



House of Commons
Administration Committee

**Election planning and
services**

First Report of Session 2016–17

*Report, together with formal minutes
relating to the report*

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The Administration Committee

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Summary

1. Our Inquiry invited submissions from all Members—returned, former, and especially those who were new in 2015. We also sought external evidence, advice and feedback from Parliamentary bodies including the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA). This allowed us to thoroughly explore arrangements made by the House of Commons to support new and returning Members following the 2015 General Election as well as look at the provision of information over the dissolution¹ period.
2. The purpose of this Report is primarily to be forward looking and apply the lessons learnt from 2015, as well as past elections, to improve the services provided for new Members when they arrive in Westminster after the next election. Our findings are broadly speaking extremely positive and reflect the fact that many of the arrangements in 2015 were developed as a direct result of engagement with Members and with this Committee.

¹ Dissolution refers to the point at which the previous Parliament officially ends and covers the period up until the next Parliament returns on the day set out by royal proclamation. At the point of dissolution all MPs revert to being members of the public and lose privileges associated with being a Member of Parliament. Parliament may be 'prorogued' a few days before being dissolved. At prorogation all parliamentary business ends, although that Parliament would still exist until dissolution.

1 The long view

3. When many of our long-serving colleagues first came to Parliament the majority of the services and facilities now available for newly arrived Members had not been dreamt of. Working out of the carpark for weeks and getting by on scraps of sage advice from more senior Members on a multitude of unfamiliar rules—both formal and unwritten—will be familiar if distant memories to many. Since this Committee began formally to review the way in which new Members of Parliament are equipped and supported to begin working quickly and effectively the House Service has made significant improvements to the induction process. Over successive elections since 2005 innovations, primarily aimed at new Members, have included:

- giving Returning Officers information packs to hand over on Election Night;
- an initial phone call from the a dedicated Contact Centre offering to make arrangements for travel and accommodation;
- on arrival at Westminster, an introduction to the House via a New Members' Reception Area;
- a welcome pack with more information on services and an updated 'New Members' Guide';
- a named House Service staff 'buddy' for each new Member;
- directories of Members broken down by party and gender, including photographs;
- tailored guidebooks for new and returning Members and Members' staff.

4. Support and guidance for Members who depart the House at an election (either because they stand down or are defeated) has also developed hugely in recent years. Guidance booklets tailored for Members standing down in 2015 provided valuable information on issues ranging from handling personal data to use of stationery and correspondence.²

5. The support given to Members' staff during busy election periods will affect Members' ability to be effective and, recognising this, the House Service has introduced specific guidance documents aimed at Members' staff which have been well received.³ The House Service further recognises the need to make services known and accessible to staff based in constituencies as well as Westminster. The value of this to Members and the service that they provide to constituents should not be underestimated and—as we suggest later in our Report—this should be a focus of election planning for 2020.

6. Over the last few elections the House Service has introduced several key elements which go beyond simply adding new processes or services to the induction of new Members. This first of these has been to ensure that new arrivals are properly welcomed. This may seem trivial but the beginning of your first term in office can be a hectic and overwhelming time. The House Service, comprising Library staff, researchers, Clerks, Serjeants, Doorkeepers, catering staff, security officers, ICT staff, among many others, are there to help and if the first thing you learn about these staff is that they are friendly,

² [Dissolution Guidance: Members not standing](#) February 2015

³ [Members' and Peers' Staff Association \(EPS 10\)](#) para 5.4

enthusiastic and welcoming then seeking that help early will be that much less daunting. The second element has been the focus on customer service as an explicit part of planning for a delivering services in 2015. This welcome approach meant that the offer in 2015 was much more responsive and tailored to the needs of Members than previously.

Future challenges

7. Throughout our current inquiry it has been clear that the altered security environment (physical and cyber) in which we now find ourselves has affected the security and training needs of those coming to work in Parliament as well as creating pressure on resources for physical security measures for Members and their staff working outside of Westminster. The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) has been taking steps to improve its response to necessary security-related expenses but it needs to do more to simplify and communicate its policies so that they can be consistently and fairly applied. The Parliamentary Security Department now offers personal security advice and training and has made significant efforts to inform Members about sources of help and information. The House Service, through the Parliamentary Digital Service, has also begun to embed messages about cyber security and the steps we all need to take consistently to ensure Parliament's ICT systems and our personal devices are secure. *The General Election Planning Group (GEPG) should ensure that messages around cyber and physical security are clearly communicated to new as well as returning Members at the next election so that the Parliamentary Digital Service and Security Department can build on this to embed good practices throughout the next Parliament.*

8. The next election is also likely to throw up significant new challenges for the House Service in relation to office accommodation on the Estate. Several significant programmes of repair and renovation are needed to listed buildings in the Northern part of the Estate.⁴ Parliament is also due to decide shortly on an approach to the much needed restoration of the Palace of Westminster itself. As the Sir Bernard Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics observed the scale of the works will require considered planning and coordination between services:

The most obvious challenge coming down the political pipeline is the proposed Restoration and Renewal (R&R) of the Palace of Westminster [...]. Although both Houses are still to debate and vote on the recommendation of the Joint Committee regarding the need for a full decant, significant reform of some kind is inevitable. As a result the type of election planning and member services to help new and returning Members transition to the changing circumstances they will face in the 2020 and 2025 Parliaments (possibly more) needs careful consideration now.⁵

9. **Ensuring that office capacity is available to accommodate all new and returning Members and their staff, with as few moves and as little disruption as possible, will be important for the effectiveness of Parliament as an institution during the next several election periods. To achieve this for 2020, plans for moving existing Members out of Northern Estate buildings need to be made soon and bearing in mind the need to allow time for more routine election moves to be planned and implemented.**

4 Q151

5 The Sir Bernard Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics, University of Sheffield (EPS 05) para 8

2 Pre-Election planning

10. At the 2015 General Election 182 new Members were elected (177 for the first time), representing 28% of the House. While this was a smaller turnover than in 2010 or 1997, the 2015 Election brought a number of changes to the political composition of the House which required the House Service to respond flexibly and quickly; for example the needs of the large intake of new SNP Members.

11. As was the case in 2010, the House convened a General Election Planning Group (GEPG) including staff from the different parts of the House Service and Members of this Committee to ensure that the transition from one parliament to another was as smooth as possible. Following recommendations of the Committee in 2013 the Group focused on improving customer service and facilitating early and sustained engagement with Members and political parties to ensure services in 2015 met Members' needs.⁶ This focus led to the development of a range of new services, which are examined in this report.

12. Since the overwhelming majority of SNP Members were new to Parliament in 2015 we were particularly keen to hear from the SNP Group about their experience of the planning and induction process. Evidence from Luke Skipper, SNP Group Chief of Staff during the Election, and Kate Emms, who led on the House's engagement with the political parties, indicated several factors which were vital to the success of the induction programme. Mr Skipper praised the depoliticised environment in which discussions took place, and the two-way communication between parties and the House Service. The ability of the House Service to work flexibly meant that it was able to respond to the unpredictable party political landscape following the Election. The House Service's responsiveness and sensitivity on these matters was found to be of particular value.⁷

13. While the House Service manages services and facilities in the House of Commons, the timetabling of business is the prerogative of the government. Separately, all of the political parties did (and will in future) arrange training and induction events for their own Members. Good and regular communication between the House Service, the parties and business managers, is therefore essential to ensure that the services the House provides dovetail with formal business and party activities. We were pleased to hear that the communication channels developed between the House Service and the parties improved coordination in 2015, resulting in nearly 95% of new Members attending induction events.⁸ In 2010 only 19% of new Members attended at least one session.⁹ ***We recommend that in planning for the next general election the General Election Planning Group (GEPG) adopts the same focus on customer service as in 2015, with members of this Committee, party Whips and individual Members engaged at the earliest opportunity. The GEPG and party representatives should continue to liaise closely on the timing of party and parliamentary business as well as the various other demands on Members' time immediately after the next election.***

6 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 2

7 Q4, Q5

8 Q4; General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 15

9 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 90

14. Efforts were rightly focused on Members who were elected to Parliament for the first time in 2015. However, Members seeking re-election and their staff are still expected to perform a number of duties between dissolution and Election Day (such as managing constituency casework), on the understanding that they may not be returned as Members in the new parliament. For this group of Members and staff, timely and consistent advice on matters including appropriate handling of casework and on winding up an office is therefore essential. The House Service produced several dissolution guidance booklets, developed with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA), aimed at specific groups (Members standing, Members not standing, and Members' staff¹⁰). The guidance for Members' staff, produced for the first time for the 2015 Election, was well received. Emily Knight of the Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA) said that:

we got quite a good amount of support here in the House when it came to what our responsibilities were as regards data protection and handling people's cases, what to do with those files, closing the offices, and so on.¹¹

15. Max Freedman of Unite Union told us that, once the processes and rules on the use of Parliamentary resources were agreed 'The most important assistance that the House and IPSA can give during the election process is clarity [...]. Clarity, and a timeline during which every step should be undertaken, would be really helpful'.¹² We were therefore disappointed that guidance from IPSA on dissolution arrangements and on the costs that Members' offices could claim was inconsistent and did not provide sufficient clarity on a number of areas.¹³ The specific issues raised with us are dealt with in chapter 6 of this report on the services provided by IPSA.

16. The Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA) praised the support it received from the House Service. For example, the Parliamentary Digital Service and HR Advisory Service provided clear and consistent guidance to Members' staff on dissolution procedures and what to do in the event of their Member not being returned. These teams also participated in Members' staff briefings, arranged by MAPSA, which were attended by over 900 people.¹⁴ However, MAPSA did point to a comparative lack of information provided for constituency-based staff.¹⁵ Constituents will continue to seek help on a range of matters during the election period so it is essential that Members and their constituency caseworkers are aware of the restrictions on the use of Parliamentary resources, as well as data protection legislation as it relates to constituency records. ***The General Election Planning Group (GEPG) should lead on the production of communications on dissolution arrangements aimed at Members' constituency caseworkers before the next election period. The GEPG should work with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and staff representative groups to ensure clear and consistent guidance is provided on permissible activities during the dissolution period, and on steps to take in the event of a Member not being returned.***

10 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 16

11 Q55

12 Q57

13 Members' and Peers' Staff Association (EPS 10) para 1.5; Q55, Q56

14 Members' and Peers' Staff Association (EPS 10) para 1.3

15 Members' and Peers' Staff Association (EPS 10) para 1.4

17. Members and their constituency staff face practical difficulties in providing a service to constituents during the election period because they are automatically locked out of parliamentary digital email accounts at the point of dissolution. Emily Knight, of the Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA) explained that:

During the election itself, certainly in the lead-up, there was guidance from the House, and from IPSA, about the difference between parliamentary work and political work, and what we were able to continue to do for our Members during the dissolution period, in terms of case work, support and all the usual things that we would do, and that we were indeed continuing to be paid for, but we were not given the tools with which to do that. Aside from not being able to come here, we were denied access to our e-mail accounts and all our Digital Service equipment—PICT, as it was then. We certainly feel that there is a case for allowing some access, certainly, to e-mails, so that we could continue to work for constituents in the way we did before the dissolution.¹⁶

18. This policy (in relation to email accounts) is designed to ensure incumbents do not have an unfair advantage during an election period. However, it is disadvantageous to constituents who may need to get in touch with their former MP in relation to ongoing or newly arising casework. Members who are standing down at an election can also continue to deal with casework during the dissolution period and can handle personal data in doing so until four days after a new Member is elected. In both these cases, from a customer service viewpoint, it would be sensible to allow constituents to use the same contact details which they will have used during the preceding five years. It would also be sensible, from a data protection standpoint, to allow Members and their staff to use their Parliamentary email accounts rather than potentially less secure personal ones. The Director of the Parliamentary Digital Service, Rob Greig, advised us that it would be possible to make simple amendments to parliamentary email accounts during dissolution to inform recipients of the status of former MPs.¹⁷ This could include removing the 'MP' handle from the display name for parliamentary email address and generating an automatic reply for all incoming emails informing constituents that the person they are contacting is no longer an MP (or working for one). This practice would bring the treatment of email accounts in line with social media accounts Members use in their capacity as Members of Parliament. This approach is also the one currently followed by the Canadian Parliament.¹⁸ We support the principle that no advantage should arise to candidates who were Members in the previous parliament. We also considered the fact that, under the current system, candidates who were Members will lose access to perhaps their primary contact point with constituents whereas new candidates are able to continue using their existing email unaffected by dissolution. This may in fact convey an advantage on new candidates. ***The House Service should explore ways of allowing the parliamentary email accounts of Members standing at the next Election and their staff to remain open, liaising with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards to ensure that measures are in place to avoid any advantage arising to incumbents. The House Service should also consider whether there is a need to extend the period during which Members standing down at an election, and their staff, can still access their Parliamentary email accounts to allow more time for records to be transferred or destroyed securely.***

16 Q56

17 Q159

18 Q159

3 Initial contact and induction programme

19. Government Accommodation Whip, Robert Syms MP, painted a picture of the type of induction new Members received around 20 years ago that will be familiar to a significant proportion of our colleagues:

