

Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

Bulletin 11 July 2019

Dear reader,

Today IPSA has published the latest business costs and expenses for February and March 2019, documents relating to an assurance review conducted into pooled services and a Professional Services Report carried out this year. We have also responded to the Gemma White report that was published this morning. IPSA's press release can be found [here](#).

The IPSA Online survey closed on Friday with 350 completed responses. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey. We will now review the feedback, as well as that received in the MP Staff User Group meeting, emails and phone calls, and will let you know what actions we plan to take as soon as possible. Please do continue to send us your feedback on the new system by email to IPSAOnlinefeedback@theipsa.org.uk.

This bulletin contains information on the following:

- Publication of Business Costs and Expenses for February and March 2019
 - Professional Services Report
 - Gemma White QC Report
 - Rental Payments and Property Leases
 - IPSA Online Access Guidance: Proxy Settings
 - IPSA Online Training
 - Sanitary Products
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Business Costs and Expenses Publication

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

Please note the next publication on 12 September 2019 will include the final claims up to the end of March 2019, when we will publish all remaining claims from the previous expenses system. The first publication of claims submitted on IPSA Online, the new claims system launched in April, will be on 14 November 2019 and will include Annual Publication and claims made from April to July 2019 via IPSA Online. This date is subject to change if Parliament is in recess.

Professional Services Report

IPSA has carried out a review of claims made by MPs for the cost of professional services. The full report can be found [here](#).

The report's key findings are:

- In 2017-18, IPSA reimbursed professional services claims worth about £1.15m.
 - A number of claims made under the professional services expense type should have been more appropriately claimed from other expense types.
 - Much of the evidence provided to support claims for professional services over the review period was inadequate.
 - Several MPs may not have the correct employment status in place for individuals currently claimed as professional services.
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IPSA has created evidence guidance [here](#) to explain IPSA's new expense types, examples of what you can claim within each expense type and the evidence you must submit with your claims.

Gemma White report

IPSA welcomes [Gemma White QC's report into bullying and harassment of MPs' staff](#) and will carefully consider the recommendations. We take good employment practice and wellbeing in the workplace very seriously and we condemn bullying and harassment.

IPSA does not employ the staff of MPs as they are employed by the MPs themselves. We support MPs and staff by providing funding for salaries and model contracts of employment. IPSA has made positive changes to improve working conditions for MPs and their staff since its creation in 2010. IPSA has developed policies to support work-life balance and has led a number of initiatives in conjunction with the House of Commons including the review and update of standard contracts (2015), review of MP staffing salaries (2016), review of MP staffing (2016/17), creation of guidance documents regarding employment terms and conditions (2017) and more recently the creation of a HR guidebook published in 2019.

IPSA adopted the UK Parliament Behaviour Code as the guideline for interactions between IPSA and parliamentary staff, and encourages respect and professionalism among parliamentary colleagues. IPSA recognises the valuable role that MPs and staff members perform and will work with the House of Commons and other agencies to promote excellent working conditions within the parliamentary community.

Rental payments and property leases

Over 1000 properties are leased for constituency offices and private accommodation and paid for by IPSA. As part of our work to set up IPSA Online, we have transferred all relevant details into the new system, so that payments made directly to landlords will be fully automated. In future, when your property lease expires, the system will automatically cancel rental payments to your landlord so it is important for you to renew your lease or register a new property in good time. Our turnaround time for registering new leases is 10 working days. Last week, we wrote to around 100 MPs with leases which are expiring, giving guidance on what to do next. We are working hard to prioritise these leases so that payments are paid correctly. Please email us on info@theipsa.org.uk if you need any help on how to do this on IPSA Online.

IPSA Online can send automated messages to alert you to items like a lease which is near to expiry. We will be working over the summer with a number of proxies to design these alerts, including their wording and frequency. We will introduce them in a phased way to ensure they meet your needs.

IPSA Online Access Guidance: Proxy Settings

If your Proxy setting does not appear to be correct in IPSA Online, clearing your cache may resolve the issue.

First try refreshing your page using 'Ctrl' and 'F5'. If this doesn't work click [here](#) for a step-by-step guide to how to clear your cache and solutions to other access issues.

IPSA Online Training

IPSA continues to provide training in London on the new expenses and payroll system. The aim of the sessions is to give you experience and confidence in using IPSA Online.

Each training session is 1 hr 15 minutes hours long and will allow you to ask bespoke questions relevant to your office.

By the end of the session you will:

- Understand how to navigate the system and find help when you need it
- Carry out the most common expenses processes
- Carry out day to day Payroll and staffing processes
- Run reports and use the Dashboard to find out your financial situation

[Click here to register for training](#)

Sanitary Products

In response to queries from some offices, we can confirm that MPs are able to claim for the cost of sanitary products for their office at their discretion. Such costs may be claimed from the office costs budget using the 'Cleaning services' expense type.

If you have any queries about the information in this bulletin, please contact us
on 020 7811 6400.

Remember to press 1 for MP Support Services or 2 for Payroll.
