

Adrian Bailey MP
Chair, Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

10th March 2015

Dear Mr Bailey

Post Office Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme Update

In light of your Committee's current Inquiry, I am writing to inform you of a decision we have made in relation to the Post Office Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme.

Having completed all our investigations into individual cases, which have found no evidence of a system wide issue with the Horizon computer system and associated issues, we will now put forward for mediation all cases remaining in the Scheme, with the exception of those where the Courts have ruled on the subject of the applicant's complaint. This will accelerate conclusion of the Scheme while continuing to provide a focus for individual concerns. I should stress that this does not change the process in relation to what an applicant can expect through their participation in the Scheme.

Of the 136 cases that entered the Scheme and have now been investigated, [xx] have been resolved, closed or put forward for mediation. A further [xx] involve earlier Court rulings. This means we now intend to put xx cases forward for mediation, overseen by the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR). The Post Office will also continue to offer independent analysis for all cases from forensic accountants.

For those applicants who have been the subject of Court rulings, we will continue to consider each on a case by case basis. Mediation cannot alter the findings of the judicial process, however, while the Post Office is under a positive ongoing duty immediately to disclose any information that might undermine its prosecution case or support the case of the defendant. However, applicants remain able to pursue the normal legal avenues open to them to appeal and in considering this approach, they will have the benefit of the Post Office's investigation into their case and the opportunity of a review by independent forensic accountants Second Sight.

We will continue to work with Second Sight to complete their 'part two' report.

The Post Office has published a report outlining the process it has undertaken to handle this issue which we will share with the committee. I enclose a copy of the press notice we have issued today.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions, or if you would like any further information. I have also written to the Minister for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs to update her on the position.

Yours sincerely

Paula Vennells
Chief Executive