



April 2016

Findings from  
the Annual  
Survey of MPs  
and their staff  
2015

## Contents

<b>Key findings – a summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>IPSA’S RESPONSE</b> .....	<b>4</b>
General Election Programme 2015 .....	5
IPSA’s website .....	5
The ease of use of the online system.....	5
The ease of understanding the Scheme.....	5
Training and contact with IPSA .....	6
<b>An Overall Rating</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>General Election 2015</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>The year overall - Advice and guidance from IPSA</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Usefulness of information from IPSA (IPSA-initiated contact) – some comparisons .....	18
Speed of IPSA’s response .....	20
Helpfulness of contact with IPSA when contact initiated by an MP or MP’s office .....	21
How can IPSA improve its guidance? .....	22
<b>Payment card and direct payments</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Completing claims</b> .....	<b>27</b>
Hours per month spent making claims for costs and expenses .....	27
Time recorded on Expense@Work .....	28
The online expenses system: ease of use .....	28
The online expenses system: usefulness of reports.....	29
The online expenses system: ideas for change .....	29
Explanatory notes when returning claims .....	30
<b>Processing claims by IPSA</b> .....	<b>31</b>
Speed .....	31
Quality.....	32
<b>IPSA’s payroll support</b> .....	<b>33</b>
Staffing budget report .....	33
Online timesheets .....	33
Job Description Tool.....	33
Staff Contract Tool.....	34
<b>IPSA’s website</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>IPSA’s regulatory role</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>ANNEX A – PERSONAL DATA</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>ANNEX B – METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>ANNEX C – FULL SURVEY DATA – Quantitative data</b> .....	<b>44</b>

## Introduction

This year, we received 312 responses to our annual survey: slightly down from last year's 334 responses. This number comprised 44 MPs, 113 MP proxies (those nominated by an MP to act on their behalf to manage their business costs and expenses), and 155 non-proxy members of staff. 16 of the 44 MPs were elected for the first time at the 2015 General Election in May.

This is the first time that we have made a distinction between proxies and ordinary staff members. The purpose of this is to gauge any differences in opinions and experiences between proxies and ordinary members of staff, as although both groups interact with IPSA, their experiences are likely to be different in light of a proxy's responsibilities acting directly on behalf of an MP. In this report, we have broken down the results to reflect the difference in opinion between the distinct groups, which in some cases is marked.

## Key findings – a summary

Overall, this survey shows clear improvements from a year ago. There are many positives for IPSA to take from this survey:

- Our 2015 General Election programme has been largely well received. A majority of newly elected MPs informed us that they were satisfied with their first meeting with IPSA following the election and that they found having a single point of contact to provide advice and guidance useful. A majority of MPs who served in the previous Parliament (2010-15) responded positively, telling us that they found the information and guidance from IPSA during the period leading up to and after the election useful.
- MPs responded more positively this year to the usefulness of information on IPSA's website compared to last. Proxies, on the whole, rated highly the usefulness of information in letters and emails, bulletins, and information on IPSA's website – with much higher positive ratings than other responding groups.
- In regards to contact initiated by MPs or their offices, MPs told us that responses by letter and email and face-to-face contact from IPSA were more useful than last year. The usefulness of IPSA's responses by letters, emails, phone, and face-to-face contact were all rated highly by proxies.
- A sizeable majority of proxies told us that they find the online expenses system easy to use, and both a majority of MPs and proxies agreed that reports generated by the online system were useful to them.
- MPs showed an increase in satisfaction with the speed in which their claims for business costs and expenses are processed. There was also a reduced level of dissatisfaction.

- Feedback on IPSA's payroll services has been generally positive from both MPs and their proxies.
- MPs rated IPSA's regulatory performance more positively than last year.

At the same time, we are always looking to improve and to do more.

- There were a greater number of newly elected MPs who told us that they did not find one-to-one training useful compared to those that found it useful. Similarly a significant proportion of newly elected MPs who responded to the survey told us they did not feel confident in understanding the Scheme and using the online expenses system, though their proxies generally felt otherwise.
- Information in letters, emails, and bulletins are all perceived to be less useful by MPs compared to last year. Information in IPSA's letters, emails, and bulletins, and IPSA's website were all rated as less useful by staff this year compared to last, though a majority of staff members continued to assess them positively as either *Very useful* or *Useful*.
- MPs informed us that the advice they received over the telephone this year was less helpful than last year. Staff agreed and also rated responses by letters and emails and guidance through face-to-face contact less positively than last year.
- Fewer MPs told us that they found the online expenses system easy to use and more informed us that they found it difficult.
- A smaller proportion of MPs than last year told us that they were satisfied with the quality of processing of their claims, with a larger proportion telling us that they were dissatisfied.

## IPSA'S Response

We are very grateful for all of the responses to the survey. There are some clear signs that MPs, their proxies, and their staff think that there have been many improvements in the support and services that we offer, but, of course, there remains more for us to do.

In response to feedback and requests from MPs and staff, we have recently implemented measures to improve the support that we offer MPs and their offices, including streamlining the process by which MPs register rented properties. MPs now complete a single form in which they give details of a rented properties, as well as confirm the details of the landlord, and bank details for direct rental payments.

In addition to completed initiatives, there are other areas identified in the survey that MPs and their staff wanted us to think about. We have completed or are currently carrying out projects to work on these:

### General Election Programme 2015

IPSA carried out a broad programme over the period leading up to, during, and after the 2015 General Election. As well as providing extensive guidance and support to incumbent MPs during the dissolution of Parliament, we assigned IPSA Election Contacts (IECs) to manage the accounts of all departing (both standing down and defeated) and newly elected MPs.

Many newly elected MPs told us they found having a single point of contact useful, and this arrangement has continued in the similar form of account managers (see section 'Training and contact with IPSA'). Some newly-elected MPs informed us in this survey that they did not feel confident in using the online systems and understanding the rules set by IPSA. We continue to offer training and guidance on the expenses system and the Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses to all MPs if required.

### IPSA's website

Towards the end of 2013 we refined and simplified our website, and in response to the results of the survey prior to this one, we developed a dedicated website for the General Election. This included in-depth information for new, departing, and returning MPs and their staff.

In response to the results of this survey and feedback already received on the General Election website, we are implementing a programme to create a brand new, user-friendly website for MPs, their proxies, and their staff, as well as for the general public.

### The ease of use of the online system

In response to feedback received in previous surveys, we started to include more specific information in claims returned to MPs, including quoting the reference number of a claim for easy reference.

We aim to make further improvements to the way in which MPs make claims and are reimbursed. As part of wider organisational improvements, we are currently working on a complete overhaul of the online expenses system – replacing it with a more user-friendly and speedy system more suited to the working lives of MPs, their proxies, and staff.

### The ease of understanding the Scheme

We received a more negative response than we had hoped as regards how confident MPs feel in understanding the rules within the Scheme.

Over the course of 2016 and 2017 we are conducting a fundamental review of the Scheme. The aim is to produce a Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses for MPs which is simple, concise, and easy to understand and work with. We will be consulting MPs and the public as part of this process.

### Training and contact with IPSA

Many respondents told us that they felt their training had been useful, but a significant number, notably a significant proportion of MPs, felt that this was not the case. Numerous respondents also told us in free text fields that they would like a continuation of the single point of contact arrangement which they experienced with their IEC as they found this useful.

In response to feedback received in this survey and prior to it, IPSA has now introduced an account management system. All MPs have been assigned dedicated contacts in IPSA's MP Support team. These account managers have been assigned according to regions and nations of the United Kingdom and will become familiar with the issues faced by MPs, their proxies, and staff in their constituencies. The account managers are available to provide further training of MPs and their staff if required.

- - -

We take your feedback seriously. It helps us to improve the support that we provide to all MPs and their staff. Thank you for the time you took to complete the survey.

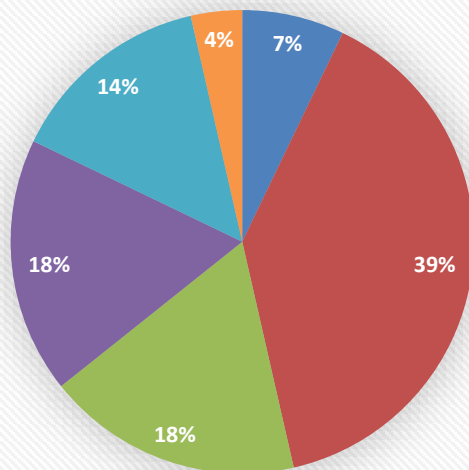
If you have any other ideas or suggestions about the support IPSA provides, you can get in touch anytime on 020 7811 6400 or [info@theipsa.org.uk](mailto:info@theipsa.org.uk).

### An Overall Rating

We asked MPs, their proxies, and their other staff to rate IPSA's service over the past year overall. As the survey covers a General Election year, this question was not asked to MPs who have only been in Parliament since May 2015, nor their proxies or staff. These respondents were asked a separate question.

Among MPs who responded to the question, the results were markedly polarised in comparison to 2014. 46% of those surveyed rated IPSA's service as *Very Good* or *Good*, an improvement on last year's figure of 36%. 18% rated the service *Average* compared to a much larger 43% last year. 32% rated it *Poor* or *Very Poor* compared to a smaller 21% last year. 4% selected the option *Don't Know*.

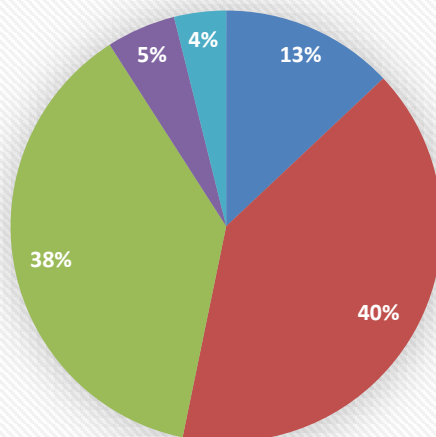
### "Overall, how would you rate IPSA's service over the last year?" (MPs only)



■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor ■ Very Poor ■ Don't Know

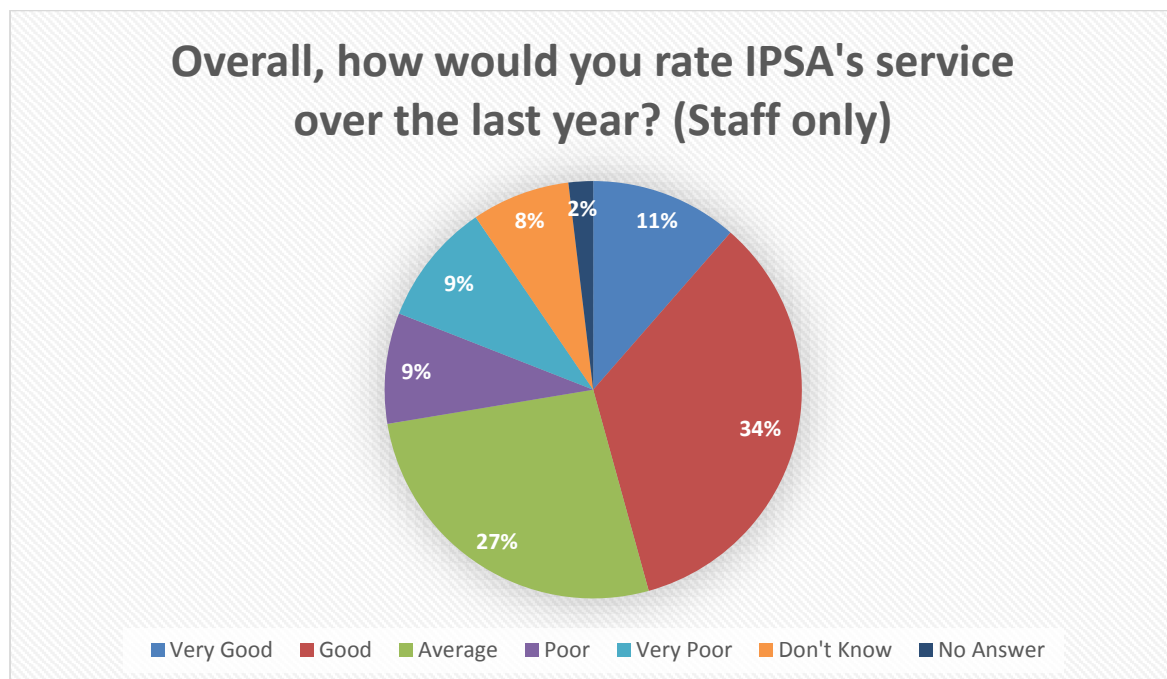
Among MPs' proxies who were asked the same question, the results were decidedly better. 53% of those surveyed rated IPSA's service as *Very Good* or *Good*. 38% rated the service *Average*. 9% rated it *Poor* or *Very Poor*.

### "Overall, how would you rate IPSA's service over the last year?" (Proxies only)



■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor ■ Very Poor

MPs' staff were asked the same question. 45% of those surveyed rated IPSA's service as *Very Good* or *Good*, a decrease on last year's figure of 52%. 27% rated the service *Average*, a slight decrease on last year's figure of 31%. 18% rated it *Poor* or *Very Poor* compared to last year's figure of 15%. 10% of respondents selected *Don't Know* or did not answer.



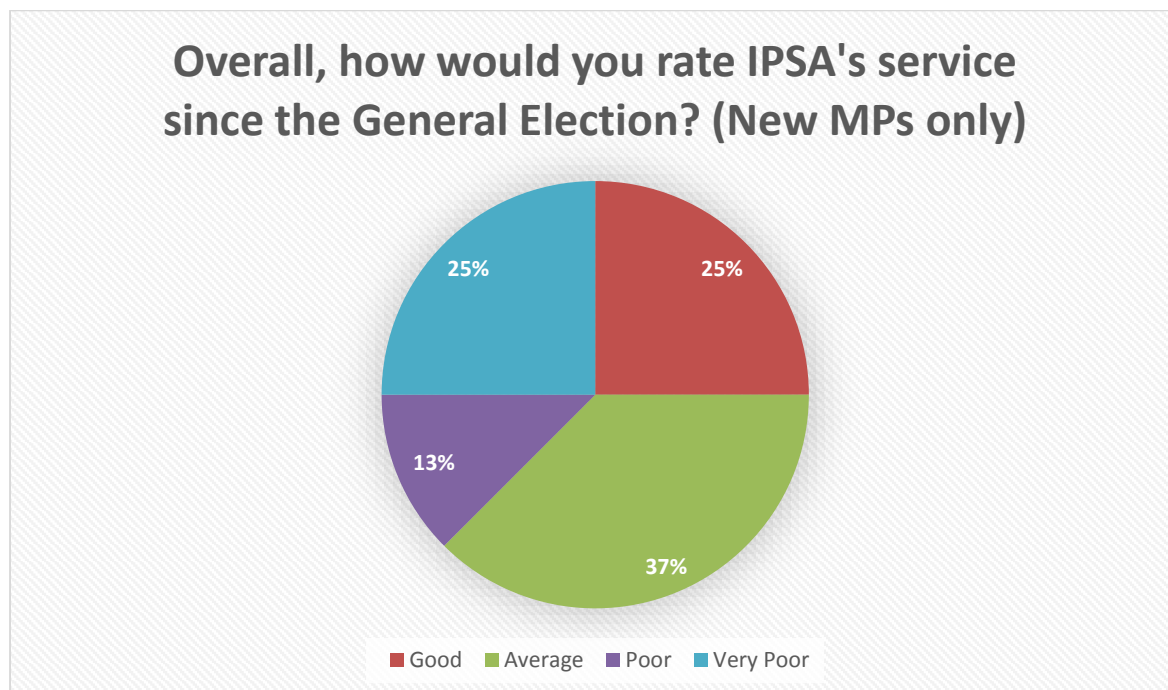
The lack of distinction between proxies and other staff in the 2014 survey may go some way to explain why responses from staff this year were slightly less positive than those received last year. In this year's survey, where proxies and other staff were considered separately, responses from proxies were noticeably more positive than those received from other members of staff. By merging these responses previously, the seemingly more positive proxy experience could be seen to have tipped the balance. The distinction in this year's survey allows for a more effective gauge between the experiences of the two groups.

