

Witness Name: Margot James
Statement No.: WITN10910100
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POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF MARGOT JAMES

I, Margot James, former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, will say as follows.

INTRODUCTION

1. I make this statement in response to the Inquiry's request for evidence dated 17 May 2024 ("**the Rule 9 request**"). I have prepared it with the support of the Government Legal Department and counsel. I have been dependent on others to provide me with documents to assist with the chronology of events as set out herein, but any views expressed in this statement are my own. Unfortunately, some documents which would have been helpful in preparing this statement, such as the minutes or notes of meetings and my Ministerial Diary, have not been located or shown to me, but I have done my best to deal with the issues raised by the Inquiry on the basis of what is available and what I can remember. I will do all I can to clarify or expand upon the evidence set out in this statement should it assist the Inquiry.
2. I wish to express my deepest sympathy for all the subpostmasters and subpostmistresses ("**SPMs**") and their families who have been subject to such a terrible miscarriage of justice during an ordeal which in most cases lasted many years and for a large number is not over yet. And to offer my heartfelt condolences

to the families of those SPMs who were driven to take their own lives as a consequence of this shocking sequence of events and of those SPMs who died never having received justice or having their names cleared. I would like to apologise to the SPM community for allowing myself to be fobbed off for too long, not challenging what I was being told more forcefully and as a result not pressing adequately for the acceleration of actions that might have expedited efforts to uncover the truth and put in place a generous scheme of compensation and redress more rapidly. It is beholden on everyone who has had any responsibility for contributing to this torment to account for their actions to this inquiry. In so doing I intend to help in every way that I can and I hope that my evidence is of some assistance to the Inquiry. I hope the Inquiry can uncover what went wrong, hold individuals to account where necessary and ensure that the appropriate lessons are learned.

3. I have answered the Rule 9 request in sequential order and have endeavoured where possible to provide my account in chronological order as requested.

Background

4. In 1985 I co-founded and was CEO of a company which worked to provide public relations and medical education services to pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers. In 1999 that company was sold and I managed the change from it being an independent company to becoming a subsidiary of a large multinational. I acted as Chair until 2002 before joining the advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather in 2003 as Vice President, Europe with responsibility for the integration and growth of its healthcare assets.
5. In 2010 I was elected MP for Stourbridge and served until 2019 when I stood down at the general election.
6. From 13 May 2015 to 17 July 2016, I served as an Assistant Whip. From 17 July 2016 to 9 January 2018, I was appointed to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (“**BEIS**” or “**the Department**”) and served as the

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility. I was also the member of the Department's Board with responsibility for diversity and inclusion. It was at this time that I became aware of some of the issues relevant to this Inquiry.

7. On 9 January 2018, I was appointed to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as Minister of State for Digital and the Creative Industries. I served in this role until 18 July 2019.
8. After I left Parliament, in April 2020, I took up a position as the Executive Chair of the Warwick Manufacturing Group at the University of Warwick. I also returned to the private sector taking up two non-executive board roles in the financial services and technology sectors.
9. After three to four years, I stepped down from those roles and now pursue independent consultancy and pro bono work in the areas of decarbonisation and climate change. I am currently the Chair of the Advisory Board to the West Midlands Electric Lightweight Vehicle and Battery Storage Cluster and the Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Board to Coventry City Council. I have held those roles since 2021 and 2022 respectively. I am an Emeritus Governor of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Oversight of POL

10. My portfolio as a junior Minister in BEIS with responsibility for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility was broad and included responsibility for Postal Services.
11. Some of the work involved with the Small Business area of the portfolio included liaison with organisations representing small businesses and start-ups, establishing and working with an advisory board on scaling up small businesses, and working with the Pubs Code Adjudicator to regulate the pub tenant and pub

company relationship under the Pubs Code. I also worked on the establishment of the office of the Small Business Commissioner to tackle late payment and to champion the needs of small and medium sized enterprises (“**SMEs**”) which included representing the interests of SMEs in the development of the Industrial Strategy. I was also involved with the British Business Bank and the Start Up Loans Company. I travelled round the country whenever I could to listen to the voices of SMEs from the nations and regions of the UK during the time when the Secretary of State was developing the industrial strategy and it was my role to ensure that the concerns of SMEs were incorporated into the industrial strategy which we launched during 2017.

12. In respect of the Consumer part of the portfolio, I worked on developing a green paper on Consumer Rights and tackling the safety of appliances that were causing fires in residential properties. I established a product safety advisory board and implemented their recommendations by setting up The Office for Product Safety and Standards (“**OPSS**”) on a statutory basis. I worked on addressing the escalating human and financial cost of fraud and improving initiatives aimed at encouraging consumer switching in regulated markets.
13. As for Corporate Responsibility, I supported the Secretary of State Greg Clark in the development of the Corporate Governance Code, which involved working with the Financial Reporting Council on the review of their code, liaising with No.10 on the introduction of a beneficial share ownership/register of people with significant control, and working with the Hampton-Alexander Review of women on boards to increase female representation on boards and in senior management. I worked with the Parker Review of Ethnic Diversity of UK Boards and I was also responsible for the Overseas Entities Beneficial Share Ownership Register.
14. In addition to these main parts of my portfolio, I also had responsibility for the following policy areas and statutory bodies:
 - a. Labour Markets, which included work on the Taylor Review, minimum wage, Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (“**ACAS**”) and employment tribunals (a responsibility which was later shared with the Ministry of Justice),

- equal pay legislation and shared parental leave, and liaison with employer and labour organisations e.g. the Trades Union Congress (“**TUC**”) and the Low Pay Commission.
- b. Retail Sector, including relationships with major retailers, the British Retail Consortium and other representative bodies.
 - c. Retail energy markets, including supporting the Secretary of State on developing the energy price cap.
 - d. Postal affairs and the Post Office
 - e. The Insolvency Service, which involved working with the CEO on a review of the workings of the Insolvency Act with a view to strengthening its provisions in light of the British Home Stores (“**BHS**”) insolvency in April 2016.
 - f. Companies House
 - g. HM Land Registry
 - h. Ordnance Survey
15. The postal affairs area of my policy portfolio formed one part of this wide-ranging set of responsibilities and was itself quite broad. The core of the brief was to ensure that BEIS held the POL Board to account for meeting financial and non-financial targets and delivery of work that was agreed to be central to the Government’s manifesto commitments. This included securing the future of 3,000 rural branches (WITN10910101 Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2015) and branches in lower income urban neighbourhoods, modernising the network, meeting access criteria, and expanding services (in particular a digital verification and identification system, banking services and services to SMEs. Some of the central work to that brief was to ensure all routine small business and consumer banking services were available throughout post office branches, and in particular in rural areas and lower income urban areas.
16. Apart from this there was significant focus within the postal affairs brief on planning and securing POL funding. The Government provides funding to POL in the form of a subsidy (which recognises the wider social purpose of the network that goes beyond that which would be commercially viable). HM Treasury was a key aspect of my work on the brief and I supported the Secretary of State on negotiations with HMT to secure the funding needs of POL as agreed with UKGI and the POL board.

