

Supporting democracy

Funding of MP parliamentary duties 2022/23

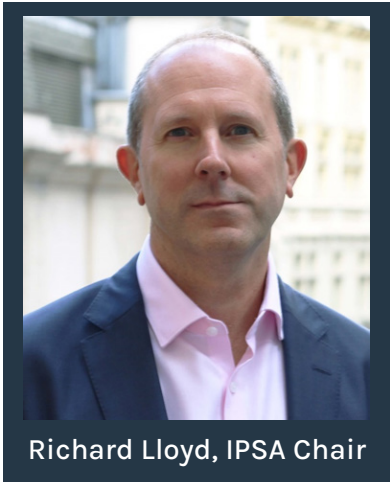
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Welcome to our first MP expenditure report



Richard Lloyd, IPSA Chair

Transparency is an essential part of supporting trust in democracy. The public has a right to know their money is being spent on the right things, in the right way.

Transparency helps provide assurance that public money is being spent wisely.

This is why since IPSA's creation we have published information about the financial support we provide to MPs in carrying out their constituency and parliamentary duties. This transparency must, however, be meaningful.

There are many myths and misconceptions about MP business costs that threaten to undermine confidence in democracy. As the regulatory body, it is important we better explain and contextualise the funds we provide.

We know from the research we have undertaken with the public and stakeholders there is still a lack of understanding about what MPs need to do to fulfil their public duties, and how that is funded.

This can lead to unfounded criticism of MPs that impacts on trust in democracy. And, as highlighted in the recent Speaker's Conference Report into the Employment of MPs' Staff, this adversely impacts the well-being of MPs' Staff.

We have work to do at IPSA to bolster public understanding of the work MPs do and how it is funded. For example:

- MPs don't decide their own pay or the budget for their own business expenditure. That is the role of IPSA, an independent body.
- MP funding is only for costs they incur when performing parliamentary duties. It is not a "bonus" or a "top up" to their salaries.
- Most MP funding goes towards paying the staff who work to support local communities on constituency issues.
- Claims are only reimbursed if supported by evidence – for example, invoices – and are within the budgets we provide.

This is the first time we have produced a report of this kind to accompany the publication of MP funding data. We hope you find it useful.

We are always keen to hear your feedback, so please let us know what you think about this report by email to feedback@theipsa.org.uk.

This report is designed to add greater context to two key areas of MP expenditure – employing their staff and the running of their offices.

It provides an overview of our role in ensuring that all of the spend is legitimate, and tackles some common misunderstandings about our funding support for the democratic process.

What is IPSA?

We are the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority.

We have the legal duty to:

- regulate MPs' business expenditure
- determine MPs' pay and pension arrangements
- provide financial support to MPs in carrying out their parliamentary functions

Understanding MP expenditure

IPSA's Scheme of Staffing and

Business Costs sets the rules on what MPs can claim for running their constituency office and in support of their parliamentary duties.

To support this work, they employ staff and operate in a similar way to a small business. MPs' Staff are paid directly by us, in accordance with established rates of pay depending on their specific role.

This funding is *not* part of an MP's salary.

Myths and misunderstandings

Publishing MP expenditure is an important way of assuring the public that this spending is legitimate and closely monitored.

Despite 13 years of IPSA's operation, myths and misunderstandings remain about what funding is provided, and how it is used.

To support trust in democracy, it is important we explain the value this funding has to the public and to parliamentary democracy.

We are independent of Parliament and government. We make fair and impartial decisions about MPs' expenditure. We provide effective regulation of MPs' pay and business costs on behalf of the public and publish the data to provide public access to information about MPs' pay, pensions and claims.

Fact #1

MPs don't decide their own pay or the budget for their business expenditure

At IPSA, we decide MPs' pay, the budgets for their business expenditure, and what they can claim for.

We have been doing this since 2010.

Our decisions are made independently from Parliament, and we work to ensure public money is spent appropriately.



Fact #2

MP funding is only for expenditure they incur while performing their parliamentary duties

Business expenditure is not a bonus to top up MPs' salaries. MPs can only claim for expenditure related to the resources that assist them in doing their job.

Think printer cartridges, train tickets and staff salaries.


Find out more about what [MPs can claim as business costs.](#)

Fact #3

The majority of MP expenditure is to pay their staff and run their constituency offices

If you look at the data we publish on our website, you will see that around 90% of the funding we provide goes to pay and support MPs and run their constituency office.

