

House of Commons

[Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee](#)

**\*\*Correspondence – Post Office and Horizon inquiry\*\***

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June - for immediate release**

## **Post Office & Horizon inquiry – BEIS Committee publishes Post Office, Fujitsu, Paula Vennells & BEIS Minister responses**

Following recent correspondence from **Darren Jones, Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee** relating to the handling of the Horizon IT scandal, the BEIS Committee has published letters today from current Post Office Ltd CEO, [Nick Read](#), the former CEO, [Paula Vennells](#), and [Fujitsu](#) [letters available via underlined links].

The BEIS Committee has also published today a response from **BEIS Minister Paul Scully**, following recent correspondence from Darren Jones, BEIS Chair, on the Government's announcement of an independent review. The Minister's response [full text available [here](#)] indicates the review will not be on a statutory basis.

The correspondence from Nick Read, current CEO, Post Office Ltd, Paula Vennells, former CEO, and from Rob Putland, Senior Vice President, Fujitsu includes responses on a series of issues such as the Post Office Ltd's conduct towards sub-postmasters, the handling of the Bates v Post Office Ltd litigation, and the role of the Government and UK Government Investments (UKGI) in overseeing the Post Office Ltd's approach.

**Darren Jones, Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee** said: *"The Minister's response gives little confidence that this review will be able to deliver justice for those who have waited for so long.*

*"It's important, as a bare minimum, that the review is put on a statutory basis so it can summon witnesses and compel the disclosure of documentary evidence. If the Government is really committed to taking action that delivers for the victims of this scandal it should bring forward a judge-led public inquiry.*

*"The letters we have received from the Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu, and former CEO, Paula Vennells, will likely be seen by many as attempts to shift the blame to the others for the dismal failings which saw sub-postmasters and postal staff suffer so grievously and, in some cases, face prosecution.*

*"The letters indicate that UKGI was engaged in discussions with the Post Office Ltd about Horizon. This highlights once again concerns about a lack of effective oversight from Government. Now more than ever, we need to be confident that Government can meet its responsibilities as a company shareholder.*

*"The BEIS Committee will now consider how best to follow up on the issues raised in this correspondence and what recommendations we wish to make to Government to ensure that something like this can never happen again."*

## Background information

Links to letters included above and also here:

Nick Read: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1619/documents/15460/default/>

Fujitsu: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1620/documents/15461/default/>

Paula Vennells: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1621/documents/15462/default/>

Paul Scully MP: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1622/documents/15463/default/>

Darren Jones [letter to Paul Scully](#) on Horizon independent review. The text of original letters from Darren Jones, Chair of BEIS Committee is available (via links) - to current Post Office Ltd CEO, [Nick Read](#), the former CEO, [Paula Vennells](#), and to [Fujitsu](#) include a series of questions relating to the handling of the Horizon IT scandal and the Committee's inquiry.

The Committee's evidence session on 24 March on the Post Office and Horizon with Post Office Ltd CEO, Nick Read, the former CEO, Paula Vennells, and Fujitsu had been scheduled for Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March but was postponed due to the Covid-19 lockdown

The BEIS Committee's inquiry had been looking at the impact on sub-postmasters and its effect on the future viability of the Post Office, and examining the lessons the Government and Post Office Ltd had learned from a scandal which saw hundreds of sub-postmasters accused of fraud.

On Tuesday 10 March, the BEIS Committee heard from the following witnesses: Alan Bates, Justice for Sub-postmasters Alliance and former sub-postmaster, Wendy Buffrey, former sub-postmaster, Tracy Felstead, former Post Office worker, Andy Furey, Deputy General-Secretary, Communication Workers Union, Calum Greenhow, CEO, National Federation of Sub-postmasters, Ron Warmington, Second Sight Forensic Accountants, Ian Henderson, Second Sight Forensic Accountants.

**Committee Membership:** Darren Jones, Chair, (Labour MP for Bristol North West), Mark Pawsey MP (Vice-Chair), (Conservative, Rugby), Alan Brown (SNP, Kilmarnock and Loudoun), Judith Cummins (Lab, Bradford South), Richard Fuller MP (Conservative, North East Bedfordshire), Nusrat Ghani MP (Conservative, Wealden), Paul Howell (Conservative, Sedgfield), Mark Jenkinson MP (Conservative, Workington), Ruth Jones (Labour, Newport West), Charlotte Nichols (Labour, Warrington North), Alexander Stafford MP (Conservative, Rother Valley).