



HOUSE OF COMMONS

# Dissolution Arrangements

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February 2010

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#### **Further Information**

The following staff at the House of Commons can be contacted for further information on any of the details contained in this booklet:

- [Terry Bird](#): pay, staff and allowances 020 7219 4292
- [Matthew Taylor](#): IT and telephones 020 7219 2067
- [James Robertson](#): other services 020 7219 3060

# The Electoral Commission

## A message from the Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission provides advice and guidance for election candidates, and also monitors candidates' compliance with the financial rules. When a General Election is called, comprehensive guidance for candidates and agents, covering the entire process of standing for election and including the rules about candidates' election expenses and donations, will be available to download on the Commission's website: [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk).

If you have any questions on the financial rules applying to candidates, please contact the Commission on 020 7271 0616 or by email at [pef@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:pef@electoralcommission.org.uk). For any other queries please ring 020 7271 0500 or email [info@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:info@electoralcommission.org.uk).

## Information for Members who are standing at the General Election

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This booklet sets out the arrangements which will be in place during the period when Parliament is dissolved before a General Election. It is not possible to deal with every eventuality in this short document. However, the principle which you should observe is that, during the dissolution period, House resources and allowances may be used only for the purpose of carrying out residual casework and for maintaining a small range of facilities as set out below. As Parliament is not in existence during this period, any such activities will inevitably be limited. No funding from parliamentary allowances is permissible for activities in connection with the forthcoming General Election, political campaigning or party political activity. The arrangements set out in this booklet reflect this restriction.
- 1.2 During the period when Parliament is dissolved before a General Election there are no Members of Parliament. Consequently you may not use that title during this period. From 5pm on the day of dissolution until you are re-elected, the facilities that the House provides for Members in Westminster during a Parliament will not be available to you. Your security pass will allow you access to the estate until midnight on the first Sunday after dissolution but this is solely to enable you to collect items and post. After midnight on the first Sunday your security pass will be deactivated. Some facilities provided for use outside Westminster may continue to be used but only for urgent constituency work. It is your responsibility to ensure that, with the exception of facilities for which you may pay (set out below), no facility provided for out of parliamentary allowances is used for party political purposes during the dissolution period.

- 1.3 Some of the facilities which are provided for your use as a Member of Parliament may continue to be used during the dissolution period if you so choose. These include some IT equipment and services and certain facilities provided out of your allowances in your constituency, such as your office accommodation. If you choose to use these facilities you must inform the Department of Resources, reimburse their costs and declare this under your election expenses. It is not possible to claim for these facilities from your allowances. Please see paragraphs 2.3 and 3.12 for further details.
- 1.4 If you have any questions about the arrangements during the dissolution period that are not answered here please seek advice from the relevant staff. Contact details are given at the beginning of this document. There are special arrangements for leaders of parties and their staff, which are detailed in a separate guidance note.
- 1.5 A checklist of actions you may wish to consider is on page 20.

## **2 Parliamentary salaries, allowances and travel**

- 2.1 Although this booklet provides a summary, details of allowances are set out in the Green Book (revised in July 2009) and other guidance from the Department of Resources ([www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/GreenBook.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/GreenBook.pdf)).
- 2.2 The system of allowances set out in the Green Book follows broad principles derived from the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament. Members must adhere to these principles when making claims against parliamentary allowances.
- 2.3 You must satisfy yourself that expenditure charged to your allowances is incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily for the purpose of performing your parliamentary duties. Claims cannot relate to party political activity of any sort, nor must any claim provide a benefit to a party political organisation.

### **Administrative and Office Expenditure (AOE)**

- 2.4 You can claim AOE in the normal way for office rental, regular payments such as rates, insurance etc, and also expenses (such as stationery) associated with constituency casework carried out during the period. You can submit invoices for advance payment prior to and following dissolution but the House will only pay up to the date of the election.
- 2.5 It is advisable to try to limit expenditure from the AOE, and other allowances, to that which is essential to run your office for the period until the election. If you are in any doubt please contact the Department of Resources on 020 7219 1340.
- 2.6 You may not claim AOE to pay for any purchases or services used for party political activity. Any material funded from the AOE and the Communications Expenditure (CE, see below) which might be deemed to provide an electoral advantage must not be distributed after 5pm on the day of dissolution. Constituency office accommodation funded through the AOE may continue to be used only for constituency casework, unless reimbursement arrangements agreed with the Department of Resources are in place.
- 2.7 You may use your constituency office as your campaign office during the period of the election, but only if you pay the full costs (rent, utilities, insurance etc) from your own or your party's funds. You will then need to reimburse the House for any costs (e.g. rent, business rates) for which you have already claimed and declare these costs as an election expense.
- 2.8 It is your responsibility to keep accurate records of any claims and to make reimbursements to the House.

### **Communications Expenditure (CE)**

- 2.9 The use of resources funded from the Communications Expenditure is prohibited during the dissolution, and claims from

the Communications Expenditure which relate to the period after 5pm on the day of dissolution will not be met. Entitlement to the Communications Expenditure recommences on the day after polling day for returned Members. If you are in any doubt, please check with the Department of Resources.

### **All websites**

- 2.10 All Members' websites must bear a clear disclaimer throughout the dissolution period which makes it clear that the website was established while you were a Member of Parliament and that you are, until re-elected, no longer a Member of Parliament. The disclaimer should read:

“This website was established while I was a Member of Parliament. As Parliament has been dissolved there are no Members of Parliament until after the election on XX XXX 2010”.

### **Websites funded from Communications Expenditure**

- 2.11 Any website funded by the Communications Expenditure must be frozen and no new content added except the disclaimer, contact details and/or a link to an alternative web site.

### **Domain names and email addresses referring to you as an MP**

- 2.12 No one can use the title MP during dissolution and you should not use a website or an email address during dissolution if it suggests you are currently an MP. Any website that contains a URL referring to you as an MP (e.g. johnpeekmp.co.uk) should be frozen. This means the website may remain online, but that no new content should be added except the disclaimer, contact details and/or a link to an alternative web site.

