

Mrs P F Fairclough

Sir Christopher Kelly  
Chairman, Committee on Standards in Public Life  
c/o Houses of Parliament  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Chester

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Dear Sir Christopher

### Parliamentary Allowances

I am a retired tax payer. I served in the WRNS from 1954 until 1960 but do not qualify for a deferred pension. I was married for 29 years, during all that time my then husband paid married man's rate of National Insurance, but because I was only 54 when the marriage ended I got nothing from all those years of payments on reaching retirement age.

Why am I telling you this? Because I am truly furious that Members of Parliament can claim so much in allowances, and then get pay-offs and pensions when they leave parliamentary service. It is after all a job they chose to do, like those who travel hours each day to get to their offices and, usually, having to pay their own travel expenses, and if they get the sack - such as an MP losing his/her seat - they do not expect, or get, handouts (unless you are a Director or Chairman - that is another dreadful story!). Why are London constituency MPs allowed to claim for transport when other workers cannot?

2nd Homes - this is truly outrageous the way MPs have manipulated getting expenses for these. I do not understand why redundant MOD barracks are not made into bed-sits which the MPs could rent at a reasonable rate. It is now being suggested that the Olympic Village currently being built - presumably near Greenwhich - should be used after the Olympics for this purpose. However I am sure that MPs will say that Greenwich is too far away. I understand that MPs no longer work late into the night, so distance should no longer be a problem. If they wish to have their own London flat/house then there should be a fixed overnight allowance similar to the reasonable rent. So then it is up to the MP as to where they buy and perhaps have to pay more themselves over the fixed rate. Why should they be reimbursed stamp duty on buying a second home and why should they be able to claim interest on monthly mortgage repayments? This is just outrageous, especially when they can sell that flat/house and keep all the profits made and know that a payoff and a pension is guaranteed on leaving Parliament plus other income sources. I missed a trick not attempting to become a Member of Parliament!

1st Homes - these should be in the constituency. The average British worker moves if his/her job moves, so why cannot MPs do the same? If their 'Family Home' is so special that they do not wish to sell it, then either they do not attempt to get into Parliament, or they have to pay fully for that home, with no expenses from the taxpayer. This happens with service families when they move into Quarters or go overseas - I know, as I was a service wife.

I am pleased to read in the Daily Telegraph, June 15th, that you were "shocked" by the extent of the abuse uncovered by that newspaper. I hope that you have had many letters such as mine which will help reach a reasonable answer for our Members of Parliament, which will be acceptable to us tax payers.

I also strongly believe that the worst abusers should be sacked, even if they were good constituency MPs, with no further payments, and the rest made to repay all costs that really should not have been claimed such as for food, irons, televisions, soap, gardening, chain link fences and so on. I am so angry looking through the lists.

Yours sincerely