

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE



1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Alan Bates
Chairman, JFSA

GRO

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www.gov.uk/bis

Our ref: MCB2014/08461

April 2014

Thank you for your letter of 16 April to Jo Swinson MP, about the Initial Case Review and Mediation Scheme. I am the Minister responsible for Post Office policy, while Jo Swinson takes maternity leave.

I am conscious that the Scheme, which is jointly overseen by the Working Group comprising representatives from the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance, Post Office Ltd, and Second Sight, has an independent Chair in Sir Anthony Hooper.

The Government, as shareholder in Post Office Ltd, does not play a role in the operation of the Working Group. As an independent Chair whose appointment was approved by the members of the Working Group, Sir Anthony Hooper must be allowed to perform his duties independently and free from influence, but Government is supportive of the Working Group and the ambitions of the Scheme. It is in the interests of all parties, especially those who have lodged applications for their cases to be considered, for there to be a timely resolution.

As a member of the Working Group, you will understand that the Government cannot be involved in operational matters concerning Post Office Ltd, the Working Group, or the Scheme and it would be inappropriate to respond to the operational concerns that you have raised. The Working Group and the Scheme have been established to consider very serious claims, and it is important that your concerns be addressed by the appropriate parties. Given your concerns relate to the operation of the Working Group, and specifically about the engagement of Post Office Ltd with the Scheme, I intend to forward a copy of your letter to both Sir Anthony Hooper and Paula Vennells so that they can make informed responses to the issues that you have raised. If you have any objections to my doing so, please contact my Private Secretary, Claire Rannard, who would be pleased to discuss any concerns you might have with that course of action.

I would be grateful for your response by Wednesday 30 April.

JENNY WILLOTT MP

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Sir Anthony Hooper
c/o Working Group Secretariat
148 Old Street
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April 2014

I have recently received a letter from Alan Bates, Chair of the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance ("JFSA") regarding the Initial Case Review and Mediation Scheme, of which the JFSA plays a role as a member of the Working Group, and of which you are independent Chair.

The Government, as shareholder in Post Office Ltd, does not play a role in the operation of the Working Group, and is keenly aware that you must be allowed to perform your duties independently and free from influence.

The Government is supportive of the Working Group and the ambitions of the Scheme, and believes it is in the interests of all parties, especially those who have lodged applications for their cases to be considered, for there to be a timely resolution.

In that spirit, I am forwarding to you correspondence from the JFSA that sets out their concerns about the operation of the Scheme. This is provided without prejudice, and I have previously informed the JFSA that I would be sharing their letter with you.

More widely, at an appropriate point in the future, I would be pleased to meet to discuss the Working Group and the operation of the Scheme.

JENNY WILLOTT MP

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1 Victoria Street
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Paula Vennells
Chief Executive Officer
148 Old Street
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April 2014

I have recently received a letter from Alan Bates, Chair of the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance ("JFSA") regarding the Initial Case Review and Mediation Scheme, of which the JFSA plays a role as a member of the Working Group.

As you will be aware, the Government, as shareholder in Post Office Ltd, does not play a role in operational matters relating to Post Office Ltd, or the Working Group. I am keenly aware that Sir Anthony Hooper, as independent Chair, must be allowed to perform his duties independently and free from influence.

The Government is supportive of the Working Group and the ambitions of the Scheme, and believes it is in the interests of all parties, especially those who have lodged applications for their cases to be considered, for there to be a timely resolution.

In that spirit, I am forwarding to you correspondence from the JFSA that sets out their concerns about the operation of the Scheme and Post Office Ltd's engagement in the process. This is provided without prejudice, and I have previously informed the JFSA that I would be sharing their letter with you.

JENNY WILLOTT MP