



24<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Sir /Madam,

I am writing to you on behalf of the UK Mortgage Prisoners' group in the hope of receiving some much-needed clarity in relation to the promised Payment Holidays for all Mortgagees during this time of National crisis.

You will no doubt agree that, in this present climate, time is of the essence; mortgage prisoners spend much of their lives worrying about the prospect of losing their homes anyway without the added pressure of doing so whilst the nation's health and well being is so very much at risk. Please understand, they need to know that their families and homes are safe just as much as the rest of the country does. However, it would seem yet again, that Mortgage Prisoners are still 'last in line' when it comes to receiving any help or support from those who portend to care.

Unsurprisingly, I am being contacted on a daily basis from customers of Landmark and Hellidor who inform me that they are receiving nothing but mixed messages and confusion. There appears to be no clarity or consistency of advice on the websites and, when contacted via telephone, customers are told that payment holidays are being looked at on an individual basis and/or regardless of what the customer is requesting, the amount of payment holiday awarded will depend on what is decided by the Company and is not based on the customer's actual need. After being asked a ridiculous amount of questions, they are given no assurance as to how long the decision process will take and, often, they are told by staff that they simply don't know what the rules for approval actually are.

Further, and I say this from personal experience, Landmark state they cannot guarantee that having a payment holiday will not adversely affect credit files and the word 'hope' is used more times than I am comfortable with when answering customer queries related to this point. This is simply not good enough.

As is clear, Mortgage Prisoners are the most financially vulnerable homeowners in society; having been charged extortionately high interest rates for too long now, they are already at financial breaking point, let alone having to face the present-day crisis we now all find ourselves in. Make no mistake - the apparent stress this is causing is both unnecessary and highly unacceptable and the fact that these Companies are continually allowed to charge what they like, without any apparent consideration for any moral and legal obligations, is a national disgrace and it must stop. Is this indicative of the rhetoric of unity and support we have been hearing from our Chancellor of late when he states that his Government 'will do whatever it takes'? I think not!

I am genuinely dismayed by the fact that I feel compelled to have this continual conversation. If the Government really are putting the people of this country first in their decision making, they must sort

this issue once and for all and I implore the FCA and UK Finance to explain to these 'business vultures' that the only right action to follow in these unprecedented times when people are either losing businesses or their jobs, is that of a regulated Company. We must all be on the same equal playing field if we are to believe the promises of the Government in as much as all UK citizens deserve the right to peace of mind during these difficult times.

I thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and await your reply with the anticipation that you will address these issues as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully,

Rachel Neale

Lead Campaigner

UK Mortgage Prisoners Action Group

Mobile contact: 07979 858817

