

London



The Committee on Standards in Public Life  
35 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BQ

11 May 2009

Dear Sirs

**MPs' Expenses**

The present system is demeaning and unfair both to MPs and taxpayers.

MPs can justifiably claim a need to maintain a London residence if they do not represent a London constituency. There are, of course, attendant expenses and travelling costs. Others meet these expenses and costs out of taxed income and so should MPs.

MPs' present salaries are plainly inadequate for these purposes and should be substantially increased. I suggest a figure of, say, £200,000 per annum. Out of this salary, MPs should be expected to meet all their own expenses, other than secretarial expenses, and make their own pension provision. They should be subject to exactly the same tax rules on expenses and allowances as everyone else.

I do not propose any differentiation between London MPs and MPs representing constituencies from further away. The higher living costs associated with London would be off-set by the absence of any need to maintain a second establishment and lower travelling costs.

On secretarial and other staff expenses, I think it important to put an end to the system whereby MPs can engage friends and family at the taxpayers' expense. I propose that necessary staff be centrally employed, paid centrally determined scale rates and recruited through an orthodox selection process.

I am sure that there will be many issues of detail but I think that it is of paramount importance to jettison the system whereby MPs live on expenses, and replace it with a system in which they are properly rewarded for the responsibility of their office but receive no preferential tax treatment or benefits.

Yours faithfully

H Anderson