

Why should it be necessary to appoint an "Independent Body" to vet M.P.'s expense claims? How about every M.P. should submit their Expenses claims to a Volunteer Committee of their constituents (no shortage of volunteers I'm sure) and once passed they can be sent on to the Fees Office for payment. All expenses must be accompanied by receipts for same. No receipt, no payment. The Committees to decide whether the claims are reasonable and fall within the prescribed allowances laid down in the Rules of Expenditure, which should be public knowledge and published in local and National newspapers, on the Internet and available at Post Offices, Public Libraries and local Government Offices. This would ensure a quick and efficient way of dealing with expenses without the additional expense needed to house and pay the proposed Independent Body. Who will they be and who will appoint them?

RULES OF EXPENDITURE

It would be good if the Public were involved in the drawing up of these rules, and their suggestions acted upon where possible. For instance: 2nd Homes to be scrapped entirely. No M.P. needs to OWN a 2nd Home for business purposes. Rent free standard furnished 1 bedroom accommodation should be available for all M.Ps who have to stay away from home on Parliamentary business *** Any furniture or appliances they wish to have, in addition to that supplied, must be paid for by themselves. The accommodation is, after all, meant to cover the time they spend away from their main residence on Parliamentary business, not to be a luxury home away from home for all the family, or a profitable property sideline. ***Everyone has to pay their own travelling expenses to and from their place of business, including meals during the day, so M.Ps should do the same. Because they have 2 places of business, their Constituencies and Westminster, they should claim for only 1 and should choose which it is to be when they are elected. A change would require the permission of the Constituency Committee.

If rented accommodation cannot be supplied, overnight stays in a Standard double/single room in a medium priced Hotel only allowed. No Suites or Luxury rooms. Bed & Breakfast and /or Half Board only. Alcoholic drinks and extras such as room service etc., to be borne by the M.P. There are many good hotels and B. & Bs who would offer a reduced rate for regular occupancy, and this would also help to keep them in business and provide employment for many people. Partners could be accommodated when required to attend necessary social functions.

MEALS ALLOWANCE.

A set amount per day for days spent away from their main residence on Parliamentary business (at the business of their choice***) at a Standard level of Restaurant/Hotel, with alcoholic drinks and additional charges for higher class restaurant/hotel, payable by the M.P. When entertaining VIPs on Parliamentary business, a higher allowance to include alcoholic drinks, etc. All claims to be accompanied by receipts.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Should be at Economy level on Trains, Planes and Buses with an allowance for bookable seats. Any additional costs for First Class or Business Travel to be borne by M.Ps. Car mileage to be paid based on 1 medium priced 5 door family saloon. Tubes and buses should be used whenever possible. Taxis as a last resort. When necessary, Special cars and drivers to be supplied from a Government Pool.

OFFICE EXPENSES

No family members, blood relatives of M.P. or partner to be employed in any capacity whatsoever, unless in an unpaid voluntary capacity.

OUTSIDE BUSINESS INTERESTS

Why is it still thought necessary for M.Ps to have outside business interests. This harks back to the time when M.Ps were not paid. They are now paid a generous full time salary and should devote their full time energies to looking after their constituents' interests. For instance:

More frequent and longer surgeries, occasional public meetings to discuss various measures and proposed legislation to obtain the views and wishes of the Public. A monthly published record of their activities and how they voted on certain matters, their attendance record at Westminster & so on, circulated in all the aforementioned ways. If outside interest allowed, then full details of remuneration, time spent on them and any other pertinent information required by the Public.

During Parliamentary recess what an opportunity for M.Ps to spend a few weeks work experience in Supermarkets, Hospitals, Factories, Benefits

Offices, Police Patrols, Road haulage, Social Work, the list is endless,, at the end of which they will have a much better idea of what life is like for the general public and how the various legislation affects them.

M.Ps should be subject to losing their job for poor performance, unacceptable behaviour, etc.*

There are many other ways in which M.Ps and Government can be more open and accountable. The majority of the Electorate are capable and intelligent with a vast amount of experience and expertise to offer and their own good ideas on how things should be managed in their name. Ask — you may be surprised and even shocked, but if you give due consideration to all the sensible well thought out ideas (you will probably get quite a few outrageous and ridiculous suggestions) it is just possible that Parliament and Parliamentarians will once again have the confidence and respect of the Electorate.

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*. MPs who cross the floor should have to stand for re-election.