

## Bulletin 12 March 2020

Last week we announced the annual adjustment to MPs' pay, budgets and staff salary ranges for the 2020-21 financial year. For further details, click [here](#).

Yesterday, Wednesday 11 March, marked 90 days since the General Election. All MPs have 90 days to claim business costs from the date the cost was incurred, therefore costs incurred shortly after the election must be claimed as soon as possible.

Throughout March and April we continue to conduct post-election research interviews to gather feedback. We are keen to hear from as many current MPs, former MPs and proxies as possible. If you can participate, please contact [communications@theipsa.org.uk](mailto:communications@theipsa.org.uk).

This bulletin contains information on the following:

- Coronavirus
  - Publication of Business Costs and Expenses
  - New Scheme for 2020-21
  - Staffing Budget for 2020-21 Guidance
  - Give As You Earn
  - Payment Card Policy
  - IPSA Online London Training and Payment Card Webinars
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## Coronavirus

The Government has today announced the next phase of the response to the coronavirus (Covid-19). Details of the government advice are available [here](#).

The NHS has published [information](#) about the illness and how to prevent it. This will be useful for MPs' staff working in constituency offices.

The House of Commons is publishing daily updates on the [parliamentary intranet](#).

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## Publication of Business Costs and Expenses

The latest publication of MPs' business costs and expenses, for claims processed between October and November 2019, can now be viewed on the [IPSA website](#).

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## New Scheme for 2020-21

The Twelfth Edition of the Scheme of MPs' Business Costs and Expenses ('the Scheme') will come into effect from 1 April 2020 for the duration of the 2020-21 financial year. The new edition of the Scheme can be viewed on our [website](#). The new adjusted budgets and staff salary ranges can be found at the end in annexes A and B, and are also available on our website.

There are a small number of changes to the Scheme for you to be aware of:

- We have updated the rules for MPs who choose to **sublet (or grant a licence for) part of their constituency office**, now requiring MPs to notify IPSA at the start of a subletting or license arrangement and to provide further information as required. Further, if subletting or granting a

licence to a political party, constituency association, or connected party, a valuation of the market rate for the office space must be provided, prepared by a valuer registered with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). (Paragraphs 6.24-6.26)

- We have clarified the rules relating to **security assistance** so that they more closely align with the operational realities, and to provide sufficient flexibility so that IPSA can respond to risks and police recommendations. For example, the rules now make clear that recommended and further security measures could be applied to accommodation or office properties, or may not be related to a specific property. They also recognise that further measures may be funded for individuals other than the MP, such as family members or staff members, if the police advise it is necessary. (Paragraphs 10.5-10.8)
- New guidance has been added stating that MPs seeking rented accommodation through their accommodation budget are able to apply for a **holding deposit loan** (a payment to a landlord to reserve a property), if required, before the start of the tenancy. To request this, MPs need to complete a Holding Deposit Loan Request Form. MPs must repay the loan within 30 days of signing the tenancy agreement or after receiving a refund of the holding deposit, whichever is earlier.

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## Staffing Budget for 2020-21 Guidance

Last week, we announced that, for 2020-21, we have made changes to MPs' staff pay bands, updated the standard job descriptions and increased the staffing budget by 13.9% for non-London MPs and 13.1.% for London MPs. This increase includes £4,000 for training, well-being, health and welfare costs.

Following feedback after last week's bulletin, we have provided [guidance](#) on how best to manage the increase to the staffing budget.

IPSA will automatically increase the salaries of any MPs' staff members who fall below the new salary bands, which are all above the national minimum wage. The increase to the staffing budget includes an amount to enable MPs to make at least a 2% cost of living increase to all staff. This is in line with public sector guidance.

The new job descriptions and salary bands will take effect from 1 April 2020 and IPSA's online job description tool will be updated ready for the new financial year.

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## **Give As You Earn**

The Give As You Earn scheme, run by the Charities Aid Foundation, enables you to schedule regular donations to one or multiple charities from a range of over 160,000 organisations, respond quickly to campaigns or appeals, make one-off donations at any time and sponsor friends and family. You can donate as much as you like each month, subject to a minimum of £4 and whole pound increments. Donations will be added to your online account on or around payday.

If you wish to take part in the scheme, click [here](#) to use the unique sign up link.

You will be sent a welcome email with instructions on how to set up and manage your account. If you have any issues accessing your online account, or have any queries about the scheme, please contact the Charities Aid Foundation on 03000 123 000 or [giveasyouearn@cafonline.org](mailto:giveasyouearn@cafonline.org).

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## **Payment Card Policy**

The new [payment card policy](#) will come into effect on 1 April 2020. Please read

the policy carefully and note the new conditions for using your payment card. Many features will remain the same, however some key changes include:

- Payment cards must be fully reconciled (as opposed to submitted) by the 8th of each month. All valid evidence must be submitted and approved by our validators by this deadline.
- Access to the payment card will be suspended if money owed from the payment card has not been repaid to IPSA within 30 days or until a repayment plan has been agreed.
- When a payment card is suspended for non-compliance, the card will remain suspended for a minimum of seven days or until the conditions are met, whichever is longer, before it can be turned back on.
- Serious or persistent breaches of the conditions will result in the card being suspended for up to six months or withdrawn completely.
- IPSA may publish information about money overdue for repayment from a payment card.

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## **IPSA Online London Training and Payment Card Webinars**

We are currently running IPSA Online training sessions at our offices in 85 Strand on Tuesdays and Thursdays. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

We are also hosting two webinars on Payment Cards where an Account Manager will talk through the new payment card policy and how to reconcile your payment card within the rules.

Thursday 19 March at 2.30pm - [Click here](#) to register

Tuesday 24 March at 9.30am - [Click here](#) to register

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### **Year-End Guidance**

We have published year-end guidance to help you manage your finances across the end of financial year 2019-20. All MPs should check their financial position for this financial year and complete a year-end form to make sure spending is allocated to the correct financial year.

Please refer to the guidance provided by IPSA [here](#). The correct submission of documentation is your responsibility and it is therefore vital all MPs and staff understand the deadlines and what you need to submit to IPSA.

Year-end forms and most claims, with supporting evidence on IPSA Online, must be submitted by **23:59 on Sunday 26 April 2020**.