

Thank you for your letter of 8<sup>th</sup> December to Paula Vennells about the Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme. I have been asked to reply.

Post Office has carefully considered the points that you raise and those that you made in the debate in Westminster Hall on 17 December. I am sorry that you have decided to withdraw your support for the Scheme. I remain of the view that the success of the Scheme rests on the commitment of all the involved parties to act in good faith and I believe that our actions clearly demonstrate we have done so. I attach a fact sheet about the Scheme and Post Office which I hope you will find useful.

During the course of the debate you raised the case of your constituent, Mrs Jo Hamilton, whose case is progressing through the Scheme. As you know, Post Office has always been willing to talk through, in confidence, individual cases with MPs. Indeed as I recall Angela Van den Bogerd from my team spent some time with you going through the detail of Mrs Hamilton's case before the Scheme was established. Although you have withdrawn your personal support for the Scheme, I am writing to offer a further meeting with Post Office representatives to discuss further Post Office's position in relation to the Scheme. Mrs Hamilton's case is currently progressing through the Scheme and, provided we have her consent to do so, I would be happy to discuss the Post Office's investigation of her case. However it would be important, in doing so, to ensure that the Scheme process is not compromised in any way. Post Office is similarly willing to meet with you about the case of your other constituent in the Scheme if we have their consent to this.

I am sure you will understand that any discussions about individual cases must remain confidential. The terms of the Scheme provide confidentiality to applicants to protect privacy and sensitive, personal information. Post Office's responsibilities to all the applicants and the Scheme are unchanged by the fact that others have chosen to speak publicly and Post Office cannot put itself in a position where, in response to public calls by others, even MPs, it is later accused of breaching confidentiality and undermining the Scheme. I should also stress that Post Office will continue to refuse to discuss individual cases with the media, even in the face of some very serious and unfounded allegations.

Please let me know if you wish meet and I will get in touch with your office to set that up.