

6. As a result of your comments last year, our Information Line is now open from 10am-5pm, Monday to Friday. How else could IPSA improve the information and guidance we offer to you?

MP RESPONSES

Opening times changes if hugely important. Thank you

It's good you've extended hours

Be a little more frank and open than merely quoting extracts from the guide.

Returning calls timeously, and replying to emails- I have had several experiences now of emails not responded to at all.

treat MPs with even the slightest amount of respect?

Make sure that information is clear and says the same in different places which is not the case now

The information could be accurate

The website is not very easy to use, could be more user friendly

Opportunity for face-to-face meetings

answer more quickly

Face to face meetings

Staff could be more understanding of MP 's concerns

By providing answers more promptly

This addresses Q5 though a weekend provision would save me having to wait till Monday to make contact

Extended opening hours a big improvement

Be more ready to understand what an MP's role is and entails, and act accordingly.

If IPSA would reply to e-mails there would be less pressure on your phone line

your staff should understand the guidance better and not return claims for more information when it's already included in the notes

change to 10a.m. - 5p.m. is welcome

10-5 is progress, but your online claiming system is so slow and inefficient that I can only find time to fill in data you require at weekends. Why don't you open your helpline at weekends? Senior IPSA staff might make themselves available to take calls at home on a rota at weekends. It is something MPs do!

Be consistent

regular surgeries where MPs or staff members can drop in to ask questions.

respond more quickly by email

by trying to be helpful rather than obstructive

Just be a bit clearer. When seeking advance advice there's always a worry something will subsequently be refused with all the public consequences. And this is not not outrageous requests but items like extended travel

STAFF RESPONSES

Dedicated staff (and direct phone numbers and email addresses) for specific contact issues ie. dedicated person/number/email for problems with logging claims, another for staff and payroll queries, another for general admin/budget queries

Make the guidance clear and apply the rules more consistently

more practical advice and help - I submitted via my MP my accommodation expenses in the constituency in April - it is July now and I am still waiting to be reimbursed

It would be useful if proxies could have access to more budget reports if authorised by their MP

Provide much more comprehensive responses when answering emails. Ensure all staff are giving out the same information.

training on all aspects of the scheme, reports production out of the IPSA system,

dont know

Better email response times; direct email addresses for members of staff; more detailed emails.

Respond to emails within 24 hours

I think that in some instances the staff aren't prepared for the variety of questions we may have and therefore I would encourage the use of email more

Clearer website - make it easier to find documents especially staffing forms + other documents needed for new employees - job descriptions etc. Replies from IPSA staff just quote the guidelines verbatim and do not really give a proper easy to understand yes or no answer

A definitive list of what can, and what cannot, be claimed for.

I was not aware you had changed the times for the Information Line!

should be able to clear work in advance ie letters to constituents, planned events

Respond to emails quicker

Simplify the system

Whilst information on the website is often very useful it can be difficult to find and I have had to call IPSA to ask how to locate a certain document!

To have longer phone hours really helps as so many bulletins come out which are just too much to keep up with. I really don't want to be bombarded with emails which give just too much information!

Regional events meeting with groups of MPs staff to talk face to face about issues of concern, suggestions for improvement etc

By having a service standard regarding email response ie within 24 hours

Good about timing. 1.00pm was ridiculous. Nothing else for me

Be consistent and admit when there's an error at IPSA or an adviser just doesn't know!

I am a proxy - I'm fairly happy with arrangements

The website is very difficult to navigate. I often have to phone someone to get pointed in the direction of what I'm looking for on the website.

At times of real urgency - [eg - first couple of days of the month, end of the month and the day before the final day for overtime(MPs staff pay) are due] run the hotline an hour earlier (9am) and an hour later (6pm)

Nothing to suggest

Great that you have listened to feedback and extended the opening hours of the Info line. Ability to search the IPSA website especially the 'For MPs section' - does not always work well; and often one is taken to a piece of information which might not be the current advice - maybe dates and versions could be included and once replaced could be marked as 'Archived' as Parliament do with many of their info / guidance docs

By giving accurate information first time round.

Not treat us like the enemy & not brief the media behind our backs

I think there needs to be consistent guidance offered. I was given conflicting advice when I enquired about something and when the claim finally when through it was rejected in the basis that we had claimed from the wrong budget even though that is precisely why we had called the helpline in the first place and followed the advice given!

By allowing us to email a named person, instead of the generic 'info@ipsa....' Very difficult to get continuity of advice when dealing with a different person each time

On the Business Costs & Expenses have a table with budget amounts listed in summary, as this would make budgeting much easier.

Improve email response times. Assign personnel to individual MPs.

Reply to emails quicker.

Respond clearly to emails

Be able to give advice that is consistent and definite.

it would be nice if the people who you were speaking to on the phone didn't treat you as though you were the enemy

By becoming accountable and providing written apologies when you have got things wrong or embarrassed Members.

IPSA could be more flexible when human error occurs rather than being overly pedantic. It would be better before challenging a claim to discuss the issue and if an error has occurred, then allow the claim to be withdrawn or amended. There is no flexibility when a claim is rejected. This is wrong. People make mistakes, either in description or in assumption. This should not be reflected as a REJECTED CLAIM, which the public will quickly jump on as the MP trying to be dishonest.... Not true & unfair

Thank the Lord for finally opening at nearly an acceptable time for customer service. You could ring people back when requested - that never happens!

Dedicated person to correspond back to rather than generic ipsa email address

By contacting members of staff first to check information rather than making assumptions and deducting pay

Opening the phone line for longer will make a massive difference, particularly to my colleague who only works for a few hours each week

it is good if IPSA answer and give the name of the officer ...it helps when following up queries

When seeking advice as to whether a certain item is claimable etc the response is generally put it through and we will look at it. However, I don't find that response at all helpful. The reason for seeking the advice in the first place is for an answer not to have the claim turned down once you have purchased an item.

I am satisfied with the extended information line opening hours.

by offering a named member of staff who has taken ownership of the enquiry

Be consistent with advice as have received differing information from the telephone line before that has resulted in difficulties with claims

10am-5pm is core working hours for almost all Parliamentary staff. It is deeply inconvenient that these are the only hours available to call IPSA, given the majority of calls from staff will be about personal and payroll matters which are not suitable to discuss on the phone whilst sat with colleagues during the working day. IPSA should open their phone lines on Friday or Monday mornings at 08:30 to allow staff to call them at a more convenient time.

Over the past year it would have been speed of response by phone, but have not yet had chance to fully test that with the (long needed) extended opening hours.

Clearer guidance on whether a claim will be accepted or rejected.

step by step guides on how to do things would be helpful

To have definite points of contact, ie be able to know who to email about a particular point/subject, rather than just email a general address. Personal contact is more reassuring.

Quicker responses to emails and a better layout on IPSA's homepage.

faster response to emails although I have noticed this has improved over the past 12mths

No body told me that the information line was open earlier. When did this happen?

Clearer information regarding categories on the expenses claim forms, particularly foreign travel

Hold information days within the House of Commons

I think you could improve the speed of e mail responses

Get back to us when promised

It would be really useful if you could sent an acknowledgement email to the MP when direct payment has been made to an intern or other member of staff. This way I know it has happened successfully.

Responding to emails much more quickly, being consistent in advice, doing what you say (eg I cancelled a rental payment, you acknowledged that it was cancelled but you still paid it again!)
employ more people that have done IPSA for MPs, they get it ... you have an excellent staff member currently, he has changed my whole IPSA experience for the good

It would be useful to have more of an idea how long to expect to wait for emails to be answered and for this to be quicker than it is

More categories to cover types of expenses.

Improve staff members' attention to detail

Please look at improving the website. There are pages which you can only get to from within other pages, rather than from menus. Eg. the 'employing your staff' page lists lots of other pages which you can only click to from that page, so you have to keep going back to it. Also, it is not always obvious where you will find certain items; the structure needs reorganising, using terms which mean something to all the people who use it. The search facility could also be improved and strengthened.

I have left messages with a staff member on 3 consecutive days requesting a call back. The staff member never returned my call.

Make the website more user-friendly

As I have suggested previously, need a page on website which lists all categories of expense and indication of which form we should use to submit it

Welcome this change

More opportunities for training/guidance meetings for constituency reps.

A much easier to use website. the search function does not work well on there

Allow members of staff to ask procedural questions. Eg, how can I claim mileage, instead of saying 'ask your manager'

clearer information on which departments of IPSA to contact about which query. Also an immediate 'helpline' when on the expenses system

This is a major and very helpful step forward. Now we will need to see how much of a difference it makes, but I have the feeling it will be massive! Thank you!

Different staff do not seem to interact eg we were told to apply to the contingency fund for a hotel payment which was over the nightly limit then were refused this due to being out of date.

Evening availability. That is when the office is quiet and things like the accounts get done.

More details about why a claim is refused.

I am just pleased that I can now phone Ipsa in the morning, much more convenient. Regarding your 'How to' guides, I haven't seen any for a long time ,IF you are still issuing them then you need to publicise the fact.

Some of the categories for payment are a bit limiting.

Action emails more swiftly

did you let us know this?

no comments

N/A

Be able to answer questions and give accurate information

More user friendly website - especially the search facility

When was this change? Excellent news. Communication with staff is essential. Also, give advice on how to compose multi-claims that will cost the least to process. I have heard it said that a one line claim for £10 still costs £30 to process.

By a named contact, who would have access to information about how the individual Member's office, staff, accommodation etc works. This would save much repetition and might help IPSA provide more accurate advice.

Response time for email message should be quicker

Improve the search function on the website, phone people back

Offer simpler 'how to' tuition on eg excel monthly budgeting. One outside provider emails me on courses they are providing.

IPSA staff should understand the rules they are meant to enforce, not make up new policies on the hoof. Replies to correspondence or phone calls should be within a day or two, not just ignored

Improve the on-line expenses claim system so that a paper confirmation does not need to be sent.

9. Over 70% of MPs' business costs and expense claims can now be paid direct to suppliers, or by using the 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?

MP RESPONSES

stationery at other suppliers; newspapers etc.

My office landline but it is a small independent company and at present only takes cheques. Additional room hire through City Council also paid for by cheque

more options for stationery items and ability to use for eg furniture replacement

I would like to be able to use it for accommodation telephone and internet in the same way as office telephone and internet please.

I would still find it helpful to send an invoice to IPSA so that you can pay the bill directly. Although IPSA tend to refund in about 2 weeks, I am still bearing the cash flow. Many professional suppliers do not accept credit card payments.

PRODUCE A LIST OF WHAT IT CAN BE USED FOR. I DON'T KNOW OF SUCH A LIST.

the truth is that i do not make any claims to recover money spent doing the job. it is done 100% by my staff as i just dont have time and your system is too complicated and cumbersome

The business the trainline doesn't always work for first class travel even when it is cheaper than full cost - this is very annoying

IPSA have made a real mess of my simplified direct payments this year that has caused hours and hours of work and embarrassment with suppliers.

Don't Know

What's a payment card?

one to one tutorials

Utility and phone bills in particular

Enable us to use it for 100% of bills so we no longer have to pay for things ourselves and claim back or claim advances, with all the bother this involves and IPSA money going in and out iof our own bank accounts.

