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Jo Swinson MP
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

9 March 2015

Dear Jo,

I am writing to inform you of a decision we have made regarding the Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme which, as you know, we set up in 2013 to respond to claims of flaws in Post Office Ltd's Horizon computer system and associated processes.

I am pleased to say that Post Office Ltd has now completed investigations into all the individual cases put forward for consideration in the Scheme. Furthermore, again I am pleased to confirm that no evidence has been found through these investigations of any system wide issues with Horizon.

As a result, Post Office has now decided to put forward for mediation all cases remaining in the Scheme except those that have been subject to a previous Court ruling (please see below for more detail on our proposed approach to these cases). This will accelerate the conclusion of the Scheme in the interests of Applicants and ensure that we fulfil the commitments we made to them at the outset.

The mediation process will continue to be overseen by the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR). The Post Office will also continue to seek to make an independent review by forensic accountants Second Sight, available to Applicants where this has not already been provided. We will also work with Second Sight to support completion of their further thematic report in order that it is available to inform the ongoing mediation process.

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For those applicants who have been the subject of court rulings, two important points need to be drawn out. Firstly, we will continue to consider each of these cases carefully, on a case by case basis, even though mediation cannot overturn a Court's ruling. Secondly, as prosecutor Post Office has a continuing duty after a prosecution has concluded to disclose immediately any information that subsequently comes to light which might undermine its prosecution case or support the case of the defendant. Having now completed its reinvestigation of each of the cases, Post Office has found no reason to conclude that any original prosecution was unsafe. Applicants remain able to pursue the normal legal avenues open to them to appeal court rulings with any further material disclosed to them, including that produced through the Scheme.

In all cases including those subject to court rulings, (if Applicants give their consent) the Post Office continues to be prepared to discuss individual cases, in confidence with relevant Members of Parliament or indeed to meet separately with individual Applicants to discuss their cases.

The approach set out above will help to bring the mediation process to a conclusion earlier than previously envisaged, thereby addressing the concerns of some stakeholders, including MPs, the JFSA and the Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee.

One of the consequences of our presumption in favour of mediating in as many cases as possible is that it brings to an end the role of the Working Group which recommends whether a case is suitable to go to mediation or not. I have informed the Chairman of the Working Group, Sir Anthony Hooper, and thanked him for his important contribution to this process.

The Post Office will also publish a report outlining the background and steps it has undertaken to be able to bring the scheme to this point.

I will be writing to the chairman of the Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee to update him.

Yours sincerely,

GRO

Paula Vennells
Chief Executive

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