

**From:** Cooper, Tom - UKGI [/O=HMT/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=8D968D43E33749AE9E59F9C9350E69D5-COOPER, THOMAS (TCOO)]  
**Sent:** Mon 18/03/2019 9:05:40 AM (UTC)  
**To:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS); [REDACTED] GRO  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

On 18 Mar 2019, at 08:56, Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED] GRO> wrote:

Hi Tom,

Please see final letter cleared by Kelly and No.10 attached.

We are currently arranging with Whips office to circulate this morning.

Thanks,  
Rosie

<image001.png>

Rosie Perkins  
Private Secretary to Kelly Tolhurst MP | Parliamentary Under  
Secretary of State  
Tel: [REDACTED] GRO | Mobile: [REDACTED] GRO  
mpst.tolhurst@ [REDACTED] GRO | rosie.perkins@ [REDACTED] GRO  
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
[www.gov.uk/beis](http://www.gov.uk/beis) | <https://twitter.com/beisgovuk>

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**From:** Cooper, Tom - UKGI <[REDACTED] GRO>  
**Sent:** 18 March 2019 08:30  
**To:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED] GRO>  
**Cc:** Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <[REDACTED] GRO>; Holloway, William (BEIS) <[REDACTED] GRO>; Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <[REDACTED] GRO>; Watson, Richard - UKGI <[REDACTED] GRO>; Clark, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED] GRO>; Willmer, Jacob (BEIS) <[REDACTED] GRO>; Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED] GRO>; Aldred, Tom - UKGI <[REDACTED] GRO>; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships) <[REDACTED] GRO>; Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <[REDACTED] GRO>; Clarke, Stephen - UKGI <[REDACTED] GRO>; Fox, Joshua - UKGI <[REDACTED] GRO>; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI <[REDACTED] GRO>  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

I'd be grateful for an update on this.

Has the letter been issued?

If so, please forward the final text.

Tom

Sent from my iPhone

On 17 Mar 2019, at 14:55, Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <GRO> wrote:

Thanks, both. Will share now and I'll revert.

Whips admin unit aren't around to issue letters this weekend. The chief Whips office have suggested our SpAds get in touch with theirs who can issue. Otherwise it will have to wait until 8am Monday morning. I'll let you know if Kelly has a view on this.

Thanks,  
Rosie

Rosie Perkins  
Private Secretary to Kelly Tolhurst MP

GRO

---

**From:** Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <GRO>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2019 14:37  
**To:** Holloway, William (BEIS); Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS); Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Cooper, Tom - UKGI  
**Cc:** Watson, Richard - UKGI; Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Thanks Will.

Rosie can you share with Kelly?

Thanks  
Craig

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**From:** Holloway, William (BEIS) <GRO>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2019 2:28 pm  
**To:** Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS); Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Cooper, Tom - UKGI  
**Cc:** Watson, Richard - UKGI; Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Thanks Craig, I'm happy with this.

Best,  
Will

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**From:** Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <GRO>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2019 2:17 PM  
**To:** Holloway, William (BEIS); Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS); Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Cooper, Tom - UKGI  
**Cc:** Watson, Richard - UKGI; Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Hi Will

Have discussed with POL, they are nervous about prejudging the outcome of future trials which will look at individual claims but have suggested the addition in bold below to the third paragraph, which hopefully addresses your point below?

I believe the courts are the right place to hear the issues being raised and hope that the legal case will assist in the resolution of what are long-standing issues between some postmasters and the Post Office ***so that postmasters with claims can obtain a remedy if the court finds there is validity to those claims.***

Regards  
Craig

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**From:** Holloway, William (BEIS) <GRO>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2019 11:02 am  
**To:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS); Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Cooper, Tom - UKGI  
**Cc:** Watson, Richard - UKGI; Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Morning,

Not really sure it reflects GC & KT steer about justice for those who have a valid claim.