[New Members] are certainly better supported than they would have been 20 years ago. Certainly, when I came in in 1997 there was no induction at all. If you asked a more senior Member what you had to do they just said, “Follow me when the bell rings” and that was about it, and, “Don’t forget to go to the fees office and make sure they pay you, otherwise you will not get paid in the first month.” That was about the only advice I received.¹⁹

20. **The support for new and as well as returning Members has come on leaps and bounds over the last few parliaments and we would like to commend the House Service staff among others who have worked hard to bring this about.**

Information packs and Contact Centre

21. As was the case in 2010, all Members were given an information pack prepared by the House Service on Election Night by their Returning Officer in 2015, advising them of what to do next. This pack included a New Members’ Guide, which gave an overview of the induction process, a welcome letter from the Clerk of the House, a checklist of key documents to bring to Parliament on the first day and information on IPSA.²⁰ In the past the first information new Members received from the House Service dealt with procedural rules and the niceties of conduct in the Chamber. Since 2005, the House Service has focused on providing practical, time-critical, information at this first point of contact. This is a trend that we welcome. Those Members who, when asked, recalled receiving the pack in 2015 were generally satisfied with the information it provided.²¹ However, many new Members will have already been handed large amounts of dense information from various sources and either did not receive or pick out the induction pack as important.²² ***The General Election Planning Group should consider further reducing the information provided to new Members on election night to just the key information needed in the days between election and arrival at Westminster. An eye-catching cover note highlighting the most essential and time-critical information (for example, on contacting the House, travel and accommodation, and what to bring for the first week) would help communicate key points more reliably.***

22. The General Election Planning Group (GEPG) led on the production of separate information booklets for new and returning Members in 2015: A short ‘New Members’ Guidebook’ was designed to help new Members to familiarise themselves with the House of Commons and guide them through the initial arrangements they would need to make on arrival.²³ A more detailed ‘Members’ Handbook’ updated from 2010 contained

19 Q143

20 [House of Commons Governance Office publications](#)

21 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) para 5 and Appendix

22 Q6

23 [New Members’ Guidebook 2015](#)

information for Members to reference throughout their time in office.²⁴ In addition, a ‘Members’ Staff Handbook’, was produced for the first time in 2015 in response to requests for more tailored information for staff. The GEPG took steps to ensure that these guides were the main communication Members and their staff received from the House Service, avoiding individual departments issuing their own separate guidance.²⁵ New Members will inevitably be overloaded with information from varying sources in the first few days and weeks following an election so the staggered ‘day 1, day 15, day 29’ approach taken by the GEPG to inducting Members is a sensible one.²⁶ We also welcome the significant efforts made to improve support for Members’ staff and echo the recommendation of the GEPG that a specific Members’ staff workstream is incorporated in future election planning. In the weeks and months following their election many Members will be reliant on their staff being equipped to get their offices up and running and to put processes in place to manage casework and assist with their Members’ Parliamentary activities. The GEPG commented that the:

‘Recognition of the important role played by MPs staff was of great benefit not just for the election, but in the wider work carried out by the House.’²⁷

23. *The introduction of improved written guidance tailored for specific readers (new Members, all Members’ staff, and returning Members) was a very positive development. However, these useful guides are easily lost in piles of correspondence and briefing. To extend their use they should be reissued at intervals: a few weeks, then several months after the next election. These guides should also be easily found (and in a searchable format) on the Parliamentary website.*

24. Immediately following their election to Parliament, new Members must make arrangements to travel to Westminster and, for those travelling from further afield, book accommodation in London. Problems finding somewhere to stay or in obtaining funding for this from IPSA limited Members capacity to start work quickly following the 2010 Election. To make it as easy as possible for new Members to get started in 2015, a new telephone service was introduced in 2015: the Contact Centre. Staff at the Centre offered to book accommodation and travel for new Members in their first two weeks in Parliament (through the Parliamentary Travel Office).²⁸ Similar arrangements were put in place by the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly following their elections in 2016.²⁹ In Westminster, the Centre ensured that Members were aware of what to do next, reiterating information contained in the packs issued on Election Night. Volunteer staff at the Centre attempted to contact all new Members within 48 hours of their election. This process was greatly assisted by the work done by the GEPG and political parties to share new Members’ contact details. Some 98% of new Members were successfully contacted. Some 63% of new Members rated the communication as ‘very useful’, and a further 26% ‘somewhat useful’.³⁰

24 [Members’ Handbook 2015](#)

25 Q17

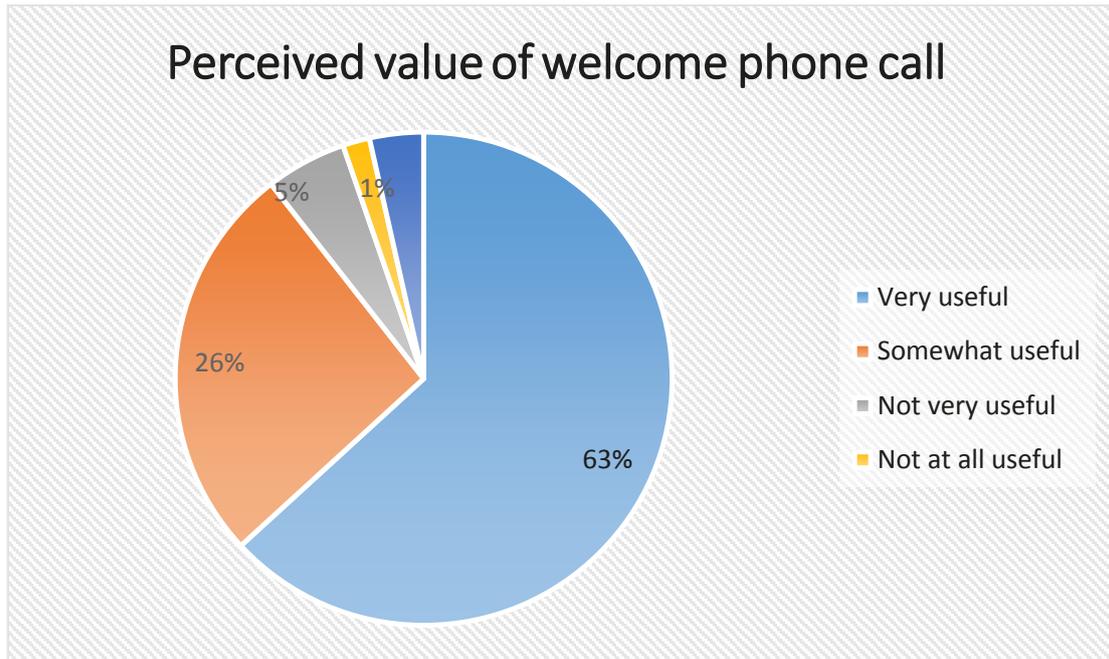
26 Q2, Q17

27 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 16

28 Q2

29 Scottish Parliament (EPS 03) para 2; National Assembly of Wales (EPS 08)

30 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07)



(General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) Para 9)

25. The Contact Centre appears to have been a successful means of conveying information immediately following Election Day. The take-up of the travel offer was also higher than expected. One new Member said that having accommodation for the first two weeks in London was a major weight off their mind.³¹ Feedback from those new Members who were unfamiliar with London prior to their election suggests that some basic practical information on the city would have also been welcome at this stage. Martyn Day MP highlighted difficulties he and some other SNP colleagues experienced navigating London's public transport system, commenting that:

One of the things that did catch me out—and I know it caught a number of other new Members out—was that to travel on the buses, and things like that, you needed a contactless card or an Oyster card. I come from a town where I can pay by cash and get change, but if you do that everybody shouts at you on the bus.³²

26. *Contact Centre staff should be equipped to provide basic information to new Members who may not be familiar with London, such as tips on public transport options (contactless or Oyster cards etc.). The General Election Planning Group should also consider whether including information from Transport for London (perhaps including an Oyster card or equivalent) in the information packs handed to Members on Election Day would be beneficial.*

31 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

32 Q11

Members' buddying programme

27. Following recommendations by this Committee in 2013³³, new Members were greeted on arrival at Portcullis House in 2015 by a staff 'buddy': a member of House of Commons staff allocated to them to serve as their primary contact during the orientation process and as long as required thereafter. This was done in response to feedback from existing Members on how confusing their first weeks had been and on the need for a source of impartial help and advice.³⁴ The GEPG noted that:

[Members] had often arrived with no office, no staff and no accommodation and with an immediate and almost overwhelming workload. As one Member told us—"You are behind before you even begin, and with less resource to cope with this than at any other stage."³⁵

28. Buddies were invited to volunteer from all staff grades and roles within the House Service. Rather than requiring them to provide advice on the full range of topics themselves, buddies underwent intensive customer service training intended to prepare them to assist new Members to navigate the services provided by the House Service and IPSA. Myfanwy Barrett, then Head of Finance and buddy to Jess Phillips MP and Edward Argar MP, explained that buddies were organised into sub-groups made up of staff with various areas of expertise, such as IT, so that buddies could pass on queries within their group or seek help quickly.³⁶ Potted CVs of new Members (produced by staff at the Contact Centre) were also available for buddies to facilitate the building of effective initial relationships.³⁷

Arranging buddies into groups to share knowledge about the array of processes, rules, and facilities in the House seems to have been a useful approach and should be repeated next time. Including an ICT specialist in each group would be especially beneficial. Providing buddies with new Members' biographical information will have to enabled them to familiarise themselves quickly with the Member they were assisting and tailor the service they provided. This approach should be repeated.

29. During her research in the House of Commons Professor Emma Crewe found that the 'buddy process in 2015 [...] allowed for individual, tailored advice about how to get specialist advice' on huge volume of political rules, conventions and processes which it would be impossible for Members to learn on arrival. Members appreciated the benefit of having a safe space in which they could ask 'stupid questions' and get impartial as well as practical advice.³⁸ Feedback collected by the GEPG showed that 89% of Members found their buddy useful.

33 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 98

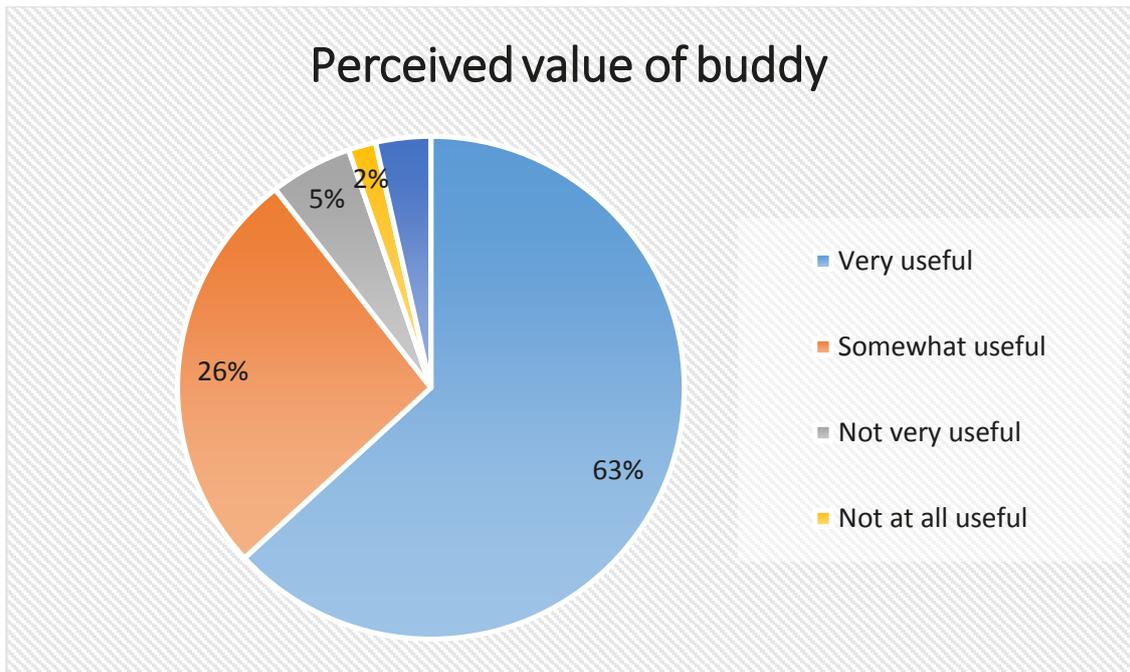
34 Q27

35 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 11

36 Q40

37 Q15

38 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix



(General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) Para 12)

30. Jess Phillips MP said that the assistance of her buddy, Myfanwy Barrett, was useful for matters ranging from getting around the Parliamentary Estate, to ‘unknown unknowns’ such as the operation of the post room.³⁹ A number of new Members, when making their maiden speeches in the Chamber, made a point of praising the help their buddies provided.⁴⁰ We noted a small selection of the positive comments made on social media about staff of the House Service, a few of which we reproduce here:

“Parliament staff are amazing, so kind, so thoughtful and friendly.”

“Great induction to House of Commons today, thank you to very knowledgeable and helpful parliamentary staff.”

“Can I say that all the staff have been courteous, patient, and happy to oblige when asked for directions probably for the umpteenth time, especially the “BUDDIES”.”

“One can only imagine and marvel at the amount of work that has gone into the preparation of staff between the election results and Monday morning.”