I PAY UTILITY BILLS/COUNCIL TAX VIA MONTHLY DIRECT DEBIT AS IT IS CHEAPER SO PAYMENT CARD IS NO USE - WOULD BE HELPFUL IF PAID DIRECTLY

When I used the card last I had problems with the reconciliation statement so I don't use it any more

Purchase of stamps and other stationery bought directly

Seminar for MP's on options

Yes. I cannot see why everything cannot be paid for by payment card

process claims more quickly

Office insurance

simple list of all expenes that can be paid by card sent to all members (not email)

It is easier to pay and reclaim than filling out the forms etc consequent on using the card (perhaps I am out of date -but that was my prejudice when I used to use the card)

No

Phone in my flat - in line with other utilities

More training and hrlp in understanding how it works

parking at office

Further information on what can be paid by card?

stationery bought at Staples so payment is direct.

telephone bills, invoices below £200

clearer guides to usage

Include gas, electricity and surgery advertising through press - costly items which are currently paid and claimed back from personal account

It would be less bureaucratic if the card statement was used instead of also having to submit paperwork

STAFF RESPONSES

It seems to be a problem to pay water bills with the payment card

TV licence

It would be good if we could direct pay but to organisations we choose rather than ones chosen by IPSA - Banner is an example as they are not the cheapest nor do they offer good customer service and we'd like to go elsewhere but feel tied due to direct payment

Office utilities when being paid as a lump sum by recharge to the landlord

All of it.

direct payment for leases of office equipment like printers/photocopiers - when not provided by PICTS

do not deal with payments

The majority of services are now covered. I think MP's should be given more discretion with the card. If they are know that a service or purchase is within the rules and invoiced accordingly they should be able to use the card for anything. The checks on the card claims are just as robust as any other form of payment and i think it would save office time if the card could be used for everything as it by far the most traceable and efficient form of payment

One page briefing guide about you can pay with the payment card

Photocopiers

Website hosting and domain names via LCN.com

No

Not applicable to me as I do not handle the accounts

TV Licence; PHS sanitary collection/licence;

Is it possible to provide the MP's proxy with a payment card to enable them to pay bills etc in the constituency?

Lift the restrictions on the IPSA card. It isn't possible to pay utility bills via British Gas website nor is it possible to pay for TV licence with it. Prob as using diff address to that which card is registered to.

also need to be able to confirm, or otherwise, charges levied by banner to MP's accounts. we have had problems with overcharging from Banner for items we didn't order. Proving hard for IPSA to rectify this for us.

I think it would be more helpful, to be able to use the payment card for more options. If the MP has to repay IPSA, so be it. For example it would be very useful to be able to buy cartridges and paper from Amazon (or suppliers on Amazons website), the card won't allow this.

Nothing to offer in this section

Advice how to convert to direct payments some of the 'direct debit' payments for utility bills and phone bills which were set up before some of the permissions re payment card and direct payment methods were established

Security Invoices. CFL Invoices

The payment card does not work with Premier Inn when trying to book online. Therefore you need to ring up and book meaning the tax payer cannot get best value for money through online deals

I think stationery costs should be payable directly to MP's staff. Banner do not always offer the best value for money and it is often cheaper and easier to source from a local supplier. Yet we are penalised for doing so as payment is made to the Member and we are left to chase reimbursement.

Not sure if it is possible to set up a direct debit, eg to BT, as that would save money but can't work out how to do it

Add training through Parli-Training to the card, this is the expense we have most problems with. to provide more information

Pay staff expenses (other than mileage) directly

Hansard (TSO)

Payment by card to the accountant and to the contents insurance provider would be helpful

A member of the MPs' staff should have a payment card too.

More clear about what you can use the IPSA card for.

n/a

There are more options available

it was better when we submitted the bills to the fees office and they paid the supplier. there was nothing wrong with this. It was the abuse that went on not the system. It worked perfectly well before. now it is gruelling

You can let us use the payment card to pay for all legitimate expenses for which the seller/provider will accept credit cards. Why wouldn't you?

more flexible arrangements to re-coup staff travel costs

Gallery News -lobby read-out provided by Rob Gibson. Dods/Vachers reference books. Is it possible to construct a good deal with PA Wires?

I didn't know they existed or what they can be used for.

As a staff member I would prefer reimbursement payments to me made to me and not via the MP.

As the proxy I arrange most payments but the MP has the payment card and so we are restricted in what I can use the card for.

not sure

It is really helpful to be able to use the card and if IPSA could open it up to more services that would be really helpful

by increasing the number of suppliers who may be smaller, but are able to take payment via the card

Cellhire

All our office costs

I am quite happy with the way things work at the moment. Although I appreciate the payment card is very useful, and MPs do not have to pay from their own pocket and reclaim later, reconciling the barclaycard statement when it comes is a tricky job. A lot of detail is contained in one IPSA form, and I am not sure I would want to make that any bigger!

Direct payment for office furniture would have made moving office significantly easier.

Support for MP's staff, it takes far too long to re-imburse us for train travel etc

Training

Payment card does not always work though on the whole it is fine

Perhaps, if one doesn't already exist, an exhaustive, searchable list of the organisations to whom the IPSA card payments can be made and for what services.

I would like to be able to use Direct Debits to save money, using payment card often means an extra cost, getting the lowest tariff for gas and electric means signing up for DD. also i need to be able to pay MP home phone bill on payment card.

I am unable to pay council tax on the payment card because the local council doesn't accept credit cards. Some other way of paying directly for this would be useful

Can't think of any

IPSA could let MPs and staff know whether it is possible to pay utility bills etc. by payment card on a standing order basis

IPSA could provide more information about the the payment cards.

Not always sure if can use payment card for things such as local stationery supplier; print hire payment. Am not always sure, when using payment card on websites, if you choose the credit or debit card option (which affects charges).

Mobile telephone bill

Refreshments at House of Commons maybe

n/a

We prefer to use the pay then claim route, it provides more opportunity for the MP to supervise what is being ordered.

Extend the use of the card to other services such as printing

I do know about the payment options but don't use all suitable for me. I will look again. Reminders (and links to relevant internet pages on the IPSA site) would be helpful.

Problems occur when updating payment cards and MPs office does not have security passwords. Payment cards take too long to be processed, especially at end of year.

Langfords Printing services would be good

Payment Card has been disallowed in respect of consumables purchased from a particular company for my office printer. The ability to make such purchases should be widened.

Is there a list of all the options somewhere - and if so, can this be updated regularly and made more easily accessible, tell us about it!

Cellhire invoices

payment to photocopier suppliers

A BACS service or direct payment to those services who don't take credit card would be useful

surgery adverts. car hire

The card is of no use where utility bills are paid communally and is of no use when invoices are below £200. Why can't it be used for lesser amounts?

The system should be more intuitive with the ability to register using the keyboard to activate the dropdown functions throughout rather than the mouse which makes it slow and cumbersome to use. It would be useful to receive a report of expenditure when paying for stationery ordered directly - it is difficult to keep track of expenditure for budgeting purposes otherwise

Extend the ability to use the payment card for a wider range of purchases

Specific advice sessions would make me more likely to switch to this option.

occasional bought in services

n/a

no

Data Protection Act Registration - every MP needs to have it

Unreliable, often the credit card is blocked and you have to ring IPSA to unblock it.

photocopier, surgery and alarm costs - basically anything that can be paid for in these ways

Send a reminder about direct payments

Our local authority will not accept payments by credit card. Some suppliers (eg gas) insist on speaking to the card holder when taking payments. Local advertising of surgeries and payment for monthly printer copy charges are not covered. by this

By issuing me with a payment card and training me in its use, please.

I would like to pay the constituency office rent by periodic direct payment but have been told we can't because a political party holds the main lease for us.

n/a

This is of no use as the MP is far too busy and unavailable to order and pay for equipment with his card. No use for staff who do this.

Why not accommodation phone bill? You allow accommodation electricity and office phone, so this seems a bit inconsistent. But an updated, short and simple, crib sheet on how-to would be useful, ie without pages of bumph about how evil the previous system was and how wonderful IPSA is for having seen off the wicked witch of the east, sorry, Department of Resources.

Photocopying services - at the moment they are claimed using the online method

Any legitimate expense where the supplier accepts credit cards should be able to use the payment card. Starting with mobile phones would be a help.

BT charges more than £9 per quarter for landlines that are not paid by direct debit, therefore a method to avoid this payment would be helpful.

Arrange for proxy to be able to use card for payment - gets tricky eg BT

The Direct Payment to Landlords system needs to actually operate as per the published rules. I understand that in practice, IPSA runs the system on an entirely different basis - requiring things of MPs even when nothing is written about them in the rules

I would appreciate a full list of direct payment / payment card options

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

MP RESPONSES

But it can be a pain to get in to them

the improvements to online system are welcome but there are still too many screens to click through

So many keystrokes for each claim. Not entering the post code every time for regular mileage claims

Payment card form is awful, complex, slow, repetitive and duplicates work

(1) Your servers can be a little slow at times. (2) Please show on the printed claim forms all notes

IT WOULD SHORTEN THE TIME SPENT ON EXPENSES IF THE AMOUNTS ON THE RECONCILIATION FORMS WERE LISTED

I have experienced various technical issues with the system, which have required re-entering info i used to do my expenses once a year and it took three hours. now i have nothing to do with it easier to get reports of spending - quite cumbersome now

It is clumsy and slow. You can spend half an hour preparing a claim and then it crashes - losing it

Mistakes easier to rectify

A return to paper-based claims

I have found the reporting function too complicated, so do not bother with it.

(1) It is too SLOW! (2) I'd like to be able to correct mistakes when spotted on forms submitted.

no idea

1. Just one claim form 2. Please allow us to claim for longer than 3 months past.

simpler and quicker

Simpler, MP's like me do not bother claiming many expenses so 90% of system is irrelevant to me

New software. and people who know what they are doing

You should be able to put in a claim and the system should allocate the appropriate charge heading.

Being able to enter the Station direct rather than having to search for it every time on rail claims

Simplification; difficulty in accessing staffing budgets

Fewer drop down boxes. Ability to copy repeated information (e.g. Constituency train station)

More options. Sometimes not clear where claim "fits"

The mileage option is very complicated and cumbersome. I regularly give up

Mileage claims require far too much information

The online timesheets system doesn't work on a tablet - can't enter text in box to return to staff

fill down options as in excel (i often put the say things in each row)

Removed completely and move into 21st C with wholistic allowance scheme and no 'expenses' whatsoever

Loading on individual items can be incredibly slow

if i understood it better i could answer the question

If errors are made, claim form should be returned to MP in first instance to amend if necessary.

It is very slow which is the main reason it takes up so much time

Paper based claims. I work 60/70 hours a week and resent being used as your unpaid data entry clerk

Despite recent improvements it can still be slow and difficult to read on a lap-top screen.

reduce the number of screens required to submit and print copies of claims

The option to print every form means an extra click and delays processing. It is slow.

too many systems, too many passwords, too many changes too often

It's still far too "clunky". Needs a proper, tailor-made website.

the staffing budget is not as good as it could be. Its often manually adjusted

made easier & fewer crashes. staff are reduced to tears of frustration on a regular basis

Better navigation through categories - still lots of clicks, and we have to submit all paperwork too make it easier and less bureaucratic to claim small amounts

STAFF RESPONSES

As the person who handles the budget access to staffing costs would be very useful
clearer explanations of the differences between some of the subcategories
none

More detail information. I breakdown in spending

Its slow and clunky. It just doesn't flow very easily.

user friendly and practical -

The report system is useful but I could do with some training to make the most of it

Drop down categories sometimes do not fit with what the payment is for.

Remove categorisation, update the date function, documents submitted online only
that the options chosen for expenses types were understood by IPSA staff
none

Access to staffing report; document upload including staffing docs.

new form design is bad - parts of it get hidden as you scroll so I keep forgetting to fill bits in

reports are up to date enough. They should show what has been submitted and then if re-imbursed

software is not user friendly. There is still no trust in MP's from IPSA and this creates double work

Reports - difficult to work out how to actually get the information you want - simpler reports

A clearer website. It still looks dated and the images are too faint.

n/a

The software is cumbersome. Why is printing a form so laborious.

changes too often

Simplification

N/A

I wish it loaded more quickly - I find the "saved" options take so long to load it is quicker to type

Whilst the system is easy to use, it is incredibly protracted and slow

Simpler options to select from when deciding which option to use to put the claim through.

It's cumbersome. As an example, when listing MPs mileage for a few weeks, having to keep pulling
do

The box that for train travel class (standard/first) is huge and takes time to load
add claim reference numbers to the expenditure reports for easier referencing and checking.

The MPs travel section is repetitious.

