

This is the formal policy supporting the provision and funding of IT equipment for Commons Members and their staff. It is designed to be a comprehensive explanation of the policy and not designed for day-to-day use. Quicker explanations can be found [linked from the Parlinet article](#).

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The system of funding for IT equipment for Commons Members and their staff is designed to deliver four main objectives:
- i. a single source of all Parliamentary-supported IT equipment provision, ownership, repair, lifecycle management and support;
  - ii. the right equipment to support the work of Members and staff, regardless of individual or office budgets, that remains flexible
  - iii. equipment options which balance the need for standardisation and the requirement to offer choice
  - iv. a cost-effective approach that delivers good value for money across the lifecycle of equipment
- 1.2 This policy provides the basis on which IT equipment is issued to Commons Members, and their staff (for a definition of “staff”, see section 4).

## 2. Ensuring value for money

- 2.1 The Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS) provides IT equipment to Members on behalf of the Clerk of the House, who is the Accounting Officer for the House of Commons, and is under a duty to ensure that good value for money is achieved in our service provision.
- 2.2 PDS is provided with a set budget by the House to fund the provision of Members’ IT. The system of provision which this policy sets out is designed to ensure that value for money is achieved across the budget.
- 2.3 Requests for equipment that go beyond the provision agreed in this policy must therefore be justified with reference to the requirement to deliver good value for money for the public purse.
- 2.4 The Clerk of the House is ultimately accountable for expenditure under this budget. They delegate this accountability through PDS, who make operational decisions on how the budget is spent.

## 3. Principles

- 3.1 The underlying principle behind the policy is that each user is provided with the IT equipment they require to perform their role, whilst reflecting the fact that different types of user have different roles within Parliament.
- 3.2 IT equipment is provided within the following categories:
- i. is provided to an **individual**, such as laptops and iPads
  - ii. is provided to an **office**, such as monitors and laptop docking stations (“docks”)

iii. is provided on a **per-Member** basis, to be shared amongst all the staff who work for a Member, such as high-specification devices.

3.3 From 2024, PDS funds and provides all the major IT equipment required for Members and their staff, on a loan basis. The IPSA OCA may be able to be used for small items of peripheral IT equipment, but these are not directly supported by PDS. Members should refer to IPSA for advice on what is within the scope of the Scheme.

3.4 Because PDS owns and manages the IT equipment, it is the responsibility of PDS to replace it in accordance with standard IT lifecycles. This will mean that equipment is not necessarily replaced after every general election, depending on the duration of the previous Parliament, and that Members and their staff may not always be issued with brand-new equipment.

3.5 There is no cash value or equipment “allowance” for the equipment available, so offices no longer need to manage budgets for IT equipment. Instead, equipment is provided and replaced on a “requirement” basis, as set out by this policy.

#### **4. Eligibility for Members’ staff**

4.1 The purpose of Parliamentary-funded IT equipment is to support the Parliamentary activities of a Member. Therefore, Members’ staff are entitled to be provided with Parliamentary-funded IT equipment under this policy if:

- i. they are security cleared by Parliament to CTC<sup>1</sup>,
- ii. they are engaged (whether on a paid or voluntary basis) to do parliamentary work for a Commons Member, and
- iii. the equipment is used to support the parliamentary activities of a Commons Member.

For the purposes of this policy, someone who is eligible to receive equipment in accordance with this section is referred to as “Members’ staff”.

4.2 “Engaged” includes staff employed directly by the Member, whether through the IPSA payroll or otherwise, and whether full-time or otherwise. It also includes staff who work on a voluntary basis, interns and students (typically university-age), so long as they have been security cleared by Parliament to CTC. There is no minimum period of engagement required, so equipment can be issued for short periods of time for interns etc., and then returned when that person leaves.

4.3 As part of requesting IT equipment, the person placing the order must confirm that the requirements of this section of the policy will be complied with (see Appendix 1).

#### **Who cannot have equipment**

4.4 Students on work experience (typically school-age) who have “work experience” passes are vetted on the basis that they will **not** have any access to the Parliamentary Network, and so do not have full CTC clearance. They will therefore not be provided with IT equipment.

