

Karen Walker
Chief Executive & Accounting Officer



**Independent Parliamentary
Standards Authority**
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Alberto Costa MP
Chair of the House of Commons Committee on Standards
By email to COMMITTEESTANDARD@parliament.uk

Ref: CEO-2026-002

30 January 2026

Dear Alberto,

Re: Reward and Recognition Payments

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you and the Committee on Monday. I have now seen the email from Unite that you referred to and can respond to your request regarding IPSA's view on the provision of reward and recognition payments for MPs' staff.

By way of context, reward and recognition payments were introduced in 2011-12 to allow MPs to recognise outstanding performance from their staff. The current payment limit is capped at £1,000 per staff member per year. In our autumn 2025 consultation, IPSA sought views on the current limit, and we will communicate the Board's final decision on this ahead of the new financial year. Funding for these payments comes from each MP's annual staffing budget.

While IPSA sets out a regulatory framework for MPs in relation to their staffing, we believe it is right that individual MPs as employers have the scope and flexibility to decide whether and how to make reward and recognition payments to their staff. IPSA does not set out the specific areas that MPs as employers should consider when providing reward and recognition payments, but the circumstances outlined by Unite in their email of 26 January 2026 – such as where staff have been managing heavy workloads, working to tight deadlines, and dealing with complex casework – seem reasonable and in line with the intention of reward and recognition generally. Feedback from MPs and their staff to IPSA indicates that casework volumes remain significantly elevated and that cases are becoming increasingly complex. We understand that some MPs consider reward and recognition payments towards the end of the financial year once they can assess affordability in line with remaining budget. Where MPs have budget to cover the cost of payments, IPSA will process those that are requested of us.

If MPs wish to seek advice about making reward and recognition payments to ensure they are following best practice, they should contact the Members' HR team.

I trust this addresses your concerns, but please do get in touch with any further issues.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KW', enclosed within a light blue rectangular border.

Karen Walker
Chief Executive & Accounting Officer