

Message

From: Thompson, Laura - UKGI [GRO]
Sent: 14/04/2016 16:20:41
To: Neville-Rolfe MPST [GRO]
CC: Javid MPST [GRO]; SpAd Javid MPST [GRO]; Callard, Richard - UKGI [GRO]; Manson, Justin - UKGI [GRO]
Subject: RE: Submission to Ministers on Post Office Horizon

Hi George – we spoke, I suggest you send something along the lines of the following. Happy to chat through of course.

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I am writing to update you on a group legal action which is being lodged against the Post Office.

We have previously kept you informed about allegations that the Horizon IT system, used in Post Office branches, had systemic errors which were causing accounting discrepancies and causing postmasters to be wrongly accused of false accounting or theft. Post Office have taken the matter seriously, bringing in independent forensic accountants to look at the issue, and setting up a mediation scheme to allow postmasters to raise claims. However, despite no evidence of flaws or wrongful convictions being found, the campaign continues. To put this in context, around 150 claims have been raised, from a population of 11,500 post office branches and nearly half a million users of the Horizon system since it was rolled out in 2000.

Civil action against Post Office has been mooted in the past but never pursued. The campaign group, Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance, announced on Monday that they have launched High Court proceedings against Post Office. Post Office are yet to receive a formal letter of claim, which would set out the basis for the legal action, but have received a letter from JFSA's solicitors stating that proceedings have been issued on behalf of 91 claimants.

Post Office are unaware of any new developments in the underlying disputes which might make the chance of a successful claim any more likely. This claim may therefore come to nothing, as others have in the past. The new Chair of Post Office Limited, Tim Parker, has undertaken a review of this matter with support from a QC. He is meeting with Baroness Neville-Rolfe later this month to discuss his review findings further, but the headline is that there remains no evidence that the IT system is flawed or that any convictions are unsafe.

Officials here advise we maintain the position that this is a matter for the Post Office – particularly given there could be legal proceedings underway. I am updating you on this as this matter has been raised at PMQs in the past, most recently on 1 July 2015 by Andrew Bridgen MP, where the Prime Minister responded that "I would hope that it would not be necessary to have a full independent judicial inquiry to get to the bottom of this issue, but get to the bottom of it we must."

Do get in touch if you need any additional information.

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director
UK Government Investments
1 Victoria Street | London | SW1H 0ET

T: [GRO]
M: [GRO]
E: [GRO]

From: Thompson, Laura - UKGI
Sent: 14 April 2016 16:25
To: 'Neville-Rolfe MPST' <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Javid MPST <[REDACTED]> SpAd Javid MPST <[REDACTED]> Callard, Richard - UKGI <[REDACTED]>; Manson, Justin - UKGI <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Submission to Ministers on Post Office Horizon

OK thanks Andrew

George/Rob – let me know what you need from us.

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director
UK Government Investments
1 Victoria Street | London | SW1H 0ET

T: [REDACTED]
M: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]

From: Neville-Rolfe MPST <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 14 April 2016 16:18
To: Thompson, Laura - UKGI <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Javid MPST <[REDACTED]> SpAd Javid MPST <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: Submission to Ministers on Post Office Horizon

Hi Laura,

BNR has asked that an e-mail is sent to No10 via the SoS office just to sight them on the developments re Horizon.

Kind regards

Andrew Smith

From: Thompson, Laura - UKGI <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 14 April 2016 16:16
To: Neville-Rolfe MPST
Cc: Javid MPST; SpAd Javid MPST; Perm Sec (BIS); Russell Mark (UKGI); Baugh James (UKGI); Callard Richard (UKGI); Dollin Michael (UKGI); Manson Justin (UKGI); McInnes Tim (UKGI); Williams Jessica (UKGI); Kilgariff Patrick (LEGAL B); French Claire (Communications)
Subject: Submission to Ministers on Post Office Horizon

Andrew cc. Rob, George

Please find attached note that we discussed with the Minister yesterday regarding the Post Office Horizon issue and potential group civil action against Post Office.

The Minister asked for a sense of timescales. Until a letter of claim is received by Post Office and they are informed of the details of the claim, it is difficult to judge timescales, but we will provide further updates as and when we receive any. The solicitors state that the letter of claim will be sent to POL within 14 days.

Rob, George – happy to chat through any additional background if intend to put this to your SpAds/Minister.

Thanks

Laura

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director

UK Government Investments

1 Victoria Street | London | SW1H 0ET

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