---

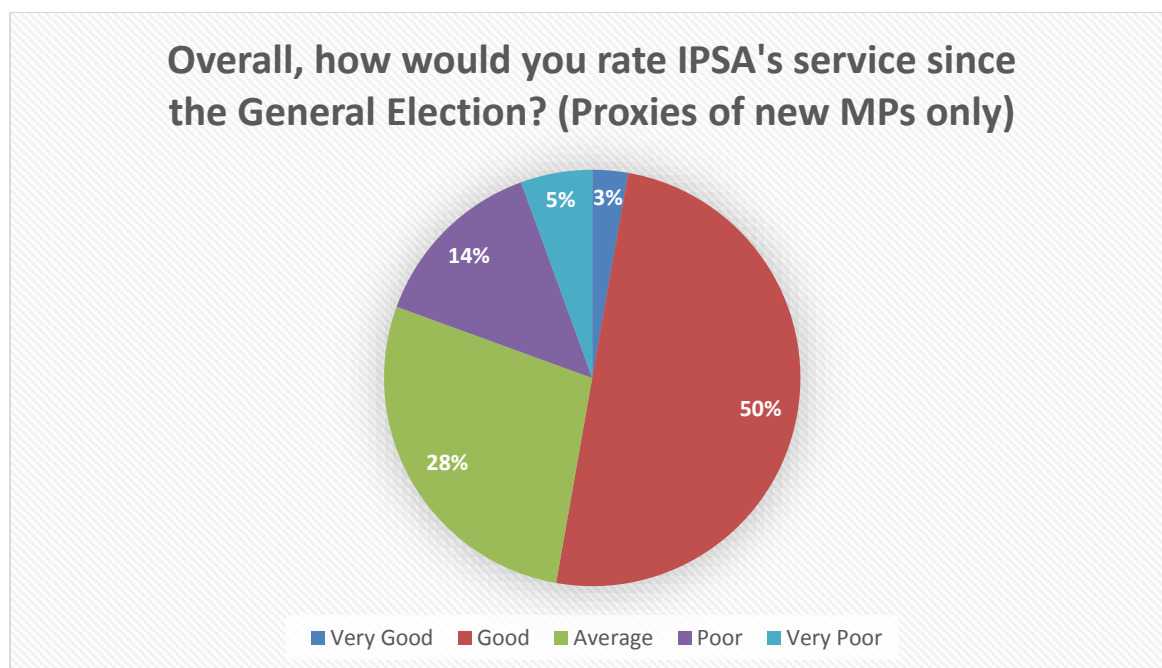
In light of the previous question referring to IPSA's service over the course of a year, we separately asked only newly elected MPs from the May 2015 General Election, their proxies, and their other staff to rate IPSA's service overall since they began working at Parliament.

Of the new MPs who answered this question, 25% of respondents rated IPSA's service as *Good* (no MPs responded with the option *Very Good*). 37% rated the service *Average* and 38% deemed it to be *Poor* or *Very Poor*.

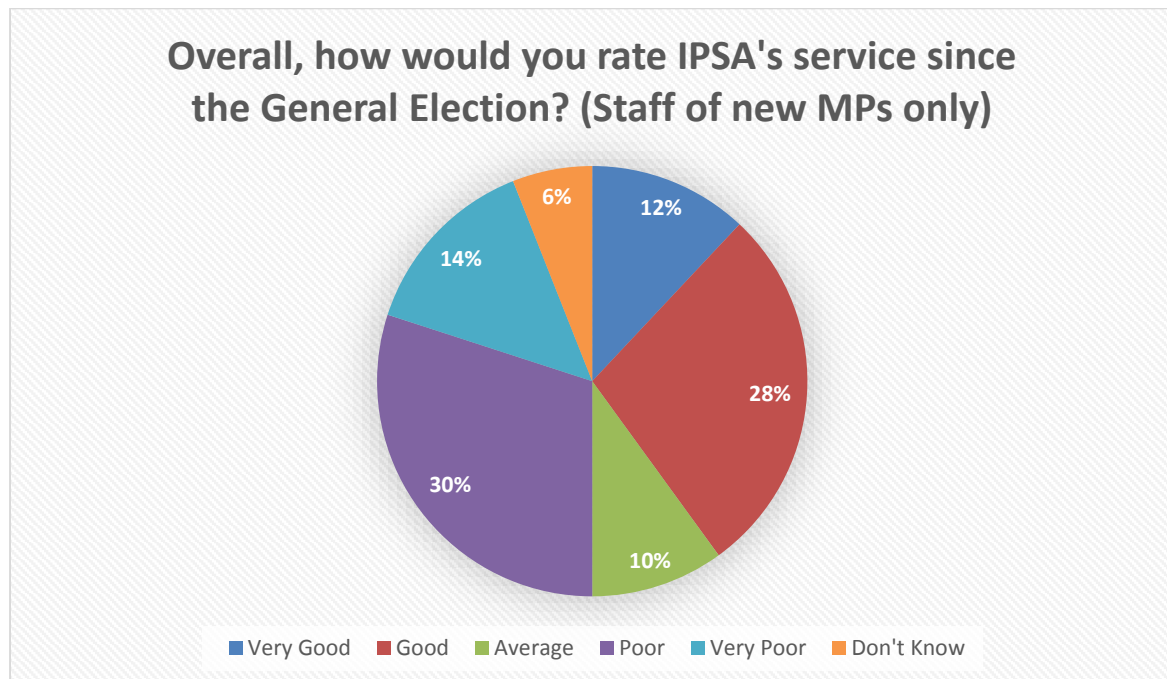




The proxies of newly elected MPs were asked the same question. Proxies' responses were significantly more positive than those of MPs. 53% of proxies rated IPSA's service as *Very Good* or *Good*. 28% believed it to be *Average* and 19% responded that the service was *Poor* or *Very Poor*.



Amongst the staff of MPs who answered, the results were split. 40% of respondents said that IPSA's overall service was *Very Good* or *Good*, and 10% believed it to be *Average*. 44%, however, said that it was *Poor* or *Very Poor*. 6% selected *Don't Know*.



## General Election 2015

This is the first Annual Survey which IPSA has conducted during a General Election year. Consequently we asked specific questions of newly elected and departing MPs to gauge their thoughts and experiences of IPSA's General Election Programme.

### New MPs

#### *NMRA – the New Members Reception Area*

We asked newly elected MPs what they thought about IPSA's performance at the New Members Reception Area (NMRA). This was an event which welcomed new MPs to Parliament immediately after the election. At the NMRA, IPSA met new MPs one-to-one. They were assigned a named IPSA Election Contact (IEC) and provided with a briefing on IPSA's role and function. MPs also provided personal information for IPSA's records. It should be noted that, whilst allowing valid conclusions to be drawn, the number of new MPs who completed the survey was small, 16 out of 182.

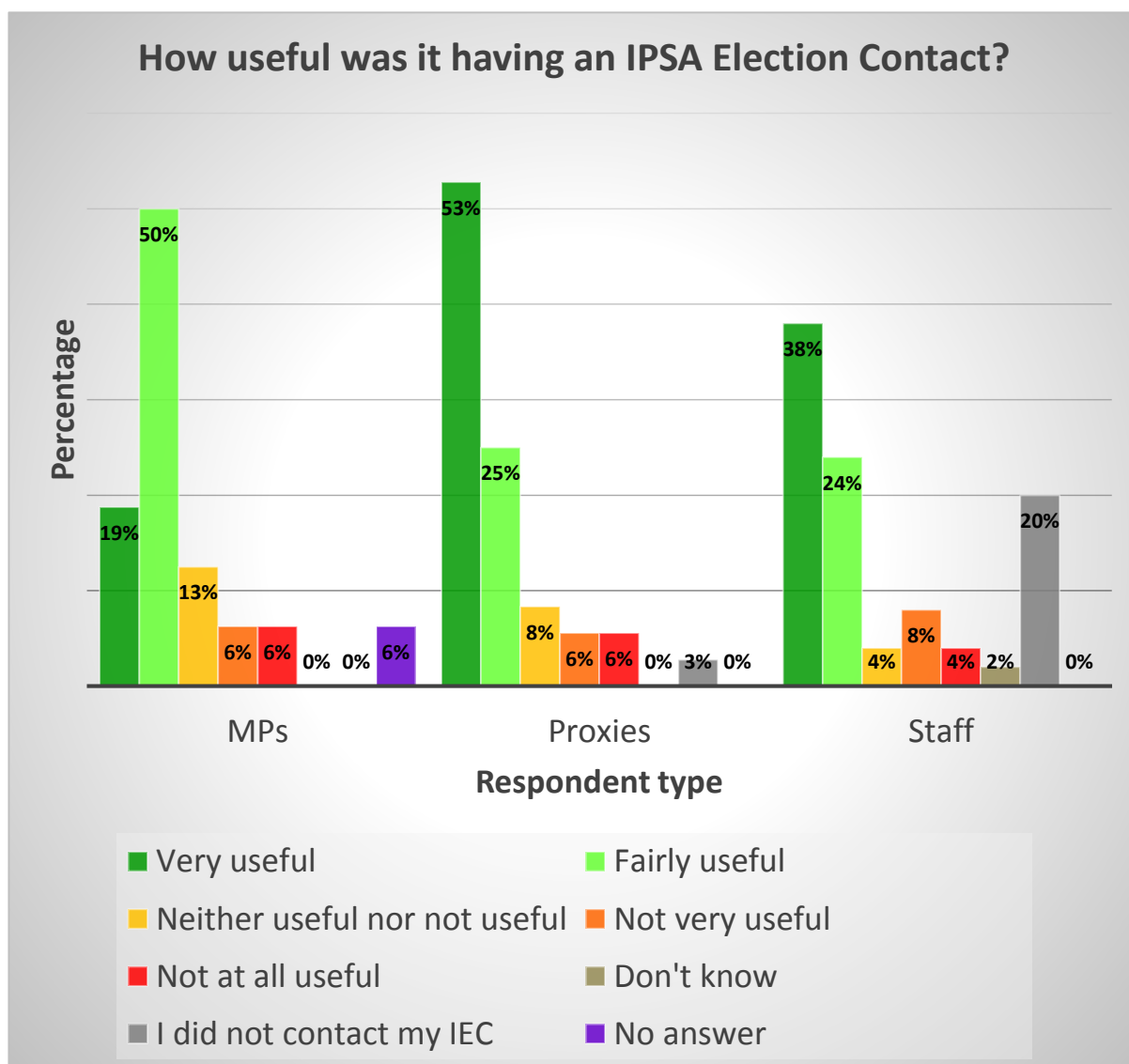
- 69% of new MPs who responded said they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* with the introduction and service provided by IPSA at the NMRA, with 19% telling us that they were either *Fairly dissatisfied* or *Very dissatisfied*.

### *IECs – IPSA Election Contacts*

We also asked new MPs and their proxies how useful they found having a single point of contact (an IEC) in IPSA to manage their account. IECs were assigned to MPs but were contactable by their proxies and staff members as delegated by individual MPs.

- 69% of new MPs said they found having an IEC either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. Only 12% of new MPs told us that they found having an IEC either *Not very useful* or *not at all useful*.
- Responses from the proxies of new MPs were even more positive. 78% of proxies said they found having an IEC either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. As with new MPs, 12% of proxies of new MPs told us that they found having an IEC either *Not very useful* or *not at all useful*.
- 62% of staff members working for new MPs told us that they found having an IEC either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. Again, 12% told us that they found having an IEC either *Not very useful* or *not at all useful*.

***n.b.*** 20% of staff members working for new MPs told us that they had no contact with an IEC, compared to 0% and 3% for new MPs and the proxies of new MPs respectively.



#### One-to-one training and IPSA's roadshows

IPSA IECs provided one-to-one training to new MPs to guide them in relations to IPSA's systems, processes, and the regulations. Training was also available to proxies and staff. IPSA also held a series of roadshow events outside London in the Summer of 2015 to provide training and guidance on the Scheme.

- 25% of new MPs told us that they found the training and roadshows either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. 31% however informed us that they found the training and roadshows either *Not very useful* or *Not at all useful*.
- Proxies of new MPs were notably more positive. 56% of proxies said that they found the training and roadshows either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. 11% informed us that they found the training and roadshows either *Not very useful* or *Not at all useful*.

- Staff members working for new MPs were similarly positive. 40% said that they found the training and roadshows either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. 14% of staff informed us that they found the training and roadshows either *Not very useful* or *Not at all useful*.

**n.b.** 38% of new MPs told us that they had not attended one-to-one training or a roadshow, compared to 17% and 36% for proxies of new MPs and staff working for new MPs respectively.