“Please accept my thanks and congratulations on delivering such smooth reception.”

“It’s strange and bizarre to think that, all of a sudden, you’re an MP. I’ll get used to it, I’m sure, and I’m already getting on with casework, which is important to me—we’ve been made incredibly welcome by the House of Commons staff.”⁴¹

39 Q30, Q36

40 HC Deb, 6 June 2015, [col 992](#) [Commons Chamber]; HC Deb, 16 July 2015, [col 1154](#) [Commons Chamber]

41 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 22

31. **The response of Members to the service provided by individual members of House Staff acting as buddies in 2015 was overwhelmingly positive and we would like to thank each of them for volunteering their time to help new colleagues find their feet.**

32. Because of the number of new Members elected in 2015 many House of Commons staff were asked to buddy more than one person.⁴² We heard that, with notice and planning, this commitment may not necessarily have an impact on their day-to-day work or the quality of the service they were able to offer.⁴³ However, the capacity of individual House staff to act as buddies at future elections will inevitably vary according to their role and needs of the Member(s) they support. The size of each new intake will also vary unpredictably from one election to the next. ***The buddying programme should be repeated at the next election with enough volunteers recruited to ensure individual buddies are required to provide support to no more than two new Members.***

33. Some new Members said that they would have found it useful for their staff to have been able to call upon their buddy.⁴⁴ Although many buddies did assist Members' staff, this was not a formal part of their role, and Members may not have been aware that the assistance provided to their buddies could have been extended to their offices. ***The buddying scheme should be extended to include formal assistance to new staff of Members, including those based in constituency offices.***

34. There is much knowledge and advice that only experienced Members will be able to provide to new colleagues and, following the 2015 Election, the need for a 'political buddy' alongside the House buddy was seen as vital by a number of Members.⁴⁵ ***We encourage all the parties to continue to facilitate their former or existing Members pairing with new Members of the same party to provide a source of support and advice at the next election.*** Doing this will inevitably be easier for the larger parties at Westminster. Luke Skipper from the SNP Group said that 'Normally new MPs would 'buddy' with a returning Member who could guide them through the first few months but the exponential growth in the number of MPs made this impossible. That is why the assistance of the House was particularly crucial.'⁴⁶ ***While House Service buddies should not be seen as a replacement for the parties facilitating their own 'political buddies' the experience of the SNP in 2015 showed the value of this new service, particularly for parties experiencing a high turnover or large influx of Members.***

New Members' Reception Area (NMRA)

35. As in 2010, a New Members' Reception Area (NMRA) was set up in Portcullis House for around one week following the 2015 General Election, to enable new Members to access the basic services that would be an immediate priority (a pass, ICT equipment, access to the parliamentary network, IPSA and Travel Office accounts, and access to HR and pensions advice). This was the point at which new Members were paired with their buddy who guided them through the NMRA. Upon arrival Members were also given a 'welcome pack' repeating and expanding upon the essentials provided in the information

42 There were 123 buddies recruited and 182 new Members in 2015.

43 Q43

44 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

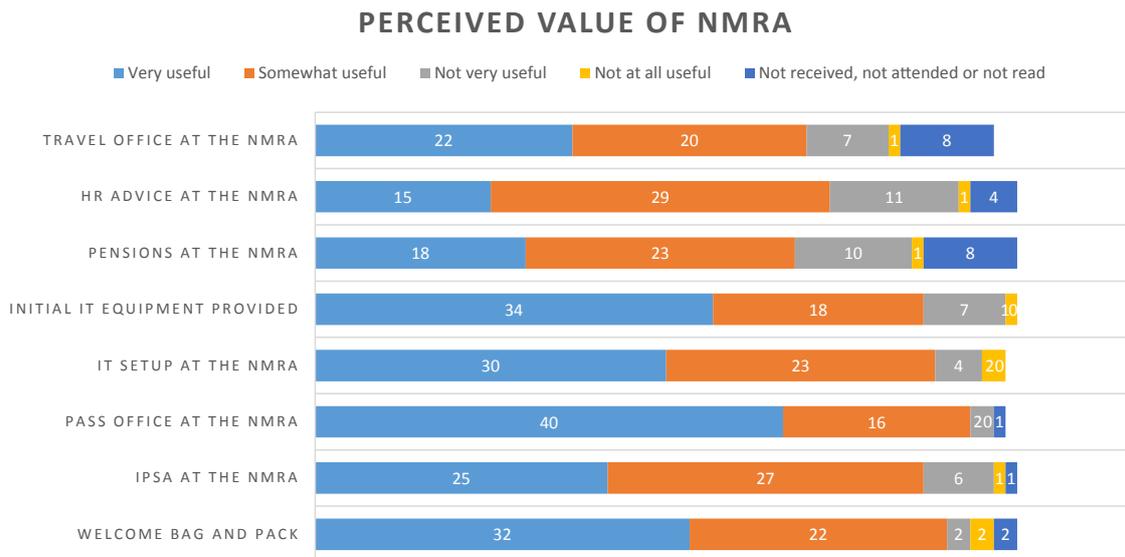
45 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) para 9

46 Luke Skipper (EPS 09) para 1.5

pack issued on election night. The pack included the ‘New Members’ Guidebook’,⁴⁷ the ‘Members’ Handbook’,⁴⁸ a copy of the ‘Code of Conduct’,⁴⁹ a ‘Short Guide to the Business of the House and its Committees’,⁵⁰ a guide to local services around Westminster, and information on pensions.

36. Jess Phillips MP and Martyn Day MP both suggested that it would have been useful early on to have contact information for government departments in relation to constituency enquiries as well as information on the main types of enquires that will land on Members’ desks immediately (such as Home Office visa cases).⁵¹ The House of Commons Library holds a list of hotline numbers for Members of Parliament to use as well as detailed briefing packs on constituencies and frequent types of casework enquiries. ***The General Election Planning Group should consider whether contact information for government departments in relation to casework enquiries would be best provided to new Members at the New Members’ Reception Area.***

37. The table below shows the number of new Members who responded to questions from the GEPG about the perceived value of on each of the individual services provided at the NMRA.



(General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) Para 10)

38. Feedback was broadly positive, particularly in relation to the Pass Office and IT equipment. Luke Skipper told us that the benefit of having passes ready for new Members was that ‘they could become an MP [...] right away’.⁵² Other areas showed greater room for improvement next time as Members were less enthusiastic about the information on HR, pensions and IPSA.⁵³ Because there is no qualitative information on why Members

47 [New Members’ Guidebook 2015](#)
 48 [Members’ Handbook 2015](#) which advises on a wide range of issues relating to the business and services of the House.
 49 [The Code of Conduct: together with The Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members 2015](#)
 50 [Short Guide to the Business of the House and its Committees 2015](#)
 51 Q33
 52 Q15
 53 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 10

felt a particular way about services provided in the NMRA it is difficult to make specific recommendations on how to improve the offer at facility. It has been suggested that allowing Members to be accompanied by somebody at the NMRA would be helpful because of the volume of information provided. *The General Election Planning Group would need to consider how much space can be made available at the New Members' Reception Area (NMRA)—and the need to focus services on Members—but we think that the option for new Members to bring someone with them through the NMRA to help absorb information is worth exploring.*

39. The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) set up a 'Departing Members Area' in the week or so after the Election and later a 'Returning Members Area' (RMA) in the House in the second half of May.⁵⁴ Only 10% of Members' offices were represented at the area for returning Members but this may have been because of its low profile in relation to the NMRA.⁵⁵ There is evidence (principally the large volume of calls to IPSA's phone line from re-elected Members⁵⁶) of demand for engagement on services. The RMA will have provided IPSA with an opportunity to update Members on changes to policies and systems. *We think that the House Service should consider running a drop-in area, in conjunction with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, for returning Members and their staff a few weeks after the next election to refresh memories about House services and procedures and to inform them of any changes that may affect them in the new parliament.*

40. John Benger, Clerk Assistant and Senior Responsible Officer for the 2015 General Election Project, put the smooth running of the NMRA in 2015 down, in part, to the inclusion of Whitehall civil servants along with around 200 House staff in the rehearsal exercise to test the facility and work out timings.⁵⁷ *We recommend that the General Election Planning Group again invites civil servants from Whitehall to test out the New Members' Reception Area before the next election to ensure that the process and content is clear to those unfamiliar with Parliament.*

Induction programme

41. The induction programme was significantly streamlined from the one provided in 2010 when around 30 induction events were arranged by the House Service in the first few weeks. The majority of these were poorly attended (the overall attendance rate was less than 19%), because of clashes with activities arranged by the political parties and because they were not seen as essential.⁵⁸ On Induction Day for new Members in 2015 (on 13 May) there was one briefing in the Chamber and two induction sessions. The focus of the programme was to answer the question 'what do you need to know straight away?'—guided by conversations between the General Election Planning Group (GEPG), the parties, and this Committee. The Chamber briefing for all Members was on the work and rules of the Chamber. This was followed by sessions (held separately for Conservative, Labour, and all other Members) on 'Complying with Standards and Declarations of Interest' and 'Setting up an Effective Office'. A few weeks later a further session on 'Select Committees' was also offered. All the induction briefings were Member-led, in response

54 [IPSA General Election 2015: Administrative Lessons](#) paras 3.24 and 3.29

55 [IPSA General Election 2015: Administrative Lessons](#) para 3.29

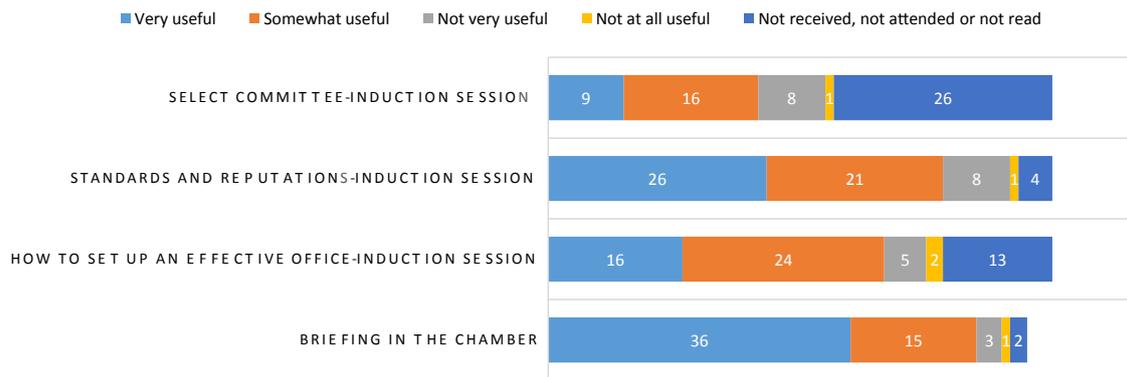
56 [IPSA General Election 2015: Administrative Lessons](#) para 3.29

57 Q12

58 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) paras 14 and 15

to feedback that Members would prefer to hear from experienced Members that they already knew.⁵⁹ Members were encouraged to attend these events by their Whips as they were coordinated with party-arranged activities. The result of all this was that 94% of new Members attended all of the briefing sessions on 13 May.⁶⁰ **The approach of cutting down the number of induction events run in the first few weeks, involving Members directly in their production, and focusing on the key information Members needed right away, led to the vast majority of new Members attending all the events on Induction Day. This approach should be repeated next time.**

PERCEIVED VALUE OF INDUCTION SESSIONS



(General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) Para 15)

42. Of the 57 Members who gave feedback, the vast majority (51) found the Chamber briefing useful.⁶¹ The two less successful sessions were on setting up an office and on the work of select committees. Some 26 out of 59 respondents did not attend the select committee session, and only 9 found it very useful, suggesting that this session should perhaps wait until Members know whether or not they are likely to serve on a committee during that parliament. Some new Members asked for more interactive training, particularly on HR and employment matters.⁶² One Member was interviewed about his experiences:

Chamber training should have more interactive sessions with smaller groups. [...] the sessions were not sufficiently tailored or sensitive to the audience, there needed to be more space for questions, and more questions about what the Members wanted to know. [There should be fewer] lectures and more open space conferencing.⁶³

43. ***The General Election Planning Group should consider ways of supplementing the induction briefings with more interactive training and activities in smaller groups which could be more tailored to their audience and would allow for more Q&A opportunities.***

59 Q16
 60 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 15; Q16
 61 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 15
 62 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix
 63 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

44. Some Members also expressed a desire for training in practicalities and courtesies of the Chamber. Jess Phillips MP said that new Members are often worried about making a mistake in their first weeks.⁶⁴ Mock debates in which MPs could participate were suggested by MPs as a way of building confidence.⁶⁵ John Benger said that a mock Chamber sitting was run by the New Zealand Parliament, and should be considered here.⁶⁶ Provided on a party-by-party basis, this could help take new Members through some of the less understood conventions of the House as well as common mistakes such as failing to ensure supplementary questions are relevant to the principal question, and walking across the line of sight between Mr Speaker and the Member on their feet. ***The General Election Planning Group should explore the possibility of running a mock sitting of the Chamber on a party-by-party basis at the next election, in order to give Members the experience of speaking in the Chamber and to familiarise themselves with basic procedures and etiquette.***

45. Despite efforts to stagger provision of information, a number of Members felt ‘somewhat overwhelmed’ with the sheer amount of it they received on arrival in Parliament.⁶⁷ While, this is not a problem unique to Westminster elections—the Welsh Assembly also reported the same problem—it has been recognised as a challenge that the General Election Planning Group (GEPG) will need to address on an ongoing basis. We recognise the point made by the Senior Responsible Officer for the 2015 General Election Project, John Benger, that the House Service does not generate a huge number of documents for Members over the election period. We agree that a slightly skewed perception may arise because Members will not necessarily discriminate clearly between House Service-generated documents and the ‘enormous amount of material’ they are handed by other sources over this period.⁶⁸ ***The approach of having a simple and uniform visual identity for all induction materials provided by the House Service should be strengthened so that they are easily distinguishable. Clearly numbering the key documents (as well as using the colour-coding introduced in 2015) would also mean Members and staff could identify when they were missing documents in the sequence.***

46. Ultimately there is a limit to how much anyone can absorb within a few days. The House Service should therefore take advantage of developments in technology to deliver information as it is needed in an accessible format.⁶⁹ John Benger told us that digital tools should be developed to enable new Members to access information when they need it.

