

Panorama

- The Panorama programme, entitled 'Trouble at the Post Office', was broadcast on Monday 17 August 2015. Despite significant dialogue with the BBC, the programme failed to fully reflect our position and included a series of inaccurate statements and comments, repeating the same unsubstantiated allegations we have previously addressed over the course of the last 3 years.
- The week before the broadcast, we offered - under certain necessary conditions - to show the editorial team documents which would disprove the claims being made and that featured on the programme. This was refused.
- The Post Office is considering next steps in relation to the Panorama programme. In doing so we will meet with the Panorama Editor and the Director of News and Current Affairs to set out in detail the inaccuracies within the programme and our other observations.

Current Position

- 26 cases have been resolved, through mediation or otherwise and the 59 are with the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution CEDR (CEDR) awaiting mediation to be scheduled or take place. The remaining 65 were either; ineligible for the Scheme (4); not suitable for mediation (48) owing to a prior court ruling or Working Group decision; or not resolved despite being mediated (13).
- The obstacle to mediations actually taking place remains the readiness of applicants and their professional advisers to commit to dates. This is reflected in that, of the 59 applicants with cases residing with CEDR, 36 have written to us indicating that they wish to withdraw from, or postpone, their progression until such time as the matter is 'reviewed by Parliament'.
- Post Office has asked all applicants to get in touch with CEDR to agree a date for mediation by 4 September. The initial letter informing applicants of this deadline was followed up with a 'chaser' letter on August 12. Mediations can take place before or after that date. The key thing is to secure an opportunity to resolve each and every complaint raised by applicants to the Scheme if at all possible.
- Since we have written to applicants asking them to specify a date within this timeframe, 13 have done so. A further 4 have provided dates in 2016 and we have asked CEDR to work with the applicants in question to bring these dates forward. There are therefore 42 applicants who have not yet engaged with CEDR to set a date for mediation.
- We have also written to each Member of Parliament with a constituent still in the Scheme to encourage them to ensure that their constituent benefits from a mediation if they would like to.
- In the event that the majority of applicants refuse to agree a mediation date by 4 September, we are considering whether we could specify a number of dates and locations across the country where mediations can take place. However, as entering mediation requires significant preparation, applicants would need to commit to attending a specific event and notify Post Office of this intention beforehand.

- Last week Shex made an explicit request for some lines in respect of the 4 September deadline. BNR should therefore be aware of its significance.