

Bulletin 19 March 2020

IPSA's Board met yesterday to discuss how we can support you and your staff during the UK's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We have agreed a series of immediate measures that we hope will provide you with the resources and flexibility to concentrate on your parliamentary duties and support your staff at this time.

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 8th 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.

[Full guidance on IPSA's coronavirus measures can be found here](#)

We are also working actively with MPs who left parliament in December to support them more flexibly too as they wind up their offices.

Please log on to the Barclaycard website to check your billing address is recorded correctly, or if you want to change the address your statements are sent to. If statements are sent to the wrong address and then returned to Barclaycard this can result in Barclaycard suspending a card. Guidance for logging into the online service can be found [here](#).

We understand the need for MPs and their staff to contact IPSA, especially for reassurance and advice about understandable concerns with finances. Like many other organisations, we now have staff off sick with Covid-19 and self-isolating, and we have cybersecurity and other operational or technical requirements that limit our ability to provide a fully accessible service. For those reasons, our phone lines will remain closed for the immediate future, so that we can triage the most important and urgent queries via email, rather than ask you to wait on the phone. We will call MPs and staff back to discuss urgent or complex matters.

I apologise for the impact this has already had, and we fully recognise that this will not provide the immediate service that MPs want. We are trying to communicate quickly and as we adapt to these exceptional circumstances, we recognise that our first communication to you did not get the tone right.

We will keep these arrangements under continuous review so that we can improve them as soon as circumstances allow. I have discussed the measures set out above with the Speaker and will be meeting him weekly to review progress.

The latest health advice from the NHS can be seen [here](#), and the government advice about coronavirus can be seen [here](#). The House of Commons is publishing updates on the [parliamentary intranet](#).

We will update you regularly with any new information so please read this first before contacting us. We want to help you as much as possible through this unprecedented time, and appreciate your patience and understanding. We hope you, your staff and your families remain well.

With best wishes

Richard Lloyd OBE
Interim Chair, IPSA