Nothing to suggest

Tuition on using the bespoke reporting functions - asked for this in 2010 - no progress or feedback
the interface could be easier to use.

none

I think the system is fairly cumbersome. For example, if you are claiming Within Constituency Travel
An easier inputting screen - eg allowing us to input dates etc directly not through the calendar
To have a simple summary of expenses pending as well as those paid, so we can watch the budget.
not to have to send doc proof every month if already supplied

I find the online expenses system very slow whenever I use it. It takes a long time to input data.
the line length on the card reconciliation is too long and can only be seen at 55% ie barely visible
Simplified. Some things do not work i.e putting through a receipt for photocopier rental

More streamlined and user friendly

n/a

More detailed breakdown of items on the reports.

It would be more appropriate to have a more dynamic expenses system

Here's a great example: I tried to write an answer in this box and ran out of characters at this point
flexible arrangements for staff travel costs

The MP says the forms can take a very long time to load

I would like IPSA staff to be able to shadow, so they can see for themselves what I am telling them

More drop down options when inputting new claims

Easier login that does not change so often for staffing

I would like to know the progress of a claim ...sometimes it seems to be stuck in someone's pile for
Swifter reimbursement

I would like things not claimed in a different colour, so they are more noticeable

I would like the proxy to be able to access the same information as the MP, eg salaries

I find that the initial problems have been well and truly ironed out

The glitches in the system need removing such as required items not opening until you save them
and

a category for misc office expenses like cleaning materials etc, also a category related to events
no more changes please, I have just got used to the current system!

Make it more user friendly, and generally less rubbish

An online chat option would be useful, instead of having to call the helpline with a question.

When competing rail travel stations it would be quicker typing in rather than searching each time

I would like to be able to see what I've spent in real time, not by the end of the month.

It would be useful to be able to do staff budgetting

I would like MP's staff to be able to book their own overtime and expenses, rather than just one per

Review the transport options available and re-instate options taken away on 31/3/14

Not always able to run the reports as I am the proxy

More consistency and simplicity through the various screens. Things not always where you expect.

The reports are really difficult to access the staff budget report almost impossible to access, we

Sometimes printing copies of forms is awkward when using Google Chrome browser

Access for MPs staff to claim mileage and other expenses incurred due to doing the job.

Payment of work mobiles paid direct to staffer and not MP

On travel expenses, a simplified way to enter Constituency stations, etc which are always the same

For mileage expenses one entry for one week not a daily entry.

Be able to submit invoices by email rather than having to post it in the IPSA box.

Make interface for creating reports easier, so you don't have to use < and > symbols etc.

The use of pre-populated forms for information that doesn't change from claim to claim

I am content with the set up presently

The reports would be useful if I could make them work - please add a guide to that section
clearer guidance

monthly statements of claims made and payments made into bank

Simpler reporting systems

Far too time consuming. Constant repetition. Very slow to turn over after each entry. Reporting functi

Email updates to be sent to proxy account as well - rejections or questions.

a report breaking down travel costs per month

speed improved further

simplify further - allow scanning of documents rather than sending by post.

the ability to CONFIRM that an expense has been paid to a member and not just processed

The "station" column with no constituency station seems pointless to me.

I would like to see the list where you choose your heading from numbered.

it is slow to save if you saved each line. you can often lose work when the options stall

Open lines on each form instead of having to say new line each time and speedier click boxes.

the reports need to be simplified so that they produce what we need in the MP's office only

Reduce the £200 advances limit; cover more spending through IPSA direct purchases

no additional comments

To be easier to download reports

n/a

catagories made clearer

Easier staffing projection, and for office costs.

Greater clarity on the yearly reports

Time not just making claims but photocopying papers/cheques/checking reimbursements

The processing of overtime claims by members of staff is complex with respect to passwords

Try to make it easier to see the releavant options...

Make less repetitive for travel claims. A help button for each type of claim.

Q13 these don't seem to come in a useful format. Can't tell at a glance how much is left in a budget

The interface has improved but remains the worst expenses system I've used in several different jobs

Quicker speed when scrolling down thru options, ie on travel section, shortcut the scrolling procedu

more training for use reports etc etc

When reconciling Travelcard statements it is tedious to have to keep scrolling across the page

Need to have a system suitable for 2014, not 1994. Software is poor. System is not intuitive.

remove the necessity to print and post a paper copy of each claim/ Clearer more detailed information

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

MP RESPONSES

Ensure that they are tailored to the individual and are not generic.

Protracted exchange of correspondence after I belived I was overpaid.

It would have helped if the IPSa person had looked at the bill and noted that the services he queried had not been used at all !

on a couple of occasions I have had to phone up and send further emails to clarify why lines had been returned when similar items had previously been approved

Not really.

They are always wrong especially with small monthly claims where paperwork has been supplied. Receipts often lost and then found!!

The Process is Rigid and Clunky lacking in common sense.

THEY CLAIMED THAT NO EVIDENCE WAS SUBMITTED WITH THE CLAIM. THIS WAS INCORRECT.

I have had forms returned because of mail being delayed with hard copies.

need to be clearer

I get lots of claims returned "in error"

There is a need for the simple device of IPSA phoning to query what it is they need clarification on
no

not clear

It is always because people are not trained

Don't issue contradictory advice.

I have already written extensively about the case in question in which a ridiculous amount of public money was spent over a small figure of under £15 - complete failure of using normal business approach and value for money criteria in conducting the case

Don't understand what happens to mileage forms, why are they converted to others when I use the latest version?

If you lose (or claim not to have received) paperwork you let it wait until the claimant contacts you asking why the claim hasn't been paid. Very poor service.

No

When claims are returned to proxy, there is no notification this has happened and it's only when proxy check that we realise why claim hasn't been processed. Could email notification be sent?

Often misleading, never acknowledged and never highlighted or communicated in grown up way. And anonymous!

Sometimes - but not always - they seem a bit daft.

try english

they are sometimes wrong and ask for information already given or misunderstand your own guidance

Welcome advice, see my comment Q14

Notes are clear, logic is mystifying! I had one claim for home broadband returned because I hadn't filled out a registration form. I had and you had been paying the same invoice for 18 months!

No explanation. You have to hunt down the claim and then contact IPSA

You have returned claims because you made an error, and then you expect me to spend more time to submit a fresh claim. If you make an error, you should put the error right.

Doesn't explain the inconsistencies when identical claims are both accepted and refused.

further details are required

No, but when a claim is clearly genuine and just needs changing the category or description you should be able to do it and advise surely?

not always helpful, look as if of standard menu. most wrong

It's incomprehensible. It takes ages to sort out a small error and we feel like criminals and worry about public outrage for what is always a misunderstanding. Still feels very like we're out to be got for something and that we're all on the fiddle. I've never fiddled an expense and nor would I

STAFF RESPONSES

They could be much clearer rather than obvious standard comments

Clearer reasons for return

Sometimes they are not clear at all e.g. 'a line in this claim is incorrect'. Fine when the claim is one line long, but incredibly unhelpful when it is mileage or similar.

Sometimes claims are returned for the same reason as a previous claim despite a previous explanation being accepted.

no

If the drop down menus were more user friendly the returns would be less frequent

The reasons claims were returned were wrong, which meant a lot of time wasted explaining to IPSA staff why they were so

no

We have generally had to follow up returned claims with phone calls to get advice.

I haven't had a claim returned BUT the system for advising MPs on a claim: "put in the claim and we'll see" is, by any definition, a means to discourage claims as returned claims are published and IPSA do not mention whether MPs sought advice on the claim beforehand.

too rigid - lack of understanding of local circumstances

They could be more precise

They were extremely poor, unhelpful and did not thoroughly explain why a claim had been rejected.

N/A

They are OK

No

Read the reasons box before disputing, it usually has the legitimate reason in!

we have had returns validated upon submission of evidence. It's good that IPSA can return for clarification, rather than mark as unpaid.

I have nothing to suggest

No

Would be far clearer & easier to ask questions if a telephone call was made prior to returning a claim

They are never clear. They are formulaic and unhelpful.

Yeap. Actually admit when IPSA loss receipts.

I was disappointed as the claim was for travel on the tube paid via Oyster, which is difficult to get receipts for. You had the dates and the journey details, so why not pay it.

Include the reason for refusal in the body of the email

Not very thorough - two minutes spent making the notes understandable would save my time phoning later for clarification

No

no but the email alerting me has no ref to the claim number

We sometimes get congestion charge statements returned, however, they are the only documents available to claim the cost.

Not clear at all - have had to call IPSA to clarify

if I have not dealt with matter properly IPSA has not followed up

Always helpful and polite

no

Notification of a return is not good enough - needs to be clearer

I received a rejected claim without the opportunity to properly review it. The description was probably wrong rather than the claim being inappropriate

it varies from officer to officer. no continuity and I end up having to call to get an understanding

Yes - don't act like a policeman while pretending to offer "services". MPs and staff are human beings not computers. Address things personally and explain them, even pick up the phone rather than sending an automated message.

Sometimes you have accepted a claim and then mysteriously reject the same claim type/details

Usually written in such poor, misspelt English I have to phone for clarification. More time spent.

I don't do the MP's claims

Sometimes things are returned for the same reason over and over..our claim for office energy costs is returned most times even though detailed notes accompany the form. However, when i follow up with a phone call it seems to do the trick.

No

it would be helpful if my boss has already approved the payment if I could make any changes without referring it back to him. I have been nominated as a proxy and he trusts me to get on with it.

Sometimes unclear. Also decision are not constistant- some things are let through and then the next week are rejected,

They were not clear as to the reason or what action was required and when calling the telephone line was told that I did not have to do anything, just submit again - confusing as to why the claim was returned

They are not always cleaer

no

They need to be more detailed...I always have to follow it up with a phone call to get a better explanation.

We have 3 phone lines in our offices. I claimed for the three phone lines in exactly the same way, yet one of them was rejected. The reason being that the 'transaction date' was not correct, yet I had made all the other claims exactly the same.

Most of the forms that have been returned were returned incorretly, which wastes time as they then need to be resubmitted again by the MP

No

Try to make them look less accusatory. They are not very clear as to why they are being returned. Also don't send stroppy letters about us not having done our travel reconciliations on time when we have. The letters threaten all sorts of bad punishments and most of the time, it's an IPSA mistake one of the claims this year - was sent to you with the paperwork 4 times - faxed and posted

na

Only one claim returned which was not our fault but BTs, your systems were very poor recording the information, still showing on report when issue was all sorted out in January. You kept asking for information which we had sent and when checked you had the information any way. Over a week ago I asked for information and no one has returned my call so will have to chase for the third time.

We had a claim returned with a request for substantiating evidence even though all the items were booked via Hillgate Travel.

They should be as detailed as possible and it would be useful to have a call/email alongside this to go over the reasons

No.

N/a

Explanations do vary and often need to follow up with a phone call

no

Frequently have to check notes and find out not accurate and changed when challenged. Waste of time again. Seems to depend on who is doing them.

IPSA wasted our time sending the claim back!

the claim categories still do not easily fit all scenarios

Mostly they are clear. However, sometimes details are overlooked hence the explanation isn't necessarily relevant.

I have emailed several times and stated in forms that flybe flights are booked through the travel office and then have to waste time with it being queried

A bit more detail could be useful sometimes

Ludicrous

Your email letting us know that a claim has been returned does not include a claim number which makes it difficult to cross reference it back to the original paperwork and the reasons for returning the claim are not always included in the email advising us that the claim has been returned - we need to access the explanatory notes online which means logging in etc.

No

Several claim lines have been incorrectly returned, when it ought to have been clear why they were permissible. Sometimes a claim is returned despite an identical claim and explanatory note having been approved the previous month. This creates unnecessary extra work for staff.

need to be more specific

Had not realised that some claims are paid automatically. This caused confusion when a paid expense on one claim form was then returned on another one!

Lack of consistency.

