Chapter 4: Facilities for Staff

1. About this Chapter

1.1 This chapter covers the main staff facilities on the Parliamentary Estate. It explains:

- catering and retail facilities
- the gym and other sports and social facilities
- church and quiet room facilities
- cash dispensers, post office, travel office gift shops and hairdressers
- how to gain access to the Visitor Route
- access information for the Palace of Westminster and the Parliamentary Estate
- lost property, car parking, late night transport service and sleeping accommodation

2. Catering Service

2.1 There is a wide range of catering facilities across the Parliamentary Estate. Details of menus, dietary information, access arrangements and opening times are available on the Catering Service Intranet pages:

Catering Services

2.2 For further information, call the Catering Service Managing Director’s Office on ext. 3686.

2.3 Members of Parliament and House of Commons staff are entitled to host private functions. For further details contact Catering Service Banqueting Office on ext. 4804, 2275 or 3677.

3. Sports and Social Facilities

Westminster Gymnasium

3.1 The Westminster Gym, which is run by the Jubilee Hall Trust, is open to all Parliamentary staff. The facilities available include a 40-station gym, strength machines and free weights, exercise studio, indoor cycle studio and a range of classes. Physiotherapy, osteopath treatments, massage and acupuncture are also available for all Palace of Westminster pass holders. Prices are available from the Westminster Gym.

3.2 The Westminster Gym is situated in the basement of No 1 Canon Row, Derby Gate.

3.3 For further details on facilities offered and the cost of membership and other services, call ext. 5546 or e-mail westminster@jubileehalltrust.org. More information about the Westminster Gym is available on the Intranet:

Westminster Gym
Sports and Social Club

3.4 Membership of the Houses of Parliament Sports and Social Club is open to staff of both Houses. This also applies to agency staff who have been working in either House for 12 weeks or more and have a valid security pass.

3.5 There is a small annual subscription and application forms for club membership are available in the bars. The facilities in the accommodation used by the club include two bars (open Monday through Friday, 12 noon to 11 pm) and two games rooms for darts and pool. Private functions may be booked by arrangement with the bar staff. The club organises a range of sporting and social activities throughout the year, including golf, darts and pool tournaments, free prize draws, karaoke evenings and other events.

Other organisations

3.6 Staff of the House of Commons are also eligible to join the following organisations:

- **For You by You – The Charity for Civil Servants**: Formerly known as the Civil Service Benevolent Fund, this is the principal charity of the Civil Service and has been in existence since 1886. The charity provides a professional help and advisory service to serving and former civil servants, and their dependents, facing hardship in the UK. More information is on the For You by You website.
- **Civil Service Club**: This club has dining and drinking facilities and some overnight accommodation. It is situated at 13 Great Scotland Yard. For further details call 020 7930 4881 or see the Civil Service Club website.
- **Civil Service Sports Council**: This organisation’s facilities include extensive sports grounds at Duke Meadows, Chiswick and a recreation centre for indoor games such as snooker and table tennis at Monck Street, Westminster. For further details call 020 8930 4881 or see the CSSC website.
- **Civil Service Motoring Association**: This organisation provides a wide range of facilities and services including recreational accommodation and a motor vehicle breakdown service. For further details call 0800 66 99 44 or see the CSMA website.

London Mutual Credit Union

3.7 The London Mutual Credit Union provides financial support and advice to staff on managing their personal finances. In addition they also offer financial products such as savings and loans which are to be deducted directly from employees’ salaries via Payroll. For further details call 020 7787 0770 or see the London Mutual Credit Union website.

Hospitality Action

3.8 Hospitality Action is a registered charity that can provide financial assistance to staff in the Catering Service, In-House Services, who are facing financial hardship or difficulty such as long term illness. Any assistance provided is non-refundable.
3.9 Applications for assistance from Catering Service staff can be made directly on the Hospitality Action website or by calling 0808 802 2111.

4. Church and Quiet Room Facilities

**Westminster Abbey and St Margaret’s Church**

4.1 All Parliamentary pass holders can visit Westminster Abbey free upon production of a valid, full parliamentary pass.

4.2 St Margaret’s Church, located in the grounds of Westminster Abbey, has been associated with both Houses of Parliament for more than 400 years. All staff are welcome to attend its regular services, and the church is available to parliamentary pass holders for baptisms, weddings and memorial services. Please contact the Rector’s Secretary (pamela.carrington@westminster-abbey.org / 020 7654 4847) for more details.

**Chapel of St Mary Undercroft (Crypt Chapel)**

4.3 The Speaker’s Chaplain celebrates Holy Communion in the Chapel on Wednesdays at 12.45 pm. All denominations are welcome. The entrance to the chapel is in Westminster Hall, at the south end on the west side of the main steps.

4.4 The Speaker’s Chaplain is normally available for spiritual guidance or to offer support and may be contacted on ext. 3768 or 020 7654 4847.

4.5 There is an active Parliamentary Christian fellowship which is open to all staff. Further details are available on the Intranet or please contact the Speaker’s Chaplain.

**Speaker’s Chaplain**

4.6 The Chapel is available to all staff with at least two years’ service for family weddings and baptisms. For more details call the Speaker’s Chaplain on ext. 3768.

**Multi-faith prayer room**

4.7 From 8 January 2018 room W4, off Westminster Hall, is to be used as a multi-faith prayer room for a trial period of approximately six months. The room is non-denominational and welcomes the use of, and is accessible to, people of all faiths and of no faith and is for individual contemplation and/or prayer; congregational prayer will not be possible. Eating or drinking in the room is not permissible and users should respect others by switching off mobile phones whilst using the room. All pass holders may use the room at any time. Non-pass holders may also access the room whilst the Palace is open for visitors but must be accompanied to W4. In addition, a quiet room, G42 on the ground floor of 7 Millbank, is also available to staff at all times.