### *The Scheme*

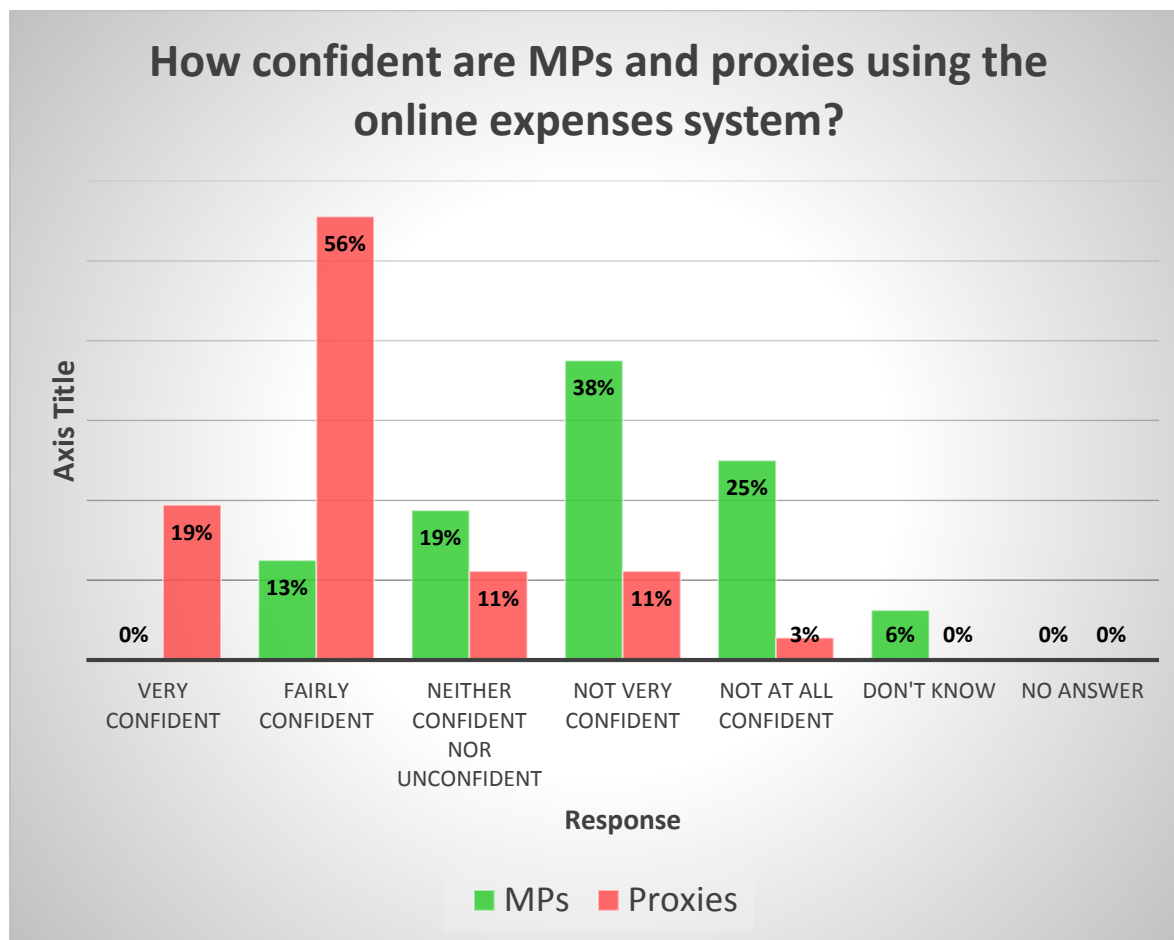
Having been offered training and guidance from IECs at IPSA, we asked new MPs and their proxies how confident they felt in understanding the MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses and what can be claimed.

- 25% of new MPs told us that they felt either *Very confident* or *Fairly confident*. 44% told us that they felt either *Not very confident* or *Not at all confident*.
- Proxies were significantly more positive. 78% of proxies of new MPs stated they felt that either *Very confident* or *Fairly confident*. Only 8% of proxies told us that they felt *Not very confident* and 0% of proxies told us that they felt *Not at all confident*.

### *The online expenses system*

We asked new MPs and their proxies, having been offered training on the online expenses system, how confident they were in using the system to submit claims for reimbursement and to reconcile the IPSA payment card.

- 13% of new MPs told us that they felt *Fairly confident*, with 0% stating that they felt *Very confident*. A notably larger 63% told us that they felt either *Not very confident* or *Not at all confident*.
- Proxies differed markedly. 75% of proxies for new MPs told us that they felt either *Very confident* or *Fairly confident*. 14% stated that they felt either *Not very confident* or *Not at all confident*.



#### Literature and training manuals

We asked new MPs and their proxies how useful they found the literature and training manuals that we gave them either at the NMRA or during a one-to-one training session.

- 31% of new MPs told us that they found these materials *Fairly useful*, with 0% telling us that they found them *Very useful*. 25% of new MPs stated that they found them either *Not very useful* or *Not at all Useful*.
- Proxies were more positive, with 48% of proxies of new MPs telling us that they found the materials either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. Just 6% of proxies told us that they found the literature and training manuals *Not very useful* and 0% told us they found them *Not at all useful*.

#### Returning MPs

##### Information during dissolution

During the dissolution period prior to the 2015 General Election, IPSA provided information to MPs, their proxies, and staff on issues surrounding what could be claimed, MPs' salaries, and the services and support offered by IPSA during the period.

We asked MPs who served in the 2010-2015 Parliament and who were re-elected in 2015, their proxies, and their staff how useful they found this information.

- 65% of returning MPs told us that they found the information and guidance either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. 14% said they found it either *Not very useful* or *Not at all useful*.
- Proxies were even more positive with 83% telling us that they found the information and guidance either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. Only 8% of proxies of returning MPs said that they found it either *Not very useful* or *Not at all useful*.
- Results from staff members were also positive with 70% stating that they found the information and guidance either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*. 14% of staff said that they found it either *Not very useful* or *Not at all useful*.

### *Drop-in sessions*

After the election IPSA ran a series of face-to-face drop-in sessions on the Parliamentary estate for returning MPs to ask questions and seek any guidance they may need. We asked returning MPs, their proxies, and their staff to tell us how useful they found these sessions.

- 75% of returning MPs, 80% of their proxies, and 89% of their staff members informed us that they had not attended a drop-in session
- Of those who did attend, 29% of MPs, 53% of their proxies, and 33% of their staff said that they found the sessions either *Very useful* or *Fairly useful*.
- Of those who did attend, 28% of MPs, 20% of their proxies, and 41% of their staff said that they found the sessions either *Not very useful* or *Not at all useful*.

### Departing MPs

We invited responses from MPs who left Parliament as a consequence of the 2015 General Election, including those who stood down voluntarily. Unfortunately we did not receive any responses from departing MPs or their staff. One proxy did respond, but this single response cannot serve as a basis for analysis. Please see Annex C1 for further reference.

### Further feedback

We asked new MPs, their proxies, and their staff to provide further comments about the service and information that they received from IPSA. We also asked them to tell us in their view ways in which we can improve. This option was also open to departing MPs, their proxies, and their staff.

We received 52 responses to this question. Below we set out a sample of the responses. For a full list please see Annex C2.

*I was supported over the phone by the MP liaison which I found very helpful indeed*

– A new MP's proxy

*The induction session early on is good. However, I think there would be a strong case for seminars or one to one sessions after return following summer recess. A lot of the stuff you can't really understand or get to grips with until you have actually tried using it*

– A new MP

*It was great having a single point of contact in the first few months but I find the system complex and occasionally we seem to get conflicting advice*

– A new MP

*The key source of help was my named contact. This was very helpful indeed. I would really recommend that IPSA adopted this approach permanently, so that MPs know who to contact with any queries. Also there should be a way to feed in problems with the current system that MPs are facing for IPSA to then consider independently*

– A new MP

*I think the system is very poor and would benefit from an overhaul*

– A new MP's proxy

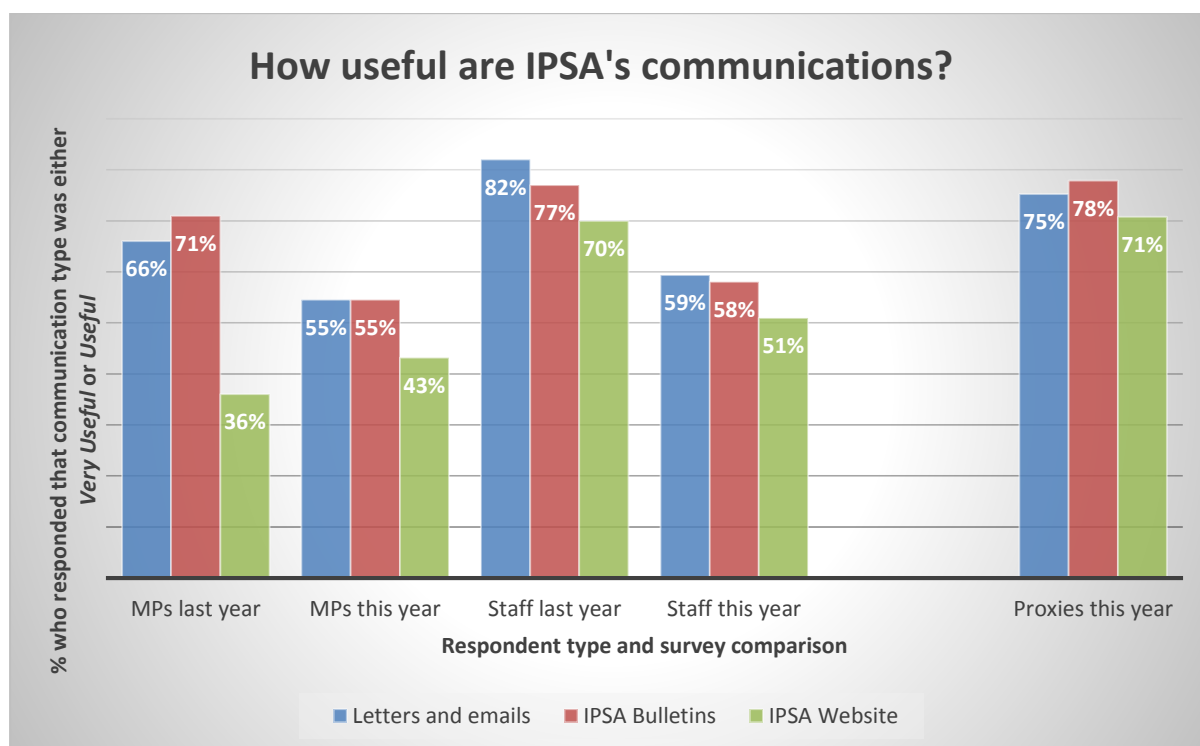


## The year overall - Advice and guidance from IPSA

The feedback from MPs, their proxies, and their staff on IPSA’s communications has been mixed. With regard to MPs this year, letters, emails, and bulletins are all perceived to be less useful than last year. However, MPs responded more positively this year to the usefulness of information on IPSA’s website compared to last.

Information in IPSA’s letters, emails, bulletins, and IPSA’s website were all rated as less useful by staff this year compared to last, though a majority of staff members continued to assess them as being either *Very useful* or *Useful*.

Proxies, on the whole, rated highly the usefulness of letters, emails, bulletins, and information on IPSA’s website. The new distinction we are making between proxies (who this year generally rated highly the usefulness of communications) and other staff may indicate why responses from staff this year were slightly less positive than last year.



## Usefulness of information from IPSA (IPSA-initiated contact) – some comparisons

### *Letters and emails*

- When asked to rate the usefulness of the letters and emails sent to them by IPSA, 55% of MPs described them as *Very useful* or *Useful*, down from 66% last year. Dissatisfaction is also down for MPs: 23% of MPs rated information that we provide through letters and emails as either *Not very useful* or *Not at all Useful*, down from 29% last year.
- MPs' staff were slightly more positive than MPs: 59% of them described the letters and emails as *Very useful* or *Useful*, though this was down from 82% last year. Unlike MPs however there was a rise in dissatisfaction. 15% said they were either *Not very useful* or *Not at all useful*, up from just 10% last year.
- 75% of proxies surveyed rated IPSA's letters and emails as being either *Very useful* or *Useful*; higher than both MPs and staff. Just 8% of proxies described our letters and emails as either *Not very useful* or *Not useful at all*, a significantly lower proportion than the result from both MPs and ordinary staff for this year.

More concise and more direct information would be useful. ...useful information I have gained from IPSA would be from over the phone - which has taken often more than one phone call to establish, and when meeting IPSA advisors face to face at training.

An MP's staff member

### *Bulletins*

IPSA regularly emails bulletins to all MPs, their proxies, and their staff.

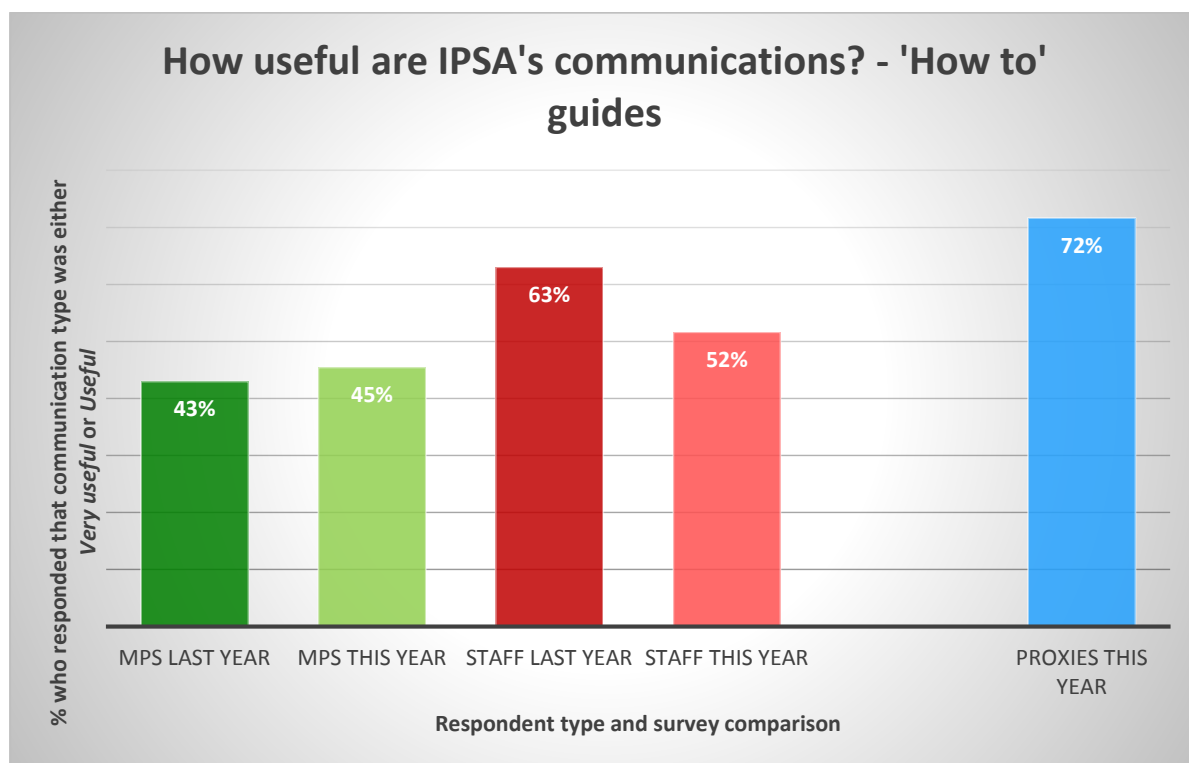
- When asked to rate the usefulness of these bulletins, 55% of MPs described them as either *Very useful* or *Useful*, down from 71% last year. Dissatisfaction is also down: 19% of MPs said they were *Not very useful* or *Not useful at all*, compared to 26% last year.
- Again, MPs' staff were more positive: 58% described the bulletins as either *Very useful* or *Useful*. However this was down from 77% last year. Dissatisfaction stayed much the same: 13% of staff said they were either *Not very useful* or *Not useful at all*, with last year's figure being 14%.
- Proxies were the most positive group, with 78% describing bulletins as either *Very useful* or *Useful*. 9% of proxies described IPSA's bulletins as either *Not very useful* or *Not at all useful*.