4.5 Not all passholders who are sponsored by a Member are engaged to do parliamentary work on their behalf, and any such passholders will **not** be entitled to Parliamentary equipment. The basic principle is that the Parliamentary budget should not be used to support anything other than Members in their role as Members.

4.6 Some Members have responsibilities in addition to the standard parliamentary functions of a Member of Parliament, such as ministers and Shadow Cabinet members. IT equipment for

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<sup>1</sup> CTC is the standard security clearance for those who work on the Parliamentary Estate or on the Parliamentary network.

staff supporting Members in their ministerial or shadow ministerial roles is provided through existing funding routes (government department/Cabinet Office/party). In some limited cases, arrangements are made for PDS to provide that equipment but the cost is charged directly to the purchaser, and these will continue.

### **Other restrictions**

- 4.7 Staff who work for more than one Member (including Commons and Lords Members) will only be provided with one set of equipment.
- 4.8 The equipment provided is to be used for parliamentary purposes, in line with the Digital Service User Responsibilities document, and so cannot be used for party-political purposes, other than where special arrangements are made with the permission of PDS at the time of a parliamentary election, which involves the payment of a charge. In such cases, Members are responsible for making the appropriate declarations.

### **5. Choices of equipment**

- 5.1 PDS works hard to provide equipment that balances varied user requirements with the need to ensure consistency and value for money.
- 5.2 Since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the vast majority of computers requested are laptop computers, which can be used standalone or at a desk (via a dock & monitor) as required. Accordingly, PDS no longer provides desktop computers.
- 5.3 Where a laptop computer is specified, the default is a Windows laptop; new Members and staff are always issued with a Windows laptop when they join Parliament. Requests to swap this for a Mac device can be made to PDS, and the PDS Member Services team will discuss this with the user, to ensure a Parliamentary-configured Mac is an appropriate choice for them and suitable for the work they do.
- 5.4 By default, PDS provide one size and specification of Windows and Mac laptops, which are designed to meet the broad range of user need. Recognising that some Members' offices produce large amounts of audio-visual content, PDS will also provide, on request, one high-specification device to each Member's office, to be used by their staff between them as required.
- 5.5 Where users have a further requirement for a different size or specification of laptop, this should be considered in accordance with section 10 (**Additional equipment**).

### **6. Individual IT equipment: Members**

- 6.1 Members are provided with **one laptop** and **one iPad** on election. They are provided with a **headset** which can be used with either device. The iPad is provided with a data SIM, funded by PDS.
- 6.2 Reflecting the fact that Members are by virtue of their role required to work in more than one place, they can be issued with a **further laptop** on request (and, with that, a **further headset**).
- 6.3 A Member who wishes to have an **iPad Pro** can swap one laptop + the iPad for an iPad Pro. Because of the value of the device, an iPad Pro takes the place of both a laptop and an iPad. The iPad Pro is provided with a data SIM.  
The combinations are:
  - **laptop + laptop + iPad**
  - **laptop + iPad Pro**

6.4 PDS issues iPads as the default tablet. Should a Member have a specific requirement that can only be met by an Android tablet, they should speak to PDS Member Services to discuss the options. An Android tablet would take the place of an iPad.

## **7. Individual IT equipment: Members' staff**

7.1 Reflecting the fact that the majority of Members' staff work predominantly from one location (typically Westminster or the constituency), with travel between locations being less frequent than for Members, Members' staff are entitled to be supplied with:

- i. one **laptop** computer, and
- ii. one **headset**.

## **8. Office IT equipment: introduction**

8.1 "Office IT equipment" means:

- i. one **monitor** (with integrated webcam and speakers),
- ii. a **dock**,
- iii. a **keyboard** and **mouse**.

8.2 Reflecting the fact that Members are by virtue of their role required to work in more than one place, we provide sufficient office IT equipment for them to work from up to **three** desk locations: their (IPSA declared) home, a constituency office and a Westminster office.

8.3 We provide sufficient office IT equipment for a staff member to work from **one** desk location: either at home, a constituency office or a Westminster office. Whilst not at a desk location, staff members can continue to use their laptop and headset.

