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Sir Christopher Kelly  
Committee on Standards  
in Public Life  
Houses of Parliament  
Westminster  
London  
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19 May 2009

Dear Sir Christopher

**MP's Expense claims**

I recommend in your considerations the Charity Commission rules on Trustees which do not allow any Trustee to benefit from his position (including the employment of family members by that charity) but allows the refund of expenditure incurred in carrying out those duties. Also consideration of the Inland Revenue's interpretation of expenses solely and exclusively for the purposes of the trade.

The fees office seems to have been involved with creating this expenses problem by ignoring (or being unaware of) the opening paragraphs and page of the Green Book on allowances. Their advice seems to have been how to maximise any claim, or in fact create a claim, within that framework.

I hope you have read so far and I follow with a number of detailed suggestions which you can pass on to your secretary or researcher on the committee if you do not have time read yourself.

A. Terminology would exclude interpretation of meanings

1. **FAMILY HOME** and **LONDON ACCOMMODATION**
2. **REFUND OF EXPENDITURE**

should replace Main and Second Residence and Allowance

B. Any claim should be signed by the MP under a statement that "these reasonable expense were incurred solely and exclusively to carry out my duties as an MP"

C. The Fees Office should not provide comment or advice until the claim has been signed and submitted (and already certified as reasonable). Any rejections or comments would soon be networked by MP's to create informal standard practice.

D. MP's would be allowed London Accommodation where their Family Home was more than 1½ hours commute from the House of Commons.

E. London Accommodation would be a self contained two bedroom house/flat etc suitable for a "bachelor pied-a -terre" for use during the week and occasional weekends. Its use on a regular basis by friend or family or subletting not allowed

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F. London Accommodation property purchase and furnishing costs should be claimed and refunded. On sale of the property and furnishings the first call on the proceeds should be repayment of the MPs contribution, then the expenditure claims and any surplus should be subject to Capital Claims Tax. A charge should be placed on The Land Register to that effect. Any sale and purchase of another London Accommodation should require the approval of the Party Leader. Temporary accommodation awaiting purchase should be three star hotel or apartment on room only basis.

G. MPs receiving Grace & Favour accommodation should give up any London Accommodation or decline the offer except for 10 & 11 Downing Street. (This will soon result in bringing this practice into the 21<sup>st</sup> century)

H. For MP's within 1½ hours commuting taxi/extra travel cost should be refunded when a sitting or committee etc goes beyond 2130 and the MP is present at that time (some MP's might dash to the chamber at 2115). Other MPs should already have London Accommodation.

I. At the commencement of each session MP's with London Accommodation should submit a claim for weekly travel to and from their Family Home or constituency to their London Accommodation for the number of weeks in the session.

J. The practice of voting allowances through the House should be eliminated. The only un-receipted "allowance" should be a daily meal allowance for all MP's set at (say) the cost in the Members restaurant of breakfast and lunch claimable when attending the House ( no other claims for food/subsistence allowed)

K. With the Freedom of Information Act public scrutiny will ensure "reasonableness" If after payment any audit finding the payment unreasonable the MP should be named to the House. Repayment would be at the discretion (and justification) of that MP.

L. As far as possible an MP should consider that position as an employee claiming from the employer who is paying the salary There should be no benefit as a result of expenses claimed from the position they hold.

Thank you for your attention

Yours sincerely

G T Craggs

Copy to David Cameron  
Nick Clegg