17. It was also my responsibility to lead the Government response to the public consultation on Post Office access criteria, which determined the size and geographical reach of the Post Office, opening hours and the range of services available across the network.
18. I made efforts to use my influence to help resolve the disputes between the Communication Workers Union (“**CWU**”) and POL, which had resulted in the CWU holding a number of strike days due to the closure of loss-making branches. I held meetings with the CWU in which I acted as mediator in an effort to improve communications with POL.
19. I also had oversight of the Royal Mail Group (“**RMG**”). My role focussed on their responsibility for delivering the Universal Service Obligation. Towards the end of 2016 I also led on the issue of scam mail (non-online fraud). I hosted a roundtable meeting with key stakeholders including RMG who agreed to work together to prevent scam mail where possible. The postal operators agreed a Code of Conduct to reduce illegal scam mail. I hosted a number of meetings to progress this policy area.
20. At the time I was appointed as Minister, POL was a public corporation which had an executive management team and Board. It was the intention of successive Governments that, although publicly owned, the Post Office should have commercial freedom to raise funds, invest in new technology, diversify its offering, and operate as a retail company in a competitive market. It was thought that these commercial freedoms were crucial to the sustainability of the Post Office. The legislation underpinning POL (the Postal Services Act 2000 and the Postal Services Act 2011) therefore separated the functions of ownership and management. The executives of POL owed their duties to the company, and were accountable to the POL Board, not directly to the Government of the day.

21. The Government's role is as sole shareholder. It is responsible for setting the overall strategy, policy or objectives for the Post Office, as well as for ensuring that POL works to deliver on those objectives, but not to have any involvement in the day-to-day running of the operations of the business. It was accepted that POL would operate at arm's length from Government, that such freedom was crucial to its ability to grow and over time reduce its dependence on the public finances. As shareholder the Government would only get more involved (through UKGI, who undertook the shareholder function on behalf of Government as I explain below) if the strategic aims or objectives looked as if they might not be met, such as if a key milestone had not been achieved.
22. In practice what this meant was that I would answer for all aspects of postal affairs in Parliament, whether this be answering questions, speaking in debates, or dealing with correspondence from MPs and their constituents. It was my responsibility as Minister and the responsibility of the Secretary of State to challenge POL's Board about whether it was achieving the strategic objectives set for it. In doing so, I tried to ensure that I was getting a full and accurate impression of POL operations and strategy by checking with other relevant stakeholders such as the CWU and NFSP to make sure that I accessed other views and experiences within POL's business which would assist me in my duty to challenge the Board where appropriate. I would do this by questioning the Board and CEO at quarterly meetings and by meeting other stakeholders, for example the leadership of the CWU and the NFSP, without POL directors and senior management being present. In addition to these meetings I also heard from and met with Parliamentarians from time to time. Of particular value to me, in keeping myself informed independently, were parliamentary debates, which it would be my responsibility to answer on behalf of the Government.
23. The fact that operational or contractual matters were not the responsibility of Government was a product of legislative design and had been established policy for some time prior to my appointment as Minister. The legislation assigned the management functions, including the operations of the company, to POL. This meant that issues concerning POL's IT systems, aside from the issue of further investment in it and budgeting for that investment, were questions of day-to-day operation of the company. Issues surrounding whether Horizon was functioning as

it should were matters for POL to resolve as part of its operations. From my experience in industry, where I had worked for a number of large companies, I understood that the shareholder should not be interfering with the day-to-day operation of a business, and I tried to respect those boundaries.

24. The Government's shareholder function was exercised on behalf of the Government by UKGI. They were represented on POL's Board. UKGI was not based within BEIS; it was a company wholly owned by HM Treasury, because it performed the shareholder role for a number of Government departments in relation to various different organisations. It had a 'dotted line' to BEIS in relation to POL. UKGI officials were the conduits of information between BEIS and POL and if I as Minister needed a briefing on POL issues or wanted to raise questions of POL, it would be done through UKGI in the first instance. In terms of how UKGI was monitored, DBT officials took the lead on most matters from UKGI rather than the other way round, but the Secretary of State would ultimately hold UKGI to account for their shareholder function in POL. This monitoring came to the fore when finance and remuneration issues were under discussion.
25. I had a private office at BEIS and the benefit of a number of officials (civil servants) who assisted in preparing paperwork for my ministerial box and arranging my diary. BEIS also had a number of officials who were subject matter experts in the various policy areas. Those officials would draft the advice/briefings/submissions ahead of key meetings, debates, Parliamentary Questions and so forth. For the purpose of the postal affairs brief, those individuals worked within UKGI rather than BEIS. It was UKGI officials that prepared the relevant advice as experts on postal affairs. They took the lead in challenging the POL executives and accounting for POL's activities to BEIS.
26. As with the advice I received on all areas of my policy portfolio, I relied on officials for objective and honest advice. They were bound by the Civil Service Code and so I expected the advice given to be of this character. Given the breadth of all ministerial portfolios, it is necessary that Ministers make decisions on the basis of the advice given (except in those cases where I had good reason to challenge that advice) and we are reliant on its impartiality and accuracy. I would, for example,

rely on the officials to review and analyse the information provided to them and provide me with sensible steers on action and draft responses to correspondence or Parliamentary Questions which advanced the Government's manifesto commitments and policy more broadly. After I had been in office for six to nine months it became clear to me that advice given by officials was often constrained by expectations on the part of officials of what might and might not be agreeable to No 10, HM Treasury, or to another department which might be taking the lead on a particular issue. Officials would require challenge from the Minister in these circumstances if decisions were to be taken in what the Minister determined to be the public interest.

