dates with the date of travel. For hotel claims, the date will reflect the date of payment, which may not, on each occasion, be the same date as the hotel stay.

³ In the first publication cycle, covering claims made and reimbursed between May and August 2010, we only published details of reimbursed claims. We did not publish details of claims not approved for reimbursement in order to provide both MPs and IPSA with a period to become accustomed to the new rules and online claims system. This adjustment period ran up to the end of 14 September 2010 and this is reflected in later publication cycles.

- **Travel and subsistence claims:** date, place of origin, place of destination, category of journey, class of travel, mileage, length of hotel stay, category of hotel stay.
 - **Accommodation claims:** rent claims, utility bill claims, council tax claims.
 - **Constituency office claims:** rent claims, utility bill claims, business rates claims.
9. Most of this information is the information MPs have submitted through the online claims system. The only additional information added by IPSA is the automatically generated claim reference, the amount reimbursed or not reimbursed and, when appropriate, the reason a claim was not reimbursed⁴.
10. We will redact certain personal or sensitive data included in claim lines. For further information see paragraphs 16 – 20 below.
11. We will publish details of instances where MPs have made a claim and received reimbursement, but have subsequently decided not to claim and have consequently repaid monies to IPSA.
12. This information is available in searchable format on our website at www.parliamentary-standards.org.uk. There is a function to export data to a flat file (.CSV).
13. Staffing costs are separate from expense claims and are not published as part of this regular cycle of proactive publication of expense claims. We will publish details of MPs' staffing arrangements annually, as set out below.

Publication of additional information

14. We will, once annually, and as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year, publish details relating to the expenditure of public funds for the previous financial year for each MP in the following areas:
- Total annual claims against constituency office budgets;
 - Total annual claims against residential accommodation budgets;
 - Total annual claims against MPs' staffing budgets, where we will publish the total amount claimed for staffing and the number of staff employed by each MP. We will only publish job functions and salary details expressed in £5,000 bands of members

⁴ In the first cycle of publication, we only published details of reimbursed claims.

of staff earning £58,200 or more, in line with the Government's plans for the wider public sector, and the names and salaries expressed in £5,000 bands of connected parties⁵ employed from public funds. With the exception of these connected parties, staff names will not be published.

15. At the same time, we will publish:

- the aggregate sum of all claims for which MPs received reimbursement under the security assistance budget;
- the aggregate sum of all claims for which MPs received reimbursement under the disability assistance budget; and
- details of repayments of reimbursements made by MPs where they may have over-claimed.⁶

16. We will not publish details of individuals' security assistance or disability assistance claims.

What IPSA will not be publishing proactively

17. We will not, as a matter of course, proactively be publishing images of receipts or invoices supporting claims.

18. We will not publish the following information:

- details of MPs' home addresses (i.e. those addresses for which they receive no subsidy from IPSA), unless the address is relevant to the claim, in which case we will publish only the first alphabetical block and the first numerical block of the postcode, for example:

i. SW1 [***]

ii. IP21 [***]

Claims where this information may be relevant might, for example, be for mileage or other journeys.⁷

⁵ See footnote 1, above.

⁶ See footnote 6, above.

- details of MPs' addresses in receipt of funding from IPSA, other than the first alphabetical block and the first numerical block of the postcode, for example:
 - i. SW1 [***]
 - ii. IP21 [***]
- specific journey times;
- any customer, account, invoice or policy numbers – or any other serial numbers that may be traced back to sensitive personal data, such as TV licence numbers or flight numbers;
- email addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers;
- financial details, such as credit card or bank account details;
- car registration numbers;
- names, addresses or other contact details of small suppliers with regular access to MPs' homes.

19. We will not publish details of claims which have initially not been approved for reimbursement where, on resubmission, they have been approved, provided it is clear that the reason for the initial determination was due to a minor administrative oversight on the part of the MP, such as the incorrect or incomplete submission of evidence, and where the oversight was rectified in the resubmission.

20. As stated above, we will not publish details of individuals' Security Assistance or Disability Assistance claims.

21. We are committed to addressing MPs' individual security concerns and will continue to work with House of Commons authorities to deal with them. We will assess individual's circumstances on a case-by-case basis and, where there are legitimate security concerns, we will take appropriate actions to protect individuals' personal security.

22. IPSA is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998. Consequently, we will not publish certain personal data where it would contravene any of the data protection principles.

⁷ This revision ensures the policy is wholly consistent with IPSA's stated position on publication following the public consultation in June 2010. In the 18 November document, "home address" was referred to as "principal address".

IPSA's duties under the Freedom of Information Act

23. IPSA is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and handles each Freedom of Information request according to the requirements of the Act. Cases are treated on a case-by-case basis.