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POST OFFICE LTD BOARD SUB COMMITTEE

**Initial Complaints Review and Mediation Scheme
Ministerial Commitments**

1. Purpose

This paper has been prepared following the initial meeting of the Board Sub Committee on the Initial Complaints Review and Mediation Scheme (the Scheme) on 9 April. At that meeting the programme team were asked to produce a paper setting out the ministerial commitments with regard to the Scheme and timescales.

2. Background

This paper looks at the ministerial commitments that have been made including within:

- Ministerial statement in Parliament on the 9th July in response to the interim report produced by Second Sight
- Written response to parliamentary questions asked by Ian Murray MP on the 31st October
- Ministerial correspondence.

3. Summary of ministerial commitments

The Minister has said very little about the Scheme itself. The majority of her comments were made during the debate on the interim report which was before the Scheme was designed or announced. The following list sets out the key commitments she has made where they could be deemed relevant to the Scheme:

- Working Party will consider all 47 cases bought forward by JFSA and MPs
- Independent figure will chair a review
- Independence of process
- Second Sight and JFSA Working Party
- Further work on cases must be independent
- Working Party must be independent
- James Arbuthnot and JFSA recipient of further cases
- Application open from 27th August – 18th November 2013
- Working Group is independent of Government and is responsible for meeting the recommendations set out in the interim report

4. Ministerial Commitments

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Summary Commitment	Ministerial Commitments (Statement or PQ)	Correspondence
No Systemic Issues with Horizon system	Statement: It did not find evidence of systemic failures; that is not to say there has never been a bug in the system, but I defy anyone to find an IT system that has never had a bug. What is important is that when bugs are found, they are dealt with and the problems are rectified. What has not been found, however, is any systemic problem leading to the issues faced by sub-postmasters, although there have been issues with the support and training provided alongside Horizon.	'No remote access to the system or individual branch terminals' 07.12.2010
Working Party will consider all 47 cases brought forward by JFSA and MPS	Statement: First, it will set up a working party to complete the review of cases started by Second Sight, and will consider all 47 cases brought forward by the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance—the JFSA—and MPs	
Independent figure will chair a review	Statement: Secondly, an independent figure will chair a review to determine how best to adjudicate disputed cases in future. The JFSA and other stakeholders will also be invited to take part in this process.	
Independence of process	Statement: It is important that any further work is not only independent, but seen to be independent	
Second Sight to be part of the Working Party	Statement: I shall happily give the hon. Gentleman that assurance [That Second Sight will be part of the working party].	
Further work on cases is independent	Statement: we need to ensure that the further work on cases where there are outstanding queries is independent	
Working Party must be independent	Statement: Yes, I am happy to give my hon. Friend an assurance that the working party will be independent.	
If other cases should come forward we would not want to deny them the opportunity for this to happen	Statement: On the hon. Gentleman's first point, I can certainly give an assurance that if there are other cases that need to come forward, we would not want to deny those people the	

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	opportunity for that to happen.	
JFSA represented in Working Group	Statement: The independent working group, which will include representation from the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance, will help to ensure that that happens swiftly and without compromising the details that need to be gone into.	
James Arbuthnot and JFSA recipient of further cases	Statement: I should point out that one avenue for highlighting any further cases would be to bring them to the attention of the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance, which will be part of the independent working group. I hesitate to suggest, although I am probably safe in doing so, that my right hon. Friend the Member for North East Hampshire (Mr Arbuthnot) would also be happy to continue in his role as a recipient for any such cases.	'Further case can be put forward to review by Second Sight' 11.07.2013
Application open from 27 th August – 18 th November 2013	31 st October Jo Swinson Written Answer to Ian Murray: 'Subpostmasters who wish to have their case considered by the Initial Mediation Scheme have until 18 th November 2013 to submit their applications. The scheme opened on 27 th August 2013.'	
Working Group is independent of Government and is responsible for meeting the recommendations set out in the interim report	31 st October Jo Swinson Written Answer to Ian Murray: 'The Working group is independent of Government, and is responsible for meeting the recommendations set out in the interim report'.	

Mark Davies**30 April 2014**