

# IPSA

Independent Parliamentary  
Standards Authority

## Supporting democracy

Funding of MP parliamentary duties 2023/24

November 2024





# Contents

Foreword from our Chair	4
IPSA's duties and responsibilities	5
Myths and misunderstandings	6
Funding parliamentary duties	10
Staffing expenditure	12
Working in two places	13
Running a constituency office	14

# Welcome to our annual MP expenditure report

IPSA plays a small role in a large political landscape. We carry out our function independently and transparently, and want to reassure the public that its money is being spent responsibly – and regulated effectively – to maintain a healthy UK democracy.

That is part of the aim of our Annual Publication of MPs’ business costs.

Since IPSA’s creation we have published information about the financial support we provide to MPs to carry out their constituency and Parliamentary duties.

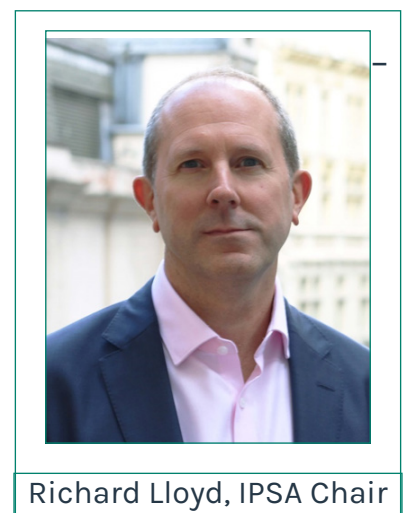
Unlike many other professions, MPs are often required to be in two places on a regular basis: their constituency, and Parliament.

We provide help to MPs to allow them to accomplish their duties, and prevent Parliament from becoming a place where only those with independent financial means can prosper.

However, there is still work to be done 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.
- We don’t fund MPs’ personal utility bills. They can however be repaid for the costs of heating their constituency office – where many of their staff work – or their work address in London.
- Most MP funding goes towards paying the staff who work to support local communities on constituency issues.
- Business costs are generally only reimbursed if supported by evidence – for example, invoices and are within the budgets we provide.

Transparency is an essential part of supporting trust in democracy, but it must also be meaningful. This report contextualises some of the costs incurred by MPs, and provides transparency about how public money is spent.



Richard Lloyd, IPSA Chair

# IPSA's duties and responsibilities

## 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 costs MPs can be reimbursed for in the running of their constituency office and in support of their parliamentary duties. Business costs are generally only covered if supported by evidence – for example, invoices – and are within the budgets we provide.

**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 business costs.**

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 14 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.



Fact #1

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

At IPSA, we decide MP's pay, the budgets for their business expenditure, and which business costs are covered.

We have been doing this since 2010.

Our decisions are made independently from Parliament, and we work hard 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 be reimbursed for expenditure related to the resources that assist them in doing their job.

Think printer cartridges, train tickets and staff salaries, for example.

Find out more about which [which business costs are covered](#).





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' staff to work within, and fund, a 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