27. Correspondence would be received by my private office and directed to me in a bundle a few times a week. It would initially be triaged by my private secretaries, and I trusted them to deal with correspondence on my behalf. Documents which they referred to officials for analysis or advice would be returned to me with a submission or note of advice and often with a draft response for my consideration. I would read the correspondence and documents returned to me, but I relied on officials to direct me to the paperwork that required my close attention. There would be standard responses, based on agreed policy lines, to a large proportion of correspondence on any brief. Officials worked hard to draft those responses in line with government policy and they were updated over time and as circumstances changed. I sometimes edited these responses myself, or added a postscript, when I had time and when the response drafted for me struck, in my view, the wrong tone. This began to happen with my replies to SPMs as I became increasingly uncomfortable with the line we were taking.

28. I met with the POL Board on a quarterly basis, although I was available to them at other times should they wish to consult me. I met with UKGI on a more regular basis, indeed my day-to-day communications in respect of POL were mostly through UKGI officials. In particular, I remember meeting with UKGI officials to agree POL's financial objectives and remuneration policies as part of the work on POL's budget and spending review. UKGI monitored POL's performance monthly to ensure that Government policy regarding the network was delivered.

29. I can see a potential distinction between the role and responsibility of the Department, and myself as responsible Minister responsible, when acting in the Government's capacity as shareholder and when acting as a Government department. It might be construed that whilst acting as shareholder the Department's responsibilities were narrowly focussed on the setting of POL's strategic goals and monitoring performance accordingly. But in the context of the Department's wider remit as the department for business, and my broader Ministerial role, there is a strong argument that we should have delved more closely into operational matters, especially when they involved the group litigation.

Knowledge

30. I have been asked to comment on my knowledge of various issues relating to the Horizon system, and whether my knowledge developed at any point., When I was appointed as Minister with responsibility for postal affairs, I had no knowledge of any of the issues I have been asked to comment on. Upon my appointment to that role I was given a Day One briefing pack (UKGI00020328, Post Office Limited ("POL") Overview July 2016). The material relating to POL was prepared by officials from UKGI and was part of a briefing made available to any new Minister when taking up their post in any Government department. The pack is aimed at bringing new Ministers up to speed with current issues in the department and likely early decisions the Minister will have to make.

31. On the "Summary and Key Issues " slide (page 2) it says as follows: "*Horizon (Slide 14): A small number of mostly former subpostmasters have raised concerns about POL's Horizon IT system, which they claim has caused their businesses losses. Over two years' worth of independent investigation has found no systemic faults in Horizon, but campaigning and media interest persists. Civil litigation has been commenced against POL*".

32. Slide 13 (rather than 14) contained further information on *"Horizon IT System: Complaints and Legal Action"* (page 14). It said that *"there has been over two years of independent scrutiny of POL's Horizon IT system and no evidence of systemic fails has been found"*. Providing more detail, it said that *"in 2012 POL commissioned an independent firm, Second Sight, to examine the system for systemic flaws that could cause accounting discrepancies. Second Sight's interim report, published in July 2013, and the final report, published in April 2015, both make clear that there is no evidence of system-wide problems with Horizon"*.
33. Brief details of the Complaints and Mediation Scheme were provided, and I was told that the Criminal Cases Review Commission ("**CCRC**") was considering around 20 cases. That review had been underway since early 2015 and I was informed that POL had *"no indication of when the CCRC may reach conclusions on any of the cases"*.
34. It was recorded that earlier in the year, *"group civil litigation on behalf of 91 claimants was commenced at the High Court. This is at an early stage and precise details of the claim are unclear. As there are legal proceedings underway, our advice is that this should remain independent of Government: it is a matter of law"*.
35. Looking again now at these documents, and to the best of my recollection, this was the first time I was made aware of the group litigation (which was still in the first stages of case management – a group litigation order was not made until March 2017), and I noted the advice provided by UKGI that the proceedings *"should remain independent of Government: it is a matter of law"* (UKGI00020328 page 14). I took this to mean, as I would do in any litigation relating to the Government, that BEIS should not look to interfere with it or comment on the process until it was concluded. Perhaps due to this position being taken, not many details were provided. Whilst the Day One briefing pack did mention the litigation it did not, for example, contain any details about there being concerns around remote access to Horizon or the deletion and replacement of files. Whilst it referred to the Second Sight interim report and final report, it did not refer to any of the subsequent reports, reviews or actions taken by POL. It did not contain any

information on the Simon Clarke advice, any of the Deloitte reports or the Swift Review. With the benefit of hindsight this briefing, even making allowance for the fact it was a high-level summary, was very selective and omitted several important developments.

36. On 29 July 2016, Laura Thompson of UKGI (UKGI00006961, Email from Laura Thompson to SPADS Clark, SpAD Clark MPST Clark MPST and others re Post Office: Potential weekend story on litigation) wrote to my private office and the private office of the Secretary of State providing notification that POL had sent a letter to the solicitors for the Claimants in the group litigation and that this letter may be made public. In that email Ms Thompson set out that *“the claims relate to the Post Office’s “Horizon” IT system, and accusations that Post Office has treated its agents unfairly”*. Ms Thompson went on to say that *“this is a legal matter and operational responsibility of Post Office Limited, the company which manages the Post Office network. As such, our advice would be not to comment and for Press Office to pass any media enquiries to Post Office directly. This is the approach we have taken previously on this issue – please let me know if you think SpAds or Ministers would disagree”*.
37. I did not have any additional knowledge of those accusations aside from what was contained in the Day One briefing pack. The advice that BEIS should not comment on the litigation did not surprise me and I accepted that advice. At the start of my time at BEIS I would have relied on officials to have informed me if a different approach was appropriate, given my lack of prior awareness and knowledge of the history of the dispute. However, refraining from any public comment did not preclude me from challenging the POL Board in private. In retrospect, I wished I had done that more vigorously than I did.
38. Ms Thompson concluded that UKGI *“will provide a full briefing on this issue to Ministers – this is flagged in the Day One briefing pack, and we have also included in our briefing to Margot James”*. It is correct that the Horizon IT System issues were flagged in the Day One briefing pack as explained above. But to the best of my recollection I never did receive what might be termed a ‘full briefing’. I regret not asking for one and that my private office did not follow up on this promise.