### **Members' Salaries**

- 2.13 You will continue to be paid your parliamentary salary for the

period of dissolution. Payment will continue after the election for all re-elected Members on condition that the oath is taken or affirmation made. The enhancement of salary payable to committee chairmen ceases on dissolution.

### **Staffing Expenditure**

- 2.14 The Staffing Expenditure continues throughout the dissolution. However, you must not claim against the allowance for staff time which is used for campaigning or political activity. Some of your staff may need to work throughout the dissolution, for example to ensure continuity in your casework.

### **Staff undertaking political activity during dissolution**

- 2.15 If you wish to allow your staff to undertake political activity or campaigning during dissolution, they must:

- take annual leave; or
- take unpaid leave.

If you agree to unpaid leave, you must notify the Personnel Advice Service in the Department of Resources in writing in advance so that pay adjustments can be made. Childcare vouchers must not be used by your staff to cover for periods when they are campaigning or undertaking political activity.

- 2.16 If, exceptionally, you intend to allow your staff to undertake political activity or campaigning during working time, you must:

- keep a written record of any time spent in this way;
- notify the Personnel Advice Service in writing in advance of the change in working hours; and
- record the time used in this way and reimburse your Staffing Expenditure and repay pension contributions accordingly.

In these circumstances, you must also include details of the reimbursement payments you make to the House as actual expenditure within your individual candidate's election expenditure return.

## **Staff not undertaking political activity during dissolution**

- 2.17 If your staff are not going to undertake political activity or campaigning during dissolution, you may:
- allow your staff to take paid annual holiday as set out in the employment contract. In this case you must ensure that you keep proper records of holiday accrued and taken, in case of challenge; or
  - allow your staff to take unpaid leave. Again, you must notify the Personnel Advice Service in advance so that pay adjustments can be made. In these circumstances pension contributions and childcare vouchers will not be paid from central funds.

Alternatively, your staff may continue to be paid under Staffing Expenditure to do work not connected with the election campaign, such as research, office-keeping and constituency casework. This work must be done away from the Parliamentary Estate, and the Parliamentary Network will remain unavailable.

## **Personal Additional Administrative Expenditure (PAAE)**

- 2.18 You cannot claim PAAE for the period of dissolution, so any claims which relate to this period will not be met. Entitlement recommences on the day after polling day for a returned Member. It is important that the dates you put on the claim forms are clearly stated to avoid any doubt or ambiguity.

## **Travel Expenditure**

- 2.19 You may undertake a single one-way journey at public expense to return to your home or to the constituency. After you have completed this single journey, corporate travel cards and season tickets must not be used. Spouse, civil partner and children's travel cannot be claimed after dissolution.
- 2.20 When an election is called your staff are allowed one single journey to return to their normal place of work. This is in addition to their annual employee entitlement. During dissolution any

necessary journeys made by staff between Westminster and the constituency must be charged to IEP and the journey must be for parliamentary reasons.

### **3 IT and related services**

- 3.1 The following sections provide guidance on the use of parliamentary IT for parliamentary purposes during dissolution. If you wish to use this equipment for other purposes, you will need to pay for and declare this as an election expense (see para. 3.12).

#### **Access to the Network and email**

- 3.2 Parliamentary Network (PN) accounts and email access, including access to the U and S drives for yourself and your staff will be suspended from 5pm on the day of dissolution. You and your staff may wish to consider making a backup of your Outlook contacts folder and Outlook personal folders. A facility to allow Members to redirect their emails from PN accounts to external accounts will be offered by Parliamentary ICT (PICT). Once the election is called PICT will issue an email containing instructions and a link to an automatic process which will set up the redirection.
- 3.3 To use this facility you must use a third party email provider. There are a number of such providers including some who provide this service free. Any charge cannot be reclaimed from your parliamentary allowances. PICT will provide further information if requested. Any private account must not redirect mail back to a parliamentary account.

#### **Remote Access**

- 3.4 All remote access to accounts on the PN, whether via VPN or Citrix, will be withdrawn from 5pm on the day of dissolution.

## **Internet facilities**

### **Access**

- 3.5 The ability to browse the internet via broadband will remain available for constituency related work only.

### **Members' websites**

- 3.6 Links to Members' websites from the parliamentary website will be cut from the day following dissolution. (See also para. 2.10).

### **Post election**

- 3.7 If you are re-elected you will have your accounts re-enabled following the election. The accounts of your staff will also be re-enabled unless you have asked PICT not to do so. You are strongly advised to ensure that your staff accounts at the time of dissolution are correct.

### **Equipment**

- 3.8 At dissolution you may remove any machines purchased using private funds or the AOE from the Parliamentary Estate. Centrally provided laptops may be taken off the estate but PCs supplied centrally as part of your Member entitlement must not be removed. No machine provided for parliamentary purposes, either centrally or through the AOE, may be used for party political purposes unless the appropriate rental is paid (see para. 3.12).
- 3.9 If you are seeking re-election you may continue to use the machines in your constituency office if you choose to pursue casework on behalf of your former constituents during dissolution. The machines should not be used for any other purposes (but see para 3.12).
- 3.10 The Members Allowances Committee Practice Note Number 6, which came into effect from 18 January 2010, gives more detailed guidance on purchases of office furniture and equipment in the remaining months of the Parliament. Members Allowances Committee Practice Notes are available from their page on the parliamentary website.

## Support

- 3.11 The service of the parliamentary service desk, the Operator Bureau and other PICT staff will not be available to you or your staff during dissolution, apart from assistance with the interpretation of this guidance. Where urgent casework is being conducted and a fault with centrally provided equipment arises, essential support, sufficient to allow the urgent casework to continue, will be provided.

