

Summary of Minutes and actions arising from the meeting held between IPSA's Board, Unite and Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA) on Thursday 21 March 2019

Present:	Ruth Evans, Chairman (RE) Rt. Hon Jenny Willott (JW) Will Lifford (via video link) (WL) Richard Lloyd (RL)
Apologies:	Sir Robert Owen
In attendance:	Vicky Fox, Director of Regulation and Insight (VF) Head of Policy and Assurance
Unite	Chair Secretary Press Officer
Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA):	Chair

1. IPSA's Chair opened the meeting by welcoming representatives from the MPs' and Peers' Staff Association and from the union Unite. She affirmed that she would like to have further opportunities for dialogue in future between MPs' staff representatives and IPSA's Board. She noted that the contact between Members' staff representative and IPSA's teams had proved positive and beneficial.
2. The representatives of MPs' staff asked IPSA's Board about the proposed increase in MPs' staffing budgets of 1.5 per cent and whether there was any scope to increase that. IPSA's Board members replied that a number of factors had already been taken into account, including inflation, usage and affordability. The Board noted that all MPs will be able to give their staff a pay increase of at least 1.5 per cent, that almost 90 per cent of MPs would be able to give their staff a 2.7 per cent increase. Indeed, three-quarters of MPs would be able to afford a 5 per cent pay increase for their staff.
3. In response to a question from MPs' staff representatives, IPSA's Board noted that these forecasts were calculated inclusive of National Insurance and Pensions contributions.
4. MPs' staff representatives drew IPSA's attention to the fact that some MPs do not use the increase for their staff. An increase involves filling in forms for each employee; there should be an easier way.
5. MPs' staff representatives also noted that some MPs do not want to look like the most expensive MP and as a result increases do not get passed on to staff.

6. IPSA's Board replied that we would be writing to every single MP to let them know if they could afford to pass on a 2.7 per cent pay increase to their staff. The Board also recognised that some MPs would want to give their staff what they are receiving. IPSA is committed to conducting regular reviews of MPs' staffing pay. There would be another such review later in 2019. In addition, IPSA is under a statutory duty to review MPs' pay after each general election.
7. MPs' staff representatives noted that their jobs bear little resemblance to the job descriptions. IPSA's Board accepted that work would need to take place on the job descriptions. This could be completed after the review, currently underway, of the demands on MPs' staff, to which we had already received almost 200 responses. The staff representatives said that there is still a culture of unpaid overtime in some MPs' offices. They also noted that the jobs of MPs' staff had become much busier and more difficult, citing the number of policy emails they receive and increasing casework load. The Board confirmed that the staffing review will address whether staff have enough resources.
8. MPs' staff representatives noted that IPSA automatically adjusts staff salaries if they fall below the new pay bands each year. There should be a way of encouraging MPs to administer the adjustment, such as an automatic increase with the possibility for MPs to opt out. IPSA's Board replied that MPs are the legal employers of their staff, so it is up to them to apply any increase. But there are options that IPSA could take forward, subject to consulting others. IPSA had increased the top of each pay band and so everybody can get a 1.5 per cent increase.
9. MPs' staff representatives asked that IPSA communicates better with MPs' staff in future, including with their representatives including MAPSA and Unite. IPSA's Board welcomed this, and agreed to set up meetings in future to discuss issues relevant to MPs' staff. Such meetings could take place following the review of MPs' staffing budgets and in advance of budget setting for 2020.
10. IPSA's Chair closed by thanking MAPSA and Unite representatives for attending the meeting, and said that they would consider the evidence provided and communicate the outcome shortly so that MPs could plan their spending for the forthcoming financial year.