



Treasury Committee

House of Commons, Committee Office, London SW1A 0AA

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Ian Ackerley
Chief Executive
National Savings and Investments
Via email

22 December 2020

Dear Ian,

I write regarding concerns over the standard of service currently being provided by National Savings and Investments (NS&I). Consumer websites are indicating low levels of customer satisfaction with NS&I, with the NS&I website currently including a banner apologising to customers if they have been experiencing difficulties with getting in touch. According to NS&I's own statistics, the six months ending 30 September 2020 witnessed a 43 per cent increase in complaints compared to the preceding six months.

The dramatic cuts that NS&I have made to their interest rates on savings products have also resulted in significant outflows of deposits in recent months, and a great deal of anxiety on the part of customers. In addition, NS&I's plans to end payments of Premium Bond winnings by cheque in 2021 may increase risks for vulnerable consumers with limited access to the internet.

I also note the [Written Ministerial Statement](#) of 17 December 2020 authorising an advance of £40.5 million from the Contingencies Fund for National Savings and Investments (NS&I). The Statement indicates that additional funding is required for responses to Covid-19 issues, building greater operational resilience and the preparation for a major retendering event. This urgent request for significant extra funding has been made only a few months in advance of the supplementary estimate process.

Accordingly, I would be grateful if you could please respond to this letter by answering the following questions:

- Could you please explain the basis for customer complaints about the standard of service that they have been receiving, and your plans to address them?
- What is your current volume of outstanding customer complaints?
- Could you please provide your most recent monthly call handling times?
- What steps have you been taking to protect and support vulnerable customers during the Covid-19 pandemic?
- Could you please provide high level information on recent cash flows in and out of NS&I products?
- To what extent has NS&I's policy on interest rates been optimal for its customers, the taxpayer, and your own organisational resilience?
- What are the weaknesses in operational resilience and Covid-19 issues that have triggered the urgent request for significant amounts of additional funding?
- Could you please provide further details on your planned major retendering event, and why it is required?

I shall be placing this letter and your response in the public domain. I would be grateful if you could provide a response by 18 January 2021.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mel Stride". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Rt Hon. Mel Stride MP
Chair, Treasury Select Committee