

Parliament is right: HMRC is wrong on the cost of MP's ...

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The [Guardian notes](#):

Tax inspectors are attempting to bar MPs from claiming thousands of pounds a year to hire accountants to file their expenses, arguing that the current arrangements subsidise their personal finances rather than their work in parliament.

HM Revenue and Customs is embroiled in a dispute with the expenses watchdog, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (Ipsa), which is defending the right of MPs to employ a professional to fill in expenses forms and tax returns for their offices and insisting that the cost — up to £5,000 a year for each MP — should be tax deductible.

This is an absurd case for HMRC to take. MP's have to run multiple offices with their own employees and inevitably complex expenses that are now subject to appropriate scrutiny. To argue that the inevitable and essential cost of preparing the resulting accounts and tax return is not deductible is simply absurd.

There are occasions when HMRC should learn what fights to take on.

If they'd got Vodafone and other cases right they might have an excuse for being pedants. But they didn't and they aren't addressing the tax gap in any serious way either and yet, as ever, are picking on easy targets. Such measures simply discredit them. And rightly so.