

Meeting 29/8/13 148 Old St.

Gayle Peacock, Stefani Ulgiati, Ann Analka?      Andrew Gilhooly, Marilyn Stoddart, Ian Park

Made clear NFSP unhappy at announcement of Mediation scheme.

GT was phoned by AVB after 5.00 pm on Friday, hinted that something was about to be announced but no detail. GT tried to speak with her on Bank Holiday Monday, failed. Tuesday scheme publicised without reference to NFSP. 13 page document, no mention of NFSP. No involvement before, no planned involvement, no consultation. We feel we are being treated with contempt.

We have supported Horizon from day 1. Felt POL were wrong to bow to pressure for SS investigation. Now concerned that it has allowed many cases to come forward that are blatantly nothing to do with Horizon. Concerned at costs of administering scheme, professional fees, expenses, rooms, fees, reports. Plus possibility of compensation for repaid losses, damages, and ruined lives. All this could cost millions over next few years. What future for Spmr's pay?

Despite only an interim report, saying no fundamental underlying problem, scheme seems to acknowledge a problem. Is there any as yet not released further info.

As to scheme itself we have reservations. What extra info is expected, especially from old cases? Why was this not considered at time? Representation on working group from POL SS & JFSA but not from official body representing Spmr's. Professional advisors who will be unfamiliar with Horizon.

Old cases, courts have determined, will be opened up. Raises the possibility that POL will be paying compensation for loss and damages despite a conviction still standing.

What info is being made available to SS that was not available at initial investigation (danger that NFSP being made to look incompetent)

What is the process if SS feel mediation is appropriate but no agreement can be reached on outcome?

How can professional fees be limited if mediation finds in favour of Spmr.

Told so far about 12 new cases since interim report and 1 more since the Mediation scheme announced. (early days)

Gayle is charged with a review of all areas where the business interacts with Spmr's to see if the business is giving proper training and support to Spmr's.

We are being asked to give information/advice as to where we think improvements can be made from start to finish.

Suggested a guide to what people are taking on and are responsible for either as working or absentee Spmr's, as soon as they express an interest. Need to be careful not to put too many off!

Is there any work to be done on application and appointment process. Takes too long. Is more help needed for filling in application. Are all parties kept up to date with progress. 2 tier process to test applicant first then specific business.

Is training adequate? Classroom and on site especially how to look for errors and use reports, and how to balance, and how to look for a mis-balance.

Should it be a building block approach? And include live customers, leave out sales until comfortable with transactions. Training tailored to given branch and be done by specialist.

Nominated liaison officer for contact in case of problems.

Helpline is a fear for many Spmr's if they report an error. Also not easy to get help in correction. Culture of POL is perceived to be that if a loss is reported it will bring the auditors round and could easily lead to loss of office instead of bringing sympathetic help to find any error.

Still a perception that discipline is being used to get NT without compensation.

Need to identify common errors and how to avoid and how to correct simply.

Instructions need to be better worded and accurate. Brief and to the point.

Horizon on line help inadequate and too difficult to navigate. Cannot access help mid transaction without losing work so far.

Branch focus needs indexing

Cannot get Help during transaction. Help tablet in each branch?

Should all overs/shorts be made good centrally? Needs a cut off to avoid over administration. POL should control and supervise. Expertise to help has been largely lost. Field team now is effectively the audit team.

Need to spot errors sooner. Detica? (proposed new analytical tool to spot possible problems sooner) Intervention sooner. Cash management do not really check orders against plan. Allow extras weeks on end.

Need reports for reversals and cancellations.

Real reluctance for Spmr's to suspect and check up on trusted members of family/staff.

Should Spmr's be made more aware of the level of monitoring.

Report on a regular basis on branch performance.

Should there be a check list of branch monitoring requirements by Spmr. There is a recent self-audit form which is to be brought in as auditors may not be able to get to all branches as NT ramps up. All offices should get a visit 1 and 3 months after NT to check all is well

TCs & TAs need to be capable of an easy if not automatic receipt.

Branch Standards scorecard should be used to make more important reports on performance and indicate possible frauds/bad practice. Eg high levels of stock or cash compared to usage/sales, or frequent need to ask for extra cash or failure to remit in excess as compared to planned orders. An option is there to comment, it could ask them to check and if there is a problem contact a specific number for advice or help. Told that the likes of oversize parcel is vital, RM could charge POL £30. We challenged that a potential fraud of £10k on scratch cards is far more important but goes unchallenged because POL can recover from the Spmr.

Too many departments, working in silos with little or no interaction and consequent loss of focus on the bigger picture.

Suspension process needs sharpening, RTU should come quicker. Audit in most cases will be expecting trouble in a particular area, should not take so long to bring a case. Is remuneration paid if Spmr is reinstated, - considered, not automatic. Need more help with keeping office open. Should be a pool of possible temps that POL can contact or provide details to Spmr. Need to consider how Spmr survives with no income during suspension. Should something be paid to cover overheads. Should there be an automatic proportion paid to suspended Spmr?

Gayle is on a fact finding mission, many of the bits we have identified are similar to her own internal review. She now has to tackle individual departments with the results and look to find improvements. Will send notes and list of which departments and who heads them up. Covers virtually all parts of the business. Structured approach to each dept. Dealing with the doers on what is actually happening not just the heads who know what they should be doing. What are you doing? Why? "If you are not a branch or supporting a branch why do you exist?"

Every member of staff has a performance review, why do we not?