Happy to accept PO changes, but can we add to them a bit to clarify?

Thanks,  
Will

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**From:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <GRO>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2019 10:43 AM

**To:** Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Cooper, Tom - UKGI; Holloway, William (BEIS)  
**Cc:** Watson, Richard - UKGI; Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI  
**Subject:** RE: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Will – do you have a view on the below amended version please?

If the letter has not yet been sent out we may have scope to replace with the version below, I've highlighted the changes. I'll continue to chase on where the letter has got to, apologies not having much luck.

Thanks,  
Rosie

<image008.png>

Rosie Perkins

Private Secretary to Kelly Tolhurst MP | Parliamentary Under Secretary of St

Tel: **GRO** | Mobile: **GRO**  
mpst.tolhurst@ **GRO** | rosie.perkins@ **GRO**

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

[www.gov.uk/beis](http://www.gov.uk/beis) | <https://twitter.com/beisgovuk>

**From:** Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) **GRO**  
**Sent:** 17 March 2019 10:21  
**To:** Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)  
**GRO**; Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <**GRO**>;  
Cooper, Tom - UKGI <**GRO**>  
**Cc:** Holloway, William (BEIS) **GRO**; Watson, Richard - UKGI  
**GRO**; Clark, Mpst (BEIS) **GRO**; Willmer,  
Jacob (BEIS) <**GRO**>; Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS)  
**GRO**; Aldred, Tom - UKGI **GRO**; Miles,  
Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships) <**GRO**>; Vandini,  
Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <**GRO**>; Clarke,  
Stephen - UKGI <**GRO**>; Fox, Joshua - UKGI  
**GRO**; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI <**GRO**>  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Rosie

As mentioned by Gavin, POL's amended version is below.

Regards  
Craig

Dear Colleague,

Postmasters are the backbone of the Post Office, and their branches are the backbone of

communities across the country. That's why we committed to safeguarding the post office network and protecting existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion.

As you may know a legal case has been brought against Post Office Ltd by a group of mainly former postmasters. It is complex, with some of the cases involved stretching back to 2000, and is due to span over four trials.

I believe the courts are the right place to hear the issues being raised and hope that the legal case will assist in the resolution of what are long-standing issues between Post Office and some postmasters.

This first judgment deals with the contractual relationship between the Post Office and postmasters. It is important to note that it does not deal with matters of breach or liability. The judge has, however, been highly critical of the Post Office's handling of the case and finds that over the long period of time addressed by the judgment, there have been times when Post Office's conduct in its dealings with the lead claimant postmasters have been heavy-handed, some of its operations insufficiently transparent, and its procedures and processes lacking in consistency and professionalism.

The judgement is complex and lengthy and the Post Office will need time to consider in detail, including whether it has a case for appeal. However, having spoken over the weekend with the Chairman of POL, I am assured they have acknowledged the criticism, are taking it very seriously, and will be taking appropriate action where necessary.

Legal proceedings in this case are currently scheduled to continue until at least March 2020. While this dispute remains a matter for the courts, it is clearly not appropriate for Government to comment further. However, I will be remaining in close contact with the Post Office over the coming weeks and months as they deliver on their commitments to improve.

I understand that this issue will be of interest and concern to Members of the House and, as this process progresses, I will update Members further.

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**From:** Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)

**GRO**

**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2019 10:14 am

**To:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS); Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Cooper, Tom - UKGI

**Cc:** Holloway, William (BEIS); Watson, Richard - UKGI; Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Thanks Rosie

Yes, Post Office came back to us late last night with some proposed changes which reflect



more of the nuance of the case and I think are helpful. They retain the core points discussed with SoS and Kelly yesterday.

So, if the letter has yet to go out, then I suggest worth Kelly considering please.

Craig is send over the tweaked version shortly.

