

IPSA's five-year strategy 2026-31

Enabling MPs to focus on what matters
by regulating through service.

Five-year strategy ver1.6 Jun 26



Contents

Our strategy

UK democracy

IPSA's purpose

Making Parliament more accessible

Regulating through service

Our priorities

Managing our costs and risks

Measuring our performance



Our strategy

The UK's democratic system is vital to the country, and IPSA plays an important role in supporting public trust. MPs need funding to carry out their work in Parliament and in their constituencies, but they must use it in line with IPSA's principles so public money is spent responsibly. IPSA must also show that it regulates MPs' spending efficiently, fairly and effectively.

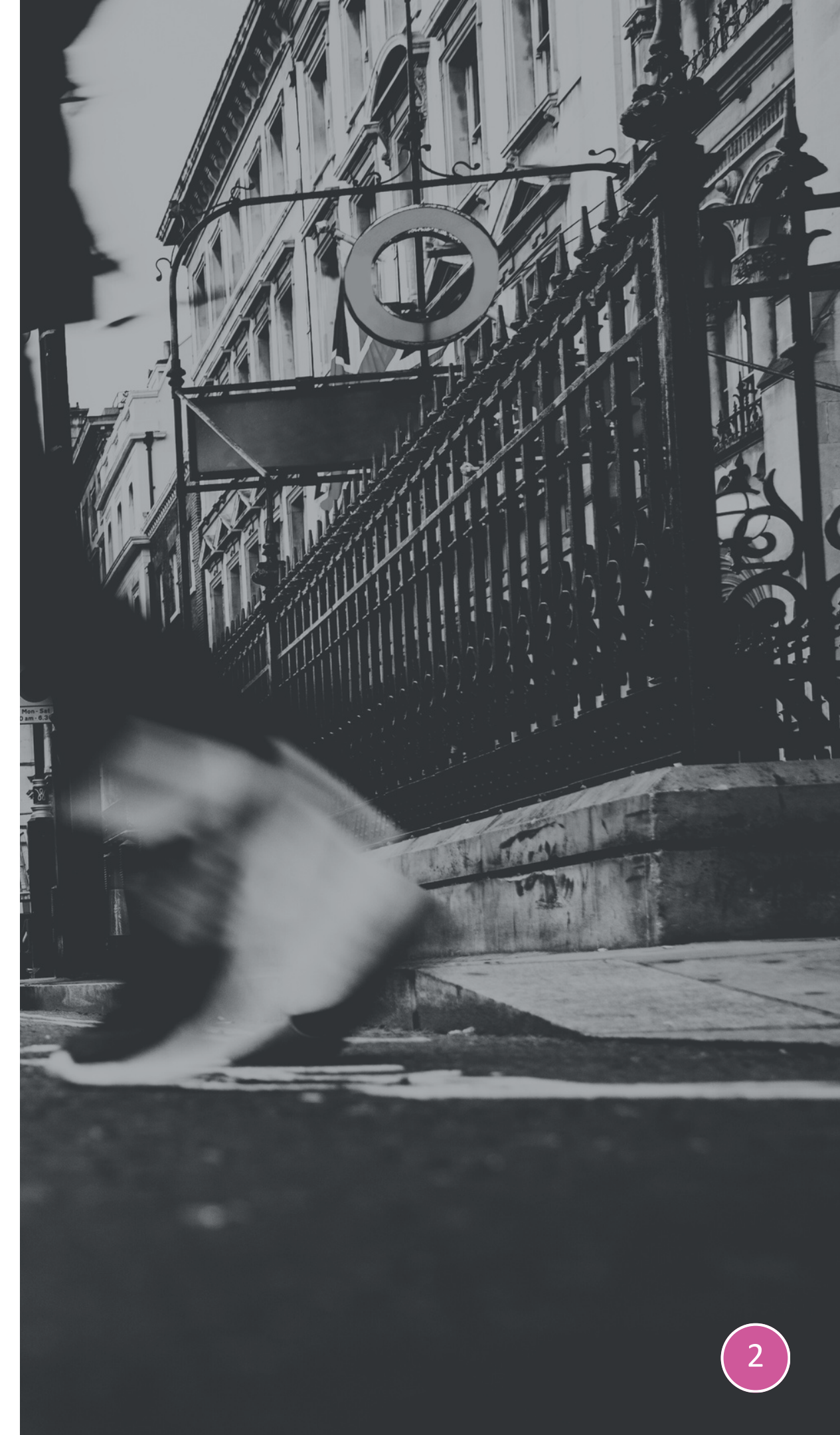
We have made strong progress in modernising IPSA and developing a more service-led approach to regulation. We have an ambitious plan to further reduce the financial and administrative burden on MPs and their staff when they access essential funding.

