

PN 224

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PRESS NOTICE

**Committee on Standards in Public Life publishes annual report and
response to IPSA consultation on MPs' expenses**

The Committee on Standards in Public Life today published its annual report for 2008-09 and its response to the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority's consultation on MPs' expenses.

Sir Christopher Kelly, Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, said:

“The Committee's work over the past year has been dominated by the issue of MPs' expenses. Our inquiry into this issue involved extensive public consultation and we were pleased that the package of recommendations we put forward were accepted as a whole by the leaders of the three main parties and endorsed by the Speaker.

“Everyone recognises the importance of ensuring that the new system for reimbursing MPs' expenses is settled as soon as possible. It is vital that candidates standing for election in the coming months are clear about the system in place to support them and the standards expected of them.

“In preparing the new expenses scheme IPSA are required to consult and it should come as no surprise that my Committee continues to argue for the implementation of the package of recommendations that we made in our report last November.

“In particular we wish to highlight three issues:

- continued payment of mortgage interest during the 5 year transitional period should be conditional on the surrender of any capital gain attributable to that support;
- to ensure a system which is free from any suspicion of abuse, the employment of family members should cease and
- that the definition of what constitutes a reasonable commuting distance for MPs should be decided by an evidence based process. “

Copies of the annual report and full response to the IPSA consultation are available on the Committee’s website www.public-standards.org.uk.

Notes to Editors

1. Media enquiries should go to Maggie O’Boyle on 07880 740627.
2. The Committee on Standards in Public Life is an Advisory Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Cabinet Office. The Chair and Members are appointed by the Prime Minister. The Committee was established in October 1994 with the following terms of reference: “To examine current concerns about standards of conduct of all holders of public office, including arrangements relating to financial and commercial activities, and make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements which might be required to ensure the highest standards of propriety in public life. Additional terms of reference were announced on 12 November 1997: “To review issues in relation to the funding of political parties, and to make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements.”
3. The current members of the Committee are: Sir Christopher Kelly KCB, Chairman, Lloyd Clarke QPM, Oliver Heald MP, Rt Hon Alun Michael JP MP, Sir Derek Morris MA DPhil, Dame Denise Platt DBE, David Prince CBE, Dr Elizabeth Vallance JP, Dr Brian Woods-Scawen DL CBE. In line with the Committee’s Code of Practice, the Parliamentary

Committee on Standards in Public Life



members of the Committee voluntarily withdrew themselves from the inquiry into MPs' expenses and also played no part in the production of the response to the IPSA consultation.

4. Additional information about the Committee and its work is available on its website at www.public-standards.org.uk.

Issued by:

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