

Message

From: ARBUTHNOT, James [GRO]
on behalf of [GRO]
Sent: 30/09/2013 13:20:38
To: Andy Holt [GRO]
CC: HANDS, Jack [GRO]; Alwen Lyons [GRO]
Subject: FW: Post Office Investigations
Attachments: Mediation Pack - Application Form.docx; ATT00001.htm; Mediation Pack.pdf; ATT00002.htm; Initial Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme cover letter.pdf; ATT00003.htm

Hi Andy,

Thanks for your earlier email, and I will get you the list tomorrow.

In the meantime, Jack Hands, who runs Karen Lumley MP's office, has been in touch, as Ms Lumley wants to discuss an individual constituent case. I have copied him in on this email, and I wonder if I can leave you to get in touch with Jack to take this on, please?

With kind regards
Janet

Janet Walker

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From: HANDS, Jack
Sent: 30 September 2013 13:13
To: ARBUTHNOT, James
Subject: FW: Post Office investigations

Dear James,

Karen would like to meet with the Post Office to discuss an individual case. Would it be possible to send me the e-mail of the best person to contact?

Best wishes,

Jack

From: "ARBUTHNOT, James" [GRO]
Subject: Post Office investigations

Dear Colleague,

When we met in July about this matter, it was thought that the results of the current investigations would be presented in October. I am writing to let you know that we will now be waiting for a little while longer but for the very best reason, in my view. I would like to propose

a meeting sometime in January, which will bring us up to speed with how investigations are proceeding, how the internal review of processes at the Post Office is going, and perhaps have some comments offered by the chairman of the working party.

Throughout the summer, the Post Office has convened a working group to develop and implement an independent mediation process by which all cases – existing and new – can be investigated. The working party comprises members of the Justice for SubPostmasters Alliance, independent investigators Second Sight, and members of the Post Office staff. It is meeting weekly and an independent chairman is to be appointed shortly.

The Post Office is also conducting an internal review of its working processes, in part prompted by our raising constituents' cases with it. The findings of the case investigations and reports from the working party are feeding into this review to ensure that required improvements are being identified and addressed.

The mediation scheme is now open to all SubPostmasters who have a complaint. They must apply to have their cases investigated. In some instances, investigation will not be possible because, for example, cases are too old and the relevant data has not been retained. The scheme remains open until Monday 18 November 2013. It offers aggrieved SubPostmasters the very best chance to have their cases reviewed independently, and their views heard to try to resolve their concerns. They may leave the scheme at any time, and their legal rights will remain in full force, whether or not they choose to enter the scheme. The Post Office has, I believe, already written to you with information about this scheme. I attach the relevant documents, and would be happy to direct any inquiries about the scheme you may have to the relevant people at the Post Office.

What this means is that your constituent, whose case is already being looked into, has the opportunity to have his or her case investigated thoroughly, independently, and fairly. The scheme may also refer cases to an independent mediator to help the parties try to find a resolution to any specific concerns.

While I acknowledge that we have all been waiting for satisfaction for our constituents, I also acknowledge that the Post Office has been, throughout, conscientious in working to arrive at a transparent and fair means by which it can offer SubPostmasters a just, independent, and dispassionate review of their case. It has cancelled trials where it deemed fit, and I know of two colleagues whose constituents are extremely relieved to hear they are no longer going to trial. I would hope you might join me in the belief that this mediation process is the very best chance your constituent has to see his or her case reviewed, and the best chance too of seeing a new Post Office working to its best capabilities with better practices than ever.

The Post Office also stands ready to meet with you individually to discuss its approach if you would find this helpful.

I do hope this is helpful, and will be in touch when a date is set for the next meeting.

Yours ever,

James

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