

Witness Name: Mr Baljit Sethi

Statement No.: WITN0200_01

THE POST OFFICE HORIZON INQUIRY

EXHIBIT WITN0200_01/1

Post chiefs tell shopkeeper he must advertise to replace wife

by rh 200402 12 01 11a



DILEMMA: Baljit Sethi and his wife Anjana with the poster which advertises the job vacancy

A BRENTWOOD shopkeeper has been faced with an impossible dilemma after postal chiefs asked him to advertise for a replacement for his wife.

Anjana Sethi, sub post office mistress at Kings Road Post Office, has been told her contract will be terminated in June due to a dispute over alleged cash and business statement irregularities.

Her husband Baljit runs the shop where the post office is based and is fighting the decision, claiming the problem is due to a faulty computer system installed by Post Office Ltd.

He is furious after receiving a letter asking him to put up a poster looking to recruit people to take over his wife's job.

Mr Sethi, who is also representing a

By Ben Hall

petition against the decision, said: "They just seem to be mucking me around and this just shows the problems I have been facing."

To add insult to injury the poster tells potential applicants that the job will be based at its current location, although Mr Sethi has no intention of agreeing to this if his wife is removed.

He said: "It is my property. I have signed a lease until 2014 and they cannot do anything without my permission."

Forced out

"They just seem to want to force me out by making things as difficult as possible."

Mr Sethi was also angered by the fact the closing date for applications was two weeks before he actually received the poster, although the Post Office has said this was due to a typing error.

The Post Office and the Sethis have been in dispute since postal chiefs raised questions about figures recorded by the computer system installed at

the sub-post office.

Mr Sethi argues the system is faulty, but Post Office Ltd has totally refuted this and claims it has sent experts down to check it twice.

Confidentiality

Due to commercial confidentiality the Post Office has refused to divulge why it has terminated Mrs Sethi's contract, but it says it has followed its Code of Practice fully.

A spokesman said this week: "We apologise for the mix up with the dates on the advertisement. The correct date for receipt of applications is May 4."

The spokesman added: "It is totally up to Mr Sethi if he wants to withdraw use of the premises."

"If he did so we would have to look for someone with appropriate premises to provide the service."

Mr Sethi said the Post Office was not interested in discussing a solution to the problem.

However, the Post Office spokesman said staff were "still in communication" with him.

At the moment the post office is due to close on June 13.