39. I received a verbal briefing from UKGI on 4 August 2016 (UKGI00000015 Prep for Margot James 4 August 2016). To the best of my recollection, helped by looking now at the documents, it was provided by Richard Callard and Laura Thompson. I was provided with a note in advance of that meeting which was prepared for me by UKGI. In respect of the Horizon IT System the note read, "THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW. 'Project Sparrow'. – Alleged problems with IT system seeing postmasters suffer losses and in some cases imprisonment. – No evidence of bugs in the system despite three years of investigation. – High court proceedings have begun. – Suggest we give you a fuller briefing on this as it regularly flares up".
40. I do not remember the detail of that verbal briefing on 4 August. I believe it covered the topics outlined in the July 2016 Day One briefing pack. My understanding was that there may be occasional faults in the IT system, but nothing that was a structural flaw across the system.
41. I had very limited knowledge of the nature of the complaints raised by SPMs. I was told that the complaints were now the subject of legal proceedings. In seeking to resolve those complaints, such as the Complaints and Mediation Scheme and the work of Second Sight in connection with that Scheme, the briefing given to me was that resolution of the complaints was not a matter for Government but instead for the Court to decide.
42. To the best of my knowledge and recollection, I was not then, nor was I ever, briefed on the Simon Clarke advice, any of the Deloitte reports, or, most importantly of all, the Swift Review. I do not believe I ever received copies of any of the documents the Inquiry has referred me to (POL00006357, POL00028069, POL00029984, POL00030009, POL00031502), nor that I knew of their existence whilst I was Minister. Having now read these reports I have concluded that they were withheld from me deliberately.
43. I do not now recall the Horizon IT system issues being referred to as "Project Sparrow", but I note that this phrase was used in the note of the verbal briefing I

received from UKGI on 4 August 2016. It may therefore have been mentioned but I have simply forgotten it in the intervening years.

44. I had no knowledge that it was RMG or POL who had both investigated and prosecuted SPMs for theft, fraud and/or false accounting. I did not find out about that until long after I had left office and the information came as a shock to me. All I was told at the time is that SPMs had been prosecuted and found guilty. I assumed these prosecutions were brought by the police and CPS in the normal way; it did not occur to me that these prosecutions were by RMG/POL itself. I did know that some of those convictions were the subject of a CCRC review, but again understood that BEIS should let the CCRC process run its course. Had I known at the time that POL were taking on the investigation and prosecution of the SPMs themselves, I would have been far less accepting of the argument against further scrutiny that was regularly made to me; namely that all the SPMs who blamed Horizon for shortfalls and had been prosecuted for theft or fraud had been found guilty in a court of law.

The Swift Review and Group Litigation

45. I have been asked to comment on my involvement as Minister in overseeing POL in relation to Horizon issues. I understand having reviewed the documents provided to me that on 8 August 2016, Richard Callard of UKGI contacted my private office to arrange a meeting to include a "*Horizon IT session*" (WITN10910102 Email to James MPST from Richard Callard RE: Post Office meetings). He wrote that "*I think the minister would benefit from a briefing session on the Horizon IT issue, which tends to flare up at random times. Laura Thompson can lead the briefing on that (I would like to be there but don't have to be), but it would be helpful to get a specific session in the diary for that purpose*". This echoed the sentiments expressed more briefly at the 4 August 2016 meeting.
46. A meeting with Tim McInnes and Laura Thompson was arranged for 23 August 2016. In the event, the meeting covered a number of topics, and the Horizon issues were "*tacked on*" the agenda (WITN10910102). I do not recall being briefed

on Horizon in any more detail than the verbal briefing I had received on 4 August. In particular, the Swift Review (and the Deloitte Bramble and Zebra reports) were withheld from me; it was not mentioned to the best of my recollection. I have been asked by the Inquiry what I was told about the review by Tim Parker or Jonathan Swift QC when I became Minister and whether I have any views on further information POL should have provided on the Swift Review. To the best of my recollection I have never met Jonathan Swift QC and Tim Parker, whom I did meet, never mentioned the Swift Review to me. Having had no awareness of the Swift Review I obviously could not have any view on the matter of whether POL should have provided further information on the Swift Review.

47. My private secretary emailed UKGI following the meeting with some action points (UKGI00006991 Email from Laura Thompson to James MPST and Tim McInnes cc Richard Callard and others re Finance and Horizon Meeting - Follow-up Actions). He asked for a copy of the group civil litigation letter and POL's response. I do not recall asking him to request those documents. I think he was probably being proactive and ensuring that I had all the necessary information available to me.
48. Laura Thompson replied saying that the Government had "*not been party to either the letter of claim from the claimants or POL's response – POL's response in particular is subject to legal privilege. I recommend we maintain that distance, certainly at this stage in the proceedings*".
49. On 1 September 2016 I met Paula Vennells, POL's CEO. I was briefed in advance of that meeting by Michael Dollin of UKGI (UKGI00032873 Official - Meeting with Paula Vennells, Chief Executive of Post Office Ltd. - Briefing note). This was a routine introductory meeting to help me understand the current issues facing POL. I do not recall the Horizon IT system issues, the SPM complaints or the group litigation being discussed in that meeting. I certainly was not briefed specifically on those issues and matters relating to Horizon were not included in the meeting agenda. Later in my time as Minister (it is hard to remember exactly when) I formed an impression that Horizon was the last thing that the POL Board or CEO ever wanted to discuss, that they would never bring it up pro-actively and, if I asked

questions about it, they were reluctant to speak about it in detail. To begin with, I simply put this down to it being a difficult issue which was subject to ongoing litigation, but as time went on and as I started to get a number of letters from MPs raising complaints from SPMs in their constituencies, and some letters from SPMs themselves which contained accounts of their personal experience of Horizon which was at odds with the minimal details disclosed to me by the CEO of the POL. I started to feel that there might be more to the Horizon issues than I was being told.