8.4 A second monitor can be provided on request for each desk (no further justification is required).

### **Office IT equipment: Westminster offices**

8.5 In Westminster, the House provides each Member with desks for two staff, with further desks being facilitated on request. When a Member joins the House, PDS will therefore fit out the desks for the Member and two staff, and if further desks are required to be fitted out, these can be requested as necessary.

8.6 Office IT equipment is only provided for use with a Parliamentary laptop: if a user has a laptop from another source, it is not to be used with office IT equipment provided by Parliament.

### **Office IT equipment: printing**

8.7 Each office location is provided with a printer. The standard printer is a colour multi-functional device (i.e. printer/scanner/copier). On request, we also provide one higher capacity black & white printer per Member. (These printers are not designed for regular bulk printing runs: Members should explore specialist printing services for such requirements.)

### **Office IT equipment: working from home**

8.8 Members who work from home may be provided with a set of office IT equipment at home.

8.9 Members' staff whose principal place of work is their home may be provided with a set of office IT equipment at home. They should not normally have office IT equipment provided in another location as well: if they work on a regular basis from another location, they should "hot desk" wherever possible.

- 8.10 PDS cannot support Members' staff who work from home with on-site engineer attendance: any technical issues will need to be resolved remotely, or by returning the relevant equipment.
- 8.11 Members who work from home may be provided with a small home office printer. This is designed for occasional use, and not regular, volume printing.

## **9. Equipment required for accessibility reasons**

- 9.1 Where a user considers that they have an accessibility requirement that means the standard equipment is insufficient or inappropriate for their role, they should seek the advice of the Workplace Adjustments team in the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service (PHWS).
- 9.2 If PHWS consider that different or additional equipment would constitute a reasonable adjustment, they will recommend in writing to PDS the nature of the equipment that should be issued.
- 9.3 PDS will endeavour to provide equipment that meets the recommendation. In doing so, they will assess the recommendation for technical compatibility, security and affordability. In the event of difficulty, PDS will support PHWS and the requestor to consider possible alternatives. The final decision maker is the budget holder: for computers or monitors, this is the Head of Provisioning, and for other items, the Head of PHWS.

## **10. Additional equipment**

- 10.1 "Additional equipment" means equipment outside the scope of what is provided by this policy.
- 10.2 Immediately post-general election, the primary focus of PDS is in issuing new equipment to new Members and their staff, and in ensuring that returning Members and staff have adequate IT equipment with which to work from (reflecting the fact that some equipment will be over 5 years old).
- 10.3 The expectation is therefore that no additional equipment will be able to be provided for the first six months following the general election.
- 10.4 The House respects the fact that although this policy seeks to provide the most suitable equipment for the broadest range of requirements, there may still be circumstances in which additional equipment is requested to be provided. Accordingly, guidance is provided in appendix 2 for when such exceptional requests can be met.
- 10.5 Where a user requests additional equipment:
- i. PDS will contact the user to discuss the request, ensure that all the requirements have been understood, explain the background to the policy, and explore how best to meet the request.
  - ii. If an exception given in the guidance applies, the Head of Provisioning will formally write to the Member, explaining the deviation in policy, set out the cost to Parliament for meeting the request, and seeking their decision on whether or not to meet the request.
  - iii. If the Member wishes to proceed, they will need to provide a business justification, setting out how the request meets the guidelines in Appendix 2 to this policy. The equipment will then be provided.
- 10.6 This justification will be recorded and published as part of the House's Publication Scheme. We will associate the justification with the Member in question, but we will not publish any personal data, such as the name of the user of the equipment, or circumstances which could identify them.

## **11. Locations of equipment**

- 11.1 There are no restrictions on where IT equipment can be located within the United Kingdom, subject to the other provisions of this policy. However, for audit purposes, Parliament must be able to find all asset-tagged IT equipment on request, and so if such equipment is moved permanently between locations, PDS must be informed. This extends as far as: “home office”, “constituency office”, and the Westminster office. For data protection reasons, it does not include the unique address for off-estate locations.
- 11.2 Fixed IT equipment will not be installed outside the United Kingdom and should not be taken outside the United Kingdom. Portable IT equipment can be taken outside the United Kingdom on a temporary basis, in accordance with [PDS advice and guidance](#). Equipment outside the UK cannot be physically supported by PDS (but we can provide limited support via the Digital Support Desk), and if it needs to be returned to the UK, this is at the cost of the Member.
- 11.3 PDS can only arrange for engineers to attend to install IT equipment in homes where the user is unable to do so themselves.

