



Secretary of State for Business and Trade

30 January 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP), who represent and are responsible for approximately 8,500 post office branches throughout the UK.

Following the recent announcement regarding the removal of the Post Office Chair, the NFSP supports your decision and has long been calling for the full Board to be overhauled. We also recommend that the new Chair engages with the NFSP in a manner not taken so far, so that they have an understanding of the needs of the full network

The NFSP strongly believes that the current role of Postmaster Non-Executive Director is not indicative of the wider Postmaster network, and as they are current serving Postmasters, may place any serving Postmaster in restricted positions as far as clauses 172, 173, 175 & 177 of the Companies Act 2006*.

The NFSP strongly believes that there is no clear and transparent process to raise the concerns of Postmasters and for action then to be taken. We are constantly told by government representatives that Post Office are “an arm’s length organisation”. During the ongoing Statutory Inquiry, successive Government Ministers have stated that they had received assurances as to the robustness of the Horizon system, both as it was being rolled out, and during the period covered by the Inquiry. This points to the need for a renewed and fully accountable governance structure.

The reputation of the Post Office has been so badly damaged, that something radical is required to restore trust from not only the network but importantly, our customers.

Therefore, the NFSP would like to suggest a solution, an Oversight Committee. This would be made up of representatives from the Government, consumer groups, and all relevant unions. Every stakeholder would have the chance to input into the strategic future of the Post Office, however our proposals would not take away the function of the Board. The Committee would provide a high level of scrutiny without obstructing the day to day management of Post Office. The Oversight Committee would seek to enhance and compliment work of the Board and the senior management group, rather than detract from their day to day running of the business.

Post Office operates as a commercial business, yet it is also in a very unique position in that the UK public are the sole shareholder, and whilst a healthy return is a priority, so is the need for a viable business that also achieves its aims of being a Service of Public General Interest. The NFSP believes that via collaboration rather than opposition, those who have an intrinsic interest in the success of the business can work together for the benefit of communities throughout the United Kingdom.

The Oversight Committee proposal has been discussed with the Postal Minister, therefore, the NFSP would appreciate your full support, as we seek to work with all those concerned in moving this forward..

Yours sincerely,

Calum Greenhow
NFSP, CEO

- * Clause 172 - Duty to promote the success of the company
- Clause 173 - Duty to exercise independent judgment
- Clause 175 - Duty to avoid conflicts of interest
- Clause 177 - Duty to declare interest in proposed transaction or arrangement