

## Message

**From:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd [GRO]  
**Sent:** 19/01/2015 12:21:21  
**To:** Mark Siviter [GRO]  
**Subject:** FW: URGENT RESPONSE REQUIRED  
**Attachments:** RE: Postage Labels

Hi Mark,


We've not met yet and I did try to call you but your number is not listed hence this e-mail. The associated e-mail trail will give you some background but to reiterate this is a serious matter that will inevitably play out in the public arena at some point which is what I'm trying to avoid.

Once you've read would you please ring me on [GRO] to discuss.

Thanks,  
Angela

**Angela Van Den Bogerd** | Head of Partnerships

 Ty Brwydran House, Atlantic Close, SWANSEA SA7 9FJ

 **Mobile:** [GRO] **Mobex:** [GRO]

 [GRO]



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**From:** Eamon Price  
**Sent:** 15 January 2015 19:49  
**To:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd  
**Cc:** Shelley Merrick  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT RESPONSE REQUIRED

Angela, as mentioned previously, I don't own labels or any future changes to the product. The team has been restructured and Shelley is the owner of labels. I am happy to support Shelley, but she needs to be comfortable with any proposals.

Thanks  
Eamon

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**From:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 15, 2015 07:36 PM  
**To:** Eamon Price  
**Subject:** URGENT RESPONSE REQUIRED  
Eamon,

Having read Mr McCormack's helpful suggestion on a solution for dealing with the unprinted label, you will note that this is what I was seeking views on in my note to you a week or so ago. I met yesterday with Second Sight, the independent forensic accountants and they too have this topic in their sights. The BBC has been in dialogue with Mr McCormack and as you will have seen on the One Show the BBC accuse us of a number of things and postage labels seems a way of potentially bringing Royal Mail into the mix here.

Given the above I'd appreciate your view on introducing the solution I proposed (earlier e-mail chain attached)

Thanks,  
Angela

**Angela Van Den Bogerd** | Head of Partnerships

 Ty Brwydran House, Atlantic Close, SWANSEA SA7 9FJ

 **Mobile:** GRO **Mobex:** GRO

 GRO



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**From:** Melanie Corfield

**Sent:** 15 January 2015 10:09

**To:** Magnus Schoeman; Eamon Price; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; flagcaseadvisor; Belinda Crowe

**Cc:** Craig Tuthill; Rodric Williams; Contract Admin Team; Alwen Lyons; Nick Beal; Martin Humphreys; Connie Hewitt; Tom Wechsler; Shelley Merrick; Mark Siviter; Julian King

**Subject:** RE: (D.A)FOR ACTION: Ref: ECT 1153/14 Customer name: Tim McCormack Feedback due: 15/01/15 Case signatory: TBC

Sorry for delay in responding

There is more, updated material following the debate and publicity in December but this is focussed on responding to criticisms of the mediation scheme ( I attach the fact sheet we are using on this). However we do not have anything that addresses the specific issue being raised here. I am happy to assist with drafting lines once we know whether or not we can get more specifics.

Mel

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**From:** Magnus Schoeman

**Sent:** 13 January 2015 11:56

**To:** Eamon Price; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; flagcaseadvisor; Belinda Crowe; Melanie Corfield

**Cc:** Craig Tuthill; Rodric Williams; Contract Admin Team; Alwen Lyons; Nick Beal; Martin Humphreys; Connie Hewitt; Tom Wechsler; Shelley Merrick; Mark Siviter; Julian King

**Subject:** RE: (D.A)FOR ACTION: Ref: ECT 1153/14 Customer name: Tim McCormack Feedback due: 15/01/15 Case signatory: TBC

Eamon,

Thanks for the note.

RMG have not raised this specific case with me but before I approach them, is there an updated briefing/line to take on this topic and the queries raised below?

I attach the briefing/Q&A Melanie shared 4 weeks ago and which I forwarded to Moya's team.

Thanks,

Magnus

**Magnus Schoeman** | Account Director

Level 2, 148 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HQ

GRO Mobex GRO  
GRO  
[postoffice.co.uk](http://postoffice.co.uk)  
[@postofficenews](mailto:@postofficenews)



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**From:** Eamon Price

**Sent:** 13 January 2015 10:03

**To:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; flagcaseadvisor; Belinda Crowe; Melanie Corfield

**Cc:** Craig Tuthill; Rodric Williams; Contract Admin Team; Alwen Lyons; Nick Beal; Martin Humphreys; Connie Hewitt; Tom Wechsler; Magnus Schoeman; Shelley Merrick; Mark Siviter

**Subject:** RE: (D.A)FOR ACTION: Ref: ECT 1153/14 Customer name: Tim McCormack Feedback due: 15/01/15 Case signatory: TBC

Hi Angela, thanks for the heads up on this.