It is invested in local communities through caseworkers and parliamentary assistants, who work to support constituents on a huge range of issues.



Fact #4

MPs can't claim for personal expenditure like food and drink during their normal working day

While MPs can claim for some subsistence costs if they are travelling for work, they cannot claim for any personal costs outside of this.

This is no different from typical travel policies across the public and private sectors.

Funding parliamentary duties

The vast majority of MPs' expenditure – almost 80% in 2022/23 – is for employing staff to support constituents and other parliamentary duties. The staffing budget per MP for this year was £221,750 (for an MP with a constituency outside London) and £237,430 (for an MP with a London constituency).

Running a constituency office

Running a constituency office is like running a small business – costs are incurred for renting, heating and lighting an office, providing services, and managing staff.

It is often an unseen part of an MP's role but requires good office management to ensure constituents receive the appropriate support they need.

Holding surgeries and attending community meetings

MPs meet constituents regularly to listen to their concerns, offer guidance, and provide assistance with various issues.

They also attend community meetings, events, and public gatherings to engage with constituents and understand their needs.

Responding to correspondence

MPs receive a significant amount of correspondence from constituents, including letters, emails, and phone calls. They and their staff respond to these messages, address concerns, and provide information or guidance as needed.



Dealing with casework

The range of casework MPs deal with on behalf of their constituents is wide and varied. It includes assisting with housing or social welfare issues, immigration matters, healthcare, education, and any other issues constituents seek help with. Casework involves liaising with relevant government departments, local authorities, or other organisations to resolve problems and advocate for constituents.

Public engagements

MPs are expected to be visible and to actively engage with their constituents. This involves attending local events, speaking at public forums, supporting local initiatives, and building relationships with community organisations, businesses, and local government officials.

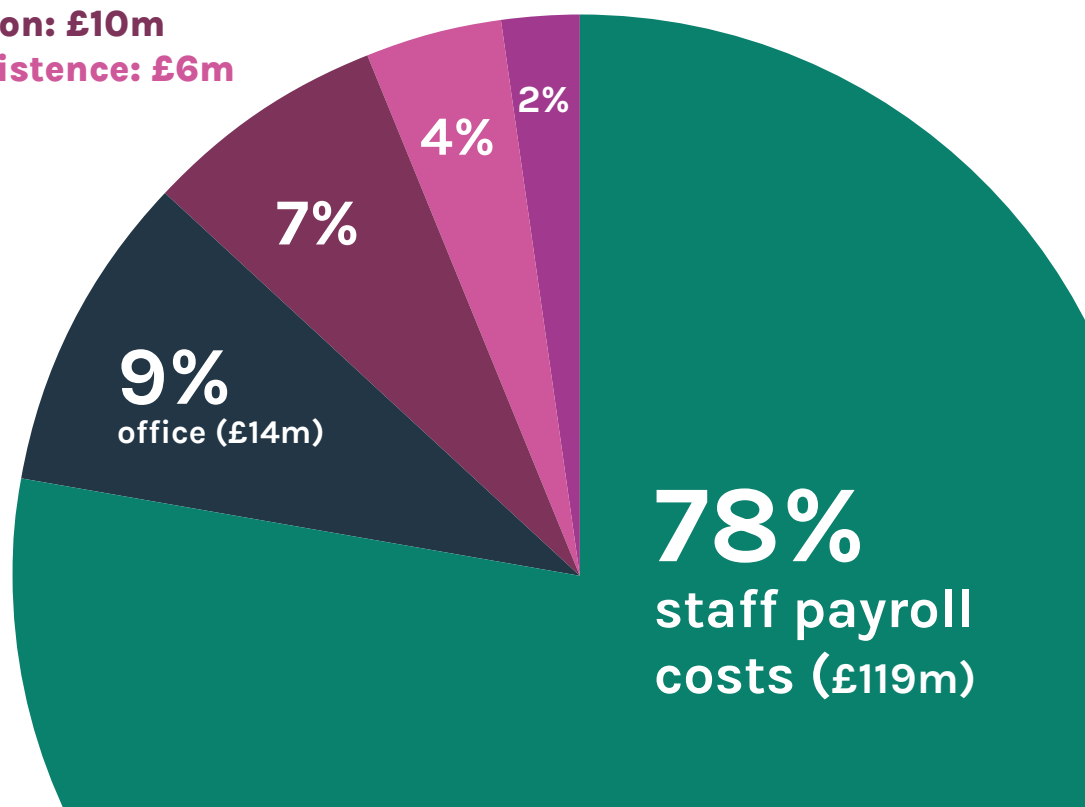
Performing their parliamentary and legislative duties

MPs play a crucial role in the legislative process. They are responsible for reviewing proposed legislation, attending parliamentary debates, participating in committee stages, and voting on bills. This requires in-depth research, analysis, and collaboration with other MPs.