This plan sets out three strategic priorities. Our aim is to make it easier for MPs and their staff to access funding so they can focus on their core responsibilities, while also helping the public better understand parliamentary spending. We will deliver this in partnership with MPs, their staff and other parliamentary stakeholders.

MPs can choose how they use their parliamentary funding, as long as they follow IPSA's rules and principles. We will introduce simpler and more efficient ways for MPs and their staff to access this funding, with options to suit different needs. In some cases, MPs will manage the administration themselves. In others, IPSA will manage it on their behalf, depending on the goods or services involved.

This plan covers the period from 2026-27 to 2030-31. It assumes there will be a General Election during this time, and we will briefly reprioritise some activities to support the additional demands an election brings.

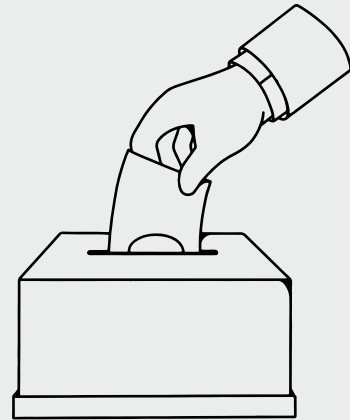
The plan will continue to develop as technology, including AI, evolves, and as a new Parliament is formed after a General Election.



UK democracy – the role of an MP

Representative democracy

At a General Election, people across the UK vote to choose the MP who will represent their area in the House of Commons.



There are 650 MPs in the UK

MPs are office holders, not employees.

In Parliament, they:

- Review and approve laws and taxes
- Question and challenge the government
- Take part in debates
- Speak up for their constituents and help shape national policy



Constituencies

The UK is divided into constituencies, and each one is represented by an MP. In their constituencies, MPs:

- Work with local businesses and community groups
- Attend local events
- Hold surgeries for constituents
- See local services first hand

This helps shape their work in Parliament, where they raise concerns, ask questions and speak up for constituents.



Offices and staffing

MPs usually have an office in Westminster and in their constituency. Their staff support them by handling casework, arranging surgeries, doing research, preparing parliamentary work and helping with community events.



How IPSA helps to fund democracy

MPs do not set their own pay or budgets.	79% of funding covers MP staff pay.	IPSA funds only essential costs for constituency offices and work-related accommodation.
4% of funding covers travel costs.	IPSA provides funding for MPs to perform their parliamentary duties.	6% of funding covers accommodation for MPs working in two locations.
Most funding goes on staff pay and constituency offices.	9% of funding covers constituency office costs.	MPs cannot claim for food or drink during their normal working day.
	IPSA funds only the resources essential for MPs to perform their parliamentary duties.	

IPSA's purpose

IPSA was created by the Parliamentary Standards Act in 2009 as the world's first independent regulator of MPs' pay, pensions and public funding for their parliamentary duties. We are independent of Parliament and the Government, and required to act in a way that is efficient, cost-effective and transparent, ensuring MPs are supported to carry out their duties in Parliament and their constituencies.