## Rental of equipment and services for non-parliamentary purposes by Members seeking re-election

- 3.12 You can rent your IT equipment (PC, laptop, PDA, printer etc.), whether loaned or purchased using your parliamentary allowances, to use for non-parliamentary purposes during an election campaign. If you wish to do so:
- you must notify the DR Enquiries and Advice Team in advance on 020 7219 1340;
  - you must reimburse the House;
  - you must declare what you have paid as an election expense; and
  - you must not use parliamentary allowances to pay for the rental.

- 3.13 A schedule of costs, updated quarterly, is provided in the PICT section of the parliamentary intranet. This can be found at <http://intranet.parliament.uk/intranet/pict/assets/dissolution-charging-schedule-v5.pdf>.

The schedule includes weekly equivalent costs for the use of parliamentary supplied personal computers, laptops, printers, PDAs, Smartphones and internet access. Warranty support will remain available where it exists at the time of dissolution, but no other support will be offered for non-parliamentary work.

- 3.14 All the guidance with regard to network access and the use of parliamentary email addresses remains as in sections 3.1 to 3.12 above. If you fully comply with the guidance in sections 3.1 to 3.12 then no payment or declaration need be made.

- 3.15 It is your responsibility to determine if a declaration is required and to ensure that an appropriate payment is made, according to this guidance.

## 4 Telephones

- 4.1 Telephone calls may not be made from the Parliamentary Estate during the period of dissolution, and telephones may not be diverted to external lines. Any existing diverts to external lines must be removed.
- 4.2 You are advised to unplug your fax machine from the telephone sockets before vacating your office.

### **Voicemail**

- 4.3 Your voicemail will not receive messages from 5pm on the day of dissolution. You can record a simple message on your voicemail lines informing the caller that the office is closed and giving a number where you may be contacted, but there will be no facility for storing or retrieving messages or forwarding calls. More detailed guidance and advice is available at <http://intranet.parliament.uk/intranet/pict/assets/change-your-voicemail-message.doc>.

### **Messages**

- 4.4 The Message Bureau will not take messages for you during the period of dissolution, but you can leave contact details in advance with the Bureau Supervisor on 020 7219 6161.

## 5 Accommodation in Westminster

### **Access to your current office**

- 5.1 Your security pass will allow you access to the estate until midnight on the first Sunday after dissolution but this is solely to enable you

to collect items and post. You may enter the precincts to collect your computers (as previously specified) and correspondence as well as papers from your lockers and filing cabinets. However, you may not work here from the day following dissolution.

- 5.2 Your staff may enter the precincts to collect papers, post, etc, but they will not be allowed to work in the precincts. Their rooms will be locked. They may not make telephone calls or use other facilities on the precincts during the period of dissolution. The same arrangements apply to political advisers.
- 5.3 If you wish to access the estate after your pass has been deactivated you should contact Accommodation Services on 020 7219 1319 to arrange this.
- 5.4 As Members are not allowed to work on the estate during dissolution your office will be locked. To access your office in the Palace you should ask the nearest Security Officer or contact Accommodation Services on 020 7219 1319. In the outbuildings, the attendant on duty will open rooms on request.
- 5.5 If you are standing for re-election, you and your staff may leave personal belongings, papers and books in your office during the dissolution period, preferably locked away. Please ensure your desk is clear, both for security reasons and to enable your office to be thoroughly cleaned.

### **Car park**

- 5.6 All cars should be removed from the underground car park during dissolution. You may park your car in the underground car park for short periods only when, for example, you are calling to collect mail.

## **6 Data protection and handling casework and records when Parliament is dissolved**

- 6.1 You may continue to deal with constituency casework during a dissolution period; please ensure that your correspondence does not give the impression that you are a Member of Parliament. You should not use official stationery or pre-paid envelopes.
- 6.2 Further guidance for Members who are standing down or are not returned is in later sections. The booklet on Data Protection Advice for Members' Offices may also be of assistance. This can be found on the internet at [www.parliament.uk/site\\_information/foi/data\\_protection/commons\\_data\\_protection.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/site_information/foi/data_protection/commons_data_protection.cfm).

## **7 Stationery and correspondence**

- 7.1 You may not use House emblems, House stationery and post paid envelopes during the period of dissolution; this includes any use for casework undertaken during the period. If you are undertaking any urgent casework the cost of plain stationery and any postage incurred in this work may be claimed under the AOE.
- 7.2 In correspondence, including emails, you should not use either the title MP or the address of the House of Commons until the day after polling day.
- 7.3 Your account with Banner Business Supplies will be suspended from the day of dissolution until the day after polling day.
- 7.4 You may make arrangements with the Postmaster on 020 7219 4639 for your mail either to be held for collection in the Members' post office or forwarded to a nominated external address for the duration of the dissolution period.

## **8 Catering facilities**

- 8.1 If you are standing again at a General Election you may not use the catering facilities during the dissolution period. All functions booked during the period in the name of a Member are automatically cancelled. Functions booked by Members who are returned at the election will stand from the day following the election.

## **9 Information services**

### **Library**

- 9.1 Library services, including the research service and the facilities in the Members' Library and Derby Gate Library, will not be available to you or your staff from 5pm on the day of dissolution. Services will resume on the day after polling day.
- 9.2 Books and audio-visual material on loan to you or your staff from the Library should be returned to the Book and Video Service in the Oriel Room of the Members' Library no later than 5pm on the day following dissolution, whether or not you are standing for re-election. Any items not returned will be counted as missing and may be subject to a replacement charge.

### **Members' Centre**

- 9.3 The Members' Centre will be open from 10am to 4pm in the week after dissolution. Staff will be available to advise former Members not standing for re-election who are in the process of clearing their desks. Services will not be available to former Members standing for re-election or their staff. The Centre will then close until the day after polling day.

### **Information Office**

- 9.4 The House of Commons Information Office's services for the public will operate as usual. You may use the Office to obtain

information about the work of the House of Commons, but only on the same basis as other members of the public. You will not be entitled to any special privileges.

## **10 Parliamentary Recording Unit**

- 10.1 The Parliamentary Recording Unit is open throughout the dissolution period, although with reduced hours. Please contact the Director of Parliamentary Broadcasting on 020 7219 5849 if you require advice on how broadcasting material may be used in election literature, party political broadcasts and on your websites.