*IPSA's website*

- MPs were more positive about information on IPSA's website than they were last year. 43% of MPs described it as either *Very useful* or *Useful*, up from 36% last year. 18% of them described information on the website as either *Not very useful* or *Not useful at all*; this figure was a much higher 49% last year.
- MPs' staff were more positive, but their ratings fell compared with last year. 51% said that the website's information was either *Very useful* or *Useful*, down from 70% last year. Dissatisfaction stayed much the same: 15% of staff this year described the website's information as either *Not very useful* or *Not useful at all* compared to 23% last year.
- Proxies were even more positive, with 71% of proxies surveyed describing information on the website as either *Very useful* or *Useful*. Only 7% of proxies described it as either *Not very useful* or *Not useful at all*.

*IPSA's 'How to' guides*

We publish 'How to' guides on IPSA's website for use by MPs, their proxies, and their staff to support them in their work with IPSA's systems and processes. These include guides on making claims online and advice on managing cash flow in an MP's office.



- MPs were slightly more positive this year in their assessment of the usefulness of information provided in 'How to' guides. 45% of MPs said that they were either *Very useful* or *Useful* compared to 43% last year.
- Staff members were less positive this year with 52% saying that the information in 'How to' guides was either *Very useful* or *Useful* compared to 63% last year.
- Again, proxies' responses were the most positive. 72% of proxies described the information in 'How to' guides as either *Very useful* or *Useful*.

### Speed of IPSA's response

MPs and staff were asked how satisfied they are with the speed of response from IPSA when they contacted us. This year, to reduce the amount of time needed to respond to the survey, we asked respondents to rate the speed of our replies overall, rather than referring separately to letters, emails, and phone calls.

#### *Responses by letters, email, and telephone*

- MPs' views differ strongly. 38% of MPs questioned said that they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* with the speed of IPSA's responses over the last year (or in the case of new MPs, since the May General Election). 34% of MPs said that they were either *Fairly dissatisfied* or *Very dissatisfied*.
- Amongst MPs' staff the results were slightly less negative: 38% said that they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* and 25% said that they were either *Fairly dissatisfied* or *Very dissatisfied*.
- Proxies' results were once again the most positive. 60% of proxies said they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied*. 22% said that they were either *Fairly dissatisfied* or *Very dissatisfied*, notably lower than the other two respondent groups.

In 2014-15, we answered 94% of emails within our target of 5 working days, an improvement on 92.9% in the previous year.

We also measure our speed of response when answering telephone calls. In 2014-15, we answered 81.5% of calls to our Information Line within our target of 20 seconds, an improvement on 66.1% in the previous year.

## Helpfulness of contact with IPSA when contact initiated by an MP or MP's office

We know that advice on the Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses is a very important aspect of the support that we provide to MPs and staff.

### *Letters and emails*

- When asked how helpful their contact with IPSA was, when they initiated contact by letter or email, 52% of MPs said it was either *Very helpful* or *Fairly helpful*, up from 49% last year. 23% said it was either *Not very helpful* or *Not at all helpful*, down from 38% last year.
- Amongst staff, 35% said advice in letter and emails was either *Very helpful* or *Fairly helpful*, down from 66% last year. 22% said it was either *Not very helpful* or *Not at all helpful*, unchanged from last year.
- Proxies' responses were again very positive. 62% of proxies said letter and email advice was either *Very helpful* or *Fairly helpful*. 23% described them as either *Not very helpful* or *Not at all helpful*.

### *Phone*

- MPs described the advice they received over the phone as less helpful than last year: 48% said it was *Very helpful* or *Fairly helpful*, compared to 71% last year. 30% of MPs said the advice was either *Not very helpful* or *Not at all helpful*, up from 23% last year.
- 48% of MPs' staff described their contact over the phone with IPSA as either *Very helpful* or *Fairly helpful*, down from 78% last year. 17% said it was either *Not very helpful* or *Not at all helpful*, compared to 14% last year.
- Proxies' responses were once again much more positive. 80% of proxies described their contact over the phone with IPSA as either *Very helpful* or *Fairly helpful*. Only 10% of proxy responses said that advice over the telephone was either *Not very helpful* or *Not at all helpful*.

### *Face-to-face meeting with IPSA*

43% of MPs, 37% of staff, and 44% of proxies who responded have had a face-to-face meeting with a member of staff at IPSA in the last year. Of those who have:

- 63% of MPs said that it was either *Very helpful* or *Fairly helpful*, up from 62% last year. 27% said it was either *Not very helpful* or *Not at all helpful*.

- 62% of the staff described face-to-face meetings as either *Very helpful* or *Fairly helpful*, lower than the 84% last year. 21% said that they were either *Not very helpful* or *Not at all helpful*.
- Proxies rated face-to-face contact the most highly, with 82% rating it as either *Very helpful* or *Fairly helpful*. Only 14% said it was either *Not very helpful* or *Not at all helpful*.

“A permanent named contact would be a helpful innovation.”

An MP newly elected in 2015

### How can IPSA improve its guidance?


IPSA asked MPs, their proxies, and their staff how we could improve the information and guidance that we offer them.

Answers were given in a free text field. Of the 74 responses to this question, the answers broadly fell into the following categories:

Suggestion	Percentage of responses*
Respond to emails more quickly/improve quality of responses	39%
Give more accurate, consistent and clear information	30%
Thanks to IPSA for usefulness of Information Line	11%
Non-specific grievance/request for improvement	7%
Improvements to online expenses system by, e.g.: more detailed information on claim forms, simpler log-in arrangements etc.	5%
Improvements to website, e.g.: easier navigation and clearer structure to find forms	4%
Staff at IPSA require more training	4%
Request for more flexibility in relation to rules/simplified rules	4%
Assign a named person to deal with queries on a permanent basis, not just at election times.	4%
Explore methods of communication other than email/telephone.	3%
Extend the Information Line opening hours	3%
Thanks to IPSA for IPSA Election Contact (IEC) programme	1%

Improve the methodology of this survey	1%
Give more proxy-style access to staff members	1%
Request for more face-to-face contact e.g.: presence within the Parliamentary Estate, constituency presence	1%
More direct payment options	1%
“Don’t know”	1%

\**n.b.* some responses contained a number of suggestions, as such that the percentages in the right hand column add up to more than 100%

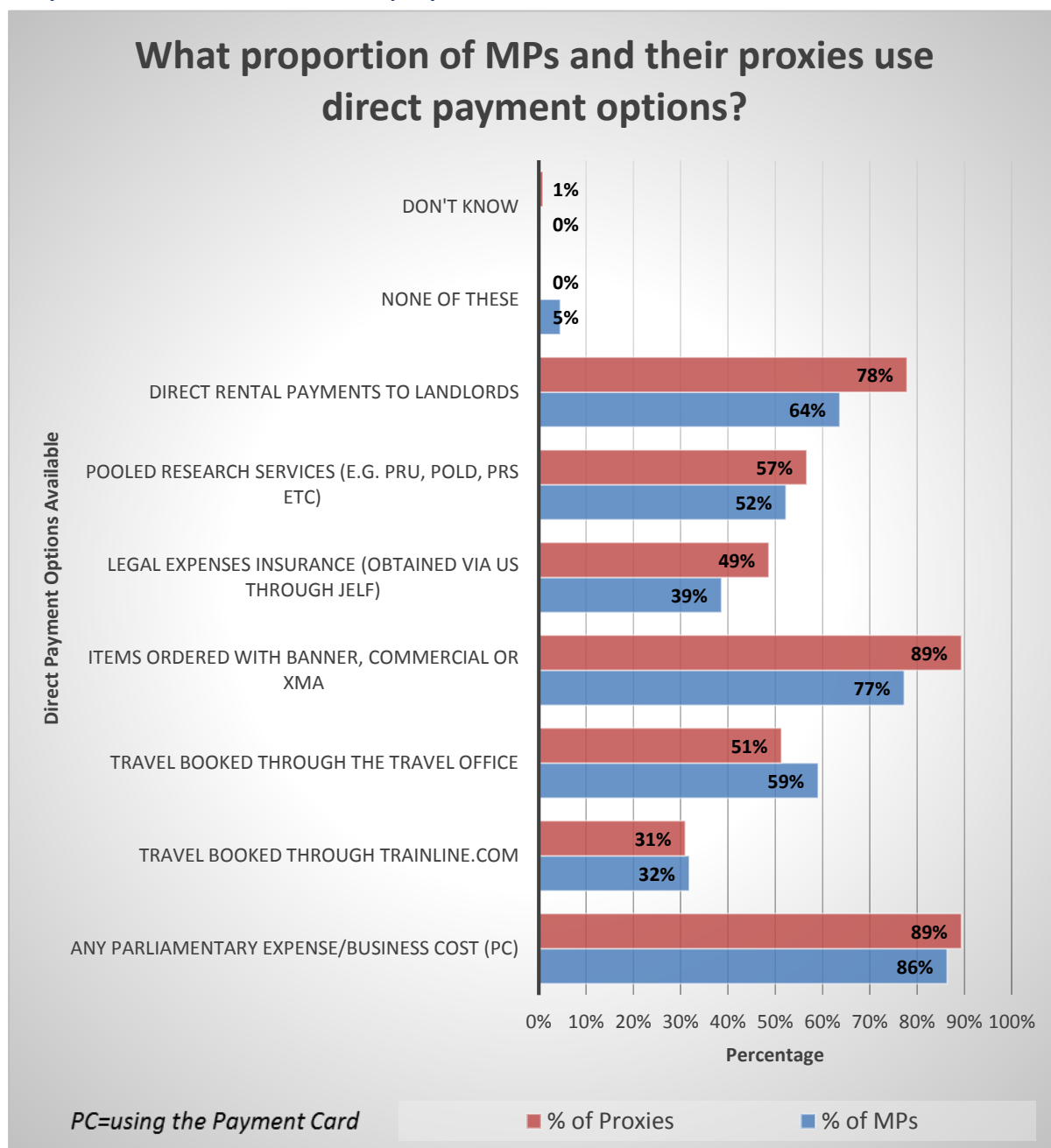


Emails to IPSA normally have to be followed up with a telephone call for them to be picked up. But the support given over the telephone has been great.

An MP’s proxy



## Payment card and direct payments



MPs are provided with a credit card, the IPSA Payment Card, to pay for many costs directly. They can also, for example, buy train tickets and stationery through specific websites where IPSA pays the bill directly. This removes the need for MPs to incur a personal cost whilst maintaining the system of claims being paid on the basis of evidence. In our survey, we asked MPs and their proxies<sup>1</sup> which direct payment options they used. The payment card and direct payment options for MPs business costs are widely used; only 5% of MPs said

<sup>1</sup> We only asked MPs and their proxies, as the majority of MPs' staff do not have access to direct payment facilities.




they did not use any options for direct payment, down slightly from 7% in 2014. All proxies have used direct payment options.

The IPSA Payment Card can now be used to pay for any claimable expense or cost allowable under the MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses. So, this year we did not ask MPs about which costs they used the Payment Card for, but only concerned ourselves with their use of the card overall.


- 86% of MPs and 89% of their proxies have used the IPSA Payment Card to pay for an allowable expense or business cost.
- 32% of MPs booked train tickets directly on the TrainLine website, down from 36% last year. 31% of proxies have done the same.
- 77% of MPs bought stationery directly from Banner, Commercial or XMA, up from 61% last year. The proportion of proxies who have done so is 89%.
- 39% bought their legal expenses insurance directly from Jelf, up from 31% last year. For proxies the figure was 49%.
- 52% of MPs paid directly for pooled research services, e.g. the PRU or PRS, up from 43% last year. The proportion for MPs' proxies was 57%.
- 64% made direct payments to landlords for accommodation or office rent, up from 48% last year. 78% of proxies have done the same on behalf of MPs.

An increasing number of MPs are using the direct payment options available to them. Using the payment card and other direct payment services, MPs are able to pay directly for all business costs incurred as part of their parliamentary duties (with the exception of mileage claims). In the 2014-15 financial year, 60% of MPs' costs and expenses that could be paid directly, were paid directly. This figure is down from 65% for the 2013-14 financial year. In the first three quarters of the current financial year 2015-16, however, this has risen to 66%.