## **12. Delivering and returning equipment**

- 12.1 Wherever practicable, PDS encourages users to collect and return items in person from Parliament.
- 12.2 Where this is not practicable, PDS bears the cost of delivering and returning IT equipment within the UK, and this requires the co-operation of Members and their staff in order to ensure efficiency.
- 12.3 Collections of equipment to be returned to PDS can only be made from constituency offices, and not home offices.

## **13. Joiners**

- 13.1 After a new staff member has received their security clearance, their individual IT equipment (laptop & headset) can be requested at the same time as their network account.
- 13.2 If additional office IT equipment is required in consequence, this can be requested separately.
- 13.3 The laptop will be sent to the new joiner immediately, and the delivery of the office IT equipment will be arranged with the office.

## **14. Movers**

- 14.1 Where Members’ staff move between Commons Members, they must inform PDS, but they may retain their IT equipment. The management of data on their device is matter for the two Members concerned.
- 14.2 Where Members’ staff stop working for a Commons Member, such as where they move to work for a Lords Member or the administration, or leave Parliament altogether, all IT equipment must be returned to PDS.
- 14.3 The exception to this rule is where:
- i. the staff member works away from the Parliamentary estate, and
  - ii. they are expected to be replaced by another staff member within a reasonable period of time (normally one month).
- 14.4 In these cases, the IT equipment may be retained in the constituency and reissued to their replacement. PDS must be notified of the departure, and subsequent reallocation. If IT

equipment is due for replacement, PDS may nonetheless require that it is returned and new equipment issued instead.

**15. Responsibility for IT equipment**

- 15.1 When IT equipment is ordered, the person placing the order must nominate an “accountable Member” for it. The Member is accountable to PDS for ensuring that the equipment is kept in good condition, and facilitating its return when required.
- 15.2 Every user of parliamentary IT equipment is responsible for taking reasonable steps to prevent or limit loss or damage of the equipment.
- 15.3 Equipment that fails or is accidentally damaged will be repaired (or, where more cost-effective, replaced) but deliberate misuse or damage/loss due to lack of care may be recharged to the accountable Member.

**16. Transition from previous systems**

- 16.1 As part of the transition from the previous funding systems to the new, it is anticipated that there will be some items of older equipment that are still capable of use.
- 16.2 If a device was bought using IPSA or private funds, PDS can rebuild it to remove it from the network and return it to the Member. It will only be replaced in accordance with this policy.
- 16.3 Devices (laptops and iPads) that are over 5 years old cannot remain on the Parliamentary network, for technical and security reasons, and cannot be rebuilt.
- 16.4 Other items of equipment, such as monitors and printers, may remain in use beyond that time period, but will only be replaced in accordance with this policy.

User		iPad	Windows laptop	Mac laptop	iPad Pro	Headset	High-spec device (Windows or Mac)	Printer	Desk setup (laptop dock, monitor, keyboard & mouse)
Members	<i>On election</i>	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	Westminster office
	<i>On request</i>		1	Swap for Windows laptop	Swap for laptop + standard iPad	1	0	A small printer can be provided for a home office	Constituency office & one home office
Member's staff	<i>On appointment</i>	0	1	Swap for Windows laptop	0	1	0	0	-
	<i>On request</i>	0	0	Swap for Windows laptop	0	No	0	Only where Members' staff work entirely from home, and require a printer to do so	One location (where this is a home office, only where Members' staff work entirely from home)
Westminster or constituency offices		-	-	-	-	-	1 per Member, to be shared by all in that office	One MFD per physical office location. Additional printers on request.	(as above)



## Appendix 1: wording for requests for IT equipment

“If a request for IT equipment has been made by or on behalf of a Commons Member, then you confirm (and if you are not the Member, you confirm on their behalf and with their agreement) that the IT equipment requested will be:

- i. used by someone who is security cleared by Parliament to CTC level,
- ii. used by someone who is engaged (whether on a paid or voluntary basis) to do Parliamentary work for a Commons Member, and
- iii. used to support the Parliamentary activities of a Commons Member.

