

Jennifer James
Via email

Our ref: CAS-16916

29 May 2015

Dear Ms James,

Thank you for your email of 22 May 2015 in which you requested information relating to . Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You made the following request.

The current IPSA website holds a great deal of information that can be accessed by individual, specific requests, but it does not 'sort' data in any meaningful way. It would be useful to be able to have the facility to compare data, for example to find out which MPs claim the most on expenses, how an individual MP's expenses compare from one year to the next, which MP spends the most on stationery etc.

League tables, if you like, similar to those which MPs have legislated for in schools and hospitals.

- 1. Can you tell me if IPSA has, at any time, discussed the introduction of sort facilities for the data - in the interests of openness and transparency. If so have these proposals been costed and if they were refused, who lobbied for them and who refused them.*
- 2. Does IPSA have any plans to introduce scanned copies of original receipts claimed by MPs as it was instructed to do by the courts? If not, why not? Has IPSA had discussions where it has been considered that the current system of simply releasing numbers leaves it open to corruption?*
- 3. After being instructed by the High Court *and* the Court of Appeal to release original, redacted if necessary, expenses documents submitted by MPs, does IPSA plan to fight the release of each original document on a case by case basis, incurring further legal costs and lengthening the process or has it now capitulated to the law in letter *and* spirit.*
- 4. Legal fees for the above proceedings approached £190,000. Can IPSA tell me which body or individual footed this legal bill for them?*

I will take your questions in turn.

- 1. Can you tell me if IPSA has, at any time, discussed the introduction of sort facilities for the data - in the interests of openness and transparency. If so have these proposals been costed and if they were refused, who lobbied for them and who refused them.*

This function already exists. As you will be aware, IPSA publishes all claims made by MPs for business costs and expenses on our publication website, at <http://www.parliamentary-standards.org.uk/>. All the data published on our website can be exported to spreadsheet format, allowing the user to sort and filter using the functions in Microsoft Excel or similar spreadsheet software.

Users can use either the 'Search Function' to locate specific claims (which can then be exported), or view all claims made during a financial year under the 'Aggregate Data' tab.

2. Does IPSA have any plans to introduce scanned copies of original receipts claimed by MPs as it was instructed to do by the courts? If not, why not? Has IPSA had discussions where it has been considered that the current system of simply releasing numbers leaves it open to corruption?

The recent appeal, heard at the Court of Appeal (The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority v The Information Commissioner & Anor [2015]) related to a request made under the FOIA in December 2010 for copies of three receipts. In response to the ruling by the Court of Appeal, IPSA disclosed copies of the three receipts on 20 May 2015. You can view copies of these receipts on our website, via the following link: <http://parliamentarystandards.org.uk/NewsAndMedia/Pages/LatestNews2.aspx?ListNews=739f9c00-b7d4-4282-bffd-9ae51fd8d92d&NewsId=85>

IPSA does not hold any information on any such discussions.

*3. After being instructed by the High Court *and* the Court of Appeal to release original, redacted if necessary, expenses documents submitted by MPs, does IPSA plan to fight the release of each original document on a case by case basis, incurring further legal costs and lengthening the process or has it now capitulated to the law in letter *and* spirit.*

Requests for copies of receipts, made to IPSA under the FOIA, will be considered on a case-by-case basis – as is required under the FOIA.

4. Legal fees for the above proceedings approached £190,000. Can IPSA tell me which body or individual footed this legal bill for them?

IPSA met the costs of the legal proceedings from its annual budget.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request an internal review. The internal review will be carried out by someone who was not involved in the original decision, and who will assess the handling of the original request.

If you wish to request an internal review, please write to IPSA within two months of the date of this letter, at the following address:

Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority
4th Floor
30 Millbank
London
SW1P 4DU.

Or by email to: foi@parliamentarystandards.org.uk

If you remain dissatisfied after an internal review decision, you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) under Section 50 of the FOIA. You may contact the ICO at the following address:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Or you may wish to visit the [ICO's website](#).

Yours sincerely,

Chris Veck
Freedom of Information Officer