My hope is that we can build some much better tools for the professional development and further induction of Members in a digital online format [...] so that you can graze on these resources when you need them, not when we can give them.⁷⁰

64 Q29

65 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

66 Q10

67 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 10; General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) para 6

68 Q14

69 National Assembly of Wales (EPS 08) para 7.9

70 Q14

47. Speaking about the difficult balance between providing enough information and not overloading people, Luke Skipper, former SNP Westminster Chief of Staff, told us that ‘There certainly was a view that there needed to be further training beyond 29 days, potentially, which could be digital.’⁷¹

48. The experience reported by new Members was that simply orientating themselves with the maze-like Parliamentary Estate could be overwhelming at times. We would particularly welcome the development of digital tools for wayfinding. This would provide an easily updated and portable means of learning your way around—a resource that could come into its own once the significant building works planned to take place on the Parliamentary Estate start up in earnest. ***We support plans to build better digital tools (such as apps) and online resources which Members can access as needed to complement the New Members’ Reception Area. As well as providing information on services, the tools should help new Members to orientate themselves on the Parliamentary Estate.***

49. Even for the most studious Member, a thorough knowledge of House procedure takes time to acquire. However, time is a precious commodity for new Members, as diaries quickly become busy and opportunities to attend training are scarce. Jess Phillips MP told us that new Members will quickly prioritise only the most necessary activities.⁷² Research carried out by the House of Commons Library on Members’ experience of procedural services found a feeling among some new Members that there was insufficient time allowed during the induction period itself to advise them of all they needed to know to be effective. In particular, a number of Members felt that not enough information was provided on using the Chamber and procedural offices effectively, such as on Business Questions and Private Members Bills. The need for more information on the legislative process was also frequently highlighted. One Member felt that a reasonable period of training on this alone was needed before new Members could adequately scrutinise legislation.⁷³ The House Service took steps following the 2015 Election to promote to Members, as well as their staff, opportunities to access one-to-one training on procedure and House business. For example, buddies encouraged Members to visit the Table Office for an informal introductory session—approximately 100 Members did so. General information on the House’s sitting pattern was also included in the ‘New Member’s Guidebook’. ***To ensure that all Members have a basic understanding of how to navigate the business of the House before the start of the Parliament we recommend that the select committee induction session be replaced by a session covering the key procedural knowledge that new Members need in the first few weeks, including the House’s weekly timetable, at the next election.***

50. ***We encourage the General Election Planning Group to work closely with the Parliamentary Digital Service to develop apps and accessible online resources to supplement the induction session on procedure and one-to-one training as this would help new Members balance the demands on their time in the first few weeks and start to develop a basic understanding of Parliamentary procedure.***

71 Q17

72 Q34

73 Sear, C. & Mehta, N., Report to the House of Commons Administration Committee on the finding of the interview study with Members on procedural services (January 2017) paras 4.1 and 4.3

4 Office accommodation

Offices in Westminster

51. Decisions on the allocation of offices are a matter for the Whips, with the House providing logistical support for moves and office set-ups once they are allocated. Having reviewed the efficiency of this arrangement over successive elections, we continue to support this division of responsibilities.

52. The House Service with support from this Committee has introduced various excellent measures (discussed below) which allow Members to access office facilities, including shared ICT, before having an office. Government Accommodation Whip, Robert Syms MP, related that, on his initial arrival in 1997, he had resorted to working out of his car for three weeks and thereafter the Library before an office was allocated.⁷⁴ Despite the major improvements made since then, we recognise the frustration of new Members and their staff at having to wait a number of weeks between starting a new job and getting a dedicated office to work out of. Certainly this would rarely be the case following recruitment to other organisations (where the number of new staff at each recruitment is managed and known in advance). The intake at General Elections is large and always unpredictable. The allocation process in 2015 was made complicated by the change in party balance. To better manage expectations the ‘New Member’s Guidebook’ advised Members of the likelihood of delays in accessing an office, along with the respective roles of the Whips and the House Service in this process.⁷⁵ Some 182 new Members were allocated offices by 3 June 2015, well ahead of the target date of 1 July 2015 (based on experiences in 2010). Over 200 existing Members were also involved in accommodation moves. That offices were allocated (and Members able to move in to them) more quickly in 2015 than in 2010, despite the change in party balance, is testament to the hard work and coordination of the parties and the Accommodation and Logistics Service. **We commend the Whips and the Accommodation and Logistics Service for their hard work in coordinating office allocations and moves following the Election.**

53. This Committee recommended in 2013 that defeated or retiring Members should be encouraged to vacate their offices as soon as possible after dissolution to reduce further the time new Members would have to wait before being allocated an office.⁷⁶ This recommendation was taken up and a limit of five days agreed between the General Election Planning Group (GEPG) and the Whips for former or retiring Members to pack up their offices following the election or the point of dissolution. A more flexible approach has been taken at by-elections and where Members have left the House unexpectedly. It is particularly important that Members’ staff in these instances are given sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements. *The policy of asking departing Members to vacate their offices within five days of dissolution starting, or—for defeated Members—after Election Day, generally worked well and should be retained. A longer period, agreed with the Whips, should be retained for Members and/or staff departing following a by-election or death of a Member.*

74 Q130

75 [New Members’ Guidebook](#) p.17

76 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 25

Temporary hot-desking facilities

54. Following the 2005 Election, this Committee recommended that ‘hot-desking’ facilities would be the best way of providing temporary accommodation to Members in light of the limited available space on the Estate.⁷⁷ In 2015, these were provided in committee rooms, along with a locker for each Member until they could access permanent offices where they could base their staff. Members were also able to base themselves in the House of Commons Library and use the existing hot-desking and IT facilities there. Because of the limited space available no separate provision was made for Members’ staff, though some Members who had already employed staff did base them in these rooms. Members and their staff raised concerns about a lack of privacy and storage space, as well as the absence of desk space for Members’ staff. Emily Knight from the Members’ and Peers’ Staff Association (MAPSA) explained that data protection issues arose because committee rooms were shared and could not be locked during the day:

there is not enough space in the locker after four weeks of correspondence coming in, so correspondence gets left in the Committee rooms and, as soon as that happens, the Member is breaking the law. It is a problem.⁷⁸

55. One Member’s Chief of Staff, Janet Walker, also pointed out that, because there were no confidential waste bags provided in the rooms, papers were not disposed of securely in the shared offices.⁷⁹

56. We recognise that—since space is limited—it may not be possible to increase the total amount of storage space available. However, since the problem becomes more acute the longer individual Members and staff hot-desk it may be sufficient to reallocate locker space to them once it has been vacated by Members who have been allocated an office. Several Members also suggested that “temporary desks in smaller rooms (as opposed to Committee rooms) would be more beneficial during the initial weeks” as this would mean greater privacy.⁸⁰ While recognising that some people will prefer a private space in which to work, we are not persuaded that the benefits of providing this would outweigh the difficulty in identifying enough smaller rooms to make this feasible. Sharing a workspace also creates the opportunity for networking and peer-to-peer support among new colleagues during their first few weeks. ***We recommend that the General Election Planning Group explores options for providing new Members and their staff with additional storage space for confidential documents, and ensures that information about obligations under data protection legislation is visible in the temporary hot-desking facilities at the next election. Sufficient confidential waste bags should also be made available in these offices.***

57. Members are advised not to recruit staff until they have access to a permanent office because of the limited office space available immediately following an election.⁸¹ However, MPs are also expected to hit the ground running and respond to large amounts of constituency correspondence. They cannot therefore wait until they have a permanent office before getting on with their job, which requires them to recruit staff. There will always be a tension here between the limit on the space the House has available for temporary accommodation and the need for Members and their staff to start working quickly.

77 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2006–07, [Post-Election Services](#), para 20

78 Q64

79 Janet Walker (EPS 16) para 1.2

80 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

81 Q132

Current digital technology presents opportunities for Members and their staff to work more flexibly and remotely, reducing the need to be based in an office or in Westminster. There were also some problems reported with the resources available to Members and existing staff based in the hot-desking facilities. Janet Walker said that:

we had trouble with basic things, like availability of letterheads, envelopes, and printers that would work, all along the way during that period. That made it incredibly difficult for the high volume of work, which comes in as soon as the election is won, to be done efficiently: to be calling up IT the whole time, trying to find somebody who would supply a letterhead so that the printing could get done—just hiccups along the way.⁸²

58. *The General Election Planning Group should work with Members' staff groups to identify the office resources needed in temporary offices (including stationery) and agree written advice to be placed in the rooms on what can be provided if required. We also recommend that the House Service explores, in light of available technology, ways of facilitating more flexible and remote working options, especially for new Members' staff, which can be rolled out quickly while new Members await allocation of permanent offices.*

Getting offices set up

59. Getting offices for new as well as returning Members fully operational requires refurbishment or repairs to be concluded where necessary, as well as delivery and installation of office furniture and ICT equipment. In 2015 this process in some cases took considerably longer than it should have with some offices needing to be vacated more than once to allow different teams to gain access. Comments received by MAPSA included one instance in Portcullis House of delays receiving IT equipment as well as all their electronics including router cables being left unplugged after the office was re-carpeted which took a long time to fix.⁸³ Better coordination of services between Accommodation and Logistics, and the Parliamentary Digital Service, in delivery and installation of ICT equipment and office furniture could have streamlined this process and avoided some of the snagging issues that arose. *The Accommodation and Logistics Service and Parliamentary Digital Service should coordinate office setups better to minimise the number of visits needed to each office.*

Constituency office accommodation

60. While a range of assistance is provided to help Members set up their Westminster offices, that available to help establish a constituency office is much less well developed. IPSA provides a budget (the Office Costs Expenditure budget) from which Members can claim for rent and supplies for their constituency offices. We were told by the Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA) and others of the difficulties in obtaining clear guidance on how to set up an office from scratch.⁸⁴ Georgina Kester of MAPSA said that:

82 Q95

83 Members' and Peers' Staff Association (EPS 10) para 2.6

84 Members' and Peers' Staff Association (EPS 10) para 5.4; Anonymous submission (EPS 01)

“there are no guidelines to say things like, “Here is your budget but, by the way, IPSA are unlikely to increase that budget for five years, so when your landlord puts your rent up next year and you have already maxed out your budget, you are going to be in a bit of a pickle”. That is the sort of thing that we are aware of and can help people with.”⁸⁵

61. Members receive a high volume of casework quickly after Election Day, so it is important to get constituency offices up and running quickly. While the House is not responsible for establishing constituency offices, it would be helpful to collate advice on practical steps and issues to consider which Members and their staff could use as a starting point. ***The General Election Planning Group should work with IPSA, party representatives, and staff groups to create a simple guide to setting up a constituency office which could be included in the New Members’ Guidebook, online, and in welcome e-mails to Members’ staff when their accounts are activated (or reactivated).***

The cost of office space

62. The amounts Members can claim through IPSA’s Office Costs Expenditure (OCE) budget are based in two classifications—‘London’ and ‘the rest of the UK’.⁸⁶ It is not clear that either of these classifications fully takes into account increases in, or variations between, commercial property prices around the UK, or indeed within London. Opposition Accommodation Whip, Mark Tami MP, pointed to the significant difference in property prices that can exist between two neighbouring areas, such as between those of his North Wales constituency and nearby Chester. In response, the Chief Executive of IPSA, Marcial Boo told us that IPSA did thorough research on market rates around the country, and that the OCE budgets were set against benchmarks.⁸⁷ IPSA reviews the OCE budgets annually and typically makes increases based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).⁸⁸ However, it is not clear how IPSA originally calculated the amount it saw as sufficient to rent an office in the UK, or that increases based on the CPI are sufficient to take into account increases in commercial property rent. ***In the interest of transparency IPSA should publish regularly clear guidance on how its Office Costs Expenditure budgets are currently calculated and benchmarked.***

