

**From:** Tom Wechsler [GRO]  
**Sent:** Thur 05/03/2015 1:34:54 PM (UTC)  
**To:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd [GRO]; Nick Beal [GRO]; Mark R Davies [GRO]; Jane Hill [GRO]; Melanie Corfield [GRO]  
**Cc:** Rodric Williams [GRO]; Patrick Bourke [GRO]; Belinda Crowe [GRO]; 'andrew.parsons' [GRO]  
**Subject:** RE: JS Commitment to a Second Review

Thank you all for your comments – all of which I have tried to reflect.

Below is the line I have given BIS. I've also reiterated our views WMS and fallbacks.

Tom

- After nearly 3 years of investigation and review by Post Office and Second Sight, no system wide issue with Horizon has been found.
- Nonetheless, Post Office has reflected on whether improvements can be made in addressing any concerns that serving SPMRs may have. As a result we have made a number of changes including:
  - changing the approach to dealing with breaches in contract by SPMRs so that the SPMR stays in the branch while Post Office investigates issues wherever possible (i.e. without suspension). This has resulted in 123 remaining in post this year who would have been suspended under the previous approach; and
  - establishing the Branch User Forum to provide a way for SPMRs and others to raise issues and insights around business processes, training and support, feeding directly into the organisation's thinking at the highest level.
- These changes have been discussed with NFSP, the independent body representing the vast majority of subpostmasters, and implemented following their feedback.
- We also intend to introduce a process where the NFSP executive may escalate cases within Post Office where they believe a Subpostmaster may have been treated unfairly.

If Pressed

- When the commitment was made in 2013 we hadn't investigated the cases and the claims made by Applicants. We have now completed all our investigations and no system wide issue with Horizon has been found.
- We believe the changes that have been implemented are a more appropriate response reflecting how Post Office and Subpostmasters operate today rather than in the past.

Tom Wechsler

[GRO]

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**From:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd  
**Sent:** 04 March 2015 21:53  
**To:** Nick Beal; Tom Wechsler; Mark R Davies; Jane Hill; Melanie Corfield  
**Cc:** Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Belinda Crowe; 'andrew.parsons' [GRO]  
**Subject:** Re: JS Commitment to a Second Review

Nick

You are correct there is no formal appeal process in the new contracts but there is a 'conversation type clause' for

certain situations.

Angela

GRO

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**From:** Nick Beal

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 04, 2015 08:36 PM

**To:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; Tom Wechsler; Mark R Davies; Jane Hill; Melanie Corfield

**Cc:** Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Belinda Crowe; 'andrew.parsons'; GRO

GRO

**Subject:** Re: JS Commitment to a Second Review

Maybe we could say "we intend to introduce...".

Please note I think that the new contracts do not have an appeals process.

Rgds

Nick

Head of Agents' Development & Remuneration

Post Office Ltd

148 Old Street

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**From:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 04, 2015 06:34 PM Coordinated Universal Time

**To:** Tom Wechsler; Nick Beal; Mark R Davies; Jane Hill; Melanie Corfield

**Cc:** Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Belinda Crowe; 'andrew.parsons'; GRO

GRO

**Subject:** Re: JS Commitment to a Second Review

Tom,

The 112 is now 123 at period 11.

Nick - I've not discussed/mentioned the escalation process to George before but as you know this is what I've done on occasion. Whilst the ultimate decision sits with POL George has been appreciative of my review of these cases.

Angela

GRO

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**From:** Tom Wechsler

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 04, 2015 06:27 PM

**To:** Nick Beal; Mark R Davies; Jane Hill; Melanie Corfield; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd

**Cc:** Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Belinda Crowe; 'andrew.parsons'; GRO

GRO

**Subject:** RE: JS Commitment to a Second Review

Nick

To answer your question, it may be used in full or just elements of it in:

- a) The report that will accompany our announcement of the scheme's future
- b) In briefing that BIS officials may use to brief Jo Swinson
- c) And in defensive lines to take for either POL or Jo Swinson

In the longer term, BIS and I expect the commitment made and the lack of visible action on it to form part of JFSA's campaign against us and it already features prominently in their letters to MPs etc. Therefore we can expect it to be used in response.

Part of the point of the response (as well as heading off the argument against us) is to put distance between JFSA and POL by restating NFSP's proper role in representing SPMRs. I hope that would be a welcome development for NFSP but I would be grateful for your steer on that.

