

Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance

Mr James Arbuthnot MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

Alan Bates



Tel:

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Email: alan.bates@

Dear Mr Arbuthnot,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you and 2ndSight a possible way forward in the matter of Post Office Horizon errors and system faults.

Though my agreement was not sought at the end of the meeting, my understanding of the way proposed was as follows:-

That an initial investigation would begin late August which would be carried out by 2ndSight with a watching brief by the JFSA appointed expert forensic accountant. It was envisaged that this would take an approximate 4-6 months but should evidence of faults with Horizon become apparent along the way, then this investigation would be halted. The focus of the investigation would then change and a mainstream international firm would be brought in to undertake a complete systems review.

For the term of the initial investigation Post Office would pay for the JFSA expert forensic accountant at an agreed cost of £5000, and that person would be allowed access to work undertaken by, and with the cooperation of 2nd Sight, in order to ensure the impartiality of the results obtained. It is accepted that the expert forensic accountant appointed by JFSA would be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Although that agreement should still enable the forensic appointee of JFSA to report on the progress and findings of the investigation in sufficient detail as to offer reassurance that the investigation is being, or has been pursued appropriately.

The initial investigation would be in two parts, the first being current errors, the second to investigate the historic cases which have been raised by MP's and a number of cases to be recommended by JFSA.

Current Errors

There would be a Post Office supported undertaking by 2ndSight to obtain current errors occurring in Horizon from serving subpostmasters, which 2ndSight would then investigate and track through the various processes. In order to have errors brought to the attention of 2ndSight, Post Office, at the highest level, would state that all those who submitted items for

consideration could do so with impunity. Post Office would make all subpostmasters aware of this through their Subspace magazine.

Though not specifically discussed at the meeting, presumably this immunity with the addition of anonymity would be extended to all Post Office personnel involved with Horizon e.g. H.Q., Chesterfield and Crown Office personnel, etc.

Historic Cases

The selected historic cases would include interviews with those involved, not just the subpostmaster and the paperwork they have, but also the paperwork belonging to Post Office, the employees involved and examining what investigation Post Office made into that case and what efforts they made to examine Horizon as a cause of the loss.

The scope of the initial investigation would include, but not be restricted to, the following areas:-

1. Review of area manager complaints.
2. A description of the Horizon system operations, in theory, in practice including training and level and access and authority.
3. Review of the second level queries of system problems especially those involving Fujitsu.
4. Preparation of a forensic analysis of the system errors to be used in point 5.
5. Selection of a sample of cases together with the historic cases put forward by MPs.
6. Live data testing on system parameters.
7. Report on the "cradle to grave" of the transactions that are flagged up in the cases reviewed.
8. Report on the integrity of the Post Office Horizon system.

If these details are correct, I would on behalf of the members of JFSA, be prepared to offer our full support and cooperation with the investigation, as proposed. We would also hand over considerable information which we believe would be of assistance in bringing a speedy outcome to a matter that has been suppressed for far too long.

Yours sincerely

Alan Bates
Chairman, Justice For Subpostmasters Alliance