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**Norman Lamb**  
Member of Parliament for North Norfolk

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Ms Paula Vennells  
Managing Director  
Post Office Ltd.  
148 Old Street  
London  
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*Please quote the reference in all correspondence with this office*

Our Ref: ZA1447-PL

19 December 2014

Dear Paula,

**Re: Alison Henderson – Horizon System**

**GRO**

I write following a meeting I have had with my constituent, Alison Henderson, together with her husband.

Alison Henderson was prosecuted for false accounting along with hundreds of other subpostmasters and mistresses.

Alison and her husband have been very badly affected by this whole matter. Alison was convicted and has remained enormously distressed as a result of what she very strongly believes is a complete miscarriage of justice. She has therefore fought to establish her innocence in this whole matter.

She has pursued her claim through the process which has been established to review cases. Alison and her husband submitted her case in November 2013. There was an acknowledgement but the last correspondence was in July and they are still awaiting an outcome to the process. I am sure you will understand just how distressing this is for them.

I have made it clear to them that I will support them in pursuing their case. The solicitors that represented Alison in the prosecution, Belmores in Norwich, have received a letter from Cartright King solicitors enclosing a copy of the interim report and making it clear that had this been available at the time of the prosecution they would have been obliged to disclose it. They state:

*'We have formed the firm view that, had the prosecution been possessed of the material contained within the report during the currency of the prosecution of your*



*client, we should and would have disclosed that material to you in compliance with our disclosure duties'*

I remain extremely concerned about this whole issue. I note the Post Office Ltd's position in respect of these prosecutions but I would urge you to do everything you can to ensure that the agreement reached with regard to review of cases is adhered to fully and that there is no delay in reaching a conclusion in this process. Delay is incredibly distressing for individuals caught up in this whole process.

I enclose a copy of an email which Alison has received from the campaign group, JFSA, and I would be most grateful if you could address each of the issues set out in that email fully in your response.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

**GRO**

**The Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP**

**Member of Parliament for North Norfolk**

*Dictated by Norman Lamb and sent in his absence*



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**Private and Confidential**  
Messrs Belmores,  
Solicitors,  
40 Crown Road,  
Norwich,  
NR1 3DX

Date: 25 September 2015  
Our Ref: MS2/44948

Dear Sirs

**Re: Alison Henderson – Norwich Crown Court**

We write to your firm as being the solicitors on the file representing this defendant in the proceedings which resulted in her being sentenced on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2010 to a Community Order of 12 months with a requirement that she complete a total of 200 hours of unpaid work for an offence of false accounting.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013 a report into the operations of the Horizon system was published by an independent organisation which had been commissioned by our clients, Post Office Ltd. The report is known as the Second Sight Interim Report.

We have thoroughly reviewed both the prosecution case and that of your client and in particular her Defence Statement and amended Defence Statement, in the light of material contained within the Second Sight Interim Report. We have also reconsidered our disclosure duties under the CPIA 1996 and the Code of Practice enacted thereunder, and the A-G's Guidelines on Disclosure. We are also alive to our duties under the common law relating to cases which have been concluded.

We have formed the firm view that, had the prosecution been possessed of the material contained within the Report during the currency of the prosecution of your client, we should and would have disclosed that material to you in compliance with our disclosure duties.

The prosecution recognises its obligation post conviction to disclose any information which may affect the safety of a conviction. Accordingly we now disclose the Report to you so that you are able to consider whether your client may have grounds for an appeal against her conviction.

## *Interim Report into alleged problems with the Horizon system*

### 1. Introduction and Scope

1.1. Following discussions with Post Office Limited ('POL') Senior Management in June and July 2012, with the Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP and with Alan Bates and Kay Linnell representing the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance ('the JFSA'), Second Sight Support Services Ltd ('Second Sight') was appointed to carry out a review into alleged problems with POL's 'Horizon' System.

1.2. The remit of the Investigation/Inquiry was later defined as:

*"to consider and to advise on whether there are any systemic issues and/or concerns with the "Horizon" system, including training and support processes, giving evidence and reasons for the conclusions reached".*

1.3. It was also agreed that Second Sight's report would:

*"report on the remit and if necessary will contain recommendations and/or alternative recommendations to Post Office Limited relating to the issues and concerns investigated during the Inquiry. The report and recommendations are to be the expert and reasoned opinion of Second Sight in the light of the evidence seen during the Inquiry."*

1.4. It became necessary to ensure that references to "the Horizon System" were understood and agreed by all stakeholders. Was Second Sight to look only for defects in the software code of Horizon? Or, was it to take a broader view and also examine:

- a) the surrounding Operational Processes, both at branch level and in POL's central processing centres;
- b) the interfaces between the Horizon system and other systems that are the responsibility of organisations other than POL such as Camelot, the Bank of Ireland, the Co-Op, various Energy Companies and the 'LINK' system for processing Credit and Debit Card payments and withdrawals;
- c) the power supply and telecommunications equipment that connects every Horizon terminal to POL's centralised data centres;
- d) the training available to Sub-Postmasters ('SPMRs') and their staff and whether it was commensurate with the demands of the day-to-day job at the counter;
- e) the actions need to 'balance' at the end of each Trading Period ('TP') and the investigation work needed in dealing with errors and Transaction Corrections ('TCs');
- f) the level of support available to SPMRs and their staff from POL's Helpdesk;
- g) the effectiveness of POL's audit and investigative processes, both in assisting SPMRs who called for help in determining the underlying root cause of shortfalls and in providing evidence for other action by POL such as in Civil and Criminal Proceedings.