Thanks to others – especially Angela and Rod - for their comments. Below is an amended line:

- After nearly 3 years of investigation and review by Post Office and Second Sight, no system wide issue with Horizon has been found.
- Nonetheless, Post Office has reflected on whether improvements can be made in addressing any concerns SPMRs may have. As a result we have made a number of changes including:
  - changing the approach to dealing with breaches in contract by SPMRs so that the SPMR stays in the branch while Post Office investigates issues wherever possible (i.e. without suspension). This has resulted in 112 remaining in post this year who would have been suspended under the previous approach; and
  - establishing the Branch User Forum to provide a way for SPMRs and others to raise issues and insights around business processes, training and support, feeding directly into the organisation's thinking at the highest level.
- These changes have been discussed with NFSP, the independent body representing the vast majority of subpostmasters, and implemented following their feedback.
- We have also agreed to introduce a process, in addition to the existing appeals process, where the NFSP executive may escalate cases within Post Office where they believe a Subpostmaster may have been treated unfairly.

If Pressed

- When the commitment was made in 2013 we hadn't investigated the cases and the claims made by Applicants. We have now completed all our investigations and no system wide issue with Horizon has been found.
- We believe the changes that have been implemented are a more appropriate response reflecting how Post Office and Subpostmasters operate today rather than in the past.

The if pressed lines are not 100% necessary but may help convince BIS.

I am very keen to get these to BIS. So grateful for any further comments by noon tomorrow.

Nick – Should we run this past NFSP?

Tom

Tom Wechsler  
**GRO**

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**From:** Nick Beal  
**Sent:** 04 March 2015 13:06  
**To:** Mark R Davies; Tom Wechsler; Jane Hill; Melanie Corfield; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd  
**Cc:** Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Belinda Crowe; [andrew.parsons](#); **GRO**  
**Subject:** RE: JS Commitment to a Second Review

The statement is technically true but as the scheme has always been sensitive to NFSP, we might want to discuss with George later today when we update him on related aspects. Please can you advise where this will be used/published.

Thx

**GRO**



**Nick Beal**  
Head of Agents' Development & Remuneration

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**GRO**

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**From:** Mark R Davies  
**Sent:** 04 March 2015 12:00  
**To:** Tom Wechsler; Jane Hill; Melanie Corfield; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; Nick Beal  
**Cc:** Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Belinda Crowe; [andrew.parsons](#); **GRO**  
**Subject:** RE: JS Commitment to a Second Review

Copying Nick

Best wishes,

Mark



**Mark Davies**  
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Banner Street Wing  
148 Old Street  
London EC1V 9HQ  
**GRO**

GRO

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**From:** Tom Wechsler  
**Sent:** 04 March 2015 11:27  
**To:** Jane Hill; Melanie Corfield; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd  
**Cc:** Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Belinda Crowe; Mark R Davies; [andrew.parsons](#); GRO  
**Subject:** JS Commitment to a Second Review

All

We've been discussing how to respond to the commitment JS made in Parliament in 2013. Extract below:

This (highlighted) was the particular commitment I mentioned – part of Jo's statement on 9 July 2013 (Hansard column 198):

The Post Office statement issued yesterday welcomed the broad thrust of the report's findings and outlined three initiatives to deal with the issues raised. 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. The JFSA has been invited to join the working party. 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. Finally, a new branch user forum will provide a channel for sub-postmasters and others to raise issues at the highest level on business processes, training and support. The company will take forward the proposals as an urgent priority. I commend this statement to the House.

I think it is really important that the response relates to Horizon as that was the context in which the commitment was made, not any complaint any SPMR makes on any issue.

I propose the following line:

- After nearly 3 years of investigation and review by Post Office and Second Sight, no system wide issue with Horizon has been found.
- Nonetheless, Post Office has reflected on whether improvements can be made in addressing any concerns SPMRs may have. As a result we have made a number of changes including:
  - changing the approach to dealing with breaches in contract by SPMRs so that Post Office investigates issues without a precautionary suspension wherever possible. This has resulted in 112 being kept in post this year that would have been suspended under the previous approach; and
  - establishing the Branch User Forum to provide a way for SPMRs and others to raise issues and insights around business processes, training and support, feeding directly into the organisation's thinking at the highest level.
- These changes have been discussed with NFSP, the independent body representing the vast majority of subpostmasters, and implemented following their feedback.

**Question – Can we say the last line and would NFSP agree?**

I'm open to other suggestions but I think less is more.

Views?

Tom

Tom Wechsler  
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GRO  
tom.wechsler@GRO

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