

**Application Form**

use only

Case ref:

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**Your Details**

Surname: Jack

Your address: GRO

Postcode: GRO

Telephone number 1: GRO

Telephone number 2:

My current Member of Parliament is: Alan Duncan

**Your Branch**

*Please insert the details of the branch where you worked. If you worked at more than one branch, please provide details on an extra sheet of paper.*

Name of branch: Great Bowden Sub Post Office

Address of branch: 28/29 The Green, Great Bowden, Market Harborough, Leicestershire

Postcode: LE16 7EU

Your role at the branch (ie. Subpostmaster, Subpostmistress, clerk, etc.): Subpostmistress

When did you begin in this role?

2005 although my husband was Post Master from 1999 until this time whereupon I took over.

**Initial Case Overview**

To the best of your knowledge, is your case (or any part of it) currently subject to any on-going criminal investigations or proceedings (including the issue of a summons, sentencing hearings or a confiscation order)?

- ☐ YES – you may still submit your case, but Second Sight may not be able investigate it whilst criminal investigations or proceedings are on-going.  
☐ NO

The purpose of the 'Initial Case Overview' is to summarise the main issues you wish Second Sight to consider. If your case is accepted for mediation, you will then have an opportunity to supply much more detail together with supporting evidence.

The following Key Questions may help you with this Initial Case Overview but please feel free to supply any information that you consider may help explain your complaint.

What is the main issue or issues you wish us to consider that relate to Horizon or its associated processes?

Regular problems with the Horizon system, lack of support from Post Office Limited, lack of training, Helpline not available to assist or provided incorrect, inconsistent advice.

When did the incidents relating to the main issue or issues occur?

I was not made aware of any problem until **July 2010 6 months after** I had sold the business in November 2009. Regular problems had occurred prior to that over a period of many months.

#### **Background**

Earlier in 2009, I was suspended and my Post Office closed for 7 days due to a deficit of £78,000! I was then informed that this was an error and that revealed a lack of training and support on how we were entering ATM figures onto the Horizon system. A Post Office Trainer was sent to our office to assist us and she advised us that she had only received her training a day before her visit, she stated it was the 'blind leading the blind'. The Post Office team highlighted that there were regular problems with my ATM and the Horizon system.

What prior contact have you had with the Post Office in regard to the incidents/issues that you are now reporting?

There was regular contact during my period of office to the Post Office because of issues with Horizon system. Calls to the Helpline were made and often the advice given by the Helpline was either non existent due to them not answering the phone or they themselves were unsure of what to advise us, inconsistent information given and often incorrect information given – poor support which led to lack of confidence with their Helpline.

POL failed to provide training and support when I asked for it. The Helpline failed me, training failed me. POL were unsympathetic when we requested help and when they turned up they never bothered investigating fully or offered an explanation. They were unsupportive at all times and at least four times they were contacted by myself due to high 'losses' Over a period of 10 years I regularly put money into the Post Office (£1,000's) to 'make good' and this was a concern. At the time of Post Office closures I actually volunteered my branch for closure because of the concerns I had and lack of support.

How was the issue or issues resolved at the time they occurred?

Poorly. Regularly needed support but lack of training and general lack of care to my requests for help. The Post Office failed me – no support, inadequate Helpdesk, unhelpful and unsympathetic staff. Inadequate training which did not meet the demands of the job.

What is the monetary value of the issue or issues you are now reporting?

The monetary value of the issue is £17,243.56

Were you the subject of either civil recovery action or criminal prosecution regarding the main issue or issues you are now reporting?

No. I received a letter 6 months after I sold the business stating that I owed the money even though on my final audit day of the business sale whereby the amount the auditor reported I owed was £288, I paid this amount and the business sale went through. The Auditor on the final day of trading in November, clearly told me that we should not have acted on the Helpline's advice and that's why there was a problem. The Helpline instructed us to do something, later told by PO staff member (Auditor) that this was incorrect.

How were these actions against you (if any) resolved?

Nothing has been resolved, I am one of the cases being supported by 2<sup>nd</sup> Sight Investigations.

What is your explanation for the events forming the main issue or issues you are now reporting?

I received a letter from the Post Office relating to the loss at Great Bowden Post Office, I queried this because I did not believe I owed the money having sold the business 6 months before and having settled a final figure of £288 on the day of the sale. The Post Office team have not carried out any proper investigations. The auditor who attended the final audit on the day was aware of the problems we had encountered at our office over a period of months and senior Post Office officers were fully aware of the significant problems we had experienced over many months from 2008 to November 2009. At least four senior Post Office personnel were fully aware of the issues we regularly experienced at our office due to ATM and Horizon issues.

In addition to my specific case, the new owners of my business, who purchased my business from me in November 2009, also showed a significant loss under their management within months of taking over, their loss was £13,000, they subsequently lost their position as Sub-Postmaster and no longer are involved in the running of the Post Office.

We have both had significant problems with Horizon and with the lack of training "extensive training" as quoted in the Post Office letter had never been undertaken by Post Office Limited at anytime in the 10 years I owned the business, indeed we found that Post Office staff themselves were not up to standard, I was once quoted by a Post Office trainer "it's the blind leading the blind I don't know what I'm doing so how am I supposed to train you". Members of my team or myself had never received adequate Post Office training, we were left to get on with it. This lack of training would appear to be a breach of duty by the Post Office, it should have ensured its agents were adequately prepared to carry out their duties as expected of them.

There were regular issues with the Helpline when our calls were unanswered and on several occasions we had been advised to do something on the system by the Helpline but later told by someone else that we shouldn't have done that! There was a real lack of support and duty of care from the Post Office to their Sub Postmasters and this is a general view of many.

BOI – the engineers did visit as the ATM was regularly out of order – we had to perform certain checks over the phone – they would eventually send an engineer.

At the audit on the final day the Auditor told my Post Office Clerk, Mrs Herbert, that she shouldn't have pressed that button and 'made good the cash' – she told her she should have settled centrally so it seems that one simple human error had disastrous consequences.

Did you request assistance from the Post Office regarding the issue or issues you are now reporting?

I have provided notes to the Post Office by way of correspondence seeking their full report and evidence which has not been forthcoming.

What assistance if any was provided?

**No support or help**

*Please attach additional sheets of paper if you require more space.*

<b>Declaration</b>  I acknowledge that: As part of the Scheme, I must promptly provide information about my case to Second Sight. If I do not provide full information in a timely manner, I accept that it may not be possible to investigate or mediate my case. Information I provide about my case or the findings of Second Sight's investigation may help reach a resolution with Post Office but that it may also reveal further claims against me. I am only entitled to financial support from Post Office if I have signed a Funding Agreement.  I confirm that: My case relates to the Horizon system or an associated issue. Post Office may communicate details of my case to Second Sight, JFSA, my Member of Parliament and/or its professional advisors. The facts and matters set out in this Application are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.  I confirm that I am: <input type="checkbox"/> Currently serving as a Subpostmaster and have already raised my case with Post Office and have completed all Post Office's internal complaint processes. <input type="checkbox"/> Not currently serving as a Subpostmaster. (Please tick one box) If you are unable to give all the above acknowledgements and confirmations, your case may not be eligible for the Scheme. In that circumstance, please contact the JFSA for assistance. This Application Form and your involvement in the Scheme do not create any legally binding contract or obligations between Post Office and you. The Working Group, its members and their advisors owe no obligations or duties, and accept no liability, to you in connection with the Scheme.	
<b>Signed</b>	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"><b>GRO</b></div>
<b>Name</b>	..... CAROLINE JACK
<b>Date</b>	..... 27/9/13