
From: Mark R Davies[/O=MMS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=MARK R DAVIESA80D7269-659B-41D0-9C80-68D9DE4FA7C5D38]
Sent: Fri 07/08/2015 9:13:12 AM (UTC)
To: Mark Underwood [GRO]; Melanie Corfield [GRO]
Subject: Fwd: Sparrow note for Tim Parker

Both

We need to send a note to the new chairman and I have drafted a first go below and asked Alwen and Jane for comments.

Given Alwen's view I would now like to get your comments and also whoever is standing in for Rod?

Clearly this is about the most important note we will send on this issue in the weeks ahead so want it to be spot on!

Your input very welcome.

Mark

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
Post Office Ltd

Mobile: [GRO]

Begin forwarded message:

From: Alwen Lyons <[GRO]>
Date: 7 August 2015 09:56:42 BST
To: Mark R Davies [GRO], Jane MacLeod [GRO]
Subject: RE: Sparrow note for Tim Parker

I think this is very clear. I have added some points to clarify in capitals, just to make them stand out clearly.

I think this note should come from Jane, or Paula if she wishes, and be sent via me to start getting him used to that way of communicating and to make it as 'normal' as sparrow can ever be!!

Thanks

Alwen

Alwen Lyons

Company Secretary

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GRO

-----Original Message-----

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: 07 August 2015 09:35
To: Jane MacLeod; Alwen Lyons
Subject: Sparrow note for Tim Parker

Hi both

See below for a first draft of a note for Tim. Let me know what you think.
Mark

For the last three years the Post Office has been investigating the cases of a small number of postmasters (I WOULD ADD HOW MANY) who have suggested that the Horizon computer system used in branches might be faulty.

They have suggested it may have caused losses in branch which in some cases led to them being prosecuted (AGAIN MIGHT BE WORTH SAYING HOW MANY).

No evidence has emerged to support these claims: indeed thorough investigation has underlined that the system is efficient and robust.

It deals with six million transactions every day and has been used by almost 500,000 people since it was introduced: the vast majority doing so without difficulty.

The Post Office has nonetheless taken its responsibilities to its people very seriously. It is very sorry that this small group of people feel they have been treated unfairly and has gone to enormous lengths to get to the bottom of their cases.

It held a review by independent forensic accountants, set up a mediation scheme overseen by independent mediators and reinvestigated every complaint in huge detail. It also paid for individuals to seek advice on preparing their case.

We have also asked our external criminal lawyers to review all the cases involving prosecutions.

Throughout all this no evidence has emerged to support the very serious allegations being made, which in some cases have stretched to claims that the Post Office has abused the prosecution process.

We do take forward prosecutions where it is right to do so. Post Offices are dealing with public money. We would be heavily and rightly criticised if we did not deal with the very small number of cases where false accounting and theft takes place.

But we only prosecute where there is clear evidence of wrongdoing and we can meet the bar set for bringing prosecutions: the evidential and public interest tests. We do not prosecute people for making mistakes. We prosecute where people dishonestly cover up the loss of money.

Some (AGAIN HOW MANY) complainants have now asked the Criminal Cases Review Commission to examine their cases, and this is their right and we are co-operating fully with this process and providing all information. No information at all has been destroyed, as has been alleged.

We have said we are prepared to mediate in every non-criminal case. Unfortunately many applicants are refusing to engage in the process.

We have offered to meet them with their MPs to talk through their case. Some have agreed to this but a number of others have declined.

Individuals are being advised in this by the Justice for SubPostmasters Alliance. (THE JFSA HAS BEEN IN EXISTANCE FOR X YEARS LED BY ALAN BATES, ONE OF THE CLAIMANTS)

Significant compensation claims - totalling more than £60m - have been made without evidence to support the allegation of wrongdoing or system failure on the part of the Post Office. This figure can be compared to the total losses of public money in the 136 cases involved, which is just over £1m.

The campaign has secured the support of some MPs - with whom the Post Office has engaged at length - which has in turn led to parliamentary and media activity.

We have been robust in rejecting the serious allegations made in Parliament and media, particularly in recent months. The allegations have suggested wrongdoing by senior management, bullying, deliberate cover-up and abuse of prosecutor powers.

A Panorama programme is due to be aired on August 17. We have challenged the programme at length but expect it will go ahead. We have provided detail on every allegation put to us. We are not appearing on the programme for interview because the programme is focussing on individual cases and has not provided evidence to support its allegations.

We cannot provide detail on individual cases because:

- we agreed to confidentiality with all applicants because of the very personal nature of some of the facts involved: while they have talked publicly and partially about their cases it would be wrong for us to breach the undertakings we made
- we would be accused of seeking to undermine the CCRC's deliberations in relation to criminal cases
- we would be accused of trying to further damage individuals' reputations if we were to reveal some of the details of the cases which are known to us but not to the wider public

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director Post Office Ltd

Mobile:

GRO