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Dear Constituent

I am delighted to say that the Government has decided to award the new contract for the Post Office Card Account to the Post Office. This announcement is good news for our local Post Offices as the card account is an important source of income and brings customers into their local post offices.

I know you were concerned about this issue and I met recently with James Purnell MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to raise it personally with him. That's why I welcome this news as will the people who run our post offices. The National Federation of Sub Post Masters had said that, without the Post Office Card Account, 3,000 Post Offices would close across the country. This decision will help to protect the Post Offices that play such an important role in our community.

I think this decision is particularly reassuring for those who will feel they need the Post Office Card Account even more during the period of financial uncertainty that began with the collapse of the American banks. The Post office is a trusted brand and is seen as a safe, secure and reliable provider of services in these turbulent times.

The Government is offering a £1.7 billion subsidy to help maintain a national post office network. We have also introduced new access criteria to ensure we have modern Post Office branches in the right places to serve people. This represents real help for these local businesses at what is a tough time.

I would like to thank you for the support you have shown local post offices and for supporting my efforts campaigning in Parliament on this issue.

Yours

Fabian Hamilton
Labour MP for Leeds North East