

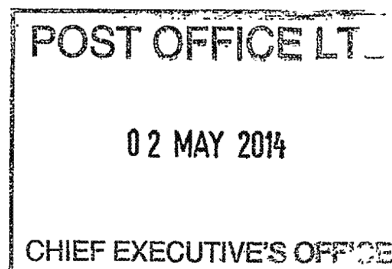
From: The Rt. Hon. James Arbuthnot, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

1 May 2014

Paula Vennells  
Chief Executive  
Post Office  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
148 Old Street  
London EC1V 9HQ



*Dear Paula,*

Thank you for your letter of 11 April and now it is my turn to apologise for the fact this response comes to you rather late due to Parliamentary Recess.

May I make two points in response to your letter? The first is that whilst I appreciate that an interim report is slightly disruptive of the Mediation Scheme's progress, I am not so sure that preliminary findings cannot be shared in a manner that respects the Scheme's integrity. Given that the investigators were issuing the Post Office with a report in late March, surely by now they have been able to draw some conclusions about the cases before them. Doing so would not intrude on the confidentiality of any individual case. And would it not be fair to share these, given that the group of MPs whose constituents have been affected have been partially (with the Post Office and the JSFA) responsible for getting these investigations underway? Second, if a July meeting is unimaginable, can you offer me a date when a further meeting will be considered, please?

I understand all the points that you make and have some sympathy with the position you adopt. However, I am anxious that the longer the silence, the more concerned MPs will get. This relates not just to their own constituency cases but to the processes which had been followed at the Post Office which led to so many individuals coming forward. This entire matter has the potential to run away from our control, something neither you nor I want to see happen. In short, I am slightly worried.

I wonder if you might let me have your thoughts please? In order to dampen expectations about a July meeting, I would like to circulate your letter of 11 April to those MPs involved, but I feel I should give you an opportunity to think these points through before I do so.

*Yours ever*

**GRO**