Magnus heads up the relationship with Royal Mail and will be interested in the copying of Moya on the issue below. I am not sure if this has already been mentioned to him by RMG, but it would be good to head this off at the pass if not.

Thanks

Eamon

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**From:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd

**Sent:** 13 January 2015 09:21

**To:** flagcaseadvisor; Belinda Crowe; Eamon Price; Melanie Corfield

**Cc:** Craig Tuthill; Rodric Williams; Contract Admin Team; Alwen Lyons; Nick Beal; Martin Humphreys; Connie Hewitt; Tom Wechsler

**Subject:** RE: (D.A)FOR ACTION: Ref: ECT 1153/14 Customer name: Tim McCormack Feedback due: 15/01/15 Case signatory: TBC

Donna,

Thanks for sight of this. Given the implications of Mr McCormack's claim then I suggest:



- we need join up with Royal Mail (cc'd to Eamon Price).
- we need a legal view - **Rodric** could you provide please.
- we need to flag to Fujistu. I'll pick this up with Belinda.
- we need Comms team input (cc'd to Melanie Corfield)

By way of background I spoke to Tim McCormack a few weeks ago; a lengthy conversation lasting 45 mins which concluded with me asking Tim to provide me with details of specific instances so that I could investigate the claims. He said that he was unable to do that as he was getting his information via closed Spmr forums and that Spmr's would not want him to share their details. I have since asked NBSC for call clogs of branches that have reported such claims however despite a search they could not provide me with anything. So it would appear that branches are not reporting the issues but perhaps as Tim suggests dealing with the issues themselves. I will go back to Tim and ask him for the CCTV footage details as without specifics we will struggle to put this to bed.

Thanks,  
Angela

**Angela Van Den Bogerd** | Head of Partnerships

 Ty Brwydran House, Atlantic Close, SWANSEA SA7 9FJ

 **Mobile:**  **Mobex:**





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**From:** flagcaseadvisor

**Sent:** 12 January 2015 14:28

**To:** Belinda Crowe; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd

**Cc:** Craig Tuthill; Rodric Williams; Contract Admin Team; Alwen Lyons; Nick Beal; Martin Humphreys; Connie Hewitt; Tom Wechsler

**Subject:** (D.A)FOR ACTION: Ref: ECT 1153/14 Customer name: Tim McCormack Feedback due: 15/01/15 Case signatory: TBC

**POST OFFICE LTD**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE CORRESPONDENCE TEAM**

**INVESTIGATION & FEEDBACK REQUIRED**

**CASE REF NO:** ECT 1153/14

**COMPLAINT RECEIVED:** 12/01/15

**DEADLINE FOR FEEDBACK TO ECT:** 15/01/15

**CUSTOMER DETAILS:** Tim McCormack

**SUBJECT:** Problems with Horizon



BRANCH NAME: Duns ? BRANCH CODE: 108 803

FOR THE SIGNATURE OF: *TBC*

Dear All

Please find some emails pasted below and copies also attached sent to Paula Vennells & Moya Greene.

As this appears to be an ongoing matter, can you let me know what the current position is and what the response to Mr McCormack will be. I will send the usual acknowledgement.

**Angela** - In one of the emails he mentions talking to you so not sure if he was expecting a response off the back of your conversation.

**Nick** - Copied for your information only at this point.

Please reply to : [ECT](#) GRO

Thank you

Donna Alder  
Chief Executive's Correspondence Team

GRO

**N.B. Should you have any problems meeting this deadline or need to discuss further, please contact the Chief Executive's Correspondence Team at [ECT](#) GRO**

**From:** Tim McCormack [[mailto:](#) GRO]  
**Sent:** 10 January 2015 10:59  
**To:** Moya Greene  
**Subject:** FW: New Year Update - This has now got quite serious

Hi

My name is Tim McCormack and I was previously a Subpostmaster.