63. Office accommodation on the Parliamentary Estate continues to be stretched due to demand caused by a combination of high rent in constituencies and inflexible office accommodation (OCE) budgets made available by IPSA, among other factors.⁸⁹ The failure of the OCE budgets to reflect the real cost of renting office space in London as well as other areas around the UK means that more Members than ever are being incentivised not to have a constituency office and instead base all of their staff in Parliament. We raised this issue following the 2010 Election, when we recommended that ‘Unintended but inefficient incentives to base staff at Westminster should be addressed’.⁹⁰ This situation will soon become critical because of pressure on space on the Estate caused by essential works planned over the coming decades. The Head of Accommodation and Logistics, Fiona

85 Q64

86 [The MPs Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses 2016–2017](#) p.27

87 Q239

88 [The MPs Scheme of Business Costs and Expenses 2016–2017](#) p.5

89 Q130; Q142

90 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 43

Channon told us that “we are going to get to the stage where you cannot take everybody on to the Estate”.⁹¹ IPSA is conducting a review of Members’ accommodation this financial year (2016–17). We look forward to the results of this review and hope that it will take into account the fact that each Member will need a constituency office and basing it within the constituency is preferable for constituents as well as being the cheaper option to the taxpayer (compared to office space provided by the House of Commons). ***If it has not done so as part of its review, IPSA should reconsider how Office Costs Expenditure (OCE) budgets, which cover renting a constituency office, are calculated to ensure that it is possible for all Members to have staff based in their constituencies.***

5 ICT and digital services

Choosing ICT equipment

64. A number of notable improvements to ICT services for Members were introduced at the 2015 Election. As in 2010, new Members were offered a laptop at the New Members' Reception Area (NMRA) and were given access to their Digital Service accounts. In addition, in 2015, new Members were also offered an iPad tablet, which was welcomed by many.⁹² Following a recommendation of this Committee in 2013 an equipment catalogue was also introduced, providing a choice of equipment which could be ordered for parliamentary and constituency offices.⁹³ New Members in particular are likely to arrive with limited knowledge of the best available equipment to assist them to carry out their roles so it is essential that they are able to access clear and tailored advice before purchasing equipment.⁹⁴ A number of new Members said they would have welcomed more proactive advice on what they would need, rather than being left to order new equipment from the catalogue and hope that it was sufficient.⁹⁵ Tailored advice was provided to those new Members who contacted the Digital Service⁹⁶; however, it should not be assumed that all new Members or their staff will do this. ***We recommend that the Parliamentary Digital Service develop a short guide for Members on selecting the right equipment for their offices. The guide should offer a selection of standard packages that Members can choose from, depending on the way they like to work. This guide should be promoted in the New Members' Reception Area and on the intranet.***

65. The catalogue was intended to give a choice of products from most major manufacturers. It therefore included Apple Mac as well as Microsoft equipment. While this was welcomed by some Members and supported in principle by the Committee in 2013 it has led to issues around the level of support which the Parliamentary Digital Service had been able to offer.⁹⁷ Rob Greig, Director of the Parliamentary Digital Service, explained that offering to support other devices (such as Macs) meant integrating “a totally new operating system into an environment that was only designed for Windows”.⁹⁸ Perhaps inevitably the Digital Service encountered problems in doing this at the same time as it was rolling out equipment to 182 new Members and refreshing equipment for returning Members. One Member commented that “People shouldn't be advised to buy Apple if there are technical issues with Apple products working with the House's systems”.⁹⁹ ***We recommend that the Parliamentary Digital Service updates the Committee with options for the range of devices which should be offered in the equipment catalogue at the next election, bearing in mind the requirement for hardware to be more compatible with Parliamentary systems and software.***

66. In addition to offering greater choice, the catalogue was intended to give Members the opportunity to spread the procurement of IT equipment over time, up to the value

92 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

93 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 82

94 Q64

95 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

96 Q164

97 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) para 7

98 Q154

99 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

of the available allowance. Members' IT budgets are designed to last for the duration of the Parliament, so equipment they purchase on day one currently has to last them five years or more.¹⁰⁰ As we all know, however, new devices become outdated quickly, due to increased capacity requirements or design changes creating compatibility issues with other devices or platforms. In order to ensure that Members ICT equipment is fit for purpose and functioning properly, the Director of the Parliamentary Digital Service, Rob Greig, suggested that the House consider a refresh of Members' equipment midway through each Parliament.¹⁰¹ ***We would welcome an update during the current Parliament from the Parliamentary Digital Service on whether there is significant evidence to support need for the introduction of a mid-Parliament refresh of Members' IT equipment.***

67. One concern that many Members raised with the equipment available through the Digital Service catalogue was that it appears—at face value—to be sold at an 'extraordinary' mark-up compared with high street or online retailers.¹⁰² The higher cost is, in fact, due to pre-installed security and customer service features. The devices come installed with encryption software, meaning that the Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS) can disable them in the event that they are reported missing or stolen. They are also covered by insurance including a 24 hour replacement service. However, these benefits were not made sufficiently clear in the catalogue or at the point of purchase. As a result some new Members purchased equipment through retailers which, although cheaper on the face of it, did not have the same security features as PDS-sourced equipment.¹⁰³ ***We recommend that the Parliamentary Digital Service ensures that information on the benefits of House-sourced ICT equipment is clearly conveyed in the equipment catalogue, by more prominently setting out what is included in the price.***

Delivery of equipment

68. Feedback received by staff in the immediate post-election period was generally positive about the Digital Service. However, it later showed "a decline in the overall level of satisfaction, with the most common reason cited being due to the speed of response".¹⁰⁴ In particular, the length of time taken for equipment ordered through the House to arrive, both in Parliament, and particularly in constituency offices, was an issue for many. Some of the problems this caused were set out by Emily Knight of MAPSA:

Delivery times for equipment in the constituency offices was even worse, and they had to wait around four weeks for the delivery and installation of their machines, forcing them to use their own personal laptops, which are not secure enough to use on the Parliamentary network. This meant constituency staff were not able to use their Parliamentary email addresses and had to email constituents and others using their personal, non-professional email addresses. It also meant they had no access to the intranet and the information available to them there which they certainly would have found useful in those first few weeks.¹⁰⁵

100 Q64

101 Q163

102 Janet Walker (EPS 16) para 2.3

103 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

104 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) para 7

105 Emily Knight (EPS 15) para 2.3

69. We were told that the target delivery time for equipment was four to six weeks after an order had been placed. In several cases new Members waited up to four months for equipment to arrive.¹⁰⁶ There were delays with the return of refreshed ICT for existing Members, which took place after orders from new Members had been processed. This meant that some returning Members were still waiting for equipment to be repaired or replaced in the autumn. Rob Greig, Director of the Parliamentary Digital Service, said that a realistic delivery target at the next election would be for existing Members to receive any refreshed or replacement equipment they needed “by the end of the summer, so that when they come back into that first real sitting period after the summer recess they all have their new equipment.”¹⁰⁷ *The Parliamentary Digital Service should have a target for completing the refresh of exiting Members’ ICT equipment of the end of the summer recess following the next election (assuming a May election).*

70. Dan Cook, Parliamentary Digital Service Election Programme Manager, told us that the delays that occurred in delivery of equipment to new Members were due to a mixture of overwhelming demand, and processing inefficiencies on the part of the Digital Service and its suppliers.¹⁰⁸ We understand that lessons have been learnt by the Digital Service and that this process can be dramatically improved.¹⁰⁹ However, the current practice of ordering equipment at the point when a large number of people will need it all at once does seem somewhat inefficient. Pre-ordering some core or very popular items of equipment and pre-installing the necessary software ready for delivery to offices would relieve the situation by avoiding an immediate backlog of orders forming. *The Parliamentary Digital Service should consider pre-ordering some commonly requested equipment so that it can be processed and despatched immediately. Any equipment from this pool not required by new Members could be used to fulfil subsequent orders from returning Members or the House Service, thus avoiding nugatory cost.*

71. Some Members and their staff reported that it took several visits by Digital Service staff to get all ICT equipment functioning and networked in Westminster.¹¹⁰ In constituencies the problem was magnified due to distances involved and reliance on contractors who were not necessarily familiar with the needs of constituency offices.¹¹¹ In response, the Parliamentary Digital Service has proposed several measures. The first suggestion was for the Service to explore an arrangement with other Parliaments and Assemblies to work together on delivery of equipment to constituencies. Rob Greig raised this as a way establishing “a more fluid delivery to Members’ offices regardless of whether they are one of our Members or a member of one of the regional Assemblies”.¹¹² A single procurement for ICT delivery and set-up to constituencies may not be possible (or desirable). However, working with other Parliaments and Assemblies to identify contractors with experience of providing this kind of service across the United Kingdom may be beneficial. The second suggestion was that all Members be given a named Digital Service contact following the next election “so that when our Digital Service staff arrive there is a clear checklist that they must follow and it is much simpler for Members to get further support to any issues

106 Q164, Members’ and Peers’ Staff Association (EPS 10) para 3.2; General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

107 Q168

108 Q166

109 Q167

110 Emily Knight (EPS 15) para 2.2

111 Q177

112 Q177

that are likely to be interrelated”.¹¹³ *We support further exploration of the steps proposed by the Parliamentary Digital Service in relation to improving delivery service standards in constituencies as well as the introduction of a named contact for each Member at the next election. We believe that this will improve the way in which interrelated issues are dealt with as well as enabling Digital Service staff to build relationships with individual Members and their staff.*

ICT support for constituency offices

72. Once ICT equipment has been delivered and installed, support to constituency offices in terms of training and advice has tended to tail off. It has certainly improved over recent years but is still insufficient and little known about by staff. Initial and ongoing training is important particularly in relation to cyber security awareness but will also create benefits for constituents by enabling Members’ offices to make the best use of the communication and casework-handling systems they have. We welcome steps taken by the Parliamentary Digital Service to provide an ongoing programme of ICT training to Members’ staff, including those based in the constituency. Staff setting up constituency offices for new Members are likely to need the highest level of support in the weeks and months following the next election. These staff are also often the least well connected to, and aware of, support offered by the House Service. *We recommend a specific new Members’ constituency staff contact be appointed within the Parliamentary Digital Service. They should act as a key contact point and champion for constituency staff and ensure that they are able to access the help and training they need to get their offices fully operational as soon as possible. This contact should work with the member of staff leading on Members’ staff engagement by the House Service to make sure that services are communicated effectively to constituency staff.*

Funding for ICT equipment

73. Accessing the funding necessary to purchase equipment for both Members’ parliamentary and constituency offices after the election could be a challenge. Emily Knight of the Members’ and Peers’ Staff Association (MAPSA) explained that:

the budgets for new Members [were] not uplifted, and we certainly found it impossible to supply our constituency offices and Westminster office with sufficient computers and printers within the budget, forcing us to dip into IPSA’s office start up budget. Additionally, the budgets could not be used in conjunction—if you had £400 remaining in your ICT budget from PDS, you could not top it up using the IPSA credit card.¹¹⁴

74. There are currently two separate budgets from which Members can draw in order to provide their Westminster and constituency offices with ICT equipment—a dedicated budget for equipment ordered through the Digital Service for parliamentary offices, and funding for constituency offices claimed through IPSA’s Office Costs Expenditure (OCE) budget. However, where Members have small amounts in each budget, but not enough to cover the equipment needed from a single budget, they are unable to purchase anything because they cannot combine sums from both sources. This is because equipment

113 Q176, Q177

114 Emily Knight (EPS 15) para 2.1

purchased through the Digital Service is the property of the House, while equipment purchased through the OCE budget is the property of IPSA. It is inefficient and nonsensical that funding for equipment that has been agreed as necessary for Members and their offices to function effectively—and which ultimately all comes from the same source—is made unusable essentially for accounting reasons.¹¹⁵ We are pleased that both the Digital Service and IPSA have signalled a willingness to address this issue. ***We encourage the Parliamentary Digital Service and IPSA to explore options for allowing Members to use all of their ICT equipment budgets available through IPSA and the House, where they have sufficient funds for the required equipment across both budgets.***

6 Members' Professional Development

75. New Members will inevitably be bombarded with information from all directions immediately following their election to Parliament. So right from the start the time available for anything other than core Parliamentary, constituency and party duties is severely limited. The induction activities that took place within the first few days and weeks of the 2015 Election were therefore focused on conveying only the key information Members need to start work. However, it is clearly not possible to convey (or absorb) all the procedural, and technical knowledge needed to be an effective Member of Parliament within this initial period. Therefore, following recommendations by this Committee, an offer of ongoing professional development and training for Members was launched immediately after the 2015 Election.¹¹⁶ Our predecessor Committee endorsed a Members' Professional Development (MPD) programme on the understanding that an experimental approach would be taken to providing this new service in order to establish demand. **At the end of the 2010 Parliament the Committee endorsed the approach of focusing resources for professional development at the point of need rather than running courses or events in anticipation of sufficient Members being able to attend to make them worthwhile. Given the unpredictable pressures on Members' time and the need to ensure available funding is used effectively we believe this remains an appropriate strategy.**

76. This 'on demand' approach to MPD requires that Members are aware of what is on offer and how to access it. Since 2015 the take up of MPD services has been low.¹¹⁷ There appear to be a number of reasons for this in addition to lack of time, including a lack of awareness of the service's existence, and reservations about taking part in training activities because of media hostility.¹¹⁸ The primary communication drive for the programme was made six weeks after the General Election.¹¹⁹ However, this was during the period when many new Members will still not have had access to an office making them harder to reach. A lot of information about ongoing training opportunities is provided on the parliamentary intranet under MPD branding, as well as being available in a hard copy guide distributed in 2015. However, it is not easy to search or distinguish between sources of general guidance and specific training courses. Where training courses are offered it is not always clear why it is important for Members to attend them. This is by no means a problem exclusive to promotion of this one facility—effective communication to all Members is a challenge for all services. *The House Service should consider a simplified offer of professional development aimed at new Members immediately following the next election. It should be based on the core activities and skills that Members are likely to need in their first year, perhaps setting out the information in a similar way to a university prospectus with a clearer distinction between information and training offers.*

77. Any review of how and at what intervals the MPD programme is promoted should also consider a variety of methods of advertising, including information stalls in busy areas such as Portcullis House, and a more accessible presence on the intranet. *The House Service should work with Members and their staff ahead of preparations for the next election to identify the most appropriate methods to advertise professional development*

116 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 93

117 Q206

118 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix; Q184 and Q185

119 Q209

opportunities to Members. As part of this, the Parliamentary Digital Service should be engaged early in the process on the inclusion of information on Parliament's intranet pages.