## **11 Vote Office**

- 11.1 If you are seeking re-election, you are not entitled to use the Vote Office during the dissolution period. If you are standing down, you may order certain documents (e.g. bound volumes of Hansard). The Vote Office is open daily from 9am to 1pm during the dissolution period.

### **Parliamentary Bookshop**

- 11.2 The Bookshop is open during the dissolution period and will serve you on the same basis as it serves members of the public.

## **12 Procedural services**

- 12.1 The main procedural offices – including the Committee Office, Table Office and the Public and Private Bill Office – are closed from dissolution until the new Parliament assembles.
- 12.2 Membership of the UK delegations to international assemblies continues over the period of dissolution. Delegation members will be briefed by the European Section on the implications of the dissolution for their work at the assemblies.

## **13 Other services**

### **Room bookings**

- 13.1 Committee and meeting rooms are not available for you to use during dissolution; following Polling Day a number of Committee and meeting rooms will be being used as decant accommodation for new Members and will not be available immediately. It is expected that Portcullis House rooms will become available two weeks after Polling Day. Other Committee and meeting rooms will gradually become available over the next few weeks as new Members move into their permanent offices. Contact the Events Team on 020 7219 3090 about bookings that you may have made before you were returned and other facilities that may be available.

### **Gallery tickets**

- 13.2 All bookings of Admission Orders, including the automatic allocation of seats in the Strangers' Gallery, will be cancelled as soon as Parliament is dissolved. Bookings already made for educational parties on days after the House re-assembles will stand. No further bookings for the galleries may be made until after the results of the General Election are known.

### **Tours**

- 13.3 You cannot escort or sponsor anybody on the Visitor Route or to the Clock Tower during the period of dissolution, or make advance bookings for tours. All confirmed Visitor Route and Clock Tower Tours falling during the period of dissolution will automatically be transferred to the sponsorship of the House authorities. You should inform your guests of this.
- 13.4 All confirmed bookings for tours falling in the new Parliament will stand, sponsorship transferred to the House authorities. Guides will be provided where you have indicated that you or your staff were to lead the group. All provisional bookings will be cancelled.

- 13.5 Before the House rises the Central Tours Office and Big Ben Tours Office will send you a complete listing of all confirmed bookings for tours under your name for the dissolution period and the new Parliament, identifying the actions taken; if you believe there are any errors, please email the Central Tours Office at [CTO@parliament.uk](mailto:CTO@parliament.uk) or Clock Tower tours at [bigbentours@parliament.uk](mailto:bigbentours@parliament.uk) as appropriate. Please note that bookings for Clock Tower tours can only be confirmed once your office has provided the details of your visitors for the Big Ben Tours office to obtain the necessary security check. If this information is not available the tour cannot be confirmed. It must be cancelled.
- 13.6 Upon return of House after the election the Central Tours Office will notify new Members of constituency groups booked in by their predecessors so that they may decide whether they wish to meet them.
- 13.7 The above arrangements do not apply to tours sponsored by Members of the House of Lords, the Education Service or staff of either House.
- 13.8 The Visitor Route re-opens the day after polling day but tours falling within the period of State Opening, including preparation time, will be curtailed or cancelled.

### **Exhibitions**

- 13.9 All exhibition bookings for the Upper Waiting Hall will be automatically cancelled when Parliament is dissolved. New applications are required for all exhibitions following the election.

### **Travel Office**

- 13.10 The services of the Travel Office will not be available to you or your staff.

## **Gymnasium**

- 13.11 If you or your staff are members of the Gymnasium, membership will be suspended for the period of dissolution until the day after polling day.

## **14 Journalists**

- 14.1 The Press Gallery will be closed on dissolution. However, in accordance with previous practice, journalists may work in their offices and use their telephones, but they may not receive any visitors, whether those who have previously been Members or others.

## Checklist of actions for Members who are standing at the General Election

### Before dissolution

- Consider how you will handle your IT requirements during dissolution, including whether you want emails to be forwarded to a private email account during dissolution.
- Consider the working arrangements of your staff during the dissolution and discuss these with them. Contact the Personnel Advice Service if you would like to discuss this.
- Notify PICT of the staff accounts that you do not wish to have enabled if you are re-elected.

### At dissolution

- Freeze any website funded from allowances.
- Add a disclaimer (such as “This website was established while I was a Member of Parliament. As Parliament has been dissolved there are no Members of Parliament until after the election on XX XXX 2010”) to any website or web pages not funded from allowances.
- Freeze any web or email domain which refers to you as a Member of Parliament e.g. [www.johnpeekmp.org.uk](http://www.johnpeekmp.org.uk).
- Remove your car from the underground car park;
- Collect any purchased (not loaned) computers that you wish to remove, correspondence and papers from your lockers, filing cabinets and your office on the Parliamentary Estate.
- Clear your desk top so that the room can be cleaned effectively;
- Make arrangements with the Postmaster on 020 7219 4639 for your mail either to be held for collection in the Members’ post office or forwarded to a nominated external address for the duration of the dissolution period.
- Return all books and audio-visual material on loan to you from the Library to the Book and Video Service in the Oriel Room of the Members’ Library.
- If you have sponsored a visit by a school party, contact the Central Tours Office on 020 7219 3003 or Clock Tower Tours Administration on 020 7219 4862 as appropriate and make arrangements for the sponsorship to be transferred to the House authorities.

- Record an appropriate voicemail announcement.
- Contact the Telephone Operator Bureau Supervisor on 020 7219 6161 to pass on contact details.
- Notify the Department of Resources if you intend to use and pay for parliamentary funded resources during dissolution for non-parliamentary purposes.

