

**From:** [Nick Read](#)  
**To:** [ps.lordchancellor@justice.gov.uk](mailto:ps.lordchancellor@justice.gov.uk); [Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE \(TRADE\)](#); [Minister HOLLINRAKE \(DBT\)](#)  
**Subject:** Urgent Letter for Lord Chancellor from Nick Read Post Office Ltd  
**Date:** 09 January 2024 16:52:49  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
[240109 Nick Read to Lord Chancellor - FINAL.pdf](#)  
[Lord Chancellor - attachment.pdf](#)

---

Please find attached a letter for the urgent attention of the Lord Chancellor

**Nick Read**  
Group CEO

EA: [REDACTED]

100 Wood Street  
London, EC2V 7AN

[postoffice.co.uk](https://postoffice.co.uk)





9 January 2024

Rt Hon Alex Chalk KC MP  
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ

Dear Lord Chancellor

### Post Office Convictions & Compensation

As you give urgent consideration to the question as to whether and how the process for appeals against convictions flowing from the Horizon IT Scandal can be accelerated, you should be in no doubt of today's Post Office's determination to ensure that proper redress is achieved for all of those affected by the business' abysmal behaviour over the relevant time period. We are, individually and collectively, working as hard and as quickly as we possibly can to get compensation to those affected, to support the Inquiry, and to provide Ministers and officials in our sponsoring Department with whatever assistance they require.

We welcome the extraordinary publicity generated by the ITV drama for its ability to reach people who have yet to come forward to appeal their conviction and/or claim compensation and for the spur it has given to looking at ways to accelerate redress for all those affected. However, I would argue that Post Office has a duty to ensure that any decisions which may be taken by Government are fully informed. We also have a duty to the Court in respect of our role as prosecutor in some 700 of those cases which resulted in convictions.

In an effort to fast-track the appeals process ourselves and to encourage people to come forward, we asked our external legal advisers, Peters & Peters, together with Simon Baker KC and Jacqueline Carey KC to undertake a review of all our historic prosecutions. The aim of the exercise was to identify potential appeals against convictions which, following the judgment in *Hamilton*, we would be highly likely to concede in Court. This has enabled us to write, proactively, to a further 30 potential appellants in addition to the 142 resolved cases and the five awaiting consideration, encouraging them to mount an appeal, have their convictions quashed, and obtain appropriate compensation.

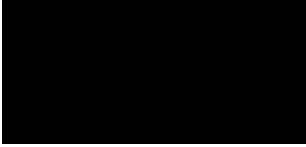
A natural corollary of that exercise has been to identify those cases in which, on the information available to us and following the judgement in *Hamilton*, we would be bound to oppose an appeal. Typically, these cases involve convictions obtained by reliance on evidence unrelated to the Horizon computer system. The number of such cases is very much more significant, at 369, with a further 11 still under review. There are another 132 in which we cannot determine the sufficiency of evidence without more information. This clearly raises acute political, judicial, and communications challenges against the very significant public and Parliamentary pressure for some form of acceleration or by-passing of the normal appeals process.

We make absolutely no value judgment about what you and your colleagues determine as the right course of action, but consider it essential for you to understand the very real and sensitive complexities presented each case. We stand ready, together with our legal advisers, to offer you and your officials every assistance as you consider these issues and we can make ourselves available to you and/or your officials at any time.

In the meantime, I attach a note prepared by Peters & Peters which covers this and other issues you may find helpful in your deliberations.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP, and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Kevin Hollinrake MP.

Yours sincerely



**Nick Read,**  
Chief Executive, Post Office Limited

Dear all

I wasn't sure who within POL currently is engaged on this issue but I assume you all are.

I have been listening with growing concern over the weekend to the reports that Alex Chalk is actively considering "stripping POL of its role" in appeals and/or using legislation to overturn every conviction. I assume he is considering the HCAB recommendations in their 14 December letter and attachment. My concern is not that the Government will implement any of the recommendations, but that it will do so on a false basis because it does not have all the relevant information and advice it needs to determine whether it will increase the number of successful appeals.

The most significant issue is that all the HCAB recommendations and the recent media and political response is based on the false assumption that there are 700 wrongful convictions, therefore there are hundreds of miscarriages of justice still out there whose route to justice is somehow being thwarted by POL and 'the system'. In reality, it is highly likely that the vast majority of people who have not yet appealed were, in fact, guilty as charged and were safely convicted. Unless this is made clear to the Government, it risks making incredibly important and expensive decisions on a completely false premise. I am sure that this point has been or is being made to whoever is briefing Alex Chalk, but I also know that points can be misunderstood or watered down by the time they reach a Minister, and this is one point that cannot be made strongly enough.

