

Purpose

1. IPSA provides MPs and certain proxies with a payment card to support them with costs relating to their parliamentary functions. This document sets out the policy and guidance relating to the use of payment cards and supports [the Scheme of MPs' Staffing and Business Costs](#) ('the Scheme').

Entitlement

2. The entitlement to a payment card is summarised below:

- The MP will be provided with a single payment card in their name, for the duration of their time in office.
- The standard credit limit is £4,000, but the MP can ask IPSA to increase it if necessary. Any single transaction is limited to £2,000 but the MP can ask IPSA to increase it temporarily, if necessary. The MP can assign an expenses proxy to reconcile their payment card expenditure on their behalf.
- The MP can request a second card for their expenses proxy (A or B) to make purchases on their behalf. In exceptional circumstances (such as absence of the MP) consideration will be given to a third card being supplied.
- The standard credit limit for the proxy card is £2,000 and the single transaction is limited to £700. The cardholder can ask IPSA to increase the transaction limit temporarily.

Conditions for entitlement to an IPSA payment card

3. The conditions of entitlement to a payment card are:

- The card must only be used to pay for costs which are allowed under the Scheme.
- The card must not be used for personal expenditure or for costs which are not allowed under the Scheme.
- Expenditure must be fully accounted-for promptly, by submitting evidence and making any repayments to IPSA by the deadline (the eighth of the month after the transactions are uploaded for reconciliation).
- The cardholder must not owe IPSA any money for payment card spending. If an MP's office has payment card debt owed to IPSA (relating to the MP or proxy's card) access to both payment cards may be suspended until the debt has been fully recovered or until a repayment plan via salary deductions has been agreed with the MP.
- The card must be kept safe and secure, and any potential fraud reported to Barclaycard immediately on 0800 008 008, and not later than 28 days from the date the fraud was identified (any fraud reported after 28 days may not be refunded by Barclaycard and the MP may be liable to repay costs to IPSA).
- The cardholder must sign an indemnity form agreeing to the conditions of use. You can find this at the end of this policy along with details required by the supplier to order your card.
- An expenses proxy (A or B) must be registered with IPSA, have a contract of employment with the MP and paid via the IPSA payroll, and the MP must authorise the proxy's application for a payment card by signing the indemnity form.
- If the cardholder is a proxy, they must attend the Payment Card Policy webinar prior to applying for a payment card.

4. It is the MP's responsibility that cardholders in their office meet these conditions. The MP will be liable for any money owed to IPSA originating from payment card use by cardholders in their office.

Breaches of the conditions for entitlement to an IPSA payment card

5. If a cardholder does not reconcile their payment card, by submitting valid evidence, or does not make repayments of money owed from payment card spending within 30 days, their card will be suspended for seven calendar days or until the conditions are met, whichever is longer. The seven-day suspension is designed to encourage prompt and full reconciliation and repayment of money owed within the deadlines.

6. IPSA carries out regular reviews of compliance with the payment card policy and the conditions set out above. Any breach of the conditions is classed as misuse. Serious or persistent breaches of the conditions will result in the payment card being suspended for up to six months or withdrawn permanently. Serious or persistent breaches include:

- Regular or frequent failure to reconcile the payment card, by submitting valid evidence, within the specified deadlines.
- Regular or frequent use of the payment card for costs not claimed from IPSA budgets (costs marked as 'not claimed, to repay').
- Regular or frequent use of the payment card for personal or other non-parliamentary use.
- Regular or frequent failure to make repayments of money owed from payment card spending within 30 days.
- Improper use of MP or proxy card for items not allowed under the Scheme while either card is suspended.

7. In these circumstances, IPSA will first warn the cardholder that that continued breaches will result in suspension or withdrawal of the payment card. If the conditions continue to be breached, the card will be suspended or withdrawn. IPSA will notify the cardholder by email if their card is to be suspended or withdrawn, unless it is impractical to do so. IPSA may decide to waive one or more of these conditions if exceptional circumstances arise.

Requesting a payment card

8. IPSA will ask the MP if they want a payment card when they take up office and ask them to sign the indemnity form (attached). IPSA will liaise with the card provider (Barclaycard) to obtain the card, PIN, and card reader, and send them to the cardholder.

9. The Proxy or MP should contact IPSA to request that their proxy is issued with a payment card. In these cases, both the MP and proxy will be required to physically sign the indemnity form for the second card.

10. A proxy must attend the Payment Card Policy webinar prior to applying for a payment card. IPSA will not issue a payment card if a proxy has not attended the Payment Card Policy webinar.

Using the payment card

11. The cardholder can use the card to pay for costs which are allowed under the Scheme. The cardholder can use the card to pay for items which exceed Scheme limits and repay the excess to IPSA within 30 days. For more information, visit [Repaying money to IPSA](#).

12. The card must not be used for personal expenditure or for costs which are not allowed under the Scheme.

13. The card cannot be used for any single purchase worth more than £2,000 by MPs or £700 by proxies or for items totalling more than the £4,000 credit limit for MPs (£2,000 for proxies) unless the MP has been given prior approval for an increase to the limit of their card. MPs should request an increase to the transaction limit or credit limit by emailing IPSA, explaining the reason and period for which the increase is needed.

