

## ***Submission to the Committee on Standards in Public Life***

### ***MPs Expenses***

#### ***Members Accommodation allowances***

Many of the damaging revelations by the Daily Telegraph regarding MPs expenses revolve in some way around the second home allowance. Some MPs are alleged to have used this system to make large profits on properties by using expenses to pay off mortgages, redesignating which of their homes is their second home so as to claim for renovations to both or even more homes and to claim for properties when members live within a reasonable distance to Westminster. For the system to be reformed it is clear that members accommodation allowances must be radically altered.

My proposal to the committee is simple, clear and would I believe make such ludicrous claims a thing of the past:

- MPs would no longer be able to claim for second homes allowances.
- The House of Commons would instead purchase properties in London which would be leased out to MPs who need to live in London to fulfil their duties as MPs.
- These properties would be furnished by the Commons to a minimal standard with any non-essentials-i.e. items that are not necessary for life e.g. TVs, trouser presses etc to be funded from the MP's pocket should they desire such items. MPs wouldn't have to pay to live in such property and thus it wouldn't harm members from poorer backgrounds who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford a London property.
- In the transition stage for a move to this system, House of Commons properties would be given out on a means test based system with MPs who couldn't normally afford London properties given preferential status for these properties than richer MPs-until enough property is available to all.
- MPs wouldn't be forced to live in such property, but should they choose not to they would not be eligible for any accommodation assistance from the Commons.

Benefits:

1. This would end for good the process of flipping
2. MPs would no longer be able to make financial gain from tax payer funded accommodation
3. It would bring MPs closer to the lives of the ordinary people they represent by making them live with more prudence than many have done previously.

***A Evans-History and Politics Student, Cardiff University***