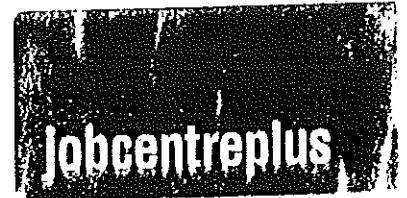


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IC PLEASE RETURN

Mr Martin Hossack
92 Granville Drive
Kingswinford
Nr Dudley
DY6 8LW

Our Ref: TO05418/BC
22 October 2002

Dear Mr Hossack

You recently wrote to Leigh Lewis, Chief Executive for Jobcentre Plus, complaining about the treatment you have received from Dudley Social Security. Mr Lewis has asked me to reply to you direct as the issues you have raised fall within my responsibilities as Head of Secretariat for Jobcentre Plus in the West Midlands.

You have complained that you are being harassed and victimised by staff at Dudley Social Security and that information relating to yourself was given to Solicitors without your consent. I was concerned to hear this and asked Stan Nelson, District Manager for Jobcentre Plus in Dudley and Sandwell, to investigate this matter on my behalf.

Mr Nelson tells me that, regrettably, information was passed to Wragge and Co Solicitors about your claim. It appears that this information was passed over the telephone after an official letter had been sent to Wragge and Co confirming Mrs Hossack's details, following her completion of a consent form. Barry Merrick, the Data Protection Officer at Halesowen Social Security, conducted an internal investigation but was unable to discover the source of the telephone call. Mr Merrick wrote to Waldrons Solicitors, who you instructed to act on your behalf in this matter, on 22 March informing them of the outcome of his investigations and also referred your case to the Departmental Data Protection Unit. They also concluded that in absence of any hard evidence no direct action could be taken. They recommended that all staff at Dudley Social Security be reminded of their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 and I am informed that this has now been done.

Computer Records will show the names of the person who made the phone call.

Jobcentre Plus treats data protection very seriously and aims at all times to maintain customer confidence by ensuring that all personal information held in our records is regarded as confidential. Information will not normally be disclosed to third parties without the consent of the person concerned. However, in your case it is clear that information has been passed on without your consent. As discussed above the source of this disclosure is unclear but I am sorry that this has happened.