All of the notes contradicted guidance issued to our office previously, and all returned claims were eventually processed.

n/a

Email only goes to MP so I do not always receive them within sufficient time.

Usually badly spelt and unclear, which is rather insulting. Surely IPSA should be able to spell correspondence?? It's even wrong on website. Sometimes complete gobbledegook.

they could be more detailed

Send an email explaining rather than just saying, look this claim number up in the system, they have to be dealt with by individuals at either end not a computer

Clear enough

it was impossible to see rejection reason online. Needed to call and speak to somebody who offered a verbal explanation from info held internally by IPSA.

No

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

MP RESPONSES

Small claims processed promptly. Larger ones take longer

It is very unpredictable which given the repeat nature of the claims in some cases is odd. We have two outstanding one from April and one from May we are chasing.

the speed of making reimbursemnt payments is still variable - this has an impact on my personal finances from month to month

It has speeded up a bit.

Far too many claims returned due to mistakes by IPSA

coming from a Business background, I fail to see why it costs £6 million to administer expences to 650 people i.e. £10,000 for each MP! The system is flawed.

I am still bearing the cash flow lag between spending the money and being reimbursed.

IT TOOK 6 WEEKS TO REGISTER. I HAD TO PAY OVER £3000 IN ADVANCE BECAUSE OF THIS.

Usually ok, but mistakes happen

some claims have taken a long time to process

Speed is very inconsistent and qualityt of processing is patchy

Sometimes can take a while to process payments for no real reason

Speed is good but I have an outstanding IPSA error that has not been corrected despite numerous calls and emails

The payments are reliable but the submission process is cumbersome.

I am generally happy with IPSA

too slow for simple things. adding an intern or a car can take two weeks

I don't pay any attention as claim very little

It's not perfect and when you have a problem your opening hours are too restricted.

payments are at times slow for no reason - recent case of almost 2 weeks to receive a substantial payment from the time it was marked as approved on your system

Some take a long while, also mileage comments as above

Travel is quick. Rest too slow leads to up claimable bank charges

It still seems unfriendly and unhelpful. We always feel that you will find'against' MPs because of the fear of press backlash.

Sometimes larger payments appear to take longer than smaller ones and those are where the delay is greatest

In recent weeks, the speed of processing has improved. It had previously been slow.

One could always do with the money sooner

Because from the very top you HAVE been duplicitous, underhand, weasily and overbearing. Need anymore?

Some - but by no means all - payments take too long. There should be an absolute maximum of about 10 days.

Speed of dealing with claims has improved considerable but still room for improvement.

Random claims seem to get lost in the system and take months.

Most seem to work out ok. Seems that late claims are refused for no reason other than that is the policy

It can take months to get a claim processed. You keep changing the rules about what data you require. Sometimes I submit what you have asked for and then tell me you have changed your mind and want something different. Your decisions are chaotic and inconsistent.

Can take a few weeks to get reimbursed sometimes longer.

some claims are processed and paid quickly, others seem to take ages. Some payments are made without a remittance advice which causes problems on verifying which claims have been paid and which are still outstanding.

The processing means I am still owed money at the end of each month

It's considerable better. A lot of improvement.

don't watch for speed of payment, life too short. staff don't seem to have ability to understand, or explain, rules

Length of time processing some claims -

Speed of payment is quite variable and this can be big sums that we've paid for out of personal money.

slow and confusing

STAFF RESPONSES

It's usually done within the 14 days it is suggested it will take but sometimes it isn't

it took 6 weeks to register a property, during which time the MP had to pay £1408 and claim it back

I think claims are being processed faster

Some claims seem to be processed much faster than others.

It's not consistent and as everything has already been entered I struggle to understand why processing takes so long. Also clearly when someone new joins the team they question things firstly

with the member as opposed to looking over past records and checking with more experienced staff. This is frustrating.

Service speed has increased recently

varies too widely

poor, inefficient - absolutely impractical

The system is still laborious to use.

because claims take weeks to process, because claims returned demonstrate IPSA still does not understand how staff or MPs work nor what they do

dont deal with payments through IPSA

Could all be faster, especially processing payments once approved.

I still have to chase IPSA sometimes to see why a claim hasnt been processed

Travel expenses take too long

still think it is slow in making payments ot staff who are out of pocket for things like travel,

Claims still take too long to be paid - frequently getting bank charges for being overdrawn. Quality of service is OK but nothing special - would expect more

Website still fails from time to time.

The speed and service hasn't changed significantly from previous years

this is down to the staff who are always helpful and very patient!

My money is usually refunded within 7-10 days.

Some claims go through quicker than others - Mileage and train tickets for example while Office Costs appear to take longer. Quality of service is exceptional under the circumstances. No one loves the IPSA process, it should be quicker to insert claims instead of laboriously clicking on every box to insert information

It depends on who the claim is allocated - some are faster at processing than others and if the person is on holiday it gets stuck in the loop until you phone up and query and then it is released to someone else.

The system is complex so the responses are naturally slow and cumbersome

Cash flow is still a problem in receiving payment for items paid for by office on average 3 weeks

I do get conflictng advice on some things! which can lead to me to making claims in the wrong way, then IPSA pursue me and we start all over again!

Service of IPSA Staff is good, but member and staff are without money for too long

It takes an age for expenses payments to be made

Simply because its a great deal improved on previous years, however it does slow down in April/May, I assume because of year end?

I don't make claims in my role

Whilst usually good, at times the speed of processing has been fairly slow.

Several errors in correctly processing. Speed is a lot better

Very satisfied

Some claims seem to take far longer than others. Why?

Nothing to offer in this section

I track time between submission of claim and receipt of money in our bank - speeded up on this time last year; would like some tangible feedback when some of the direct payments are deducted - as we get for rents. As to quality of service - still not resolved a query as to year end totals for 2013 / 2014 which started on 21/05/14. Also, I maintain my own spreadsheet for budget, claims etc and 'check off' when Ipsa claims have been processed etc - it is very infuriating when the totals are

Haven't got the time

because responses are slow and answers contradictory. There sense is that you are trying to catch us out rather than help us.

In last few weeks since Marcial Boo took over noticed increased speed of processing. However, issue still remains in processing staff expenses who on the whole because of the pay bands imposed by ipsa don't get paid very much and in some instances are asked to shoulder the burden of perhaps £100 even £200 worth of expenses until they are paid back.It's not right and its not fair.

See previous comments about the wrong advice and delays in processing claims

It could be quicker when paying staff.

paid promptly

Documents lost by Ipsa, card suspense for more than once in error

Takes a while for expenses to be reimbursed.

Day to day claims are processed in a timely manner but would like to see advance payments turned around quicker. Often I do not received "chck remittances" so am not aware that the money has been paid until I get a bank statement

I feel the speed of processing could be improved, it currently takes too long to process claims.

Most of the time the speed is satisfactory but occasionally it does take longer than you would expect.

the system is utterly confusing to reconcile with 3 options - claim, card recon, direct pmt fr supplier to IPSA - clear as mud

The speed of processing can take up to a month but I appreciate their are 650 MPs to deal with. The quality is fine.

We need to be able to pay bills over £200 more quickly and have to wait until IPSA has cleared them usually pretty good but can be quite exasperating on occasion

Remittance always comes through promptly and whenever I have a question about processing it is met politely and effectively

Processing seems to be fairly good but could maybe be a little faster. The quality of service seems good

There are delays in the process

do not always receive notice of payment for every claim; some payments are missed and left outstanding until they are chased, with no explanation of why.

this year we have not received all of our remittance slips. there is a significant delay in receiving them when we do

It takes ages and ages to pay expenses. I often have to pay hundreds of pounds I don't have from my personal account and wait weeks to get it back, incurring overdraft and interest charges before you pay. And staff shouldn't have to wait three weeks to get a £20 taxi fare back.

Speed of processing does a while and copies of claims should be copied into their proxy as well as the M.P otherwise having to find out directly by IPSA if the claim has been processed

Claims are dealt with erratically; notification of a claim's success or otherwise equally erratic. The bigger the claim, the longer it takes IPSA to reimburse. I also object to IPSA staff answering any and every query with, 'well, you don't have to claim it, do you!' If it is an allowable expense, it's an allowable expense, not for them to pass judgment.

Remittances are so to be sent out

No

I don't do the MP's claims

Sometimes speed is a bit slow.

In the past there has been a long delay in IPSA actioning matters and also conflicting information from members of IPSA staff regarding which budget to use.

Normal day to day is fast but the slightest problem that is not the norm is very slow

A couple of errors recently IPSA end that could have led to major problems. Processing time had gotten far quicker but again slowed recently.

I have rated the quality of service as Very Dissatisfied because my issues are not resolved in a satisfactory time.

A few of our claims took longer than expected to be processed.

I have in the past had to enquire by telephone how long it will be before payment can be made

Processing is sometimes very slow and has been held up by strange requests

One claim i put through recently took quite a long time compared to normal. It was being repaid to a member of staff who had paid for his own train travel which left him short of money for a few weeks.

Speed: time varies greatly for claim to be processed. Whilst I appreciate there will be busy periods, it is quite erratic. I think the quality of the service has improved immensely from the earlier days

Claims are cleared usually within 10 days and I don't have to chase payment

I am fairly satisfied with the speed of service and having the telephone line open throughout the day helps a lot as it saves you waiting for the afternoon to call.

Some times the processing can take over three weeks this needs to be quicker

It's embarrassing when interns are in the office and I cannot give a definitive date as to when their expenses will be put back into their account.

Although I appreciate that processing claims takes time, I am still conscious that MPs, but more importantly unpaid interns, have paid money from their own pockets, and have to wait to have this repaid. However, I am not sure you could improve your service times by much!

It would be useful for cash flow purposes if the claims were processed quicker.

Claims are processed in the time I would expect and I always find IPSA staff to be very helpful and well informed.

because of delays in [some] payments we find we are paying bank charges for an overdraft facility

It takes far too long for staff claims for travel that the MP has made them take, to be paid back to them

the processing of claims has improved greatly since last year

It takes too long to process and payment into bank account

Can be hit or miss, fine if everything straightforward but poor if there is an issue

Speed is as good as one could expect, the quality less so as a result of the sometimes confusing online payment process.

we recently had an email saying we owed lots of money from 3 years ago, I was very upset by this ... i ignored it because I was too busy to try and find out why (but had sleepless nights) then a few days another email to say this was all a mistake and we didn't owe this money no apology, this is a terrible way to treat people

Some claims, and unfortunately particularly those for travel costs of volunteers, have been processed very slowly. Speed of processing is very variable generally

I do not know when the payment is made into the MP's account so don't know how fast this is

I appreciate the workload is great, but on some occasions it takes quite some time.

Most people on the info line are very helpful, but on occasion I have known more about the rules than they have and been given contradictory advice.

Speed of processing can fluctuate

Only fairly satisfied with speed because some of the claims seem to take much longer than others submitted at the same time.

As per earlier question, speed of e-mail response has been slow

Speed of processing has improved but there are still lots of mistakes in correspondence and processing of claims. Emails still sometimes go unanswered.

Would be very useful if advance payments could be make quicker.

I don't think I always get the confirmation slips when claims have been paid, which I retain for my records

There has been an occasion where I have had to pursue the matter more than once to finalise a claim that was a straightforward claim for processing.

Payment notifications MUST be consistent and timely

Speed of processing varies. Quality of service and advice varies, have on regular occassions been given wrong advice

It has improved but system still cotains too many repetitive requirements

Claims could be quicker (especially helpful when claiming expenses for volunteers). No complaint on the quality.

Return of payments on mass doesn't match what was sent in and then takes up time having to match them up with initial forms to check. Not all returns are notified by email.

Speed of processing payments direct to the Member for them to then pay on is sometimes a little slow

claims are on system very quickly and payments made

seems to take the maximum length of time for most office expenses to be paid

it takes about 2 weeks to get payments made and this can cause some problems with some suppliers

speed of claims being processed varies considerably and often claims seem to be suddenly processed in a group

Speed isn't always as quick as promised (2wks)+ IPSA has been sitting on claims for weeks before telling there was something wrong with it. Not acceptable, communicate the problem quicker and then let us get on with it.