There is an issue with some suppliers not accepting payment by card via the proxy, only via the MP

An MP's proxy



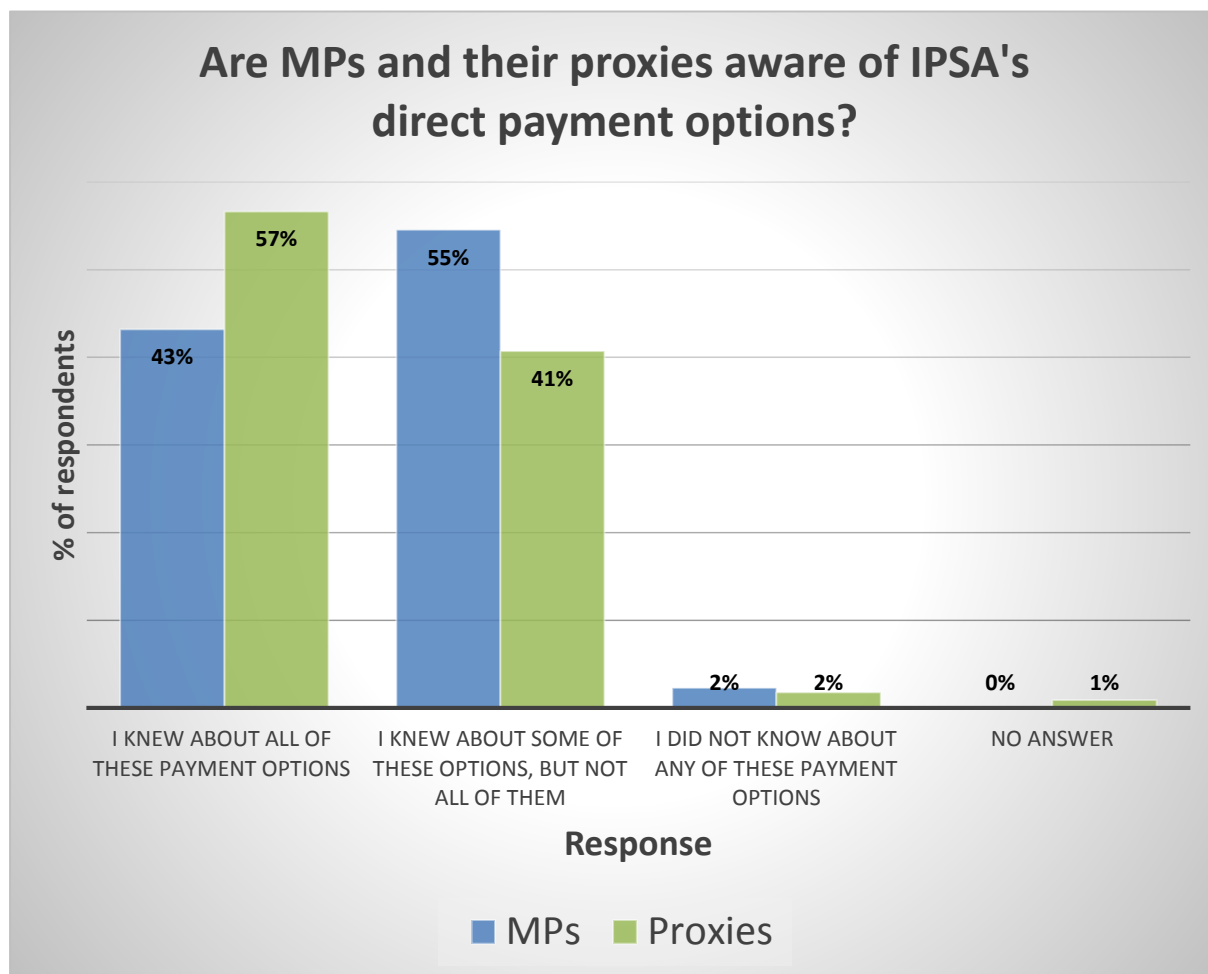
IPSA asked MPs and their staff how we could help them to make the most of the payment card and direct payments. Of the 84 responses to this question, the answers broadly fell within the following categories:

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Percentage of all responses</b>
Open up the direct payment/payment card facilities to more expenses and business costs	51%
Resolve issues with/ make improvements to existing direct payment facilities	11%
Provide additional IPSA payment cards for use by proxies/staff	10%
Provide a Direct Debit facility to pay suppliers (e.g. utility companies).	7%
Provide a full list of costs and expenses that can be paid using the payment card/direct payment	2%
Provide training to staff and/or MPs	2%
Other (e.g. expression of non-specific grievance, no comments for improvement, specific personal complaint).	21%

Specific services that MPs and staff would like to be able to use/pay for using the payment card or direct payment facilities included:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cellhire/mobile phones</li> <li>• Surgery costs</li> <li>• A BACS payment facility</li> <li>• Stationery services</li> <li>• Contactless “tap in” and “tap out” for Transport for London services</li> <li>• PayPal services</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council tax (some mentioned that their local Council does not accept credit cards)</li> <li>• Refreshments (this expense was previously allowable under IPSA rules but as of this year is not)</li> <li>• Printing services</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

We asked MPs and proxies how aware they were of IPSA's various direct payment options.



## Completing claims

### Hours per month spent making claims for costs and expenses

We asked MPs and their proxies how many hours on average they spend per month making claims on the online system for business costs and expenses. The results were as follows:

Average length of time per month spent making claims.	Percentage of respondents
Between 0 and 2 hours	10%
Between 2 and 4 hours	16%
Between 4 and 6 hours	13%
Between 6 and 8 hours	8%
Between 8 and 10 hours	7%
10+ hours	24%
Non-quantifiable answer or n/a	21%

## How this compares to last year

We asked MPs and their proxies how they felt the amount of time they had spent making claims this year compared to last year.

Excluding those who said the question was *Not applicable* (39% of MPs), MPs' responses were largely neutral. 7% of MPs said they spent *Much more time now* making claims compared to last year (no MPs selected the option *Somewhat more time now*.) 34% of MPs said they spent *About the same amount of time* this year compared to last. 11% of MPs said that they spend *Somewhat less time now* or *Much less time now* compared to last year.

Proxies' responses were more positive, though, like MPs, a significant portion said this question was not applicable to them (31%). Just 5% of proxies said that they spent either *Much more time now* or *Somewhat more time now* making claims compared to last year. 31% of proxies stated that they spent *About the same amount of time* this year compared to last, with 25% saying that they spent *Somewhat less time now* or *Much less time now* compared to last year.

## Time recorded on Expense@Work

We can also compare what MPs and their proxies/staff reported about their time spent making claims with the time that we have recorded that they spend on our online system, Expenses@Work.

The average MP or proxy spent 24 minutes 7 seconds per week on the Expenses@Work system in the last financial year (2014-15), a fall from 31 minutes 51 seconds in 2013-14. So far this financial year, that amount of time has gone down again slightly: the average MP or proxy spent 23 minutes 52 seconds per week on the system.

Time spent on the Expenses@Work system is not the only time that MPs or their staff will spend making claims for business costs and expenses. They will spend time collating and sending in their receipts to IPSA, reconciling their payment card and checking expenses against the Scheme, amongst other things.

## The online expenses system: ease of use

We asked MPs and their proxies how easy they find the online expenses system to use.

19% of MPs said they found the system either *Very easy* or *Fairly easy* to use, down from 33% last year. 46% told us that they found the system either *Fairly difficult* or *Very difficult* to use, up from 39% in the previous year.

MPs' proxies were more positive: more than half (55%) of them said they find the system either *Very easy* or *Fairly easy* to use. 25% find it either *Fairly difficult* or *Very difficult*.

### The online expenses system: usefulness of reports

We asked MPs and their proxies to tell us how useful they find being able to produce reports on the online system detailing how much they have spent on various budgets.

A large majority of MPs, 61%, agreed that *Yes, this is useful*. Only 9% thought that the reporting functions of the online system were not useful. 27% said that they had never used the facility.

An even larger majority of proxies, 75%, agreed that *Yes, this is useful* as regards online reports. 12% disagreed and stated it was not useful, with 20% telling us that they had never used the report function.

### The online expenses system: ideas for change

We asked MPs and their staff what changes they would like to see to the online expenses system. Of the 93 responses to this question, these were the most common answers:

Response	Percentage of all responses
Improve the report functions: make clearer, more up to date/real time display of data, provide more training and guidance on how to run them.	27%
Improve the online expenses system: it is slow, cumbersome, contains glitches, not user-friendly, and complicated – implement measures to fix this	24%
Change the current arrangements for printing and posting claim forms (e.g. be able to print directly rather than convert to PDF, submit claims online)	11%
Give more guidance on the budget and categories of claims to explain the difference between them and make it simpler to decide which category to choose	4%
Improve the interface	4%
Introduce the ability to complete claim forms in offline mode/autosave forms if connection lost	3%
Set up payments directly to proxies and staff members for Office Cost claims, similar to staff travel reimbursements.	2%
Greater access for proxies (e.g. ability to view staff budget reports)	2%
Improve the validation process (e.g. clearer notes, returning single lines rather than entire forms)	2%
No improvements suggested	6%

Some of the other suggestions and comments that MPs and staff made about the online expenses system included:

- “Allow proxy to run monthly staffing reports, MP doesn't have the time to do it and as proxy can't do [sic].”
- “When expenses need breaking down further, a prompt to suggest this - otherwise, they are sent back and the whole process starts again.”
- “It would be very helpful to have the original claim ref. number detailed next to the items in the budget reports.”
- “As well as being able to clearly see and access current forms, I would like to be able to see a list of all submitted forms - those currently in progress and those already approved.”

### Explanatory notes when returning claims

When there are errors in claims submitted to IPSA or when further information is required in order to validate a claim, IPSA’s validators write an explanatory note to get the information they need or explain a decision. This note is then sent to the MP or their proxy.

We asked MPs and proxies about these returned claims and explanatory notes. 79% of respondents had had at least one claim returned to them with an explanatory note, up from 69% last year. Feedback on how clear explanatory notes are was divided, with 43% of MPs telling us they were clear, and 36% saying that they were not clear.

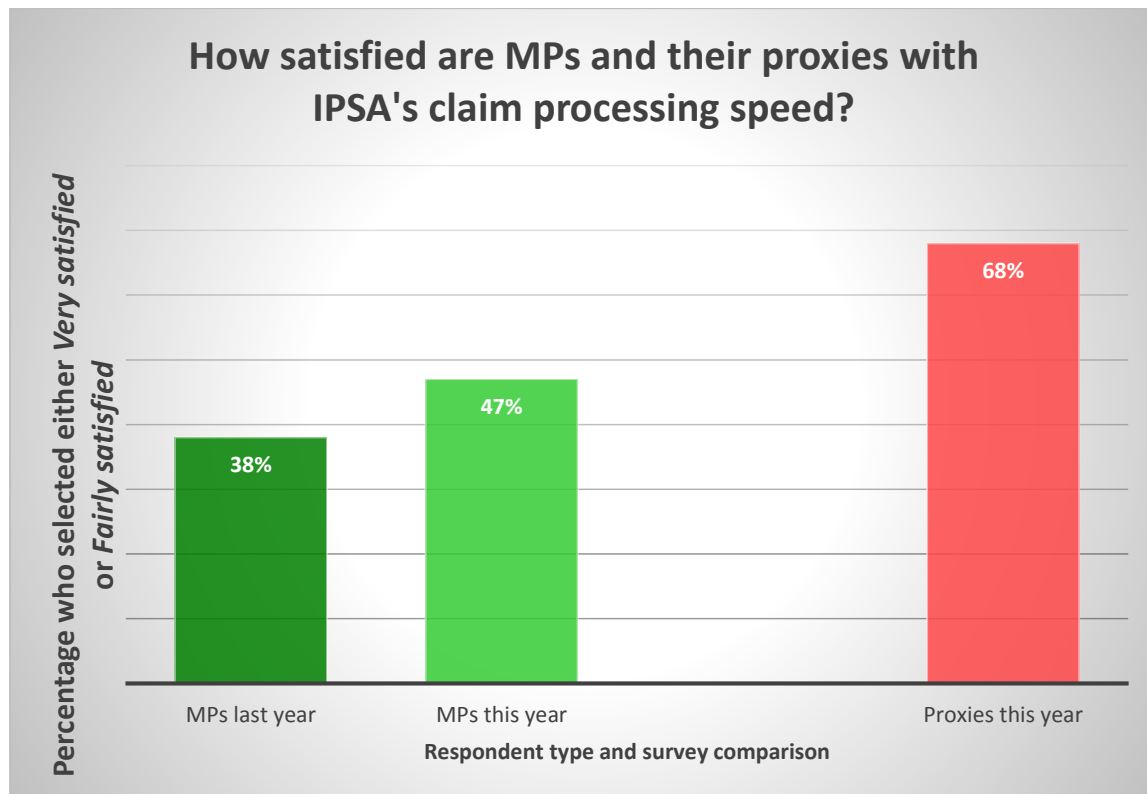
We asked MPs and their staff if they had any comments to make about the explanatory notes IPSA sent them when returning a claim. Of the 65 responses we received, these were the most common answers:

Response	Percentage of all responses
Notes attached to returned claims are generally unclear/unhelpful and/or require further clarification and instructions from IPSA	28%
There is a lack of consistency and uniformity in IPSA’s notes; MP or proxy has had contradictory advice through explanatory notes, or some claims accepted then identical claims rejected	22%
IPSA sends notes which have not taken into account the MP’s/proxy’s own notes.	8%
IPSA takes too long to send notes requesting further information from the MP	6%
Notes should also be sent as an email to the MP/proxy	6%
Notes do not explain adequately which types of expense should be used when resubmitting a claim.	5%

## Processing claims by IPSA

We asked MPs and their staff about how IPSA processes claims for business costs and expenses. We asked respondents to tell us how satisfied they were with the speed and quality of the processing of claims.

### Speed



In terms of the speed with which claims for business costs and expenses are processed, MPs showed an increase in satisfaction. Last year we asked staff to rate IPSA's speed, but this year we restricted the question to proxies in light of the approach in this survey of distinguishing them from other staff.

47% of MPs were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* with the speed, up from 38% last year. 23% of MPs said they were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*, down from 40% of MPs last year.

68% of proxies were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* with the speed whilst 16% of proxies were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*.

According to statistics held by IPSA, the average claim took 7 days from receipt of evidence for a claim to reimbursement in the last financial year (2014-15), compared with the average of 9 days in the previous year (2013-14). In the first quarter of this financial year (2015-16), the average claim has taken 6 days to be processed. IPSA's target for claims to be reimbursed is 12 working days.

## Quality

In terms of the quality of processing their business costs and expenses claims, this year's results were divided. 43% of MPs said they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied*, slightly down from 46% last year. 32% of MPs were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*, a rise from 24% last year.

Proxies' responses were once again more favourable. 68% said they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied*, with 17% saying they were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*.

We asked MPs and their proxies to explain why they selected their respective ratings of the speed and quality of IPSA's processing claims. Of the 87 responses to this question, the answers broadly fell into the following categories:

On the whole the system has bedded down now with less problems. IPSA staff are always very helpful when I need to ring them.

MP's staff member

Response	Percentage of all responses*
Payments take too long and/or their speed of processing varies between different types of expense	33%
Good performance by IPSA (e.g. fast turnaround, helpful staff, general positive responses)	23%
More information required/better guidance and/or communication requested	22%
Specific personal/circumstantial comments	14%
Recent improvements in IPSA's performance	13%
Loss of documents by IPSA	3%
IPSA's systems are too complicated	3%
Non-specific comments	3%

\*n.b. some responses contained multiple suggestions falling into more than one category. As such the percentages in the rightmost column add to more than 100%



## IPSA's payroll support

We asked respondents about the payroll tools available to MPs through the Online Expenses system, namely the staff budget report and the online staff timesheets. We also asked respondents about the payroll tools available on IPSA's website, namely the job description tool and the staff contract tool. Results for these questions were mixed, with some payroll tools notably more utilised and more popular than others. Qualitative responses suggested that whilst there is widespread appreciation of payroll tools, they can be improved.

### Staffing budget report

As proxies and ordinary staff do not have access, we asked MPs exclusively how satisfied they were with the staff budget report tool. 64% of MPs were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied*, up from 57% last year. 16% were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied* compared to 12% last year,

### Online timesheets

IPSA provides a timesheet facility for use by MPs, their proxies and staff. Here staff can register any overtime for an MP to authorise. 45% of MPs, 57% of proxies, and 66% of staff, however, have not used the tool.

