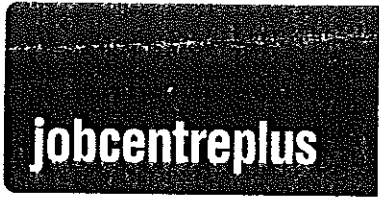


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Ian Pearson MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: CE 96536

10 March 2005

Dear Mr Pearson,

The Minister of State has asked me to reply direct to your letter of 11 February, enclosing one from Mr Martin Hossack of 92 Granville Drive, Kingswinford who feels that consolatory payments awarded to him are inadequate. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I am aware that Rosemary Thew, the Director for Jobcentre Plus in the West Midlands, wrote to you on 16 August 2004 in response to your enquiry concerning Mr Hossack and provided you with a summary of the situation regarding his complaint about a breach of the Data Protection Act (a copy is enclosed for your convenience). She also explained that our investigations concluded that the breach was inadvertent, had no malicious intent and could not be attributed to any identifiable member of staff. While suppositions may be made by Mr Hossack or other parties, we have no conclusive evidence to support a positive identification.

Solicitors
Advice

I note that Mr Hossack has provided you with a copy of the report of an investigation into his complaint by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman). The Ombudsman refers in this report to shortcomings in the way we handled the initial enquiry into Mr Hossack's complaint and a request that we consider a further consolatory payment in the light of this. We had previously awarded Mr Hossack £100 in recognition of the inconvenience and unwarranted personal intrusion caused by our error and have subsequently paid a further £50 in recognition that we could have handled his complaint better in its earlier stages. The Ombudsman considers the two payments to be suitable redress and the amounts are commensurate with those made in similar cases.

Nevertheless, as Mr Hossack copied to us his letter to you of 22 October 2003, we realise that he has, for some time now, had in mind a figure of £8,000. He refers to stress, loss of civil liberties, secretarial work, admin and postage. On this vein,