Normally all works smoothly and if we have any questions they can be answered quickly

Individual staff members like [REDACTED] are helpful . IPSA takes too long to process claims and then refuses to pay because they are out of time. MP has been left out of pocket for costs clearly associated with work.

All fine, it goes through quickly

The average turn around time does seem to have improved this year

It takes ages to process some things. Intern registration being one of them on many occasions and payment card reconciliations

Some claims appear to take much longer to process than others especially travel, mileage and subsistence claims

System generally works efficiently and staff are knowledgeable about the scheme.

claims are processed much quicker, but advance claims do still take some time to process

needs to be quicker

Service from staff in general is very good. Some claims have taken a long time to process and this has created problems with cash flow.

As a zero sum claim we often have to delay paying suppliers for cash flow reasons. Some claims still take nearly a month to pay.

Some claims still take a long time. Quality of service varies. Phone line hours very frustrating but hopefully this will change with extended hours

Once submitted the claims passed fairly quickly, its just the errors on returns slowed down progress

Sometimes have had to chase reimbursements, particular problem is bill hasn't been paid

Advance payments can be too slow.

I cannot track the claims; there have been receipts lost (50% so far) and I have had to re-submit all the claims. I have lost confidence in the sending of receipts by mail to IPSA, and the ability of IPSA to connect those receipts to the online claims I have made.

where claims are fairly simple, standard and uncontroversial, I can't see why it should take more than 2 days

n/a

Though improved there remains issues resulted from how badly this system was initially set up

The bigger the claim, the longer IPSA takes. V embarrassing when it's a local company waiting to be paid

the speed of processing the claims is good, but sometimes staff can be rather flippant especially when answering seemingly simple questions - but as the rules are rigid clarification is often necessary

It takes ages to pay expenses, they come out of my personal account and I have a cash flow problem. When I speak to your staff they are great, but the system is dire.

I think you need a category between 'Very satisfied' and 'Fairly satisfied', as your inbuilt satisfaction ratio is otherwise 2:4 down

Occasionally, office volunteer lunch and travel expenses have been delayed for several days in processing. They need payments processed as quickly as those to the MP.

Seems to vary and not always clear when payment made - no longer receive emails??

We have received quick and efficient service

Takes too long to process claims. IPSA makes up rules on the spot rather than operating in line with the published rules.

As I was not aware of all payment card/ direct payment options

20. How could IPSA improve the payroll services it provides?

MP RESPONSES

the calculation tools are useful but it would be helpful to have additional support when dealing with sickness/absence

I find them very helpful - the best bit of IPSA

Time sheet option cumbersome

Having to access online time sheets with another password is inconvenient. I have tried to use the flexible job description tool, but had trouble

get rid of the ridiculous job description system and allow us to pay underpaid staff bonuses when there is cash available

more consistent information and better communication - I have major problems on the interpretation of the sickness rules and staff disadvantaged due to failure to pay on time

I have never been able to get the budget report to work

send advice about public sector pay rises eg 1% this year to remind MPs it can be implemented

more accuracy

Speak directly to member of staff affected instead of MP, who is often in a different location

Pay somebody outside to do this.

Improve the access to staff budget

Casual contracts look like zero hours

The online timesheets system isn't accessible on a tablet. You can't enter text in the box needed to return the timesheet to a member of staff. It is hard to view on a tablet generally. The different 'hour' types have also led to some confusion. Explanations would be helpful for staff

Be more responsive, receptive and root itself in 21st C practices...

Acknowledging receipt of forms or letters so as employer I know they are 'in the system' and progressing.

Take over HR and staff recruitment

By treating my staff with greater respect. They feel that IPSA does not respect them or understand the difficult job they do.

The staffing report should be available immediately after the payroll has been run so that we can see what payments have been made.

if the payroll IT was integrated with the ipsa report instead of being collated and manually adjusted it would be better

Provide clearer information about different implications of fixed term and permanent contracts

Massively! Staff do not know the issues. We have payroll trying to provide bad personnel advice. When you have a staffing challenge or even a routine issue such as cover it does not feel like there's any sense of urgency. The JD tool is a bit untested but we're all afraid to get something wrong...

update the totals more promptly

STAFF RESPONSES

Give access to Proxys, the member obviously trusts them enough to be proxys so why can't the member decide if they have access to staffing budgets

give clear examples how to pro rate annual leave and pay

The online timesheets are not reliable or clear - they need a format makeover

Again this system is not easy to navigate and the titles of things are unclear and not in what I would consider to be the obvious place to look for them

Less frequent password changes

Get an easy to use reliable system that is simple

Payments to MPs need to have a quicker turn round, waiting up to 4 weeks on reimbursement is too long

Scrap online timesheets. Hours should be submitted by email and processed by ipsa payroll department.

Not make so many mistakes, and apologise when you do (preferably someone senior apologising and correcting the errors). Feel like I cannot trust payroll after so many mistakes with my maternity pay & childcare vouchers.

dont know

Accept digital documents.

re-design to form so that it is fit for purpose again.

Staffing reports should be able to be used as a tool to project pay increases, new staff members etc

Overall I have found them to be very good

Not have to change your password every time you log in to timesheets online. Make a programme compatible with Google Chrome. Have to use in Internet Explorer.

Allow direct contact with payroll staff members by MPs staff especially when it affects them directly.

n/a

I would like my payslip on time the law states payslips should be received on or before pay day sometimes mine is several days after. Also i would like information on the online time sheets.

Allowing changes to staff pay entirely at the MP's behest so long as it sits within the pay limits

Pay slips often arrive several days after 'pay day'. Whilst I accept 2nd Class postage, couldn't they be mailed out earlier?

Making sure customer service after IPSA errors is greatly improved

I've never been able to access these once submitted and approved - makes it difficult to see ref budgeting

By making it easier for the person who has access to the MP's account able to get the information.

The staffing reports are helpful, although it takes a little time to make them printer friendly.

Getting the pay right in the first place. IPSA made three huge errors in my payment and one in my colleagues. It makes me wonder how many other mistakes are happening.

With the new move to passwords, it would be nice if IPSA did not constantly change passwords for timesheets. If you are operating the MPs IPSA account on payroll as well as claims - you have to remember three passwords, as well as your own passwords for the website and the password for the payroll tool. I have still yet to receive my P60 form, I have spoken to a few MPs staff who are in the same position. Surely it can't be that hard to churn them all off a few weeks after the end of the year?

Nothing to offer in this section

Allow access to sample / standard contracts which are 'amendable'

Not interested in payroll services, but human resources support far more useful

quicker and accurate responses.

Online pay slips. Online application for travel loans

Currently difficult to download staffing budgets - apparently it depends on the operating system in use - but still very frustrating

Not sure

Allow foreign interns to receive payment without having a UK bank account

by giving us correct updates - several times the off cost reports and staffing reports have been confusing as they include prof services and intern reimbursements which don't always show up

The Staffing Budget report needs to be clearer about the projected expenses

More guidance and information about how to use these services

Consolidating all job forms into one for new job role

have not heard of flexible job description tool; time sheets process very cumbersome with different 2 passwords which seem to expire frequently

it is not explained in lay man's language and so can get confusing. we have stopped claiming overtime as the timesheet system is a nightmare.

Online timesheets is ok but when you want to do part hours doesn't seem to work. Flexible job descriptions is a sticking plaster. How can you make an MP an employer and then say they must choose from a JD someone else provides. They have a budget and should decide what to pay and what roles the people should fulfil. Stupid to hold them responsible to other people's definitions.

By answering communications sent to it, and even better, within a couple of weeks. Confirmation of important information should be given in writing, including confirmation of a leaver's status. I shouldn't have to check IPSA has stopped salary, pension etc. My staffing budget function has never worked and IPSA don't know why. On line time sheets have to have a new password every time they are used. Why?

By passing them over to House of Commons - as staff we do not work for IPSA. We have no HR dept.

Not sure if Payroll makes reimbursement payments to staff but if they do I cannot see why the payment has to go into the MP's account rather than our own when it is our reimbursement payment.

Perfectly satisfied

N/A

Should be able to provide more information to designated member of staff

by being able to work with google chrome

As a member of staff I have felt very confused about what information and support is available from IPSA. I have worked in a number of large organisations and the lack of any kind of central HR support in Parliament is unprecedented in my experience. IPSA will not provide me with any support in relation to pensions -they tell me to phone the Portcullis providers. Nor will IPSA give me any advice about my NIC or Income Tax deductions from my paycheck. I've found it a limited and unhelpful service

In recent months we have had to request contingency funding. The path was not easy with conflicting advice being given. It would be extremely helpful to receive a direct answer to a direct question

Cut off date for new starters is too soon. An employee starting on 16th June won't get paid until 31.07.14

satisfied with the service

Probably not. The service is fine

The staffing budget report shouldn't need you to hold down control to open successfully.

The way in which payroll info is laid out on the website could be better - the forms should be made easier to locate.

Process new staff pay quicker. If we miss the 15th then our poor new member of staff doesn't get paid until the end of the next month

It would help if we received a confirmation that information had been received i.e. when details of a new staff member have been submitted or a season ticket loan application

By allowing me to have access to the staff budgeting tool

Enable more users to use the service and have one system for overtime and expenses

Time sheets cannot be approved by the proxy who as the Office Manager I know the hours worked, sent straight to the MP who is now a minister and there is no way of checking

More notice that the budget is close to running out perhaps a direct email

make it possible to access, the system is terrible, it hardly ever works

I have looked at the flexible job description tool but not used it yet.

online

Flexible job description tool is a little too simplistic!

Even more flexibility is needed on job roles. The new job description tool is very narrow

Online timesheets don't make the date that the claim is for very clear, i.e. which week

Occasional problems with accuracy of staffing budget report

Staffing budget report - would be good to see zero hours staff payments on there for past months.

Online timesheet - doesn't show you the month when in individual authorisation.

Return calls and messages left. Reply to emails promptly.

Clear guidelines on calculating annual leave for part-time staff - who do not work 5 days and their hours of work are different on each day

Have professional, well informed and properly trained experts taking calls, have direct access to managers, have a response time to respond to queries, have an immediate new password delivery, have a new online timesheet system whereby you can see claims put in to whom and authorisation deadlines

I am content with the system presently

Some staff found it hard to get on to the system. the staff budget report is quite complicated, would like to see simpler forecasting tool.

If job descriptions match up with the jobs needing done that will be an improvement.

The JD tool could be improved if you were able to pick and choose responsibilities from different job titles - staff often cross over the roles and the JD needs to reflect this.

Keep a running total of balance due on Season Ticket Loans on the Pay Slip

Lack of help with pension queries for new member of staff very disappointing

I haven't got any issues with it. Always seemed very well and efficient.

Don't know

n/a

Even as a proxy I can't seem to access the staffing budget report. The job descriptions are pretty awful.

an email acknowledgement of receipt of forms to Payroll, i.e. employee leaver form or new starter form, but be very helpful as you would know they have definitely been received.

no comments

to give a query a unique log number

The online timesheets can only be used in internet explorer, this should be changed. Also having to change my password every time I log on is far from ideal!

have had no problems and feel it works well

Logging on can be a pain - should be universal access on any device - any browser. there is an ongoing issue abt which IExplorer to use - if you are up to date, its hard to log onto timesheets, needs a rethink

Make staff projections easier and recruitment of temporary staff less bureaucratic.

The change password function on timesheets is very clunky meaning that passwords have to be repeated a number of times shen they are changed

payroll reports to be made available to proxy in part or in full

Online timesheets are difficult to access for members of staff and MPs.

