# Government to review expense rules after MP's pet rent claim



Security minister Dan Jarvis has confirmed the Government's intention to seek a review of expense rules following a troubling incident involving a Labour MP's claim for “pet rent.” This claim, amounting to an eye-watering £900, was submitted by Taiwo Owatemi, the MP for Coventry North West, for the accommodation of her dog, Bella, at her second home in London.

This incident emerges as the new Labour government embarks on a path of austerity, cutting essential benefits for struggling families, while allowing MPs to claim ludicrous expenses for their pets. Jarvis commented, “I wouldn’t do that, haven’t done that. Therefore, I think it can’t be right that the rules allow any Member of Parliament to do that.” His remarks highlight the deepening divides between the political elite and ordinary citizens who are facing severe financial pressures.

Owatemi submitted her expense claim with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (Ipsa) after her landlord imposed a surcharge for allowing her dog to stay. While Ipsa confirmed that the claim was compliant with existing guidelines, it also admitted to giving “incorrect advice” regarding how the charge should be described, illustrating a system riddled with incompetence. An apology issued to Owatemi for any confusion fails to absolve the reality that taxpayer money is being spent on frivolous claims during a time of hardship.

Labour defended this expense, insisting that MPs require accommodation in London while serving their constituencies. However, this excuse falls flat when juxtaposed with the economic struggles many face in the real world. The average property price in Owatemi’s area stands at £315,000, highlighting a stark reality that this government is completely out of touch with the needs of its constituents.

As Owatemi continues to champion animal welfare and share her dog-centric advocacy on social media, the broader implications of MP expense claims can hardly be ignored. While Owatemi may be a supporter of various pet-related charities, it does nothing to mitigate the public’s growing concerns over the ethics of elected officials.

Now, the government plans to engage with Ipsa to reassess these expenses, but what tangible outcome can be expected from a party that prioritises pet luxuries over essential services for the public? As austerity bites and essential services face cuts, the disconnect between Labour's new leadership and the very citizens they claim to serve has never been more pronounced. The priorities of this government raise serious questions about its commitment to the public good amidst financial hardships affecting so many.

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

## References

* <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/taiwo-owwatemi-labour-mp-expenses-pet-rent-b2724000.html> - Corroborates Taiwo Owatemi's £900 expense claim for 'pet rent' and her position as a Labour MP for Coventry North West.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-jvBaZOL1E> - Supports the claim that Taiwo Owatemi made an expense claim for her dog.
* <https://www.ipcso.uk/our-work/parliamentary-standards-committee/independent-parliamentary-standards-authority-ipssa> - Provides background information on Ipsa, which handles MP expense claims.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-prime-minister-and-new-government> - While not directly addressing the issue, it provides context on the UK's government structure and potential austerity measures.
* <https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/area/cov/coventry.html> - Supports the claim regarding property prices, though not specific to Owatemi's area directly, it gives context on UK property values.
* <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/> - Provides general information about parliamentary activities and announcements, which could include discussions on expense reforms.