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## HOGSTHORPE – Spmr David Hedges (Tom)

Tel: **GRO**

Branch previously came to my attention as appeared on Paul Kellett's debt report. On contacting the branch, Tom the spmr told me that he had started experiencing losses almost every week, and this started about March time 09. A DFR was put in place, however additional losses continued and were settled centrally.

The branch is a one position office, the only other person working in the office is Tom's daughter who works on Tuesday afternoons. The branch operates a single stock unit. Tom told me he could only put the problems down to a problem with Horizon as he hadn't experienced large discrepancies prior to March and security was tight, he also went on to say since the losses started he had been extra careful.

An intervention visit was requested and took place on 06.05.09. I briefed David Crowth before he went to the branch to ensure he did not get into a debate about Horizon. David was thorough in his visit, and could not identify anything in the branch which might be causing the losses.

Additionally I checked with all the teams in PB&A to establish whether any credit TCs were due to the office for the period when the losses had occurred. No TCs were pending.

I discussed the branch with Antonio Jamasb from the Branch Systems Team in Dearne House who agreed to look at the branch. I received a confirmation from Tony on 22.06.09 that there were no comms problems identified and that his checks had not shown anything out of the ordinary.

Up to date customer account requested from PB&A and detailed below.

05.03.09	Discrepancy £3957.19	TP11
01.04.09	Discrepancy £1048.40	TP12
06.05.09	Discrepancy £2867.08	TP01
04.06.09	Discrepancy £1718.89	TP02
01.07.09	Discrepancy £1102.97	TP03

Thursday 25.06.09

Contacted Tom to explain the information I had received from Tony. Tom told me that he was carrying another loss which was since his last BTS and that he was at his wits end. I asked whether he had started doing a handover, ie checking cash and stock when he handed over to his daughter on Tuesday afternoons. He said he hadn't because, since our last conversation he hadn't let her work in the branch as he wanted to rule her out of any problems, the losses continued. I asked if he

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could think back to when the losses started and whether he was doing anything different now to what he did before.

Tom said that he does a lot of postage and customers come in leave their items of mail and a blank cheque, so they don't have to wait. He then processes the items in between serving other customers. Previously he would have several items on the sales stack, items for which labels had been printed and if a customer came in he would suspend the session, from the Smartpost screen and serve other customers before going back and swapping back into the suspended session. This would take him straight back to the Smartpost screen, but when he initially suspended the session it would take a long time, as it also did when he swapped to go back into the suspended session. Around the time the losses started he changed how he suspended the session. Items in the sales stack and in Smartpost, when a customer came in he started going back to serve customer, suspending the session from there, would serve other customers and then swap to go back into the suspended session, by doing it this way it took him back to the serve customer screen and both the suspending of the session and returning back into the suspended session was far quicker this way, than how he did it previously.

Contacted Gary Blackburn, after a lengthy discussion he said it was more likely to be a problem in the branch, I acknowledged that was usually the case but having spoken to the spmr on several occasion and feedback from David Crawl felt that the spmr seemed genuine. Gary said that as Tony had done some checks already the spmr would need to log calls with the NBSC and HSH regarding the information we discussed today about the differences in how the sessions were now being suspended.

Contacted Tom and asked that he contact the NBSC and clarify what the process should be for suspending a session and also speak to HSH regarding whether this might affect his balance. Agreed to call Tom back early next week to establish what the outcomes of helpline calls were.

Tuesday 30.06.09

Contacted Tom, has logged a call with the NBSC (H16389509), who have told him that it is okay to suspend a session of Smartpost using either of the methods described above.

Wednesday 01.07.09

Contacted Tom, he has contacted HSH (E-1318562) regarding suspending sessions of Smartpost and losses. Tom stated that HSH are arranging for a visit to the branch on 02.07.09 to change the central processor.

Thursday 02.07.09

Contacted Tom, Fujitsu were at the branch changing the processor.

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Monday 27.07.09

Contacted the branch and Tom stated that his balances have been okay since the processor was swapped. His next Trading Statement is due on 5.08.09. Advised that Fujitsu could find no system errors. I also explained that I had been looking through MI for the branch and could find no evidence of problems with the suspended sessions of postage transactions. Will contact him to obtain next BTS figures.

Also received a contact request from Andrew Craddock (NFSP Exec) Newport Pagnell 109109 (tel 01908 613228). Andrew has been speaking in length to Tom, who has raised concerns about the level of settle centrally debt. Advised that Fujitsu could find no system errors. I also explained that I had been looking through MI for the branch and could find no evidence of problems with the suspended sessions of postage transactions.

Thursday 06.08.09

Contacted the branch but Tom was busy on the counter and not able to speak.

Tuesday 18.08.09

Contacted the branch but Tom out delivering papers, will try again later.

Wednesday 19.08.09

Checked with Paul Kellett and no losses settled centrally on 05.08.09. Contacted Tom who confirmed he been short by approximately £40 on his last BTS, 05.08.09 and had made this good with cash. Advised that Fujitsu have confirmed that they have not found any system errors which would have caused the discrepancies, and concluded that there was nothing wrong with the processor. Advised Tom that he needs to provide evidence to support any claims that the problems with losses were as a result of Horizon and that he is responsible for making the losses good. I advised Tom to contact me should he require any further help.

Contacted Andrew Craddock (NFSP Exec) Newport Pagnell as he had asked to be kept updated on this case and outlined my conversation with the spmr.

Karen Arnold  
Agent Contract Manager