They may serve on parliamentary committees focused on specific policy areas or inquiries. They attend committee meetings, review documents, conduct research, and contribute to the committee's reports, and recommendations.

Breakdown of total spend

- **Staff payroll: £119m**
- **Office: £14m**
- **Accommodation: £10m**
- **Travel & subsistence: £6m**
- **Other: £3m**

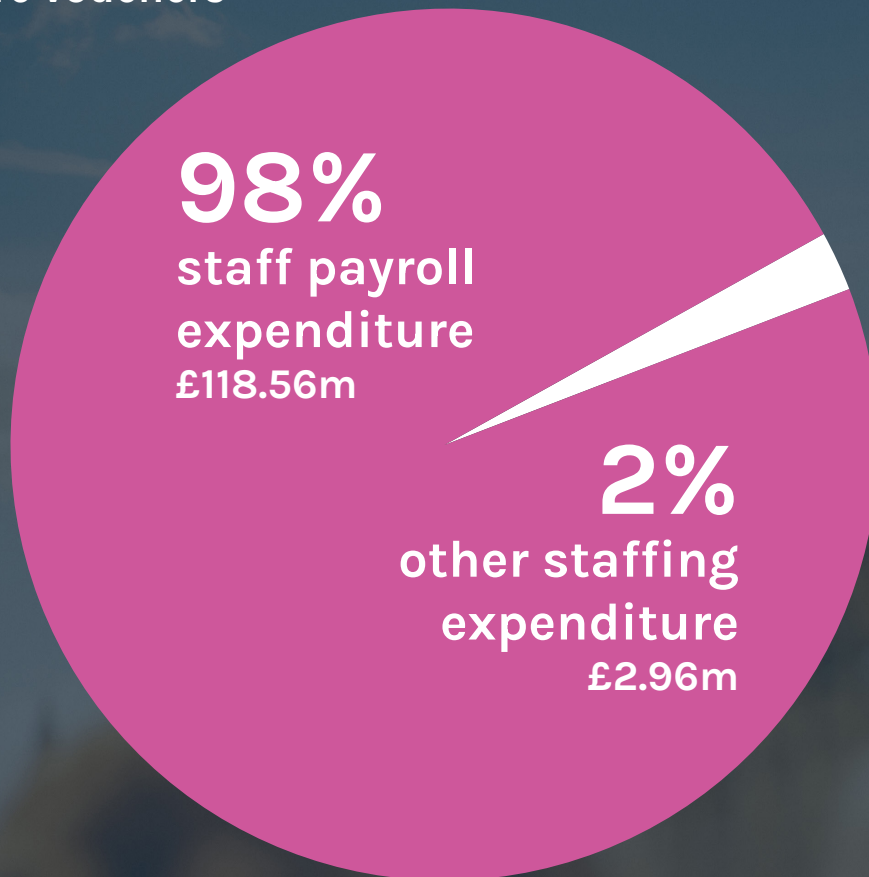


Staffing expenditure

Almost all staffing expenditure pays for staff salaries.

In 2022/23, 98% of staffing expenditure paid for:

- basic salary
- Employer's National Insurance
- pensions
- overtime
- childcare vouchers



Number of staff employed across MPs offices in 2022/23

4,859*

*This figure includes all those who started or left employment during the 2022/23 financial year

Running a constituency office

The second highest proportion of funding provided by IPSA is to support MPs with running a constituency office.

The budgets available for constituency offices in the 2022/23 financial year were £28,570 (for an MP with a constituency outside London), and £31,620 (for an MP with a London constituency).

