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Mr L Lewis
Chief Executive
Job Centre Plus
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21 September 2005

Dear Sirs

Martin Hossack 92 Granville Drive Kingswinford Stourbridge

I hope that you will be able to support and assist me in bringing to a conclusion a long running complaint that my client pursued against the DWP for the last four years. What began as a very minor breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 has ballooned in his view into a conspiracy to keep information from him – and as far as I can see for no good reason.

The problem arises from enquiries made by Wragge & Co Solicitors representing Dudley MBC in a claim which Mr Hossack's wife was making for damages for personal injury. Wragge & Co asked Dudley DWP office for details of benefit paid to his wife. Someone from the DWP rang Wragges and told them that she did not – and then seemingly gratuitously, told them that Mr Hossack claims incapacity benefit. This was a breach of section of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Mr Hossack complained and I think all the problems which have occurred since then have been caused by the DWP's clumsy and unnecessary attempt to cover up the breach.

Mr Hossack has delivered to you many letters that he has exchanged over the years with the DWP to various branches of Jobcentre and Jobcentre Plus. I do not think any of this would have been caused if the person concerned had simply said 'I am sorry, I made a mistake'. Mr Hossack would have accepted that and got on with life. But, for reasons unknown the person concerned either did not admit the telephone call or was not allowed to admit it to him and there began a series of attempts to avoid the problem.

This occurred in March 2002 and as I have said was a minor breach of the Data Protection Act – at least it was minor in my view. However, the efforts made to cover it up go beyond all reason. It made Mr Hossack wonder that perhaps the DWP staff are automatons who must not admit to any failure.

Mr Hossack asked for documents and received them. Within that bundle of documents was a letter – an internal letter written by a man called Barry Merrick to a Mr Reeder dated the 3rd April 2002 – within a couple months of the breach. As you can see Mr Merrick had been given the name of the person who made the telephone call by a lady called Daljit Verdee. I think this letter must have been given to him by mistake. – unless of course by some twisted logic whoever put the bundle together was trying to tell him something.

Then, in October 2002, six months later Mr Hossack received a letter from Andrew Frost of the DWP who told him that no names were known and the breach was inadvertent. I presume Mr Frost was not aware that Mr Hossack had seen the letter from Mr Merrick to Mr Reeder. So again he wondered why he was being