

Improving the public sector

Today I have highlighted two disastrous management errors in public services which Parliament has criticised many times in the past. Yesterday Ministers presented their approach to both problems to try to put things right.

In both cases MPs asked about what would happen to the managers who made the mistakes, especially the top management of the Post Office who went on to spend large sums on lawyers to hound the people they had wrongly accused. One contributor has been muddling the state owned Postal Office up with the privatised mail services, which have nothing to do with this issue.

My prior concern over the years has been to speak with others for the postmasters who were so badly treated to get the accusations against them reversed and to give them compensation for their large financial losses forced upon them. I agree the government as owner of the business does need to tell us what will be done about those who pursued this policy at the Post Office. The bill for compensation will be substantial and falls to taxpayers as we own the Post Office.

The Defence Minister has accepted that the MOD needs to improve the way it handles contracts. He has also promised to seek to rescue this large contract by closer working with the defence supplier. He seemed confident that remedial costs fall to the supplier to pay.