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Our ref: **GRO**

Your ref: **GRO**

October 2015

Thank you for your letter of 8 October on behalf of your constituent Ms Vanessa S Braithwaite **GRO** regarding the Post Office's Horizon IT system and mediation scheme and Early Day Motion 427.

Following concerns raised by some postmasters and MPs, the Post Office's Horizon IT system has been subject to thorough scrutiny over the past three years. As part of this process, Post Office commissioned an independent firm, Second Sight, to examine the system and they have produced two independent reports, the most recent of which came out in April this year. The Horizon system is also independently tested and audited every year as is standard practice with large IT systems.

Alongside these investigations, Post Office established a mediation scheme to enable current and former postmasters to have their individual cases reviewed, and seek to resolve any issues. This scheme includes an independent investigation and report by Second Sight for each individual case. The mediation scheme was established jointly by Post Office and the representatives of affected groups. This mediation process is independent of Government.

Mediation can be a useful way of seeking resolution to disputes, but it is a voluntary process and it is not appropriate in every case. The mediation process cannot overturn a court judgement. Where an individual has a criminal conviction that they feel is unsafe, they can consider whether to go to the Court of Appeal or raise their case with the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC). I understand that a number of individuals with prosecutions have contacted the CCRC, and this is an independent process in which the Government cannot intervene.

I understand the concerns that your constituent has raised and I hope you will appreciate that the Government does not influence the day-to-day operation of the Post Office, but allows it to operate independently as a commercial business.

Post Office is happy to meet any MP to discuss this matter, or to talk through details of individual constituents' cases, if the individual gives their consent. Your constituent can contact Angela Van Den Bogerd at Post Office to arrange this. Her email address is angela.van-den-bogerd@GRO

I hope this information is helpful to address your constituent's concerns.

**SAJID JAVID**

**The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP**

Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and President of the Board of Trade