

18 July 2012

Mr Alan Bates



Thank you for coming to Westminster last week for the meeting. I thought it went well, and am extremely grateful to you for your and Kay's constructive help in achieving that.

Thank you also for your letter. As I said at the end of the meeting, I do believe this is the best chance we have had for many years to address this most important issue. I had the impression that everybody agreed with that.

My understanding of the outcome of the meeting, while I don't think we went into quite as much detail as your letter suggests, is broadly similar to yours. We envisaged that 2nd Sight would proceed with initial investigations, and that the result of these would dictate the direction of further investigations. Whether or not this included a full systems investigation of Horizon remains to be determined, but if the initial investigations show that this is needed, we shall ask the Post Office to increase the scope of the investigation to include the system itself. We are all of us (and I genuinely believe this includes the Post office) fully aware that, if the initial investigation shows that the system is suspect, it is in everyone's – including the Post Office's – interest to take it further and 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 as a limit on the amount payable 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.

I will pass a copy of your letter and of this reply on to 2nd Sight, as they ought to see your detailed remarks about the historic cases. How they investigate is, I think, 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 after 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 genuinely 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.