

Review of whistleblowing procedures in 2015/16

Author: Georgina Blair Sponsor: Jane MacLeod

Meeting date: 05 May 2016

Executive Summary

Context

The purpose of this paper is to update the Risk & Compliance Committee on the operation of the whistleblowing procedures in Post Office over the past year.

Questions this paper addresses

1. Is the whistleblowing policy fit for purpose?
2. Has the policy been complied with in the year?
3. How many reports of whistleblowing reports were made in the year to 31 March 2016 and how does this compare to last year?
4. What else needs to be done?

Conclusion

1. The whistleblowing policy has been updated and is presented for approval (Appendix 1).
2. The whistleblowing procedure is operating but needs to be publicised more.
3. Seven reports were received (see Appendix 2 for summary). This is more than last year, when a total of three reports were received.
4. Implementation of the updated policy will require training and awareness activities. ARC will be updated on the operation of the policy and procedures annually in March.

Input Sought

The Committee is asked to review the report and approve the revised policy.

The Report

Is the whistleblowing policy fit for purpose?

1. The whistleblowing policy has been revised and updated (see Appendix 1). As part of the process our external auditors reviewed it for compliance with the new whistleblowing regulations for the financial services sector.

Has the policy been complied with in the year?

2. The previous version of the whistleblowing policy was complied with during the year, but awareness of the whistleblowing line among employees is low.

How many reports of whistleblowing reports were made in in the year to 31 March 2016 and how does this compare to last year?

3. Seven whistleblowing reports were received in the year to 31 March 2016 (see Appendix 2). This is an increase on the previous year, when a total of three calls were received. This is still a low number given the total number of employees within Post Office.

What else needs to be done?

4. The updated policy needs to be implemented. As part of this awareness of the policy, the correct method of dealing with whistleblowing reports and the availability of the Speak Up line and other methods to report whistleblowing will be communicated to all employees.

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Appendix 2

Summary of whistleblowing reports in the year 2015/16

Number	Date	Subject of report	Mode of contact	Action	Result
1	September 2015	Behaviour of senior management	Verbally to GC	Investigated – insufficient evidence to support allegation	Closed
2	November 2015	Activity of postmaster	Speak Up Line	Investigated – no evidence found	Closed
3	December 2015	Procurement process	Verbal to Legal team	Further information requested	[Jane – any update?]
4	January 2016	Relating to Sparrow investigation	E-mail forwarded from Lord Arbuthnot	Investigation to confirm whether matters have been addressed	[Jane – any update?]
5	January 2016	Activity of postmaster	Speak Up Line	Investigated – no evidence found	Closed
6	January 2016	Employment matters within third party	E-mail to Paula Vennells	Referred to third party and investigated in conjunction with them. No evidence of misconduct.	Closed
7	March 2016	Activity of colleague in branch	Speak Up Line	Investigated and matter resolved without intervention.	Closed

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