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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY

The Adelphi, 1-11 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT

Telephone 0171-962 8000

Gtn. 391

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Jonathan Evans  
Director, Network Services  
Post Office Counters Ltd  
King Edward Street  
King Edward Building  
LONDON

30 November 1998

*Dear Jonathan,*

BA/POCL AUTOMATION PROJECT: TOWARDS AN INTER-MINISTERIAL DECISION

1. We spoke about the letter from Joe Ashton to Hamish Sandison of earlier today.
2. I am sorry that there appear still to be issues that concern you around the provision of advice by the Joint Programme Lawyer. Given the need to get something sorted out in time for us to put forward our respective submissions to the Treasury this evening, we did not have the opportunity to discuss what the continuing concerns are. But I would be glad if you could take me through them before too long, so that we can resolve them once and for all.
3. In the meantime, you suggested that a way through for this particular work would be for DSS/BA to commission work independently from Hamish. I agreed to this, but pointing out that the basis for seeking his advice is of course that he is the Joint Programme Lawyer with the expertise that goes with that, and it is in that capacity that we are seeking such advice.
4. You also confirmed that our agreement about how best to proceed supersedes the letter earlier today from Joe Ashton to Hamish.
5. I have now written to Hamish accordingly; and I attach a copy of that letter.
6. Thank you for your help in sorting out the immediate problem.

*Yours,*

**GRO**

MRS SARAH GRAHAM  
Department of Social Security

*Copies of this letter*

*go to those on the copy list for my letter to Hamish. Srg.*



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Hamish Sandison  
Bird & Bird  
Fetter Lane  
LONDON

30 November 1998

*Dear Hamish,*

**BA/POCL AUTOMATION PROJECT: TOWARDS AN INTER-MINISTERIAL DECISION**

This note confirms that DSS/BA have sought some further advice from you, following up your earlier Memoranda addressed to us and POCL on a possible exit strategy, should continuing with the BA/POCL Automation Project not prove possible.

As you know, one of the pieces of work commissioned by Ministers is advice on the best exit strategy to pursue, should they decide to halt the project on 9 December or shortly thereafter. There are differing views between ourselves and POCL about the best strategy to pursue, taking all the issues into account; and as a result, we and POCL have been asked to set out our respective preferred strategies for the Law Officers' consideration.

Our preferred strategy has been developed on the back of your legal advice as Joint Programme Lawyer, and further informed by advice given by our Counsel. I should be grateful if you could provide advice - in essence, the advice you have already given in your memorandum of [ ] - but in a form that may be suitable to present as part of our submission to the Law Officers.

I have agreed with Jonathan Evans, Network Director at Post Office Counters Ltd, that you will be providing us with this assistance.

I am copying this letter to him and to David Sibbick at DTI for information; also to Catherine Churchard, Solicitor and Legal Services Director at POCL; Robert Ricks, Legal Advisor to the Treasury; Clive Osborne, Solicitor at DTI; and to Marilynne Morgan, the DSS Solicitor, and Ron Powell the DSS legal advisor on the project.

*Yours,*

**GRO**

**MRS SARAH GRAHAM**  
**Department of Social Security**