78. The Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly offer potential alternative models for a professional development and information offer. MSPs and AMs were offered training not just in the core procedural matters relevant to all Members, such as legislation and passing a budget, but on activities designed to enhance core skills, such as speechmaking, effective questioning and online communications.¹²⁰ Professor Emma Crewe suggested that the House of Commons should consider developing similar activities that take into account the range of skills Members will bring to Parliament and the changing nature of their duties and the expectations placed upon them, such as managing social media.¹²¹ ***The General Election Planning Group should continue to look at the activities provided by other legislatures as possible models for future professional development provision in the UK Parliament.***

79. As the lead for the MPD programme, Eve Samson, explained the success of the model adopted by the Welsh Assembly appears to have been driven principally 'from the top' with political buy-in from the parties and senior AMs.¹²² One crucial factor in determining Members' ability to take up training offers in Westminster will continue to be the value placed on this by the parties and the House as a whole. ***Gaining cross-party support for Members to take part in the same kind of professional development that is simply taken for granted in other sectors (and indeed by staff of the House Service) will, over time, help to tackle the perception in some parts of the news media that investing in developing the skills and knowledge of Members of Parliament is reproachable. As in 2013 we will write to the Leaders of all parties represented at Westminster to encourage continued proactive support by the parties of the training programmes put in place following the next election.***

80. We believe that there is considerable potential for the House Service to work with external groups such as the Institute for Government, the Hansard Society and the National Audit Office to offer development opportunities in Parliament. Professor Emma Crewe suggested that external bodies such as these would be freer to experiment and offer innovative approaches to learning and sharing ideas.¹²³ The Westminster Abbey Institute, for example, runs events where Members can learn from other Members in a private setting.¹²⁴ Working with external organisations relevant to the work of Parliament to provide opportunities for Members to participate on-site would add value to the current offer as well as increasing opportunities to attend such activities. Running sessions off-site will always be challenging where the Government has a small majority and Members are required to be available to vote.¹²⁵ ***The House Service should consider inviting external organisations to deliver development and knowledge-sharing activities on the Estate, as well as facilitating more informal knowledge sharing between more experienced and newer Members.***

120 Scottish Parliament (EPS 03) para 6, National Assembly of Wales (EPS 08) para 8.2

121 Professor Emma Crewe (EPS 13) para 5.2

122 Q199

123 Q185

124 Q188

125 Q181

Induction and professional development for Members' staff

81. Significant efforts continue to be made to ensure that Members have the information and knowledge to work effectively. It is also important to recognise the central role of Members' staff in terms of managing constituency casework, operating in Westminster and enabling their Members to effectively participate in Parliamentary business. However, there is currently no induction programme or professional development for Members' staff in Westminster or in constituencies. There is a culture in Parliament of expecting Members' staff to learn on the job.¹²⁶ One member of MP's staff, Robert Dale told us that:

Given the scale of work a parliamentary researcher is expected to deal with (to a professional standard too) from day one, it is saddening that there is no Parliamentary approved induction session or training available to them before they start. It is very much 'sink or swim' as one researcher once put it to me. This is made further worrisome by the fact that for many parliamentary researchers, working for an MP may be their first ever fulltime office job.¹²⁷

82. While there is no substitute for experience, new starters in most jobs would expect to receive some basic induction and, where necessary, training on-the-job or otherwise. The Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA) said that it would:

welcome the introduction of a formal induction process for staff in Westminster. Possibly taking the form of a day's training before they collect their pass and officially start work, as it is often difficult for staff to find time for training once they have started. This needs to include items such as booking meeting rooms, booking tours, tabling questions and amendments, where they can and cannot go in the building, fire safety, security etc.¹²⁸

83. The Welsh Assembly provided an induction programme for new staff of AMs following its election in 2016, with tailored provision for Assembly and constituency-based staff.¹²⁹ More recently, the Scottish Parliament has run a two-day training course for the staff of MSPs, covering a broad range of issues.¹³⁰ There would be tangible benefits in Parliament, particularly for new Members, of a more structured induction for their new staff. Indeed, the General Election Planning Group has already suggested that Members' staff be considered more explicitly in the planning process for the next general election.¹³¹ A more structured induction and training programme for Members' staff would also help the House to ensure that essential compliance issues such as fire safety and evacuation procedures, data protection and registration of interests, were routinely followed. Some information is already made available for Members' staff through the 'Members' Staff Handbook' developed for the 2015 Election. However, since the Handbook is not sent to all Members' offices or constituency offices its existence is often overlooked. ***We recommend that the 'Members' Staff Handbook' be sent in hard-copy and by email to all Members' offices following the next election and to constituency offices as they are set up.***

126 Members' and Peers' Staff Association (EPS 10) para 5.6; Robert Dale (EPS 12) paras 4 and 5

127 Robert Dale (EPS 12) para 6

128 Members' and Peers' Staff Association (EPS 10) para 5.3

129 National Assembly of Wales (EPS 08) paras 13.02, 13.03 and 13.04

130 <https://storify.com/scotparl/msp-staff-event>

131 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 16

84. We welcome the recommendation of the General Election Planning Group (GEPG) that a specific work stream should be created for Members' staff when planning for the next election. **The House would benefit from imparting to Members' staff some knowledge of procedure, because those staff would then be able to better advise their Member. More guidance and information for staff on giving tours of the Palace and on the process for booking rooms would contribute to a better visitor experience for members of the public. Requiring staff to complete fire safety training as part of their induction would also potentially benefit all occupants of the Estate.** The House has a world-renowned research facility in the House of Commons Library but new Members' research staff are not routinely signposted to it. *The General Election Planning Group should work with staff representative groups to create a work stream focused on developing an induction programme for Members' staff in both Westminster and constituencies. New research staff of Members should be advised to contact the Library in their first week to arrange an induction.*

85. Unlike in some other legislatures, there is no formal career progression for Members staff in the UK Parliament.¹³² Retention of staff (and the valuable experience they develop while here) can be a problem, in part because of this, as individuals often will need to find employment outside the House in order to progress their career or earn a higher wage. Access to a more formalised induction and professional development programme may go some way to address this and encourage the development of professional skills. **Once an induction framework for Members' staff has been agreed it should be passed to HR so that it can be applied for all Members' staff at whatever stage they are recruited. The 'Members' Staff Handbook' should also be updated to reflect the range of training available—highlighting essential training that all Members' staff should undertake.**

7 Services provided by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA)

86. The 2015 Election was the first time that the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) was responsible for handling business costs and expenses and providing advice to all new, returning and departing Members. IPSA was more integrated into the work of the General Election Planning Group (GEPG) from the start than it had been in 2010, when it had only recently come into existence. The Chief Executive of IPSA, Marcial Boo, said that their approach in 2015 had been to put the needs of Members first, and to provide a specific offer for retiring, defeated and new Members.¹³³

87. The service for retiring Members was generally well received. One Member's Chief of Staff, Janet Walker commented that communications with her former employer ahead of his retirement were generally smooth.¹³⁴ However, we identified a number of issues with services for the 92 defeated and 182 new Members, as well as some unintended consequences that could have been avoided through better consultation with Members and their staff in the development of services.

Dissolution arrangements

88. As touched upon earlier, IPSA first published guidance on activities and expenses policy during dissolution in November 2014. However, comprehensive dissolution guidance was not made available to Members' staff at the point of dissolution. IPSA recognised this in their own General Election report:

We were perhaps not as well prepared as we might have been for the Dissolution period which ran from 30 March 2015 until the Election on 7 May. For example, there was concern among some of IPSA's staff that we did not have specific rules or guidance on some of the issues that MPs' staff raised about travel, subsistence and relocation.¹³⁵

89. As previously noted, Members seeking re-election and their staff need clear and consistent guidance on permissible activities during the dissolution period so that they can continue providing a service to constituents and campaign for re-election without breaching IPSA rules. Regular and early engagement with Members' staff groups by IPSA could have avoided the problem of unclear dissolution guidance by identifying the issues Members would be likely to come across to feed into guidance. It is evident from IPSA's own findings following the 2015 Election that when services were effectively user tested and consulted on prior to launch, such as its general election website, they were positively received.¹³⁶

133 Q214

134 Q94

135 [IPSA General Election 2015: Administrative Lessons](#) para 5.43

136 [IPSA General Election 2015: Administrative Lessons](#) paras 4.19 and 5.10

Service levels

90. Inconsistent advice and diminished service levels after the summer recess cast a shadow over otherwise much improved services to new Members immediately after the Election. New Members told the Committee that their initial customer service experiences were positive.¹³⁷ IPSA provided all new Members with a dedicated contact (IEC) who would guide new Members and their staff in understanding their scheme, which was valued by Members and their staff.¹³⁸ However, these contacts were discontinued at the end of August 2015, after which many Members reported a decline in that customer service they received, as well as the consistency of advice.¹³⁹ Many Members recruit staff during and after the summer recess, and Members themselves often need a post-recess refresher. Retaining the IECs until the end of the conference recess would have allowed IPSA to provide the required service levels at this time. Again, Members' recruitment patterns and the need for refresher training are issues that could have been anticipated through prior engagement with Members and their staff. We are pleased that IPSA recognises the need for training for new permanent staff and a refresher for Members after the summer recess.¹⁴⁰

Issues with unclear dissolution guidance, poor timing of training for new staff, and late payment of resettlement grants could have been avoided through better prior engagement with Members and their staff. IPSA should work with the General Election Planning Group and the parties on engagement with Members and staff on dissolution guidance, timing of briefings for Members and dedicated contacts for Members.

91. *The introduction of named IPSA contacts for new Members should be repeated at the next election with the heightened service remaining in place at least until the end of the conference recess. Improved training of IPSA's permanent staff is also needed to ensure that the quality and consistency of advice does not subsequently tail off.*

92. In 2013 the Committee recommended that IPSA provide a dedicated phone line for new Members for at least three months following the Election.¹⁴¹ This was not the approach taken by IPSA in 2015, which instead extended its standard enquiries line (for all Members) albeit with opening hours extended by two hours for one month.¹⁴² **We repeat our recommendation from 2013 that IPSA establish a dedicated enquiries line for new Members following the next election for at least three months.**

Resettlement payments

93. Defeated Members are entitled to payments to cover costs incurred when winding up their Westminster and constituency offices including making their staff redundant, paying upfront for office removals, and terminating contracts with telecoms companies and for rental leases. IPSA's current policy is to pay resettlement grants to Members defeated at an election only after all outstanding business has been resolved. By September 2015 (some 17 weeks after the Election) all but 10% of defeated Members had received grants.¹⁴³ However there were significant delays for a number of Members, which we believe could

137 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

138 [IPSA General Election 2015: Administrative Lessons](#) paras 4.20–23

139 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix

140 [IPSA General Election 2015: Administrative Lessons](#) para 4.23

141 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, First Weeks at Westminster: [Induction arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 31

142 [IPSA General Election 2015: Administrative Lessons](#) para 3.29

143 Q257

have been avoided. A former Member from the 2010 Parliament, Thomas Docherty, and Emily Knight of MAPSA told us about difficulties they experienced in relation to delays in receiving resettlement grants.¹⁴⁴ Ms Knight told us that IPSA refused to pay her former employer's resettlement payment because it disputed an office business expense claim made in September for USB sticks.

