

Dear friend,

I am well aware that there have been some concerns raised in the media and by the general public about MP's pay and "expenses".

In my experience most MP's (from all parties) are well intentioned and decent people who believe in public service, doing their bit for our country by becoming MPs and are definitely not misusing their allowances.

Unfortunately, a combination of a handful of MP's doing outrageous things plus a failure of politicians to properly explain the pay and allowances systems allows negative public opinions to fester.

As I promised last week, I thought it would be useful if I used this week's e-news to explain, in broad terms, how the system works.

### **MPs pay**

All MP's receive a basic salary of £61,820. Inner London MP's, like me, receive slightly more to take account of London weighting which takes this to £64,632.

There was recently a review of MPs pay which recommended a 4.5% increase over the next three years. MPs voted on this in parliament last week.

I voted against these proposals, which were defeated.

In my view, it is vital for economic stability that there is a disciplined, responsible approach to pay in both the private and the public sector. It is important that senior figures in the public and private sector lead by example in taking a disciplined and restrained approach to pay.

### **Allowances**

In addition to their salaries MPs, have three separate budgets to run their offices. They are the Staffing Budget, the Incidental Expenses Provision and the Communications Allowance. Each one has rules guiding their use, and the total for all three allowances comes to £132,798. For each item I buy using these allowances I have to put in a claim which is then scrutinised by parliamentary civil servants; I never have direct access to any of this money.

I am determined to do my best to serve local residents properly. This money pays for:

- my office in Tooting at 58 Trinity Road;
- furnishing both my Westminster and my constituency (and I mean desks, filing cabinets, computers and stationery – not pieces of art to hang on the walls!);
- my staff;
- hiring rooms to hold my regular advice surgeries; and
- communications with constituents.

The allowances are exactly that – allowances available to an MP to serve their constituents as they see best. I know that some chose to reduce their outgoings by not operating a constituency office, but I made a pledge prior to my election to open an office for my constituents which would be easily available by public transport. Running two offices requires me to purchase additional furniture, telephone lines,

stationery etc – but I believe that having an office in the heart of the constituency is the correct decision.

I similarly feel that I have made the correct decision with regards to how I staff my office. On a typical day I will receive over 100 emails from constituents, as well as on top of all the post and telephone calls. These communications can be requests to assist a constituent with an ongoing issue they have with a Government Department (such as Inland Revenue or Child Support Agency). Additionally, residents contact me to lobby me about a particular Bill about to go through Parliament or on some policy issue.

All of these deserve a proper response and so I employ staff to assist in casework and other related matters. Approximately 75% of my office budget is spent on staff – this is by far the biggest cost in running my office – but one that is entirely necessary considering the high volume of work this allows me to do on behalf of constituents.

Oh, and following the recent scandal about an MP employing his children to do very little work on very generous wages, I would like to reassure you that I do not, and have not, employed any member of my family and have an equal opportunities policy on recruitment of all staff.

I use my Communications Allowance to print, publish and distribute my quarterly newsletter, *Totally Tooting*, to every household in the constituency. It is used to help inform constituents about important issues in the constituency and what I am doing to try and help them.

Finally, there is a budget for MPs who represent constituencies outside of London in order to assist them with purchasing/renting a property to reside in from Monday through to Thursday. The existence of this allowance, and the so-called ‘John Lewis List’ of available furnishings, has made the headlines in recent months. I’m sure you won’t be surprised to learn that Tooting is close enough to London for me not to have to rent another property! I do not receive a penny from this allowance – and I get the pleasure of living in the same house as my family every night of the week!

*To read more about Parliamentary allowances, and the rules of claiming them visit:*  
[http://www.parliament.uk/site\\_information/allowances.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/site_information/allowances.cfm)

### **Super Head retires**

I realise this week’s email has been a bit longer than normal, but I don’t want to sign off without paying tribute to a truly remarkable individual.

One of the best things about being an MP has been the opportunity to get to know more of our local schools and the staff who work so hard to give our children the best start in life. Over this period I have gotten to know St Anselm’s (RC) Primary School and the fantastic Head Tom Gately far better. His passion for education, the students, the school, the connected Church and the local community have been inspiring to me.

Tom has been the Head for 18 years and is a popular fixture in our local community.

Last week I attended a Mass of Celebration for Tom’s service to education conducted by Father William Hebborn. The tribute paid to Tom by the Chair of Governors, Brendan Kearns was richly deserved. It was good to see so many local children, parents and other local primary Heads present for this important event.

I know, from my own experience as a governor at two local primary schools and as a parent, that being a headteacher is not an easy task. A good head can make a huge difference to the running of a school and the performance of students.

Tom will be a hard act to follow and I wish him a very happy retirement, whilst at the same time wishing his current assistant, Christine Macauley, the best of luck in taking over as head in September.

Until next time.

Best wishes,

**Sadiq**

To read more about my work in our community and in Westminster, read my diary by clicking [HERE](#)

## **CONTACTING ME**

I hold four advice surgeries every month around the constituency. For more information about making an appointment and how to contact me click [HERE](#).

Whether it's a local issue or government policy, I'm here to help (whatever your politics). Click [HERE](#) for details of how to contact or meet me.

For more details on my work for Tooting constituency residents, please see my website: [www.sadiqkhan.org.uk](http://www.sadiqkhan.org.uk).

If you've been forwarded this email by a friend and would like to sign-up to receive it directly in future, please email [sadiqkhan@sadiqkhan.org.uk](mailto:sadiqkhan@sadiqkhan.org.uk) with 'Sign me up' in the subject box.

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