I have been in communication with Ms Vennells regarding an intermittent problem with Horizon whereby when a SPMR requests a batch of labels to be printed, one or more labels are in fact not generated by the system. The POL Help desk, when informed of such an error by the SPMR explains to the SPMR that there is no problem with Horizon, the error is the SPMRs fault and they must make good the cost of the missing labels from their own pocket. In my opinion this happens as a result of a poor communication link between printer and the Horizon terminal and I have examples of it occurring from all around the country in a multitude of unrelated sub post offices.

As you can see from the example below in the Email to Paula I explain how both RMG and POL profit from this error which may or may not be the fault of the SPMR.

The Theft Act clearly defines this as Appropriation - I am not a lawyer and could not advise whether or not you should face criminal charges - but I must admit it does look likely.

Indeed in my personal opinion, having knowledge now that your company has obtained money in such a way and recorded that in their accounts it could be held as False Accounting - a term I am sure you are familiar with.

I have offered a solution to the problem below. I trust you take this seriously enough to act upon it in conjunction with POL and Paula.

Kind regards

Tim McCormack

You learn more from one criticism than from ten compliments

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From: Tim McCormack  
To: [paula.vennells@gro.co.uk](mailto:paula.vennells@gro.co.uk) GRO  
Subject: RE: New Year Update - This has now got quite serious  
Date: Sat, 10 Jan 2015 08:46:56 +0000

Hi

I hope you don't mind but I have copied Moya Greene as she should know of this.

I had quite a long chat yesterday with a representative of the BBC who contacted me for some background information on POL and the NT program and it was while I was trying to explain the label problem to them briefly it dawned on me that this is more serious than it looks.

An example using some easy figures rather than real ones:

A SPMR requests 10 £5 postage labels from Horizon for a customer who obviously has 10 parcels to post.

As a result of the error I have pointed out to you only 9 are printed yet 10 are on the stack.

The Help Desk informs the SPMR that it is their loss and they have to make good the missing label.

So the customer pays £50 to the SPMR for the Postage.

The SPMR pays £5 for the extra label.

BUT only 10 labels have been produced and RMG incur the cost of delivering these to their destination.

For simplicity sake the breakdown of costs for each label are £1 TRP to the Subpostmaster, £1 Profit/Handling Fee to POL and £3 Profit/Handling Fee to RMG.

So therefore POL have received £1 for a label that was never printed, and RMG £3 for a package that never existed.

This despite POL being informed by the SPMR that the label never appeared.

I have been informed that such circumstances are covered by the Theft Act and it is perfectly possible that both POL and RMG could be held liable.

Proof: Other than CCTV footage there can be no proof that these events occur by their very nature on an individual basis. (e.g. think of someone who puts £1 in a vending machine and the chocolate bar does not appear). However there is clear and overwhelming evidence from around the country just from my enquiries alone that this error occurs quite frequently at random times. There is also a clear paper trail of POL having been informed of this error multiple times via the Help Desk over a number of years. Plus of course the fact that you were personally made aware of this error by myself before Xmas yet nothing has been done about it yet.

Overprinting: The SPMR can also cause this error to manifest itself in another way by re-inserting a label that has already been printed and I have received several messages from SPMRs that they readily admit to having done this. This is just as serious or perhaps even more serious, because POL's stance on this is that in this case the SPMR should still make good on the missing label as the SPMR has confirmed via Horizon that the label had printed correctly. POL's correct course of action in these cases would be at a minimum not to seek financial gain and indeed RMG should not receive consequential financial gain. In POL's case they have lost only the intrinsic value of the label that has been printed which is clearly negligible.

Recovery of Loss by SPMR: As I have previously mentioned to you, the majority of colleagues I have communicated with regarding this problem recover their losses arising from such an error by fraudulent means. Should POL find out that this is what they are doing then it is clearly a criminal offence for which they could be prosecuted. It would make for a very interesting court case should it go that far.

Possible Solution: The SPMR is not provided with the means to print duplicate labels without first confirming to HOL that the label did not print correctly. This is for obvious reasons but as I have pointed out there is clearly a requirement for POL to allow this. If you consider that a SPMR may decide to scan several DG barcodes in order to recover his losses on the missing label then this is clearly just as unacceptable and hard to track. POL do not even get to hear about the original lost label. If a system was put in place to allow the SPMR to use official postage to replace the missing label and having to indicate via HOL the reason was because of this label printing problem, then POL (and RMG) would no longer be liable under the Theft Act, POL could make allowances for these errors in settlement with RMG so that would absolve RMG, and the SPMR would suffer no loss and no longer be tempted to perform a criminal act. In addition you would get a clear audit trail of the extent of this problem throughout the network which may help you track down the source.