50. The Inquiry has referred me to document UKGI00016322, which is a draft letter dated 20 September 2016 from me to David Warburton MP in response to his letter of 16 September 2016 which enclosed correspondence from his constituent, John Bowman. The letter is not properly headed or signed and so I do not know if this is the final version. In any event, this letter would have been drafted by UKGI officials and the source of the information contained within it would have been POL. I relied on UKGI officials providing accurate and reliable information in this draft letter, as with all correspondence. The reply states that *“Mr Bowman mentions the legal action taking place on complaints about the Horizon IT system. As I’m sure you will appreciate, as civil proceedings have been issued against the Post Office on this matter, I am unable to comment further at this present time. This is a matter for the courts”*. I do not recall the content of Mr Bowman’s letter as it pertained to the litigation. It is highly likely that his letter deserved a more empathetic response, but as I stated above, I accepted the advice that I should not be commenting on these proceedings as they progressed through the court system.
51. On 10 November 2016 UKGI sent my private office a briefing pack (UKGI00007416 Email from Jessica Williams to James MPST, Michael Dollin and James Baugh and others re: 161110 Debate Briefing - WHD Future of the Post Office first cut for James R) ahead of the Westminster Hall Debate on 17 November 2016 (UKGI00007417 Killer Facts on Post Office Limited, UKGI00007409, Briefing Pack Westminster Hall Debate: Kelvin Hopkins MP, Labour, Luton North, Tuesday 17 November 3pm-4:30pm). The motion of the Debate was ‘That this House has considered the future of the Post Office’ and it

focussed on the closure of post offices. The pack contained a page on the “*Top Lines*” and “*Background*” in relation to the Horizon IT Issues. In terms of “*Top Lines*” It said at the first bullet point that “*civil proceedings have been issued against the Post Office on the matter of the Horizon IT system. This is a matter for the courts and I am unable to comment further*”. In respect of background, the first bullet point notes that “*following complaints from a small number of sub-postmasters regarding the POL’s Horizon IT (point of sale) system, an investigation was undertaken by an independent firm, Second Sight, over two years. Whilst this received relatively high profile press attention, no systemic issue with Horizon has been found*”. The third and final bullet point under “*Background*” was that “*the Court system represents the best place for this sort of dispute to be resolved*”.

52. Those documents were drafted by UKGI and repeated the information and advice received previously.
53. A record of what was said in the debate is available on Hansard (RLIT0000222 Hansard Westminster Hall Volume 617: debated on Thursday 17 November 2016 Download text). The contributions of the various MPs related to the Post Office financial position, branch closures, and the availability of services in rural areas. There was no mention of Horizon, the complaints of SPMs, the prosecutions or anything related to these issues.
54. On 22 November 2016, Ranil Jayawardena MP tabled a Parliamentary Question in respect of the Post Office. He asked, “*how much the Post Office has paid in compensation to sub post masters as part of the Initial Complaint Review and Mediation scheme*”. The draft answer which was provided by Laura Thompson of UKGI was that “*The Initial Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme was independent of Government, and an operational matter for Post Office Limited. I have asked Paula Vennells, the Chief Executive of Post Office Limited, to write to the Hon member on this matter to provide the information requested. A copy of her reply will be placed in the libraries of the House*” (UKGI00016351 House of Commons Parliamentary Question: PQW2016/31850).

55. A response that this question would be answered by way of a letter from Paula Vennells accorded with Government's policy that it was an operational matter for POL, as the Scheme was run and managed by POL.

56. On 20 January 2017, Laura Thompson of UKGI provided my private office with an update on the group litigation (UKGI00020453 Email from Laura Thompson to James MPST, French Claire (Communications), Russell Philippa (Communications)). She wrote that:

"As you are aware, a group of (mostly) former postmasters are seeking to bring a group legal action against Post Office Limited, regarding claims that alleged faults in the Horizon IT system (used in all branches) have caused postmasters to be wrongly dismissed or prosecuted. This story has been covered quite extensively in the press in the past. Note that there remains no evidence that anyone has been wrongfully convicted, or that there are any systemic flaws in the IT system. Next Thursday (26 January) there will be a hearing at the High Court, which is the first part of this group action process. The purpose of the hearing is largely administrative – it will define the scope of the group action, and other procedural points. Nevertheless, the campaign group ("Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance") bringing the legal action has been very vocal in the past, and there is the chance that they might seek to create interest in this hearing: "Post Office in the dock", etc. The hearing will be in public, although is unlikely to cover any specific details of any of the claims. So I wanted you to be aware that this is coming up. If there is any media interest, I would suggest our usual approach of referring any enquiries to Post Office. I would not suggest we comment on legal action – but welcome thoughts from press office".

57. I would have taken this email as an update only and not a request for action or decision of any sort. I decided to accept this advice after consultation with the BEIS press office.

58. I am aware that there was some media coverage arising from this hearing (WITN10910104 Email from Claire French to James RE: BEIS Forecast for Tuesday 31 January 2017, UKGI00007542 Email from Claire French to Callard Richard (UKGI), Thompson Laura (UKGI), Dollin Michael (UKGI)) and that Laura Thompson confirmed UKGI's advice that *"we're content with the suggested lines – pass to Post Office in the first instance, 'operational matter / legal proceedings' if needed"* (UKGI00020455 Email from Claire French to James MPST FW: Post Office Litigation).

59. The Inquiry has provided me with a copy of some text messages I exchanged with Paula Vennells on 5 March 2017, regarding a meeting on 15 March (PVEN00000392 Message chain between Margot James and Paula Vennells dated 5 March 2017). I am afraid that I have absolutely no recollection whatsoever of whether this meeting went ahead or what we discussed if it did take place. It is possible that, given the timing, it was about the funding settlement for POL that was the subject of considerable discussion between BEIS and HM Treasury during March 2017. The fact that the meeting was requested by Paula Vennells means I am fully confident that it would not have been about Horizon, because as noted above neither she nor anyone on the POL Board ever proactively raised matters relating to Horizon with me.
60. On 7 March 2017, my private secretary sent me an email setting out the current live issues in my policy areas and the key contacts in each of those areas (WITN10910105 Email from James MPST Final Handover). In respect of the Horizon IT issues, my private secretary said that *“this is the name of the computer system used in Post Offices. There is currently a group action at the High Court regarding issues that have led to dismissals and criminal convictions – they have been accused (and some proven in court or even provided a guilty plea) of theft. A group of ex-subpostmasters believe they were sacked/convicted due to an issue with the system, rather than theft. The High Court agreed they could bring about a group action suit, and gave them 6 months (from the 26th Jan) to conclude applications of who could be included within the ‘group’. It will be worth asking for an update from Laura Thompson in around June-time”*.
61. On 29 March 2017, Jessica Williams of UKGI copied my private office to an email (WITN10910106 Email from Jessica William to Twinley Leann Re-worked briefing pack for HoL debate on Post Office tomorrow) enclosing a briefing pack on the Post Office ahead of a debate listed by Lord Hain on the future of local post offices (UKGI00007551 Questions for Short Debate Thursday 30th March 2017). That briefing pack contained a page on the *“Top Lines”* and *“Background”* in relation to the Horizon IT Issues. The content replicated that contained in the briefing pack for the 17 November 2016 Westminster Hall Debate.

