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**From:** Belinda Crowe[IMCEAEX-  
\_O=MMS\_OU=EXCHANGE+20ADMINISTRATIVE+20GROUP+20+28FYDIBOHF23SPDLT+29  
\_CN=RECIPIENTS\_CN=BELINDA+20CROWE79B93F11-569F-4526-A078-  
F5B4958A8917220@C72A47.ingest.local]  
**Sent:** Fri 24/10/2014 2:59:32 PM (UTC)  
**To:** Gavin Lambert[  
**Cc:** Avene O'Farrell  
**Subject:** Re: Correspondence with James Arbuthnot's office : a quick update and next steps

After. Then we present a united view.

B

GRO

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**From:** Gavin Lambert  
**Sent:** Friday, October 24, 2014 03:58 PM  
**To:** Belinda Crowe  
**Cc:** Avene O'Farrell  
**Subject:** RE: Correspondence with James Arbuthnot's office : a quick update and next steps

Thanks Belinda. I think Paula has some keep free time in her diary on Monday which Avene might be able to use to squeeze in 15 mins for a catch up.

Before or after we sit down with Mark at 12?

GRO

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**From:** Belinda Crowe  
**Sent:** 24 October 2014 15:45  
**To:** Gavin Lambert; Chris Aujard; Mark R Davies; Tom Wechsler; Patrick Bourke; Belinda Crowe  
**Cc:** Belinda Crowe  
**Subject:** RE: Correspondence with James Arbuthnot's office : a quick update and next steps

Just for the record Alice sent her email to James as has responded. I have cut and pasted below. Please note the reference to seeing Paula asap. In view of where we now are, I think at least a call asap.

We will bring the plan to the meeting on Monday and walk through it. We really will need a quick brief with Paula. Any chance of getting a quick slot with her Monday Gavin?

Best wishes  
Belinda

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From: ARBUTHNOT, James[  
Sent: 24 October 2014 12:53  
To: Alice Perkins  
Subject: RE: Post Office Mediation Process

Dear Alice  
Thank you for this message. I look forward to seeing Paula, as soon as possible.  
Yours ever  
James

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Office of the Rt Hon James Arbuthnot, MP House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

From: Alice Perkins [GRO]

Sent: 24 October 2014 12:22  
To: ARBUTHNOT, James  
Subject: Post Office Mediation Process

Dear James,

> Thank you for your email of yesterday afternoon (which strangely arrived in my personal inbox which I see infrequently - this address is much more reliable).

> I am very sorry that you feel you may have to question the Post Office's good faith in the way the Sub-Postmasters' cases are being handled.

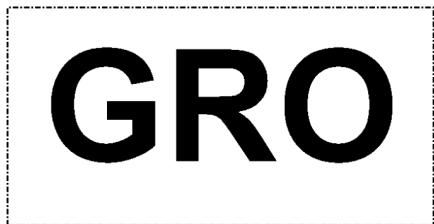
> As you know, feelings understandably run high on this issue and it is very important that you understand the facts of the matter. So I am very glad that you want to hear the Post Office's point of view before taking any action.

> Paula has had a well-deserved break of 3 days this week and as luck would have it, I understand that your letter to her arrived on the first day she was away. I know that she will be in touch with you as soon as she possibly can and that she will want to be as frank with you as I know you will be with her.

> Yours ever

> Alice

**Belinda Crowe**  
148 Old Street, LONDON, EC1V 9HQ



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**From:** Gavin Lambert  
**Sent:** 24 October 2014 12:44  
**To:** Louise Chatfield; Belinda Crowe  
**Cc:** Chris Aujard; Mark R Davies; Patrick Bourke; Tom Wechsler  
**Subject:** RE: Correspondence with James Arbuthnot's office : a quick update and next steps

thanks Louise. Let's go for 30 mins at 12 on Monday please.