14. The MP must let IPSA know promptly if a second cardholder/proxy leaves employment, so their payment card can be cancelled.

Reconciling payment card spending

15. At the beginning of each month, the card provider sends IPSA the transactions for the previous month. IPSA uploads them to IPSA Online, and the system automatically emails the MP (and their expenses proxy, if they have one) to tell them the expenditure is ready to be accounted for. MPs and Proxies are required to reconcile the expenses incurred on their payment card. Proxy A's will continue to have their transactions approved by their MP. Proxy B's will be able to submit their lines directly to IPSA without their MP's approval. For more information, visit [Payment card reconciliation](#).

16. The cardholder must fully account for the expenditure (by 'reconciling') by the eighth of the following month. The cardholder must fully reconcile the transactions, by submitting valid evidence and repay any money owed to IPSA, and the submitted reconciliation must be approved by our Validation team by the eighth of the month. It is good practice for the MP to check they do not owe any other repayments to IPSA.

17. If the cardholder uses the payment card for personal expenditure or expenditure outside the Scheme, the cardholder must mark the transaction as 'Not claimed, to be repaid' and repay the money owed immediately. If the money is not received by IPSA within 30 days, the amount owed will be deducted from the MP's salary. Frequent instances of monies owed relating to the payment card is considered misuse and may result in withdrawal of the card/s.

18. Approximately a week before the deadline, the IPSA Online system will automatically remind any MP (and their proxy) if they have not yet reconciled their payment card transactions and need to do so.

19. On the first working day after the deadline, IPSA will suspend for seven calendar days payment cards with transactions which have not been fully reconciled and approved by our Validation team by the deadline. IPSA may also suspend payment cards belonging to cardholders that owe money to IPSA for payment card spending which has not been repaid within 30 days of the cardholder being notified.

20. IPSA will email the MP (and their proxy) to inform them that their card will be suspended for seven calendar days and that they must account for the expenditure and make any repayments to IPSA within that week.

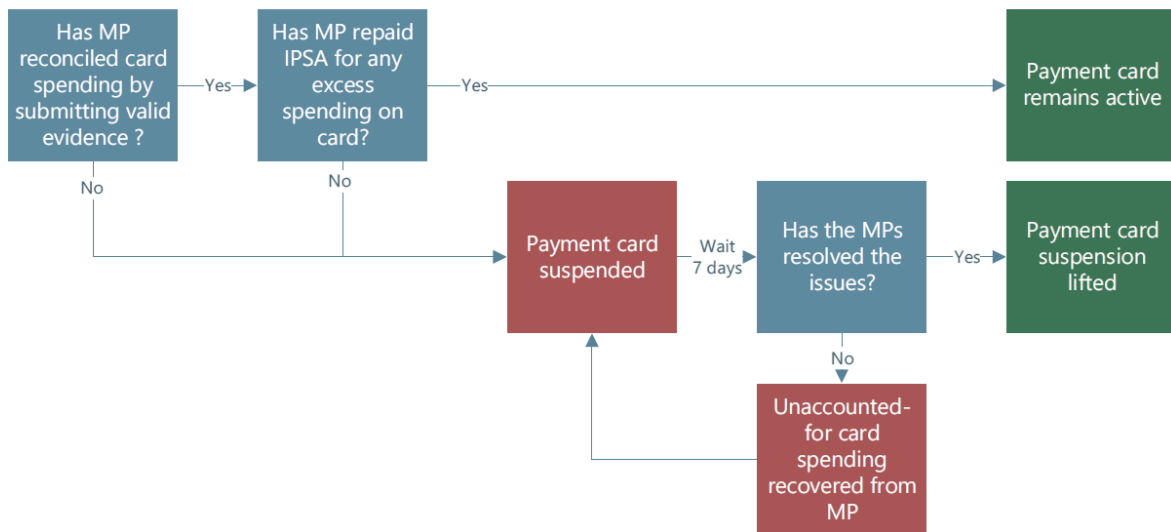
21. After seven calendar days, IPSA will lift the payment card suspension for cardholders that have fully accounted for the expenditure and made any necessary repayments to IPSA. Note that cards will be suspended for a minimum of seven days, even if reconciliation or repayments happen sooner.

22. If, seven days later, the cardholder has not fully accounted for their payment card expenditure, IPSA will seek repayment of the cost of any unaccounted-for expenditure by raising a credit note on IPSA

Online. The payment card lines will be marked as 'costs not reconciled,' and the payment card suspension will be lifted when the money owed to IPSA has been fully recovered. If the costs are allowable, the cardholder may submit a claim for reimbursement of the costs in the normal way within 90 days of the expenditure being incurred.

23. If there are exceptional circumstances which prevent the cardholder reconciling expenditure on time, please notify IPSA in advance of the deadline and we will consider whether an extension to the deadline is appropriate in the circumstances.