I don't think the job titles match up to the content of tasks - still needs more flexibility

Create a dedicated section for Office Manager's on the website

In macro terms, by taking over employment directly instead of offering MPs confusing, inaccurate a and sometimes downright illegal 'advice' on staffing matters. Then staff could sue IPSA instead of risking the publicity of taking an MP to court. e

Time sheets is a bit clunky but works. The JDs tool is just silly, you can't have standard JDs when everyone needs to be so flexible. The system makes employers liable as employers but without the right to write their own JD and disburse budget as they see fit. Any title or role should be ok as long as it's public

No comment

Allow proxy to view staff budget report. Give MPs total flexibility over what they include in the job descriptions and job titles of their staff.

This works well and contact is good.

Q22 was 'Which of the following were your reasons for not claiming a business cost or expense?'

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

MP RESPONSES

I do not claim for many items, partly because I do not agree with charging evening meals, partly because items are too small to worry about.

To answer Q22 there are more than 1 reason for not claiming and the system do not permit this. Small claims are picked up by the press as "tight" MPs.

I could have ticked a number of boxes in Q23 if you had allowed it

system too complicated. only small claim. worried about it being published

I wanted to chose more than 1 option. Small claims, too long, too complicated and not worth claiming

I do not believe certain permissable expenses should actually be allowed eg TV licences, meals on late sittings.

FIVE (5) OF THE OPTIONS WERE APPLICABLE - BUT ONLY ONE "TICK" WAS ALLOWED! The five were Numbers 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7

Lots of small claims take lots of time, and it is not worth it. Take too long for the amounts involved.
a combination of several of the above

The claim was for computer broadband installation at my home £540 and I was unaware I could claim for this until after the 90 day period

The press would manipulate the information to get a headline.

Everyone should be given a set amount in one pot to pay staff, office costs and everything required to run an office - when its gone, its gone! This would be far simpler

The first two and the sixth, but you can't enter more than one so the result will be skewed in IPSA's favour.

Small claims paid are poicked up by the media and are damaging - there is a need to review reporting

All of the above. What a badly designed survey.

Actually it was four of them but I could only choose one, tipical of IPSA not really wanting an answer

Q22 - you can only select one - when many actually apply - seems to me to defeat the purpose of the q

I wanted to tick several boxes but you system does not allow this - yet another example of poor online form design.

Would only allow me to tick one - also small claim and worried how it would look when published.

My choice

answer varies but a combination of first 3 + unsure of amount claimable

Most of the above at some point

We have to go through the same process for £5 or £500 it's a very expensive system (in both time and money). There's no risk assessment. I always fear claiming the occasional taxi because they are always queried but they add up! And when you pay a lot in childcare to do the job it's hard to pay for taxis on top as well.

STAFF RESPONSES

I have to purchase items for the constituency office but you insist on repaying this directly to the MP who I then have to chase for payment. Why should a staff member have to wait up to a month to be reimbursed? Why can this not operate along the same lines as mileage claims?

On the list above i would pick more than one option. I would pick 1, 2, 3, 6 & 7

I work from home (legitimately) but feel home expenses would be considered to be unreasonable.

small claim not sure if allowed, worried about being published or rejected

Possible criticism in the press

there were a number, too small, time involved, publishing of the claim

It is not always possible to get receipts.

for small claims it is too long - to log on and claim back small amounts - and purchases bought cheaply in markets (pencils etc) dont get receipts given.

x

The claim was totally legitimate but when it appears as ...MP claimed for £2 for pencils it would incur ridicule. There are lots of similar examples.

staff had to use own car to travel but as not registered could not claim

Impossible to check in advance whether it fell in the scheme rules. IPSA said, put it in and we'll think about it. Not good enough and clearly another way to discourage claims and so justify IPSA's existence

We already run over on office costs because of business rates so we tend to try not to spend anything on the office budget, if we need small items we buy them ourselves.

I had to park my car at the train station when travelling to Westminster to work for the day (I am based in the constituency). It was an extremely long day, late when I got back and I was very tired and I forgot to press for a receipt. I would have been unabl to claim without a receipt but feel IPSA could have checked the train travel ticket for that day and would have known I had been working in London so felt I should have been able to put the claim through.

The company would not provide receipts as required by IPSA so unable to provide proof of payment being received, also claims were only approximately £10

I was worried about the claim being published and the process of justification was far too complicated. The rules are not clear enough.

My Member chooses not to claim for food and drink where applicable as considers that this would be an unacceptable item to claim for

The claim would be repaid to the Member's account which I believe is wrong. If a member of staff makes a claim for postage for example, it should be repaid to his/her own account.

All of the above!

Went past the deadline.

There are more than one reason for not making claims. Basically it ends up taking so long to sort out you don't bother and also don't want to be criminalized if get it wrong.

It was outside the claim period and worried about publication of rejected claim

There was a mixture of reasons from the above: small claim, concern when claim published

and would take too long and too complicated

Too complicated for the size of claim and the time it would take

IPSA refused to discuss in advance whether it was allowable & MP worried about the possibility of a public refusal AND having to pay for it in the end anyway. So we took more expensive lease option.

This question won't let me click more than one, but of these the first, second, third and sixth apply. On another occasion didn't claim as receipt was >3months old as it was mislaid

Date was out of time

Choose not to claim for some items that are allowable, e.g. coffee, tea, cleaning supplies etc.

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

MP RESPONSES

No complaints

The pay review was ludicrous and mishandled.

the way that the proposed rise in MPs pay in next parliament was dealt with had an impact on how my constituents perceived my current remuneration. I don't believe enough was done by IPSA to counter that by

I think the public all think we have had about 4 pay rises of 11% just during the life of this Parliament and that we still vote on our own pay. Thus the whole reform has not really registered.

IPSA let us hang on the so-called salary change. I received abuse for a package that leaves me worse off and was not of my doing. It was a blatant failure to support MPs and restarted the whole issue of greedy MPs. IPSA completely failed in their duty of care towards us.

The Public do not think MPs should be remunerated fairly. The Chancellor & all Party leaders will not agree with your recommendation for 11% pay rise and IPSA have completely failed to get their point across to the public yet the public think MPs are giving themselves a 11% rise. The worst of both worlds.

I believe IPSA sometimes are too worried about the red tops and their reaction to IPSA decisions.

The assessment of the MP's proposed salary increase was reasonable and robust. The timing of the publication and presentation was inept.

Does IPSA really think MPs should earn less than deputy head teachers, council officers, GPs, pharmacists, Lt Colonels

the very negative approach that IPSA took at the outset (you are all MPs therefore you must be trying to claim for things to which you are not entitled) has still not been changed. IPSA is now more neutral but is still more concerned about its own reputation than that of law-abiding MPs

The public distrust MPs pay and conditions more than ever. There has to be an explanation on what it does.

Not sure they fully understand the role of an MP

IPSA has not represented MPs expenses well in the Press, even when expenses are legitimate

Because IPSA is dabbling in things which are none of their statutory business!

The proposals on the pay review were not necessary at the time they were made, for possible implementation years ahead in 2015/6 and at the time when the public sector is on a pay squeeze.

It is of benefit to me to be able to refer any moans about expenses to you, as an INDEPENDENT body.

Not enough is being done to reassure the public that most MPs work hard, don't abuse expenses and are good vfm

rate it against what or whom?

The way the pay review was handled was poor. Public think WE were asking for big pay rise

MPs are badly underpaid when compared to chief executives of local authorities whose roles are less responsible

too much spin and you keep telling the public we are having a pay rise which is untrue but they believe we have awarded ourselves an 11% increase

IPSA seems more interested in developing thier brand and reason for existing rather than focusing on restoring trust in MP's, most of us were not even elected during the scandals

The lack of understanding out side the civil service.

Because your timelines mean that you announce a decision long before it will be implemented created a vacuum for fabricated stories. The 11% pay rise is a classic because the rise is paid for by other T&C cuts. You don't contribute to solving the problem. you make it worse.

Handling of sensitive issues ie. pay review has been lamentable

The announcement of the pay review proposals was very badly handled

I don't think you have made any difference to how the public view MPs and the expenses system.

IPSA caused a public furore over the planned MP pay rise. It was very badly explained to the public

Not really how you administer but shortcomings of overall system

We have the worst of both worlds - an expenses system that means you have to pay to do your job, particularly if you are a Minister, and a delight in being seen to be tough - which leads the media and public to loose confidence in Parliament.

When Tabloids criticise IPSA needs to defend its own rules

Expenses or allowances & salary vs pension. No MP can possibly think you do a good job.

The pay recommendation is fairly sensible but timing and manner of publishing it could be better.

Because that want you are.

clear and proportionate

Significant improvements in administration since 2010

System seems transparent

IPSA provides very poor value for public money. Your annual cost is hugely greater than the cost of wrongful overclaiming by MPs in the past. Overclaiming had to be stopped - and you have done so - but with an inefficient and disproportionately costly system.

much publicity is generated on claims, particularly for small items, which is unfairly reported. IPSA should ensure that these are challenged

The fuss over the increase in mps salaries

public still dont understand the pay and expenses

IPSA sees its role as to justify itself rather than explain

Generally fit for purpose

IPSA completely failed to undrestand the media's ability to misunderstand either deliberately or failure to read statments fully or an inability

There's more focus on media and publicity than on regulation. Loopholes still remain but you focus on the public and their views without really explaining the role. It was outrageous that the chairman said publicly that he dd not understand the role. He should do. It's embarrassing that he doesn't and he's paid by taxpayers to understand what MPs do. The salary issue was particularly badly handled.

neede to consult more with Members regarding performance of your regulatory role

STAFF RESPONSES

its a thankless task!

People still think staffing and office budgets are "expenses" I think it should be made clearer. Staff are essential to help an MP do his job and so not be classed as an "expense"

I think the process is transparent which the public can see i if they eish.

The average cost of processing claim

Public isn't reassured, cost of IPSA is disproportionately high

MP's staff seem to be treated with more suspicion by IPSA than MPs themselves.

The public still doesn't trust MP's. They still don't understand that MP's don't actually have all this money in their bank accounts etc

Very transparent

too worried about media reaction

I do not know a single MP who thinks it is this way, in fact the public, people, constituents I speak to still are as dissatisfied as they were when it happened

I do not think it is in the interest of MPs, those who work for MPs or the wider body politics for MPs to be given an 11% payrise at the current time. This looks bad on us all.

In my view the system has taken it too far. I believe the costs to the taxpayer was less using the old system.

Information for the public could be more user friendly.

I think IPSA defending salary increases for MPs helps constituents understand that their increase was independently decided

because I believe IPSA constrains MPs and their staff from doing a good job, from wanting to do a good job, and makes us all feel like criminals waiting to be caught. IPSA should exist for the benefit of MPs and staff, and not just as a watchdog for the public

the suggested pay rise for MPs whilst staff have low incremental increase

Put MPs in a difficult position at a time when discussion of pay increasing pay well above inflation was unpalatable for public and politicians. A complete media mess.

Haven't had any major problems

what they do is very well in terms of publishing and oversight etc. But i dont feel they are proactive or visible enough in trying to change public perception

IPSA still gives the impression that ALL MPs are trying to buck the expenses system - MPs and staff have to be whiter than white - we have to defend ourselves against the public and press

No idea what you communicate to the public or in what form or if most of the public are even aware. But we do get silly stuff appearing in local press which has been untrue and had to be rescinded.

It takes too much time and effort - eg to claim £2 for 2 x £1 local newspapers

As mentioned, when MPs ask for advice on a claim, I understand they are told to put the claim in and "we'll see", but if the claim is rejected the fact it was rejected is published without the context of an MP having requested claims advice beforehand.

Because you have failed to convince the politicians, let alone the public that MPs are worth their pay

It does what it says on the tin!

Transparent for the public

Can't really comment - I'm not aware of IPSA saying much in public.

Whilst being transparent re expenses often the expenses are published in a very subjective way - ie 1 month - and thus taken out of context from the bigger picture

Proposal on MP's pay - completely inappropriate given economy.

I think IPSA is a good thing, although what the public perceive is up to them.

I think IPSA costs a lot of money and is very obstructive. It wastes a huge amount of staff time and, ironically, has cost the taxpayer more money when it was set up to save money.

