

Message

From: Aldred, Tom - UKGI [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=06D11548F5DE4D0B9AFF66FE06B7697D-ALDRED, TOM]
Sent: 03/12/2019 12:26:22
To: White, Beth (Professional Business Services, Retail & Post Directorate) [GRO]; Wilson, William (BEIS) [GRO]; Post Office Team [GRO]; Creswell, Carl (Professional Business Services, Retail & Post Directorate) [GRO]
CC: Adegun, Oluwatosin - UKGI [GRO]
Subject: RE: BEIS/NFSP/UKGI meeting 26/11/19 - read out

It's surprising to see what Calum says about the transparency of audit, given what we heard from POL when we were up in Chesterfield last week (which was that the process has become much more transparent). It would be good to make sure the two sides are engaging and we might get some clarity on the truth. Perhaps we could follow up with the people we visited last week?

Will – what's a mailwork office? I'd ask Tosin but she's away this week.

Tom

Tom Aldred, Post Office Shareholder Team, UKGI

T: [GRO] M: [GRO]

From: White, Beth (Professional Business Services, Retail & Post Directorate) [GRO]
Sent: 03 December 2019 08:26
To: Wilson, William (BEIS) [GRO]; Post Office Team [GRO]; Creswell, Carl (Professional Business Services, Retail & Post Directorate) [GRO]
Cc: Adegun, Oluwatosin - UKGI [GRO]; Aldred, Tom - UKGI [GRO]
Subject: RE: BEIS/NFSP/UKGI meeting 26/11/19 - read out

Hi Will

Thanks for this. The position NFSP put forward is fairly worrying, as it feels that the lessons that the Perm Sec would like POL to understand and respond on coming out of the first trial, haven't been taken on board by POL.

The Chair is due to come back on this at the end of the year (I haven't been able to double check this as I'm doing this via a hotspot and therefore my computer isn't working as well as it should). I suggest that Tom and I look at that with your input, and take a view whether their proposals go sufficiently to addressing the issue/challenge that they've been set.

Thanks
Beth

Beth White

[GRO] [GRO]

From: Wilson, William (BEIS) [GRO]
Sent: 02 December 2019 13:18
To: Post Office Team [GRO]; Creswell, Carl (Professional Business Services, Retail & Post Directorate) [GRO]
Cc: Adegun, Oluwatosin - UKGI [GRO]
Subject: BEIS/NFSP/UKGI meeting 26/11/19 - read out

Hi team,

Last week Cecilia, Tosin and I met with Calum Greenhow and Peter Hall from the NFSP and had a good discussion on issues such as the pay review, the relationship between POL and NFSP, and mailwork – see below the key points from the meeting:

- **Pay review:** Calum noted that the outcome of the pay review is the first positive remuneration announcement since 2000, and postmasters have already seen increases in their payslips. There are concerns from Calum that CWU are trying to undermine the outcome of the review though and certain CWU members have been continuing to make personal remarks against Calum. POL are expected to share a detailed breakdown of the increase early in the New Year.
- **Mailwork:** Calum explained that 38 members of the NFSP have been given notice by Royal Mail (RM) that their mailwork offices are to be fully withdrawn in 2019. A further 10 members will have their mailwork offices partially withdrawn, becoming a 'delivery base', i.e. a drop off point for parcels etc. RM are withdrawing mailwork services as they believe it will help them meet Ofcom targets and improve performance. The NFSP contacted these affected members with a short survey to understand what the likely impact will be on their post office businesses. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) felt that the business would not be viable without mailwork services. The NFSP reassured us that support from the Post Office to the affected postmasters has been good, with POL introducing a compensation scheme that, sadly, very few affected postmasters are taking advantage of. Tosin therefore encouraged the NFSP to continue working with POL to promote such scheme. Given the threat of potential resignations we are discussing with Tosin how best to follow this up with POL post-purdah and will keep the team updated.
- **POL/NFSP relationship:** Calum highlighted some issues NFSP are continuing to have with POL – notably that POL are not being as collaborative as they could be and a feeling that the relationship is a 'parent child' relationship (he linked this back to the Commons Issues trial and its findings). For example, NFSP emailed POL regarding opening hours during the Christmas period – POL ignored the email and announced their decision without consulting NFSP. Calum also mentioned that it can be challenging trying to get data from POL and that NFSP are not involved in POL's Hot Housing scheme. Another example he cited is the pay review - while the NFSP were heavily involved in the data gathering and initial development, the NFSP felt that the decision which POL took was not what the NFSP had been expecting and was taken by POL disregarding what the NFSP had been telling them. While this does not take away from the very positive news of remuneration increases, it makes the NFSP feel as if their engagement was more of a box ticking exercise rather than a genuine desire to cooperate to reach a shared goal.
- **Litigation:** Calum explained NFSP's position on the litigation, including the Courts' rejection of POL's appeal. For the NFSP, the litigation (including the decision on Friday) highlights the need for a new way of working between POL and NFSP. Calum informed us he wrote to POL to seek discussions around some contractual aspects – given that POL will need to make swift changes to reflect the outcome of the common issues trial. The key point for Calum is that, following an audit, there should be much more transparency when POL investigates claims. He finds POL ways of dealing with (potential) losses still rather cack-handed and not in good faith.
- **Hard-to-place branches:** NFSP are meeting with POL next week to discuss the proposal they submit to POL – Calum agreed to send us a read out of that meeting as well as the proposal. We also agreed to pick this up at our next catch up in January.
- **Other:** I asked Calum whether the NFSP had any plans to do another members' survey similar to the one they did earlier this year (which found that 1 in 5 postmasters were considering resigning in the next 12 months). Calum explained that they are allocated money by POL each year, a part of which they use towards research and there are plans to do surveys next year. Peter Hall (who also attended the meeting) leads on this so I will pick up with him separately. Calum also said that if there is anything we want NFSP to ask their members they would be more than happy to do so.

Regards,

Will



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& Industrial Strategy

William Wilson

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GRO

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