

Georgia Wilson
Director of MP Support



**Independent Parliamentary
Standards Authority**
85 Strand
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Mrs Virginia Crosbie
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

By Email

19 January 2021

Dear Mrs Crosbie,

Re Your request for review to the Compliance Officer regarding Airbnb costs

I am writing to say sorry for the protracted and unnecessary process you have had to go through to gain agreement that IPSA will fund the costs for your stay in an Airbnb in your constituency shortly after the election. This should not have happened.

As you know non-London MPs are entitled to use hotels or rented accommodation in either their constituency or in London. When MPs use hotels there is a daily cap of £175 in London, or £150 outside London (eleventh edition of the Scheme for 19/20).

It appears that when your office first asked us, we failed to give you the correct advice that short term Airbnb bookings are treated in the same way as hotels, and therefore do not need a property registration or signed lease. Instead you were able to submit a simple claim with the documentation attached, because your claim was within the daily cap. When you applied to the contingency panel, the error was repeated, and you were forced to ask the Compliance Officer to review the matter. This should not have been necessary. Our guidance for MPs and for our own staff should have been clear about how we treat Airbnb bookings, and we should have given you that advice in January when you asked for it.

I am so sorry that the mistake happened in the first place, and that we did not notice and correct it sooner. As soon as I read the Compliance Officer's report, I immediately agreed with her decision that we should refund the costs – the cost is permitted under the Scheme and you could afford it within your IPSA budget.

In December we presented our new corporate strategy to the Speaker's Committee for IPSA, with our aim being to "enable MPs to focus on what really matters by providing an exemplary, seamless regulatory service". We have a lot of work to do, but our new CEO Ian Todd and all of us at IPSA are committed to improving and meeting this objective. Bear with us, it will take time, but I hope you will notice improvements over the coming months.

Once again, I am sorry, and I wish you and your team a happy 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Georgia Wilson
Director of MP Support