### Supplemental materials

**Representative misbehaviour, voter perceptions and accountability: evidence from the 2009 House of Commons expenses scandal**

1) **Variable coding**

The table below describes how the key variables used in our analyses were coded, including the BES question number and wave where appropriate.

| Variable               | Measurement                                                                 | BES variable (if applicable)             | Wave            |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Implicated             | 1 if asked to repay in the 2010 report on Commons expenses by Sir Thomas Legg or mentioned by The Telegraph, 0 if not (for more details on coding, see text) |                                          |                 |
| Amount to repay        | Amount asked to repay in the 2010 report on Commons expenses by Sir Thomas Legg |                                          |                 |
| Perception of MP overclaiming | Indicators for three possible values: did overclaim, did not overclaim and don’t know | aaq142, aaq136                            | 2010 pre |
| Vote for incumbent MP (2010) | 1 if voted for the incumbent MP in 2010, 0 if not | ccq25                                     | 2010 post |
| Voted for incumbent MP (2005) | 1 if voted for the incumbent MP in 2005, 0 if not | post_q20                                 | 2005 post |
| Party identification   | 1 if identifies with same party as incumbent MP belong to, 0 otherwise | y08_q27                                   | 2008           |
| General trust          | Trust in people, 0 to 10 scale, 0 lowest and 10 highest value               | pre_q131                                  | 2005 pre |
| Political efficacy     | Self-assessed influence on politics, 0 to 10, 10 highest value               | pre_q142                                  | 2005 pre |
| Attention to politics  | 0 to 10, 10 highest value                                                   | aaq131                                    | 2010 pre |
| Political knowledge    | Ability to correctly place parties on three ideological scales (e.g. Labour left of the Conservatives on economic policy), 0 to 4, 4 highest value | pre_q119, pre_q120, pre_q121, pre_q120, pre_q102, pre_q103, pre_q127, pre_q126 | 2005 pre |
| Seat change            | 1 if respondent changed seats, 0 otherwise; see text for more details on this variable | pa05, refno                               | 2005, 2010 |
| Majority 2005          | Size of majority in 2005 in % (vote share lead to second place challenger, source: Norris 2010). |                                          |                 |
| Notional majority 2005 | Notional size of majority in 2005 in %, accounting for boundary changes | maj05 |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Year entered parliament | Year MP first elected to Parliament (Source: Who’s Who) | |
| Frontbench MP | 1 if MP ever on government or opposition frontbench, 0 if not (see text for details on coding, source: Who’s who) | |
| Conservative MP | 1 if incumbent MP Conservative, 0 if not | |
| Lib Dem MP | 1 if incumbent MP Liberal Democrat, 0 if not | |
| Other MP | 1 if incumbent MP neither Labour, Lib Dem nor Conservative, 0 if not | |

2) **Addendum to footnote 12: data structure**

When explanatory variables vary across clusters of subjects rather than across individual subjects, naive standard errors may under-estimate the uncertainty in inferences (Moulton 1986). We therefore use clustered standard errors in our main results. We also estimated the effects of our *implicated* variable on perceptions after aggregating our data to the constituency level (Angrist and Pischke 2009, p.322). Specifically, we employed robust estimation of an overdispersed multinomial regression model (Mebane and Sekhon 2004) to model the counts of respondent ‘did not overclaim’, ‘did overclaim’ and ‘don’t know’ perceptions within each constituency in our data, as a function of all MP-level variables described in the main text. In these models, the effects of *implicated* on voter perceptions were statistically significant and of similar magnitude to those found in our respondent-level regressions reported in the main text. In addition, to test whether our results would be affected if a hierarchical model was specified, we binary logit models with constituency random intercepts for the 'did not overclaim'/'overclaimed' and ‘don’t know’/'overclaimed' comparisons. No substantively important differences to the results of the multinomial logit model were found.
3) **Amount ordered to repay and perceptions of the severity of misconduct**

In the main text of our paper, we indicate that voter perceptions of MP misconduct also reflect the severity of the scandal. In this supplemental analysis, we provide more information on this result.

In the main text our key measure of perceptions of misconduct is a respondent’s answer to the item:

*Now, thinking about the MP in your local constituency, has he or she claimed expense money to which they are not entitled?*

Those who answered ‘yes’ were also given a follow-up question, asking them to state how much expense money they thought their MP had overclaimed, on a scale of 0 to 10 (with higher scores corresponding to greater amounts). We use answers to this item to assess perceptions of the severity of an MP’s wrongdoing, our dependent variable here.

As a proxy for the publicly revealed severity of an MP’s expenses misbehaviour, we code the *amount* of money, if any, they were asked to repay in the Legg report (if applicable using the figure after appeal by the MP). We then run a simple OLS regression where the main explanatory variable of interest is this *amount* variable, and the outcome variable is the 0-10 scale measuring respondent beliefs as to how much the MP had overclaimed. We also include as further controls whether the respondent voted for the MP in 2005 and whether he or she identifies with the MP’s party. Table A1 below presents the results for two sub-sets of respondents: first, all those who believed their MP to be guilty (Model A1); second, we include all respondents who formed some definitive opinion on the original question as to whether or not their MP had overclaimed (i.e. are not recorded as a “don’t know” on our key measure of perceptions in the main text), coding those who believed that their MP had not overclaimed as -1 on the dependent variable (Model A2).
While the overall explained variance in these models is relatively low, it is nevertheless clear that the amount the MP had to repay is indeed significantly related to constituent perceptions. In Model A1, a £10,000 increase in the amount to be repaid in the Legg report is predicted to lead to a .65-unit increase in the perceived amount of overclaiming.

The magnitude of this effect is clearer if we calculate predicted values (here using Model A1). If we take a respondent who does not identify with the MP’s party and did not vote for their MP in 2005, then the predicted response if the MP did not have to repay any money is 4.73 on the 0-10 scale. If the MP had to repay the mean amount of money (£3179), the predicted value is 4.94. For the MP with the maximum amount to repay (£42458), the equivalent value is 7.50. In other words, perceptions of the amount to repay follow the actual severity of the scandal relatively closely.

This supplemental analysis provides further support for the evidence in the paper that voter perceptions of MP misconduct do reflect publicly available information on the scandal. However, as in the main analysis the correspondence between information and perceptions is by no means perfect.

References

Mebane, Jr, W.R. and J.S. Sekhon (2004) Robust Estimation and Outlier Detection for Overdispersed Multinomial Models of Count Data, *American Journal of Political Science*, 48: 391–410.

Moulton, B. (1986) Random group effects and the precision of regression estimates, *Journal of Econometrics*, 32: 385-97.
Table A1. Amount asked to repay and perceptions of the extent of overclaiming

|                   | Model A1 Respondents who think MP overclaimed | Model A2 Respondents who state a perception |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Amount to repay   | 0.07*** (0.01)                                | 0.14*** (0.03)                             |
| Voted for incumbent | -0.92** (0.30)                              | -1.04*** (0.23)                            |
| Party identification | -0.27 (0.30)                               | -0.44+ (0.23)                              |
| Intercept         | 4.73*** (0.18)                               | 1.71*** (0.16)                             |
| n                 | 549                                          | 1259                                       |
| Adjusted R²       | 0.07                                         | 0.12                                       |

Note: ***: p<0.001, **: p<0.01, *: p<0.05, +: p<0.1; cluster robust standard errors in parentheses; data from own coding and BES