

Message

From: French Claire (Communications) [GRO]
Sent: 31/01/2017 14:24:24
To: Thompson, Laura - UKGI [GRO]
CC: Pettitt Josh (Communications) [GRO]; Russell Philippa (Communications) [GRO]; Callard, Richard - UKGI [GRO]
Subject: RE: Post Office litigation

Super, thanks Laura.



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Claire French

Senior Media Officer – Labour Markets and Corporate Governance
desk

Direct: [GRO] | Mobile: [GRO] | Out of hours: [GRO]

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From: Thompson, Laura - UKGI [mailto:[GRO]]
Sent: 31 January 2017 14:19
To: French Claire (Communications)
Cc: Pettitt Josh (Communications); Russell Philippa (Communications); Callard Richard (UKGI)
Subject: RE: Post Office litigation

Hi Claire

Thanks, Josh and I spoke on this a short while ago. I hadn't seen the press notice but was not surprised to – the JFSA now have a period (6 months, it appears) to add any other individuals onto their claim, and so a press notice to seek this is not unexpected.

We're content with the suggested lines – pass to Post Office in the first instance, "operational matter / legal proceedings" if needed.

Let me know if you need anything else, and helpful to know if you are getting any other press enquiries on it.

Thanks

Laura

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director
UK Government Investments

1 Victoria Street | London | SW1H 0ET

T: **GRO**
M:
E:

From: French Claire (Communications) [[mailto:](#) **GRO**]
Sent: 31 January 2017 13:51
To: Thompson, Laura - UKGI <**GRO**>
Cc: Pettitt Josh (Communications) **GRO**; Russell Philippa (Communications) **GRO**
Subject: RE: Post Office litigation

Hi Laura, did you know about the below Horizon development? Suggested lines follow what we agreed previously.
Thanks,
Claire



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& Industrial Strategy

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From: Pettitt Josh (Communications)
Sent: 31 January 2017 13:18
To: French Claire (Communications)
Cc: Russell Philippa (Communications)
Subject: FW: Post Office litigation

Hi Claire,

I'll get the ball rolling on this, but essentially a group of subpostmasters have been permission to pursue a joint litigation order – collective action – against Post Office Ltd over the IT system Horizon problems.

As yet there is no court date and we don't know which court it would be either. Michael Pooler has said the claimants who issued the press release below said there were 100s of subpostmasters involved.

Previously in Horizon cases we have said:

"This is a matter for Post Office Ltd. Please call their press office."

If pushed:

“As this legal case is open, it is not appropriate for us to comment at this stage.”

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I'll see what officials think.

Ta

Josh

From: Michael Pooler [<mailto:> GRO]
Sent: 31 January 2017 12:51
To: Pettitt Josh (Communications)
Subject: Post Office litigation

Court gives go ahead for litigation against the Post Office

31 January 2017 - A Group Litigation Order has been granted by the High Court in London in respect of claims being brought against Post Office Limited by several hundred current and former sub postmasters.

All of the claimants were required to use the Horizon computer system to record day-to-day financial transactions in the branches.

The claim is that the claimants were wrongly required to pay financial shortfalls (ranging from hundreds to many thousands of pounds) as a result of discrepancies erroneously showing on the Horizon system. It is also that these demands have caused significant financial loss and hardship, bankruptcy, and in some cases gaol for the sub-postmasters.

James Hartley, the partner at Freeths who is leading the case, commented: “This is a very good day for the sub-postmasters who have suffered real hardship. The process has begun to get justice for them and to hold the Post Office accountable for their actions. We urge any sub-postmasters who have not yet come forward to do so before the deadline of 26 July 2017 imposed yesterday by the court.”

Alan Bates of the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance (JFSA) said: “With Post Office Limited continuing to deny its responsibilities despite overwhelming evidence of its failures, and successive governments hiding behind a hands-off approach to its ownership of the business, JFSA has been left with no other option than to seek redress through the courts.

“It seems that if a corporation is determined to keep covered up its years of mismanagement and maltreatment of those involved with it, it does not care how much money it has to spend to stop the truth coming out, especially when it is public money.”

The claimants are asking the court for fair redress. They want the Post Office to accept responsibility for their computer system and their refusal to properly investigate alleged shortfalls. The claimants are asking for Post Office accountability for the way they have been treated, as well as financial compensation to put them back to where they should have been financially if Post Office had acted properly.

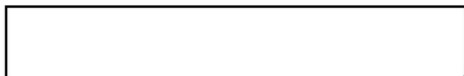
Any sub postmaster that worked for the Post Office since 1999 and who experienced issues with the Horizon computer software, is eligible to join the case. Either go to the website, www.poclaims.co.uk, contact [poclaim](#) **GRO** or call **GRO**

ENDS

For more information please contact: Caroline Wagstaff, Luther Pendragon | Tel **GRO** or email **GRO**

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Michael Pooler
Industry reporter

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