We were given three main responsibilities:

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

IPSA's independence allows us to make decisions about how we fund business costs and on MPs' pay without interference. A strong and independent body, we implement financial controls, internal audit, data protection and transparency to ensure the UK's 650 elected MPs and their staff comply with the principles of accountability, integrity, ensuring value for money and using the funding only for parliamentary purposes.

We exist to support trust in democracy with great service, fair rules and wise spending. Our aim is to enable MPs to focus on what matters by regulating through service.

IPSA's strategic objectives

- Regulating through service
- Supporting trust in democracy
- Delivering financial value
- Growing our people

Making Parliament more accessible

IPSA sets MPs' pay and funding so they can carry out their parliamentary duties effectively. Our aim is to make this fair for all MPs, whatever their circumstances. We want Parliament to be open to people from all walks of life.

MPs' pay is set independently by IPSA, not by MPs or Parliament. We use data, our principles and the wider economic context to make these decisions.

This includes data from the Office for National Statistics and other information about public sector pay. We also look at pay in other comparable parliaments.

Each year, IPSA also sets budgets for MPs' staff, offices and accommodation. These decisions take account of factors such as inflation and rental costs. As well as setting fair pay and funding, we must make sure public money is used wisely.

- Each year, IPSA gives MPs a set budget which they must not exceed.
- This funding covers essential work costs such as staff, office costs, accommodation and travel for parliamentary duties. IPSA calls this business funding.
- To receive this funding, MPs must provide receipts, meet IPSA's requirements and stay within their budget. Business funding is separate from an MP's pay.
- MPs and their staff should not have to fund these work costs themselves.

Regulating through service

IPSA has a legal duty to regulate funding for MPs' parliamentary work. Our regulatory principles are **parliamentary purpose, integrity, value for money** and **accountability**.

We support MPs to manage their finances within our principles and guidance, with clear guardrails to help them get things right first time. This is what we mean by regulating through service.

Compliance with IPSA's rules is high, but we also hold MPs to account when standards are not met. We use data and insight to identify risk and non-compliance. Where issues arise from misunderstanding, our first response is usually support, advice and education.

Where risks are higher, we will take stronger action, such as limiting access to the IPSA payment card or other funding methods. In serious cases of repeated or deliberate non-compliance, we will take formal enforcement action. This may include:

- A published letter of concern or non-compliance
- Referral to the IPSA Compliance Office, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards or another regulator
- Referral to the police where there is evidence of suspected criminal activity

- **Parliamentary purpose:** IPSA funding may only be used for costs directly related to parliamentary duties. It cannot be used for campaigning, political parties, outside organisations or promoting an MP's political profile. It should be used only where no more appropriate source of funding exists.
- **Value for money:** MPs must use IPSA funding responsibly, stay within budget and ensure it is managed properly by them and their staff.
- **Integrity:** MPs must make funding decisions objectively, choose suppliers impartially, avoid personal or connected-party benefit, and manage any real or perceived conflicts of interest.
- **Accountability:** MPs must be able to explain their spending decisions, follow IPSA's rules, meet their responsibilities as employers, ensure staff use funding properly, and provide the information IPSA requires.