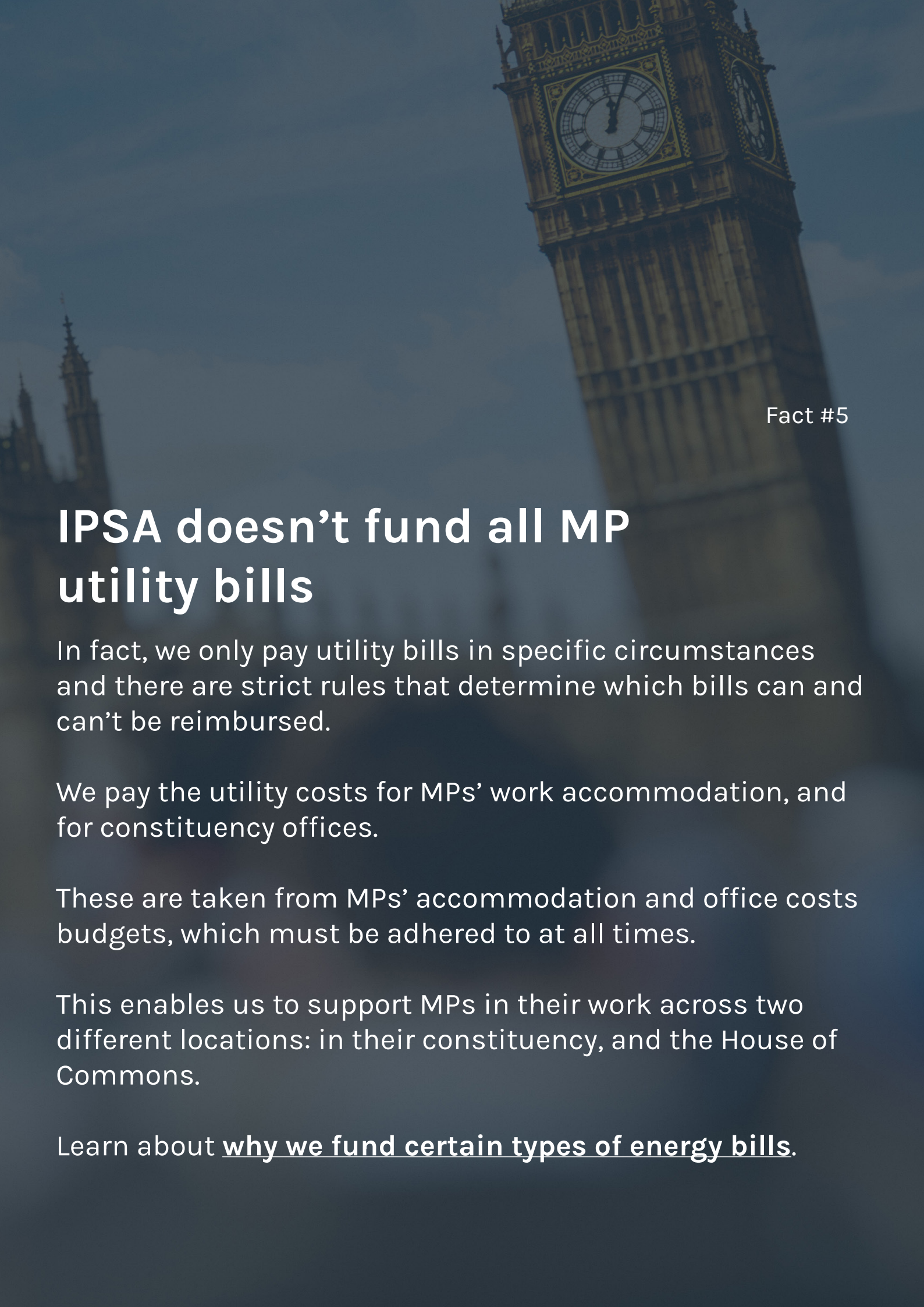
## **MPs can't be reimbursed for personal expenditure like food and drink during their normal working day**

MPs can receive a small subsistence allowance if they are travelling for work and staying overnight outside of London or their constituency.

They are not repaid for any personal costs they incur.

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





Fact #5

## IPSA doesn't fund all MP utility bills

In fact, we only pay utility bills in specific circumstances and there are strict rules that determine which bills can and can't be reimbursed.

We pay the utility costs for MPs' work accommodation, and for constituency offices.

These are taken from MPs' accommodation and office costs budgets, which must be adhered to at all times.

This enables us to support MPs in their work across two different locations: in their constituency, and the House of Commons.

Learn about [why we fund certain types of energy bills](#).

# Funding parliamentary duties

The vast majority of MPs' expenditure – almost 80% in 2023-24 – is for employing staff to support constituents and other parliamentary duties. The staffing budget per MP for this year was £236,170 (for an MP with a constituency outside London) and £252,870 (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 hundreds of messages from constituents every day. They need to employ staff to help them respond, address concerns, and provide information or guidance.



## Dealing with casework

The range of casework MPs deal with on behalf of their constituents is wide and varied. It includes help with housing or social welfare issues, immigration matters, healthcare, education, and any other issues where constituents seek support. 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 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.