### **During dissolution**

- Record any staff time used to undertake political activity or campaigning so that you can reimburse your Staffing Expenditure; or, if you allow your staff to take annual holiday or to take unpaid leave to undertake such activities, you must also record this and notify DR promptly so that pay can be adjusted.
- Do not use your corporate travel card for yourself or your spouse, civil partner or children, other than for the one journey to which you, as the former Member, are entitled.
- If you continue to deal with constituency casework during the dissolution period, ensure you sign all correspondence in such a way as to indicate that you are not a Member of Parliament.
- If you use and pay for parliamentary funded resources, you must account for these as election expenses.

## Information for Members not standing at the General Election

### 1 Parliamentary salaries and allowances

- 1.1 Claim forms and other documentation will be sent out to all Members who have announced their intention to stand down before dissolution. Please contact the Department of Resources as necessary about the allowance arrangements.

#### Parliamentary Allowances

- 1.2 Staffing Expenditure and AOE cease on the day of the election; PAAE and CE on dissolution. The available allowance is calculated on a quarterly basis according to these end dates. For example if election day is in the first quarter of the financial year your maximum Staffing Expenditure and AOE will be restricted to one quarter of the annual allowance in each case.

#### Resettlement Grant

- 1.3 You may claim a resettlement grant when you leave the House at a General Election. This grant is based on age and length of service. It ranges between 50% and 100% of the salary payable at the date of dissolution. The cost is met centrally and is not charged against any of the allowances.

#### Redundancy Payments for Members' Staff

- 1.4 Staff who are made redundant as a result of your leaving the House may qualify for a redundancy payment based on their age and length of service as set out in their contract of employment. This cost is met centrally and is not charged against any of the allowances. Further information and advice on employment contract matters is available from the Personnel Advice Service on 020 7219 2080.

#### Staff undertaking political activity during dissolution

- 1.5 The guidance in paragraphs 2.15-2.17 (p.7) on staff working for Members who are standing at the General Election also applies to staff of Members who are not standing.

### **Winding-Up Expenditure**

- 1.6 You are entitled to claim an allowance to cover all necessary expenses incurred in winding up your parliamentary business after polling day. Guidance on this is available from the Department of Resources. The financial limit is based on one third of the sum of annual Staffing Expenditure and AOE.

### **Members and staff pensions**

- 1.7 You will be advised individually of your pension entitlements and options by the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Pension Contributory Fund. Staff are advised to contact their stakeholder/personal pension administrator directly for details of their options.

### **Other**

- 1.8 Please settle all outstanding Catering and Retail accounts in full. Any sums owing to the Department of Resources (for example overpaid allowances, telephone calls, etc.) must also be repaid immediately. Similarly, any debts incurred under contracts held by the House of Commons (e.g. to Computacenter) must be settled immediately. If you do not pay in good time, DR may deduct any outstanding sums from your Resettlement Grant.
- 1.9 Corporate travel cards and season tickets should be returned immediately to the Operations Directorate in DR.

## **2 IT and related services**

### **Access to the Network and email**

- 2.1 Your Parliamentary Network and email accounts and those of your staff will be kept active until 5pm the day before the election to allow you to download any of your own personal records from these accounts. When you have vacated your room and left the Parliamentary Estate you will still be able to use your current remote access services (i.e. VPN, Citrix, SSL VPN and PDA access) until the day before the election. At 5pm on the day before the election your network account will be closed and we will arrange for a standard reply to be sent to any email directed to it. If you wish, we will include your contact details. This service will be provided for three months.

- 2.2 Any centrally provided broadband services to your home and/or constituency office will remain available for 28 days after the election and will then cease. You will be responsible for the BT lines and any ISDN services. If your successor wishes to take over your constituency office and keep the broadband service, PICT will arrange, if requested, for the service to be transferred after the election.

### Equipment

- 2.3 You can purchase IT equipment to run your office using the AOE until the current Parliament has run for 54 months. The Members Allowances Committee Practice Note Number 6, which came into effect from 18 January 2010, gives more detailed guidance on purchases of office furniture and equipment in the remaining months of the Parliament. Members' Allowances Committee Practice Notes are available from their page on the parliamentary website.
- 2.4 At dissolution you may remove from the Parliamentary Estate any machines you have purchased using private funds or with the AOE. You must not remove machines supplied centrally as part of your Member entitlement since these belong to the House and will be recovered and recycled. PICT will make arrangements to transfer to you the maintenance contracts of machines that you have purchased privately or using AOE. The software that was included with the PC at the time of its purchase remains the property of Parliament and, in accordance with the conditions of supply and the terms of the licensing agreement, it will need to be removed.
- 2.5 You should remove all data you wish to keep from machines which will be returned. This should be carried out within ten days of dissolution for equipment at Westminster and by the day before polling day for equipment at other locations. You should treat any personal information held on this equipment about your staff, constituents or others, in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. This includes ensuring that personal data is properly deleted from electronic equipment if you no longer have a legitimate reason to hold it.
- 2.6 Following this PICT will arrange collection of the parliamentary loan machines from your offices at Westminster, home or in the constituency

and all remaining data on the equipment will be securely wiped. Please notify PICT in advance of or at dissolution if there are any particular dates by which the equipment should be retrieved, e.g. by the expiry of an office lease.

- 2.7 If, at the election, you are succeeded by another Member of the same party you may transfer your constituency IT equipment on a temporary basis to the incoming Member, pending the issue of new equipment. When transferring equipment to another Member, of whatever party, you must ensure that all information about individuals is treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **3 Telephones**

- 3.1 Your telephone lines will remain available until you vacate your room, but your voicemail accounts will be closed down on the day after dissolution.
- 3.2 No messages will be taken for former Members after dissolution, but, if requested, the operator bureau supervisor will inform callers of your contact details. This service will be provided for three months.

### **PDAs and Smartphones**

- 3.3 If you have a centrally purchased PDA or Smartphone your connection to the Parliamentary Network will cease on the day before the election. This will leave redundant software on the device and PICT will provide information on how this can be removed. Any data already on the device will remain but will not be updated. The T-mobile SIM (and number) will cease to operate 28 days after the election unless you inform PICT that you wish to transfer it to a personal account. Any SIMs still within the initial 24-month contract period will incur a termination charge that will be charged to your allowances. If you do not wish to keep your device PICT will dispose of it for you in a secure and an environmentally responsible way.

