



Mr Paul Patterson  
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Date  
30 May 2024

Post Office  
100 Wood Street  
London EC2V 7ER

**Classification:**  
Public

**BY EMAIL ONLY:** GRO

Dear Paul

### **Use of Horizon Data**

I write further to your letter of 17 May 2024, in which you make a number of concerning statements about postmaster enforcement.

As you say, we share a commitment to learn lessons from the Horizon scandal and to ensure that the appalling treatment of postmasters, and the miscarriages of justice that occurred, could never happen again.

I would like to reassure you that Post Office has invested significant time and resource effecting cultural and procedural change across the business, taking on board the court's findings, and ensuring that our postmasters' interests are central to everything we do. I would be keen to talk to you further about these changes as it appears from your letter that there are some fundamental misunderstandings at FSL about Post Office's current day culture and activities.

Taking each of your points in turn:

### **Criminal investigations**

I can reassure you that Post Office is not now - and will not be in the future - undertaking any prosecutions against postmasters or any third parties as the prosecuting body.



Post Office's requests to use Horizon data may be for any number of day-to-day business reasons, including supporting postmasters with their branches. However, in respect of enforcement, Post Office's requests only relate to cases where our teams are supporting criminal investigations or prosecutions pursued by independent third parties, such as the Police or the Crown Prosecution Service. These independent investigations may be initiated by (i) a third party, (ii) by postmasters where they believe a member of their staff or indeed a member of the public has engaged in criminal activity, or (iii) by Post Office.

In response to the specific case you raised, potential criminal activities were identified in the branch and Post Office therefore reported the matter to the Police. We have assisted with the Police's investigation, including providing supporting data from the Horizon system.

Naturally, it is vital to the Police's investigation that it can rely on the Horizon data it has received. I am happy that you have confirmed in your letter that FSL will cooperate with the Police when it is exercising its independent investigative powers as this case would require a statement from FSL. It is a matter for the Police and FSL to determine the necessary content of that statement.

### **Pursuit of Shortfalls from Postmasters**

As you are aware, civil recovery of losses was stopped by Post Office in 2018 so Horizon data is not currently being used for civil recoveries from postmasters.

However, Post Office does rely on Horizon data for a range of key day-to-day business activities, including supporting its postmasters with resolving discrepancies on their accounts. In fact, where a discrepancy arises on a postmaster account, Post Office has implemented several positive changes to ensure that postmasters are treated fairly, including:

- creating a 'Review or Dispute' button on Horizon so a postmaster can flag to the Business Support Centre that there is an issue they would like help with,
- removing the discrepancy from the postmaster's account once it has been reported,
- helping postmasters identify and correct issues like mis-keys, or omissions when remitting cash or stamp stock based on Horizon data, and
- passing any unresolved discrepancies to the Network Support Team to perform a more detailed investigation of the Horizon data.



Our improved discrepancy investigations process has been externally assured and is subject to regular audit checks to conform with the findings from CIJ. Nevertheless, Post Office sees reliance on Horizon data as essential to supporting postmasters with understanding and remediating discrepancies on their accounts promptly and transparently. Post Office relies on FSL and the services it provides to ensure that it can continue to support postmasters in that way. We trust we can continue to do so.

#### **Postmaster redress**

The reliability of Horizon data is also central to the compensation and redress schemes which Post Office is currently delivering, to right the wrongs of the past. I welcome your confirmations that FSL will provide Post Office with information to achieve redress at no charge, and provide a credit note for any prior charges which have been raised.

Can I suggest we arrange a call or meeting to discuss this further and to seek alignment?

Yours sincerely

A large, bold, black "GRO" signature inside a dashed rectangular box.

**Nick Read**

**Group CEO, Post Office Ltd**

cc.

**Daniel Walton:**

A large, bold, black "GRO" signature inside a dashed rectangular box.