Around all day and happy to discuss

Gavin

Gavin Lambert

GRO

---

**From:** "Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS)" <GRO>  
**Date:** Sunday, 17 March 2019 at 09:51  
**To:** "Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)" <GRO>, "Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)" <GRO>, "Cooper, Tom - UKGI" <GRO>  
**Cc:** "Holloway, William (BEIS)" <GRO>, "Watson, Richard - UKGI" <GRO>, "Clark, Mpst (BEIS)" <GRO>, "Willmer, Jacob (BEIS)" <GRO>, "Jeremy Lum" <GRO>, "Aldred, Tom - UKGI" <GRO>, "Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships)" <GRO>, "Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)" <GRO>, "Clarke, Stephen - UKGI" <GRO>, "Fox, Joshua - UKGI" <GRO>, "Lambert, Lucie - UKGI" <GRO>  
**Subject:** RE: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Hi all,

Hibaq shared the Dear Colleague letter with the Whips office yesterday and I understand that version was cleared by all (see attached). I am just checking in with the whips on whether it was actually sent or not, as we did not receive confirmation yesterday.

Can you please confirm that concerns have been raised regarding the attached letter?

Additionally, is there any update on the departmental statement please?

Thanks,  
Rosie

<image009.png>

Rosie Perkins

Private Secretary to Kelly Tolhurst MP | Parliamentary Under Secretary of St

Tel: GRO | Mobile: GRO

mpst.tolhurst@GRO | rosie.perkins@GRO

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

[www.gov.uk/beis](http://www.gov.uk/beis) | <https://twitter.com/beisgovuk>

**From:** Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 17 March 2019 09:14  
**To:** Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <[REDACTED]>; Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Cooper, Tom - UKGI <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Holloway, William (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Watson, Richard - UKGI <[REDACTED]>; Clark, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Willmer, Jacob (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Aldred, Tom - UKGI <[REDACTED]>; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships) <[REDACTED]>; Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <[REDACTED]>; Clarke, Stephen - UKGI <[REDACTED]>; Fox, Joshua - UKGI <[REDACTED]>; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Morning Hibaq,

Can you confirm if the letter went out last night or has it been held pending POL's concerns?

Thanks  
Craig

<image010.png><image011.jpg>

Craig Watson – Deputy Director Retail, Services & Advanced Manufacturing and Services Directorate  
Tel: [REDACTED] Mobile: [REDACTED]  
craig.watson@[REDACTED]  
Floor 4 Victoria 3, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1  
0ET [www.gov.uk/beis](http://www.gov.uk/beis) | <https://twitter.com/beisgovuk>

PA: Pat Omogbai

[REDACTED] pat.omogbai@[REDACTED]

<image012.png>  
Mental Health First Aider  
[MHFA Details on BEIS Intranet](#)

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**From:** Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 17 March 2019 02:06  
**To:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Cooper, Tom - UKGI <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Holloway, William (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Watson, Richard - UKGI <[REDACTED]>; Clark, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Willmer, Jacob (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS) <[REDACTED]>; Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <[REDACTED]>; Aldred, Tom - UKGI <[REDACTED]>; Miles, [REDACTED]

Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships) <[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]> Vandini,  
Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services) <[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]>; Clarke,  
Stephen - UKGI [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]>; Fox, Joshua - UKGI  
[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Can we hold the letter from going out please until we and our lawyers have had chance to review POL's comments

Gavin Lambert

[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]

**From:** "Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS)" <[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]>  
**Date:** Saturday, 16 March 2019 at 23:46  
**To:** "Cooper, Tom - UKGI" [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED], "Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS)"  
[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** "Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)"  
<[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]>, "Holloway, William (BEIS)"  
[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]>, "Watson, Richard - UKGI"  
[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED], "Clark, Mpst (BEIS)" <[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]>,  
"Willmer, Jacob (BEIS)" [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED], Jeremy Lumb  
[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED], "Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and  
Services)" [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED], "Aldred, Tom - UKGI"  
[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED], "Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships)"  
[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED], "Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and  
Services)" [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED], "Clarke, Stephen - UKGI"  
[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED], "Fox, Joshua - UKGI" <[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]>,  
"Lambert, Lucie - UKGI" [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Would you be able to share on the chain the text you had shared with POL? Is the text a previous version of the DC letter?

