

Mrs Gina Griffiths



Our ref: 304059

Your ref:

30 August 2012

Thank you for your letter of 15 July to Norman Lamb about the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance and your husband's experiences as a subpostmaster. As I am sure you will appreciate, the Minister receives far more correspondence than he is able to respond to personally, and I have been asked to reply on his behalf.

As I expect you will be aware from previous correspondence on your behalf between your MP, Stephen Mosley, and Edward Davey last autumn, the Government cannot intervene in operational and contractual issues between Post Office Ltd (POL) and individual subpostmasters. I can however advise you that Norman Lamb met Alan Bates, Chairman of the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance, earlier in the summer to hear the Alliance's concerns.

I can also report that, in the light of discussions with James Arbuthnot MP and a number of other MPs with ex-subpostmaster constituents who had raised concerns about Horizon, POL has agreed to an external review of a number of individual cases that had been raised with them by several MPs.

POL nevertheless remains confident about the robustness and integrity of its Horizon system and related accounting processes. Over the past ten years, many millions of branch reconciliations have been carried out with transactions and balances accurately recorded.

The external review of specific individual cases is being undertaken by a firm of forensic accountants and the timescale and precise processes for

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identifying the cases for the review are being determined by James Arbuthnot and the forensic accountants.

Whilst I have noted your comments about the shortfalls repaid by your husband under the terms of his contract as a subpostmaster, I should also point out that, as a recipient and custodian of significant amounts of taxpayers' funds, it is entirely appropriate that POL has in place suitably rigorous processes in place to protect and, when necessary, recover these funds. I also understand that POL would be happy to provide additional training and advice to resolve recurring accounting problems your husband may be experiencing.

Yours sincerely

Mike Whitehead
Shareholder Executive