

WHAT ARE THE ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES I AM ALLOWED TO CLAIM?

There are five Parliamentary allowances these enable MP's to carry out their Parliamentary duties. All are separate from, and not part of my salary. Rules govern each allowance and compliance is monitored by the Department of Resources. The rules are contained in *The Green Book*. On April 1st a new *Green Book* was issued because of abuses under the old rules. You can read the new Green Book here,

<http://dfaweb.parliament.uk/members/publications/greenbook.pdf>

Additional Costs Allowance

This allowance is for running my London home. The Allowance was introduced in the 1970's to enable those who do not live within daily travelling distance to afford to live and work in London as MP's. As a new MP in 2005 I needed the allowance to set up my base in London.

Communications Allowance

In April 2007 a communications allowance of £10,000 was introduced. Previously all of our printing costs were paid for from the IEP. I have used the allowance to pay for leaflets, Parliamentary reports and updates. I always spend more than the £10,000 allocated as I see it as important to keep constituents informed of the work I do. In 2007/08 I spent £10,287. The contents are always approved by the Department of Resources, the printing carried out in Wales and delivery is by the Seaside News and the Western Mail. Money can be moved into this allowance from IEP but cannot be moved out to other allowances.

Incidental Expenses provision

The (IEP) is also known as the office costs allowance. It covers my purchase of furniture, equipment, office supplies, rent, rates, utilities, in short anything needed to maintain and run two offices. Over the last four years we have slowly upgraded the office in Bridgend for example, replacing wooden and plastic seats for visitors with more a comfortable sofa and chairs. Part of this allowance can be transferred into staffing or communications budgets.

Travel

The travel allowance covers my travel back and forth to London, around the constituency. I have a travel allowance of 350 miles per month to move around making visits to constituents, undertaking casework, visits to local organisations, surgeries and advice sessions.

I am allowed up to 15 return journeys for my husband to visit me in Westminster each year. I am allowed 12 journeys a year for staff between Westminster and the Constituency.

Constituency staff must understand the business of the House while Commons staff must understand the needs and problems of the constituency. Staff travel may be to cover sickness, training or constituency events such as street surgeries. Training covers anything from new immigration to new benefits rules.

Staffing Costs

I employ four staff, two in London and two in Bridgend. Three of the staff are local people. In 2005 I employed one person in London and four in Bridgend one of whom worked part time.

The staffing allowance covers pay for my four staff, employed full time and occasional interns. I also welcome local young people who are looking to gain intern/work experience in my office, their expenses and travel costs paid from petty cash. Ex staff and interns from my office have gone on to work for other MP's, for the Welsh Assembly, for national newspapers and one is a Parliamentary candidate.