

COPE 74

**SUBMISSION TO IPSA BY CAROLINE USHER, OFFICE OF RT HON  
DAVID HEATHCOAT-AMORY MP**

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Pensions

Kelly said that staffing budgets should provide the 10% contribution to Portcullis Scheme with no increase in budget. This is patently wrong. There is a huge history of MPs not paying or allowing for this contribution which is why the present scheme was introduced. So the staffing budget must be increased to allow for this.

In addition I propose that when the government announces an increase in employer NI contributions, the staffing budget must be increased accordingly. We are not the private sector and MPs are not in a position to make a commercial decision on this basis.

Green Book, Job Descriptions and exclusion of 'political' work

MPs' staff have become an unintended victim of the various reports into the working of Parliament, MPs' pay and 'allowances'. We are an easy target and in danger of becoming subject to civil service rules because no-one understands the nature of the jobs that we do.

At the meeting on Monday, 8 February I was the first speaker and unintentionally gave the impression that because I am also a Councillor, that I wanted to be able to do that job here in the House of Commons as well as working for my MP. This was not my intention. Councillors have to be given time to do their jobs, as volunteers, and that, as I understand it, applies across all employment fields. It is the political aspect of our jobs that is a concern because this is not addressed in your report and if our jobs are prescribed, and this was certainly the impression given at the meeting, then there will be difficulties.

De facto our jobs are political and the 'reasonable' test has to be applied. I am available for further input on this, if required, together with colleagues from other Parties.