24. The process is described in the flowchart below.



25. At the end of the financial year the timescales for payment card reconciliation will change so that the costs can be assigned to the correct financial year and IPSA can complete its financial year-end process. Please see the IPSA year-end guidance, issued each year, for more information.

IPSA validation of payment card spending

26. We validate payment card spending in the same way we validate reimbursement claims. If spending is not permitted under the Scheme, or insufficient evidence is submitted, the claim will be returned to the cardholder as an expense correction on IPSA Online in the usual way, via the Task Manager.

27. The cardholder must action returned lines promptly, by submitting additional evidence by the payment card deadline, to avoid their payment card being suspended.

28. Payment card expenditure will be allocated automatically to the budget selected by the cardholder during reconciliation.

Repaying money to IPSA

29. The cardholder must repay any money owed to IPSA promptly and within 30 days of the cardholder being notified of the repayment being required. In accordance with the Scheme, any money owed after 30 days is treated as debt, which IPSA can recover by offsetting against future reimbursement claims or via salary deductions. IPSA has recently adapted its policy and will now, after notifying the MP, recover

any outstanding costs marked 'not claimed, to be repaid' from the MP's salary if they are not repaid within 30 days.

30. If the cardholder owes money to IPSA which has not been repaid or the MP is forecast to overspend against their budgets, IPSA may suspend use of both cardholders' payment cards (or restrict it to travel costs only) to prevent a greater overspend and an increase in the money owed to IPSA.

Payment card statements and settling the account

31. IPSA receives and settles an overarching payment card statement each month, which includes the expenditure for all cardholders.

32. The cardholder will be provided with an account and logon so that they can view their expenditure online. Alternatively, they may opt to receive paper statements which the payment card supplier will send to their chosen address. IPSA Online will also send details of the Proxy B's Barclaycard statement to the MP at the end of each month for information.

Publication of payment card expenditure

33. IPSA publishes payment card expenditure in the same way we publish data about reimbursement claims, [in accordance with our Publication Policy](#).

34. IPSA will not publish data about payment card expenditure if the cardholder has selected to repay the cost to IPSA. However, as stated in our Publication Policy, IPSA may publish information about money overdue for repayment to IPSA, including that originating from payment card use.

35. IPSA may be asked to release additional information about payment card expenditure, reconciliation, and card suspensions under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Requests for information under the FOIA are considered on a case-by-case basis.

IPSA Payment Card Key Contacts

I want to...	Please contact...
Report suspected fraudulent use (within 28 days)	Barclaycard customer services 0800 008 008
Report a lost or stolen card	
Report an issue logging on to my Barclaycard account	
Report an issue with my card reader	
Order a new payment card	IPSA 020 7811 6400
Change my name or address	
Increase my single transaction or monthly credit limit	
Ask about my payment card suspension	
Get advice about how to reconcile my payment card	
Make a repayment to IPSA	

IPSA Payment Card Indemnity Form

Conditions for holding an IPSA payment card

The conditions of entitlement to a payment card are:

- The card **must only be used to pay for costs which are allowed** under the Scheme.
- The card **must not be used for personal expenditure** or for costs which are not allowed under the Scheme.
- Expenditure **must be fully accounted-for promptly**, by submitting evidence and making any repayments to IPSA by the deadline (the eighth of the month after the transactions are uploaded for reconciliation).
- The cardholder **must not owe IPSA any money** for payment card spending. If an MP’s office has payment card debt owed to IPSA (relating to the MP or proxy’s card) access to both payment cards may be suspended until the debt has been fully recovered or until a repayment plan via salary deductions has been agreed with the MP.
- The card **must be kept safe and secure**, and any potential fraud reported to Barclaycard immediately on 0800 008 008.
- An expenses proxy (A or B) must be registered with IPSA, be fully employed by the MP and on the payroll, and the MP must authorise the proxy’s application for a payment card.
- The cardholder **must sign an indemnity form** agreeing to the conditions of use.
- An expenses proxy (A or B) must be registered with IPSA and the MP must authorise the proxy’s application for a payment card by signing the indemnity form.
- If the cardholder is a proxy, they must attend the Payment Card Policy webinar prior to applying for a payment card.

It is the MP’s responsibility that cardholders in their office meet these conditions. The MP will be liable for any money owed to IPSA originating from payment card use by cardholders in their office.

If you agree, please sign in ink below, and fill out the [Cardholder details](#).

I/we have read the IPSA Payment Card policy and I/we agree to comply with the conditions of holding an IPSA payment card.	
Cardholder name:	
Cardholder signature:	
Date:	
MP name (where cardholder is the proxy):	
MP signature (where cardholder is the proxy):	
Date:	

Cardholder Details

To complete your request, we will need you to confirm the following details required by the supplier. Please type your details in the fields below:

Title:	
Full name (including any middle names):	
Date of birth:	
Home address: this is the address that the payment card and bank statements will be sent	
Nationality:	
Gender:	
Preferred contact email address:	
Home/mobile number:	