

**Horizon Compensation Advisory Board**  
Secretariat: Department for Business and Trade  
Old Admiralty Building  
London  
SW1A 2DY

Nigel Railton  
Chair  
Post Office  
Group CEO  
100 Wood Street  
London, EC2V 7AN

15 May 2026

Dear Nigel,

### **Post Office Objections to Appeals Against Convictions**

Thank you for your letter of 14 May, in reply to mine of 1<sup>st</sup> May, which HCAB colleagues and I have carefully considered.

The Post Office's public stance as expressed to the Select Committee is that these convictions should be overturned. Yet they are arguing to the Court of Appeal that they should not be. That seems to us and to public commentators to be inexplicable and unconscionable.

You and the Post Office have been on record as apologising for horrendous harm to SPMs. Yet this stance actually causes fresh harm and insult to them. It completely undermines any trust in statements that the PO is sorry, has changed, and can now be trusted.

The rationale given is excessively legalistic, and avoids making a policy choice based on what we would view as sound human values, and its effect on victims and public opinion. During early discussions with Counsel for the Post Office on Horizon convictions, we heard similar arguments to those advanced in your letter, about the obligation on them to support the Court of Appeal by taking an adversarial, defensive view of convictions. To put it in layman's terms, taking arguments that could be made or might ordinarily be made rather than should be made. We never saw convincing justification that this was required of them by way of legal authority. We would invite you please to let us see that authority and reasoning.

Your letter seems to shift responsibility for the decision towards your legal advisers. The advisors on which PO rely have been involved for some time and were involved in the post-Hamilton defence of convictions, in ways which properly provoked some controversy during Nick Read's tenure. Some come from the same chambers as counsel now under the spotlight through the PO Inquiry for matters of significant concern. Without in any way questioning the propriety of their decision-making, we do wonder if they come to these matters with the appearance of sufficient independence when advising on matters with a considerable history where they have played an active role.

There appears to us to be no reason why the PO could not make a statement to the Court of Appeal that in the current situation, where the PO has caused such harm to the victims, it does not feel right or conscionable that it should object to any appeals brought by victims or having been independently reviewed by the CCRC, and it trusts that the PO will understand the reasons for this. The decision on this should be taken by the PO Board. The advice of lawyers to the PO Board should be treated as advice rather than a binding decision, and that advice should be subjected to a degree of common sense – which has not, in our view, yet happened.

Yours sincerely,

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