



**BOARD PAPER**  
**IPSA/150610/2**

**TO:** IPSA Board  
**CC:**  
**FROM:** Andrew McDonald  
**TEL:**  
**SUBJECT:** Chief Executive's Report

**DATE:** 15 June 2010

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**Issue**

1. Update on IPSA's operations


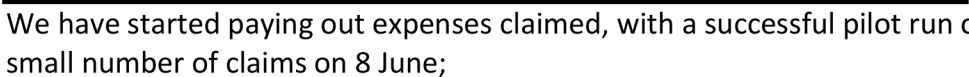
**Timing**

2. For discussion at the Board meeting


**Recommendation**

3. That the Board note the points below.

**IPSA operations**

4. As raised at last week's Board meeting, the operation is currently under significant pressure, coping with a great volume of work and enquiry levels far in excess of those anticipated. There is no room for give and the organisation is not currently equipped to take on additional workloads.
5. Currently the IPSA Operations Team is not providing a level of service to MPs and their staff that is considered to be acceptable. To improve upon levels of service the IPSA SLT is taking steps to review: (i) Operational staffing, capability, structure and management; (ii) the underlying processes within operations with a view to streamlining; (iii) the use being made of ICT systems. More on this below.
6. Nevertheless, in the past week we have achieved the following:
  - i. 
  - ii. 
  - iii. We have started paying out expenses claimed, with a successful pilot run of a small number of claims on 8 June;
  - iv. Scanning of documentation, claims and receipts has started[?];
  - v. The validation team has started validating claims – and consequently we have made our first expenses payments, two weeks ahead of schedule; and

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- vi. We have cleared a backlog of emails identified over the course of the past two weeks – however, we are conscious that a large number of more recent emails are still awaiting replies. Progress on these is being reported on daily and I will give you an update on the latest figures at the Board meeting.
7. In addition to this, the following provides a brief picture of the additional programmes of work underway:
- i. Payroll are working flat out to ensure all MPs and members of MPs' staff will be paid.
  - ii. Human Resources colleagues are dealing with a very large number of HR queries from MPs and their staff, as well as validating staff contracts;
  - iii. We are receiving over 100 phone calls and 100 emails per day for the advisory team to reply to;
  - iv. The documentation centre in Parliament is extremely busy, with over 2 MPs visiting yesterday alone;
  - v. The MPs' staff briefing sessions are now underway, with IPSA staff and trainers travelling around the country delivering these briefing sessions;
  - vi. Policy colleagues are finalising the consultation papers and are both continuing to induct the remaining MPs who have not yet had their initial inductions, as well as delivering the MP staff briefing sessions; and
  - vii. 
8. We discussed at our conference call yesterday a new service proposition for MPs. As mentioned, this approach would carry a cost. However, I believe it would help alleviate some of the pressures the organisation is currently struggling with.

### Short-term plan

9. A short term plan to implement tactical fixes is underway – specifically targeted at throughput bottle-necks experienced in (i) Correspondence; (ii) Claim Validation. This paper will focus on current corrective actions being implemented in these areas.
10. In parallel a more comprehensive review (independently led) will report within the next fortnight on recommended next steps towards achieving longer term operational stability.

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### Correspondence

11.



12. The Remedial Actions underway include:

- An increase in the team size by 2 FTE's [REDACTED] to bolster capacity to answer general scheme questions;
- A strengthening of the management of the team by the addition of [REDACTED];
- The identification of Subject Matter Experts to answer questions of a specific thematic area to ensure both consistency and faster turn-around of response – e.g. [REDACTED] on ICT matters; [REDACTED] on MP Staffing Contracts; [REDACTED] on Payroll; and [REDACTED] on Travel Card;
- [REDACTED]
- Training of staff to use the Customer Relationship Management System more proficiently – this is not yet fully embedded. There will be productivity gains when workflow, statistical reporting, and the knowledge base are adopted;
- Steps taken to reduce Demand Pressures – FAQ's have been published on [www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk](http://www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk) and targeted communications around recurrent themes;
- Work to produce a suite of standard responses;

13. **The budgetary implications in terms of additional staffing on a per month basis are circa [REDACTED].** Once a greater level of experience and stability is achieved (and MP start-up activity lessens) it is envisaged that this additional expenditure will be contained.

14. I will of course keep you updated on progress.

### The IPSA Helpline

15. The Helpline implemented within IPSA Operations has basic call-handling functionality combined with the ability to record calls received. There is no ability to track and monitor calls received and report statistically. To date a rudimentary manual count has been implemented – this gives no real indication of the caller experience.

16. The table below provides a basic summary of calls processed.

17. Between 7 May and 8 June we have answered some 2,300 phone calls.

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18. Out of these the categories breakdown as follows:

Count of Enquiry Category	
Assurance Inspections	2
Book Training (IT/scheme)	199
Complaint (IPSA service)	23
Compliance	2
Employment Issues	339
Freedom of Information (FOI)	8
General	498
IT Support	273
Payments	36
Payroll	148
Scheme	597
Travel Card	173
Vexatious Caller	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2300</b>

19. The Remedial actions underway to improve this service include:

- IPSA's ICT Service Provider (Calyx) has reviewed current Helpline configuration and recommended that IPSA implement their standard Helpline service – previously not progressed on cost grounds;
- IPSA is reviewing call/message flows to ensure an improved end-user experience as well as optimised utilisation of staff handling the calls;
- Standard reports will be implemented as part of the software upgrade to be introduced. This will include (non-exhaustive list) statistical reports of call duration; throughput; peak times etc.;
- The call handling system will be tied into the CRM system to ensure improved handling of the initial call as a result of having customer history at finger tips; as well as encouraging the creation of clear records of telephone contacts / queries.

20. These corrective actions will be implemented with a target timescale for resolution of two weeks. **The cost is expected to be under £10,000, but will be confirmed by Friday 11 June.**

### Consultation papers

21. The consultation papers have almost been finalised and will be published on Wednesday, 16 June.

### Implementation programme

22. Attached below is the programme update on the implementation team from Robin Galloway.

**Andrew McDonald**