

Message

From: Susan Crichton [IMCEAEX-
_O=MMS_OU=EXCHANGE+20ADMINISTRATIVE+20GROUP+20+28FYDIBOHF23SPDLT+29_CN=RECIPIENTS_CN=SUSAN+20CRICHTONCE
DC28-49AB-8F0F-BE4237A4AD4F [GRO]
on Susan Crichton <IMCEAEX-
behalf _O=MMS_OU=EXCHANGE+20ADMINISTRATIVE+20GROUP+20+28FYDIBOHF23SPDLT+29_CN=RECIPIENTS_CN=SUSAN+20CRICHTONCE
of DC28-49AB-8F0F-BE4237A4AD4F [GRO] [IMCEAEX-
_O=MMS_OU=EXCHANGE+20ADMINISTRATIVE+20GROUP+20+28FYDIBOHF23SPDLT+29_CN=RECIPIENTS_CN=SUSAN+20CRICHTONCE
DC28-49AB-8F0F-BE4237A4AD4F [GRO]
Sent: 12/07/2013 07:44:58
To: Paula Vennells [GRO]; Kevin Gilliland [GRO]
CC: Mark R Davies [GRO] Martin Edwards [GRO]
Subject: Re: Fwd: The case for independence in the Post Office appeals system

Thanks Paula I will organise someone from Chris' area. Take a look at the case and we can discuss at 2

From: Paula Vennells
Sent: Friday, July 12, 2013 07:29 AM
To: Kevin Gilliland; Susan Crichton
Cc: Mark R Davies; Martin Edwards
Subject: Fwd: The case for independence in the Post Office appeals system

Hi both/all, please see below and read the attachment.

I would like to take this as an example of how we can begin to turn the SS situation around. And I am taking it very seriously - there are many interested MPs copied and a letter direct to our minister, but irrespective of that (which is clearly important) I want the business to respond willingly and with transparency and pace.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the case and there will be views on both sides, if this Spmr has had an unblemished record for 33 years, (which I would want us to verify), why are we suspending him while we investigate around £2000?

That is the optic.

It was already a complicated case (ATM rates related) compounded by a further and totally separate issue, which appears to be caused by the fact that our accounting procedures do not allow for cheque acceptance for stamp purchases over a certain value. In the case in point.

To be very very clear, I am not saying we should abandon disciplinary action. But his note repeats some of what we hear in the SS review: an overbearing/impersonal process, one that is not proportionate to the record or the case in hand, and one that penalises the cashflow/costs of a small business less able to bear those in the short-term. In a case like this, perhaps a formal written warning might have been better as an initial stake in the ground, while we explored the issues - it would be more understanding of Spmr colleagues situations, it would diffuse any angst on the part of PO colleagues trying to understand the confusion, and certainly would be less costly for us: the cost of public funds deployed this case already outweighs the cost of the error/missing funds, which if I have understood correctly are/will not be missing at all.

I would like an answer by this pm as to whether there is any good reason why we cannot just clear this up now. This is a chance for us to move at pace, email Mr Woodrow and the MPs and show that the new PO has common sense and can act quickly but not ignore the risks to the business.

We will then need quickly to work out guidelines for colleagues involved in such cases, to allow for more flexibility, better understanding and reaction to cases/ £ thresholds, as well as impacts on manager support to guide staff.

Susan and I have a 121 this afternoon, Kevin can you join please for the first 15 minutes, I want to understand firstly what we can do about this and secondly, what we might need to think about to be able to respond responsibly going forwards. (Someone should call in from Chris' area - please could Susan decide.)

Mark/Martin can you liaise with Will. I will send this onto Alice, it may well reach her in some way and I know she would want to be aware.

Many thanks, I realise this is not easy but it is the best response so that we are seen to be true to our word, and it is absolutely a chance for a 'triumph' as JA would say.

Paula

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: DAVID WOODROW <[REDACTED]>
Date: 11 July 2013 15:29:32 BST
To: "jo.swinson.mp" <[REDACTED]>
Cc: "paula.vennells" <[REDACTED]>, JimSheridan <[REDACTED]>
 [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "alan.bates" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 "ian" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "woodm" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "jonathan.djanogly.mp" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "kevanjonesm" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "weirm" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 "k" <[REDACTED]>, "jonathan.lord.mp" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 "andrew.bridgen.mp" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 "cathy.jamieson.mp" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 "david.mowat.mp" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 "phillip.hollobone.mp" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 "simpsond" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "bonep" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "john.woodcock.mp" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
 <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Subject: The case for independence in the Post Office appeals system
Reply-To: DAVID WOODROW <[REDACTED]>

Dear Jo.

I write to you as the minister dealing with the inquiry into the Horizon system and I watched with interest the debate on Monday as a constituent in your neighbouring constituency. You seemed to make quite an issue of the fact that there was only 47 cases that have come to light. As a currently suspended subpostmaster after 33 years service I can assure you that the 47 are only the tip of the iceberg. I personally paid out £1900 last year as our office could not resolve a horizon issue to do with reversing M.V.L. transactions.

Only two weeks ago P.O.C.L. issued a very complicated procedure to resolve such matters but because it involves a separate government agency the procedure is fraught with problems and that would be confirmed by helpline operators.

Why I am currently suspended is because I broke the terms of my contract by retaining £2000 in lieu of a rates issue which is exclusive to Scotland and is partly due to poor support for current Sub Postmasters from P.O.C.L

I attach a document which I submitted to my first interview at the end of which I was given the option of resigning or take my case to appeal.

I chose to appeal, but in light of the debate on Monday, the fact that the appeal is to be heard by a Post Office Manager seems a bit contrary to one of the accepted outcomes of the inquiry that there should be some form of independence in any appeal process.

My office has now been closed for nearly 8 weeks and I will attend my appeal on Tuesday 16th in the hope that I and my staff can get back to serving our community.

I am copying this to all the M.P.s who took part in the debate as they all had issues that need to be resolved. There was however a common denominator in that P.O.C.L. has been lacking in their support and training for Sub Postmasters.

Yours sincerely

David Woodrow (Sub postmaster in limbo Bishopton)