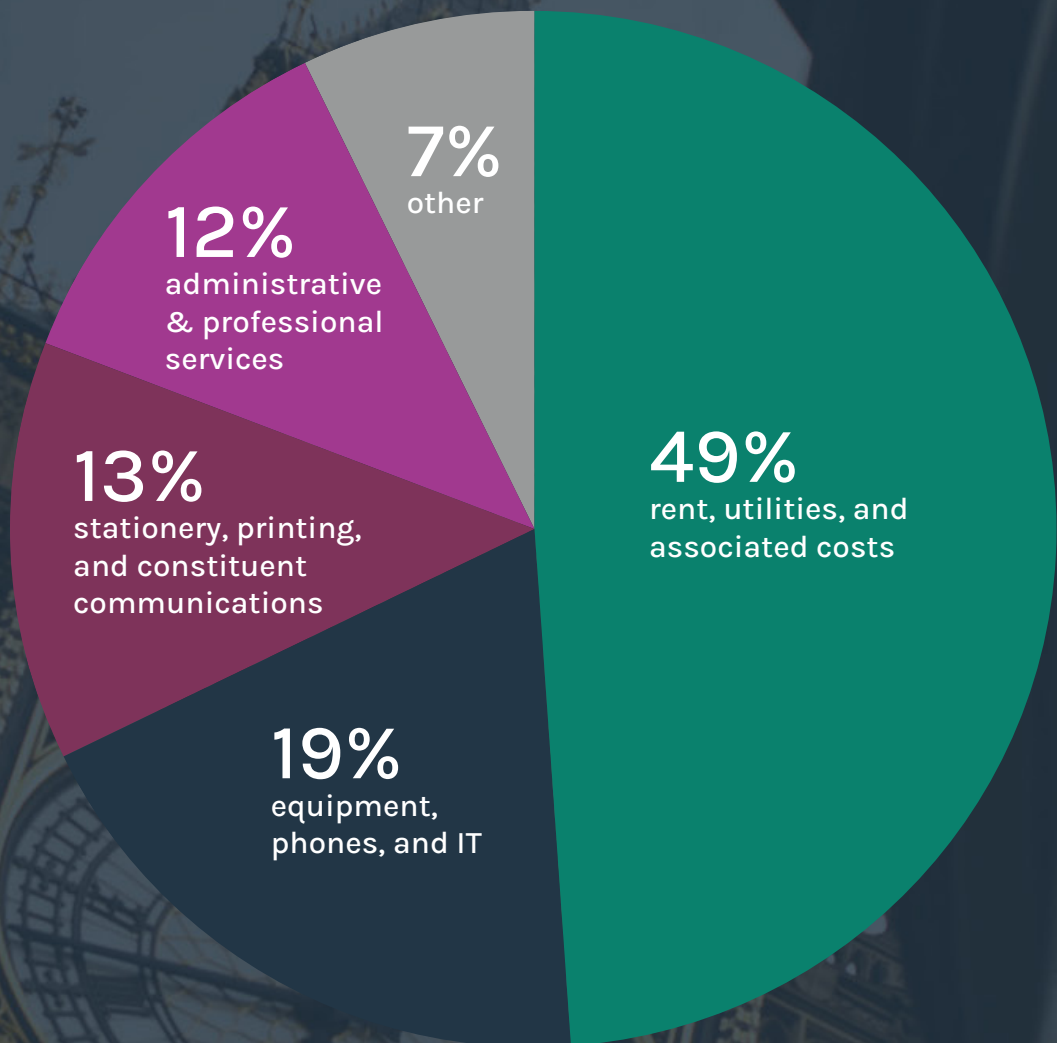
The budget covers rent, business rates, office cleaning, surgery hire and advertising – and essential supplies such as paper, pens and printer ink, office equipment, telephony – everything they need to provide a service to their constituents.

Almost half of all office expenditure pays the rent, utilities, and associated costs.

The costs of running an office

Type of office expenditure	2022/23 total	%
Rent, utilities, and associated costs	£6.80m	49%
Equipment, phones, and IT	£2.69m	19%
Stationery, printing, and constituency communications	£1.80m	13%
Administrative and professional services	£1.61m	12%
Other	£0.98m	7%
Total	£13.88m	

How office costs are made up



Office rent, utilities and associated costs covers rent, service charge, ground rent, business rates, insurance (buildings and contents), utilities (including an office TV licence).

Administrative and professional services covers research, translation services, website hosting, other professional services, and administrative support.

The “other” category includes the costs of:

- office cleaning and maintenance: £0.47m
- hosting and meeting constituents (including venue hire): £0.18m
- training, health and welfare: £0.07m

IPSA

Independent Parliamentary
Standards Authority