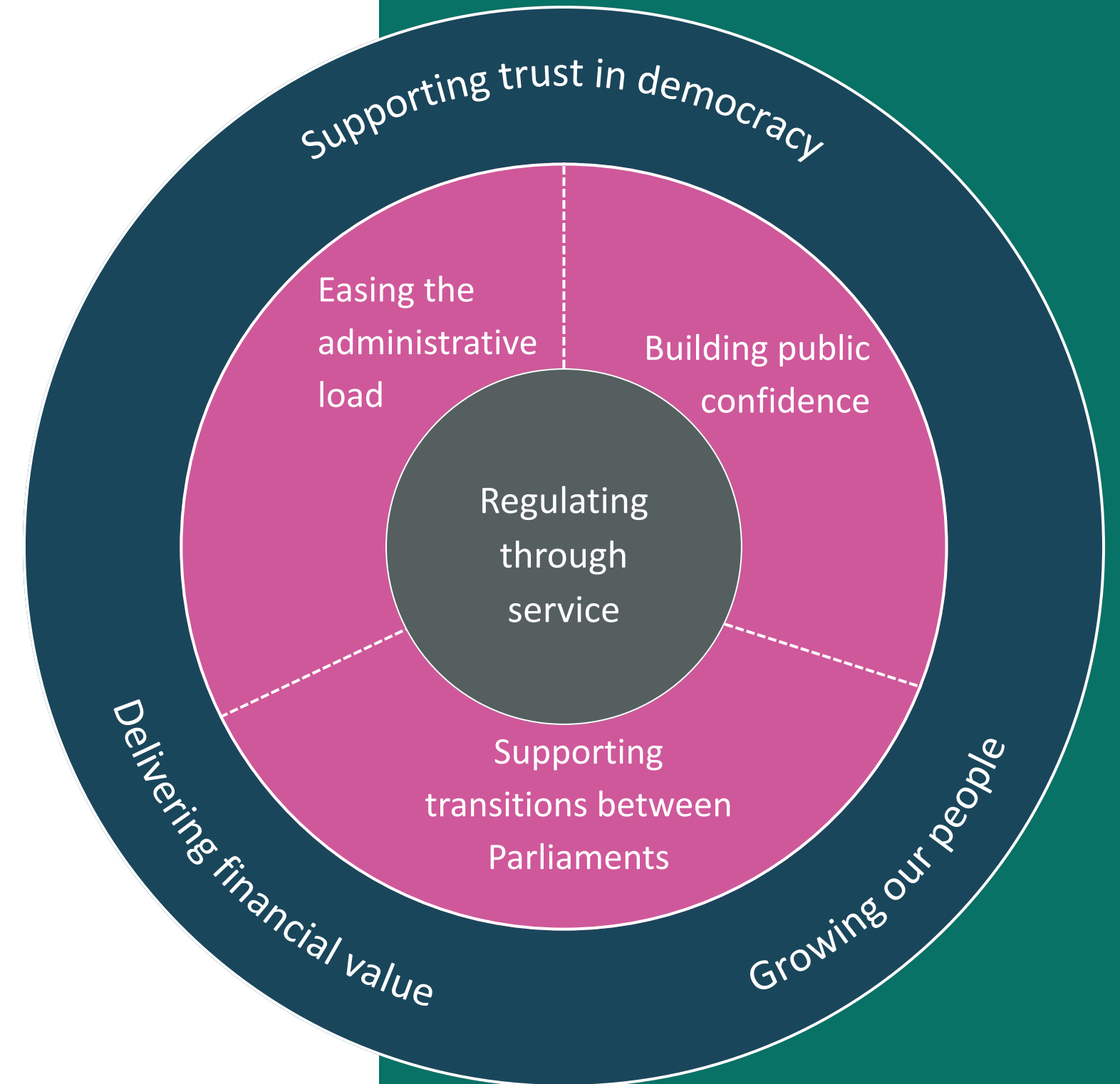
Our priorities

IPSA aims to strengthen public trust in the UK's democratic system by ensuring MPs receive the funding they need while maintaining proportionate, fair and efficient regulation.

Over the next five years, we will focus on three clear priorities:

1. **Easing the administrative load** by improving services, simplifying processes and strengthening regulatory support for MPs
2. **Building public confidence** through clearer information, improved transparency and helping the public understand parliamentary spending
3. **Supporting transitions between Parliaments** by improving the experience for departing MPs, candidates and newly elected MPs

Together, these priorities will streamline access to funding, improve public trust and understanding of how public money is spent and reduce complexity.



IPSA's vision: Enabling MPs to focus on what matters by regulating through service.

