

## **Bulletin 27 March 2020**

This week we are all adjusting to the Government's instructions to help to slow the pace of the coronavirus outbreak. We hope that you are staying safe and well and coping with current restrictions, both professionally and personally.

Thank you for your understanding as we altered the way we received queries in response to the advice for all employees to work from home where possible. Each day we review the queries and our teams respond to the most urgent requests first to ensure that the most critical matters are dealt with. If you have submitted a query, please be assured that a member of the IPSA team will contact you as soon as possible, by phone or email.

On Tuesday we held a virtual meeting with the MP Staff User Group where we discussed IPSA's response to the coronavirus as well as the budget and Scheme changes for 2020-21, the payroll report and IPSA's customer service. We would like to say thanks once again to the group members for their invaluable feedback. If you would like to join the MP Staff User Group, or find out more about it, please email [communications@theipsa.org.uk](mailto:communications@theipsa.org.uk).

As recess begins, we plan to continue to send regular Bulletins to keep you updated. We aim to provide as much guidance as possible in these bulletins and online so that the IPSA team can concentrate on more complex and individual queries.

This bulletin contains information on the following:

- IPSA's coronavirus measures
- Coronavirus FAQs
- Year-end 2019-20

- Newsletter guidance
- Payment card webinar recording
- Training and development
- IPSA Online Guidance

IPSA

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### **IPSA's Coronavirus Measures**

Last week IPSA's Interim Chair, Richard Lloyd, sent information on IPSA's coronavirus measures. Full details can be found [here](#).

The key changes are:

- **Office Costs Budget:** There will be an immediate increase of £10,000 to your office costs budget. This is to cover any additional costs you may incur to set up working remotely as a result of coronavirus. This extra budget will be available until March 2021.
- **Payment Card:** Your monthly credit limit has been increased to £10,000 to help with cash flow. Please continue to make reasonable efforts to reconcile the payment card as normal, by the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month. However, we understand that this may be difficult in some cases, for example due to staff sickness. If you haven't reconciled by the deadline, we will contact you. For the time being we will not suspend any payment cards if you cannot reconcile on time.
- **90 Day Limit for Claims:** We are suspending the 90-day limit for costs that have been incurred since the start of January 2020. This means that claims will not be returned on the basis that they are outside of the 90-day period. Please still make all reasonable efforts to make claims promptly

- **Evidence Requirements:** If you do not have access to a receipt or invoice, but cannot wait for reimbursement, we will pay claims without evidence and ask you to send in the evidence as soon as you can.
- **Leases:** Processing property registrations and amendments and paying your rent on time are two of IPSA's key priorities, and we are taking action to set up new and renew existing leases as quickly as possible.
- **Contingency Applications:** We have put in place a streamlined process for [contingency fund applications](#) to cover the exceptional costs you may incur due to coronavirus.
- **Staff Absence:** We will provide additional funding from the staff absence budget, in case staff members are unwell or otherwise unable to work.

We encourage all MPs and staff to follow Government instructions regarding the coronavirus outbreak and hope that the measures detailed above will support you to do this.

Details of the government advice are available [here](#). The NHS has published [information](#) about the virus and how to prevent it. The House of Commons is publishing updates on the [parliamentary intranet](#).

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## Coronavirus FAQs

Following the publication of our coronavirus measures, we have created a frequently asked questions guide to answer some of the queries we have received.

[Click here for the coronavirus measures FAQs](#)

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## Year-end 2019-20

Given the exceptional circumstances, we are extending the deadline for submission of year-end paperwork until 30 June. For more information on the year-end process and what you need to do, please consult the [year-end guidance](#). This will be updated to reflect the new timetable.

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## Newsletter Guidance

Section 6 of [The Scheme of MPs' Business Costs and Expenses](#) allows for MPs to claim from the Office Costs budget '*costs of renting, equipping and running MPs' constituency offices, surgeries, and other activities which support their parliamentary functions, where these costs are not covered by other budgets under the Scheme*'.

Section 6.5 (b) stipulates that the Office Costs budget should not be used to fund newsletters. However, communicating with constituents on a single issue is claimable if this complies with the principles of the Scheme such as the communication is for a parliamentary purpose and not containing campaigning or party-political content. For example, communicating important health messages to constituents is claimable.

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## Payment Card Webinar

On Tuesday, one of our account managers delivered a webinar on how to reconcile your payment card and answered a number of questions relating to compliance with the payment card and the new [Payment Card Policy](#).

[Click here to access the payment card webinar](#)

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## Training and Development

As well as the additional training and development money within the staffing budget, we are working on a range of training sessions to help you to understand our policies and processes.

There are two webinars available next week, please click the links below to register.

[Payment Card - Tuesday 31 March at 11am](#)

[IPSA's Coronavirus Measures - Wednesday 1 April at 2pm](#)

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## IPSA Online Guidance

The [IPSA Homepage](#) contains guidance on how to complete many IPSA Online functions- listed below.

### Expenses

[How do I make a reimbursement claim?](#)

[How do I reconcile a payment card?](#)

[How do I attach evidence?](#)

[How do I make a mileage claim?](#)

[What do I do when my claim has an error?](#)

[How do I correct previous claims I've submitted?](#)

### Payroll

[How do I access my payslip?](#)

[How do I update my personal details?](#)

[How do I update my bank account details?](#)

[How do I complete or approve MP staff ov](#)

[How do I record absences?](#)

[How do I calculate casual staff holiday?](#)

[How do I complete a property registration form?](#)

[How do I complete a property amendment form?](#)

[How do I organise my tasks?](#)

[How can I access things I need quickly?](#)

[How do I use the IPSA Online App?](#)

[How do I register a dependant?](#)

[How do I make changes to employment co](#)

[How do I complete a staff leaver form?](#)

[How do I offer reward and recognition to r](#)

[How do I apply for a season ticket/bike loa](#)

## **Dashboard**

[How do I view and manage information on](#)