

Post Office meeting – Monday 17 November 2014

Andrew Bridgen MP
Oliver Letwin MP
Mike Wood MP

Alan Bates

Paula Vennells
Chris Aujarde (lead counsel for PO)
Angela Van-Den-Bogerd (leading on mediation scheme for PO)
Mark Davies (public affairs)

- Really worried about mediation scheme
- All parties – MPs, Post Office, JFSA – entered into scheme in good faith
- All wanted: justice for individuals as well as Post Office reputation unsullied
- Entire project began with meeting here at which a number of individual SubPostmasters came forward and claimed the same thing: they had been accused of false accounting. Not all of them criminals.
- Scheme was never designed JUST to look at Horizon as a computer system and its potential faults – and JNA has experience at how difficult it is to look at software (FADEC and Chinook), experience that absence of evidence of faults does not necessarily mean that faults are not there
 - Difficult to understand why PO now saying that some of Second Sight's investigations are beyond their remit / their areas of expertise – to JNA's mind, Second Sight perfectly equipped to investigate as they are doing (areas like contracts, training, quality of past investigations)
- Real dismay at how things are going

Specific cases

- Past investigations resulting in individuals being bullied into court
 - Jo Hamilton – bullied into court on the threat of criminal prosecution – and her experience shared by others
 - She made mistakes but had no training, poor advice given via Helpline when she ran into difficulty
 - Now being told that her case won't proceed to mediation until ALL cases have been investigated
- Delay in mediation unfair – why wait until all cases investigated?
 - Karen Lumley MP's constituent – house being re-possessed because he has been told mediation not possible until all cases have been considered
 - When will all cases be considered? We understand not until Second Sight's Second report has been finalised – this probably not until April 2015. Why can't mediation proceed before this? No matter the reason, surely unjust that people have to wait – evidence on individual cases has already been presented by the time Second Sight present their initial report – don't have to wait, surely.
- Meetings have become too procedural and 'lawyerly'

- John Redwood MP's constituent says that she has now withdrawn from the scheme
- Tried to present her case at a meeting but was interrupted by Post Office lawyers and not permitted to speak
- Discrepancies between Horizon data PO had and the data she had were dismissed – different logs, no sensible explanation offered, little time permitted to raise concerns – PO said there were data about which she would need to know nothing
- Given very little time to respond to PO – and this is common. Jo Hamilton was only given a few days to respond to initial investigation report.

Post Office meeting – Monday 17 November 2014

What does JNA want from this meeting?

1. A steer on whether the mediation scheme is going to achieve its aims or not
2. How willing Post Office is to revert to scheme's original aims – mediation in good faith between individuals and Post Office to ensure that BOTH leave with reputations restored
3. If scheme is to get back on track – how? Next steps? By whom?
4. If not – JNA will be talking to media this week (any political action to be taken? UQ?)