62. On 13 April 2017, my private secretary sent an email to my private office with updates on policy areas following her meetings with various officials that week (WITN10910117 Email from James MPST to Rehman Sahar re [OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE] Policy Update – An Overview dated 14 April 2017). In respect of POL she wrote that “*Horizon court case on going: Grievance between subpostmasters (represented by the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance) re the IT system. Concern that the court verdict could force a change in the subpostmaster’s contract as issued by POL, however this is a POL operation issue*”. That information would have come from POL via UKGI.
63. On 31 July 2017, Richard Callard of UKGI sent my private secretary an email updating her on the live issues in respect of POL (WITN10910107 Email from Richard Callard to James MPST RE: Post Office catch up). Neither Horizon nor the group litigation were mentioned as a live issue.
64. I received a further update on the current live issues in my policy portfolio from my private secretary on 2 August 2017 (WITN10910108 Email from Sophia Nikolaou to James [OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE] Sophia's Handover). This did contain a further reference to the litigation as follows: “*Horizon. This is the name of the computer system used in Post Offices. There is currently a group action at the High Court regarding issues that have led to dismissals and criminal convictions – they have been accused (and some proven in court or even provided a guilty plea) of theft. A group of ex-subpostmasters believe they were sacked/convicted due to an issue with the system, rather than theft. The High Court agreed they could bring about a class action (group) suit, and gave them 6 months (from the 26th Jan) to conclude applications of who could be included within the ‘group’. Next Steps – Post recess: there has been no further movement on this since March 2017. It is worth asking Richard Callard for an update on the issue after recess as this is when the High court has finished accepting applications to the class action law suit*”.

65. I have also seen a document entitled "*Post Office facts (for MP Drop In Session, 18th October 2017)*" (UKGI00016304). This appears to be a briefing pack for an event in Parliament which I would be expected to attend and answer questions from MPs. It notes on the second page "*Attack: Allegations about the Post Office's Horizon IT system. – This is an operational matter for Post Office Limited. As legal proceedings are underway, I am unable to comment further*". I have no recollection of this particular event; events such as these were a fairly regular occurrence on various different subjects or policy areas that I would always try to attend if relevant to my policy areas.
66. On 24 November 2017, I received from my private office "Crib Sheets" in respect of POL (WITN10910109 Email to James MPST dated 15 March 2017, POL Crib Sheet UKGI00007701 Post Office Network Crib Sheet). I would receive "Crib Sheets" on reasonably frequent occasions which provided the top line policy positions in a number of areas. For example, I received "Crib Sheets" on the issues of employment tribunals, EU Exit and Consumers, corporate transparency and beneficial ownership, and the Retail Energy Price Cap Bill. The November 2017 "Crib Sheet" and indeed the December 2017 version (UKGI00007701) both stated, "*Allegations about the Post Office Horizon IT system. – This is an operational matter for Post Office Limited. As legal proceedings are underway, we are unable to comment further*". The "Crib Sheets" on the Post Office Network would be drafted by UKGI (WITN10910110 Policy areas for 'Crib Sheet' with authors assigned).
67. I would also frequently receive a document entitled "BEIS Hot Topics Pack". As the write around for submissions in March 2017 makes clear, "*the pack will be used by Ministers for Parliamentary business. As such, the lines need to be short and to the point*" (WITN10910111 Email from Andrew Singleton BEIS Hot Topics Pack- Deadline: COP Friday 17 March dated 15 March 2017). UKGI were responsible for the Post Office content in this Pack (WITN10910112). The March/April 2017 version of this document stated on page 9, "*Allegations about the Post Office Horizon IT system. – This is an operational matter for Post office Limited. As legal proceedings have been announced, we are unable to comment further*"(WITN10910112). The

January 2017 (WITN10910113), May 2017 (WITN10910114 BEIS Hot Topics Pack: May 2017), and November 2017 (WITN10910115 BEIS Hot Topics Pack: November 2017) Hot Topics documents contained a version of these same lines.

68. On 20 December 2017 I sent a letter to Tim Parker, the then Chair of POL (UKGI00016342 Letter from Margot James MP to Tim Parker re: provision of clarity about the Government's expectations for the businesses it owns). This was a standard letter drafted by UKGI which reminded him of the Government's strategic priorities for POL and confirmed the level of subsidy and investment which would be forthcoming in the next financial year. There was no mention of Horizon issues.
69. On 31 January 2017, my private secretary emailed me with a further update on the legal proceedings (WITN10910116 Email from James MPST RE: Update for Margot James). He wrote, *"you may remember there were a number of ex-Subpostmasters involved in group-action litigation regarding the computer system 'Horizon' used in post offices. The group claim they were wrongly dismissed by POL or prosecuted due to a glitch in the system which indicated they had made mistakes or stolen money. Last week the group attended the High Court for an order request to sue the Post Office. The Financial Times will be running a story tomorrow to confirm the group has been granted permission by the High Court to pursue a collective action. The group has been given 6 months to add any additional affected members before the court proceeds. This is not expected to cause any parliamentary business (UQs etc.) as this is a matter for POL and, as it is a legal case, we would be unable to say anything anyway."* He goes on to advise in respect of media handling that, *"as this is an operational matter, the Department are not providing any comment – 'This is a matter for Post Office Ltd. Please call their press office'". It goes on to say, "If pushed: 'As this legal case is open, it is not appropriate for us to comment"*.