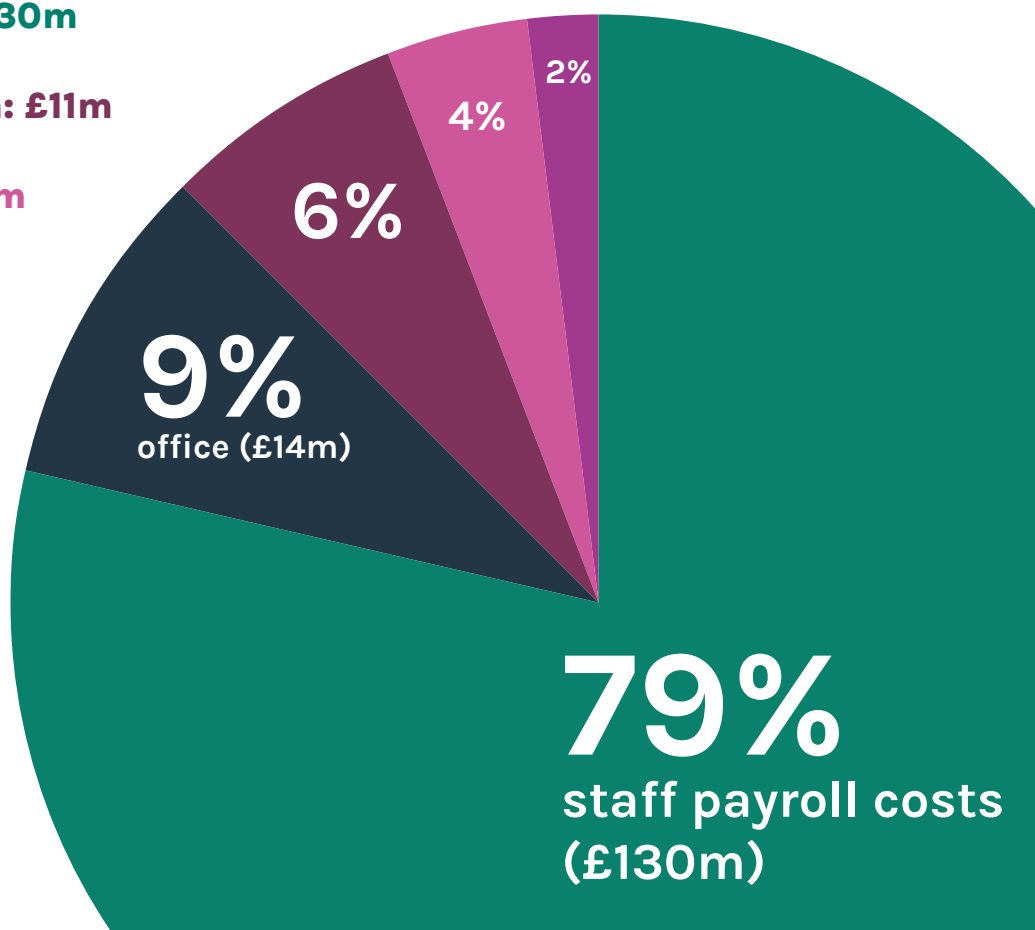
## Performing their parliamentary and legislative duties

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: £130m**
- **Office: £14m**
- **Accommodation: £11m**
- **Travel & subsistence: £6m**
- **Other: £3.0m**





# Staffing expenditure

Almost all staffing expenditure pays for staff salaries.

In 2023/24, 98% of staffing expenditure paid for:

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



**98%**  
staff payroll  
expenditure  
£129.31m

**2%**  
other staffing  
expenditure  
£2.96m

# Working in two places

As voters, we expect MPs to work in two places.

MPs are elected to represent constituencies across the UK, many of which are hundreds of miles from the House of Commons – where they must also be on a regular basis.

IPSA is committed to supporting a representative parliament, where people without private finances to fund working from two locations shouldn't be prevented from becoming an MP.

We provide reimbursement for travel costs from non-London constituencies to Westminster, and budgets for the cost of maintaining somewhere for MPs to stay while they are working.

We don't cover mortgage payments, or the cost of utility bills on properties which aren't used as a result of Parliamentary work.

**In 2023-24, the total cost of utility bills and service charges in MPs' offices was £1.09m, and £0.43m in MPs' work accommodation.**



# 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 2023/24 financial year was £30,570 (for an MP with a constituency outside London) and £33,840 (for an MP with a London constituency).

