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Post Office Compensation Programme Board Minutes

Chair: Carl Creswell

03 August 2023 – 10:00 – 11:00

Programme Board Members:

Carl Creswell (CC) - Chair - Director, Business Resilience, DBT

Rob Brightwell (RB) – Deputy Director, DBT Post Office Policy

Ciara Lawrence (CL) – Senior Policy Advisor, DBT Post Office Policy (deputising for Beth White)

Patrick Kilgarriff (PK) - Director, DBT Legal

Kirsty Wedderspoon (KW) - Deputy Director, DBT Finance

Milo Kershaw (MK) - Policy Advisor, Business and Trade Spending, HMT (deputising for Joshua Fleming)

Ellen Wasden (EWa) - Senior Economist, DBT (deputising for Monique Ebull)

Caroline Lawless (Claw) – Windrush, Home Office (Non-Executive Director for PB)

Other Attendees:

Milo Kershaw (MK) - Policy Advisor, Business and Trade Spending, HMT (Observer)

Joshua Scott (JS) - Head of GLO Compensation, DBT (Observer)

Simon Recaldin (SR) – Remediation Unit, POL

Rob Mackie (RM) - Executive Director, UKGI (Observer)

Apologies:

Beth White (BW) - Deputy Director, DBT Post Office Policy

Monique Ebull (ME) - Deputy Director, Business Resilience and Industry Sectors Analysis, DBT

Joshua Fleming (JF) - Deputy Director, HMT

Note:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Discussion, Actions and Decisions</u>
1. Introduction and Actions	CC welcomed CLaw to the Board to fulfil the independent NED position.
2. Upcoming events	Subsumed into strategic communications item.

Action log

- Publication of data: progressed but delayed by work on ways of speeding up compensation. Perm Sec / DG keen to crack on. All aligned with POL? Same publication dates, taking POL feed of data. CC – need to test teams are joined up. Worth checking.

Data

- Slide from 4 July. Nothing to add.
- 7 outstanding offers on HSS

Comms

- Report of AB meeting will be key. Early next week aim
- HAB letter to CCRC key
- RM – on triage review. Need to join up with POL Comms. Has Pol written to everyone we need to write to? Are all triage actions complete? SR – POL comms lined up for this. Ongoing process. 5 /23 already responded.

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- DBT response to Interim Report and HAB. HAB may be later
- JS – updated GLO G+P missing
- CC – Moore point re direction. Past 31/07. Strategic comms question is an interesting one. Reflects steer from strategic comments. Also referenced conversation with Perm Sec – steer is to find creative ways to demo progress: get some journos in for technical briefings + something focusing on big numbers.
- SR- momentum on POL side to embrace opportunity. Interview with Yorkshire post. **Action for DBT officials to flag to Minister. Minister v keen Pol because more forward leaning.**
- Letter to go to inquiry re disclosure challenges. Opportunity. Keeping option on the table and content of which will be subject to developments over coming weeks.
- JS referenced helpful technical briefing TBC on what to do with Dan Neidle.
- CL – reflections. Big thing is what we have struggled with any comms is a balancing act between genuinely show where the scheme has made progress but anything that looks like we are shouting about the scheme doing well has to be balanced with great care cf. from community re gaslighting. Noted opportunity re big broadcasters and put more junior staff in front of them to give human face to see huge passion and commitment people are giving, difficult relationships they built. Struggled to get people willing to say what a positive experience it has been.
- LG – sceptical being able to manage likes of Dan Neidle. Caution that whoever talks to him is something who will come across well. Also about making sure you don't appear defensive. Echoed by MK – need a defensible policy rationale for each criticism before going.
- CC – compensation scheme heads getting together to share stories?
- CC – Strategic Handling plan. **RB to consider**

Inquiry Interim Report

- Number of recommendation to HAB. When officials discussed it with HAB they are in the same place re remit and capacity.
- CC – read Simon's letter over night. Pol consider recommendations and coming up with thoughts, financial repercussions. Keen we don't end up out of sequence. Need to be joined up. SR – noted and agree. Going to proposal to RC on 16 August and will engage with DBT in advance.
- SR provided feedback re governance role of HAB. Want to consult then put advice to Ministers.
- Comments in writing please
- CC- a lot of discussion on appeal mechanism, different views. DBT working up advice. SR – how we work together with HAB on this. About being joined up. Decisions POL may need to make now on the build up to advice to Ministers. CC – BW please pick up. Need to do some policy work but probs need to work towards advice to Ministers in Sept.

Cross-cutting issues

- Classifying issues in order of difficulty. Is this right? Issues not happy or not aware of work being done and want to raise?
- CC – helpful conversation with HMT re de minimis and fixed payments. DBT to share ideas following earlier meeting with Minister. Work in progress.
- Court direction – had a meeting on 01/08. Not willing to seek a direction in themselves so DBT taking it forward. Should know this week re putting papers in.
- Tax treatment – steerco reviewed paper.

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- Convictions overturned – PK agreed but is there a subclass where CCRC takes the view that any prosecution is questionable whether or not it is horizon based in particular ones from magistrates court. How much of an emerging issue is it? Took decision not to JR CCRC on this. Specific case this week which could comment on this from appeal court. Issue on this one is about disclosure. Could be an indication of momentum.
- POL has 3 more cases to SCC where POL has decision re PIO. Others may have picked up on this.
- Decisoion on case? Not sure but does have interaction with HAB.
- CC – may be helpful to have CoA ruling for clarity. JR impacts being felt. HAB may want to write on the back of it.
- Restorative justice – SR: going to RC this month on 16 August. Got 47 appointments in diary. Meeting GLO, OC and HSS members. CC – please link up with team re GLO members. Also noted we need to make sure we do not raise expectations.
- ACTION FOR JS TO TWEAK ISSUES LIST TO REFECT CATEGORISATION
- CL – have similar list but not as big. List of policy issues and changes. Also operational changes as well.

AOB

- Any other items to add for next meeting?
- SR – more colour on proposal round HSS could be provided. TCB