JARB0000028

18 July 2012

Mr Alan Bates

GRO

Thank you for coming all the way to Westminster last week for the meeting. I thought it went well, and am really very pleased that you came.

Thank you also for your letter. I thought your agreement was explicitly asked for at the end of the meeting, so am sorry you felt it was not. I know Miss Linnell was happy with how things might proceed, but perhaps we did not put as direct a question to you as you would have wished. I am sorry that you feel this was so. I suppose the potential for confusion was there partly as I imagined Miss Linnell was, in a way, acting for you. Would you be good enough to perhaps let me know whether this is, or is not the case?

I do not think we went into as much detail as your letter recollects. My understanding is that 2nd Sight will proceed with initial investigations, and that the result of these will dictate the direction of further investigations. Whether or not this includes a systems investigation of Horizon is yet to be determined, but if it does, we will ask the Post Office to consider increasing the scope of the investigation to include the system itself. We are all of us, including the Post office, fully aware that if this does become the case, it is in everyone's – including the Post Office's – interest to look into the system.

Your point about obtaining cases where current errors are occurring was and is a very good one. I shall write to the Post Office and suggest this, asking firstly that individuals might be prompted to come forward via the Post Office's Subspace magazine, and secondly, for some assurances with regard to immunity. I take your point that this immunity ought to be extended to all personnel involved. Thank you for making it.

With regard to your outline, I have written to the Post office asking them to set aside £5000 for a review of the 2nd Sight initial investigations. I am yet to hear from them, but as soon as I do, I shall let you know.

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I will pass a copy of your letter on to 2nd Sight, as they ought to see your detailed remarks about the historic cases. How they investigate is, I think, a matter that is up to them. They are, after all, as expert in the field as you are in yours, and I do not want to dictate terms to them. I hope that by meeting Ron and Ian, you were somewhat reassured that they are not biased towards any given end result. Kay seemed content, and I was greatly encouraged by this.

I am glad we met, and I hope you believe that I am very concerned about this entire matter and want it cleared up as effectively – not as quickly – as possible.

I shall write again once I have heard from the Post Office.