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I am writing in response to the IPSA consultation on MPs' expenses. I write as the [REDACTED] where I have been employed for nearly 18 years, first as a [REDACTED] and for the past 5 years as [REDACTED]. In this role, I act as line manager to 3 other members of staff. The work is rewarding but at the same time demanding; we all work under considerable pressure and regularly for longer hours than we are paid for.

My MP made a submission to the House of Commons Commission on 8 July 2009. In his submission he argued for the need to "transfer MPs' staff to the payroll of the House to improve transparency and accountability to the public who fund their, and our, salaries." I agree with this. It is for this reason that I have grave concerns about IPSA recommendation 12.14 which proposes that "employers' contribution towards pensions for MPs' staff should be made from MPs' staffing budgets", without at the same time any proposal to increase the staffing budget by 10% to cover pension payments. This would amount to a 10% pay cut for MPs' staff; in my view this is an extremely backward-looking proposal and would be an insult to staff members.

I object strongly to the proposal (8.25) that MPs' staff contracts should "have a clause permitting termination of the contract upon reasonable notice." Staff do not qualify for the generous payments that MPs receive when they "retire" or lose their seat and I believe that this proposal is extremely unfair to staff.

When I started my job in 1992 I was working on a PhD, which of course ceased when I took up my full-time post. 18 years later, and towards the end of my working career (I am aged 58), I have risen to a salary of just over [REDACTED]. This illustrates that I, and as far as I am aware, MPs' staff in general, do not carry out the work they do for the payment they receive. They do not seek personal reward or recognition; the majority perform their tasks willingly and with an enormous commitment to the constituents that they support and to their MP. I have considerable concerns about any proposal to worsen their working conditions.

In addition to the points that I have made above, I have read the response submitted by the UNITE Parliamentary staff branch and support the points that have been made. However, I wanted to add my own comments and to make special mention of the two issues I have raised from my own personal perspective.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Dellagana
[REDACTED]