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**From:** Martin Humphreys [GRO]  
**Sent:** Fri 27/07/2012 11:13:09 AM (UTC)  
**To:** Batten Peter (ShEx) [GRO]  
**Cc:** Whitehead Mike (ShEx) [GRO]  
**Subject:** FW: James Withers (ex SPM - Horizon review)  
**Attachment:** JWithers9Jun2012\_1342546171490[1].pdf

Peter

The background on this case is that Mr Withers was suspended in July 2008 following an audit, which Mr Withers indicates in his email, revealed a shortage of around £9000.

Mr Withers was already paying back significant losses.

Mr Lusher was due to attend an interview with POL on 17/10/08 but he resigned in a letter dated 08/10/08 and his resignation was accepted with effect from 22/07/08.

Post Office received official notification of Mr Withers bankruptcy in July 2009. The case was kept open until January this year to see if any monies would be forthcoming from the receiver, but none were received.

The general position on the review is the same as for the Albert Owen case that I sent across yesterday and set out here for ease of reference –

The situation is that it will be an independent review and the specific cases and the timescale for the review are still to be determined at this stage.

For info, the reactive position from POL at the time of the review being agreed was as follows; i

Post Office spokesman said: “The Post Office continues to have absolute confidence in the robustness and integrity of its branch accounting processes. Over the past ten years, many millions of branch reconciliations have been carried out with transactions and balances accurately recorded by more than 25,000 different subpostmasters. The Post Office has no hesitation in agreeing to an external review of these few individual cases that have been raised with us by a number of MPs.”

This affects a very small number of individual cases and to put this into context, over the past ten years, many millions of branch reconciliations have been carried out with transactions and balances accurately recorded by more than 25,000 different subpostmasters. The Post Office continues to have absolute confidence in the robustness and integrity of its branch accounting processes. We are not independently reviewing our systems. We have agreed with MPs to commission an external review of a small number of individual cases and report back on these. We already have processes in place to ensure that systems and processes are fully audited and are robust.

Also, I think that Mike G has had a conversation with Mike Whitehead on this.

On your question around the number of cases pre Horizon and post Horizon we do not have the data on this as it is going back many years – and there are so many other factors at play that even if we had the info what conclusions could be drawn.

Hope this helps

Many thanks

Martin Humphreys  
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**GRO**

**From:** Batten Peter (ShEx) **GRO**  
**Sent:** 18 July 2012 09:07  
**To:** Martin Humphreys  
**Cc:** Whitehead Mike (ShEx); Baugh James (ShEx)  
**Subject:** James Withers (ex SPM - Horizon review)

Dear Martin

Please see attached another letter from an ex-SPM regarding the forensic review. I suspect that we may see a great number more letters from ex SPMs over the coming months.

I would be grateful for the POL version of events regarding Mr Withers tenure as SPM at Cromer, and particularly regarding the transition of services from SPO to the Budgens.

As well as the details of the forensic review that I requested earlier in the week (in relation to the Albert Owen correspondence), it would be helpful to know how many SPMs have been dismissed for false accounting/theft/etc since the introduction of Horizon (and whether this is proportionately higher or lower than before the introduction of Horizon).

Many thanks  
Peter

<<JWithers9Jun2012\_1342546171490[1]>>

Peter Batten | Shareholder Executive | Department for Business, Innovation & Skills |

**GRO**

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