It seems to be working, though I do believe IPSA has a role to play in the way MPs employ staff - I think IPSA should ask Parliament for more money to pay for a HR section to be added to its duties. It is the only bit of the Bill voted for by Parliament that they chose not to do in 2009.

IPSA processes claims well to the rules / guidance etc but there is no 'audit' function - how does IPSA proactively reassure the public not only that all claims are validly made and paid within the rules but also being validly used within the rules?

I believe that IPSA give far too much credence to individual public opinion which is based on ignorance. IPSA needs to rebalance its priorities.

because I don't know whether how you have fulfilled this role.

as it is contributing to the negative image of MPs by suggesting a pay rise at a politically inopportune time

You have a difficult job, the public are mistrusting and do not want to understand the process, and are confused by the on-going scandals that still relate to the old expenses.

Incompetent organisation

The system lets us know in good time when a publication is due and the spreadsheet is clear to understand as to what the public will see etc

IPSA do provide transparency to the public - even though they don't think so.

I feel sometimes too much information is published which the media exaggerate and thus provides more anger from the public.

IPSA does not advise - the usual reply is this is up to the MP, so there is no greater clarity than before - on the contrary

We are happy with the IPSA's role.

Deciding to put up MP's pay despite opposition

neither good nor bad

you are so unpleasant to staff

The regulatory role seems to be working well

public generally have not registered that ipsa is independent; public still think MPs expenses are too high and are for their personal benefit, ie an additional salary.

when you work for an MP who has never abused the system the question becomes redundant.

The previous chief executive and the chairman behave(d) in a disgracefully high-handed and arrogant manner. IPSA plays politics and treats MPs in its written communications including to the Admin committee as lowlife criminals.

I think that there has been a lack of political sensitivity surrounding the announcement of the proposed MPs' pay rise.

not clear about overall MP pay package

MPs need to be paid more and respect needs to brought back in

The public & media are as ignorant now as in 2009 about MPs work. IPSA's insistence on tiny claims brings MPs & staff into further disrepute. I v much doubt Ms Boo/her secretary bring in pints of milk and coffee @ own cost for meetings. Why should MPs' staff be expected to?

Sometimes slow to act when highlighted an error in the reports

NO

I have had nearly 50% of my income deducted in one month because information from the HMRC was not checked first and I had to wait a month to get it back.

!

Many people I speak to still think MPs are able to abuse the system freely

I think that MPs are still regarded in a negative way regarding expenses and that IPSA could help create a more positive perception of the MP expenses system.

There is nothing to compare it with.

I'm not convinced the issue of the increase in MPs pay was handled that well.

You do do what is right for both sides.

Have never really taken on board the views of disgruntled staff having their old bonus allocation taken away which appears to have been a knee jerk reaction to the behaviour of some MPs. It appears that Civil Servants are still able to have a bonus and I think a fairer way to have dealt with this would have been a consultation and maybe offered a one off payment or reduced the 15% to perhaps 7% or 5%. The £20 now being offered is nothing less than an insult

do not handle publicity well - eg MP salary changes was about a total remuneration package but that did not come across to the public

I think it does an ok job- but mistakes and slowness damage people's confidence in it

I believe the public can now understand a robust system is in place

We had a problem with money that had been repaid not being taken out of the publication figures which caused problems for us in our local newspaper.

poor

It is helpful to be able to refer a constituent's enquiry to the IPSA website.

IPSA needs to stand by decisions relating to claims it has made and make it clear in the press that they have allowed it and therefore it is fair.

The public still don't understand the system and the hoops we have to jump through to make a claim.

It is a very difficult job you do. Even when MPs are being remunerated fairly and transparently, the press, and the public do not always see things that way. I still feel that all office expenditure, for Westminster and constituency offices, should not be seen as a personal expense to a member of parliament. Budgets are there for a reason, and as long as MPs remain within their budgets I do not feel that they should be held to public account for how much they spend on paperclips!

IPSA are good in their role; in my experience they are fair in their approval of claims and have done a lot of research when making changes to the system, keeping in mind the public's perceptions.

Don't tell the public that MPs deserve a 17 percent pay rise when the rest of the public have a pay freeze. This is obtuse

I think the public's has been restored a little to know that an independent body is dealing with expense claims

I think the systems need vastly improving and more access for staff

I think that IPSA have taken a while to bed in as they were introduced quite dramatically and this showed in the system. They are slowly getting there and it has improved but there is still some way to go.

To suggest raising MP's salary but 11% is ridiculous and does not take account of public opinion or economic circumstances

The public may need further convincing that MPs do not set their own pay scales and do not administer their own pension arrangements.

More could be done to show that MP's expenses are well regulated

The public still don't understand how difficult it is for MPs living in 2 places 200 miles apart, especially MPs with children

I don't know enough about what IPSA has done in this role to give a rating

Press coverage has been overall negative and the public continue to have no confidence in MPs

IPSA seems to be picking at random some claims that will no longer be claimable in the future just because they can to penalise MPs not because of fairness

Clear and consistent

They haave made an expenses system extremely complicated - worst I have known.

It is seen to be fair

Unnecessary public row over proposal to increase MPs' pay from 2015.

Many errors found in reimbursments, particularly ahead of publication of expenses. Too much time spent on the phone with IPSA trying to correct these.

Believe that the accuracy of the publication of expenses figures needs more scrutiny before publication, to reduce bad publicity re MP's expense claims.

because on every occasion when I have had the need to contact IPSA they have been incompetent, unprofessional, unhelpful and inaccurate, I therefore believe that IPSA cannot reassure the public in a regulatory role.

Expenses information is published, but not sure what else this role entails

IPSA are transparent and are easily accessible to the public. They provide accurate and up to date information in relation to MP's expenses and pay.

Not increasing the staffing budget in line with inflation is a disgrace.

A review of pay scales should take place more regularly.

Reports we have received in advance have not always been accurate and it has taken quite a lot of 'effort' to get them corrected.

Nott yet clear whether salary recommendations acceptable to political Leaders

You have done very little and what was done was politically inept

Decision to increase MPs pay whilst staff were on a pay freeze was not timed well, even if justified..

Your role has been biased and does not provide a true explanation of the system, while also providing the media with stories to stoke public opinion in a negative way.

I don't think you make it clear that it is you, an independent body, that decides how much increase an MP should get and not the MPs

does not support valid claims adequately

reports don't explain the differing individual demands that MPs face

I think it does what it is needs to do, but sometimes it has the public's interest too much in front of its eyes. There could maybe be a more balanced attitude. Having said that it has improved tremendously since IPSA has first been established.

The public are still skeptical and have very little trust in MPs and money. IPSA could try harder to correct this. Plus one still reads of abuses of the system.

remuneration is not fair. IPSA just look like they are covering their backs

Only just started using the system but it seems cumbersome.

The idea of giving MPs an 11% pay rise when public sector employees on less than a third of their salaries are refused a 1% rise is outrageous, and will damage IPSA's reputation with the general public. Why can't MPs' salary increases be linked to those of other public sector workers?

I am staff not an MP

I've not seen any issues relating to this in the public domain and am happy that MP's expenses are published. I disagree with the use of the word remunerated. They are not remunerated - they are refunded for the cost incurred for running a public service. MP's salaries are remuneration - their expenses are not, they are legitimate claims to be refunded / reimbursed. It is little wonder that the public have the wrong impression of MP's expenses.

clear

Uphill struggle following on from earlier problems, which have seen public level of mistrust increase hugely. Decision on salary increases probably haven't helped.

for example referring to paid interns as 'casual staff'!

Transparent system might be right policy, but have suspicion that material is leaked to the media and justify existence of IPSA.

IPSA always seems to have subscribed to the widely held but erroneous view that all MPs are 'on the fiddle' when this is simply not true. As a memeber of staff I object to being described as an 'expense'. There is little acknowledgement that MPs and their staff do a very good job for which staff, in particular, receive poor remuneration and nothing like the pension and other wage guarantees that staff working for parliament, in the Civil Service and at IPSA itself receive.

Need to be clearer about what are office costs or those for staff to avoid headlines over toilet paper etc

MPs paying for office expenses out of their own personal accounts, which is in effect how bills are paid if not covered by the card or direct payments, does not give the impression of normal business processes.

There does not seem to have been anything in particular that springs to mind that would have made the regulatory performance better or worse.

The planned pay rise for MPs is completely out of tune with the public mood. Completely appalling decision and communication.

sometimes your approach actually feeds the media story that MPs are untrustworthy

Is not working, particularly the use of FOI. Public are now attacking both MPs and IPSA.

Press and public at least as ignorant as they ever were. Instead of whining on his blog, why doesn't the Chairman take a more proactive role about the misinformation.

Need to improve communication with public that MPs don't award themselves salary increases.

The regulatory role should be about transparency and fairness so the public can decide whereas IPSA is literally unaccountable. Hopefully the new Chief Executive will bring some common sense

It keeps the public informed of its actions which is what it was set up for.

The general public have a poor opinion of MPs and I do not believe that IPSA can do much to improve that.

Did not provide a clear or proactive explanation of IPSA's decisions relating to MPs' pay. Public have no idea who IPSA are or what they do.

No complaints

26. Do you have anything else you'd like to add? Remember, the survey software anonymises all responses so please call us if you would like to talk about a specific query or problem.

MP RESPONSES

The instructions for the change to an online token are a nightmare

I did not have a problem with IPSA but they have made me angry this year - a number of cock-ups on their part and the mishandled pay review.

ther eis no doubt that then system has improved. however it is still bureaucratic in terms of the requirement to fill out everything on line, then print off and post in paper copies of teh same material.

IPSA have not succeeded in changing the public's knowledge of how our salaries are set and failed to explain to average person that Maria Miller case was old system.

IPSA never supports MPs. For example, high claims for travel due to two children under four - no support from IPSA. High staff claim due to contingency claim to cover for staff member with cance - no support from IPSA.

Regional Constituency MPs who actually live in the constituency tend to have a higher Office and Travel costs compared to London/South East MPs who cannot claim but use their parliamentary office as their constituency office have lower claims. Publishing League tables without explaining that MPs who live in the regions are always going to have higher claims means that there is a perverse incentive to live in London. The current Expenses Scheme will put good people off becoming MPs

The field for improvements didn't allow me to add that the printed claim form should also show if we said 'Yes' to back-up information (bills etc) already supplied.

Have you any idea of the costs associated with the job that MPs are unable to recover - especially entertaining

the overall experience is still that of an unhelpful bureaucracy although there are individual members of staff who are helpful and friendly

Nothing to add in this survey

I think IPSA staff are not well served by its Chairman, Board and some senior staff

Only to re-emphasise that it would be helpful if one could have a short period (say an hour) to cancel a submitted form, if one spotted one had made an error.

nope

The Profession of MPs and UK politics can never be as respectable as other professions until it is properly remunerated

no

I don't interact with IPSA and cannot be bothered with the system. It has created a climate of fear and culture that you have to be wealthy or in a safe seat to be an MP. Explaining every claim to local media is too long and boring. A lot of expenses, should actually be office costs and the public believe expenses are spent on business expenses, such as food and drink and not on rent, phone bills etc..I have outside interests to supplement my income so I don't have to use the expenses system.

Train your people properly. And sort out the software.

It takes far too long to reimburse - a week turnaround should be sufficient to verify. It has taken over 3 weeks for some claims to be paid, which causes cashflow problems personally.

What MPs don't claim is given little prominence in this survey. Unfortunately typifies IPSA's attitude.

IPSA has done very little to make the case for its recommendations on MPs pay or to defend MPs against criticism for legitimate expense claims

Sustenance: those in hotels and B&B who have no access to a kitchen ought to be able to claim for other than an evening meal, if it is to be one meal per day, please can it not have to be an evening meal: some of us prefer a larger breakfast (most hotels now do not include b'fast) or lunch.

