

Memo



The Real Network

31st May 2007

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REGINA v JOSEPHINE HAMILTON
WINCHESTER CROWN COURT
TRIAL – 10TH SEPTEMBER 2007
CASE NO: POLTD/0506/0685

Further to my previous minute regarding the above please note that Counsel requires the following statement. Please see responses to points below, which I am in the process of covering in further statements.

- 1 A further statement from Allen as to why no extra training was given on handover ie could she explain was this because the Defendant already knew how the system worked to a good standard.

When an applicant is interviewed for the position of spmr they would be offered the normal training package. In cases where it is an existing spmr or assistant who is experienced, then the training would still be offered but in the vast majority of cases, applicants will only ask for training on any areas where they feel it is necessary. As there is no record of training here, then I can only assume that Mrs Hamilton declined our offer in view of the fact that she had been running the branch and doing the balancing on behalf of the previous nominee spmr for a fair period of time. (N Allen)

- 2 A further statement of Portch, this should set out how much cash she would expect should be held at any one time at an Office similar to the Defendants.

Flexible Planning generates an ideal nightly cash holding based on information from the last 6 weeks business, this takes both payments and deposits into account. In an outlet similar to South Wamborough, a reasonable expected maximum holding would be in the region of the sum of the weekly payments plus around £1740 for coin (a bag of each denomination). However, the Flexible Planning system remains the most accurate guide to what the outlet should hold and is the main tool we use in determining the required levels of cash in a branch. (R Portch).

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- 3 Could Portch or someone else give details of the extent of the offenders training on Horizon, her handover, how it happened and what help / training she got.

Because the transfer took place nearly four years ago, I can't say for certain whether a transfer audit was done, but it is very likely that one did take place. At transfer, the auditors check the final cash account of the outgoing spmr and the incoming spmr is supposed to check the cash/stock on hand. Horizon training is part of the standard training package - I don't know where she learnt how to use the system and very unlikely that any info would now be available to confirm. (N Allen)

- 4 A further statement from Colin Woodridge regarding his conversation about the shortfall of £1,500 in May 2003.

I do not recall a conversation around May 2003 concerning a loss of £1,500. If I did have one, I would have offered her advice on security aspects to ensure cash was not at risk. I have found on my laptop a log of a visit I made to the branch on 21/01/ 2004. That refers to a loss of £3196.47, in week 42, which started as a loss of £2,072 in week 36. I discussed the loss at that visit and learned that the postman was being admitted to the secure area, so told her that the practice must cease. I also discussed how the loss could have occurred, and told her she would have to repay it. I checked with Chesterfield that there were no matters outstanding to account for the loss, and advised Jo that she could apply to repay the loss by instalments. I have no record of any subsequent conversations about the loss. I also have a record of a visit to the branch on 23/12/02 when Jo ran the branch on behalf of Alwen Stacey, the previous postmaster. There were no issues then with understanding of balancing or losses. I attach that log as well. My job title at that time was Performance Advisor. (Colin Woodbridge). Please note that the logs referred to by Colin are included as separated attachments on e-mail to you.

- 5 Could a statement be provided dealing with who is available if the Defendant finds she is struggling ie dealing what help would be afforded.

When a new spmr has been appointed, they are visited a short while after their appointment by the local manager which at that time would have been a Performance Advisor (Colin Woodbridge). At that time, if a spmr required help or assistance, they could call the Post Office helpline. If they couldn't deal with the issue, it would have been referred to the relevant Area Office (Bournemouth) who would attempt to sort the issue out. If it required a visit, then the Performance Advisor would attend. (N Allen)

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