

Message

**From:** Belinda Crowe [IMCEAEX-  
\_O=MMS\_OU=EXCHANGE+20ADMINISTRATIVE+20GROUP+20+28FYDIBOHF23SPDLT+29\_CN=RECIPIENTS\_CN=BELINDA+20CROWE79F  
569F-4526-A078-F5B4958A8917220@C72A47.ingest.local]  
**Sent:** 01/04/2014 15:20:15  
**To:** Sophie Bialaszewski [GRO]; Mark R Davies [GRO]; Chris Aujard  
[GRO]  
**CC:** Martin Edwards [GRO]  
**BCC:** Belinda Crowe [GRO]  
**Subject:** Fwd: Update from Post Office meeting, 24 March 2014

For information. We have received the letter from James Arbuthnot and are considering a response.

Best wishes  
Belinda

Belinda Crowe  
148 Old Street, LONDON, EC1V 9HQ

**GRO**

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "ARBUTHNOT, James" [GRO]  
**Date:** 1 April 2014 10:56:20 BST  
**To:** Undisclosed recipients;;  
**Subject:** Update from Post Office meeting, 24 March 2014

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks to those of you who attended or sent representatives to our meeting on 24 March.

I thought it would be useful to summarise what was discussed and to point to where we are going with this matter.

The mediation scheme is up and running, with a working group chaired by Sir Anthony Hooper, a retired Court of Appeal judge. This group reviews whether or not cases qualify for the mediation process which is being conducted by the Centre for Dispute Resolution, independent of Post Office, the investigators, and the applicants. 150 applications were received by the deadline of 18 November 2013. The investigators reported that they are confident that many of the issues would be common to many cases. I hope this means that the investigating process will speed up considerably.

No results were made available to us at the meeting. The Post Office was at pains to say that this was both because the mediation process was underway and by no means concluded yet, and because confidentiality of each applicant and his or her case must be respected. The matter of potential compensation is also considered confidential and so no details were made available. Alan Bates from the Justice for SubPostmasters Alliance expressed some frustration with these points, but said that his group were going along with the mediation process and would see what the outcome is to be.

The Post Office has clearly implemented new processes in response to our raising these cases with it. A parallel scheme for looking into new cases is already in place, and business improvements have been made. This is encouraging news.

I remain concerned that the process is taking much longer than anyone wants and also that we were not given any indication of when any investigation might yield results, and what exactly we might be told about these results. Given that the investigators were on the verge of producing a report on 26 March about their work and handing this to the working group, I have also asked when MPs might be offered some more substantial news.

I have therefore written to Paula Vennells, the CEO who attended the meeting, expressing these points and requested another meeting which I hope could take place in July. I have also asked her what to do about any 'new' cases that arise. My office has received one or two, and I know others are being directed to MPs. As soon as I receive a reply from Post Office about this, I shall be in touch.

I have said to the Post Office that I remain confident that the mediation process remains the best possible opportunity for this matter to be resolved, but that we need to see some results, and soon. I ask you to be patient a while longer.

Yours ever

James

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