As that's the text you had said the lawyers would be concerned about earlier.

Kind Regards,  
Hibaq

Hibaq Said

APS to Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility

[REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]

<image013.png>

**From:** Cooper, Tom - UKGI [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2019 11:08 pm

**To:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS)

**Cc:** Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Holloway, William (BEIS);  
Watson, Richard - UKGI; Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS);  
Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles,  
Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing  
and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst



Post Office have now seen the draft and have emailed Gavin and me to say they have significant concerns - not with the spirit but with the way it is worded.

As mentioned in my earlier email I think the current draft will cause the lawyers problems in relation to handling the case.

I suggest there needs to be a discussion with POL to agree with POL a form of words that conveys what is wanted but that doesn't damage the case.

Tom

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Mar 2019, at 22:47, Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <GRO> wrote:

Hi All,

Please see readout below of the call between Kelly and POL this afternoon with few actions. Let me know if anything doesn't make sense or if I've misunderstood something.

It would also be good to get an update on when we plan to make this departmental public statement. Thanks!

**Participants;**

Kelly Tolhurst

Tim Parker

Al Cameron

Jane MacLeod

Gavin Lambert

Tom Cooper

Hibaq Said

**Actions:**

- KT Private Office to set-up a call with Al Cameron on Tuesday morning before Orals, so that Kelly gets an update on the boards discussions the previous day.
- Gavin/Tom to ensure our office is kept well informed of progress and to provide a weekly update.

**Discussion Points:**

- TP was surprised by the outcome of the judgment, however POL's intention is to be fair and not defensive and aim to bring a good case to reach a fair settlement. He confirmed that they would look at their procedures and the opportunities to improve. He acknowledged where they can do things better, and if it costs them money (could be as much as £100m) they will look to manage the costs. He mentioned there was a few legal points that were of concern and they will be receiving subsequent advice to review this in more detail, and looking at whether they should do an appeal. KT stated the importance that BEIS are consulted before they make any intention to appeal.

- They are currently assembling as much information they can, so at their board meeting on Monday, they know what needs to be done. They will discuss ways to improve the manner they run their branches, so when disputes arise they are dealt with fairly. They will also look to review the question on where the judge has been biased on and whether they will ask him to recuse himself from the horizon trial. Unlikely that we will do this, but they will consider whether it is an action, they should take forward. It is a legal pressing matter that would need to be addressed sooner rather than later. *(Line was fuzzy/ interruption at this point - so I may have not captured this correctly)*

- Al Cameron made clear that they would not go down this route until there was final agreement with everyone and will of course keep us updated. They will also discuss their views of the rationale of doing an appeal and where the focus is. They have started doing work streams since the judgement, such as the process of managing differences correctly. He mentioned that some of the cases are 20 years old and how it will be hard for them to be exactly sure of the circumstances. However, they will not be avoiding their liability, they are going to listen but will also highlight where they have improved in cases over time. They are also looking at mediation schemes, to compensate people that were treated badly.

- KT outlined that it was a disappointing judgement, she understood the complexities that they face and appreciated that they are taking this seriously. In regards to the liabilities, she said £100m was a significant amount, and that Government may be involved in the sign off or funding of this amount. They discussed the operational issues and the criticism faced on the culture and practices. She highlighted the point that as the responsible Minister she will be held to account and rightly so in the House and how this should be bared in mind. On that basis, she stressed the importance of Post Office sharing information with BEIS and that she is kept updated throughout the whole process.

