

Post Office Business Support Programme

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Business Improvement Programme (BIP) is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the support we provide to our subpostmasters and operators in the running of their Post Offices from an operational and engagement perspective by:

- Reviewing the life cycle of the subpostmaster and all touch points with the business
- Taking input from owners, users and recipients of Post Office policies and processes
- Designing policies and processes that deliver improved ways of working with our subpostmaster network in a cost effective and engaging way
- Reviewing all our interactions with Spmrs and making recommendations on structure design for the network and admin support function touch points.
- Developing an implementation plan to move from existing to future state

Background

To address concerns raised by some subpostmasters over recent years about the Horizon system, the Post Office in 2012 commissioned an external firm Second Sight to undertake an independent review of their cases.

Second Sight published an interim report on 08 July 2013 [View Horizon Interim report](#) that confirmed that no system wide problems had been found in relation to the Horizon software but suggested that the Post Office should examine its support and training processes for subpostmasters.

The Branch Support Programme was initiated in July 2013 to review the level of support the Post Office provided to subpostmasters to operate their post offices and to introduce improved levels of support having taken feedback from subpostmasters. As the findings of the Branch Support Programme unfolded it became evident that the scope of this programme needed to be wider to ensure that the required cultural change was to be embedded within the business as usual with the Post Office. This was not simply a network consideration but essentially the DNA of the Post Office. Consequently the Programme has been renamed the Business Improvement Programme with a wider scope which is detailed within this paper.

Scope

The focus of the Programme is predominately how the Post Office supports the agency network and the policies and processes that impact on the Subpostmaster. What is in and out of the scope of this programme is detailed below:

In Scope	Out of Scope
<p>Cash management</p> <p>Finance Service Centre (FSC)</p> <p>NBSC</p> <p>Training – design & delivery</p> <p>Audit – design & delivery</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>IT changes to support BIP</p> <p>Spmr/operator selection process</p> <p>Spmr contract breaches</p> <p>Sales support – delivery methods</p> <p>Structure design for the network and admin support function touch points</p> <p>Crown – where the touch points are the same for the Crown network then these are in scope</p>	<p>Crown network as an entity</p> <p>Supply Chain as an entity</p> <p>NTP as an entity</p> <p>Wider business organisational design</p>

Programme Workstreams

Nine workstreams have been identified and have a business owner allocated as detailed below. The aims and the change required to make the required level of improvements are detailed at appendix 1.

- Pre-appointment Process – Craig Tuthill
- Training – Julie Thomas
- Operational Support – Kendra Dickerson
- Physical Support – Pam Heap
- Early Identification Tool – Gayle Peacock
- Performance Management – Julie Thomas
- Communications – Richard Weaver
- Leavers Process – Craig Tuthill
- IT – Andy Holt

Interdependencies

There are two other strategic programmes that have been identified as key to this programme:

- Sparrow ie Initial Complaint Review and Mediation Scheme. Sponsor – Chris Aujard. Programme led by Belinda Crowe
- Business Operating Model – Sponsor – Lesley Sewell. Programme led by Brian Deveney.

Programme Resource

The Programme has to date been light touch in terms of resource and programmatic governance. Gayle Peacock as Programme Manager with the support of Anne Allaker has been working on the Programme to date full time. A business analyst, Peter Prior-Mills has recently joined the team.

A budget of £750k for quarter 4 has been requested to enable this work to continue. A budget bid for £4m was submitted for 14/15. Finance believe that this spend can be treated as exceptional and linked to Network Transformation Programme via a business case which is currently work in progress

Governance

The Business Improvement Programme will operate with a formal programmatic approach supported by the necessary governance and resource. The rationale for this is that a cultural change in behaviours will be required and therefore the right support in each of the workstreams and business areas will be needed to ensure that the changes are managed effectively and successfully embedded within the organisation.

- ExCo Programme Sponsor – Kevin Gilliland. Monthly update will be provided to ExCo and POL Board
- Programme Board will meet monthly. Members are:
 - Kevin Gilliland, Chair
 - Fay Healy, Chief HR Officer
 - Michael Larkin, Head of Agency Sales and Service
 - Harry Clarke, Head of Customer Experience, Property and Modernisation
 - Brian Deveney, Procurement
 - Michael Brown, SPMO
 - Alana Renner, Deputy Comms Director
 - Sharon Bull, Finance
 - Angela Van Den Bogerd, Programme Director
 - Gayle Peacock, Programme Manager and Programme Board Secretariat

Programme Timeline

The milestone plan for each of the workstreams is currently being scoped and will be completed by the end of March 2014. Some of the workstreams will have longer timelines than others due in part to the interdependency on other workstreams to complete or other business considerations – the IT workstream is a good example of where delivery will depend on the requirements of the other programme workstreams.

