
From: Mark R Davies GRO
Sent: Fri 07/08/2015 12:12:44 PM (UTC)
To: Mark Davies GRO
Subject: Fwd: DRAFT letter to Alan Bates

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Melanie Corfield <GRO>
> **Date:** 7 August 2015 09:49:02 BST
> **To:** Mark Underwood1 GRO, Mark R Davies GRO
> **Subject: RE: DRAFT letter to Alan Bates**
>
> Yep. I have slept on it. I also do not think we should send to applicants - additional reasons: they have complained in the past about distress caused from, for example, seeing PO logos on letters, so we removed; the scheme is being run as neutrally as possible and PV has previously said she has deliberately kept distance.
>
> To send to Bates alone gives the problem Mark U has articulated. I also do not see how we could easily make letter public whatever the scenario - the scheme is confidential, correspondence is confidential (apart from sharing with individual MPs). It would also give impression that all applicants are boycotting scheme and refusing mediation and this is not the case.
>
> The entire dynamic of the scheme could change and PV would be seen to be conceding too much.
>
> BUT I still love that cool Panorama messaging so we must surely be able to use that in our internal messaging.
>
> Mel
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> ---
>
> From: Mark Underwood1
> Sent: 07 August 2015 08:42
> To: Melanie Corfield; Mark R Davies
> Subject: RE: DRAFT letter to Alan Bates
>
> Hi Mark & Mel,
>
> I like the letter but am, at the moment, not convinced we should send it.
>
> My biggest concern is that this 'recognises' JFSA and since closing of the WG, we have made a conscious decision to try and avoiding recognising them and their power to seemingly orchestrate applicants decisions. Whatever we have sent in the past has been manipulated and been the springboard for conspiracy theories so at the moment I would be minded not to send a letter to JFSA, especially as AB will, as a disengaged applicant, will be receiving his own letter anyway which covers a lot of the similar points. My other thought is that we did end up sending it, I think sending it to all applicants would be dangerous as not all will be represented by JFSA and it

would promote JFSA to them

Taking the ministers point about empathy, perhaps we can address that by softening up the proposed chaser letter to applicants? A Draft of that letter is attached (signed off by PB & MC)

Mark

Mark Underwood
Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme
GRO

-----Original Message-----
From: Melanie Corfield
Sent: 07 August 2015 01:29
To: Mark R Davies; Mark Underwood1
Subject: RE: DRAFT letter to Alan Bates

I especially love the messaging on Panorama I have to say! I would love to get something out there, just still a bit worried about any backlash. Much warmer to idea now I have seen this - will sleep on it!

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: 06 August 2015 22:16
To: Melanie Corfield; Mark Underwood1
Subject: DRAFT letter to Alan Bates

Hi
What do you reckon? Would this work? I must say I am quite taken with it.
M

As you know, a Panorama programme is due to air on Monday in relation to the Post Office and the Horizon system. At the same time we are writing to applicants in the Mediation Scheme to urge them to engage with us to arrange a time for mediation to take place.

I know the JFSA is urging applicants not to take part in mediation. That is your right, of course, and you have your reasons for taking this position.

I wanted, however, to write to you to urge you to reconsider this position. I do so for the following reasons.

The Post Office is very sorry that those who applied to the Mediation Scheme feel that they have been treated unfairly by the business in the past. We believe we have, however, made every effort to consider their grievances and provide an avenue for them to be heard.

I appreciate that you feel the mediation scheme has not worked as you had hoped, and that you have concerns about the Post Office's approach. I do not agree with you but I respect your view and it is partly why we have asked CEDR to produce an update on the scheme: to provide applicants with more guidance about how it is working and how it can work most effectively.

As you will know mediation has led to resolution in some cases, but not in all: that is the nature of the process. My reason for writing is to suggest that whatever your other considerations, it is surely worth applicants engaging in mediation on its own merits.

Not doing so will simply result in losing an entirely additional and cost-free opportunity to resolve complaints. Agreeing to mediate in no way prevents people from taking further action at a later stage. If they find they cannot reach an agreement with Post Office, their position remains unchanged and they remain free to explore all other avenues open to them.

I recognise that some people will not be familiar with mediation and what it involves. We want to ensure that people are able to make an informed choice about whether or not they wish to take part. As you know we are offering funding for independent advice on mediation: in addition we are also sending applicants the attached report from CEDR on the mediations that have taken place to date.

I hope this report will help to reassure you and other applicants about the way in which the process is being conducted.

As I have indicated, the Post Office has resolved a number of cases through mediation and we believe it offers both parties with the best opportunity to reach agreement.

We are hoping that applicants will let us know before September 4 whether they wish to engage in mediation. What I would add to that is while this date is important in order that we and CEDR can plan ahead we do stand ready to discuss any of the cases in a mediated environment at any time (and are equally happy to discuss cases with individuals and their MP).

I hope you will consider the points I have made. I make them out of a genuine desire to support those individuals who believe they have been treated unfairly and provide an opportunity to set out their case. Whatever allegations are made in the Panorama programme, and we are familiar with them, and while after three years of investigation the Post Office has confidence in its position, we remain committed to engaging with you and other applicants.

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director Post Office Ltd

Mobile: GRO

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