- KT made the point that this judgement could justify the criticisms the Post Office are receiving on postmasters pay. She addressed that the issues on the franchising plans and postmasters pay and this judgement will be perceived as the same argument, with the ongoing concerns on Post Office. TP outlined that it was important to keep the issues separate if possible, but understands the difficulties within this. KT highlighted her concerns on the impression she was given at her last meeting with Post Office on the case, and the expectation that there would be a better outcome then what was handed. Therefore was concerned about the legal advice and independence of this and how important it was to understand the issues.

- She informed them that she would be meeting with 10 labour MPs on franchising on Monday, and that they will mention this judgement. She raised the point that where there has been unjust actions against employees, individuals should receive settlements where postmasters have been affected.

- KT asked who will be leading on this, as Paula had step down and emphasised the need for her to have an understanding of the actions that Post Office will be taking forward. She expressed her appreciation of the work of the Post Office and how it is managed. TP confirmed Al Cameron would be in charge, and leading on this and that they were fortunate to have him, as he knows the company very well. TP informed KT that in terms of advice, they had two senior QCs and could not expect to have a better advocate. However when it comes to deciding on whether they should appeal they will look to get an independent person, and their lawyers feel that there is good grounds to appeal.
- They discussed the franchising programme and that as a board they believe it will improve the sustainability of the Post Office. TP said that they were looking at ways of improving the rewards for postmasters, such as the NSSP that looks at the banking framework and creates more work for postmasters. As part of this, their remuneration would increase. KT said she defends the franchising programme and the Post Office, however needs to have comfort and confidence that when there is feedback for them, they are actioned. She then gave an example of a recent franchising issue brought to her attention. Al Cameron provided an update on the banking framework. KT offered her assistance and informed POL that she was happy to put pressure on the banks if required, and help remove any blocks. She mentioned that she had spoken recently with HMT Ministers to get them to put some pressure on the banks.
- KT asked about their legal team defending their positions and advice. She asked whether there would be any change of strategy on dealing with the horizon litigation. JM provided an update of the four separate trials. The Horizon trial driven by evidence and by independent witnesses (appointed on each side) she then went on to explain the various evidence that will be taken into account. They discussed the two trials in November and how the judge wants to look at issues of limitation. The judge wants an answer on whether the limitation act applies to these trials. The fourth trial will be looking at representative claimants and breaches; this will be a conventional trial process. The judge has dictated the sequencing of the questions; therefore POL's strategy is how to respond to these questions. Al Cameron said as they will be receiving new advice from a different QC this will bring forward other perspectives, the quality of this advice will guide their thinking of their strategy.
- KT reiterated that it was incredibly important in her view that as much information is shared with us as possible. She requested a detailed update next week after the board meeting, to know what the board's strategy is and what their next steps are in taking this forward. Al Cameron was more than happy to brief the Minister on updates as and when appropriate – whether that be weekly in person or via phone to ensure she has the close oversight she has requested. Which KT appreciated and will follow up with them if she has any additional

questions.

- Lastly KT said she was concerned that Paula resigning will be perceived negatively, considering she has taken on another role that has been publicised. Therefore would like to understand the exact recruitment process to get a new CEO and for this to be set out clearly. As having this in place will help to defend possible criticisms and speculation. Al Cameron confirmed they will share this.

Kind Regards,  
Hibaq

<image001.png>

<image002.jpg>

**Hibaq Said**

Assistant Private Secretary to Kelly Tolhurst MP |  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State |  
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial  
Strategy |

1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET |

GRO

mpst.tolhurst@

GRO

GRO

**From:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <GRO>

**Sent:** 16 March 2019 19:13

**To:** Cooper, Tom - UKGI <GRO>

**Cc:** Holloway, William (BEIS) <GRO>; Watson,

Richard - UKGI <GRO>; Lambert, Gavin (Advanced

Manufacturing and Services) <GRO>; Clark, Mpst

(BEIS) <GRO>; Willmer, Jacob (BEIS)

<GRO>; Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS)

<GRO>; Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and

Services) <GRO>; Aldred, Tom - UKGI

<GRO>; Miles, Annabelle (Communications &

Partnerships) <GRO>; Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced

Manufacturing and Services) <GRO>; Clarke, Stephen -

UKGI <GRO>; Fox, Joshua - UKGI

<GRO> Lambert, Lucie - UKGI

<GRO>

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Hi all,

No10 have cleared and I have sent the attached final signed Dear  
Colleague letter to the Whips office to issue.