Other conversations, meetings, correspondence or briefings about Horizon issues

70. I have set out in the above narrative what I recall about all my interactions and engagement with the Horizon issues. The Horizon IT system issues were raised very little with me and I was not informed at any time of the existence of the reports and the investigations that the Inquiry has referred me to. In consequence I did not spend much time at all on these issues and my role was for the most part reactive. After I became concerned that there was more to Horizon than had been communicated to me I asked more questions of the POL Board and I questioned other stakeholders about their understanding of the issue. I decided to meet the outgoing leader of the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters (“**NFSP**”) and took the opportunity of questioning him about the alleged impact of Horizon on some SPMs. Somewhat to my surprise I was reassured by the representative of the NFSP, who concurred with the line taken by the POL in response to my questions. This had the effect of allaying my concerns which had been growing prior to the meeting. This state of reassurance was reinforced by Horizon never coming up during my meetings with the leadership of the CWU.
71. My overall impression of POL around this time was favourable but with growing doubts on the issue of Horizon. I was impressed by the strategy of rolling out the counter services via concessions in other retailers and people in my constituency reported that this arrangement was going well. When I was a candidate for election in 2010 the Post Office was busy closing branches and by the time I became Minister for postal services our record was one of preserving branches in rural parts of the country and areas of social deprivation (apart from loss making Crown post offices), opening new counter services, growing services, improving access and investing in the infrastructure. I saw that POL’s banking operations were evolving, with particular benefits to SMEs. The network transformation plan was proceeding as intended and these achievements were all the more impressive for being delivered in the context of a reducing dependence on the public purse.

Against this generally positive impression, it would have taken a red flag for me to have become proactive in relation to the Horizon IT system issues.

Red flags might have involved exposure to James Arbuthnot MP's campaign and reading the Swift Review report. Had either or both of these things occurred, I think I would have pursued the issue much more vigorously. Had there been a parliamentary debate on Horizon (similar to the one called by James Arbuthnot on 17 December 2014) whilst I was in office I would most certainly have taken action. The development that impacted most on my awareness of the damage being done by problems with Horizon were the letters I received from SPMs. These were occasional but they were very concerning. After I had received a few of these letters my confidence in what I was being told by POL started to be undermined. This did result in one action I took in response to a submission by POL around budgetary matters. Approval was being sought for a budget that included an amount of money set aside as a provision against claims. POL proposed to cap this amount at what I regarded to be potentially too small a figure. I recommended to my Secretary of State, and he agreed, that the cap be removed as by then I was concerned that SPMs had been treated unjustly and might well be deserving of substantial compensation and redress.

72. I have been asked by the Inquiry specifically to address the sentence in UKGI00007417 at page 34 that reads "*the Court system represents the best place for this sort of dispute to be resolved*". I have explained above what I can remember of this document. I cannot comment on what the author of the document meant by "*this sort of dispute*". Whilst of course I would have hoped and wished that the issues suffered by SPMs could have been resolved satisfactorily through other means and in a much timelier fashion, the mechanisms put in place to try and achieve that, for example the Complaints and Mediation Scheme, came before my time as Minister. Others are in a better position to provide commentary on those mechanisms.

General reflections

73. Whilst accepting the advice not to comment publicly on legal proceedings I should have questioned the POL Board more assertively than I did. I should have requested more information concerning the group litigation being taken by SPMs against POL and then I might have understood better the details behind the allegations and this would have led me to challenge the advice I was getting that Horizon issues were operational matters and as such the preserve of POL and not the Government. A painful irony of the situation lay in the responsibility I had for corporate governance and labour markets. We were engaged in an overhaul of corporate governance and working on a review of employment protections, mostly pertaining to the gig economy but nonetheless trying to level the playing field between employers and employees. I did not realise at the time that one of the most egregious examples of appalling standards of governance and abuse of agents by a vastly more powerful corporate entity was happening right in front of us at a company actually owned by the Government.
74. I should have been briefed on the scope and purpose of Tim Parker's review and especially the conclusions as set out in the report of 8 February 2016 by Jonathan Swift QC. I should have been provided with a copy of that report and if there was any reason why it could not be provided to me then that should have been explained. I should certainly have been told of its existence. The same goes for the contents of the Project Zebra report of June 2014 which fed into Mr Swift QC's report. I understand now that further work was undertaken by Deloitte under the banner "Project Bramble". If I had known about these reports we might have been able to put pressure on POL to implement the recommendations of the Swift report rather than just commission yet more reports that served to delay the day of reckoning for POL. I should also have asked for a copy of the Second Sight reports. These were held very close by POL but I could probably have had access to them and I should have read them rather than taken as read the only message POL wanted the reports to convey.
75. I should have been briefed on the scope of Project Bramble and briefed on the Sparrow Interim Report dated 8 July 2016, the Bramble draft Interim Report dated 27 July 2016, and the draft for discussion dated 31 October 2016. If for any reason

those reports could not be made available to me then that should have been explained to me. Again, I should certainly have known that these reports existed.

76. With hindsight I feel that I was not properly or adequately briefed by UKGI on the scope of the issues pertaining to Horizon. Had I known of these matters in more detail then I hope I would have been able to follow up the ongoing investigations to ensure that they were brought to a conclusion and, most importantly, that UKGI's representative on the POL Board pressed the importance of these reports upon the executive team so that they did not just fall into abeyance as they seem to have done.
77. My suspicions gained ground over time that there was more to the Horizon issue than was being shared with me, as a result of the correspondence I received from MPs and the caginess of the POL Board and CEO about the matter, but there was nothing specific I could put my finger on to push harder about. My biggest regret in retrospect is relying on what UKGI officials told me as being the full picture and not carrying out my own research. In particular, I have subsequently read the record of the debate called by James Arbuthnot MP in Westminster Hall on 17 December 2014 as part of my preparation to respond to the Inquiry's Rule 9 request. If I had found that debate during my time as Minister I would most certainly have taken a more robust line and questioned the POL Board and UKGI closely about the whole Horizon issue. If at that point I had been able to drag the Swift report out of the POL board I would have pushed POL and UKGI to ensure that Jonathan Swift QC's recommendations were implemented promptly.
78. My suggestions for the future oversight of POL would be either bring it under the broad control of DBT or to expand the remit of Ofcom's regulation of postal services to provide independent and effective regulatory oversight. Currently Ofcom regulate postal services but only in respect of the Universal Service Obligation.
79. The structural problems of the current system of oversight are first that there are too many players involved: UKGI, HMT and DBT. This gives rise to communication challenges, creates an opportunity for POL to play one entity off against the other and risks making it easier for POL to conceal vital information.

