

Case Notes for Conduct Suspension Cases

Date of suspension

Branch	Hightown	FAD Code	512 323
Subpostmaster	Miss Alison Hall		
Contract Manager	Sue Muddeman	5367 3432	

Background of branch

Length of service		Have they or do they hold any other appointment	
Is the subpostmaster active in the branch	Yes		

REASON FOR SUSPENSION AND CHARGE

Suspension letter sent : - 2 September 2010

Horizon Cash check on 1 September followed by an audit on 2 September revealed a shortage at the branch of £14842.37 (which includes lottery TC of £819.00)

ANY FURTHER DETAILS FOLLOWING SUSPENSION : -

During the Horizon cash check the subpostmaster indicated to Tracey Bedford that she was aware that there was an error and gave the reason as Lottery. She said this was being dealt with by the NBSC but no reference number for this was found ref E Mail from Ray Hart, Horizon On Line .

However there is a request on the EFC in reference to a call made to the NBSC on 31 August 2010 requesting contact in relation to having balance problems with Lottery and that she has put in £10k in the last few months. She wishes further training or audit.

Charge letter sent : - 24 September 2010

Charges levied : -

1. A loss revealed at the audit of £14023.37 which after including the amount of £819.00 Transactional Corrections was increased to £14842.37 This loss was discovered initially during the Horizon migration support visit on 1 September 2010 and confirmed during the subsequent audit on the 2 September 2010.

2. Failure to make good losses at the branch
During the audit you said that when you accepted Transaction corrections you had been adjusting the lottery scratchcards to the correct figure but had not put in any money to compensate for the loss.

3. Increasing the amounts of cash on hand when completing the overnight cash holdings

Your Contract for services
Section 12 Paragraph 4

The Subpostmaster must ensure that accounts of all stock and cash entrusted to him by Post Office Counters Ltd are kept in the form prescribed by Post Office Counters Ltd. He must immediately produce these accounts, and the whole of his sub-office cash and stock for inspection whenever so requested by a person duly authorised by the Regional General Manager.

Section 12 paragraph 12

The Subpostmaster is responsible for all losses caused through his own negligence, carelessness or error, and also for losses of all kinds caused by his Assistants. Deficiencies due to such losses must be made good without delay.

Interview held 8 October 2010: -

Miss Hall was very upset during the interview. She was on her own with no representation.

Miss Hall admitted to falsifying the accounts and stated that she feels the loss is in the scratchcards
She wants someone to go through all the lottery slips for her.

From an email from Neil Thorneycroft, Lottery Team Leader (have a hard copy of this in file) and he 'says that he 'cannot find any errors relating to the amount in question.

National Lottery Game - 03.04.08 to date £1052.00 credit

Prize Payments - 24.04.08 to date £190.20 debit

Scratchcards - 23.06.08 to date £2,200 debit (stock credit)

Regular numbers of apparent scratchcard sales entries have been made. However a high number of stock adjustments have also been made. From 01.01.08 to date 115 stock adjustments @ £1760.00 credit. If stock adjustments have been made in place of sales entries no commission is payable to the subpostmaster. ``

There was no evidence given that the loss in question relates to scratchcards Miss Hall stated that when she received TCs for scratchcards that she accepted the TC which increased the stock level. She would then put in the right stock amounts and inflate the cash levels to enable the branch to balance. She said that she requested the audit herself after returning from holiday. (log call 31/8/10)

When asked about staffing she said that she had 4, did have 5 but one member of staff has recently
Left

Miss Hall stated that she counted the lottery scratchcards every day - this was by the markers on the dispenser or scratchcards?.
She keeps a count of the scratchcards by doing a chart on an A4 piece of paper.

She also stated that she does a physical count of the cash daily

She asked whether with scratchcards

- if she had not remmed them in but activated them would this cause a problem.
- At the audit there was a £400 in stock wants a breakdown of what this was
- She cuts off her scratchcards on the Weds morning when balancing and wants to know if the problems are being caused by this

She said that she had not contacted Post Office before as she had been trying to sort this out herself. She had been going through the paperwork. She says that she has not taken a penny

DECISION - terminate the contract for services

Decision letter sent : - 15 October 2010

Reason for the decision

Miss Hall admitted to falsifying the accounts by increasing the cash totals over a period of time

It would appear that Miss Hall only informed POL that there was a problem when she knew that the HOL team would be attending the branch. Ie call to Helpline 31/8/10 HOL cash check completed 1/9/10

NB Miss Hall has requested an appeal and also that someone in Chesterfield looks through all her paperwork. I advised her that we would not do this. She said that she had been to Citizens Advice and they advised that if anyone is requesting monies they are obliged to look through the paperwork.