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E paula.vennells

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The Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

24 February 2015

Dear James,

Thank you for your letter of 8th December 2014 and subsequent letters of 13th January 2015 and 22nd January 2015.

You should have received a letter from Mark Davies, Post Office Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs, also dated 13th January 2015 which addressed most of the points in your letter of 8th December. I asked Mark to reply to you so that he could also offer you a personal meeting with him and Post Office representatives to discuss Post Office's investigation of Mrs Hamilton's case and that of your other constituent in the Scheme. That offer remains open: I do hope you will take it up, as you will then be fully informed of all details of the investigations. We have made the same offer to all MPs who spoke in the Westminster Hall debate that have constituents with cases in the Scheme.

You also asked a number of questions in your letter of the 8th December 2014.

You asked about the Statute of Limitation. Limitation periods strike a balance between giving claimants enough time to bring a court claim (typically six years) and protecting defendants from old claims (where evidence is stale or no longer available). As the Scheme does not affect anybody's legal rights, there is no reason why Post Office Limited should not be able to use a limitation defence where appropriate, bearing in mind that ultimately it is something a court will rule on.

With regards to your question about retention of data, I can assure you as I have done when we have spoken about this twice previously, once in the presence of Alan Bates of the JFSA, that Post Office has gone to great lengths to trace information relating to cases in the Scheme, even those that are very old and we have no plans to destroy that information, all of which is being provided to Second Sight and applicants as part of the process of the Scheme.

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You asked if I would agree to Second Sight meeting with MPs. I am content for Post Office to organise a briefing on the Scheme for MPs, perhaps via the All Party Parliamentary Post Office Group, that Second Sight could attend. I have asked my team to pick this up.

I am sorry that you have decided to withdraw your support for the Scheme. The success of the Scheme rests on the commitment of all parties involved to act in good faith. I firmly believe Post Office has done so.

Yours sincerely,

GRO

Paula Vennells
Chief Executive