

11 February 2021

Dear Member of Parliament

IPSA support for parental leave

IPSA is strongly committed to supporting a more family-friendly Parliament. As the House considers the Ministerial and Other Maternity Allowances Bill, I am writing to confirm further steps we plan to take in this area.

First, the IPSA Board has agreed to undertake a brief consultation to enhance our current provisions so that MPs who take paid parental leave can hire additional staff to cover constituency work during their absence.

We want to create a specific MP Parental Leave Cover Fund and a new policy which will clearly set out MPs' eligibility for funding and how we will provide it. We have a statutory duty to consult on such changes to the Scheme of MPs' Business Costs and will begin that consultation shortly so that the new approach can come into effect from 1 April 2021.

Second, we have also agreed to undertake a further phase of work to improve the practical support IPSA provides to MPs and their offices during a period of leave, such as tailored training and 'keeping in touch' days. In addition, we want to explore whether changes to the online system could make it easier for your designated proxies to continue to manage the office's business costs while the MP is absent. We will be seeking your views as we do this over the coming months.

Although today's Bill is focused in scope, it is an important part of the wider debate. Please be assured that IPSA will work side by side with House authorities to implement improvements for all MPs.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Lloyd
Interim Chair, IPSA