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From the office of **Andy Furey** Assistant Secretary

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AF/LS/100

24th March 2020

Nick Read
Chief Executive
Post Office Limited
Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
London
EC2Y 9AQ

Dear Nick

RE: CORONAVIRUS – FUTURE OF THE CROWN OFFICE NETWORK: FORMAL PROPOSAL FOR A SIX MONTH MORATORIUM

At this extremely difficult time I am writing to you to outline my serious concerns about the short-term future of the Crown Office network. Once the Coronavirus outbreak is under control and our conscientious members have some normality back to their lives, they will require a fair degree of stability and continuity. This letter focuses on the directly employed Crown members as I have already emailed you separately regarding some of my concerns for Postmasters and I await your response to this email.

As you are aware, people operating Post Offices have been designated by Government as key workers and in this regard the CWU is working with your senior managers, including the Health & Safety teams, to ensure that all Government guidelines are being strictly adhered to, to keep members and the public safe, including social distancing.

I'm sure you will agree our members working in Crown Offices are making the best endeavours to continue to provide a business as usual service to the community in these challenging times and this needs to be recognised in terms of their immediate job security.

The lockdown as directed by Government last night will make it impossible in the coming months for the Post Office to make any franchising announcements and in turn to run the usual (albeit inadequate) four week public consultation under Citizens Advice Code of Practice. Given the unprecedented circumstances, and in order to provide an important morale boost for the dedicated workers in Crown Offices who are providing an excellent service to the public under such tremendous pressure and anxiety, I would urge you to consider positively the following formal proposal:

- **Rather than the weekly announcements regarding potential franchising, there should be a six month moratorium on the franchising/closure of all Crown Offices – I would also invite you, where possible, to include the 10 Crowns which are already in the process of being franchised to private retailers. An example of this is Stockport, which is not due to be franchised until June.**

Ideally, I would like to see a much longer guarantee, however in the

General Secretary: Dave Ward

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circumstances I am being pragmatic which is why this proposal is for six months.

I am also aware there is a feeling out in the Crowns that they are putting themselves potentially in harm's way, yet once life returns to some semblance of normality the Post Office, if true to form, will quickly reinstate its franchising programme. This position is obviously not helpful in terms of morale and we would ask you to consider the feelings of our members during this worrying time.

Our Crown Office members are naturally continuing to provide a wonderful public service in these dangerous times when many people in jobs across the country are working from home. If you, as the CEO, were able to provide comfort to these members that their job is safe for the future, at least in the relative short term, our members would be reassured that their efforts are being tangibly recognised.

I look forward to your early response to my fair and reasonable proposal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Furey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end of the name.

Andy Furey
Assistant Secretary