Thank you everyone for all your work getting this out.

Kind Regards,  
Hibaq

Hibaq Said

APS to Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate  
Responsibility

**GRO**

<image014.png>

**From:** Cooper, Tom - UKGI

**GRO**

**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2019 4:47 pm

**To:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS)

**Cc:** Holloway, William (BEIS); Watson, Richard - UKGI; Lambert, Gavin  
(Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob  
(BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and  
Services); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle (Communications &  
Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services);  
Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

It's a fair comment. I think the early versions achieved a better balance  
between not commenting on the result of the current hearing and the  
SoS's desire to show that we are supportive of the case taking place  
to achieve a remedy for those postmasters who have a just claim.

Tom

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Mar 2019, at 16:36, Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS)

**GRO**

wrote:

No10 have said the text is fine, but have asked as the  
legal case is ongoing should we be commenting on that?  
Is it not premature?

Gavin/Tom & Richard - grateful for your views on this..



Kind Regards,  
Hibaq

Hibaq Said  
APS to Minister for Small Business, Consumers and  
Corporate Responsibility

**GRO**

<image015.png>

**From:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <mpst.tolhurst@beis.gov.uk> **GRO**

**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2019 3:46 pm

**To:** Holloway, William (BEIS); Watson, Richard - UKGI; Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Cooper, Tom - UKGI

**Cc:** Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI

**Subject:** RE: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Kelly was happy for the version attached to go to No10.

Will let you know once they have cleared this.

Kind Regards,  
Hibaq

<image002.png>

<image003.jpg>

**Hibaq Said**

Assistant Private Secretary to Kelly Tolhurst

MP |

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State |

Department for Business, Energy and

Industrial Strategy |

1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET |

**GRO**

mpst.tolhurst@beis.gov.uk

**GRO**

**GRO**

---

**From:** Holloway, William (BEIS)

**GRO**

**Sent:** 16 March 2019 15:22

**To:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <**GRO**>

Watson, Richard - UKGI <**GRO**>

Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)

**GRO**

>; Cooper, Tom - UKGI

**GRO**

**Cc:** Clark, Mpst (BEIS) <**GRO**>; Willmer, Jacob

(BEIS) <**GRO**>; Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS)

<**GRO**>; Watson, Craig (Advanced

Manufacturing and Services) <**GRO**>

Aldred, Tom - UKGI <**GRO**>; Miles,

Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships)

**GRO**

>; Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced

Manufacturing and Services)

**GRO**

Clarke, Stephen - UKGI <**GRO**>; Fox,

Joshua - UKGI <**GRO**>; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI

**GRO**

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Happy with this revised wording, thanks.

Will

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

<image015.png>

**From:** Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS) <**GRO**>

**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2019 3:07 PM

**To:** Watson, Richard - UKGI; Lambert, Gavin (Advanced  
Manufacturing and Services); Cooper, Tom - UKGI

**Cc:** Holloway, William (BEIS); Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob  
(BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Watson, Craig (Advanced  
Manufacturing and Services); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles,  
Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia  
(Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI;  
Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Thank you all - Will, are you happy with the change below?

