

Message

From: Mark R Davies [GRO]
on behalf of Mark R Davies [GRO]
Sent: 20/04/2015 08:30:13
To: Paul Swanton [GRO]
CC: Louise Chatfield [GRO]
Subject: Re: Sparrow - urgent
Attachments: image001.png

Ta

Louise can you print for me?

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
[GRO]

On 20 Apr 2015, at 09:28, Paul Swanton [GRO] wrote:

Hi it's all ready just to push publish

<image001.png>

Paul Swanton
Strategy Planning &
Production Manager

Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
LONDON, EC2Y 9AQ

[GRO]

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: 20 April 2015 09:28
To: Paul Swanton
Subject: Fwd: Sparrow - urgent

I will be in in about 10 mins - would like this out by 10. Will that work? Want to read it one final time.

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
[GRO]

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jane MacLeod [GRO]
Date: 19 April 2015 21:44:54 BST
To: Mark R Davies [GRO]
Cc: Melanie Corfield [GRO], Rodric Williams [GRO], Patrick Bourke [GRO], Tom Wechsler [GRO], Paul Swanton [GRO]

GRO
GRO
GRO
Subject: RE: Sparrow - urgent

Richard R Weaver
, Alana Renner

Suggested text for External version – Rod – does this work in relation to the CCRC point?

You may have seen coverage today on the BBC about the Horizon computer system and the investigations into it by a firm of forensic investigators called Second Sight.

The report by Second Sight was prepared for use by the small number of former postmasters in the mediation scheme who have complained about Horizon and other issues. The report was designed to be used by the applicants and their advisers for the purposes of mediation. It was sent along with a 77-page response by Post Office.

Last week we wrote to the BBC offering to provide background given their past interest in the issue, and in fact had arranged to discuss the issue with the BBC Today Programme on Tuesday. It was surprising then that we received calls to our press office from the BBC - including the Today programme – on Sunday night asking us to appear on various news programmes the next day.

It seems odd to us, and probably to you, that as we had made arrangements to meet, the BBC couldn't wait to discuss these issues properly. The BBC has also never reported on the 187-page report we produced on this issue in March. We are concerned that the reporting by the BBC on this issue is not [balanced and fair][*note – can we use the wording that the BBC itself uses to describe their own approach?*] and we will be raising this concern with them.

The short story is that the investigations over the past three years have confirmed that the Post Office's Horizon computer system is operating as it should. It is used successfully by 78,000 people to process six million transactions every working day in communities throughout the UK.

A tiny fraction of the overall 500,000 people who have used Horizon since it was introduced put forward complaints to the mediation scheme we set up to provide a forum for people to air their concerns. That does not constitute evidence that the IT system is flawed or unfit for purpose; indeed, if anything, it demonstrates that the system is highly reliable.

Both the Post Office and Second Sight have found that the majority of the losses put forward in complaints to the mediation scheme were, in fact, caused by errors at the counter.

It is therefore unfortunate that Second Sight's report includes a number of assertions and opinions which, because of their inaccuracy and/or the absence of evidence to support them, will not assist applicants in the mediation scheme or the resolution of the remaining complaints. To address this, Post Office has produced a response to the Second Sight report which has also been provided to all remaining applicants to the scheme. Following the completion of its investigations, the Post Office announced last month that it will put forward all

remaining cases to mediation, with the exception of those which have been subject to a previous court ruling. Those cases will continue to be considered on a case-by-case individual basis.

It's worth reading the report we produced in March on this issue [link]. It provides background to this issue and useful information.

Post Office regrets that these issues are being played out in the media. The mediation scheme was set up to support people making complaints. We have learned a lot from these investigations and from the mediation process - most importantly that our systems work as they should.

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: 19 April 2015 21:23
To: Jane MacLeod
Cc: Melanie Corfield; Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Tom Wechsler; Paul Swanton; Richard R Weaver; Alana Renner
Subject: Re: Sparrow - urgent

Final version with Jane comments below:

You may have seen coverage today on the BBC about the Horizon computer system and the investigations into it by a firm of forensic investigators called Second Sight.

The report by Second Sight was sent at the end of last week to a small number of former postmasters who have complained about Horizon and other issues. It was sent along with a 77-page response by Post Office.

Last week we wrote to the BBC offering to provide copies, given the BBC's previous interest in this issue. We were following up on those offers this week, and in fact had arranged to discuss the report with the BBC Today Programme on Tuesday. It was surprising then that last night we received calls to our press office from the BBC - including the Today programme - asking us to appear on various news programmes today.

It seems odd to us, and probably to you, that as we had offered to send the BBC the reports, they couldn't wait to discuss them properly and instead called us on a Sunday evening demanding our response.

It's equally strange that the BBC has never reported the 187-page report we produced on this issue in March. We'll be making complaints about that, but in the meantime I thought you would welcome some background.

The short story is that the investigations over the past three years have confirmed that the Post Office's Horizon computer system is operating as it should. It is used successfully by 78,000 people to process six million transactions every working day in communities throughout the UK.

A tiny fraction of the overall 500,000 people who have used Horizon since it was introduced put forward complaints to the mediation scheme we set up to provide a forum for people to air their concerns. That does not constitute evidence that the IT system is flawed or unfit for purpose; indeed, if anything, it demonstrates that the system is highly reliable.

Both the Post Office and Second Sight have found that the majority of the branch losses put forward in complaints to the mediation scheme were, in fact, caused by errors at the counter.

It is therefore unfortunate that Second Sight's report includes a number of assertions and opinions which, because of their inaccuracy and/or absence of evidence to support them, will not assist the resolution of the small number of remaining complaints. That's why the Post Office has produced a response to the Second Sight report which has also been provided to all remaining applicants to the scheme. We're happy to make it - and the Second Sight report - available to others too subject to ensuring that confidential information about applicants is protected.

Following the completion of its investigations, the Post Office announced last month that it will put forward all remaining cases to mediation, with the exception of those which have been subject to a previous court ruling. Those cases will continue to be considered on a case-by-case individual basis.

It's worth reading the report we produced in March on this issue as well [\[link\]](#). It does provide a lot of background and useful information.

It's regrettable that these issues have played out like this in the media. The individuals involved deserve better than that. The mediation scheme was set up to support people making complaints. We have learned a lot from them and from our own investigations - most importantly that our systems work as they should.

Sent from my iPad

On 19 Apr 2015, at 21:19, Jane MacLeod wrote:

GRO

See minor comments below

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: 19 April 2015 21:06
To: Melanie Corfield; Jane MacLeod; Rodric Williams; Patrick Bourke; Tom Wechsler
Cc: Paul Swanton; Richard R Weaver; Alana Renner
Subject: Sparrow - urgent

All

In the light of the media tomorrow on Sparrow, I would like to get the message below from me posted on our website asap. It builds on previously cleared material. I would also like it to go through internal channels tomorrow asap.

I therefore need - sorry - very quick agreement, preferably tonight but I appreciate this is unlikely - and of course Swani to oversee its posting on our site.

Thanks in advance.

Mark

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