The difference this will make

For MPs and their staff

- **A simpler system** with fewer forms, clearer guidance and simpler processes
- **Faster access** to essential funding
- **More consistent support** across staffing, pay and property
- **Better support through the parliamentary journey** from candidacy to departure

For the public

- **Clearer information** on how MPs use public money
- **Greater confidence** through transparency and accountability

For IPSA itself

- **A more modern, service-focused organisation** with better systems and delivery
- **Greater efficiency** so we can focus more on strategic regulation and public engagement
- **An improved experience** for IPSA's people

Easing the administrative load – centralised services

MPs currently buy many goods and services themselves, either using the IPSA payment card or paying upfront and seeking reimbursement. This is complex, time-consuming and can create unnecessary financial pressure. Additionally, MPs access some goods via contracts owned by the House of Commons but IPSA pays for them, leading to some duplication and inefficiency.

The challenge

Individual purchasing can be costly and inefficient, and overlapping roles between IPSA and the House of Commons reduce value for money.

How we will address this

We will introduce centralised procurement for common office needs, reducing administration, limiting reimbursement and card reconciliation, and improving efficiency through closer collaboration with the House of Commons services.

The benefits this will bring

This will lower costs, simplify purchasing and reduce reliance on personal funds, while improving value for money and the user experience.

Easing the administrative load – access to funding and support

MPs currently access funding through reimbursement or payment card reconciliation. New technology offers simpler ways to pay for goods and services and track spending. We support MPs and their staff through phone, email and in-person services, and provide additional funding for specific needs such as disability, absence or dependants. IPSA Online, our operating system, is outdated and complex, but the end of its contract gives us the opportunity to replace it with a simpler system and use new technology, including AI, where it improves service and efficiency. Funding processes and publication requirements also need to be modernised.

The challenge

Reimbursement requires MPs and their staff to pay upfront, while current systems and processes make spend tracking and access to support more complex and time-consuming than they should be.

How we will address this

We will introduce simpler ways to pay for goods and services and track spend, replace IPSA Online, simplify key processes and improve publication. We will also work with the House of Commons services to make support more seamless and provide targeted training to MPs' staff to ensure the efficient use of public funds.

The benefits this will bring

This will make it easier for MPs and their staff to access funding and support, reduce administration and give them more time to focus on their constituents and parliamentary work.

Easing the administrative load – employing staff

IPSA supports new MPs with guidance on funding, staffing and office set-up. We also help MPs be good employers through payroll support, staffing advice and resources for health and wellbeing, training and development. We need to simplify recruitment, contractual change and exit processes, improve technology and continue improving staff terms and conditions.

The challenge

Employing staff is complex, involving different role types, contract arrangements, pay decisions and ongoing management. IPSA's processes can make recruitment, induction, development and exits more difficult for MPs than they should be.

How we will address this

We will simplify staffing processes through better technology and streamlined procedures. This will include simpler onboarding and contract changes, clearer pay structures, and better support for training and career development.

The benefits this will bring

This will reduce administration, improve the staff experience and help MPs be good employers.

Easing the administrative load – renting property

Most MPs rent a constituency office and, if based outside London, accommodation near Westminster. IPSA provides capped budgets and MPs are responsible for finding properties, negotiating rents and arranging utilities and equipment. Finding suitable, safe properties is complex and time-consuming, and we need to make this easier for MPs.

The challenge

Securing safe, affordable office space remains a practical challenge for MPs. Lease arrangements, utility set-up and IPSA registration can also require significant time and administrative effort.

How we will address this

IPSA is piloting a model in which it acts as leaseholder on behalf of MPs. Under this approach, MPs identify a property and IPSA manages the survey, lease negotiation and rent payments. For MPs who prefer to hold their own lease, IPSA will streamline registration and payment processes and provide support.

The benefits this will bring

By holding leases, IPSA could secure better terms, reduce administration and lower costs. Simpler registration would also help MPs move in more quickly.

Building public confidence – transparency

IPSA publishes details of the funding MPs use for their parliamentary duties. Funding details are published every two months and some information, such as funding for staffing, is summarised annually. What is missing is the context that explains why this spending matters and how it supports parliamentary work.

The challenge

Transparency is a statutory duty and essential to public trust, but current publication focuses on funding with too little context.