You need a much better Chairman and Board. Jury out on new CE. Same old rest of staff. Rare diamonds

A block grant for accommodation is worth thinking about after the election

I waste about 8 hours a week on the train. It's very difficult to work in standard class when fellow passengers read your papers or listen to dictation. Travelling 1st allows for confidentiality as well as a table bigger than an A4 sheet of paper. But if you go 1st at (below the standard cost) IPSA still publishes it as 1st class travel and the papers love 'greedy MP' stories. It's a self-defeating catch 22 which wastes the equivalent of an entire working day. It really annoys me.

I believe you should set as a goal reducing the administrative burden you place on MPs to the minimum necessary for effective regulation of public money, and do more to substantially reduce your operating costs.

Still have impression IPSA does not understand MPs' jobs.

get impression some staff get to keep claims they deter or reject. system still hyper-bureaucratic

The new software key has and is still a nightmare

Get the IT better, avoid the need for paper duplication as this is very time-consuming, understand our role and stop picking and querying the smallest expenses.

STAFF RESPONSES

there have been instances where I have been told mis-information, especially about the length of time it takes to register a property with IPSA, that led to many many phonecalls

IPSA does not reveal the number of foreign trips MPs have gone on, their cost, number of days, whether spouse went and if it was done as member of a committee, Inter-parliamentary Union, OSCE or an APPG

Why can't all expenses to staff be reimbursed direct to them. It is not helpful to have to wait for an MP to be paid back for e.g. sight tests and then expect them to pay the staff member back.

Most of my dissatisfaction from IPSA derives from the fact that you are unavailable by 1pm. This is completely unprofessional and often hinders expense processing. How are you only working for 4 hours of the day. To have time in the office that you refuse to pick up the phone is unacceptable.

Members' Staff reimbursement should be made easier and more practical - the system is useless

Staff are lacking knowledge and sometimes competent English language usage

The 3 month rule for the processing of claims should be more flexible. I have lost a significant sum of money on rail fares due to this rule as I do not travel to the constituency that often so wait for a few tickets to build up before claiming. I do not want to book via the trainline as I need more flexibility in the time I travel from Westminster to the constituency.

no

Need to be able to claim for flu jabs.

IPSA still make it very difficult for genuine good honest MPs to submit expenses

Public perception is that most MPs are still on the fiddle despite the IPSA system and all the work it involves.

The 90 day claim period is a bit draconian especially when there is a valid reason for exceeding the 90 days limit.

It is beyond ludicrous that MPs' staff can have mileage and parking refunded to their own accounts, but other purchases made by staffers are refunded direct to their MP's own account, meaning staffers have to go cap in hand to their boss and ask for small sums. I very much doubt any other public sector organisation operates in this way and it seems to me to be a way of dissuading staffers from making legitimate claims due to the embarrassment of asking their boss to refund a couple of quid.

Pay the members of IPSA the same salaries as MPs and see how they like it. Likewise do not pay IPSA middle managers salaries above the max for parliamentary staff

I still feel nervous each month as I put in my MP's claim as I feel PSA are there to catch me out rather than help! This may still be the fall out from MPs expenses when so many of us were so misrepresented, but if I ring I feel I have to explain too much why something which should be straightforward has to be begged for. For instance, I had claimed 18th birthday letters postage for months, then the claim was refused and a staff member at IPSA seemed adamant they were right but eventually it w

After a recent error in receiving my pay due to IPSA errors with my timesheet the following customer service and information given to resolve the problem was inadequate and not to the standard expected of IPSA. This has been raised with IPSA by the MP and whilst the replies have not been satisfactory there is not a great deal more that can be done

We used to get automatic percentage rises. This doesn't happen any more and my MP has no-one to remind him to think about salaries (he's so busy) and so we could go for ever without any payrise again. And it's not nice having to ask. It would be good if this could be more central.

IPSA is particularly helpful now re end of year tax returns and P11D, etc, much more helpful than previous House administration. also, note re Q21, I'm a proxy, I don't decide what to claim, the MP does that.

I am employed part-time, and there was a period when I worked a lot of extra hours. With the agreement of my MP I tried to claim for them, but found the system was designed for people claiming on a weekly basis. I knew my MP would not want me to make an inaccurate claim (ie say I had done extra hours in certain weeks, when in fact they had been worked weeks earlier) so I didn't claim. The taxpayer had many extra free hours worked on its behalf!

The sense you give is that you exist to catch us out and be generally obstructive.

IPSA will be conducting a review of the staff pensions system soon. I had to find out through one of my providers and not through IPSA. I worried staff are going to get a raw deal because the cheapest option rather than one equal to or comparatively better for staff will be pursued. I don't mind paying more, I just want a comfortable retirement!

Having worked in Parliament for over 10 years, I do feel that MP's staff are being penalised as a result of the expenses scandal, rather than MP's.

Impressed by IPSA's one-to-one help for MPs standing down

IPSA's phone contact hours are ludicrous, esp on Fridays when there is time pressure and it would be useful to contact IPSA as well.

Overall very satisfied with IPSA. Everyone on information team is always really helpful, especially Omar and I rarely have any issues with IPSA (if I ever do they are resolved quickly)

no

I find functionality of the site on google chrome is not good - especially when claiming for more than one item. The drop down menus don't work properly

I think it would be better if all expenses were paid directly by I.P.S.A

The old system / process worked perfectly fine. it was those who abused their claims that has landed us where we are now. Fine to have a regulatory role, it needed policing but honestly the actual process was ok

The staff on the help line are usually very knowledgeable and friendly but please please please could they identify themselves. I ring and say my name; there is silence; I have to ask "who am i talking to" and the tone is set for confrontation not cooperation. You could also allow all payments in advance if they are legitimate, the cashflow of managing office expenses is a major problem.

It would be useful if there is a problem someone from IPSA could be on hand at the House of Commons to go and visit or they come to the office as how it was when it previously started. I found the staff extremely helpful and one to one communication is very helpful.

the system should be more flexible for staff travel otherwise in reality they have to incur costs to ensure convenience and avoid overtime

IPSA's basic assumption is all MPs & staff are fraudsters. They treat us accordingly. Regardless of how businesslike we try to be, we get the same sneering responses, as MPs' staff try to do their jobs

I think it would be helpful - particularly with queries to have one dedicated contact rather than input from 2 or 3 different people who often give conflicting information

Too much paperwork and duplication. A very unwieldy system. Needs to be improved big time

I have had excellent service from [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

No

It is unfair that MPs have their salary decided by you (and cost of living increases happen automatically) but money is given directly to MPs to give cost of living pay increases to their staff and these are not necessarily passed on. I am not talking about pay rises but cost of living pay increases. These should happen automatically.

There should be more training for ipsa even if it is in the form of online training. I found it very difficult picking up where someone else had left it just with your guide lines.

The Member has an outstanding issue as regards a rent refund from August 2013 which has still not been processed correctly.

no

This system is no better than the last system.

I think that there should be more regulation in regards to job roles in an MP's office and the level at which they are paid.

there is still not enough scrutiny regarding the employment carried out by family members.

The amount allowed for office admin is nowhere near enough for a good busy MP, we overspend every year, also the staffing budget is not adequate ... all staff are stressed because there are not enough of us to do the job effectively. Please change IPSA and make it more straightforward, allow us to pay everything direct, by card, BACs or DD

We have had a few hiccups this year with lost receipts etc. I keep a copy of everything I send because of such problems in the past and this usually sorts it out, but it does appear to me that there may be a problem with receipts getting lost in processing. Is there anything we could do to help avoid this? I already staple them to the paper form, but would some form of annotation help?

I pay for my mobile, then claim it back. However the money is credited to MP's account, usually bundled in with lots of other claims. So time consuming to track it down. The money comes direct out of my pocket so should be reimbursed to me.

We should change the terminology and talk about allowances or budgets, not expenses, eg staff allowance or budget for staff pay.

Just want to reiterate about improving the website. Your phone service is great but the website needs to be more intuitive. Often information is buried away in places which aren't obvious. The search engine often comes up with zero results. It isn't obvious what the difference is between 'guidance' and 'how to guides'. Might make sense to have subject areas, rather than segregate by 'type' of information. There is no obvious site map.

A lot of time is spent sorting out receipts into the correct category (Office Costs, Payment Card, Travel and Subsistence). Delay in receiving Trainline claims involves significant time establishing what the journey was in relation to etc.

N/a

Members of MP's staff deserve inflationary pay increases every year.

Concerned that sometimes the advice given on phone line is incorrect. For example this has resulted in claims being processed under the wrong category and then during the validation process being sent back to us.

be good to have a bit more flexibility around the 90 day deadline as sometimes things get missed in a busy office with many urgent priorities. thank you

The system is a nightmare, time consuming and preventing us from doing the things we were initially employed for. It has made a difficult job unbearable.

MP staff need higher pay

I haven't had a pay rise since Parliament started as it shows as an expense against my MP and he wants to keep his "expenses" down - should be a different way of showing staff salary - not as an expense

claiming for small things due to potential ridicule is a problem - ie paperclips form part of stationery order directly claimed yet it is portrayed that it is the MP who is mean

the concern about how a claim might appear if published is the first consideration rather than whether it is a genuine and allowed claim

I think overall IPSA and its attitude has improved and the original negativity (ie: all MPs are bad and want to steal from the public) towards MPs has calmed to a more professional relationship where by now there is a good amount of trust element as well.

Apart from this issue, I think IPSA is doing fine.

On the odd occasion where I might choose an incorrect expense type from the drop down menu It would be more helpful and time saving if Ipsa staff could correct the error and then notify me of this by email rather than returning the submission for me to correct. I suggest this as I only work two mornings a week and a returned claim could be delayed for a week before I see it.

The space for comments on other questions was too small and would not take the full comments I wanted to make.

i think payroll and PICT need to be more constituency focused- they are not
no

I think Payroll need to be faster with their responses - I have had to chase for a response on a number of occasions. I think there should be more consultation on staffing salary and pay rises as the system is too complicated/daunting to tackle as it currently stands

Quality of telephone service is dependent on who you talk to with often a 'couldn't care less' attitude.

There must be a way of achieving IPSA's objectives with less time-consuming bureaucracy.

More information should be provided to staff. Staff should be automatically given a 1% pay rise each year, instead of having to ask their MP for it.

In the constituency, staff sometimes have to pay bills themselves and ask the member for reimbursement as there is insufficient time to get a cheque or other payment from the member himself. There is no system of petty cash.

IPSA - You're too anonymous, and you are faceless at 30 Millbank. And you should stand up toughly to bullying from MPs and their staff.

IPSA are very slow and poor at correcting your own mistakes and inaccuracies

IPSA staff are excellent and the new Board Members a vast improvement but the way IPSA was set up continues to impact.

We shouldn't have to print and post expense forms where there is no evidence to attach, e.g. mileage claims or payment card claims for just trainline/hillgate. It's an unnecessary waste of paper and postage.

Before 2010, I used to spend half a day a MONTH on financial work. It's now that much every single week. Your £6m figure doesn't come close if every office has taken on extra staff for this purpose. Much of it is repetitious. Why does the MP's local station have to be searched for and entered every single time? Why must I tell IPSA every week that his local buses stop running at 6.00 & therefore he needs a taxi on a Thursday evening? Why??

Just that doing expenses remains the most wearisome issue. Please remember, MPs' priority should be to serve their constituents and to vote in the House not fill in expenses forms.

Can you change the voice on your answer message phone, it's the same one you've had all along, and is not that welcoming.

Read your own published rules and ensure you are operating by them. If the rules say IPSA should notify MPs of something, do it. If the rules say MPs do not need to do something then do not get upset with MPs for not doing it! We can't read your mind!

Nothing to add.

No specific category for claiming for office purchases such as toilet roll, soap and tea/coffee. Any claim using the 'other' category within the Office Costs budget automatically appears on the Member's P11D and therefore taxable. Could any expenses that are going to be added to the P11D be sent to MPs first so they can explain to IPSA the reasons why they should not be taxed?