The second issue, which is not really for POL to make, but it should make it if no-one else will, is that based on its conduct of appeals so far the CPS is unlikely to take a more generous approach than POL and, if anything, will take a more restrictive view.

The third issue is that there are still many cases that need to go via the CCRC which, like the CPS, is completely independent and has already explained that it has rejected 31 applications based on clear confessions and/or other corroborating evidence of guilt. It could revisit those decisions but, unless there is further evidence or legislation is used to either bypass the CCRC or change the test it applies, those decisions aren't going to change.

The fourth issue is the unspoken assumption that the CACD would overturn more convictions if only POL would let it, or it considered different arguments or evidence. There is no basis for thinking that the CACD will depart from *Hamilton* or that it will allow appeals if they would only come forward or if, contrary to expectations, the CPS concedes appeals which POL would not. The HCAB recommendations assume that only psychological barriers are preventing hundreds of PFAs from appealing and that if those PFAs came forward then, given the proper evidence, the CACD would allow the appeals. However, this 'trauma' theory only works if hundreds of innocent PFAs made false confessions. Even if that is true (which is very doubtful), because the burden is on the appellant, the CACD will expect them to give evidence on oath to that effect which it can then consider in reaching its decision. No-one has been prevented from doing that in any appeal to date. Several have withdrawn their appeals when it became clear that this is what they needed to do. The Government can't change the basic principles and procedures in the CACD: if a PFA was convicted based on a

false confession and in fact suffered unexplained shortfalls then at some point they are going to need to explain that to a Court.

There are many other legal, procedural and practical points that the Government and CPS should consider before making any decisions, such as:

- Should the PCDE be completely re-done given the criticism that the *Hamilton* test is too narrow because the CACD did not see all the relevant material?
- If not, should POL still be responsible for searching the new repositories and/or conducting case-specific further enquiries in any given appeal?
- Should POL continue to liaise with NPPs on the current basis?

Please let us know if you need assistance from P&P in ensuring that the Government has a clear and comprehensive picture of all the relevant issues in its current decision-making process. If it does not, or they are not presented clearly, I am very concerned that the outcome of that decision-making process will not be in the interests of justice, PFAs or POL.

Kind regards

Nick

**Nick Vamos**  
**Partner and Head of Business Crime**

For and on behalf of Peters & Peters Solicitors LLP

**From:** [Correspondence - Secretary of State for International Trade \(TRADE\)](#) on behalf of [Correspondence - Secretary of State for International Trade \(TRADE\) <Badenoch.Correspondence@trade.gov.uk>](#)  
**To:** [Nick Read](#); [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE \(TRADE\)](#); [Minister HOLLINRAKE \(TRADE\)](#)  
**Subject:** Letter from the Business and Trade Secretary  
**Date:** 15 May 2023 19:14:27  
**Attachments:** [Post Office Response from SoS.pdf](#)  
[image001.jpg](#)

---

Good afternoon,

I hope that this email finds you well.

Please see attached a letter from the Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade, President of the Board of Trade, and Minister for Women & Equalities.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED] | **Secretary of State's Private Office**  
[REDACTED] to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade  
and President of the Board of Trade, and Minister for Women and Equalities  
Tel: [REDACTED] | E-mail: [REDACTED]



# Department for Business & Trade

**The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP**  
**Secretary of State for Business & Trade**  
**President of the Board of Trade**  
**Minister for Women & Equalities**  
Department for Business and Trade  
Old Admiralty Building  
Admiralty Place  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2DY

Nick Read, Chief Executive  
Post Office Limited  
Finsbury Dials  
20 Finsbury Street,  
London  
EC2Y 9AQ

T +44 (0) 020 4551 0011  
E [Badenoch.Correspondence@trade.gov.uk](mailto:Badenoch.Correspondence@trade.gov.uk)  
W [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

15 May 2023

Dear Nick,

## Post Office Accounts

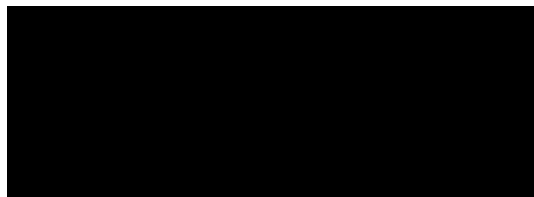
Thank you for your letter of 10 May. I appreciate you taking the time to write and apologise on behalf of the Post Office.

I also welcome the investigation that Amanda Burton is undertaking into the incident, in her role as the incoming Chair of the Post Office Remuneration Committee. I have set the expectation that this investigation should complete within two weeks, to allow us all to have clear sight of all the facts, particularly the evidence case that was used to assess that the Inquiry sub metric for 2021/22 had been 'achieved'. UKGI have confirmed that Amanda will work to this timetable, and I am grateful for this. We have also been approached by the Business and Trade Select Committee, who will I am sure be keen to see the results of the investigation too.

