

From: martin smith
Sent: 27 September 2013 15:53
To: 'Ruth X Barker'; Rodric Williams
Subject: RE: BBC Wales - Horizon Documentary

Ruth,

Please see my suggested amendments to the last paragraph in red:

Cases are considered on a case by cases basis and held under constant review. In some instances charges may change as new evidence is presented or as a result of representations made by the defence. Any decision is made having taken full account of the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Martin.

Martin Smith

martin.smith@

martin.smith@

Direct: [GRO](#)

GRO

From: Ruth X Barker [mailto:[GRO](#)]
Sent: 27 September 2013 15:37
To: Rodric Williams; martin smith
Subject: RE: BBC Wales - Horizon Documentary

Hi Both

Further to my conversation with Martin here's a revised response to the final question.

Would be good if I could have any comments or amends today.

Thanks

If you are so sure that the sub-postmasters had stolen from you, why did you, time after time, drop the charges of theft and change it to one of false accounting in court?

We take forward approximately 50 prosecutions a year and with a network of 11,800 post offices that means such cases are not commonplace

These prosecutions are progressed in accordance with the Court's processes and systems. We have a duty to investigate where there is suspicion of wrong-doing. Subpostmasters are pillars of the community and must abide by high standards of probity in that role. The public would be surprised if we did not take action where public money may have been misappropriated.

Cases are considered on a case by cases basis and held under constant review. In some instances charges may change as new evidence is presented or as a result of representations made by the defence. Any decision is made having taken full account of the code for crown prosecution.

From: Rodric Williams
Sent: 27 September 2013 10:27
To: 'martin.smith@c[REDACTED] GRO
Cc: Ruth X Barker
Subject: FW: BBC Wales - Horizon Documentary

Martin - thanks for looking at this.

Can you please call Ruth Barker in our Communications team to discuss with her your comments. Her details are:

Tel: [REDACTED] GRO
Mobile: [REDACTED] GRO
Email: ruth.x.barker@[REDACTED] GRO

Thanks, Rodric

From: Rodric Williams
Sent: 26 September 2013 17:31
To: 'martin.smith@c[REDACTED] GRO
Cc: Jarnail A Singh; Susan Crichton
Subject: FW: BBC Wales - Horizon Documentary

Martin – can you please take a look at the statement at the bottom of this email trail which we are proposing to make to BBC Wales.

In particular, is it fair to say that “in some cases charges may change in line with [review of the case under the] code”?

Kind regards, Rodric

Ps thank you for your voicemail earlier this afternoon. I just tried to call you, but we can pick it up tomorrow.

Rodric Williams | Litigation Lawyer



148 Old Street, LONDON, EC1V 9HQ



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From: Susan Crichton
Sent: 26 September 2013 17:12
To: Rodric Williams
Cc: Ruth X Barker; Jarnail A Singh
Subject: FW: BBC Wales - Horizon Documentary

Rodric _ can I ask you to take this on, I think that we need to send the draft to Martin Smith at Ck for input re the criminal cases and if you want to use Susan Barty at CMS for a general view that's probably not a bad idea.

Thanks

Susan Crichton | General Counsel

1st Floor, Central Wing, 148 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HQ

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POST
OFFICE

From: Ruth X Barker
Sent: 26 September 2013 17:10
To: Susan Crichton; Mark R Davies
Cc: Nina Arnott; Andy Holt; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; Sophie Bialaszewski
Subject: BBC Wales - Horizon Documentary

I think might have to take your call on that.

The amends aren't substantial to previously cleared. It's the final question or rather what we say in response which worries me the most.

From: Susan Crichton
Sent: 26 September 2013 16:38
To: Ruth X Barker; Mark R Davies
Cc: Nina Arnott; Andy Holt; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; Sophie Bialaszewski
Subject: Re: BBC Wales - Horizon Documentary

Ruth - do you want this to go to our media lawyer?
Susan

From: Ruth X Barker
Sent: Thursday, September 26, 2013 03:24 PM
To: Mark R Davies; Susan Crichton
Cc: Nina Arnott; Andy Holt; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; Sophie Bialaszewski
Subject: BBC Wales - Horizon Documentary

Hi Both

We need to submit responses to BBC Wales re their programme on Horizon,

It is expected that the programme will focus on the case of Noel Thomas. They also say they may be interviewing an MP, a lawyer and a computer expert

Below is a statement and a response the questions posed.