Kind Regards,  
Hibaq

Hibaq Said

APS to Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate  
Responsibility

**GRO**

<image015.png>

**From:** Watson, Richard - UKGI **GRO**

**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2019 3:04 pm

**To:** Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services);  
Cooper, Tom - UKGI; Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS)

**Cc:** Holloway, William (BEIS); Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob  
(BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Watson, Craig (Advanced  
Manufacturing and Services); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles,  
Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia  
(Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI;  
Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Fine legally

Richard

Sent from my BlackBerry — the most secure mobile  
device

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**From:** Gavin.Lambert **GRO**

**Sent:** 16 March 2019 2:50 pm

**To:** Tom.Cooper **GRO**; MPST.Tolhurst **GRO**

**Cc:** William.Holloway **GRO**; Richard.Watson@ **GRO**; mpst.clark **GRO**; Jacob.Willm  
st.clarkspad@ **GRO**; Craig.Watson **GRO**; Tom.Aldred **GRO**; Annabelle.Miles **GRO**  
ini **GRO**; Stephen.Clarke **GRO**; Joshua.Fox **GRO**; Lucie.Lambert **GRO**

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Thanks Tom

Hibaq – to note amend below to correct a factual point as per Tom's email.

Richard – can I double check this is Ok with this from a legal perspective? If so, then Hibaq can you please go back to Kelly.

Dear Colleague,

Postmasters are the backbone of the Post Office, and their branches are the backbone of communities across the country. That's why we committed to safeguarding the post office network and protecting existing rural services. The overall number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion.

The Post Office and I are fully supportive of this legal case being brought. This first judgment, which deals with the contractual relationship between the Post Office and postmasters, represents a significant step towards delivering justice.

The judge has been highly critical of the Post Office's handling of the case and finds the Post Office's conduct in its dealings with the lead claimant postmasters have been heavy-handed, some of its operations insufficiently transparent, and its procedures and processes lacking in consistency and professionalism.

The judgement is complex and lengthy and the Post Office will need time to consider in detail, however having spoken today with the Chairman of POL, I am assured they have acknowledged the criticism, are taking it very seriously, and will be taking appropriate action where necessary.

Legal proceedings in this case are currently scheduled to continue until at least March 2020. Whilst this remains a matter for the court and it is not appropriate for Government to

comment further. However, I will be remaining in close contact with the Post Office over the coming weeks and months as they deliver on their commitments to improve.

I understand that this issue will be of interest and concern to Members of the House and, as this process progresses, I will update Members further.

Gavin Lambert

GRO

---

**From:** "Cooper, Tom - UKGI" GRO  
**Date:** Saturday, 16 March 2019 at 14:34  
**To:** "Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS)" GRO  
**Cc:** "Holloway, William (BEIS)"  
GRO, "Watson, Richard - UKGI" GRO, "Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)"  
GRO, "Clark, Mpst (BEIS)"  
GRO "Willmer, Jacob (BEIS)"  
GRO, Jeremy Lumb  
GRO, "Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)"  
GRO "Aldred, Tom - UKGI"  
GRO, "Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships)"  
GRO, "Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services)"  
GRO, "Clarke, Stephen - UKGI"  
GRO, "Fox, Joshua - UKGI"  
GRO "Lambert, Lucie - UKGI"  
GRO  
**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

This isn't correct:



“represents a significant step forward, delivering justice for those postmasters who have been wronged.”

It would be accurate to say “...significant step towards delivering justice...”

I’m out of action for the rest of the day.

Gavin - would you be able to share with POL? Expect resistance from their lawyers.

Tom

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Mar 2019, at 14:20, Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS)

<MPST.Tolhurst@beis.gov.uk> wrote:

Hi All,

Please see a modified version from Kelly below, she would like to see a redraft and is aware that Will had further comments.

Grateful if you could review and provide an updated draft.

Thank you.

Kind Regards,  
Hibaq

Dear Colleague,

Postmasters are the backbone of the Post Office, and their branches are the backbone of communities across the country. That’s why we committed to safeguarding the post office network and protecting existing rural services. The overall

number of post offices across the UK remains at its most stable in decades with over 11,500 branches thanks to significant Government investment of over £2 billion.

