

Message

**From:** Avene O'Farrell [GRO]  
on behalf of Avene O'Farrell [GRO]  
**Sent:** 19/01/2015 11:03:05  
**To:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd [GRO]; ECT [GRO] flagcaseadvisor  
[GRO]  
**Subject:** FW: Probably too late now ....

Hi Angela,

Please see a further email from Tim. Are you ok to go back to him?

Avene

Avene O'Farrell | Executive Assistant to Paula Vennells, Chief Executive

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**GRO**

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**From:** Tim McCormack [GRO]  
**Sent:** 19 January 2015 09:25  
**To:** Paula Vennells  
**Subject:** Probably too late now ....

Hi

Shortly after receiving your email yesterday I received the email below from Angela. I presume the two events are linked.

Yesterday morning though I completed my report into this matter. On my own I have 'got to the bottom' of this matter and highlighted the issues that pertain to it.

Angela's email I am afraid is pretty damning in **many** respects, to you, to her and Post Office Ltd.

I could explain why but in order to do so you would first need to see my report and remind yourself of all the emails I have sent you on the subject since I first reported it to you. There isn't much new in the report - just a summation of what I have already passed on to you via email. Angela should have been able to produce something similar.

Perhaps you have a copy already - I did send it to several people for comment who may or may not pass it on.

I am sorry you did not take this more seriously - I had no idea when I first got involved with this just how serious it would become.

I presume in due course it could lead to your resignation. I am truly sorry about that. Read my emails again and you will see I was trying to help you identify the weaknesses in your organisation that surround you. Angela has shown she is a prime example of what I was warning you about.

Perhaps there is a way out for you though. Should Angela 'leave' as a result of this and is replaced by someone who is capable of resolving issues like this one then all blame could be passed on to Angela. You would be seen as having taken decisive action. I do know of one person who would fit the bill completely and you know her quite well too. It is about time POL have a senior manager who was also a former subpostmaster.

For the sake of clarity I would stress that I am personally not interested in such a position nor am I seeking any form of compensation for my investigation. My involvement with all of this is purely altruistic being for the benefit of my former subpostmaster colleagues.

Tim

You learn more from one criticism than from ten compliments

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From: [redacted] GRO  
To: timandag [redacted] GRO  
Subject: Bulk Postage Labels  
Date: Sun, 18 Jan 2015 17:52:15 +0000

Hi Tim,

Since our conversation I have tried to source some information from NBSC but have drawn a blank. This may be because the issue hasn't been logged as a 'bulk postage label issue' or maybe as you have said previously that the branch is dealing with the issue in-branch and not reporting it.

The Branch User Forum met on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> Jan and I took the opportunity to ask them if they had experienced this issue or knew of fellow Spmr's who had. This also drew a blank other than one of the members (a Spmr) recalling that she had experienced something similar but had realised at the time that she had inserted the label incorrectly causing it to overprint. So her fault she concluded.

It is important that I get to the bottom of this issue and would therefore appreciate you sharing any evidence of such events happening. You mention in your recent correspondence to Paula that CCTV is available. Would you please share the details of this Spmr so that I can make contact? This would be really helpful in assisting me trying to establish what's the cause of the incidents you've described to me.

With regards,  
Angela

Angela Van Den Bogerd | Head of Partnerships

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📍 Ty Brwydran House, Atlantic Close, SWANSEA SA7 9FJ

📱 Mobile:  Mobex:

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**From:** Tim McCormack   
**Sent:** 12 December 2014 11:41  
**To:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd  
**Subject:** RE: Second Sight - Horizon Errors - Media Coverage

Hi

Brief update - certainly raised a big debate on the forum.

We have a new case - which I would have to question if the system was responsible - 71 labels requested - 71 labels printed - 70 labels on stack - transaction log checked - no rejects.

I think it is not worthy of investigation unless other examples of the same problem come to light and it certainly wouldn't be reported to NBSC.

Cheers, Tim

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**From:** timandag   
**To:**   
**Subject:** RE: Second Sight - Horizon Errors - Media Coverage  
**Date:** Fri, 12 Dec 2014 08:55:30 +0000  
Hi

Sorry the folk remember it happening but not the actual dates.

I have one date from the incident with Cyril though - I should have looked closer at the photo of the label - I assumed it to be a recent event as his Facebook post was in the present tense. However it was details of an event he recorded that occurred in early 2013.

Paula can be assured he his fit and healthy.

The photo of the label suggests to me that the label was put into the printer slightly squint so again ruling out the possibility of an overprint and in any case this was 2 missing from a batch of 8.

What you could look at or find out for me is what type of data is sent to the printer. Epson receipt printers can print bitmap images as well as line by line printing. If it was a bitmap then I can see a possibility of how the errors might occur in that the printer fails to send or the PC fails to recognise a command that the printout was successfully completed (often CRLF) so that the PC sends down another image of a label which overwrites the image in the bitmap stored in the Printer.

Its not the only way it could happen but it is where I would start looking.

I cannot obviously reveal the date or branch code for Cyril's case. But a search of NBSC records will surely through up multiple instances of this problem. I would be interested to know how many but I guess you won't be able to tell me.

Cheers, Tim

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From: [angela.van-den-bogerd](#) **GRO**  
To: [timandag](#) **GRO**  
Subject: Re: Second Sight - Horizon Errors - Media Coverage  
Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2014 05:59:24 +0000

Tim,

Thank you. If you are able to give me specifics that would be helpful for me going forward.

Kind regards  
Angela

**GRO**

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**From:** Tim McCormack **GRO**  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 11, 2014 07:24 PM  
**To:** Angela Van-Den-Bogerd  
**Subject:** RE: Second Sight - Horizon Errors - Media Coverage

Good to talk to you today. Sorry I didn't realise it went on so long!