You will have heard Minister Kevin Hollinrake say in the House of Commons on 10 May that our department is going to separately commission an independent review of the governance around Post Office remuneration. This will take account of the issue of corporate best practice that you mention in your letter. We are in the process of appointing the lead of this review, which will run in parallel to Amanda's investigation, and we will share information with you about this soon. This review is more likely to focus on whether there are significant safeguards built into the process than removing bureaucracy. I will be grateful for your full commitment to share information with the reviewer once they take up that role.

This has been an unfortunate episode and I am determined to ensure that we establish the facts and allow the investigation and review to complete their work before we reach conclusions about next steps. I appreciate your engagement as we take forward the investigations and any follow-on actions.

Best wishes,



**THE RT HON KEMI BADENOCH MP**  
Secretary of State for Business & Trade and President of the Board of Trade  
Minister for Women & Equalities

**From:** [Nick Read](#)  
**To:** [badenoch@trade.gov.uk](mailto:badenoch@trade.gov.uk)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Letter from Nick Read - Post Office - Urgent.  
**Date:** 10 May 2023 11:01:36  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[230510 - Nick Read Letter to Kemi Badenoch MP - fin.docx](#)

---

Dear Secretary of State.

Please find attached letter.

Regards  
Nick Read

**Nick Read**  
Group CEO

EA: [REDACTED]

Finsbury Dials, 20 Finsbury Street  
London, EC2Y 9AQ

[postoffice.co.uk](http://postoffice.co.uk)







10<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP  
Secretary of State  
Department of Business and Trade  
Old Admiralty Building, Admiralty Place  
LONDON  
SW1A 2DY

Dear Secretary of State

### Clarification to Post Office Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22

I write to apologise to you on behalf of Post Office for the error made in including an inappropriate metric as part of the Transformation Incentive scheme in 2021/22 in relation to the Post Office's performance in discharging what were, and continue to be, its clear obligations to the Horizon IT Inquiry. That error was compounded by Post Office's mistake in declaring that this element had been achieved successfully.

As detailed in the Company's statement from Lisa Harrington yesterday, an investigation into the circumstances which resulted in these mistakes is underway. That investigation is being led by Amanda Burton, a Non-Executive Director who joined the Board just two weeks ago, on 27 April 2023. Amanda also takes over as Chair of our Remuneration Committee (Remco) from Lisa Harrington as part of planned succession arrangements for Remco. We would welcome the involvement of an independent third party to assure the robustness and integrity of the investigation and its recommendations and invite your suggestions in this regard.

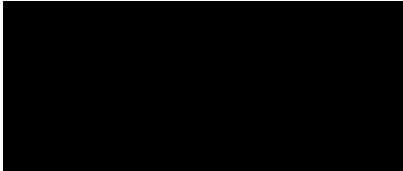
You will be aware that, as Chief Executive, I have volunteered to return the portion of the bonus which is attributable to all of the business' work described as relating to the Inquiry and not only to the specific element of the metric at issue. The position of other recipients of relevant payments will be addressed as part of Amanda Burton's work.

Finally, it is our intention to appoint an independent expert to undertake a detailed review of the Post Office's governance framework.. In the light of the remuneration issues, we intend to request a specific focus on the governance arrangements for Remco and to ask that this part of the expert's report be prioritised. I hope that this will could be helpful in providing another avenue for recommendations and assurance that could simplify our current governance arrangements. These have, in recent years, become unsustainably cumbersome and do little to promote clarity in decision-making processes. We would welcome a commitment by the Government to review our governance and the reports by the independent expert may be helpful to you.

The errors for which I have apologised are a source of deep regret both for me personally and for the Company as a whole. We will continue to work hard as a business to support every aspect of the Inquiry's work and to offer those affected full and fair compensation as quickly as possible. The transformation of Post Office, its culture and its operations, is vital to the success of today's Postmasters and the customers and communities they serve. The provision of these essential services should not be jeopardised by the rightful fulfilment of our duties to the Inquiry and the Postmasters affected.

I am copying this letter to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Kevin Hollinrake MP

Yours sincerely



**Nick Read**  
Chief Executive, Post Office Limited

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE \(TRADE\)](#)  
**Subject:** Nick Read early arrival  
**Date:** 05 March 2024 10:17:02  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

---

Good morning [REDACTED]

Just a note to let you know that Nick will be arriving at the [REDACTED] a bit early having come straight from another appointment.

Might you be able to collect him so that he can go to the coffee shop?

Thank you.

[REDACTED]  
Executive Assistant to Nick Read,  
Group Chief Executive Officer

[REDACTED]  
100 Wood Street  
London, EC2V 7AN