The high level timeline assumption at this stage is that the Programme will run until end of March 2015.

Success Criteria

The Programme has two main key performance indicators (KPIs) – Agent Engagement and Operational Cost Reduction:

- Agent Engagement - the formal measure is the Spmr annual engagement and in particular the support category of the survey. This will be supplemented with Pulse surveys undertaken by Comms at quarterly intervals throughout the year. Reviewing the life cycle of the subpostmaster and all touch points with the business
- Operational Cost Reduction - the cost of support to the network will be baselined as part of this Programme. Headline numbers suggest that 40% of the current support to the network is spent on recovery support ie correcting things that haven't been done right first time

Each of the nine workstreams will have performance measurements that feed into the two main KPIs.

Angela Van Den Bogerd
4th Feb 2014

Appendix 1

Work stream	Owner	Objective	Level of change required
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Training	Julie Thomas	To provide co-ordinated, flexible, effective training to post office branches, delivered by highly trained individuals supported by a multi-channel approach.	Full review of who, where, when, what and how we train our branches. Includes IT development and structure review. Business change processes for delivery of training People change required for delivery of training and the accountability
Communications	Richard Weaver	To ensure all of our communications are personal, simple, co-ordinated, relevant, accurate and timely. They must also be signed off by a release authority, be measurable and visible to all.	Full review of how we interact with branches and development of new channels or materials to support that interaction. Specific communications to support the visions of the other work streams. Cultural change to embed the principles across the business
IT	Peter Prior-Mills	To provide effective support and meaningful MI to colleagues, customers and clients, enabling sales and improving support	Transaction processes to make things easier for customers and branches Tools for branches to access help and support, and to improve the experience Tools and systems for internal teams to support and record contact Systems and MI in place to reduce inefficiency among teams Behaviour to support new ways of working
Pre-appointment process (agents)	Craig Tuthill	To ensure our agents are consistently informed, supported, knowledgeable, confident and feel part of Post Office Ltd. To ensure that our leavers in this process also feel	The information that is provided to applicants and how we share that How we support people through the process, both from a structure and behaviour process The process of how we

		informed, supported and valued.	recruit agents The process of how we support agents leaving
Operational support	Kendra Dickinson	To ensure consistent, quality, efficient and co-ordinated support is provided to branches to ensure they can serve customers effectively and have their issues resolved in a timely and quality way.	Structure of the operational support model and change in business process Development and deployment of tools and technology to support the model Way we deal with suppliers Streamlining of transactions causing business inefficiency Behaviour towards our branches
Physical support model	Pam Heap	To engage and support our branches effectively to ensure great customer service is provided and business growth.	Structural review of support and necessary transition including recruitment, assessment and transition Roles and responsibilities, including behaviours Development of different skill sets
Performance Management	Julie Thomas	To ensure branch performance is managed in the most efficient way that enables action to be taken in a timely and effective way to improve income, improve compliance, reduce losses, or reduce risk.	How we manage data within the business, including the structure and also the tools and technology The intervention process for managing branch performance How we identify issues, problems and the way we react
Leavers process	Craig Tuthill	To ensure that quality and consistent support is provided to branches, issues are investigated before contractual decisions are made and agents supported during the exit process and	Review of the suspension process, policy and contractual approach Behavioural change in how we treat agents with issues Structural change to support processes Approach to how we

			support agents with issues with assistants
Early Identification Tool HORice pilot	Gayle Peacock	To test the effectiveness of a real-time data tool to support the early identification and intervention of accounting and transactional anomalies in branch.	Earlier identification and intervention regarding unusual branch behaviour which could be an indicator of non-conformance or fraud. The real-time element will enable analysis to be undertaken at the point it happens rather than waiting for historical data to be gathered. There have been specific historical cases of significant losses (i.e. £185k) where having this data would have identified a pattern or behaviour within one to two months rather than after 1 year.