



THE RT HON GEORGE OSBORNE MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

HOUSE OF COMMONS, LONDON SW1A 0AA

Edward Davey MP
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

26 July 2010

My constituent, Mr T Walters of GRO
GRO, has written to me about errors on the Post Office computer system which he believes led to the termination of his contract. As you can see, he and others in a similar position have joined "Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance".

I enclose a copy of his letter and would be grateful for your comments.

GRO

Rt Hon George Osborne MP

Working for the Constituents of Tatton

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Mr & Mrs T Walters

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6th July 2010

Dear Mr Osborne,

I am writing to you with regard to the way I have been treated by Post Office Ltd (POL).

From 5th May 2005 until 11th February 2008 I was the Subpostmaster at Hockley Post Office in Poynton. That was until POL terminated my contract and accused me of falsifying accounts to obtain money from the Post Office.

Before I took the position the POL vetted me and found me to be a honest, reliable and trustworthy person and a suitable candidate to take on the position as Subpostmaster. I am still that same person. Logically why would any hard working person who had invested their money into a business want to jeopardise that business by falsifying accounts in order to take money from the Post Office.

Unfortunately a few months after my contract was terminated the Post Office closed as part of the government cut backs. I still maintain to this day that it was a set up so I would not be paid the compensation that I was entitled to for closure of the Post Office side of my business. Needless to say my business and personal financial affairs have suffered considerably since.

Do you not think it strange that not only I but many other Subpostmasters have experienced the same thing and that nearly 300 Subpostmasters have been suspended for similar offences as we speak. Its alright expecting the poor Subpostmaster to make good any short fall but what happens when they are thousands of pounds under which obviously is a computer error and cannot be right and yet they are expected to make good this loss. Those that cannot are treated as criminals and sentenced as such because the Post Office say they have taken the money. Although the Post Office cannot produce such evidence to support these claims. The saying that innocent until proved guilty does not come into it.

The Subpostmasters Federation was set up to help and advice Subpostmasters and subs were paid every month to them and yet when a problem occurs with a Subpostmaster they are a complete waste of time and money and need to be abolished.

At the end of the day the root cause behind the problems we had with POL was entirely due to their fault ridden Horizon system. We are not alone in suffering from a system which is prone to errors, has negligible support, is inaccessible to the level required to manage the business, and yet makes its Subpostmasters accountable for its failures and losses. Even the contract neither states we are employed by the Post Office or self employed which needs to be clarified for future Subpostmasters.

The Post Office is 100% owned by the government and regardless of how the Government try and sidestep its responsibilities, it is the Government of today with its silence, that ultimately approves and sanctions the atrocities that POL has inflicted on me and many other Subpostmasters.

To take me into the back of my premises by a criminal investigation team and question me while it was being tape recorded and I was not able to have a representative who could speak up in my defence was very intimidating and humiliating to say the least. It was more like M15 than a small village Post Office. I was suspended without pay for 3 months.

When my contract was terminated despite me trying to defend myself with evidence they just assumed I had taken money from the Post Office and that was that. I categorically deny I ever took any money from the Post Office. At the present time the Post Office are pursuing me through the courts for £11,800.00 they say I owe them. From my point of view they owe me a lot more.

I and others have now joined together to form the **Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance** in order to try and have our voices heard and to let the public know how the Government, in the guise of POL, are treating Subpostmasters.

As you are my elected representative in Parliament I am asking you to request an inquiry to be set up to investigate my case and the many other cases from around the country where Subpostmasters have suffered at the hands of Post Office Limited.

I am available to come and talk to you at one of your surgeries if you want more details of my case.

Yours sincerely

GRO

Terry Walters