25% of MPs said they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* with the tool compared to 27% last year. 10% said they were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied* compared to 8% last year.


21% of proxies were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied*, with 11% saying they were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*.

Staff were less positive, with 11% saying they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied*, with the same proportion stating they were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*.

### Job Description Tool

We asked respondents their views on the online Job Description Tool where users can make customised job descriptions when MPs are hiring members of staff.

41% of MPs said that they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* with the tool, with 23% being either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*. 16% said they had never used the tool.



[Payroll services] are the best bits about your service. Improve by providing [sic] HR support and advice for MP staff

An MP's staff member



48% of proxies were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* with the tool, with 24% either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*. A smaller percentage than MPs said they had never used the tool; 12%.

41% of ordinary staff have never used the tool. 30% stated that they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* and 14% were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*.

### Staff Contract Tool

We asked respondents their views on the online Staff Contract Tool where users can create contracts for hiring members MPs' staff.

MP feedback was positive, with 48% of MPs surveyed said that they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied* with the contract tool. 18% said they were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*.

57% of proxies said that they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied*, whilst 14% were either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*.

As regards staff members, almost half, 46%, said they had never used the tool. This is not unexpected as most contracts are constructed by MPs as the employer, or by their designated proxies. 32% of staff said they were either *Very satisfied* or *Fairly satisfied*, with 12% either *Very dissatisfied* or *Fairly dissatisfied*.

We also asked MPs and staff how IPSA could improve the payroll support it provides. Of the 119 responses we received, the answers broadly fell within the following categories:

Response	Percentage of all responses*
Improve the online payroll tools (job description tool and contract tool): inflexible and not encompassing enough, difficult to combine job descriptions.	44%
Remedy IT/technical issues: website usability issues, timing out and error difficulties, have the payroll tools integrated with the other IPSA systems	14%
Provide clearer advice: more in-depth information, more timely communication of any changes	14%
Address administrative issues: processing paperwork, responding to emails, loss of documents	9%
Improve the timesheet tool	9%
No improvements needed/general praise	5%
Specific personal/circumstantial comments	5%
Better training for IPSA staff	2%
IPSA to provide HR support to MPs' staff	2%
Non-specific/not applicable/other comments	13%

\**n.b.* some responses contained multiple suggestions falling into more than one category. As such the percentages in the rightmost column add to more than 100%

### MPs' use of business costs and expenses

We asked MPs and their proxies if they had decided **not** to submit a claim over the past year to IPSA for any expenses or business costs, despite believing that they could have been reimbursed. 82% of MPs said they had not in fact claimed for particular expenses in the last 12 months, compared to the 93% of MPs who said the same thing last year. For proxies, the figure was lower at 60%.

The most common reasons that MPs gave for not claiming were:

Reason	Percentage of MPs who gave this reason	Percentage of Proxies who gave this reason
The claim process was too complicated	39%	15%
It was only a small claim	61%	42%
It would take too long	41%	18%
I was not sure if it was claimable	14%	12%
I was concerned about the claim being published	34%	21%
I was worried the claim would be rejected	14%	10%
Don't Know	0%	1%
Other reason	14%	12%

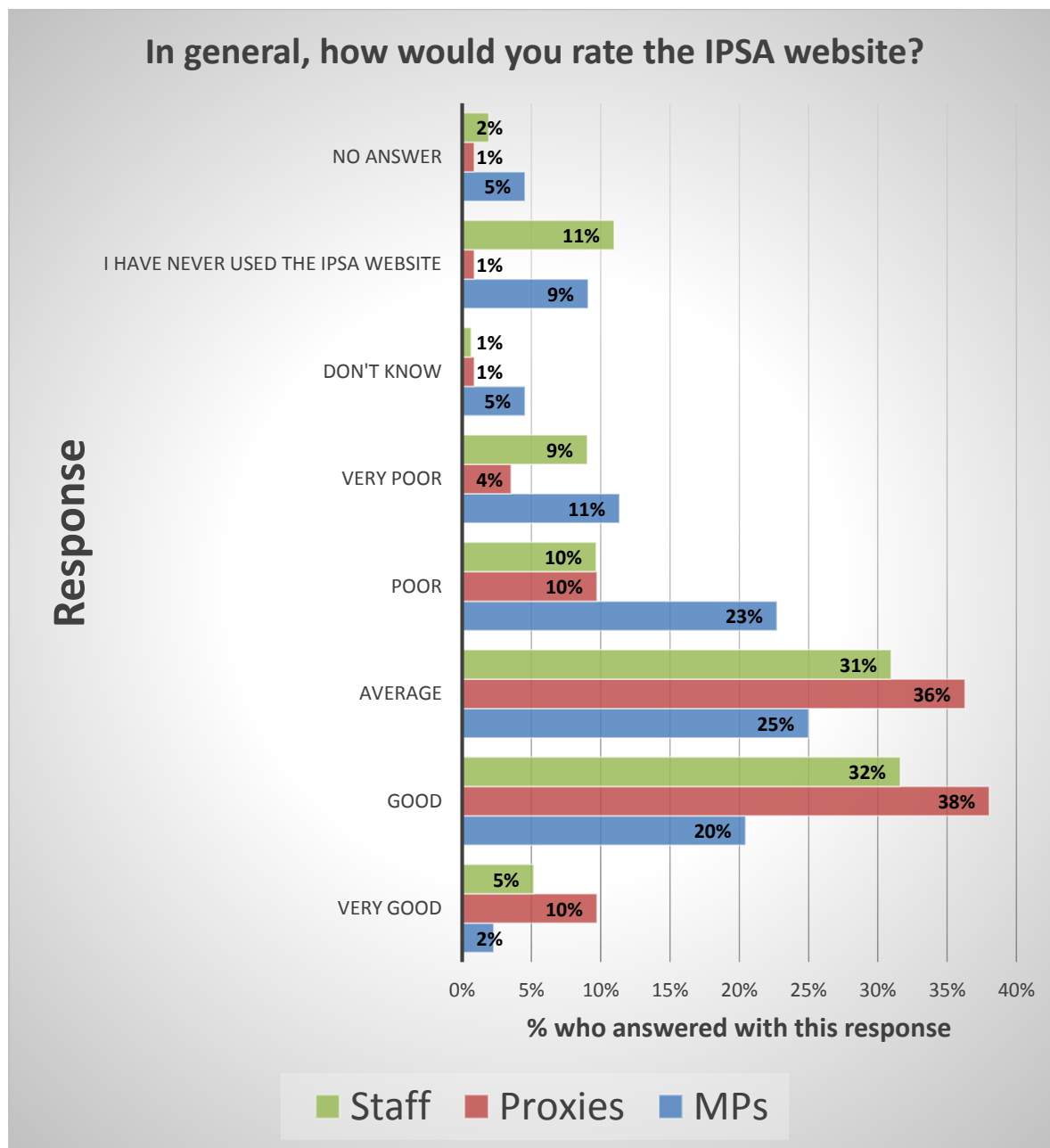
Most MPs and proxies gave a combination of the above reasons. MPs and proxies who gave the answer “Other reason” were asked to explain their answer. More than one respondent cited negative press coverage for small value items as a reason for not submitting a claim and some proxies stated that they and staff had incurred costs themselves but were uncomfortable asking the MP to claim the costs back from IPSA.

### IPSA’s website

Earlier in the survey we asked MPs, their proxies, and their staff to rate the usefulness of information and communications on IPSA’s website presence. We are also interested in gauging the quality of the website as a whole, including its user-friendliness, appearance, and general function and ease of use. Accordingly, as well as asking how useful respondents found information on the website, we also asked respondents to rate IPSA’s website overall.

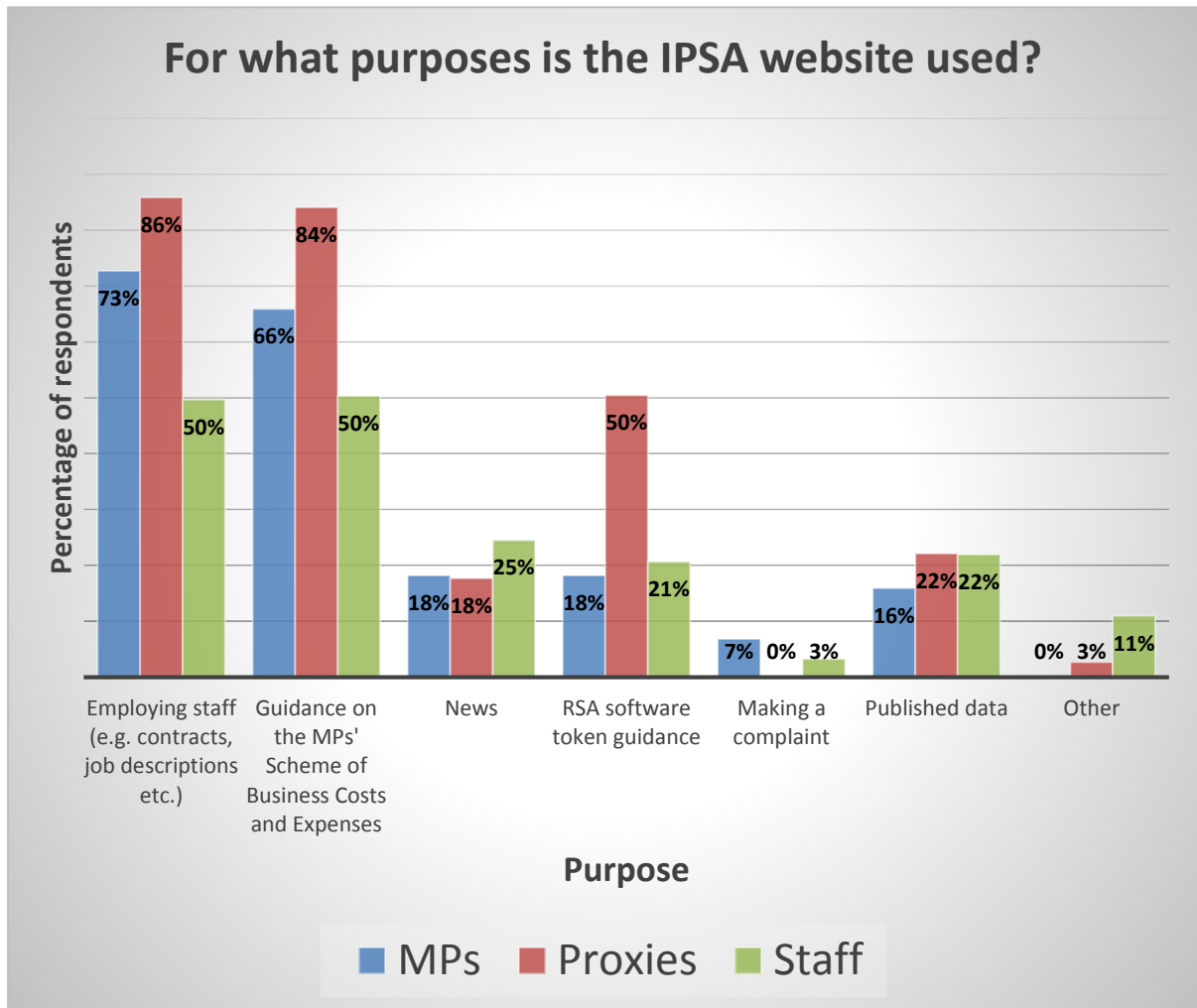
...I did not want to ask the MP for the money back and I cannot make the claim for myself

An MP’s proxy



22% of MPs rated our website as either *Very good* or *Good*, with 34% rating it as either *Very poor* or *Poor*. Proxies were more positive: 48% rated it as either *Very good* or *Good* whilst 14% rated it as either *Very poor* or *Poor*. Staff results were similarly positive, with 37% rating the website overall as either *Very good* or *Good* and 19% rating it as either *Very poor* or *Poor*.

We also asked respondents to tell us for what purposes they used IPSA’s website. The results were:



Some key findings emerge, including that a particularly larger proportion of MPs and proxies than staff use the website for staff employment tools and guidance on the Scheme. A much larger proportion of proxies compared to MPs and staff have used the website for guidance on using an RSA software token. For a detailed breakdown of responses under “other”, see Annex C2.

We asked respondents to tell us further how they thought IPSA's website could be improved. Of the 71 suggestions we received the answers broadly fell within the following categories:

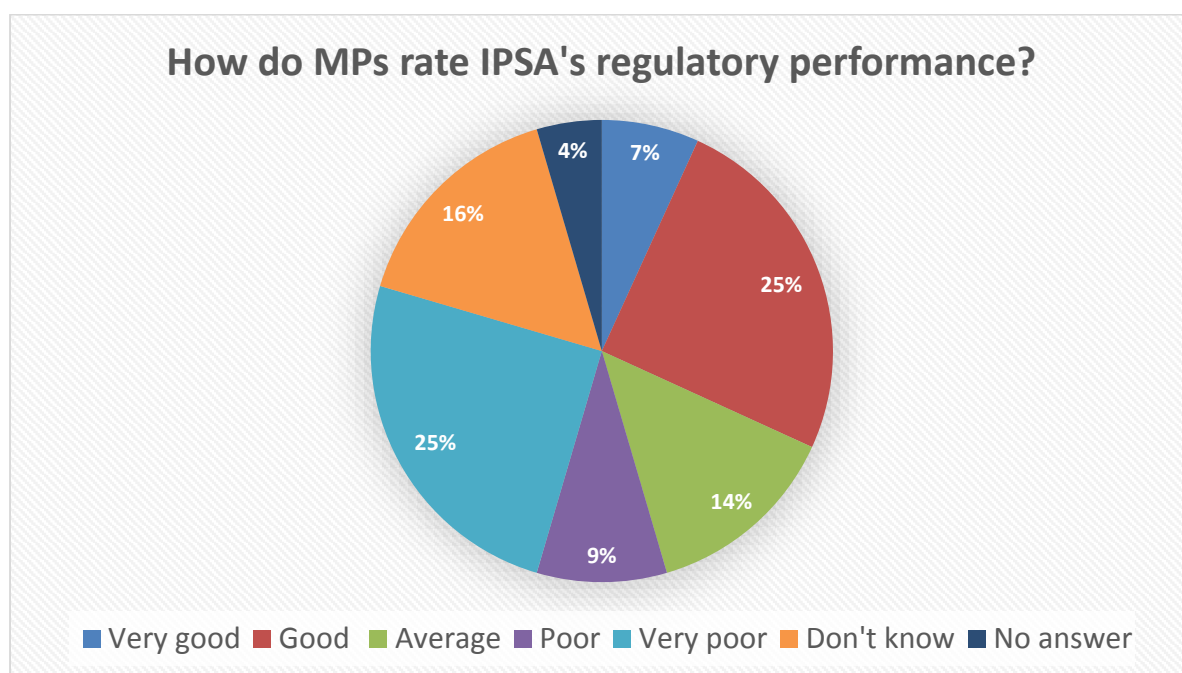
<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Percentage of all responses*</b>
Streamlining: more clear and easy to follow information/a more user friendly interface with easier navigation	58%
Improved categorisation of forms	18%
Improved search tool	11%
Suggestion not applicable/respondent has confused the IPSA website with the Online Expenses System	11%
Improved payroll tools on the website	6%
More information specifically for MPs' staff	4%
Don't know/non-specific comments	4%
Improved aesthetic appearance of the website.	3%
Link to the Online Expenses System on the website	1%
More clearly delineated publication of expenses	1%
More frequent updating of information, forms, and documents	1%

\**n.b.* some responses contained multiple suggestions falling into more than one category. As such the percentages in the rightmost column add to more than 100%.

