

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 28 June 2021 16:08  
**To:** Ian Todd; Georgia Wilson; Directors [Distribution Group]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Woman's Hour

*"IPSA is committed to supporting a more family-friendly Parliament and enabling MPs to fulfil their parliamentary duties while maintaining their family life.*

*"We want arrangements that work for any extended MP absence, which includes parental leave but also covers long term sickness absence.*

*"As Office Holders rather than employees, MPs continue to receive their full salary regardless of absence. In addition, IPSA will fund all that can be done by an unelected person covering part of an MP's job in their constituency. This would be up to £60,000 (pro rata) on top of the existing staffing budget.*

*"Elected MPs are able to attend the Chamber, engage in debates, ask oral questions of Ministers and vote in Parliament. It is up to Parliament to decide if the law should be changed so that an unelected person can undertake these duties when an MP can't be there."*

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 28 June 2021 15:28  
**To:** Ian Todd [REDACTED]; Georgia Wilson [REDACTED] Directors [Distribution Group]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: Woman's Hour

Hi All

Here is the proposed response of the House to this issue:

*"While we cannot comment on individual cases the House continues to offer support to Members who may require assistance.*

*"Since 2019, Members have been eligible to apply for a proxy vote in divisions of the House for parental leave reasons. That vote is cast by another Member.*

*“It would be for the House to decide whether further changes to procedure could be made to assist MPs who are unable to attend the House. Any such changes would have to take account of the fact that an MP is elected by their constituents and, under the Parliamentary Oaths Act 1866, Members have to take the oath before they participate in debates. Consequently even elected Members who have not sworn the oath are not able to participate in parliamentary proceedings. If they do, they must vacate their seat. The Act makes no provision for someone who is not an elected MP to take the Oath.*

*“MPs may appoint someone to carry out constituency work of various kinds. The payment and terms on which such substitutes are paid are a matter for IPSA.”*

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Ian Todd <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** 28 June 2021 14:44

**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; Georgia Wilson <[REDACTED]>

Directors [Distribution Group] <[REDACTED]>

**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk> [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Woman's Hour

[REDACTED]

To be clear, we are looking to adopt a policy which is relevant for any extended MP absence, which includes parental leave but also covers long term sickness absence etc. (helps remove the gender element)

As Office Holders rather than employees, MPs continue to receive their £82k salary regardless of absence, which is far better than statutory maternity or sick leave

We have been asked to provide funding for a job that can't do many of the things an elected MP is required to do, like attend the Chamber, engage in debates, ask oral questions of Ministers and vote in Parliament.

It's up to Parliament to decide if the constitution should be changed so that an unelected person can undertake these duties when an MP can't be there.

IPSA is happy to fund all the things that can be done by an unelected person covering part of an MPs job in their constituency, and we've offered that to [REDACTED] MPs in similar situations. This additional up to £60k (pro rata) is on top of the existing staffing budget.

Speak later

**Ian Todd**

Chief Executive &  
Accounting Officer

**IPSA**

[www.theipsa.org.uk](http://www.theipsa.org.uk)

My normal working hours are Monday to Friday 07:00-16:00

My pronouns are he/him/his

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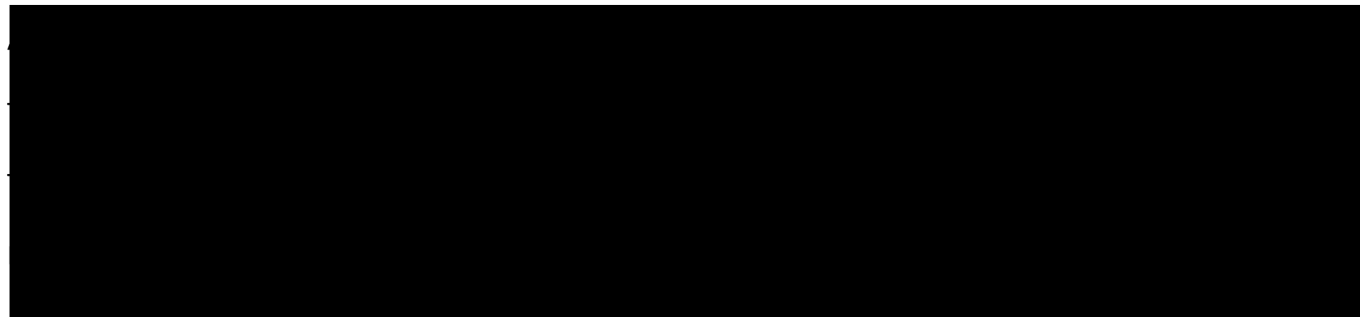
**From:** [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>