4.8 Use of both rooms during your normal working hours should be planned in advance with your Line Manager.
4.9 If you have any queries or require more information, please contact the Diversity and Inclusion team on ext. 2932.

5. Access to the Palace of Westminster and the Parliamentary Estate

Access to catering facilities, including the Terrace

5.1 Access to the Terrace is limited to prevent overcrowding. Further information regarding access may be found on the Intranet link listed below.

Access to the Terrace

5.2 Full details of all catering facilities on the Parliamentary Estate, including access information, is available on the Intranet:

Catering Services

Visitor Route

5.3 If you have a full Palace of Westminster photo identity pass you may take up to six personal guests along the Visitor Route (formerly Line of Route). You must accompany your guests at all times. This facility is not open to temporary pass holders. Please contact Visitor Services on ext. 0516 for further details or see the Intranet.

Visitor route availability during Commercial Opening

Bringing Visitors to Parliament

Tickets for the Public Gallery

5.4 A limited number of tickets are available for members of staff on each sitting day and requests are booked on a first come, first served basis. Tickets are bookable in advance for the start of the session only and each member of staff can request up to two tickets. Tickets after the Question Period are issued on the day from the Admission Order Office dependent on space available in the Gallery. To book tickets please contact the Admission Order Office by email - aooffice@parliament.uk. Tickets are issued for your personal use or for use by your friends and relatives.

Special occasions

5.5 Pavement tickets for occasions such as the State Opening of Parliament are allocated through Managing Directors.

Disabled access

5.6 If you or your visitors have a disability which requires you to use alternative access routes, then you will find information in the leaflet 'Facilities for Visitors with Disabilities in the Palace of
Westminster’. The leaflet may be obtained by contacting your Health and Safety Coordinator or may be found on the Intranet:

Disabled Access

6. Other Facilities

Retail facilities

6.1 There are two House of Commons gift shops located on the Parliamentary Estate, and a third located on Bridge Street. There are seasonal discounts available to pass holders on occasion. More information is available on the Intranet:

House of Commons Gift Shop

Cash dispensers

6.2 There are cash dispensers available in three locations:

- in the corridor, off Cloister Court, near the Terrace Cafeteria
- near the House of Lords staff restaurant
- in the Post Office in Portcullis House

6.3 There are three Post Offices:

- Members’ Lobby: for the use of Members and staff at Band A and above
- Central Lobby: open to all staff
- Portcullis House: open to all staff.

Travel Office

6.4 The Travel Office provides services to Members and staff, including discounted air and rail travel and commission free foreign exchange. Personal travel is subject to an 8% administration charge and should, where possible, be booked on less busy days (Mondays, Tuesdays or Fridays). The Travel Office is situated in the basement of Star Chamber Court and may be reached on ext. 4232. Further details are on the Intranet:

Travel Office

6.5 The in-house hair salon, John Simon, offers a wide range of cuts, colours and hair care services. Further details are on the Intranet:

Hairdresser
7. Lost Property

7.1 Please hand in all unidentified property found in common areas to the Hallkeeper’s Lodge as soon as possible, located to the left of the entrance to St Stephen’s from Westminster Hall. The Hallkeeper is available on ext. 4626.

7.2 There may also be local rules about the receipt of lost property.

8. Car Parking

8.1 Parking is not permitted on the Parliamentary Estate without a valid parking permit. A limited amount of space for staff car parking is available in the underground car park and outside the Norman Shaw buildings. Public transport should be used to travel to and from work where possible. Priority in the allocation of space is given to staff on regular night duty and those who are required to work when public transport is not easily available. For more information, and to apply for a parking permit, please contact the Serjeant at Arms office on ext. 3030/3040/3050 or at saaenquiries@parliament.uk.

8.2 Please see Chapter 10 for information about car parking arrangements during transport emergencies.

9. Late Night Transport Service

9.1 Staff of the House are expected to make their own arrangements for travel to and from work. Official journeys are normally made on public transport and use of the late night transport service at the House’s expense is not an entitlement. The House Service will only pay for late night transport when it is necessary for a member of staff to work to a late hour and it is not reasonable for him or her to use public transport to get home.

9.2 Detailed guidance on use of the late night transport service may be found on the Intranet: Late Night Transport

9.3 The House of Commons Service has a severe transport disruption policy. If there is a major disruption to public transport, the late night transport service will be available to staff on duty after 10 pm irrespective of what time the House rises. Exceptionally the service may also be provided earlier at management discretion, for example, where there is very severe transport disruption. The severe transport disruption policy may be found in Chapter 11 and on the Intranet: Severe transport disruption policy

10. Sleeping Accommodation

10.1 The House provides bedrooms in 22 John Islip Street for staff who have a clear business need for overnight accommodation, as authorised by Business Management Directors. This is bookable through the In-House Services Service Centre on ext. 4226. If there is a greater requirement for sleeping accommodation than the capacity of 22 John Islip Street (17 rooms), hotel
accommodation may be arranged within reasonable access to the House. More information may be found on the Intranet:

**Overnight accommodation**

10.2 Staff using the above facilities may be entitled to use the late night taxi service. More information on the Late Night Transport Service policy may be found on the Intranet:

**Late Night Transport**

[Return to the Staff Handbook]