

Mr Marcial Boo
Chief Executive
Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA)
7th Floor, Portland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5BH

10 September 2015

Dear Marcial Boo

RE: Debts written off under my name

Today IPSA published MPs annual business costs & expenses for 2014-15. I am writing to ask that you urgently correct, and issue an apology in respect of the item shown as a debt under my name. I write further to letters from my office of 25th March 2014, 7th October 2015 and 24th March 2015 regarding the amount of £77.30 in relation to a payment card charge which was incorrectly allocated to me.

We received notice of an outstanding Payment Card Reconciliation in March 2014 in relation to an expense incurred on my IPSA Payment Card for £77.30 from Hillgate Travel Ltd, the Parliamentary Travel Office, on 4th February 2014. Given that I rarely use my IPSA Payment Card, my office became concerned about the amount as we had no record of any such payment other than a charge showing on my statement. In this respect, my office contacted Hillgate Travel Ltd who immediately investigated.

Hillgate Travel Ltd advised that they had mistakenly charged my account when assisting the staff of another Member of Parliament with travel arrangements and suggested to us that we advise IPSA to contact them about this amount so that Hillgate could arrange for the matter to be resolved. As you would expect, I was outraged that the Travel Office had been able to charge my account without authorisation.

My office contacted IPSA immediately by phone and advised your staff of what had happened and said that we would be sending a letter in this respect. I refer to my office's letter of 25 March 2014 which sets out what has happened and who the appropriate contact at Hillgate Travel Ltd would be in order to reverse the transaction. IPSA acknowledged that letter by email the same day saying "*Thank you for your email. It has been forwarded to the appropriate team member to action*". This email was signed off "*Kind regards,*"

We received no further correspondence on this matter but raised the issue again with IPSA on 7th October 2014 as the Payment Card Reconciliation was still showing as outstanding. We asked IPSA to advise us how to proceed with this matter. Again we received no acknowledgement or further correspondence.

My office subsequently received communication from _____, Acting Head of Credit Management on 17th March 2015 (by email and by post) noting that IPSA were demanding a repayment of £77.30 with a description of the debt stating:

Office of Barry Gardiner MP

Member of Parliament for Brent North

"You selected 'not claimed - to repay' when submitting this item you purchased on the Payment Card, but haven't yet returned the funds to us."

This is false and I was shocked that IPSA were falsifying the record in this way. I had not, in fact, selected "*not claimed - to repay*". The process for reconciling Barclaycard statements is that IPSA itself generates an expense claim on the basis of the information from Barclaycard and sends that to us for reconciliation. We did not submit this item at all and we immediately wrote advising that it was not for our account. My office has now written and spoken with IPSA on at least four occasions about resolving this matter. On each occasion IPSA has failed to provide a substantive response.

My office responded to _____ in writing on 25th March 2015 advising her of the history of this matter. You will note that this letter stated:

"I understand also that an amount for £77.30 remains outstanding in relation to a payment made on Mr Gardiner's Payment Card. Mr Gardiner did not make this payment and we have written to IPSA on a number of occasions on this matter and have, again, yet to receive any correspondence in relation thereto (previous correspondence enclosed). The amount relates to a charge that, worryingly, was allocated to Mr Gardiner's card by Hillgate Travel Ltd in respect of an expense incurred by a member of staff of another Member of Parliament. Hillgate Travel has advised us that IPSA would need to contact them to rectify this. Mr Gardiner did not select 'not claimed - to repay' through the online expense system as we have been awaiting a response from IPSA as to how this will be rectified."

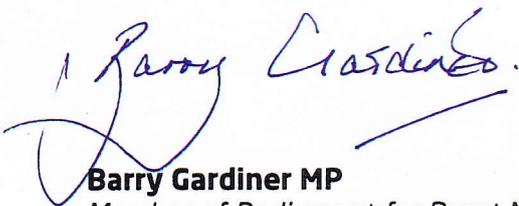
Given that my office has written to and contacted IPSA on numerous occasions in relation to this issue and IPSA has failed to take the appropriate action, I am appalled that you have decided to publicly publish the amount as an irrecoverable debt under my name and have, consequently, tarnished my reputation when it is clear that the debt is irrecoverable due to gross incompetence on IPSA's part.

Furthermore, I am outraged that you have suggested that I have select "*not claimed - to repay*" which I clearly have not done. I am deeply concerned that this would suggest that your records have been falsified.

This has, in my view, reflected a very disturbing trend in terms of my ongoing dealings with IPSA and I would ask that you meet with me on an urgent basis to discuss this matter.

I would also ask that you issue a public apology immediately in this respect and ensure that my name is removed from this list forthwith.

Yours faithfully,



Barry Gardiner MP
Member of Parliament for Brent North