

Human Resources and training for MPs

Your suggestions for the involvement for a proper HR department are to be welcomed. I believe you should keep in mind that MPs staff work in a 'political environment', which involves confidentiality and trust. Therefore any recipient will and must involve an expectation of party affiliation.

MPs need some training in good practice - regarding labour relations and staff management. Some MPs will already have this, but not all. Therefore I think all MPs whether new or incumbent should be given some mandatory advice/training if they wish to manage staff.

The requirement for a contract with staff should continue. However as currently stated, if an MP does not do this, their staff will not be paid. I propose if an MP does not submit a contract for their staff. the MPs salary should be stopped or docked not the staff members.

As an aid to this HR process - the MPs staff should be recognised, bringing Parliament into line with other places of employment. Currently MPs listen to grievances about themselves. This is plainly ridiculous. A fully functioning HR department, which advises both staff and MPs fairly, in line with the rest of the public and private sector will make life easier for everybody.

Recruitment and 'Temp Staff' Proposals.

If you propose to make MPs wait before recruiting staff and or 'bidding' for staffing funds, how long will this process take? A new intake of MPs will create a significant backlog. MPs will have built up a caseload - how long are constituents expected to wait for their asylum claims, tax credit over payments and CSA cases to wait whilst Ipsa decides on how much to apportion per MP?

You suggest temping agencies will be used. In the interim. These temping agencies will expect a competition to bid for services. Have you prepared a bid process? The last thing Ipsa would want is a court action. Are you contacting temp agencies in every Parliamentary constituency as some MPs will want constituency staff? I would recommend that Ipsa itself sets up a 'temp' database of staff who are being made redundant at the General Election and as of the day after the General Election those staff members, whose MP has lost their seat. As well as having an experienced database, they will also be security cleared (which takes one to two months).

Career Progression and Staff Training.

There need to be clearer guidance and procedures for staff career development. Both training, and progression. At the moment pay bands exist, however nothing is in place to 'uprate' staff pay for experience, upskilling or length of service.

Staff Pensions.

You suggest MPs staff pensions should be administered out of the 'staffing budget'. Will this be an additional 10% to what the MPs bid for? Or are you proposing that what they bid for will include salaries, NI contributions and pensions? The existing arrangements were introduced to take this out of MPs hands. This is because it would become a choice between buying a new printer or a shredder, staff wages and staff pension. As a result the shredder would often win to the detriment of the pension. Many staff were never told they

could receive a pension contribution, on top of their wages. Staff agreed to the administration by the House of pensions into one or both of two schemes, saving on cost. A change in this would be a retrograde step. This could continue to be administered by the House (or Ipsa) who would also administer MPs pensions and House staff. If the reason for your proposal is to make staff pensions contributions transparent I have a simple solution, why not just add up the totals for each MPs staff at the end of the year and publish.

Gareth Myton