

COPE 51

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Consultation Response**

I should like to make the following points.

I work for Laurence Robertson M.P., the Member of Parliament for Tewkesbury. I work between the constituency and Westminster. At the moment, I am not a family member as such at the moment, although I might become one in the future as I am Laurence's partner.

I oppose the proposals to end the right of MPs to employ family members. Family members work very long hours for their MP employers. They work unsocial hours, during evenings and weekends, every single week. They also provide a great deal of flexibility. Family members also provide a degree of confidentiality which could not be automatically expected from others.

The dedication found in family members, as described above, is very important in helping MPs to carry out what is a very difficult job. MPs are on call at every hour of every day and they need support equivalent to this.

Additionally, if an MP does not employ his wife, or husband, they would see very little of them due to the demands of the job. This could not be considered to be a "family friendly" arrangement.

Also, is it fair to have to sack someone if an MP marries that person? Again, this is very family **un**friendly. I believe that it would infringe my human rights if I were sacked simply because I got married.

There is also the legal point. As well as being contrary to human rights legislation, sacking people simply because they are family members would contravene employment law, and very many spouses will take this matter up in the courts, thus costing the tax payer a great deal of money.

I also believe that pension payments should continue to be made to MPs' staff from central funds.

On MPs' accommodation, I believe that MPs should continue to be free to own two homes. As well as my MP employer, I also work from both those homes which I would not be able to do from a hotel.

Yours faithfully  
Anne Marie Adams  
Senior Secretary to Laurence Robertson M.P.