Gavin Lambert  
**GRO**

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**From:** Louise Chatfield  
**Sent:** 24 October 2014 12:35  
**To:** Gavin Lambert; Belinda Crowe  
**Cc:** Chris Aujard; Mark R Davies  
**Subject:** RE: Correspondence with James Arbuthnot's office : a quick update and next steps

Hi Gavin and Belinda

The first available time Mark is free on Monday is 12pm.

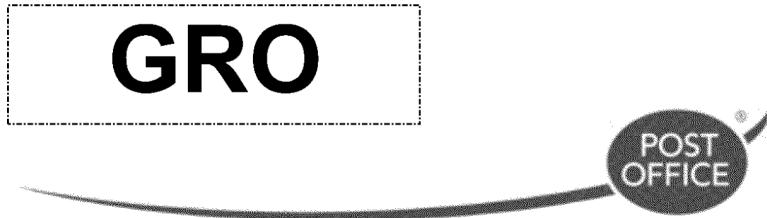
With ExCo moving to 9am there is no free time first thing in the morning I'm afraid.

Does 12 work for you?

Louise

Louise Chatfield | PA to Mark Davies, Communications and Corporate Affairs Director

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Banner St Wing, 148 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HQ



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**From:** Gavin Lambert  
**Sent:** 24 October 2014 12:30  
**To:** Belinda Crowe; Louise Chatfield  
**Cc:** Chris Aujard; Mark R Davies  
**Subject:** RE: Correspondence with James Arbuthnot's office : a quick update and next steps

Thanks Belinda.

Can I suggest we sit down with Mark first thing on Monday morning to run through tactics for next week please, including Paula's conversation with James? I'm conscious we are now in the territory of delivering robust messages and I'm keen to be make sure they are consistent across any messages from Paula, Alice etc.

Louise - would you be able to help us by finding 15 mins on Monday to review with Mark please?

Many thanks

Gavin Lambert

**GRO**

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**From:** Belinda Crowe  
**Sent:** 24 October 2014 09:55  
**To:** Alice Perkins  
**Cc:** Chris Aujard; Paula Vennells; Gavin Lambert; Belinda Crowe; Mark R Davies  
**Subject:** RE: Correspondence with James Arbuthnot's office : a quick update and next steps

Dear Alice

Chris and I have discussed and also agree what you have drafted works well. We would hope, as you suggest, that a response from you today will suffice until Paula responds substantively on her return. In terms of handling we:

- have a response drafted for Paula in reply to James' initial letter in which he asked Paula to meet with him and a number of other MP's. The initial dates he has offered are not convenient so that gives us an opportunity to suggest an earlier meeting or a call between Paula and James in the first instance
- intend to respond next week to Ron's request for a meeting with Paula (preferably after James and Paula have spoken) by inviting him to speak to Chris
- have a call out to BIS about preparing for a possible UQ
- plan to call Tony early next week, the timing and substance to be determined by what happens over the next couple of days
- have media lines to cover most eventualities (which I am reviewing with Comms again this morning)

We will keep all of this under review as/if the situation develops.

Clearly there is a lot of detail behind this so please let me know if you have any questions or would like more information. Otherwise we will, as ever, let you know if there are any significant developments.

Best wishes

**Belinda Crowe**  
148 Old Street, LONDON, EC1V 9HQ



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**From:** Mark R Davies  
**Sent:** 24 October 2014 08:24  
**To:** Alice Perkins  
**Cc:** Chris Aujard; Paula Vennells; Belinda Crowe; Gavin Lambert  
**Subject:** Re: Correspondence with James Arbuthnot's office : a quick update and next steps

Dear Alice

I think this works very well.

Mark

Sent from my iPhone  
On 24 Oct 2014, at 07:43, "Alice Perkins" <[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]> wrote:

Thank you Chris. It is v helpful to see this.

I don't think we should be surprised by this - you flagged up v clearly that taking the steps we are taking would at some point cause a reaction. And we have long suspected some of the behaviours you have referred to. As a small aside, this is the first time JA has ever written to my personal email address and I have no idea how he got that.

