

## Start-up

New MPs have an extra budget of £6000 to start up their offices in the first year. The budget lasts for 365 days from the day after an MP is elected, and can span financial years. The start-up budget is intended to support you in purchasing 'big ticket' items associated with the setting up of an office, but can be used to purchase smaller items.

## Winding up

A winding up budget is made available to meet the cost of completing the outstanding parliamentary functions when an MP leaves Parliaments.

## Budgets 2015/2016\*

Office Costs Expenditure	London MPs - £26,050 per annum
	Non-London MPs – £23,400 per annum
Winding up	London MPs - £57,150
	Non-London MPs - £53,950
Start up	£6,000

\*New MPs will receive an 11 month office budget

Please visit our website <http://generalelection.parliamentarystandards.org.uk>

### Useful contacts:

IPSA information line – 020 7811 6400

E-mail – [info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk](mailto:info@parliamentarystandards.org.uk)

Twitter - @IPSAUK 

Members' HR Advice Service

Telephone – 020 7219 2080

E-mail – [MembersHR@parliament.uk](mailto:MembersHR@parliament.uk)

# Office costs expenditure

A quick guide: what you need to know and  
how we will support you.

This is not a comprehensive statement of the rules and has no status other than an explanatory one. Full details on the Accommodation budget can be found in the current edition of MPs' Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses.

## Office costs

Office Costs Expenditure (OCE) is provided to meet the costs of equipping and running your constituency offices and surgeries. The OCE budget covers costs that are not available from other budgets in the Scheme, or other sources, like the House of Commons.

With some specific exceptions, you have discretion over what you claim under OCE, provided that the items claimed for are in support of your parliamentary functions.

## Exclusions

Specific items which you are not allowed to claim are:

- alcoholic drinks;
- hospitality (including tea and coffee in the office);
- House of Commons stationery;
- newsletters;
- party political material containing a party logo or emblem (other than a website); and
- personal accountancy or tax advice.

## Constituency offices

You are able to rent a constituency office or offices to support you in your parliamentary functions. You should register your constituency office with us via an **Online Registration** and also submit a **Property Rental Form**. You should also send us a copy of the tenancy agreement, lease or licence. A constituency office must be located within the constituency or less than 20 miles outside it. If you require further details about this process, please contact us.

Claims for the following items will only be allowed once the office has been registered with us:

- rent;
- energy and water bills;
- business rates;
- contents and buildings insurance; and
- rental and usage costs for telephone and internet access.

You can rent your office from a political party, but you must provide a valuation of the market rate for the contract which has been prepared by a valuer regulated by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. This market rate cannot be exceeded. The cost of the independent valuation is claimable under OCE.

You and your staff can work routinely from home, and register your/their home as an office

providing it complies with HMRC guidelines. Once registered, you and your staff can claim a proportion of the costs incurred for doing parliamentary work at home. Please see HMRC guidance for further information or contact us regarding the process.

If you share an office, only the appropriate proportion of the office costs can be claimed.

If you move offices, removal costs are not required to come from OCE. You may claim removal costs separately from the Contingency Fund instead. No pre-approval is required.

You are strongly advised to negotiate a clause within your contract to allow you to extricate yourself from the contract within two months in case of a change in circumstances. This is because the ‘winding-up’ period for departing MPs is for up to two months after an MP departs Parliament.

When you have found an office to rent, we can arrange to pay the rent directly to your landlord upon the completion of a Property Rental Form and the receipt of a signed lease. Direct payments can help with cash flow and avoid you having to make claims on a regular basis for your rent.

## Flexibility between OCE and Staffing

A number of costs can be claimed either under OCE or the staffing budget. This provides MPs with a degree of flexibility in their budgeting, which can be helpful when some of these costs – parliamentary research services, for example – can run into thousands of pounds. Some of these costs include:

- pooled staffing resources;
- employment practice liability insurance (see below); and
- staff training.

## Insurance

Every year we facilitate the purchase of employment practice liability insurance for MPs. This covers you for employment liabilities as a result of employing staff in your offices. We will contact you to ask if you would like to be part of the joint purchase arrangements but you are also able to purchase cover separately. Employer’s and public liability insurance is provided by the House of Commons.