A quick update - after we finished I put out a request via a forum and despite it being Xmas and Dinner time I have already 4 new incidences of the same problem plus a very quick scan through the history files revealed 3 more.

Earliest occurrence pre-june 2013

Several reported to NBSC and got several different replies! One recalls several happening in rapid succession which clearly discounts overprinting in my opinion - if you did overprint once or twice you would certainly learn your lesson - in this case 6 times he recalls.

Cheers, Tim

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From: [angela.van-den-bogerd](#) **GRO**  
To: [timandagi](#) **GRO**  
Subject: RE: Second Sight - Horizon Errors - Media Coverage  
Date: Thu, 11 Dec 2014 08:48:04 +0000  
Dear Tim,

Are you available to have a chat this afternoon sometime after 3pm? Is so, what number should I call you on.

Best regards,  
Angela

**Angela Van Den Bogerd** | Head of Partnerships

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📍 Ty Brwydran House, Atlantic Close, SWANSEA SA7 9FJ

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**From:** Avene O'Farrell **On Behalf Of** Paula Vennells  
**Sent:** 10 December 2014 13:48  
**To:** Tim McCormack



**Cc:** Gavin Lambert; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; Rod Ismay; Lesley J Sewell; Kevin Gilliland  
**Subject:** RE: Second Sight - Horizon Errors - Media Coverage

Tim, hi.

If there is one thing you should know about me is that I do listen.

But please be careful that you don't over generalise or conflate different points.

We are not defending the indefensible - all systems have issues from time to time. And they need to be (and are) fixed when they occur. We have records of when that has happened, of alerting users and then putting in place an appropriate fix. We operate in a dynamic market and Horizon, like all epos systems is constantly updated.

To your challenges. I listen and I'm therefore concerned at what you say. I'm copying three people who I expect to get to the bottom of it. And who I trust to do so: Gavin Lambert who works directly for me, Angela van den Bogerd, and Rod Ismay. I am also copying Lesley Sewell (CIO) and Kevin Gilliland. I want Lesley and Kevin to be in the loop - they are the directors responsible for ensuring our branches have the appropriate service.

Angela will be in touch with you directly.

In the meantime, I wish you a happy Christmas when it comes.

Paula

Ps. If the colleague you mentioned needs support, please let Kevin know.

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**From:** Tim McCormack [GRO]  
**Sent:** 10 December 2014 08:00  
**To:** Paula Vennells  
**Subject:** FW: Second Sight - Horizon Errors - Media Coverage

Angela ...

I think you should make sure that Paula gets to read the message below.

In an absolutely bizarre coincidence shortly after sending the email I was made aware that yesterday, as a result of the stress caused by an occurrence of this problem and the subsequent refusal by NBSC to acknowledge that it could happen, a Subpostmaster was rushed to hospital with stress related heart problems. He had the presence of mind to record details of the incident as proof that it had happened which for the first time gave me an indication of what might be happening to cause it.

This could well make the news today or at the weekend as a follow up to yesterday's events. Paula should be prepared to answer the obvious questions.

Cheers, Tim

PS I have never in my life come across such an amazing coincidence - if I was in the least bit religious and knowing of Paula's faith I would declare it a divine intervention.

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From: timandagil **GRO**  
To: paula.vennell **GRO**  
Subject: Second Sight - Horizon Errors - Media Coverage  
Date: Wed, 10 Dec 2014 00:04:28 +0000

Dear Paula

Yet again today Mark Davies, speaking on behalf of POL, relied on the defence that there are no systemic errors in Horizon and this is proved because we deal with so many customers per day in so many branches. I think Mark and yourself might like to review the periodic Message to Branches that are sent out via Horizon. There are a catalogue of systemic errors that arise from time to time and are fixed. Some involving automatic transaction corrections.

Paula, as I keep saying, you are surrounded by people in your office that tell you all is well. You have no personal knowledge of operating Horizon nor probably any in depth technical knowledge. What if the people that are telling you all is well have the same attributes?

So forget systemic errors for the moment and consider 'intermittent' errors which by and large are caused by communication problems.

I know of more than one but one in particular:

It exists.

It occurs at different times in different branches.

It is noticed.

They are reported to NBSC (I would really like to see the number of times this has been reported to NBSC)

It causes a financial loss to the SPMR.

They are not fixed BUT the wise SPMR knows how to get his money back so you don't hear many complaints. You would from the Audit team if they caught someone doing it though.

So why haven't these intermittent errors been fixed. To put it simply - because they are intermittent. There is no known sequence of events that can cause this error to re-occur in any particular branch. How can you fix something if you don't know what caused it in the first place? You have to throw the whole thing out and start all over - the only way.

On our 'chat' forums, there are documented reports over the years of the same error repeating itself randomly in a wide number of branches, including at Duns and my previous PO.

I am pretty sure I can arrange for the error to be replicated though by asking a large sample of offices to repeat the process until the error occurs - and I am also sure that I can obtain transaction logs and associated CCTV coverage of the error manifesting itself.

I can show you it happening. I can explain the financial consequences but neither I nor your best technical team will be closer to fixing the underlying problem. You cannot make it go away.

I would also be happy to stand up in court and declare that Horizon has intermittent faults, probably caused through communication errors, provide clear and undeniable evidence as well as bring along a fair number of your most trusted SPMRs to bear witness that it has happened to them too.

I hope you get my point - I can show one error occurring that you can't fix nor can you explain - if you could explain it then you could probably fix it - so how many other intermittent errors like this are in the system that cause unexplainable financial losses to SPMRs?

I am trying to help you but the hole you are digging for yourself is getting deeper by the day. Please stop trying to defend the indefensible.

Cheers, Tim

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