



**Professor Christopher Hodges OBE**  
Horizon Compensation Advisory Board  
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By Email

16 January 2024

Dear Professor Hodges

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP), the only Post Office-recognised trade association representing post office operators, responsible for approximately 8,500 post office branches throughout the UK.

I am asking for your help regarding an urgent matter that is seriously affecting 105 subpostmasters.

Following the closure of the Network Transformation (NT) programme in 2018, Post Office now hold a 'Hard to Place' (HtP) register, which covers offices that have not found a Potential New Postmaster (PNP) due to location, declining footfall, and low remuneration etc. The majority of these offices are in rural locations, and many of the HtP postmasters are of retirement age and/or have an underlying health issue. All of us have been looking for a PNP since 2015.

All HtP postmasters receive a small, fixed remuneration from Post Office Ltd and have a year-to-year agreement to continue with this, which the NFSP pushes Post Office to extend every year so that we do not lose our compensation. Within the original offer signed in 2015, is a leaver's payment equivalent to 26 months, which the postmaster would receive when a PNP is willing to take over the office. This leaver's payment is a nest egg for retirement for many, covers the cost of staff redundancies, and is a return of their original investment. £640m of taxpayers' funds was provided, but crucially not ring-fenced, to Post Office in 2015 specifically to complete Network Transformation. The NFSP have tried on several occasions, via the Freedom of Information Act, to find out where this money has gone but have been blocked by Post Office on cost grounds.

This year, Post Office decided to close the HtP network, mainly due to the cost of transferring to a new IT system which is being introduced throughout the network. This is despite

receiving £122m in funding from Government to develop and complete this new system, which is set to replace the ageing Horizon system that has been in existence since 1999.

The original offer of 26 months compensation has been revised to 12 months if a PNP has not been found by March 2024. This change has been made without proper consultation with the HtP network. The NFSP have been informed by PO they will now deploy a field team to try and find PNPs up until the end of March 2024. This comes after five years of inactivity, with Post Office admitting they have taken "their foot off the gas". Even though this team will be working to find alternative premises, the events following the ITV drama and the negativity towards Post Office Ltd, will make this virtually impossible as no retailer will want a post office at this current time.

We strongly disagree with this offer as it leaves many postmasters hugely out of pocket after serving their communities for years, and instead benefits Post Office and Government due to the savings made. PO have offered no reasonable compromise.

The average leavers payment to my colleagues if the 26 months remained, is £80,000 which would cost Post Office £8.4m to enable us to retire with dignity. The 12 months that Post Office are imposing would cost £3.9m, saving them £4.5m.

However, the question remains; where has the £640m of funding provided to Post Office in 2015 gone?

At a time when there is public anger due to 'Mr Bates Vs The Post Office', a Statutory Inquiry set up to uncover mistakes made by PO and others in the past, and an additional £150m recently approved to cover additional legal costs for the Inquiry, I find it hard to understand how this unethical practice can occur today. The NFSP has raised the issue with the Government, MPs, and external bodies.

Yet again no one is listening, just like in the past.

I plead with you to contact Treasury and the Postal Minister to request that Post Office enter meaningful negotiations, to agree a leavers' payment. This would enable these 105 to retire with dignity rather than in potential debt after covering costs of closing their post office.

Colleagues have written to their MPs, therefore I would be grateful if a debate on this matter could be raised in Parliament which would highlight how Post Office are treating Postmasters of today.

Cultural attitudes within Post Office which led to mistakes of the past, are still present and in practise today.

As a group we would be more than happy to meet with you for you to hear first-hand our stories and experiences.

Yours sincerely,

Calum Greenhow, CEO NFSP

Co-signed by:

Robert Cockburn	Drumnadrochit
Christine Pickles	Collingham
Steve Harrison	Ewell Court
Depesh Patel	Copthorne Bank
Andrew Forrester	Brynteg
Amrit Singh	Quinton
Barbara Poole	Rising Bridge
Barry Heeks	Adlington
Robert Forster	Ford
Phil Dolby	Crich
Mr Parikh	72 Battersea Bridge Road
Gillian Greenhow	West Linton
Mohan Chandegra	West Ferry Road
Sheelim McKeaghney	Centre Post Office
Patsie Ford	Nayland
Brian Arris	Kingswell
Susan Harper	Meriden
Adrian Watts	Coffee Hall
Alan Bedding	Abersychan
H Kuni	The Fold
Chris Birchmufg	Sentolm Corden
Sharon Hammond	Postavogie
Bharat Vada	Princes Ave
Keith Thrush	Hathern
Manjit Singh Dhaliwal	Brewery Road
MS Panesar	Lower Stoke
L Davies	Clydach Vale
DK Lehal	Wootton
NB Patel	Blaenearan
AN Stringer	The Holmes
Naseem Akhter	Brinsall
Alice Harrington	High Valleyfield
Carole Younger	Almondbank
Sailesh Patel	Shrub End
Paresh L Vakharia	Winshill
Rupa P Vakharia	Winshill
Christine Neale	St Germans
John Duraid	Holme Hall
Rana Aslam	Arden
Bella Sood	Dalmuir
Peter Cattee	High Lane
Charles Gardner	Trafalgar Place
Lisa Marcham	Cullingworth
Steven Binyon	Moorclose Estate
Vipul Pabari	Connaught Road
Neena Kochhar	Underwood
Sittampalam Thillainathan	Ladbroke Grove
Christine McAloone	Duncairn Street
Susan Bruce	Hartington
Janita Wicks	Rookley
Dilip Patel	Kew Gardens
S Patel	Shrub End

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Locking Stumps  
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Bush Hill Park  
Llandrillo Yn Rhos  
Camp Hill