[IPSA] refused to pay my Member's resettlement payment, and it took about four weeks of me arguing with them before they eventually paid it. That was an incredibly stressful time for her, and for me as well. I no longer worked for her by that point; I had made myself redundant.¹⁴⁵

94. Ms Knight was only able to persuade IPSA to allow the payment because she produced an email (forwarded to her personal account) showing that the Authority had previously advised that the claim was within the rules.¹⁴⁶ IPSA should consider that by this point staff and Members are working to complete the (sometimes fraught) negotiations for no wage and without access to their work email accounts. IPSA understandably wishes to ensure that Members are motivated to reach an agreement, but we support the suggestion made to IPSA by departing Members that this would be achieved simply by staggering the resettlement grant rather than withholding it in its entirety.¹⁴⁷ Further, we agree that asking former Members to incur significant costs after losing their income, and with no clear sense as to when they will be reimbursed, is unfair.¹⁴⁸ IPSA told us that its Board would examine the possibility of giving Members an upfront payment.¹⁴⁹ ***We recommend that IPSA writes to this Committee in relation to its final decision on payment of resettlement grants to defeated Members following the next election, explaining how it will ensure they are not left considerably out of pocket for a prolonged period.***

144 Q25, Q56

145 Q55 and Q56

146 Q56

147 [IPSA General Election 2015: Administrative Lessons](#) para 5.40

148 Q25

149 Q258

8 Support for Members as employers and Members' staff as employees

95. Each Member of Parliament effectively runs their own small business and is ultimately responsible for all aspects of recruiting and managing their team. The House Service provides a dedicated advice service to Members on all employment related issues through the Members' HR Advice Service. Members' staff can also contact the service with written permission from their Member. Following a recommendation by this Committee in 2013 the (then 'Personnel Advisory') Service had a higher profile in 2015, with a presence at New Members' Reception Area, and induction session on 'Setting Up an Effective Office'.¹⁵⁰ ***The General Election Planning Group should consider creation of simple guides, and videos for new Members on recruiting and managing staff. These should allow Members and their staff to quickly develop a basic understanding of their role, responsibilities, and sources of advice. These resources should be supplemented by on-demand training that recognises the differing levels of experience Members will have in directly employing and managing staff.***

96. The work of the Members' HR Advice Service was received positively by new Members and their staff.¹⁵¹ However, the team is made up of only three members of staff, and it is not realistic to expect a small team to be able to provide an effective service to all new as well as returning Members during this busy period. In 2013 we recommended that the Service should be provided with additional resources during the immediate pre and post-election period in order to meet demands from departing and new Members.¹⁵² The introduction by IPSA of temporarily-employed designated contacts for new Members was well received and we believe that a similar arrangement could be beneficial for HR matters. ***The House Service should consider enhancing the HR advice service (either through temporary recruitment or an agency) by providing named contacts, similar to those employed by IPSA, to assist new Members until the end of the conference recess following the next general election. These temporary staff, under the guidance of the HR Advisory Service, would act as designated HR contacts to new Members, assisting with the initial process of hiring staff and providing general advice.***

97. Emily Knight of the Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA) proposed the creation of a Members' staff buddying scheme, similar to the House staff buddying scheme for new Members. This would allow experienced staff, with the consent of their employer, to advise a new Member on matters including recruitment and setting up an office. This is an idea we think should be explored further in consultation with IPSA as well as the parties. ***The House Service should explore, with staff groups including the Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA), the possibility of facilitating a voluntary Members' staff buddying scheme, through which experienced staff could advise new Members (of the same party) and their staff on recruitment, setting up an office, etc.***

150 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 50; [New Members' Guidebook](#); General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 15

151 General Election Planning Group (EPS 19) Appendix; Q55; Members' and Peers' Staff Association (EPS 10) para 4.1

152 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 52

Initial staffing needs

98. While new Members are wisely counselled by their parties to avoid recruiting in haste, they will still need assistance with casework and other tasks within days of their election. Since 2010 the Committee has considered various suggestions for enabling new Members to quickly access temporary staff. In 2013 the Committee recommended that a pool of secretarial staff could be provided by the House Service for a few weeks to deal with non-political work, such as large volumes of correspondence and invitations.¹⁵³ However it was concluded by the parties at the time that access to experienced staff would provide the greatest benefit. Indeed, Members who inherited competent and experienced staff from a predecessor in 2010 said that this had prevented constituents from suffering from a temporarily reduced service. Creation of a ‘clearing system’ for experienced Members’ staff has also been suggested in the past as a way to help new Members during their first weeks.¹⁵⁴ The General Election Planning Group informed us of discussions did take place before the 2015 Election on whether work should be commissioned to assess the feasibility of providing a pool of administrative support in the initial weeks.¹⁵⁵ *A study by the House Service on the feasibility of creating a pool of staff to provide Members with administrative support in the weeks following the next election would be welcome. These staff should ideally be experienced as they would need to get Members’ offices up and running quickly. Therefore, the General Election Planning Group should work with the parties and IPSA to explore creating a list of experienced Members’ staff who could (in the event that their Members are defeated or stand down) provide administrative assistance for new Members on short-term contracts. This would provide new Members with access to experienced staff without the pressure of making long-term recruitment decisions hastily.*

HR services for Members’ staff

99. Our inquiry has focused on issues specific to the 2015 Election; however, a wider issue has been raised with us by Members, their staff and representative bodies. This is the lack of formal HR support and advice for Members’ staff. Current support provided by the Members’ HR Advice Service is designed principally to assist Members. The House Service has recently contracted for a telephone service for Members’ staff (the Employee Assistance Programme) and there does exist a voluntary grievance procedure which Members can choose to follow (set out in the standard staff contract). The Members’ and Peers’ Staff Association (MAPSA) welcomed the helpline but stressed that it did not amount to HR support, and that the helpline was staffed by “people not familiar with Parliament or the particular stresses of working here”.¹⁵⁶

100. *We support the principle that Members continue to directly employ their staff. However, Members’ staff should be able to access support on day-to-day HR matters independent of their Member, including training, occupational health, and independent advice on handling employment issues before they can escalate to full grievances.* For their staff, a Member is an employer, line manager and HR department unless they choose

153 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 54

154 Administration Committee, First Report of Session 2013–14, [First Weeks at Westminster: Induction Arrangements for new MPs in 2015](#), HC 193, para 53

155 General Election Planning Group (EPS 07) para 18

156 Members’ and Peers’ Staff Association (EPS 15) para 4.2

to individually contract out these functions. This is not a fair expectation of Members, whose focus should be on their parliamentary and constituency duties, nor does it lead to staff always being provided the support and advice they need. ***The House Service, along with the major parties, should explore the development of a centralised HR support service for Members' staff, which could be funded jointly by the House and the parties.***

Conclusions and recommendations

The long view

1. *The General Election Planning Group (GEPG) should ensure that messages around cyber and physical security are clearly communicated to new as well as returning Members at the next election so that the Parliamentary Digital Service and Security Department can build on this to embed good practices throughout the next Parliament. (Paragraph 7)*
2. Ensuring that office capacity is available to accommodate all new and returning Members and their staff, with as few moves and as little disruption as possible, will be important for the effectiveness of Parliament as an institution during the next several election periods. To achieve this for 2020, plans for moving existing Members out of Northern Estate buildings need to be made soon and bearing in mind the need to allow time for more routine election moves to be planned and implemented. (Paragraph 9)

Pre-Election planning

3. *We recommend that in planning for the next general election the General Election Planning Group (GEPG) adopts the same focus on customer service as in 2015, with members of this Committee, party Whips and individual Members engaged at the earliest opportunity. The GEPG and party representatives should continue to liaise closely on the timing of party and parliamentary business as well as the various other demands on Members' time immediately after the next election. (Paragraph 13)*
4. *The General Election Planning Group (GEPG) should lead on the production of communications on dissolution arrangements aimed at Members' constituency caseworkers before the next election period. The GEPG should work with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and staff representative groups to ensure clear and consistent guidance is provided on permissible activities during the dissolution period, and on steps to take in the event of a Member not being returned. (Paragraph 16)*
5. *The House Service should explore ways of allowing the parliamentary email accounts of Members standing at the next Election and their staff to remain open, liaising with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards to ensure that measures are in place to avoid any advantage arising to incumbents. The House Service should also consider whether there is a need to extend the period during which Members standing down at an election, and their staff, can still access their Parliamentary email accounts to allow more time for records to be transferred or destroyed securely. (Paragraph 18)*

Initial contact and induction programme

6. The support for new and as well as returning Members has come on leaps and bounds over the last few parliaments and we would like to commend the House Service staff among others who have worked hard to bring this about. (Paragraph 20)
7. *The General Election Planning Group should consider further reducing the information provided to new Members on election night to just the key information needed in the days between election and arrival at Westminster. An eye-catching cover note highlighting the most essential and time-critical information (for example, on contacting the House, travel and accommodation, and what to bring for the first week) would help communicate key points more reliably.* (Paragraph 21)
8. *The introduction of improved written guidance tailored for specific readers (new Members, all Members' staff, and returning Members) was a very positive development. However, these useful guides are easily lost in piles of correspondence and briefing. To extend their use they should be reissued at intervals: a few weeks, then several months after the next election. These guides should also be easily found (and in a searchable format) on the Parliamentary website.* (Paragraph 23)

Members' buddying programme

9. *Contact Centre staff should be equipped to provide basic information to new Members who may not be familiar with London, such as tips on public transport options (contactless or Oyster cards etc.). The General Election Planning Group should also consider whether including information from Transport for London (perhaps including an Oyster card or equivalent) in the information packs handed to Members on Election Day would be beneficial.* (Paragraph 26)
10. Arranging buddies into groups to share knowledge about the array of processes, rules, and facilities in the House seems to have been a useful approach and should be repeated next time. Including an ICT specialist in each group would be especially beneficial. Providing buddies with new Members' biographical information will have to enabled them to familiarise themselves quickly with the Member they were assisting and tailor the service they provided. *This approach should be repeated.* (Paragraph 28)
11. The response of Members to the service provided by individual members of House Staff acting as buddies in 2015 was overwhelmingly positive and we would like to thank each of them for volunteering their time to help new colleagues find their feet. (Paragraph 31)
12. *The buddying programme should be repeated at the next election with enough volunteers recruited to ensure individual buddies are required to provide support to no more than two new Members.* (Paragraph 32)
13. *The buddying scheme should be extended to include formal assistance to new staff of Members, including those based in constituency offices.* (Paragraph 33)
14. *We encourage all the parties to continue to facilitate their former or existing Members pairing with new Members of the same party to provide a source of support and*

advice at the next election. While House Service buddies should not be seen as a replacement for the parties facilitating their own ‘political buddies’ the experience of the SNP in 2015 showed the value of this new service, particularly for parties experiencing a high turnover or large influx of Members. (Paragraph 34)

New Member’s Reception Area (NMRA)

15. *The General Election Planning Group should consider whether contact information for government departments in relation to casework enquiries would be best provided to new Members at the New Members’ Reception Area.* (Paragraph 36)
16. *The General Election Planning Group would need to consider how much space can be made available at the New Members’ Reception Area (NMRA)—and the need to focus services on Members—but we think that the option for new Members to bring someone with them through the NMRA to help absorb information is worth exploring.* (Paragraph 38)
17. *We think that the House Service should consider running a drop-in area, in conjunction with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, for returning Members and their staff a few weeks after the next election to refresh memories about House services and procedures and to inform them of any changes that may affect them in the new parliament.* (Paragraph 39)
18. *We recommend that the General Election Planning Group again invites civil servants from Whitehall to test out the New Members’ Reception Area before the next election to ensure that the process and content is clear to those unfamiliar with Parliament.* (Paragraph 40)

Induction Programme

19. *The approach of cutting down the number of induction events run in the first few weeks, involving Members directly in their production, and focusing on the key information Members needed right away, led to the vast majority of new Members attending all the events on Induction Day. This approach should be repeated next time.* (Paragraph 41)
20. *The General Election Planning Group should consider ways of supplementing the induction briefings with more interactive training and activities in smaller groups which could be more tailored to their audience and would allow for more Q&A opportunities.* (Paragraph 43)
21. *The General Election Planning Group should explore the possibility of running a mock sitting of the Chamber on a party-by-party basis at the next election, in order to give Members the experience of speaking in the Chamber and to familiarise themselves with basic procedures and etiquette.* (Paragraph 44)
22. *The approach of having a simple and uniform visual identity for all induction materials provided by the House Service should be strengthened so that they are easily*

distinguishable. Clearly numbering the key documents (as well as using the colour-coding introduced in 2015) would also mean Members and staff could identify when they were missing documents in the sequence. (Paragraph 45)

23. *We support plans to build better digital tools (such as apps) and online resources which Members can access as needed to complement the New Members' Reception Area. As well as providing information on services, the tools should help new Members to orientate themselves on the Parliamentary Estate. (Paragraph 48)*
24. *To ensure that all Members have a basic understanding of how to navigate the business of the House before the start of the Parliament we recommend that the select committee induction session be replaced by a session covering the key procedural knowledge that new Members need in the first few weeks, including the House's weekly timetable, at the next election. (Paragraph 49)*
25. *We encourage the General Election Planning Group to work closely with the Parliamentary Digital Service to develop apps and accessible online resources to supplement the induction session on procedure and one-to-one training as this would help new Members balance the demands on their time in the first few weeks and start to develop a basic understanding of Parliamentary procedure. (Paragraph 50)*

Offices in Westminster

26. *We commend the Whips and the Accommodation and Logistics Service for their hard work in coordinating office allocations and moves following the Election. (Paragraph 52)*
27. *The policy of asking departing Members to vacate their offices within five days of dissolution starting, or—for defeated Members—after Election Day, generally worked well and should be retained. A longer period, agreed with the Whips, should be retained for Members and/or staff departing following a by-election or death of a Member. (Paragraph 53)*