How we will address this

We will adopt a more meaningful transparency model, supported by clear explanations of how IPSA funding enables MPs to do their job and how spending is regulated.

The benefits this will bring

Greater clarity and context will strengthen confidence in IPSA's role and in the integrity of parliamentary funding.

Building public confidence – public and stakeholder engagement

Views on MP pay and funding are often strong, but not always based on a full understanding of how the system works. IPSA wants to engage UK citizens beyond formal consultations to help explain its role, address misunderstandings and build confidence in how parliamentary funding is managed. We also want to work with stakeholders and partners to support the wider system that promotes standards in public life.

The challenge

Public understanding of IPSA's work and its role in sustaining democracy remains limited. Through the What's Democracy Worth initiative, we have built stronger links with academia, NGOs and civil society. We now want to deepen collaboration and contribute constructively to wider standards work while maintaining our independence.

How we will address this

Building on the 2025 Citizen's Forum on MP Pay, we want to involve the public more in IPSA's work and highlight the role of funding in a healthy democracy. We will also work more closely with Parliamentary committees and other partners on shared priorities so MPs receive consistent support across the system.

The benefits this will bring

This will improve public understanding of parliamentary funding, strengthen trust in IPSA's role and improve support for MPs.

Supporting transitions between Parliaments

General Elections create a significant transition for departing MPs, candidates and newly elected MPs. IPSA has an important role in making that transition clearer, faster and more consistent, so people can leave well, prepare effectively and begin parliamentary work with confidence.

The challenge

Departing MPs must complete winding-up activity quickly and efficiently, candidates often have limited understanding of the support available if elected, and new MPs face immediate practical demands such as securing offices, accommodation and staff. Without clear guidance and timely support, transitions can be more complex, slower and more costly than they need to be.

How we will address this

We will provide clearer milestones and practical guidance for departing MPs, better pre-election information for candidates and more direct onboarding support for new MPs. This will include clearer guidance on staffing, property and financial matters, alongside more streamlined office and accommodation arrangements.

The benefits this will bring

Departing MPs will have a clearer and more cost-effective winding-up process, candidates will be better prepared for office, and new MPs will be able to establish their teams and services more quickly. Overall, this will create a smoother transition between Parliaments and help MPs focus on their parliamentary duties sooner.

Managing our costs and risks

Managing our costs

We set MPs budgets annually, taking account of inflation, the wider economic and fiscal context, data and insight, and feedback from MPs and their staff on funding needs. These are scrutinised annually by the Speaker's Committee for the IPSA to ensure the efficient and cost-effective discharge of IPSA's functions.

To secure value for money, we are strengthening our finance, procurement and project management capability. We will invest in technology, primarily a more efficient core operating system, and use AI where it delivers demonstrable efficiencies. Although this is a five-year plan, we will proceed only with projects that have clear and compelling benefits.

A General Election is expected during the plan period, and some transformation activity may be reprioritised to support election-related demands.

Managing our risks

We have identified a number of strategic and operational risks that we will manage on an ongoing basis through IPSA's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Project risks will be managed throughout the project lifecycle.



Measuring our performance

IPSA will shift from a transactional, reactive model to a more strategic, centralised approach that builds trust, reduces the administrative burden for MPs and helps them focus on their parliamentary work.

Easing the administrative load – we will deliver relationship-centred services that build trust, reduce friction and provide MPs with the resources they need for their parliamentary duties. We will simplify systems and processes to reduce effort, strengthen governance and safeguard public money. We expect this to significantly reduce the administrative burden of accessing IPSA’s funding and support.

Building public confidence – we want the public to understand the value as well as the cost of funding democracy, and to be confident it is regulated responsibly. We will provide clearer, more accessible information on parliamentary spending. We expect this to strengthen public understanding and confidence in IPSA and to contribute to improved trust in Parliament.

Supporting transitions between Parliaments – we will provide structured support throughout the transition into and out of Parliament, from candidacy and election through to departure. We expect this to improve the overall transition experience.