

From: Paula Vennells [GRO]
Sent: 13 June 2012 23:19
To: ARBUTHNOT, James
Subject: Fwd: Message from James Arbuthnot to Alice Perkins and Paul Vennells

Dear James, thank you for your care and attention to this. It is critical we resolve it properly and I am grateful to you.

Firstly, let me reassure you that Altice and I intend total transparency - as I'm sure you sensed from the meeting we arranged for you and Oliver.

Secondly, the queries you raise are entirely valid: the reason I had wanted to meet face to face on Monday was to talk this through. Each case as you saw with your own and with Oliver's, is different. We are dealing with particularly sensitive and personal situations, as well as with a combination of fact and misunderstandings. (And in some cases, as we explained, fiction and /or fraud.)

Rather than a blanket approach, we would take each case separately - we are dealing with individuals' lives and livelihoods. But, the guarantee for each one is complete transparency and handled in the most appropriate and sensitive way. Therefore in some, we may need to go further than the draft TOR suggests, with SubPostmasters in joint meetings; in others, that might be difficult and/or embarrassing for them and their MPs. We would however, start with each MP in order to explain/explore the background.

Thank you for reminding me about summer Recess - of course, we will work to a timetable that suits.

As regards, your draft release, my view is that it would not be without risk both in terms of human sensitivities and reputational distortions. There are reasons for this which I am happy to share.

I hope this helps clarify and reassure. That said, I do think it would help both of us to meet up before Monday; I will make this a priority and rearrange my diary to accommodate yours. Theresa or Alwen will be in touch with Janet first thing tomorrow.

Kind regards,

Paula

Ps. Alice is away on holiday this week, hence I am replying for both of us. (We discussed the issue of transparency before she left. As you would expect, Alice is committed to the primacy of this. She is also very aware of the risks and sensitivities of how we handle the individual cases.)