I am happy with the timeline you suggest - we must reply to JA today but it may be enough for me to do so if Paula wants to wait till Monday.

In drafting them though, we must reflect the fact that he is a senior backbench MP and we have had good conversations with him in the past, albeit that he has an axe to grind and has not always been transparent with us. The really key thing is that he hears our side of the story and in fairness, he is giving us that opportunity, albeit with very little notice. If Paula could see him on her own with no-one else in the room that might be the best we could hope for but he may well not agree to that.

I think my reply should be very brief but friendly - something like:-

"Thank you for your email (which strangely arrived in my personal inbox which I see much less regularly).

I am very sorry that you feel you may have to question the Post Office's good faith in the way the Sub-Postmasters' cases are being handled. As you know, feelings understandably run high on this issue and it is very important that you understand the facts of the matter.

I am very glad that you want to hear the Post Office's point of view before taking any action.

Paula has had a well-deserved 3 days of leave this week and as luck would have it, I understand that your letter to her arrived on the first day she was away. I know that she will be in touch with you as soon

as she possibly can and that she will want to be as frank with you as I know you will be with her.  
Yours ever  
Alice"  
Perhaps you could let me know this morning whether you are happy with that?  
Thanks  
Alice

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**From:** Chris Aujard [mailto:[GRO](#)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 23, 2014 09:18 PM GMT Standard Time  
**To:** Alice Perkins; Paula Vennells <[GRO](#)>  
**Cc:** Mark R Davies <[GRO](#)>; Belinda Crowe <[GRO](#)>; Gavin Lambert <[GRO](#)>  
**Subject:** Correspondence with James Arbuthnot's office : a quick update and next steps

Dear Both

I thought it might be useful to drop you a short note to let you know where we got to this evening with James Arbuthnot's office. By way of background:

1. On Tuesday Paula's received a letter from James Arbuthnot asking for a meeting.
2. His office followed up with two subsequent emails from Janet (on Wednesday and today), the first chasing a response to the letter and the second, saying that Ron was trying to contact Paula to tell her how things were going from his perspective. In both emails Janet mentions, in a slightly menacing manner, that James is being approached by the media.
3. This morning Ron contacted Belinda asking for Paula to call him. Belinda spoke to Ron who said that James (and others) had asked him to speak to Paula about his concerns with the Scheme.
4. This afternoon James emailed Alice, copied to Paula expressing concern about the Scheme.

Given the above, and particularly in view of fact that this all feels rather orchestrated, I placed a call to James's office around 5:00pm tonight to offer to discuss the role and functioning of the Working Group. Janet answered - her response was curt, dismissive and quite aggressive: she declined to listen, repeatedly interrupted me in my efforts to offer a call to James. It took me several attempts to persuade her to agree to pass my message onto James, though she ultimately did. I followed up my offer up with an email confirming my willingness to speak. However, as it turns out, she had in the meantime left a message on my mobile to say that James had declined my offer of a call as he only wants to speak to Paula and no one else (I am not clear how she got hold of James so quickly as he was meant to have tied up). [By way of an aside, to start with, she thought that I was Ron (from Second Sight) when her tone was both very friendly and welcoming!]

In light of the above, Belinda has been developing a handling plan, the elements of which include a draft letter for you, Paula, to send to James, and a suggested response for you, Alice, to James' email. I am hoping that this will be finalised tomorrow morning, and that we will be able to circulate the responses then along with our more general thoughts on the way forward. In the meantime I would suggest that we hold our line that we are not prepared to discuss the Scheme as it is confidential.

Belinda - please do jump in if you think that I have missed anything of importance!

With kind regards

Chris

PS - many apologies that this brief update is so long!

Chris Aujard | General Counsel  
<image001.png>  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Bunhill Row, 148 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HQ  
**GRO**  
<image002.png>

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