Clearly it will be difficult to monitor misuse of the system but a track record of frequency of missing labels per branch could be built up over time and a warning issued to a SPMR that an auditor / engineer will spend two weeks in his branch in order to see the problem occurring will quickly stop that SPMR from misusing the system.

I think the solution I propose would be acceptable all round however it does not cover the losses that many SPMRs have incurred over the years. May I respectfully suggest that you offer a settlement to all SPMRs based on a percentage of the number of labels they print per annum? It should cover the period from the introduction of Label Printing to the time you put in place a solution to the problem.

Hope this helps.

Cheers, Tim

You learn more from one criticism than from ten compliments

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From: **Tim McCormack**  
To: [paula.vennells](#) **GRO**  
Subject: New Year Update  
Date: Tue, 6 Jan 2015 21:25:15 +0000

Hi

Happy New Year to you and your colleagues.

Subsequent to my phone call with Angela and my search for other examples of the intermittent Horizon fault I reported to you I was contacted discreetly (off forum) by an SPMR who claims to have CCTV footage of the Horizon screen when such a fault occurs showing the system adding two printed labels to the stack when only one was printed.

They want to remain anonymous because of the way they handle the error - i.e. the way they collect back the money from POL.

That got me thinking ...

I know of many ways to extract money from POL ranging from the downright dishonest methods to the ones that are no more than mischievous (although your organisation would of course not approve)

Last Summer I helped an SPMR in reviewing his last 6 months pay slips and calculating for him how much he would earn (stand to lose) if he converted to Mains. Looking at his

transactions there was something so obviously wrong in what he was doing that I called him and warned him to stop as he would be found out. Despite spending several hours doing unpaid work for him that was the last I heard from him. He was clearly embarrassed at what I had seen. Not only this but I know he is a senior local councillor of many years good standing.

So I wondered what if a Horizon error such as the ones that have happened to at least a few of the Second Sight cases had happened to me. Several thousand pounds short, what would I have done? I don't know the details but I assume in most of these cases the total amount is a result of accumulated losses of smaller amounts. I could easily generate £50 to £100 of additional income from POL related sources each day. You don't have to be particularly smart to know how to do this - just dishonest.

So why did these people not resort to similar tactics to cover their losses? Don't you think if they were dishonest they would do this? It doesn't add up. It doesn't make sense. These are surely honest people (for the most part) that have had their lives destroyed by POL. Do you feel no compassion towards them?

You have a chance to put this right. Put in place the Second Sight recommendations to prevent re-occurrences, eliminate the shock and terror tactics of the auditors and arrange a blanket settlement. As I keep repeating you need to look seriously at the people who continue to advise you that there are no problems with your organisation in the face of clear evidence to the contrary. Have you ever heard of the Peter Principle?

I sincerely hope you take my advice.

Kind regards

Tim

PS We all make mistakes - after we closed the PO - the Audit team had been and gone - the night before we realised a £500 gain which we pocketed - fair enough. Later that week I was dismantling our combi till and stuck between the top of the drop safe and the counter was a cash cassette containing £200 - in hindsight a simple mistake to make as there is very little distance between the two openings.

So whose money was that? Obviously mine. £700 up at the end of 4 years trading?? Don't start jumping to conclusions with regard to what I said earlier - I am honest through and through as is my wife. Remember also you only hear about the mistakes that cause losses not the ones that produce gains.

But consider this. The same mistake made but with £2k in the cassette instead, just before the Auditors walk in? What then? £2k down and money nowhere to be seen? I would be adamant that nothing untoward had happened. Not a Horizon error this time a physical error. No money missing, just hidden by a design fault. End up in Jail for something like that - you have to be kidding.

PPS Branch Finder - you do know its been out of commission for some time now? You do know how they have been phoning the branches to find out their opening hours -

operative word 'how' as in method. Totally bizarre.

You learn more from one criticism than from ten compliments

<b>Flag Case Fact Sheet:</b> The information contained in this sheet will be used to prepare the final response and will be shared with the signatory. It may also be recalled in any FOI enquiry.	
<b>Background information &amp; actions taken</b> This should include details relating to customer complaint. (what went wrong/why it went wrong/ what has been done about it)	
<b>Additional Information:</b> Please supply any additional information - including any In Commercial Interest or In Confidence, which may assist in completing response or provide a better understanding to the background. Also advise if information can be used in response.	
<b>Information supplied by:</b>	