



Hive Support Ltd

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Remote Staff Induction

Housekeeping Issues:

Beyond the usual topics to run through with your staffer, the following should also be considered during this period of remote-working:

- Does the staff member have a safe place to work from? Consider security issues of data and make sure they follow correct processes with regards to paperwork and data held on computers.
- Do they have a suitable place to work? As an employer you are responsible for the health and wellbeing of your staff. It is crucial to ensure that they have an appropriate workstation and are aware of good practice in workplace ergonomics
- Ensure they know when they should start/finish work and are taking appropriate breaks.
- Do they need any additional equipment – stationery, printer, headphones etc.
- Are they aware of what expenses they can claim for working from home (in line with IPSA's guidance).

Before network access:

This can be a slightly awkward time to manage remotely and depending on how far along the security clearance process the new starter is, it could go on for some time. However, there is plenty your new staffer can do during this time to build great foundations – no matter which role they are going to be doing in the long term.

Information to share:

- House style. Standard fonts you use, key phrases, likes & dislikes in writing style, tone you are trying to convey. It can be helpful to keep a selection of letters the Member has written/cleared which demonstrate the 'style' used.
- Job responsibilities. Have a spreadsheet which lists who each member of your team is, the days/hours they work, and their usual location, plus a list of their main job responsibilities. Although there is often a lot of overlap, this can be a helpful reference guide for everyone and a good base to review office responsibilities during annual appraisals.
- Housekeeping – how to access IPSA Online, signing confidentiality agreement, external training resources (Westminster Professionals, ParliTraining etc), reviewing the office Data Protection policy.
- Logins – arrange the logins that the staffer will need; some of these can be accessed without network access. (pooled research facilities, social media accounts, website etc)



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Research:

Ask the staffer to

- Familiarise themselves with the Member's interests (APPG groups, relevant legislation currently progressing, local issues etc)
- Research Member's recent commitments (what were their election promises, and how are these going to be delivered)
- Follow recent updates on website and social media
- Understand key local organisations (Councils – unitary or district/county – who deals with what? Police, CCG, Hospitals etc)

Tasks:

- Do you have contact lists for Parish/Town Councils, Schools, Council Departments etc that need updating
- Think about drafting press releases/parliamentary questions
- Design posters for local noticeboards with MPs contact details
- Drafting responses to campaign emails. The text of these emails can be shared without sensitive data being passed off the Parliamentary network, so are a great starting point.

Practical assistance:

- Your team are probably already having regular video/conference calls to stay in touch with each other. Move temporarily to facility that all members can take part in (I.e. Zoom rather than Skype). Even if they can't contribute at this stage, it allows them to observe how the team are working and what the current issues are.
- External training. Lots of the usual Parliamentary training providers are currently running remote sessions. This can be a good time to cover any basics for your new starter and gives you a day to catch up with work!

With network access:

Once your new starter has the access they need to the Parliamentary network:

Familiarisation:

An MP's inbox can be overwhelming to someone not used to working in Parliament, particularly if you use a lot of side folders to organise work. Make sure your starter has a few hours to spend looking around the following:

- Inbox & calendar
- Parliamentary intranet – it can be helpful to give them a list of useful things to find:
 - o Government hotlines/Ministerial responsibilities
 - o Question rota/deadlines



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- Tour information
- Order paper
- Library
- Health & welfare

Training:

The ACT portal (Parliamentary learning and management system) runs some excellent courses for MPs' staff. Ensure your staff have completed the following:

- Valuing Everyone training
- Fire, Safety, Security and Behavioural Code

There are lots of other useful courses, but these two should be completed by everyone who works for an MP.

Office training:

All offices work differently with different processes, and we will not seek to dictate 'best practice'. However, there are useful tools and tips for inducting staff remotely.

- Do not try to do too much at once
There is a lot to take in and trying to cram it all into one session will be overwhelming and is unlikely to be helpful in the long term. Remember, you will not be sitting next to your new starter and are not going to be able to repeat information or answer questions as they arise.
- Screen share
Whether you use Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams, Zoom or another platform, all these have the options to share your screen. This is incredibly helpful so you can spend time 1-2-1 with your new starter talking through the key parts of your system:
 - *How incoming work is processed*
 - *How outgoing work is approved (what is the process for printing/sending letters & emails)*
 - *Good practice for storing confidential data*
 - *Navigating IPSA Online*
- Recording training videos
When it comes to using software such as Caseworker, or if you find your new starter is struggling to get to grips with one thing in particular, recording short training videos can be a great resource which they can come back to over and over again. And once you've done them, you have them on file for future use.



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We find Zoom works best for these videos.

- *Select 'Host a Meeting' and 'screen share only'*
- *When the session starts, select 'Record on this Computer' (Located under 'More')*
- *Choose whether you want audio as well – you might find it useful to talk about what you are doing*
- *Create a short video for each process you want to record – don't make it too long because this will increase the size of the end file.*

Finally...

Make sure you are regularly checking in – not just with your new starter, but across the whole team. It can feel awkward trying to work as a team remotely but ensuring everyone stays connected and feels supported is a great start.

If your new starter will be working in Westminster, then it can be useful to introduce them to other offices that might become part of their network when they get back to SW1. Staff WhatsApp groups and various online quizzes and events can give them a little taster of Parliamentary life.

HIVE Support offer bespoke Parliamentary Office appraisals and reviews. These include individual and group sessions to ensure your team, no matter where they are based, are able to work collectively as efficiently and effectively as possible. We look at current job descriptions and responsibilities and help facilitate conversations amongst the team to smooth out areas that need improvement and rejig the workload to create a better balance.

Do get in touch to discuss the process further, and how this could help your office.

Review from an MP – May 2020:

“As a new MP in a ‘red wall’ seat, I was faced with the daunting task of setting up a team and establishing an office from scratch when I hadn’t necessarily expected to win.

Hive’s support and mentoring has provided me with the structure and experience of an established team and given us the essential tools to navigate the maze of Parliamentary life.

I cannot understate the value of investing in Hive’s services or the positive impact their friendly, professional and highly capable team have had on my first few months as an MP.”