



Rachel Reeves MP
Chair
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

WH Smith PLC

WH Smith High Street
Greenbridge Road
Swindon
SN3 3LD
United Kingdom

7 June 2019

Dear Ms Reeves

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to the Committee in person on 21 May 2019 in respect of its inquiry on the Post Office network.

Please find set out below the additional information that you requested from me during my session in front of the Committee:

1. Prompt Payment Code - I outlined that across the WHSmith business, we pay 87% of our supplier bills within 60 days, and three quarters of these within 30 days. Turning to your question specifically, I confirm that Post Office Limited ('POL') own all of the stock that we sell from our Post Office business until it is sold. Accordingly, it is POL and not WHSmith that is responsible for paying its suppliers within the terms agreed in its contracts.
2. Rents - On the high street, WHSmith operate over 600 stores. In a small number of our stores, we do not pay rent, though we do pay other property costs for these branches, like Business Rates. I confirm that none of these stores provide Post Office services.
3. Living Wage - I confirm that WHSmith has not been accredited by the Living Wage Foundation. We offer pay rates which are competitive with other retailers, in what is a very challenging retail environment. Salaries will be dependent on roles, but we start the majority of our store staff on the National Living Wage / National Minimum Wage or at an uplift of roughly 6% in some locations. Alongside this, we offer training and progression to support and encourage employees as they move up through the business, evidenced by several of our executive directors having started on the shop floor.

I hope this additional information is helpful. I would like to reiterate that I am proud of WHSmith's partnership with the Post Office and our role in providing an accessible, quality postal service to millions of customers each week.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Cowling', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Carl Cowling
Managing Director, WHSmith High Street