

E377 - P. Rowbotham

At the suggestion of my MP, Natscha Engel (North-East Derbyshire) I have read the document on line and would like to submit the following points:-

para 3.4 There should be no 'allowances paid to cover costs whether incurred or not'. This is a salary increase in all but name. (para 3.8 appears to correct this).

para 3.9 ought to be unnecessary

para 3.18 I feel Members should be able to claim for setting up a second home but all claims should be at basic level. If you want higher quality it is not up to the taxpayer to pay for it. (It might be cheaper and quicker to administer if a list of prices existed so, for example, a claim for a washing machine would lead to a £300 payment automatically. A receipt would only be needed to prove that the item had been purchased.) Lists would be updated annually in line with price inflation or deflation.

Any claim e.g. for mortgage support, maintenance or gardening should be on the scale of the value of a normal band D home in the constituency or, if the second home is in London, of a band D flat.

para 3.24 Members should be able to employ family members. It is usual in many walks of life. GPs and vets certainly do it.

I have found it very worrying to read about some of the claims that have got past the scrutiny system. How on earth could they have allowed married MPs to claim two second home allowances. The system must be tightened up.

Finally, although it may not be within the remit of this review, I feel we need legislation to make it IMPOSSIBLE, apart from parliamentary privilege to cover what is said in the chamber, FOR MPs TO EXEMPT THEMSELVES FROM ANY LAWS OR TAXES THAT THEY IMPOSE ON THE REST OF THE P[OPULATION].

That seems to me to be the bedrock of democracy and I do not like the idea of my country going down the path that was so brilliantly described by George Orwell in 'Animal Farm'.

P Rowbotham