

Mike Granville

From: Mike Granville
Sent: 04 February 2011 16:53
To: Kevin Gilliland; Paula Vennells; Mike Young; Susan Crichton; Rod Ismay; Alana Renner
Subject: FW: Inside Out programme
Attachments: CMK letter to BBC pdf.pdf

To update the latest on this programme, which goes out on Monday evening;

The media statement sent over by David Simpson looks like this;

Post Office Statement

- The Post Office is fully confident that the Horizon computer system in its branches, and all the accounting processes around it, are absolutely accurate and reliable at all times.
- The Horizon system has been subjected to full, independently-assured, robust testing procedures. The Horizon information security processes meet the relevant industry standards which apply to such organisations as banks and building societies.
- Subpostmasters are given fully appropriate training, typically including classroom training and a further time on site under close supervision and guidance from a Post Office manager. Subpostmasters can also ring a dedicated helpline for advice.
- The Horizon system has operated successfully for over 10 years across the Post Office network, which currently stands at more than 11,500 branches.
- The National Federation of Subpostmasters, which vigorously represents the views and interests of subpostmasters around the entire country, has gone on record on a number of occasions to express its full confidence in the accuracy and robustness of the Horizon system.
- The Horizon system provides detailed records of every transaction, no matter how small or large, in any individual Post Office branch. Separate records of all key strokes in the system are stored in a tamper-proof way..
- The Post Office handles large sums of public money as well as the money entrusted to it by the 20 million people who visit our branches each week. The Post Office rightly makes every effort and takes all reasonable steps to protect the money in its care.

In the three cases indicated by the BBC programme Inside Out, the facts are:

Misra. Mrs Seema Misra was found guilty of the theft of £74,609.84 at her branch in West Byfleet while she was subpostmistress by the unanimous verdict of a jury at her trial lasting more than a week at Guildford Crown Court in 2010. She had also pleaded guilty at Woking Magistrates' Court to six further charges of false accounting involving the falsification of documents on dates in December 2006, June 2007 and December 2007. The Crown Court judge sentenced her to 15 months imprisonment on the theft charge and six months concurrent imprisonment for each of false accounting charges. The judge said when sentencing Mrs Misra that the jury, before reaching its unanimous guilty verdict, had heard all of the evidence put before it, including the testimony of an IT expert appointed by Mrs Misra's defence.

Hamilton. Josephine Hamilton's contract as a subpostmistress with the Post Office was terminated in 2006 after a loss of £36,644.89 was discovered during an audit at her branch in South Warnborough. She agreed to repay the money. She pleaded guilty to 14 charges of false accounting at her trial at Winchester Crown Court in February 2008. She was sentenced to 12 months community service and received a supervision order.

Bristow. Discussions continue between Mr David Bristow and the Post Office, which is seeking the repayment of a shortage of over £40,000 at the branch in Odiham during his time as subpostmaster. Mr Bristow received appropriate training. Investigations have been made. There is no evidence that the loss is related to the Horizon system.


In addition, a letter has been sent from Cameron McKenna to BBC lawyers which is attached to this e-mail.


Thanks

Mike

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