I've tried to use previously cleared content as much as possible. New text is marked in red.

Susan are you able to give some guidance on the final question. I've added a line re the change in charges but not sure this is factually correct.

BBC Wales have asked that we send our response tomorrow.

Ruth

Statement

"The Post Office is committed to addressing any outstanding concerns among subpostmasters swiftly and transparently.

"As part of this commitment we set up an independent review which recently published an interim report which found that so far there was no evidence of any systemic issues with Horizon but did identify some further improvements we could make to our training and support arrangements, which we are taking forward.

"The Horizon system has around 68,000 users and processes more than six million transactions every day. The total number of cases put forward by users to Second Sight as part for its external review was 47, less than 0.1 per cent of the total number of users of the Horizon system. We are reviewing our training and support procedures and have established an independent mediation scheme to provide an effective way to assess and address any outstanding cases where subpostmasters feel they have been unfairly treated.

"Subpostmasters are the lifeblood of our business and we take their concerns extremely seriously. We hope the measures we are taking will demonstrate our commitment to working closely with them to further improve our network."

Why didn't you, the Post Office, admit that you had found bugs in the Horizon computer system in 2010 (This is in the interim report published in July - part 6. 6.4).

It is not the case that the report found bugs in the system. In fact the interim report found that investigations so far had shown no sign of systemic issues with the Horizon system,

We voluntarily provided information on two anomalies involving a receipts/ payments mismatch and historic accounting entries. Both of these were found and rectified by the Post Office and voluntarily communicated to the independent review company.

Modifications have already been made to rectify these issues and all subpostmasters involved have been informed of this. None of the subpostmasters involved have been prosecuted.

Why have you continued to prosecute sub-postmasters after this date even though they claim it is Horizon that is causing the deficits they have in their branches. Why didn't you tell MP's about your findings in 2010?

We recognise some subpostmasters have concerns that their cases have not been fully resolved and we are committed to finding a resolution to this. That is why we commissioned an independent review and have also worked with the JFSA to establish this Independent Mediation Scheme. Any cases which were raised through this review have been placed on hold pending its outcome. This will remain the case until the review is concluded.

The Horizon system has around 68,000 users and processes more than six million transactions every day. The total number of cases put forward by users to Second Sight as part for its external review was 47, less than 0.1 per cent of the total number of users of the Horizon system. For information so far 30 applications have been submitted to the mediation process.

The interim report produced by SS found no evidence of systemic issues with Horizon but did identify some further improvements we could make to our training and support arrangements, which we are taking forward.

Why did it take 10 years for POL to ask an independent company (Second Sight) to investigate the claims made by tens of sub-postmasters that the computer system Horizon is faulty?

The interim report produced by Second Sight found no evidence of systemic issues with Horizon but did identify some further improvements we could make to our training and support arrangements, which we are taking forward.

Why did the POL not have a central file full of the cases and people that you had prosecuted who all claimed Horizon was at fault. There was no file ready for Second Sight when the company began their investigations. If POL had already investigated the sub-postmasters' claims one would expect a central file on the matter. Why wasn't there one? Had you investigated these claims thoroughly?

In line with industry standards we operate a seven year document retention policy. We have fully co-operated with Second Sight's investigation. We have provided case files

where established and contacted people in our 11,800 branches to offer them the opportunity to put forward any concerns they may have regarding Horizon and its training and support processes. The 47 cases considered by Second Sight were a combination of cases which had gone to court and those which were based on comments made by people working across the network.

If you are so sure that the sub-postmasters had stolen from you, why did you, time after time, drop the charges of theft and change it to one of false accounting in court?

We take forward approximately 50 prosecutions a year and with a network of 11,800 post offices that means such cases are not commonplace

These prosecutions are progressed in accordance with the Court's processes and systems. We have a duty to investigate where there is suspicion of wrong-doing. Subpostmasters are pillars of the community and must abide by high standards of probity in that role. The public would be surprised if we did not take action where public money may have been misappropriated.

In line with the code for Crown Prosecutions we continually review cases for prosecution and in some cases charges may change in line with this code.

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