# Conservative MP claims over £1,100 on Who’s Who books freely available in Commons library



A Conservative MP has sparked controversy after claiming over £1,100 in expenses for the purchase of multiple editions of the Who’s Who reference books, which are freely available in the House of Commons library. Mark Pritchard’s claims include substantial amounts for editions dating from 2020 to 2022, with individual claims amounting to £321.17 for the latest edition, £264.54 for the 2022 edition, £300.82 for the 2021 version, and £279.92 for the 2020 book.

This practice raises questions around the appropriateness of MPs claiming expenses for resources that are easily accessible at no cost. If every MP were to follow a similar pattern, taxpayers could face an estimated bill exceeding £750,000. Critics argue that such claims reflect a broader issue within the parliamentary expense system, which allows for varying degrees of discretion in what MPs classify as necessary for their work.

Pritchard, a backbench MP with a history of serving as a trade envoy to Armenia and Georgia, defends his expenses within the framework set by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (Ipsa). The Ipsa Funding Handbook permits claims for “newspapers, journals, magazines, or relevant books,” provided they are not for personal use. Although his claims were approved, this instance joins a list of previous expenses controversies that have included claims for items deemed luxuries or non-essential.

The scrutiny surrounding MPs' expenses has heightened since the 2009 scandal, which revealed that some had attempted to charge taxpayers for extravagant items, sparking a call for greater transparency in the expense claims process. While Ipsa has made efforts to increase oversight, the system still allows some leeway, leading to debates about what constitutes reasonable expenditure.

In a related development, Ipsa recently announced the commencement of an investigation into Labour MP Tahir Ali regarding his claims for office costs, travel, and accommodation, which totalled approximately £59,000 in the last financial year. Ali has asserted his confidence in complying with Ipsa rules and has stated his intention to cooperate fully with the investigation.

The current review of MPs' expenses underscores ongoing concerns regarding accountability and integrity in public office. While the regulations set by Ipsa outline allowable claims, many constituents are left questioning whether their representatives are making judicious use of taxpayer money. As more MPs come under scrutiny for their financial activities, the implications of these claims on public trust in elected officials remain a significant concern.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/may/16/tory-mp-claims-1100-for-purchase-of-freely-available-whos-who-books> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/may/16/tory-mp-claims-1100-for-purchase-of-freely-available-whos-who-books> - An article from The Guardian reports that Tory MP Mark Pritchard claimed over £1,100 in expenses for purchasing copies of the Who’s Who reference books for his office, despite the availability of free copies in the House of Commons library. The article details the specific amounts claimed for editions from 2020 to 2022 and discusses the implications of such claims on taxpayers. It also provides background information on Pritchard's political career and mentions previous instances of MPs' expenses being scrutinized.
3. <https://www.parallelparliament.co.uk/mp/mark-pritchard/expenses> - This page provides a detailed breakdown of Mark Pritchard's expenses claims, including the purchase of Who’s Who editions for his parliamentary office. The records show the dates, descriptions, and amounts of each claim, offering transparency into his spending. The page also includes other expenses related to accommodation, staff travel, and office costs, allowing for a comprehensive view of his financial activities as an MP.
4. <https://www.ipsaonline.org.uk/guidance/rules-and-eligibility> - The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) outlines the rules and eligibility criteria for MPs' staffing and business costs. The document specifies what expenses are claimable, such as costs incurred in the performance of parliamentary functions, and emphasizes the principles of parliamentary purpose, value for money, integrity, and accountability. It also lists activities that are not considered parliamentary and therefore not claimable, providing guidance to MPs on acceptable expenditure.
5. <https://www.ipsaonline.org.uk/guidance/reports-and-budgeting> - IPSA's guidance on reports and budgeting details the procedures for MPs to manage and report their expenses. It includes information on claim limits, the types of costs MPs can claim, and the process for applying for contingency funding. The document also outlines the responsibilities of MPs in adhering to the Scheme of MPs’ Staffing and Business Costs and provides resources for MPs to plan and forecast their budgets effectively.
6. <https://www.ipsa.org.uk/a-guide-to-mps-business-costs> - This guide from IPSA explains the staffing and business costs that MPs can claim to support their parliamentary duties. It covers the allocation of specific budgets for MPs to run local offices and employ staff, accounting for up to 80% of MPs’ business costs. The document also outlines the Scheme of MPs’ Staffing and Business Costs, detailing the rules and principles MPs must follow when making claims, and provides information on thematic reviews conducted by IPSA.
7. <https://www.ipsaonline.org.uk/the-scheme-of-mps-staffing-and-business-costs> - The Scheme of MPs’ Staffing and Business Costs, as outlined by IPSA, is designed to ensure MPs are reimbursed for costs incurred in the performance of their parliamentary functions. The document sets out fundamental principles and rules that MPs must operate within, while also allowing appropriate discretion over making claims. It is regularly reviewed to ensure budgets and rules remain up-to-date, and IPSA has a statutory responsibility to regulate and administer a transparent scheme of staffing and business costs for MPs.