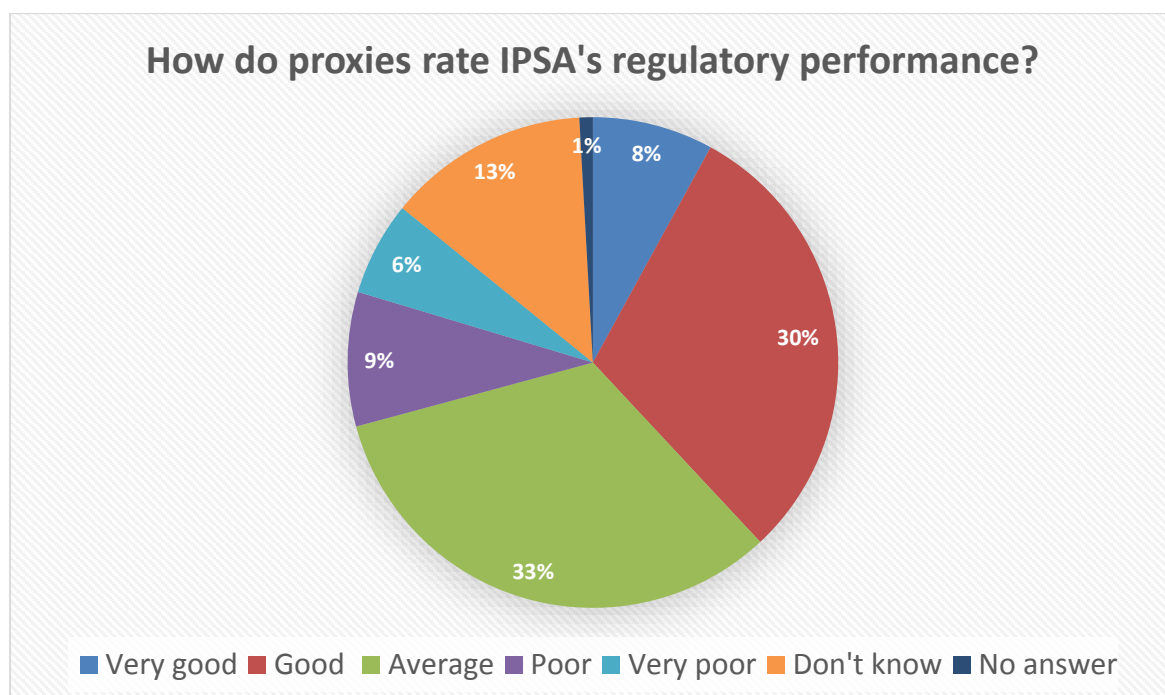
## IPSA's regulatory role

We asked MPs, their proxies, and their staff to rate IPSA's regulatory role, as distinct from the day-to-day support we provide to MPs.

Among MPs, 32% rated IPSA's regulatory performance as either *Very good* or *Good*, a rise from last year's 16%. 34% rated it as either *Poor* or *Very poor* compared to 46% last year.

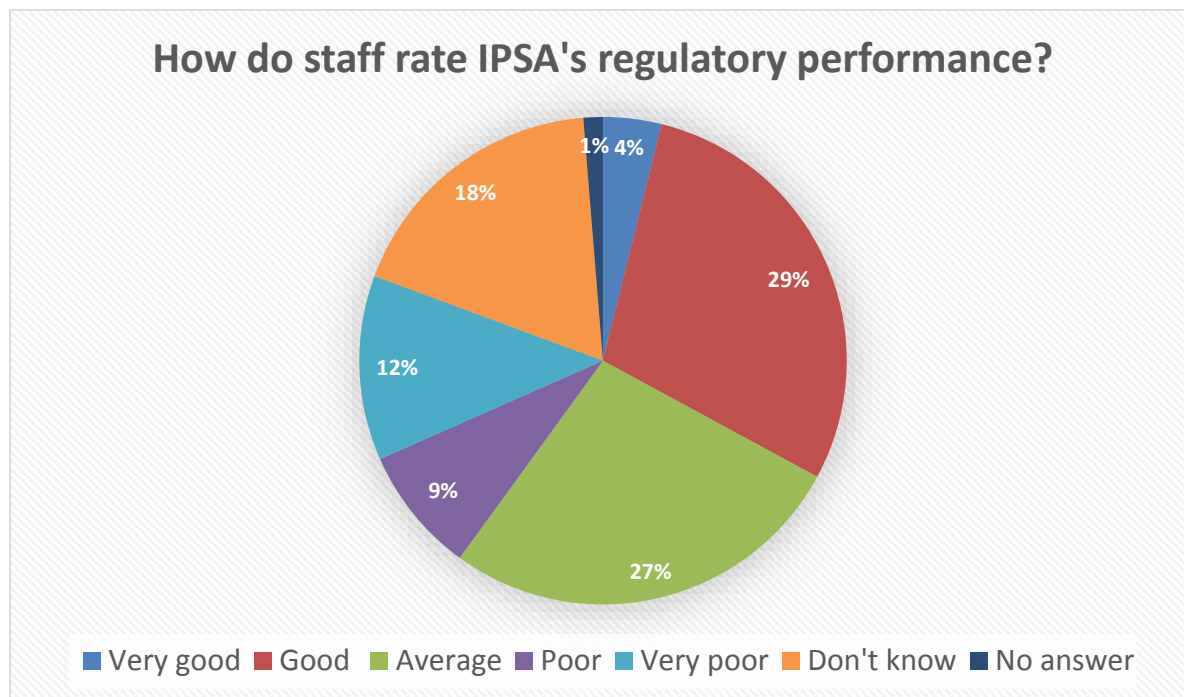


MPs' proxies were slightly more positive – 38% rating IPSA's regulatory role as either *Very good* or *Good*. 15% rated it as either *Poor* or *Very poor*.





Amongst ordinary staff, results were more positive than those from MPs but less than those from proxies. 33% of staff rated IPSA’s regulatory performance as either *Very good* or *Good*, slightly higher than 30% last year. 20% of staff rated IPSA’s performance as either *Poor* or *Very poor*, slightly lower than last year’s 21%.



We asked respondents why they rated IPSA's regulatory role in this way. Of the 69 responses to this question, negative responses included comments surrounding dissatisfaction with the way IPSA managed the adjustment to MPs’ pay this year and a lack of public assurance. Positive responses included comments regarding IPSA’s independence and regulatory success.

You have acted independently of Parliamentary opinions and that is right.

An MP

There is public dissatisfaction at the way in which IPSA handled the MP pay rise.

An MP's staff member

I feel that IPSA treats MPs and their expenses with fairness and understanding.

An MP's proxy

IPSA perform an important job in restoring and building public trust... but I wonder how much effort was taken to resolve the issue of unpaid debts from retired MPs.

An MP

It seems to be good. IPSA have a duty to provide the public with information and they seem to do it well.

An MP's staff member

I think statements to the public from IPSA don't sound neutral enough.

An MP's proxy

## ANNEX A – PERSONAL DATA

The survey did not ask respondents for their personal details and, therefore, the responses to the survey were anonymous. Individuals could not be identified from the responses, unless personal data was entered into the free text fields.

At the beginning of the survey, MPs and their proxies were informed that the survey would be conducted anonymously and that we may disclose quantitative or qualitative data, including in response to a Freedom of Information request. Where any of the data might identify an individual, respondents were aware that we would withhold that information

## ANNEX B – METHODOLOGY

The survey was built using Snap Surveys (Snap) software and available online. A link to the survey was included in an email of 20 October 2015 to MPs and their staff from IPSA, inviting them to take part in the survey. A further reminder email and reminders through regular IPSA bulletin emails were sent during the next three weeks. This resulted in a total of 312 responses; 44 MPs, 113 MP proxies, and 155 non-proxy members of staff.

The survey was closed after three weeks and the results downloaded and imported into the Snap software. The survey analysis took place both in Snap and in Excel.

In addition to quantitative analysis on 33 questions, responses to 14 qualitative free text fields were received.

## ANNEX C – FULL SURVEY DATA – Quantitative data

The figures given in bold are overall figures. The figures in brackets are given in the form: (MP result/Proxy result/Staff result respectively.)

*n.b. all figures are rounded to integers and so some figures may add to more or less than 100%.*

### Initial opening questions

1. Are you:

An MP	A Proxy	A member of staff
<b>14%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>50%</b>

2. Overall, how would you rate IPSA's service over the last year?

*(Question not asked to MPs newly elected in May 2015, nor to their proxies or staff)*

	Percentage of respondents who selected option
Very good	<b>11%</b> (7%/13%/11%)
Good	<b>37%</b> (39%/40%/34%)
Average	<b>30%</b> (18%/38%/27%)
Poor	<b>9%</b> (18%/5%/9%)
Very poor	<b>8%</b> (14%/4%/10%)
Don't know	<b>4%</b> (4%/0%/8%)
No answer	<b>1%</b> (0%/0%/2%)

3. Overall, how would you rate IPSA's service since the General Election?

*(Question asked only to MPs newly elected in May 2015, their proxies and their staff)*

	Percentage of respondents who selected option
Very good	<b>7%</b> (0%/3%/12%)
Good	<b>35%</b> (25%/50%/28%)
Average	<b>21%</b> (38%/28%/10%)
Poor	<b>22%</b> (13%/14%/30%)
Very poor	<b>13%</b> (25%/6%/14%)
Don't know	<b>3%</b> (0%/0%/6%)
No answer	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)

## Questions for New MPs, their proxies, and staff only

4. How satisfied were you with the introduction and service provided by IPSA at the New Members Reception Area (NMRA)?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs only)
Very satisfied	(13%)
Fairly satisfied	(56%)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	(13%)
Fairly dissatisfied	(6%)
Very dissatisfied	(13%)

5. How useful did you find it having an IPSA Election Contact (IEC) to support you in your first few months?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very useful	<b>40%</b> (19%/53%/38%)
Fairly useful	<b>28%</b> (50%/25%/24%)
Neither useful nor not useful	<b>7%</b> (13%/8%/4%)
Not very useful	<b>7%</b> (6%/6%/8%)
Not at all useful	<b>5%</b> (6%/6%/4%)
Don't know	<b>1%</b> (0%/0%/2%)
I did not contact my IEC	<b>11%</b> (0%/3%/20%)
No answer	<b>1%</b> (6%/0%/0%)

6. How useful did you find the one to one training and IPSA roadshows?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very useful	<b>14%</b> (6%/17%/14%)
Fairly useful	<b>29%</b> (19%/39%/26%)
Neither useful nor not useful	<b>12%</b> (6%/17%/10%)
Not very useful	<b>8%</b> (25%/3%/6%)
Not at all useful	<b>8%</b> (6%/8%/8%)
Don't know	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
I did not attend one to one training or a roadshow	<b>29%</b> (38%/17%/36%)
No answer	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)

7. How confident are you in understanding the MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses and what can be claimed?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs & Proxies only)
Very confident	<b>10%</b> (6%/11%)
Fairly confident	<b>52%</b> (19%/67%)
Neither confident nor unconfident	<b>19%</b> (31%/14%)
Not very confident	<b>13%</b> (25%/8%)
Not at all confident	<b>6%</b> (19%/0%)
Don't know	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%)
No answer	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%)

8. How confident are you at using the online expenses system to submit reimbursement claims and reconcile the payment card (IPSA credit card)?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs & Proxies only)
Very confident	<b>13%</b> (0%/19%)
Fairly confident	<b>42%</b> (13%/56%)
Neither confident nor unconfident	<b>13%</b> (19%/11%)
Not very confident	<b>19%</b> (38%/11%)
Not at all confident	<b>10%</b> (25%/3%)
Don't know	<b>2%</b> (6%/0%)
No answer	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%)

9. How useful did you find the literature and training manuals that we gave you either at the NMRA or during a one to one training session?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs & Proxies only)
Very useful	<b>4%</b> (0%/6%)
Fairly useful	<b>38%</b> (31%/42%)
Neither useful nor not useful	<b>15%</b> (31%/8%)
Not very useful	<b>10%</b> (19%/6%)
Not at all useful	<b>2%</b> (6%/0%)
Don't know	<b>2%</b> (0%/3%)
I did not attend the NMRA or one to one training	<b>27%</b> (13%/33%)
No answer	<b>2%</b> (0%/3%)

10. Do you have any comments about the service and information you have received from IPSA or ways in which we can improve?

*51 responses to this question, from 10 New MPs, 22 of their proxies, and 18 members of their staff.*

## Questions for Returning MPs, their proxies, and staff only

11. How useful was the information that you received from IPSA about guidance during the dissolution period?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very useful	<b>26%</b> (29%/30%/22%)
Fairly useful	<b>48%</b> (36%/53%/48%)
Neither useful nor not useful	<b>10%</b> (18%/9%/8%)
Not very useful	<b>7%</b> (7%/7%/7%)
Not at all useful	<b>5%</b> (7%/1%/7%)
Don't know	<b>5%</b> (4%/0%/10%)
No answer	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)

12. How useful did you find the drop-in sessions in the House of Commons Room R after the Election?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very useful	<b>1%</b> (0%/3%/1%)
Fairly useful	<b>5%</b> (7%/8%/3%)
Neither useful nor not useful	<b>4%</b> (11%/5%/1%)
Not very useful	<b>2%</b> (4%/3%/1%)
Not at all useful	<b>3%</b> (4%/1%/4%)
I did not attend a drop-in session	<b>84%</b> (75%/80%/89%)
Don't know	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/1%)
No answer	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/1%)

## Questions for Departing MPs, their proxies, and staff only

13. How useful did you find it having an IPSA Election Contact (IEC) to support you in winding up the office?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very useful	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
Fairly useful	<b>100%</b> (0%/100%/0%) ( <b>1 respondent</b> )
Neither useful nor not useful	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
Not very useful	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
Not at all useful	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
I did not contact my IEC	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
Don't know	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
No answer	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)

## 14. How satisfied were you with the service provided by IPSA at the Departing Members Area?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very satisfied	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Fairly satisfied	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Fairly dissatisfied	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Very dissatisfied	0% (0%/0%/0%)
I did not contact my IEC	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Don't know	0% (0%/0%/0%)
No answer	0% (0%/0%/0%)

***n.b. this question was only available to Departing MPs, not their proxies or staff. As no Departing MPs completed the survey, no results were collected.***

## 15. How satisfied were you using our IT systems for submitting claims during the winding up period (8 May to 8 July)?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very satisfied	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Fairly satisfied	100% (0%/100%/0%) <b>(1 respondent)</b>
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Fairly dissatisfied	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Very dissatisfied	0% (0%/0%/0%)
I did not contact my IEC	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Don't know	0% (0%/0%/0%)
No answer	0% (0%/0%/0%)

## 16. How clear were you on what you had to do to close down parliamentary affairs with IPSA?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very clear	100% (0%/100%/0%) <b>(1 respondent)</b>
Fairly clear	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Neither clear nor unclear	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Not very clear	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Not at all clear	0% (0%/0%/0%)
Don't know	0% (0%/0%/0%)
No answer	0% (0%/0%/0%)



17. How satisfied were you with the service provided by IPSA during the winding up period?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very satisfied	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
Fairly satisfied	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
Fairly dissatisfied	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
Very dissatisfied	<b>100%</b> (0%/100%/0%) ( <b>1 respondent</b> )
Don't know	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)
No answer	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/0%)

18. Do you have any comments about the service and information you have received from IPSA or ways in which we can improve?