The other problem with the status quo is that UKGI as the representative of government on the board of POL reports directly to HMT. The power wielded by HMT across government can be absolute and this power heightens the risk that UKGI focusses purely on the achievement of financial objectives with the sole goal of reducing public subsidy. Whilst this is undeniably important, the risks of pressure being applied solely to meeting financial objectives irrespective of how such goals are attained, are a direct threat to high standards of corporate governance.

80. The other issue related to the disproportionate focus on reducing public subsidy was the system of bonuses within POL. I understand the difficulty of recruitment into government owned enterprises which operate in a commercial environment and the need for a system of incentives. But to allow a bonus culture to operate in which the only performance measures were financial carries a high risk of rewarding bad behaviours. I suspect that this type of bonus culture, which was set at board level, but also reached quite deeply down into the organisation played a significant part in producing the abhorrent behaviour that prevailed.

81. There is an argument that whilst POL depends on public money for the delivery of a social purpose beyond what is commercially viable that it should be accountable to DBT. The influence of HMT would still be there, but it would no longer have direct representation via UKGI on the POL board. The risk with this model is that the aims of the original legislation that POL operate with commercial freedom in order to compete effectively in a competitive market would be compromised. I think it worth considering, therefore, the option of establishing effective and independent regulation of POL by expanding the remit of its regulator. Ofcom could be tasked with a much broader regulatory oversight that could include the establishment of a statutory code of practice that would require POL to meet high standards of consumer protection and workforce, agent and supplier engagement.

Statement of truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

GRO

Signed:

26 June 2024

Dated: _____

Index to First Witness Statement of Margot James

No	URN	Document Description	<u>Control Number</u>
1	WITN10910101	Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2015	WITN10910101
2	UKGI00020328	Post Office Limited ("POL") Overview July 2016	UKGI029223-001
3	UKGI00006961	Email from Laura Thompson to SPADS Clark, SpAD Clark MPST Clark MPST and others re Post Office: Potential weekend story on litigation	UKGI017775-001
4	UKGI00000015	Prep for Margot James 4 August 2016	VIS00000976
5	POL00006357	Advice on the use of expert evidence relating to the integrity of the Fujitsu Services Ltd Horizon System	POL-0017625
6	POL00028069	Deloitte Draft Board Briefing document further to report on Horizon desktop review of assurance sources and key control features	POL-0023072
8	POL00029984	POL Sparrow - Interim Report: Draft for Discussion	POL-0026466
9	POL00030009	Deloitte Draft "Bramble" - Interim Report	POL-0026491
10	POL00031502	'Bramble' – Draft Report 31	POL-0028404
11	WITN10910102	Email to James MPST from Richard Callard RE: Post Office meetings	WITN10910102
12	UKGI00006991	Email from Laura Thompson to James MPST and Tim McInnes cc Richard Callard and others re Finance and Horizon Meeting - Follow-up Actions	UKGI017805-001
13	UKGI00032873	Official - Meeting with Paula Vennells, Chief Executive of Post Office Ltd. - Briefing note	UKGI041768-001
	UKGI00016322	Letter to David Warburton from Margot James dated 20 September 2016	UKGI027115-001

14	UKGI00007416	Email from Jessica Williams to James MPST, Michael Dollin and James Baugh and others re: 161110 Debate Briefing - WHD Future of the Post Office first cut for James R	UKGI018230-001
15	UKGI00007417	Killer Facts on Post Office Limited	UKGI018231-001
16	UKGI00007409	Briefing Pack Westminster Hall Debate: Kelvin Hopkins MP, Labour, Luton North, Tuesday 17 November 3pm-4:30pm	UKGI018223-001
16	RLIT0000222	Hansard Westminster Hall Volume 617: debated on Thursday 17 November 2016 Download text	RLIT0000222
17	UKGI00016351	House of Commons Parliamentary Question: PQW2016/31850	UKGI027144-001
18	UKGI00020453	Email from Laura Thompson to James MPST, French Claire (Communications), Russell Philippa (Communications)	UKGI029348-001
19	WITN10910104	Email from Claire French to James RE: BEIS Forecast for Tuesday 31 January 2017	WITN10910104
20	UKGI00007542	Email from Claire French to Callard Richard (UKGI), Thompson Laura (UKGI), Dollin Michael (UKGI)	UKGI018356-001
21	UKGI00020455	Email from Claire French to James MPST FW: Post Office Litigation	UKGI029350-001
22	PVEN00000392	Message chain between Margot James and Paula Vennelles dated 24 September 2017	PVEN00114363
23	WITN10910105	Email from James MPST Final Handover	WITN10910105
24	WITN10910106	Email from Jessica Williams to Twinley Leann Re-worked briefing pack for HoL debate on Post Office tomorrow	WITN10910106
25	UKGI00007551	Questions for Short Debate Thursday 30 th March 2017-4pm-5pm	UKGI018365-001

		Location: Moses Room Lord Hain: To her Majesty's Government about the future of local post offices	
26	WITN10910117	Email from James MPST to Rehman Sahar re [OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE] Policy Update - An Overview dated 13 April 2017	WITN10910117
27	WITN10910107	Email from Richard Callard to James MPST RE: Post Office catch up	WITN10910107
28	WITN10910108	Email from Sophia Nikolaou to James [OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE] Sophia's Handover	WITN10910108
29	UKGI00016304	Post Office facts (for MP Drop In Session, 18th October 2017)	UKGI027097-001
30	WITN10910109	Email from James MPST to James MPST re POL Crib Sheet attachment	WITN10910109
31	UKGI00007701	Post Office Network Crib Sheet	UKGI018514-001
32	WITN10910110	Policy areas for 'Crib Sheet' with authors assigned	WITN10910110
33	WITN10910111	Email from Andrew Singleton to David Greenway, Cameron Yorston, Christopher Thresh and others RE: BEIS Hot Topics Pack - Deadline: COP Friday 17th March, dated 15 March 2017	WITN10910111
34	WITN10910112	BEIS Hot Topics Pack: March 2017	WITN10910112
35	WITN10910113	BEIS Orals Hot Topics Pack: January 2017	WITN10910113
36	WITN10910114	BEIS Hot Topics Pack: May 2017	WITN10910114
37	WITN10910115	BEIS Hot Topics Pack: November 2017	WITN10910115
38	UKGI00016342	Letter from Margot James MP to Tim Parker re: provision of clarity about the Government's expectations for the businesses it owns	UKGI027135-001

39	WITN10910116	Email from James MPST RE: Update for Margot James	WITN10910116
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