### **4 Accommodation and other services**

- 4.1 Your pass will be deactivated at midnight on the second Sunday after dissolution. If you have a particular need for access after this date, please contact the Serjeant at Arms on 020 7219 3030.

- 4.2 During the period of dissolution, please clear all your personal belongings, papers and books from your rooms, desks, filing cabinets and lockers. Please remove any office equipment of your own that you may have installed. Your staff should also clear any desks or filing cabinets allocated to them. This applies even if they will be seeking employment with another Member after the General Election.
- 4.3 Please clear your possessions as soon as possible after the election is called and in any event no later than ten days after the House is formally dissolved. This will give time for any necessary refurbishment, redecoration, etc, to take place prior to polling day. Any paper records stored in your office and remaining after ten days, or when you have vacated the office, will be destroyed.
- 4.4 Please return all locker keys and keys of rooms, desks and filing cabinets to the Hallkeeper's Lodge or to the reception desk in the parliamentary outbuildings. Photo-identity passes and car parking permits should be returned to one of the two Pass Offices, at Black Rod's Garden or Derby Gate, or to your Office Keeper.
- 4.5 If you wish post to be re-directed please inform the Postmaster on 020 7219 4639. This service will be provided free of charge for 3 months. Otherwise it will be redirected to the Member who is returned at the General Election for the same constituency.
- 4.6 Depending on your length of service in Parliament you may be entitled to a Former Members' photo identity pass. For further details please contact the Serjeant at Arms on 020 7219 3030.
- 4.7 The Members' Centre will be open from 10am to 4pm in the week after dissolution to assist former Members not standing for re-election who are in the process of clearing their desks.
- 5 Data protection and handling casework and records**
- 5.1 You may continue to deal with constituency casework during a dissolution period; correspondence must not give the impression you are a Member of Parliament.

- 5.2 You may still handle personal data when dealing with casework. This authority runs until the end of the fourth day after a new Member is elected, provided of course that the individuals concerned are content for you to continue acting on their behalf. If in doubt their agreement should be sought.
- 5.3 The proper disposal and handling of casework and records you hold in your capacity as a Member of Parliament must be carefully considered when you cease to be a Member of Parliament. This includes electronic as well as hard copy information. The Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to you as the data controller of this information even when you cease to be a Member so you should ensure that you are aware of your obligations in relation to this legislation.
- 5.4 It is recommended that the records held by your office, including those held off-site in the Iron Mountain facility, should be reviewed. In general, old records should be destroyed rather than passed on to the new Member even if the new Member is from the same party. However, exceptions may be needed for live casework or casework which is dormant but likely to become live again in the near future. Each case must be considered, taking account of the expectations of the person concerned. If the case involves sensitive personal data it is recommended that the explicit permission of the person(s) concerned is obtained. Government Departments are advised not to forward information about existing cases to a new Member without the constituent's explicit permission.
- 5.5 To cancel your Data Protection notification, you will need to write to the Information Commissioner to request for this to be done, quoting your security number which they gave you when you notified. Further details can be found on [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

For further advice please contact the Data Protection Officer on 020 7219 2032 or refer to the booklet on Data Protection advice for Members. This can be found on the internet [www.parliament.uk/site\\_information/foi/data\\_protection/commons\\_data\\_protection.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/site_information/foi/data_protection/commons_data_protection.cfm).

## 6 Other

- 6.1 You may wish to join the Association of Former MPs. Contact details are in Annex A.

## Checklist of actions for Members not standing at the General Election

A more detailed checklist on financial matters is available in the booklet Pay and allowances for Members who leave the House at a General Election (the White Book).

### **As soon as you know you are leaving**

- Obtain a copy of Pay and allowances for Members who leave the House at a General Election from the Department of Resources/parliamentary intranet.
- Contact the Department of Resources to discuss your plans, including those for your staff.
- Inform your staff of your plans.
- Start to dispose of unwanted records and other material from your office, taking appropriate measures to ensure that sensitive or personal records are destroyed securely. This includes reviewing any material you hold off-site in the Iron Mountain facility.

### **When you know the date of the General Election**

- The Department of Resources, the Department of Facilities and PICT need to be made aware of any new address or contact details. Please let the Enquiries and Advice Team (020 7219 1340) know what they are and they will be circulated to the other Departments.
- Obtain refund of advance payments from parliamentary allowances made (e.g. council tax or rates) then send remittances to the Department of Resources.
- Consult the Department of Resources about redundancy arrangements for your staff.
- Give notice to your constituency office landlord.
- Contact the Department of Facilities on 020 7219 1319 to arrange clearing your Westminster office and to issue instructions about the secure disposal of any material you hold off-site in the Iron Mountain facility.
- Contact PICT on 020 7219 2001 to arrange return of IT equipment and cessation of broadband services.
- Contact the Postmaster on 020 7219 4639 to arrange forwarding post.

- Contact the Head of Pensions on 020 7219 4962 to discuss your parliamentary pension.
- Contact Telephone Operator Bureau Supervisor on 020 7219 6161 to pass on contact details.
- Be aware that your parliamentary pass will be deactivated at midnight on the second Sunday after dissolution. Your Pass should be returned to one of the two Pass Offices at Black Rod's Garden or Derby Gate, or to your Office Keeper.

### **After the General Election**

- Complete any casework and arrange for the secure disposal of paper records, plus any records stored on IT equipment which is not loaned from the Houses of Parliament.
- Be aware that any records left in your office after ten days, or when you have vacated the office, be it on paper or electronic files, will be destroyed without further notice.
- Submit all claims against AOE/staffing/PAAE/CE within one month of the General Election to avoid delay in paying your resettlement grant;
- When all your liabilities (for example, those relating to your staff and allowances) have been cleared, claim resettlement grant.
- Submit any outstanding claims within six months of the General Election.
- Cancel your Data Protection notification with the Information Commissioner's Office: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).
- Contact the Association of Former MPs. See Annex A for contact details.

