

Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance

Anna Soubry MP
Minister for Postal Affairs
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
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Alan Bates

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Dear Minister

I am writing to you, the Minister responsible for Post Office, on behalf of our group, the Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance, to request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

We have been campaigning for years to try and obtain justice for all who have suffered and are still suffering from the abuse inflicted upon Subpostmasters as a result of the introduction of the Horizon computer system by Post Office. With the aid of a growing number of MPs, this matter has been discussed in Westminster over the past few years, the last time being the BIS Committee evidence session on the 3rd February 2015.

In the past I have written to the predecessors of your current office, who have responded with varying degrees of concern, so your department should have considerable information about this issue, although I fear in recent years it has only echoed Post Office's position. However I do believe it is important that you are presented first-hand with the issues from the victims perspective, hence the request to meet with you.

I am sure you will be told that a scheme was set up by Post Office a few years ago to address this matter (the Initial Complaint Review & Mediation Scheme), and that a firm of independent forensic investigators (Second Sight) had been engaged by Post Office to examine the concerns of the individuals. The Scheme was overseen by a Working Group comprising of representatives of Post Office, JFSA, Second Sight and Sir Anthony Hooper who was engaged as Chairman. While the Scheme began with the aims of finding the truth, Post Office shortly afterwards changed direction and went into denial and defence of their brand at any cost using exorbitant amounts of public money on lawyers to bolster their position.

Without any doubt at all, the recent report by the independent investigators was so damning of Post Office's actions that Post Office disbanded the Working Group, got rid of the Chairman and publically announced the Working Group had completed its work (which is utter nonsense). Furthermore, Post Office spent even more money on lawyers having them write a report, twice as long as the investigators report, in an effort to twist the truth of this independent work produced by the firm they themselves had selected. This 93

page Post Office 'report' has absolutely no merit and it is only the independent report that has any standing, as it is, independent.

The Scheme has been so badly abused by Post Office that it is no longer fit for purpose, and last week JFSA had to write to its members in the Scheme to suggest that they now withdraw until such time as an independently run, transparent and honest scheme is in operation. It is obvious to everyone involved, other than Post Office, that the only way the truth is going to come out about the way Post Office has behaved, is when Post Office itself is subject to an independent investigation. This is the goal that we will now be asking for political support to achieve, as until that happens, Post Office will continue its programme of denial and its abuse of Subpostmasters both past and present, and very soon every MP will have at least one constituent who would have suffered at the hands of Post Office.

Whilst it is important that we meet with you to discuss this matter in more detail, we would ask you to consider inviting the firm of independent investigators, Second Sight, who we understand are amongst the world leaders in this type of work, to meet with you to give their honest assessment of the situation without Post Office or JFSA being present. It should be remembered that Second Sight was Post Office's choice and it took considerable work by both Second Sight and James Arbuthnot, who was then the MP for North East Hampshire and chairing the MP group on this issue, to convince JFSA of Second Sight's independence having been a Post Office appointment at the start of the Scheme. The meeting with Second Sight is really of some urgency, as contractually they are obliged to hand over all data from their investigations to Post Office in matter of a few weeks. JFSA is concerned that once Post Office has the only copy of all the data, it could be lost, misplaced, accidentally destroyed, suffer from fire or flood damage, all of which seems to have happened to a number of crucial documents during the term of the investigations.

We would gladly supply you with any further information you might require, and look forward to meeting with you in the near future as this matter has gone on for far too long and needs resolving as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



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Alan Bates
Chairman, Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance