

Message

From: Alwen Lyons
on behalf of Alwen Lyons
Sent: 18/09/2012 09:50:50
To: Paula Vennells
Subject: Fw: JA Brief

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Fyi
Thanks Alwen

Sent from Blackberry

From: Alwen Lyons
Sent: Tuesday, September 18, 2012 11:13 AM
To: Alice Perkins
Subject: FW: JA Brief

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Alice here is Simon's brief for our discussion

MP Cases Review of Horizon - Update 17th September

1. Background

- Forensic Auditors, Second Sight, have been commissioned to review cases to determine if there is a systemic problem with Horizon.
- The audit team comprises of Ron Warmington and Ian Henderson. Ron is the lead auditor, Ian is primarily responsible for technology and data analysis.
- Ron and Ian have had a couple meetings with JA, and believe they have built up a good rapport with him.
- At the last meeting with JA, Alan Bates of the JFSA and the JFSA's forensic auditor, Kay Linnell, were also present. Post Office was not represented.
- Subsequent to the meeting Post Office has agreed to pay for Kay Linnell's fees (up to £5K).

2. Scope

- Second Sight has made it clear that their investigations would try to determine, on the balance of probability, where the money went. They would not focus on false accounting as the issue. This is different from the Post Office investigations, where we gather enough evidence to prove false accounting; we do not attempt to determine what happened to the money.
- The number of cases to review has not been finalised. Post Office would like to limit the size of the sample to around 20 cases because of the costs involved. The primary route for cases to be included in the sample is via MPs. However, it was agreed at the meeting with JA, JFSA and Second Sight, that the JFSA would submit their 5 to 10 best cases.
- So far, 12 cases have been requested by MPs. JFSA have submitted none.

3. JFSA

- In a letter to JA, forwarded to Post Office, JFSA have requested:
 - Total immunity for sub-postmasters, to encourage them to come forward.
 - Post Office to publish an article in SubSpace magazine. Again, to prompt sub-postmasters to come forward.
- JA has now forwarded this letter to Paula, which we need to respond to this week. Initial thoughts on this request are that we are **unlikely** to be able to offer full immunity from prosecution as we need to retain the ability to protect public funds. As a compromise, we could offer immunity from reprisals and reassure JFSA that there would be no recrimination against those involved.
- Publishing in SubSpace is feasible but it does raise the question; why is this necessary if JFSA are sitting on over 100 cases. If we did publish, there is the practical question of who the sub-postmasters would call if they had a balancing problem. We would suggest that sub-postmasters register their case using the standard help desk who would compile the list, which will be passed to Second Sight and JFSA to review. Second Sight does not have the capability to set up a help desk.

4. Timing

- Post Office have not dictated time scales for the review. We have taken the position that Second Sight should operate outside the control of Post Office.
- Our hope was that the review would have been completed by the end of September. However, the slow progress on determining which cases to include means that September now is unrealistic. Until we know the number and complexity of the JFSA cases, it is difficult to estimate the completion date.

5. Update on the review itself:

- During the summer, MPs have submitted 12 cases to be included in the review. Post Office is retrieving documentation for these. Most of which will be gathered, scanned and sent to Second Sight by mid-September.
- Second Sight have spent a day with Fujitsu to gain an understanding of Horizon and prepare for the data analysis phase of the audit.
- It is too early to speculate on conclusions, but no evidence yet of bugs in Horizon causing these problems.

6. JA's case

- South Warnborough case. The preliminary review of this case has been concluded. So far nothing new has emerged to challenge our initial findings. A more detailed horizon data analysis will be carried out for this case in the next month.

Simon Baker

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