*1 response to this question, from 1 proxy of a departing MP.*

19. What else could we have done to help wind up parliamentary affairs quickly?

*1 response to this question, from 1 proxy of a departing MP.*

### Questions for All MPs, their proxies, and staff only

#### Advice and Guidance from IPSA

20. In the last year (or if newly elected, since the Election), how helpful was your contact with IPSA?

	Very helpful	Fairly helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful	Don't know	I haven't used this method of communication	No answer
By letter and/or e-mail	<b>15%</b> (18%/20%/10%)	<b>32%</b> (34%/42%/25%)	<b>10%</b> (14%/8%/10%)	<b>13%</b> (7%/15%/13%)	<b>10%</b> (16%/8%/9%)	<b>0%</b> (0%/0%/1%)	<b>16%</b> (7%/3%/28%)	<b>4%</b> (5%/4%/4%)
By phone	<b>31%</b> (18%/45%/25%)	<b>29%</b> (30%/35%/23%)	<b>7%</b> (7%/6%/7%)	<b>10%</b> (16%/8%/9%)	<b>6%</b> (14%/2%/8%)	<b>1%</b> (2%/0%/1%)	<b>13%</b> (9%/0%/23%)	<b>4%</b> (5%/4%/5%)
Face-to-face contact	<b>17%</b> (11%/22%/14%)	<b>12%</b> (16%/14%/9%)	<b>4%</b> (5%/2%/6%)	<b>3%</b> (5%/4%/2%)	<b>5%</b> (7%/3%/6%)	<b>1%</b> (0%/1%/1%)	<b>55%</b> (45%/53%/59%)	<b>4%</b> (11%/2%/3%)

## 21. How useful is the information we provide through the following channels?

	Very useful	Fairly useful	Neither useful nor not useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Don't know	No answer
Letters and emails to MPs	<b>15%</b> (16%/21%/10%)	<b>49%</b> (39%/54%/49%)	<b>13%</b> (11%/12%/14%)	<b>9%</b> (16%/6%/10%)	<b>4%</b> (7%/2%/5%)	<b>9%</b> (9%/4%/12%)	<b>1%</b> (2%/1%/0%)
IPSA Bulletins	<b>17%</b> (16%/22%/13%)	<b>48%</b> (39%/56%/45%)	<b>13%</b> (14%/12%/14%)	<b>7%</b> (14%/6%/6%)	<b>5%</b> (5%/3%/7%)	<b>9%</b> (11%/2%/14%)	<b>1%</b> (2%/0%/1%)
IPSA's website	<b>12%</b> (5%/16%/10%)	<b>46%</b> (39%/55%/41%)	<b>16%</b> (16%/17%/16%)	<b>8%</b> (11%/5%/9%)	<b>5%</b> (7%/2%/6%)	<b>12%</b> (16%/5%/16%)	<b>2%</b> (7%/0%/1%)
IPSA's how to guides	<b>14%</b> (2%/20%/13%)	<b>44%</b> (43%/51%/39%)	<b>12%</b> (16%/10%/12%)	<b>5%</b> (5%/4%/5%)	<b>5%</b> (7%/4%/6%)	<b>17%</b> (25%/9%/21%)	<b>4%</b> (2%/2%/5%)

## 22. In the last year (or if newly elected, since the Election), how satisfied have you been with the speed of response when contacting IPSA?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know	No answer
<b>15%</b> (11%/17%/15%)	<b>31%</b> (27%/43%/23%)	<b>15%</b> (14%/15%/15%)	<b>15%</b> (16%/13%/15%)	<b>11%</b> (18%/9%/10%)	<b>10%</b> (7%/0%/19%)	<b>3%</b> (7%/3%/3%)

## 23. How else could IPSA improve the information and guidance we offer to you?

*74 responses to this question, from 8 MPs, 40 proxies, and 26 members of staff.*

**Payment cards and direct payment**

24. Which of the following payment options have you used? [Please tick all that apply]

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs/Proxies only)
IPSA payment card (for any parliamentary expense/business cost)	<b>89%</b> (86%/89%)
Travel booked through trainline.com	<b>31%</b> (32%/31%)
Travel booked through the Travel Office (Chambers Travel)	<b>54%</b> (59%/51%)
Items ordered directly with Banner, Commercial or XMA	<b>86%</b> (77%/89%)
Legal expenses insurance (obtained via us through Jelf)	<b>46%</b> (39%/49%)
Pooled research services (e.g. PRU, POLD, PRS etc.)	<b>55%</b> (52%/57%)
Direct rental payments to landlords for accommodation or office rent	<b>74%</b> (64%/78%)
None of the above	<b>1%</b> (5%/0%)
Don't know	<b>1%</b> (0%/1%)

25. Prior to beginning this survey, were you aware of these direct payment options?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs/Proxies only)
I knew about all of these payment options	<b>53%</b> (43%/57%)
I knew about some of these options, but not all of them	<b>45%</b> (55%/41%)
I did not know about any of these payment options	<b>2%</b> (2%/2%)
No answer	<b>1%</b> (0%/1%)

26. All MPs' business costs and expense claims can now be paid either direct to suppliers, or by using the IPSA payment card. How can IPSA help you to make the most of the payment card and direct payment options? Are there any other services you would like to pay for directly in this way? (MPs/Proxies only)

*84 responses to this question, from 23 MPs and 61 proxies.*

27. In the last year, on average how many hours per month have you spent making claims for business costs and expenses?

Average length of time per month spent making claims.	Percentage who submitted a response within this bracket (All respondents)
Between 0 and 2 hours	<b>10%</b>
Between 2 and 4 hours	<b>16%</b>
Between 4 and 6 hours	<b>13%</b>
Between 6 and 8 hours	<b>8%</b>
Between 8 and 10 hours	<b>7%</b>
10+ hours	<b>24%</b>
Non-quantifiable response or n/a	<b>21%</b>

28. How does this compare to the amount of time you were spending making claims a year ago?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs/Proxies only)
Much more time now	<b>3%</b> (7%/1%)
Somewhat more time now	<b>3%</b> (0%/4%)
About the same amount of time	<b>32%</b> (34%/31%)
Somewhat less time now	<b>17%</b> (9%/20%)
Much less time now	<b>4%</b> (2%/5%)
Don't know	<b>3%</b> (2%/3%)
Not applicable	<b>33%</b> (39%/31%)
No answer	<b>6%</b> (7%/5%)

29. How easy do you find the online expenses system to use?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs/Proxies only)
Very easy	<b>7%</b> (5%/8%)
Fairly easy	<b>38%</b> (14%/47%)
Neither easy nor difficult	<b>18%</b> (18%/19%)
Fairly difficult	<b>19%</b> (14%/21%)
Very difficult	<b>12%</b> (32%/4%)
Don't know	<b>4%</b> (14%/0%)
No answer	<b>2%</b> (5%/1%)

30. Do you find it useful to be able to produce reports detailing how much you have spent in various budgets on the online expenses system?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs/Proxies only)
--	--

Yes, this is useful	<b>60%</b> (52%/63%)
No, this is not useful	<b>11%</b> (9%/12%)
I haven't used the reporting function	<b>22%</b> (27%/20%)
Don't know	<b>4%</b> (7%/4%)
No answer	<b>2%</b> (5%/1%)

31. What changes would you like to see to the online expenses system?

*93 responses to this question, from 23 MPs and 70 proxies.*

### **Processing of claims by IPSA**

32. If we have returned a claim to you in the last year, were our explanatory notes clear?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs/Proxies only)
Yes	<b>57%</b> (43%/63%)
No	<b>29%</b> (36%/26%)
I have not had any claims returned to me by IPSA	<b>11%</b> (16%/10%)
No answer	<b>3%</b> (5%/2%)

33. Do you have any comments to make about the explanatory notes IPSA sends you when returning a claim?

*65 responses to this question, from 22 MPs and 43 proxies.*

34. How satisfied are you with IPSA's current service in relation to processing your claims?  
(MPs/Proxies only)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know	No answer
Speed of service	<b>16%</b> (11%/18%)	<b>46%</b> (36%/50%)	<b>17%</b> (18%/16%)	<b>12%</b> (9%/13%)	<b>6%</b> (14%/3%)	<b>3%</b> (9%/0%)	<b>1%</b> (2%/1%)
Quality of service	<b>16%</b> (16%/16%)	<b>45%</b> (27%/52%)	<b>13%</b> (14%/13%)	<b>14%</b> (16%/13%)	<b>8%</b> (16%/4%)	<b>3%</b> (11%/0%)	<b>1%</b> (0%/1%)

35. Please explain why you have rated the speed and quality of the service this way

*87 responses to this question, from 21 MPs and 66 proxies.*

### **IPSA's payroll services**

## 36. How satisfied are you with the following payroll services?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know	I have never used this	No answer
Staffing budget report (MPs only)	25%	39%	2%	7%	9%	0%	14%	5%
Online timesheets	<b>5%</b> (11%/8%/2%)	<b>11%</b> (14%/13%/9%)	<b>9%</b> (11%/7%/10%)	<b>5%</b> (5%/6%/5%)	<b>5%</b> (5%/5%/6%)	<b>2%</b> (7%/1%/2%)	<b>60%</b> (45%/57%/66%)	<b>2%</b> (2%/3%/1%)
Job description tool	<b>11%</b> (7%/15%/10%)	<b>27%</b> (34%/33%/20%)	<b>13%</b> (14%/15%/12%)	<b>10%</b> (7%/15%/7%)	<b>9%</b> (16%/9%/7%)	<b>2%</b> (5%/1%/3%)	<b>27%</b> (16%/12%/41%)	<b>1%</b> (2%/1%/1%)
Staff contract tool	<b>13%</b> (9%/19%/10%)	<b>30%</b> (39%/38%/22%)	<b>10%</b> (14%/11%/8%)	<b>7%</b> (7%/8%/6%)	<b>7%</b> (11%/6%/6%)	<b>2%</b> (2%/2%/2%)	<b>30%</b> (16%/15%/46%)	<b>1%</b> (2%/1%/0%)

## 37. How could IPSA improve these and other payroll services?

119 responses to this question, from 15 MPs, 50 proxies, and 54 members of staff.

**IPSA's regulatory role and additional questions**

## 38. In the last 12 months, have you ever decided not to claim for any expenses for which you believe you could have been reimbursed?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs and Proxies only)
Yes	<b>66%</b> (82%/60%)
No	<b>31%</b> (16%/36%)
No answer	<b>3%</b> (2%/4%)

## 39. Which of the following were your reasons for not claiming a business cost or expense?

	Percentage who ticked this option (MPs and Proxies only)
The claim process was too complicated	(39%/15%)
It was only a small claim	(61%/42%)

It would take too long	(41%/18%)
I wasn't sure if it was claimable	(14%/12%)
I was concerned about the claim being published	(34%/21%)
I was worried the claim would be rejected	(14%/10%)
Don't Know	(0%/1%)
Other reason	(14%/12%)

40. If you selected 'other', please provide further details here.

*27 responses to this question, from 7 MPs and 20 proxies.*

41. In general, how would you rate the IPSA website?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very good	<b>6%</b> (2%/10%/5%)
Good	<b>32%</b> (20%/38%/32%)
Average	<b>32%</b> (25%/36%/31%)
Poor	<b>12%</b> (23%/10%/10%)
Very poor	<b>7%</b> (11%/4%/7%)
Don't know	<b>1%</b> (5%/1%/1%)
I have never used the IPSA website	<b>7%</b> (9%/1%/11%)
No answer	<b>2%</b> (5%/1%/2%)

42. For what purpose have you used the IPSA website? (tick all that apply)

	Percentage who ticked this option
Employing staff (e.g. contracts, job descriptions etc.)	<b>66%</b> (73%/86%/50%)
Guidance on the MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses	<b>65%</b> (66%/84%/50%)
News	<b>21%</b> (18%/18%/25%)
RSA software token guidance	<b>31%</b> (18%/50%/21%)
Making a complaint	<b>3%</b> (7%/0%/3%)
Published data	<b>21%</b> (16%/22%/22%)
Other	<b>6%</b> (0%/3%/11%)

43. If you selected 'other', could you tell us in more detail what else you have used the website for?

*24 responses to this question, from 6 proxies, and 18 members of staff.*

44. Please tell us further how you think the IPSA website could be improved

*71 responses to this question, from 11 MPs, 29 proxies, and 31 members of staff.*

45. As well as administering the system to pay salaries and expenses, IPSA has a wider regulatory role to provide assurance to the public that MPs are remunerated fairly and transparently. Thinking about IPSA's regulatory role, how would you rate our performance over the past year?

	Percentage who ticked this option
Very good	<b>6%</b> (7%/8%/4%)
Good	<b>29%</b> (25%/30%/29%)
Average	<b>27%</b> (14%/33%/27%)
Poor	<b>9%</b> (9%/9%/8%)
Very poor	<b>12%</b> (25%/6%/12%)
Don't know	<b>16%</b> (16%/13%/18%)
No answer	<b>2%</b> (5%/1%/1%)

46. Please explain why you have rated IPSA's regulatory role in this way.

*126 responses to this question, from 22 MPs, 41 proxies, and 63 members of staff.*

47. Do you have any further comments you would like to add about IPSA, its service, support, systems or regulation?

*103 responses to this question, from 20 MPs, 42 proxies, and 41 members of staff.*