

**BIS** | Department for Business  
Innovation & Skills

**Pat McFadden MP**

Minister of State for Business,  
Innovation and Skills

The Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: LG/159460

5 December 2009

*Dear James,*

Thank you for your letter of 3 November to Peter Mandelson, on behalf of your constituent, Mr David Bristow of Odiham Post Office, High Street, Odiham RG29 1LA, about the Post Office Horizon system. I am replying as Minister of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Under the Government's postal sector reforms introduced in 2001, Royal Mail (which includes Post Office Ltd (POL)) was given greater commercial freedom, as the management and unions had requested, and Government has assumed an arm's length role as a shareholder in a public limited company. Subject to agreeing its strategic plan with us, the Board can structure the business as it decides best to meet the challenges of market development and changing customer needs.

The issues raised by your constituent are operational and contractual matters for POL and not for Government. I understand from POL that errors at the branch have been fully investigated and there is nothing to indicate that there are any problems with the Horizon system. The company's position as regards the integrity of the Horizon system remains as set out in the reply dated 13 October from Alan Cook, Managing Director, to Brooks Newmark MP, to which your letter refers.

*Yours sincerely,*  
**GRO**

**PAT McFADDEN**

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