## Information for Members not returned at the General Election

The House Service understands that if you have not been returned following the General Election this will be a difficult time. We will try to help you as much as we can. Please appreciate, however, that we also have a duty to provide facilities for those who have been elected.

Following the recommendation of the Administration Committee, a senior official has been appointed to deal with any problems encountered in accessing House services in the immediate post-election period by Members defeated in the election. The official is Paul Silk and he can be contacted on 020 7219 2600. We will write to you immediately after the election to give you full information on how House staff from all Departments will be able to help you in leaving the House.

### **1 Salaries, allowances and other financial matters**

- 1.1 You will be sent information by the Department of Resources the day after the General Election. You are strongly advised to contact them as soon as possible thereafter about your entitlements.

#### **Staffing Expenditure and AOE**

- 1.2 These allowances cease on the day of the election. The financial limit is calculated on a quarterly basis according to this date. For example if the election takes place in the first quarter of the financial year then you may claim one quarter's worth of allowances.

#### **Resettlement Grant**

- 1.3 You may claim a resettlement grant when you leave the House at a General Election. This grant is based on age and length of service. It ranges between 50% and 100% of the salary payable at the date of dissolution. The cost is met centrally and is not charged against any of the allowances.

#### **Redundancy Payments for Members' Staff**

- 1.4 Any of your staff who are made redundant as a result of your leaving the House may qualify for a statutory redundancy payment based on their age and length of service. The cost is met centrally and is not

charged against any of the allowances. Further information and advice on employment contract matters is available from the Personnel Advice Service in the Department of Resources on 020 7219 2080.

### **Winding-Up Expenditure**

- 1.5 You are entitled to claim an allowance to cover all necessary expenses incurred in winding up your parliamentary business after polling day. Guidance on this is available from the Department of Resources. The financial limit is based on one third of the sum of the annual Staffing Expenditure and AOE.

### **Members and staff pensions**

- 1.6 You will be advised individually of your pension entitlements and options by the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Pension Contributory Fund. Staff are advised to contact their stakeholder/personal pension administrator directly for details of their options.

### **Settling bills**

- 1.7 Outstanding accounts and debts to the House should be settled in full, together with any debts incurred under contracts held by the House of Commons (e.g. to an IT Supplier). The Department of Resources will deduct any outstanding sums from your resettlement grant if they are not paid promptly.

## **2 IT and related services**

- 2.1 Your PN account will be re-enabled for ten days after the General Election to allow you the opportunity to download any of your own personal records from your account. The accounts of your staff will also be re-enabled for the same period. Your pass will be deactivated at midnight on the second Sunday after polling day.
- 2.2 After this time the accounts will be disabled. We will arrange for a standard reply to be sent to any email directed to your account. If you wish we will include your contact details. This service will extend for three months. You are strongly advised to ensure that your staff accounts at the time of dissolution are required and accurate.
- 2.3 Please remove any data you wish to keep from your parliamentary loan machines within ten days following the election.

- 2.4 During this time you should also remove from the estate any computers you have purchased from the parliamentary catalogue with AOE or personal funds. You should treat any personal information held on this equipment about your staff, constituents or others, in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. This includes ensuring that personal data is properly deleted from electronic equipment if you no longer have a legitimate reason to hold it.
- 2.5 At the end of the period of ten days following the election, PICT will collect the machines on the Parliamentary Estate and make arrangements to collect any centrally provided machines from your home or constituency offices. All remaining data on the equipment will be securely wiped.
- 2.6 PICT will arrange for the maintenance contracts for any machines that have been purchased from the PICT catalogue with AOE or personal funds to be assigned to you. The software that was included with the PC at the time of its purchase remains the property of Parliament and in accordance with the conditions of supply and the terms of the licensing agreement will need to be removed.
- 2.7 PICT will arrange for any centrally provided broadband services in your constituency office and/or home to cease 28 days after the election. However, you will be responsible for the BT line and any ISDN services. Your telephones will remain available until you vacate your office but must not be diverted to external numbers.

### **3 Telephone**

- 3.1 Your voicemail account will have been turned off during dissolution. Your telephone will work as long as your pass remains active.
- 3.2 No messages will be taken for Former Members after dissolution, but, if requested, the operator bureau supervisor will inform callers of your contact details. This service will be provided for three months.
- 3.3 If you have a centrally purchased PDA/Smartphone its connection to the PN will also cease ten days after the election. This will leave redundant software on the device and PICT will provide information on how this can be removed. Any data already on the device will remain but will not

be updated. The T-mobile SIM (and number) will cease 28 days after the election unless you inform PICT that you wish to transfer it to a personal account. Any SIMs still within the initial 24-month contract period will incur a termination charge which will be charged to your allowances. If you do not wish to keep your device PICT will dispose of it for you in a secure and an environmentally responsible way.

## **4 Accommodation and facilities**

**4.1** Your security pass will allow you access to the Parliamentary Estate on the morning after the election. Your pass will be deactivated on the second Sunday after election day. Requests for access after this period and requests for vehicle access should be made to the Serjeant at Arms on 020 7219 3030.

**4.2** The Department of Facilities staff in your area stand ready to help if you have any issues or problems.

Help with packing personal belongings, office and computer equipment, and transporting these items to your car can be arranged through the local Office Keeper or the Department of Facilities Accommodation Office (020 7219 1319). This should be completed by no later than ten days after polling day.

The Despatch Box will be open from 10.30am till 4.30pm on the Saturday and Sunday immediately following the election to provide refreshments for those clearing their offices and others.