**Sent:** 28 June 2021 13:50

**To:** Georgia Wilson [REDACTED]; Directors [Distribution Group] [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Woman's Hour



IPSA is committed to supporting a more family-friendly Parliament and enabling MPs to fulfil their parliamentary duties while maintaining their family life.

Earlier this year we made it easier for MPs who take parental leave to hire additional staff to cover constituency work during their absence.

We created a specific MP Parental Leave Cover Fund and a new policy which clearly set out MPs' eligibility for funding and how we will provide it.

As office holders and not employees, MPs continue to receive a full salary for any period they are taking parental leave.

Shadow Ministers are not paid any additional funds for their roles on the Opposition front bench.

*(We have been working collaboratively with Dr Creasy to find an agreed approach, and)* We have suggested a £60,000 salary for those MPs who want to hire additional staff to cover their absence.

This reflects the important work that MPs do in their constituencies.

We cannot provide like for like cover as a staff member is not able to carry out all of the duties of a Member of Parliament, including speaking in debates, asking questions and sitting on Select Committees.

Any changes to what staff members are able to do is not within IPSA's remit and would be a matter for Parliament.

We remain keen to work with any MPs who want to take parental leave to find a solution that works for them and their constituents.

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**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 28 June 2021 12:37

**To:** Georgia Wilson [REDACTED]; Directors [Distribution Group] [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Woman's Hour

All

There will also be a feature in The Times about this tomorrow. An email has arrived from a journalist there (see below).

[REDACTED]

Stella Creasy, the Labour MP for Walthamstow, has been told she cannot hire a locum MP by Ian Todd following his consultation with Commons authorities because of the lack of a constitutional basis for one.

She was told on May 14:

"Having discussed this with the House authorities, it is clear there is currently no constitutional basis for a 'locum' MP role and that anyone covering an MP would be unable to undertake a number of the key tasks which the Committee set out."

And on June 11:

"Throughout the process you have sought a 'like-for-like locum MP' as your preferred solution. We are unable to meet that request. An MP is an office holder elected by members of the public and there are core parts of that office that cannot – in legal and constitutional terms – be undertaken by someone else, as discussed previously. The concept of a locum is therefore misconceived in relation to an MP. Furthermore, IPSA providing budget for a like-for-like locum MP would go beyond what the House of Commons has agreed pursuant to its parental leave arrangements. This would, as alluded to, raise democratic and constitutional issues, which are well beyond our remit to resolve."

Creasy said she was offered the possibility of hiring a £60k member of staff but is dissatisfied because it does not amount to "like for like" cover. I understand she is taking legal advice as she believes the policy is unlawful and discriminatory.

Could you get me a comment/any background by 5.30pm? Would be good to get some clarity on why she was allowed to advertise for a locum MP last time though I'm aware the person hired wasn't allowed to speak in the chamber.

I'll be putting in a request for comment to the Commons press office as well.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>

**Sent:** 28 June 2021 12:12

**To:** Directors [Distribution Group] [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>; [REDACTED]@theipsa.org.uk>

**Subject:** Woman's Hour

Hi All

I've taken a call from a researcher at BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour about parental leave issues.

They expect to interview Stella Creasy at 10am tomorrow. I have explained, in broad terms, the IPSA position:

- MPs receive a full salary during parental leave
  - We provide funds and support for constituency office cover
  - Parliamentary rule changes can only be made by MPs (as with Suella Braverman)
- [REDACTED]