The Post Office and I are fully supportive of this legal case being brought. This first judgment, which deals with the contractual relationship between the Post Office and postmasters, represents a significant step forward, delivering justice for those postmasters who have been wronged.

The judge has been highly critical of the Post Office's handling of the case and finds the Post Office's conduct in its dealings with the lead claimant postmasters have been heavy-handed, some of its operations insufficiently transparent, and its procedures and processes lacking in consistency and professionalism.

The judgement is complex and lengthy and the Post Office will need time to consider in detail, however having spoken today with the Chairman of POL, I am assured they have acknowledged the criticism, are taking it very seriously, and will be taking appropriate action where necessary.

Legal proceedings in this case are currently scheduled to continue until at least March 2020. Whilst this remains a matter for the court and it is not appropriate for Government to comment further. However, I will be remaining in close contact with the Post Office over the coming weeks and months as they deliver on their commitments to improve.

I understand that this issue will be of interest and concern to Members of the House and, as this process progresses, I will update Members further.

Hibaq Said

APS to Minister for Small Business, Consumers and  
Corporate Responsibility

**GRO**

<image005.png>

**From:** Holloway, William (BEIS)

<img alt="GRO logo" data-bbox="312 276 547 298"/>

**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2019 1:58 pm

**To:** Watson, Richard - UKGI; Cooper, Tom - UKGI

**Cc:** Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and  
Services); Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS);  
Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS);  
Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and  
Services); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle  
(Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia  
(Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke,  
Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie -  
UKGI

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly  
Tolhurst

Ok, can we go with this instead (reinserted in the  
same place)?

Our objective is that those people who were  
wronged to get the justice they deserve.

Thanks,  
Will

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

<image005.png>

**From:** Watson, Richard - UKGI

<img alt="GRO logo" data-bbox="312 889 560 909"/>

**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2019 1:53 PM

**To:** Cooper, Tom - UKGI; Holloway, William (BEIS)

**Cc:** Lambert, Gavin (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clark, Mpst (BEIS); Tolhurst, Mpst (BEIS); Willmer, Jacob (BEIS); Clark Spad, Mpst (BEIS); Watson, Craig (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Aldred, Tom - UKGI; Miles, Annabelle (Communications & Partnerships); Vandini, Cecilia (Advanced Manufacturing and Services); Clarke, Stephen - UKGI; Fox, Joshua - UKGI; Lambert, Lucie - UKGI

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Just discussed with Tom and think it might be better to stick with the wording agreed before Will's suggested change. I understand the issue of PM's getting justice for valid claims was important to SoS

Richard

Sent from my BlackBerry — the most secure mobile device

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**From:** Tom.Cooper@ [GRO]  
**Sent:** 16 March 2019 1:39 pm  
**To:** William.Holloway [GRO]  
**Cc:** Gavin.Lambert [GRO]; Richard.Watson [GRO]; mpst.clark [GRO]; MPST.T [GRO]; .Willmer [GRO]; mpst.clarkspad@ [GRO]; Craig.Watson [GRO]; Tom.Aldred [GRO]; [GRO]; Cecilia.Vandini [GRO]; Stephen.Clarke [GRO]; Joshua.Fox [GRO]; [GRO]

**Subject:** Re: POL discussion with SoS and Kelly Tolhurst

Sorry. I actually think the opposite. As drafted it looks more like we agree with the judgement than before.

What we've now also lost is the SOS's wish to communicate that we want postmasters who have been done wrong to get justice.

Tom

Sent from my iPhone

> On 16 Mar 2019, at 13:12, Holloway, William (BEIS)

<[REDACTED]@GRO> wrote:

>

> The Post Office are I are fully supportive of this legal case. Our objective is that justice is obtained for those claimants with valid claims.

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<Dear Colleague - Kelly Tolhurst - POL.pdf>