

Janet

Sorry to trouble you on something that falls strictly within Luke's domain, but I haven't got round to it in time to ask Luke to, and it's urgent.

Please would you telephone Ed Davey's diary secretary at the Department for Business and ask whether I might be able to see him - perhaps even during a vote if we could have ten minutes - as a matter of some urgency to talk about the issue of sub-postmasters?

The issues are as follows:

The Sub-postmasters are represented by the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters, but one of my sub-postmasters, who will in May become the President of the NFSP, believes there are problems with that organisation, and that sub-postmasters may in fact come out against the Government's proposals for the following reasons:

- a) The loss of the Green Giros (to Paypoint) will seriously damage footfall through Sub Post Offices;
- b) The proposed structure of sub-Post Offices, of Flagship, Hub, Local, Basic and Outreach, will not halt the decline of the number of the sub-post offices caused by the removal of 75% of their income;
- c) Giving the Sub-Postmasters less than equality in the running of the Company will stifle the possibility of their coming up with innovative ways of creating new opportunities out of privatisation (a concept they do not in principle oppose at all) and
- d) They are aware of the promise of £300 million offered to the network but in order to plan they need to know how, where and when it is going to be provided.

And please let me know how you get on and let Nippy (as he is known) / Pritpal Singh know that we are waiting to hear from the Minister's office about it.

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