



First Minister
Scottish Parliament
firstminister@gov.scot

By Email

16 January 2024

Dear First Minister

I am writing to you as the Chief Executive Officer of the National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP), a professional not-for-profit trade association representing post office operators responsible for approximately 8,500 post office branches throughout the UK.

The recent ITV drama highlighted in the public consciousness the largest miscarriage of justice in the history of the UK. This miscarriage of justice extends to Scotland where, the NFSP understands, approximately 100 prosecutions of SubPostmasters took place. Over and above those prosecutions, SubPostmasters throughout Scotland fell victim to “shortfalls” showing on the now discredited Horizon system and were subject to investigations, audits and demands for payments by the Post Office of apparent shortfalls showing on Horizon.

It is believed that many tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of pounds were paid by Scottish SubPostmasters to the Post Office as a result of those investigations and audits in order to avoid threatened legal action.

The NFSP is aware that significant questions have been raised in the UK and Scottish Parliaments about the many issues arising since the ITV drama was aired. While the NFSP is dealing with the Postal Affairs Minister in the UK Parliament regarding the miscarriages of justice and Horizon, we are also concerned about the prosecutions which took place in Scotland, where prosecutions are brought by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) rather than the private prosecution system in England & Wales. The NFSP therefore requests your response to the following questions:

- When and how it was that COPFS became aware that there were questions about the reliability of Horizon data in prosecutions of SubPostmasters
- When did a representative of the Post Office attend in Scotland to meet a representative or representatives of COPFS regarding the use of Horizon data in such prosecutions

- Who it was who attended that meeting from the Post Office and who attended from COPFS
- What was decided by COPFS in terms of prosecutions as a result of that meeting
- When it was and why it was that no further prosecutions of SubPostmasters took place where the prosecution relied on Horizon data
- It is understood that prosecutions of SubPostmasters took place after the meeting with the Post Office referred to above. Why was that?
- What steps were taken by COPFS once it was recognised that the Horizon data was not reliable in terms of a prosecution to review and address all such prosecutions which had already taken place and which had resulted in convictions
- What steps the Scottish Government and/or COPFS intend to take with regard to the actions of the Post Office in attending Scottish sub-post offices to demand payment of alleged “shortfalls” showing on Horizon. The NFSP notes that at last week’s First Minister’s Questions, the Scottish Labour leader Anas Sawar raised the prospect of the Post Office being investigated for extortion in such cases. Are any steps to be taken with regard to this issue?

The NFSP would be very happy to meet with you to discuss the issues above and arising from the Post Office/Horizon scandal. As I am also a former SubPostmaster, my wife now runs the Post Office and retail side, living in Scotland, such a meeting in Edinburgh would not be difficult to arrange

Yours sincerely,

Calum Greenhow, CEO NFSP