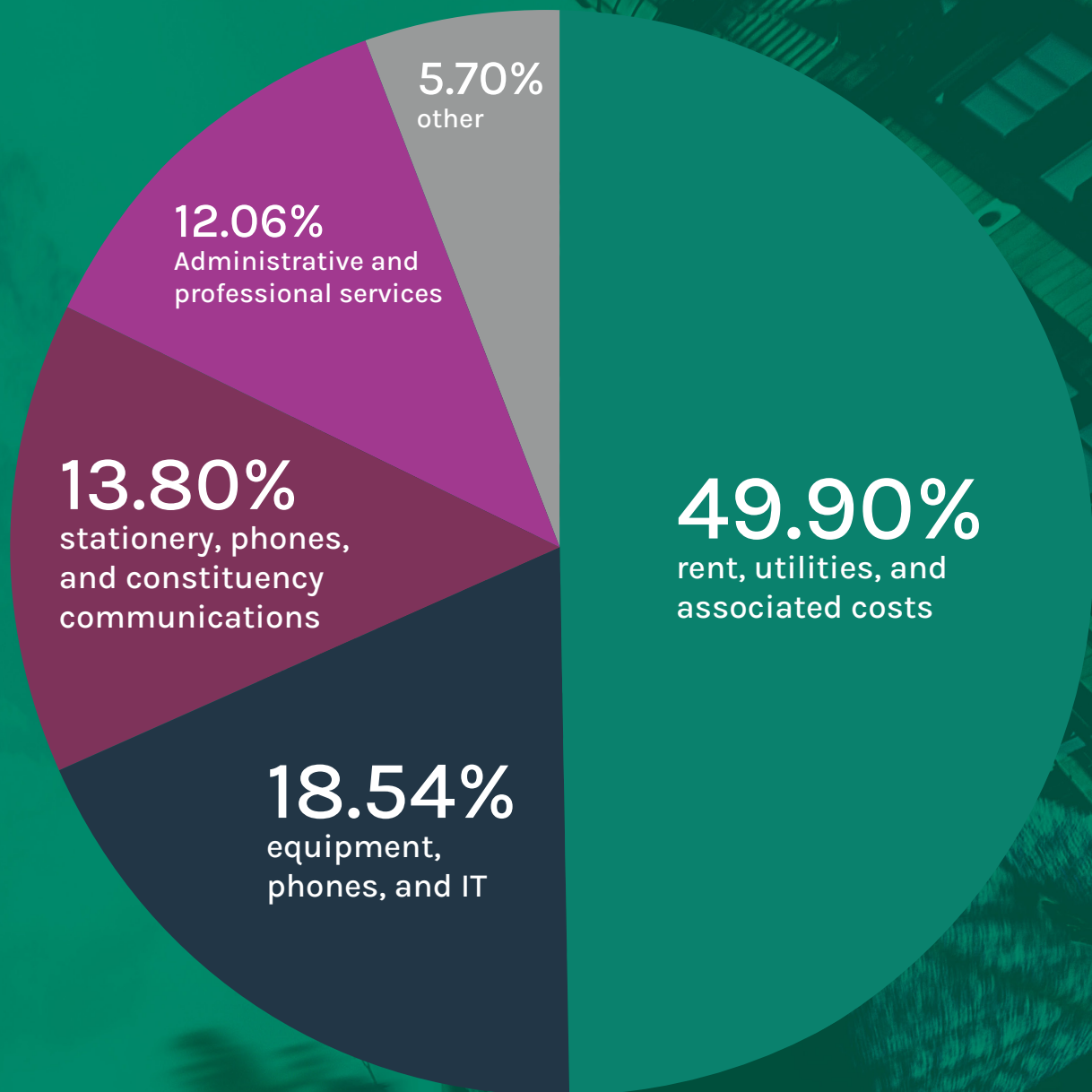
The budget covers rent, business rates, office cleaning, surgery hire and advertising and essential supplies such as paper, pens and printer ink, office equipment, telephony – everything that is needed to provide a service to their constituents.

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

## The costs of running MPs' offices

Type of office expenditure	2023-24 total	%
Rent, utilities, and associated costs	£7.18m	49.90
Equipment, phones, and IT	£2.67m	18.54
Stationery, printing, and constituency communications	£1.98m	13.80
Administrative and professional services	£1.73m	12.06
Other	£0.82m	5.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>£14.38m</b>	<b>100</b>





Almost 40% of office expenditure covered the rent of offices in MPs' constituencies, allowing them to maintain a presence close to the people they were elected to represent.

Less than 8% of expenditure - £1.09m - was on utility bills in those offices, covering items like service charges, ground rents, and heating and water bills.

The "Other" category includes the cost of hiring venues for community engagement in an MP's constituency, for example drop-in sessions or regular surgeries.

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