Temporary hot-desking facilities

28. *We recommend that the General Election Planning Group explores options for providing new Members and their staff with additional storage space for confidential documents, and ensures that information about obligations under data protection legislation is visible in the temporary hot-desking facilities at the next election. Sufficient confidential waste bags should also be made available in these offices. (Paragraph 56)*
29. *The General Election Planning Group should work with Members' staff groups to identify the office resources needed in temporary offices (including stationery) and agree written advice to be placed in the rooms on what can be provided if required. We also recommend that the House Service explores, in light of available technology, ways of facilitating more flexible and remote working options, especially for new Members' staff, which can be rolled out quickly while new Members await allocation of permanent offices. (Paragraph 58)*

Getting offices set up

30. *The Accommodation and Logistics Service and Parliamentary Digital Service should coordinate office setups better to minimise the number of visits needed to each office. (Paragraph 59)*

Constituency office accommodation

31. *The General Election Planning Group should work with IPSA, party representatives, and staff groups to create a simple guide to setting up a constituency office which could be included in the New Members' Guidebook, online, and in welcome e-mails to Members' staff when their accounts are activated (or reactivated). (Paragraph 61)*

The cost of office space

32. *In the interest of transparency IPSA should publish regularly clear guidance on how its Office Costs Expenditure budgets are currently calculated and benchmarked. (Paragraph 62)*
33. *If it has not done so as part of its review, IPSA should reconsider how Office Costs Expenditure (OCE) budgets, which cover renting a constituency office, are calculated to ensure that it is possible for all Members to have staff based in their constituencies. (Paragraph 63)*

Choosing ICT equipment

34. *We recommend that the Parliamentary Digital Service develop a short guide for Members on selecting the right equipment for their offices. The guide should offer a selection of standard packages that Members can choose from, depending on the way they like to work. This guide should be promoted in the New Members' Reception Area and on the intranet. (Paragraph 64)*
35. *We recommend that the Parliamentary Digital Service updates the Committee with options for the range of devices which should be offered in the equipment catalogue at the next election, bearing in mind the requirement for hardware to be more compatible with Parliamentary systems and software. (Paragraph 65)*
36. *We would welcome an update during the current Parliament from the Parliamentary Digital Service on whether there is significant evidence to support need for the introduction of a mid-Parliament refresh of Members' IT equipment. (Paragraph 66)*
37. *We recommend that the Parliamentary Digital Service ensures that information on the benefits of House-sourced ICT equipment is clearly conveyed in the equipment catalogue, by more prominently setting out what is included in the price. (Paragraph 67)*

Delivery of equipment

38. *The Parliamentary Digital Service should have a target for completing the refresh of exiting Members' ICT equipment of the end of the summer recess following the next election (assuming a May election). (Paragraph 69)*
39. *The Parliamentary Digital Service should consider pre-ordering some commonly requested equipment so that it can be processed and despatched immediately. Any equipment from this pool not required by new Members could be used to fulfil subsequent orders from returning Members or the House Service, thus avoiding nugatory cost. (Paragraph 70)*
40. *We support further exploration of the steps proposed by the Parliamentary Digital Service in relation to improving delivery service standards in constituencies as well as the introduction of a named contact for each Member at the next election. We believe that this will improve the way in which interrelated issues are dealt with as well as enabling Digital Service staff to build relationships with individual Members and their staff. (Paragraph 71)*

ICT support for constituency offices

41. *We recommend a specific new Members' constituency staff contact be appointed within the Parliamentary Digital Service. They should act as a key contact point and champion for constituency staff and ensure that they are able to access the help and training they need to get their offices fully operational as soon as possible. This contact should work with the member of staff leading on Members' staff engagement by the House Service to make sure that services are communicated effectively to constituency staff. (Paragraph 72)*

Funding for ICT equipment

42. *We encourage the Parliamentary Digital Service and IPSA to explore options for allowing Members to use all of their ICT equipment budgets available through IPSA and the House, where they have sufficient funds for the required equipment across both budgets. (Paragraph 74)*

Members' Professional Development

43. *At the end of the 2010 Parliament the Committee endorsed the approach of focusing resources for professional development at the point of need rather than running courses or events in anticipation of sufficient Members being able to attend to make them worthwhile. Given the unpredictable pressures on Members' time and the need to ensure available funding is used effectively we believe this remains an appropriate strategy. (Paragraph 75)*
44. *The House Service should consider a simplified offer of professional development aimed at new Members immediately following the next election. It should be based on*

the core activities and skills that Members are likely to need in their first year, perhaps setting out the information in a similar way to a university prospectus with a clearer distinction between information and training offers. (Paragraph 76)

45. *The House Service should work with Members and their staff ahead of preparations for the next election to identify the most appropriate methods to advertise professional development opportunities to Members. As part of this, the Parliamentary Digital Service should be engaged early in the process on the inclusion of information on Parliament's intranet pages. (Paragraph 77)*
46. *The General Election Planning Group should continue to look at the activities provided by other legislatures as possible models for future professional development provision in the UK Parliament. (Paragraph 78)*
47. *Gaining cross-party support for Members to take part in the same kind of professional development that is simply taken for granted in other sectors (and indeed by staff of the House Service) will, over time, help to tackle the perception in some parts of the news media that investing in developing the skills and knowledge of Members of Parliament is reproachable. As in 2013 we will write to the Leaders of all parties represented at Westminster to encourage continued proactive support by the parties of the training programmes put in place following the next election. (Paragraph 79)*
48. *The House Service should consider inviting external organisations to deliver development and knowledge-sharing activities on the Estate, as well as facilitating more informal knowledge sharing between more experienced and newer Members. (Paragraph 80)*

Induction and professional development for Members' staff

49. *We recommend that the 'Members' Staff Handbook' be sent in hard-copy and by email to all Members' offices following the next election and to constituency offices as they are set up. (Paragraph 83)*
50. *The House would benefit from imparting to Members' staff some knowledge of procedure, because those staff would then be able to better advise their Member. More guidance and information for staff on giving tours of the Palace and on the process for booking rooms would contribute to a better visitor experience for members of the public. Requiring staff to complete fire safety training as part of their induction would also potentially benefit all occupants of the Estate. The House has a world-renowned research facility in the House of Commons Library but new Members' research staff are not routinely signposted to it. *The General Election Planning Group should work with staff representative groups to create a work stream focused on developing an induction programme for Members' staff in both Westminster and constituencies. New research staff of Members should be advised to contact the Library in their first week to arrange an induction. (Paragraph 84)**
51. *Once an induction framework for Members' staff has been agreed it should be passed to HR so that it can be applied for all Members' staff at whatever stage they are recruited.*

The ‘Members’ Staff Handbook’ should also be updated to reflect the range of training available—highlighting essential training that all Members’ staff should undertake. (Paragraph 85)

Dissolution guidance and service levels

52. Issues with unclear dissolution guidance, poor timing of training for new staff, and late payment of resettlement grants could have been avoided through better prior engagement with Members and their staff. *IPSA should work with the General Election Planning Group and the parties on engagement with Members and staff on dissolution guidance, timing of briefings for Members and dedicated contacts for Members. (Paragraph 90)*
53. *The introduction of named IPSA contacts for new Members should be repeated at the next election with the heightened service remaining in place at least until the end of the conference recess. Improved training of IPSA’s permanent staff is also needed to ensure that the quality and consistency of advice does not subsequently tail off. (Paragraph 91)*
54. *We repeat our recommendation from 2013 that IPSA establish a dedicated enquiries line for new Members following the next election for at least three months. (Paragraph 92)*

Resettlement payments

55. *We recommend that IPSA writes to this Committee in relation to its final decision on payment of resettlement grants to defeated Members following the next election, explaining how it will ensure they are not left considerably out of pocket for a prolonged period. (Paragraph 94)*

Support for Members as employers and Members’ staff as employees

56. *The General Election Planning Group should consider creation of simple guides, and videos for new Members on recruiting and managing staff. These should allow Members and their staff to quickly develop a basic understanding of their role, responsibilities, and sources of advice. These resources should be supplemented by on-demand training that recognises the differing levels of experience Members will have in directly employing and managing staff. (Paragraph 95)*

57. *The House Service should consider enhancing the HR advice service (either through temporary recruitment or an agency) by providing named contacts, similar to those employed by IPSA, to assist new Members until the end of the conference recess following the next general election. These temporary staff, under the guidance of the HR Advisory Service, would act as designated HR contacts to new Members, assisting with the initial process of hiring staff and providing general advice. (Paragraph 96)*
58. *The House Service should explore, with staff groups including the Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA), the possibility of facilitating a voluntary Members' staff buddying scheme, through which experienced staff could advise new Members (of the same party) and their staff on recruitment, setting up an office, etc. (Paragraph 97)*

Initial staffing needs

59. *A study by the House Service on the feasibility of creating a pool of staff to provide Members with administrative support in the weeks following the next election would be welcome. These staff should ideally be experienced as they would need to get Members' offices up and running quickly. Therefore, the General Election Planning Group should work with the parties and IPSA to explore creating a list of experienced Members' staff who could (in the event that their Members are defeated or stand down) provide administrative assistance for new Members on short-term contracts. This would provide new Members with access to experienced staff without the pressure of making long-term recruitment decisions hastily. (Paragraph 98)*

HR services for Members' staff

60. *We support the principle that Members continue to directly employ their staff. However, Members' staff should be able to access support on day-to-day HR matters independent of their Member, including training, occupational health, and independent advice on handling employment issues before they can escalate to full grievances. For their staff, a Member is an employer, line manager and HR department unless they choose to individually contract out these functions. This is not a fair expectation of Members, whose focus should be on their parliamentary and constituency duties, nor does it lead to staff always being provided the support and advice they need. The House Service, along with the major parties, should explore the development of a centralised HR support service for Members' staff, which could be funded jointly by the House and the parties. (Paragraph 100)*

Formal Minutes

Monday 13 March 2017

Members present:

Sir Paul Beresford, in the Chair

Sir David Amess	Nigel Mills
Martyn Day	Mark Tami
Michael Fabricant	Keith Vaz

Draft Report (*Election planning and services*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 100 agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the First Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 26 April at 4.30pm]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 31 October 2016

Question number

John Benger, Clerk Assistant and Managing Director, Chamber and Committees, House of Commons, **Kate Emms**, Parliamentary Adviser to the Leader of the House of Commons, Cabinet Office, **Thomas Doherty**, former Member of Parliament for Dunfermline and West Fife, and **Luke Skipper**, former Chief of Staff to the SNP Westminster Group

[Q1–28](#)

Jess Phillips MP, Member of Parliament for Birmingham Yardley, **Martyn Day MP**, Member of Parliament for Linlithgow and East Falkirk, **Myfanwy Barrett**, Managing Director, Corporate Services, House of Commons, and **Donald Grant**, Deputy Director, Parliamentary Estates Directorate

[Q29–50](#)

Monday 28 November 2016

Max Freedman, UNITE Union Parliamentary Staff Branch, **Georgina Kester**, Chair, Members' and Peers' Staff Association, **Emily Knight**, Vice-Chair, MAPSA

[Q51–91](#)

Janet Walker, Chief of Staff to Tom Tugendhat MP, **Barbara Joy**, Senior HR Manager, Corporate Services, and **Alix Langley**, Director of People Services, Corporate Services, House of Commons

[Q92–122](#)

Monday 5 December 2016

Mr Robert Syms MP, Government Accommodation Whip, **Mark Tami MP**, Opposition Accommodation Whip, and **Fiona Channon**, Head of Accommodation and Logistics, House of Commons

[Q123–153](#)

Rob Greig, Director, Parliamentary Digital Service, and **Dan Cook**, Portfolio Manager, Parliamentary Digital Service

[Q154–180](#)

Monday 16 January 2017

Professor Emma Crewe, Professorial Research Fellow and Professor of Social Anthropology, SOAS, University of London, and **Eve Samson**, Chair, Interdepartmental Working Group for Members' Professional Development, House of Commons

[Q181–212](#)

Marcial Boo, Chief Executive, **Victoria Elliott**, Programme and Projects Manager, and **Vicky Fox**, Director of MP Support Services, Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority

[Q213–261](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

EPS numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Anonymous Submission ([EPS0001](#))
- 2 Electoral Commission ([EPS0006](#))
- 3 Emily Knight ([EPS0015](#))
- 4 Eve Samson ([EPS0017](#)), ([EPS0020](#))
- 5 General Election Planning Group ([EPS0007](#)), ([EPS0019](#))
- 6 Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) ([EPS0014](#))
- 7 Janet Walker ([EPS0016](#))
- 8 Luke Skipper ([EPS0009](#))
- 9 Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA) ([EPS0010](#))
- 10 National Assembly for Wales ([EPS0008](#))
- 11 Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards ([EPS0018](#))
- 12 Professor Emma Crewe ([EPS0013](#))
- 13 Robert Dale ([EPS0012](#))
- 14 Scottish Parliament ([EPS0003](#))
- 15 The Sir Bernard Crick Centre, University of Sheffield ([EPS0005](#))
- 16 Unite Parliamentary Staff Branch ([EPS0011](#))
- 17 Victoria Borwick MP ([EPS0002](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2015–16

First Report	Record copies of Acts	HC 521
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