(The only exception to the usage rules is where the equipment is used for campaigning purposes at a Parliamentary election, and the Dissolution Guidance is complied with.)

For further guidance on what the Digital Service consider to be “the Parliamentary duties of a Commons Member”, you are encouraged to refer to the examples given in the annex to the [“Rules for the use of House of Commons stationery”](#).

If you are not sure about whether your request will meet all of these requirements, you should contact the Digital Service Member Services Team for further advice before making a request.”

## Appendix 2: guidance for additional equipment requests

*This appendix forms part of section 10 and should be read with reference to that section.*

The standard provision set out in this policy is designed to meet the vast majority of demand from Members and their staff. Sometimes, there will be exceptional circumstances that mean additional equipment is required. This guidance sets out examples of where additional equipment is **likely** to be provided. It is not exhaustive, and should circumstances arise where additional equipment is requested that is outside the scope of this guidance, each request will be considered on a case by case basis.

### **A: Westminster offices**

- The standard provision is that office IT equipment in Westminster is provided for the Member, and two of their staff. Desks should not be fitted out simply because they are present in the room – the desk must be regularly used by a user.
- Where Members have more than two staff working from a Westminster office as their principal place of work, additional office IT equipment can be provided.
- The expectation is that no more than five sets of office IT equipment will be provided for Westminster: further requests in excess of this will need to be clearly justified.
- Parliament can only fund office IT equipment for staff who have a Parliamentary laptop. Other people who work from the estate, who do not have a Parliamentary laptop, are responsible for providing office IT equipment separately.

### **B: Constituency offices**

- Some Members operate more than one constituency office. In these circumstances, adjustments can be made to the standard provision to reflect the fact that more than one location is being operated: for example, an additional high capacity black & white printer can be provided, and if staff work across two offices, additional sets of office IT equipment can be provided.

### **C: Home working**

- Members' staff who work from home will not normally be provided with a printer. The expectation is that printing is done from the constituency or Westminster offices. If there is an exceptional requirement for printing to be done at the home of Member' staff, a printer can be provided.

### **D: Second laptops for Members' staff**

- In line with the policy for members of Administration staff in the House, and broadly in line with policy across the public sector, the expectation is that a single laptop is provided to each staff member. The laptops PDS provide are carefully chosen to be as portable as possible, and to be usable in different environments. Administration staff and civil servants who choose to work from multiple locations, such as hybrid office/home working, are expected to take their laptops with them. Specially-designed rucksacks are available through PDS to support this.
- Should a member of Members' staff have accessibility or health reasons for not carrying a laptop, they can request a second laptop through the accessibility process – that is outside the scope of this guidance.
- In exceptional cases that are not accessibility- or health-related, Members' staff may make a request for a second laptop. All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It is expected that this is only where they are often required to work at short notice from

different locations, or it is entirely impracticable to take their laptop between different locations.

#### **E: iPads for Members' staff**

- The standard provision is for only Members to be provided with iPads, which reflects their requirement to work whilst travelling, for Chamber use and for business papers. If a Members' staff member requires an iPad, it is expected that this is for regular and frequent use in circumstances where a laptop is inappropriate or impractical.
- PDS monitor the frequency with which iPads are used, and iPads which are unused for long periods may be required to be returned.
- Parliament cannot provide data SIMs for Members' staff iPads.

#### **F: High-specification devices**

- The standard laptop that is provided is carefully selected by PDS following engagement with manufacturers and is designed to be capable of meeting the majority of current and future needs.
- In some cases, an office may have a requirement for a higher-specification device for particularly intensive work, such as frequent complex/long duration video editing. Each Member can be provided with one high-specification device to be used between them & their staff. It is expected that this is sufficient for the majority of office requirements.
- Exceptionally, where a Member engages more than one person to do work which requires a high-specification device, and it is not practicable for this to be shared between them, a further high-specification device can be provided.
- High-specification devices are considerably more expensive than standard specification devices. Requests for further high-specification devices will therefore be carefully explored to ensure that good value for money is being achieved by their provision.