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THE PARLIAMENTARY
OMBUDSMAN

First communication since
ombudsman report
attached 

OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION
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Mr M J Hossack
92 Granville Drive
Kingswinford
West Midlands
DY6 8LW

Our Ref: C.1719/03

2 February 2005

Dear Mr Hossack,

YOUR COMPLAINT AGAINST JOBCENTRE PLUS

1. Since my colleague, Mrs Harrison, wrote to you on 29 March 2004, you have provided us with some additional evidence in support of your complaint against Jobcentre Plus, and Mrs Harrison has made some further enquiries of them. As she promised, I have reviewed your case, and I am now writing to let you know the outcome. I am sorry that I have been unable to do so before now.

2. It seems to me that there are three main aspects to your complaint. First, you complain that Jobcentre Plus wrongfully disclosed personal information about you to a third party - Wragge & Co., solicitors. You also complain that certain officers, whom you have named, have attempted to "cover-up" that disclosure, incorrectly describing it as "inadvertent", when you believe it was deliberate. Additionally, you complain that you have been subject to harassment by Jobcentre Plus because of the stance you have taken. I will deal with each of these elements of your complaint in turn.

Wrongful disclosure

3. There is evidence that a Jobcentre Plus officer spoke to Wragge & Co. by telephone on 4 January 2002 and disclosed information about you which should not have been disclosed without your permission. Wragge & Co. reported that telephone call to your wife's solicitors, Waldrons, on 7 January 2002, giving their understanding from the call that you were at that time in receipt of incapacity benefit and that that benefit included an element relating to your wife. Jobcentre Plus have accepted that the disclosure of information about you was made to