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PIV/BHS

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Sir Christopher Kelly KCB  
Chair  
Committee on Standards in Public Life  
35 Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BQ

re: Review of MPs' Expenses

Thank you for your letter of 24 April.

I think that the "Principles" which you set out on pages 19-21 are admirable and I wish your Committee well in coming to some clear and robust conclusions.

I have two submissions, both of which I think are important. Both relate more to public perception than they do to natural equity:-

- 1) Where Members of Parliament are husband and wife (or partners) the arrangements should not give them a double benefit by way of accommodation allowance or other arrangements.
- 2) I think it is unacceptable in public perception that a Member of Parliament should employ a family member or a person in some form of partnership arrangement. This is intensely controversial amongst my colleagues but I think the public perception that a Member of Parliament can support his family by providing a source of income is a very sensitive issue and one of the causes of the greatest public concern.

I suppose existing contractual arrangements must be respected so that there should be no new employment of family members, and existing arrangements should be phased out on an appropriate basis.