

Message

From: Swinson MPST [/O=DTI/OU=DTIHQ/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=SWINSONMPST]
Sent: 09/07/2013 11:25:56
To: Parly Unit - Others [GRO]
CC: Gibson Will (ShEx) [GRO]; Whitehead Mike (ShEx) [GRO];
Batten Peter (ShEx) [GRO]; Boughen Aileen (Communications)
[GRO]; Cable MPST [GRO]; SPAD Cable MPST
[GRO]; SPAD Fallon MPST [GRO]; Fallon MPST
[GRO]; Walch Emily (MPST MIN) [GRO]; Wilkes Giles (MPST MIN)
[GRO]; Wild James (MPST MIN) [GRO]; Younger MPST
[GRO]; Fearon-Low Nic (Communications) [GRO]; Balakrishnan
Angela (Communications) [GRO]; Coe Joshua (Communications)
[GRO]; Swinson MPST [GRO]
Subject: RE: Post Office - Oral Statement

Justin

Here is the statement. No 10 has seen and is fine with it.

Emily

Text

Yesterday evening an interim report into alleged problems with the Post Office Horizon computer system was published. The report was commissioned by Post Office Ltd from external forensic accountants, Second Sight.

The Horizon system records all transactions conducted at every post office counter across the country. The Government welcomes the publication of this interim Report and the Post Office's statement in response.

Although Post Office Ltd is 100% owned by Government, the company operates at arm's length as an independent commercial business. The Government does not play any role in operational matters.

It is important to note that the issues in the report have no impact on Royal Mail which is an entirely separate business.

It is also important to be clear that, contrary to misleading media reports, the review explicitly confirms that *"we have so far found no evidence of system-wide problems with the Horizon software"*

The very small number of subpostmasters who have experienced issues with the Horizon system are a minute proportion of the tens of thousands of people who have been successfully using the system across the network of over 11,500 branches on a daily basis since 1995. Out of 68,000 users, only 47 cases have been put forward to the Review.

I want to emphasise that the interim report makes no comment about the safety or otherwise of any conviction of a subpostmaster for fraud, theft or false accounting.

Equally, even if it had done, the Government cannot intervene in the legal process to review or appeal past convictions. These are matters which can only properly be dealt with by the relevant judicial authorities.

The interim report published yesterday analysed 4 cases. It did find that there was scope for the Post Office to improve aspects of its support and training for subpostmasters. The Post Office has already taken steps to do so.

The Post Office has further proposed a number of measures to build on some of the points made in the Second Sight report about support and training for subpostmasters. I very much welcome these initiatives as, I understand, does my Hon Friend the Rt hon. James Arbuthnot who has played a key supporting role in identifying cases for examination in this Review.

The Post Office statement issued yesterday welcomed the broad thrust of the report's findings and outlined three initiatives to deal with the issues raised.

Firstly, they will set up a working party to complete the review of cases started by Second Sight. This will consider all 47 cases brought forward by the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance (JFSA) and MPs. The JFSA have been invited to join this working party.

Secondly, an independent figure will chair a review to determine how best to adjudicate disputed cases in future. Again the JFSA and other stakeholders will be invited to take part in this process.

And finally a new Branch User Forum will provide a channel for sub-postmasters and others to raise issues around business processes, training and support, at the highest level.

The company will be taking forward these proposals as an urgent priority.
I commend this statement to the House.

From: Parly Unit - Others
Sent: 09 July 2013 11:04
To: Swinson MPST
Cc: Gibson Will (ShEx); Whitehead Mike (ShEx); Batten Peter (ShEx); Boughen Aileen (Communications); Cable MPST; SPAD Cable MPST; SPAD Fallon MPST; Fallon MPST; Walch Emily (MPST MIN); Wilkes Giles (MPST MIN); Wild James (MPST MIN); Younger MPST

Subject: RE: Post Office - Oral Statement

Emily

Once I have the approved statement, I will approach the Whips, Leader and Speakers office and REMIND them, Jo does have a WMH debate at 14:30, they should already be aware but I will try to encourage them to stick to the time and not let the oral statement over-run.

Kind Regards

Justin

From: Swinson MPST
Sent: 09 July 2013 10:54
To: Parly Unit - Others
Cc: Gibson Will (ShEx); Whitehead Mike (ShEx); Batten Peter (ShEx); Boughen Aileen (Communications); Cable MPST; SPAD Cable MPST; 'VOYCE, Hollie'; SPAD Fallon MPST; Fallon MPST; Walch Emily (MPST MIN); Wilkes Giles (MPST MIN); Wild James (MPST MIN); Younger MPST

Subject: RE: Post Office - Oral Statement

Thanks Justin - that's fine. To be aware we will also share the draft oral statement with No.10.

Jo's first adjournment debate today is at 11am, the second is at 2.30pm. Is there a risk the Post Office oral statement will run on past 2.30pm, or does the adjournment debate provide a cut-off point?

GRO

GRO Senior Private Secretary to Jo Swinson MP | Department for Business, Innovation & Skills | mpst.swinson **GRO** | 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET **GRO**
GRO www.bis.gov.uk

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is making a difference by supporting sustained growth and higher skills across the economy. **BIS: working together for growth**

From: Parly Unit - Others
Sent: 09 July 2013 10:37
To: Swinson MPST
Cc: Gibson Will (ShEx); Whitehead Mike (ShEx); Batten Peter (ShEx); Boughen Aileen (Communications); Cable MPST; SPAD Cable MPST; 'VOYCE, Hollie'; SPAD Fallon MPST; Fallon MPST; Walch Emily (MPST MIN); Wilkes Giles (MPST MIN); Wild James (MPST MIN); Younger MPST; Parly Unit - Others

Subject: RE: Post Office - Oral Statement

Hi Emily

I know Jo will be busy preparing for the Oral Statement and the 2nd Westminster Debate today, but I will need the oral statement approved by 12:15 at the latest.

I will need to provide a copy of the statement to the Opposition an hour before Jo makes her statement and I will need to arrange to provide copies of the statement to all MP's once Jo sits down.

Please could you also ensure that Younger MPST are copied in on all relevant emails, just in case Viscount Younger has to repeat the statement in the Lords.

Kind Regards

Justin

Justin Placide | Deputy Parliamentary Clerk | Department for Business, Innovation & Skills | MPST.parly **GRO** | T: **GRO** www.bis.gov.uk |
Twitter: @bisgovuk

The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) is making a difference by supporting sustained growth and higher skills across the economy. **BIS: working together for growth**

From: Swinson MPST
Sent: 09 July 2013 10:28
To: 'mike.winter' **GRO**
Cc: Gibson Will (ShEx); Whitehead Mike (ShEx); Batten Peter (ShEx); Parly Unit - Others; Boughen Aileen (Communications); Cable MPST; SPAD Cable MPST; Swinson MPST; 'VOYCE, Hollie'

Subject: Post Office - Oral Statement

Mike

We spoke. The suggested title for Jo Swinson's oral statement today is: Post Office Horizon System.

Please let me know if you need anything else at this stage.

Thanks

GRO

GRO | Senior Private Secretary to Jo Swinson MP | Department for Business, Innovation
& Skills | mpst.swinson | GRO | 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET | GRO
GRO | www.bis.gov.uk |

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is making a difference by supporting sustained growth and higher skills across the economy. **BIS: working together for growth**