**4.3** Please clear your papers and belongings as soon as possible after polling day and in any case no later than ten days after the date of the election. This will include:

- clearing all personal papers, belongings and books from your room, desk, filing cabinets and lockers, including any office equipment which has been installed. Paper records stored in your office and remaining after ten days, or when you have vacated the office, will be destroyed;
- returning your locker keys and keys of rooms, desks and filing cabinets to the Hallkeeper's Lodge or to an outbuilding reception desk;
- returning your photo-identity passes and car parking permits to either of the two Pass Offices at Black Rod's Garden or Derby Gate or to your Office Keeper;

- removing your car from the precincts;
- returning all loaned books and videos to the Library;
- issuing instructions about the disposal of any material you hold off-site in the Iron Mountain facility.

4.4 Please arrange for your staff to clear any desks or filing cabinets allocated for their use, return all keys to the Hallkeeper's Lodge (020 7219 4626), or to an outbuilding reception desk, and return any photo-identity passes and car parking permits they hold to either of the two Pass Offices at Black Rod's Garden or Derby Gate, or to the local Office Keeper.

4.5 Post can be redirected to a specified address free of charge for three months. To use this service contact the Postmaster on 020 7219 4637.

4.6 Depending on your length of service in Parliament you may be entitled to a Former Members' photo identity pass. For further details please contact the Serjeant at Arms on 020 7219 3030.

## 5 **Data protection and handling casework and records**

5.1 The proper disposal and handling of casework and records you hold in your capacity as a Member of Parliament must be carefully considered when you cease to be a Member of Parliament. This includes electronic as well as hard copy information. The Data Protection Act 1998 will apply to you as the data controller of this information even when you cease to be a Member so you should ensure that you are aware of your obligations in relation to this legislation.

5.2 It is recommended that closed files are destroyed rather than passed to the new Member because your constituents and other third parties may not have intended that the information they provided to you would be shared with the new Member. In relation to live casework or casework that is dormant but should not be destroyed for reasons such as relating to matters which may become live again or which contain evidence that might be vital to the constituent in the future (for example for the purpose of litigation) it is advised that you contact the data subject and ask them whether they would be content for their file to be passed to the new Member to represent their interests. (The advice to Government Departments is that they should not forward information about existing cases without the constituent's explicit consent).

- 5.3 Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure that records containing personal data are securely destroyed.
- 5.4 Special provision for Members of Parliament and other elected representatives was made under the Data Protection Act to allow them to act on behalf of their constituents and share and request sensitive personal data (as defined by the Act) without first needing to have evidence that their constituent had provided their explicit consent as required by the Data Protection Act. The Data Protection (Processing of Sensitive Personal Data) (Elected Representatives) Order 2002 was introduced to address concerns by elected representatives to ensure that the requirements of the Data Protection Act did not unduly hamper them in their casework duties. The provisions of this Order will continue to apply to you until the fourth day after a new Member is elected provided that the individuals who requested that you take action are content for you to continue to do so. No special provision was made for Members in respect of the processing of non sensitive personal data because explicit consent is not required under the Act when this information is processed, rather it can be implied from the circumstances. For more information on the Order go to the Information Commissioner's Office website at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).
- 5.5 To cancel your data protection notification you will need to write to the Information Commissioner quoting the security number that was provided to you when you notified them in terms of the Act. For further advice, please contact the Data Protection Officer on 020 7219 2032 or refer to the booklet on Data Protection advice for Members. This can be found on the internet [www.parliament.uk/site\\_information/foi/data\\_protection/commons\\_data\\_protection.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/site_information/foi/data_protection/commons_data_protection.cfm).
- 6 Other**
- 6.1 You may wish to join the Association of Former MPs. Contact details are in Annex A.

## Checklist of actions for Members who are not returned at a General Election

A more detailed checklist on financial matters is available in Pay and allowances for Members who leave the House at a General Election (the White Book).

- The Department of Resources, the Department of Facilities and PICT need to be made aware of your new address or contact details. Please let the Enquiries and Advice Team (020 7219 1340) know what they are and they will be circulated to the other Departments.
- Contact the Personnel Advice Service on 020 7219 2080 to discuss redundancy arrangements for your staff; inform your staff of your plans.
- Give notice to your constituency office landlord.
- Contact the Department of Facilities on 020 7219 1319 to arrange clearing your Westminster office and to issue instructions about the secure disposal of any material you hold off-site in the Iron Mountain facility.
- Contact PICT on 020 7219 2001 to arrange return of IT equipment and forwarding information for emails.
- Contact the Postmaster on 020 7219 4639 to arrange mail-forwarding;
- Contact Operator Bureau supervisor on 020 7219 6161 to pass on contact details.
- Complete any casework and arrange for the secure disposal of paper records, plus any records stored on IT equipment which is not loaned from the Houses of Parliament.
- Be aware that any records left in your office after ten days, or when you have vacated the office, be it on paper or electronic files, will be destroyed without further notice.
- Contact the Head of Pensions on 020 7219 4962 to discuss your parliamentary pension.
- Submit all outstanding claims against AOE/staffing/PAAE/CE within one month of the General Election to avoid delay in paying your resettlement grant.
- When all your liabilities (for example those relating to your staff or your allowances) have been cleared, claim resettlement grant from DR.
- Submit any outstanding claims within six months of the General Election.

- Cancel your notification with the Information Commissioner's Office [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).
- Contact the Association of Former MPs. Contact details are in Annex A.
- Return your parliamentary pass to one of the two Pass Offices at Black Rod's Garden or Derby Gate, or to your Office Keeper.

## Annex A

### **The Association of Former Members of Parliament**

Founded in 2001, there are now 340 paid up members from all parties, regions, and both Houses. The Speaker is Patron and the Association is supported by the House of Commons Commission. Its aims are:

- A) to provide former Members of the House with opportunities to meet socially and continue long-standing friendships;
- B) to offer high quality advice on individual personal problems from other professionally qualified former Members;
- C) to maintain links with the House of Commons and the House of Lords and administrative committees of Parliament so as to enhance the status of politicians generally and demonstrate that British politics is an honourable profession in which we have been proud to serve.

*For information and an application form please contact:*

Sally Grocott  
Executive Officer  
Association of Former MPs  
Room G13  
1 Parliament St  
LONDON  
SW1A 2NE

Telephone: 020 7219 8207

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