

Addendum to Shortfall Analysis

Brief Details	
Claimant Name:	Jennifer O'Dell
Claimant Number:	124
Branch Name:	Great Staughton
Branch Code:	288230

Additional Information/Observations	
Mediation	
•	The Claimant was the subject of a Mediation report (M005), all supporting evidence uploaded (Extra Documents/M005_POL_CR_Evidence folder).
•	The Claimant progressed through the Mediation process. Angela van den Bogerd represented Post Office at the Mediation meeting and would be able to advise on the outcome.
•	As a result of the Mediation meeting, the Claimant emailed "scheme enquires" on 22/09/15 for clarification on points raised during the meeting (Extra Documents/Post Mediation Correspondence folder).
•	Post Office replied to the Claimant in an email dated 01/10/15 attaching a response to the issues raised by the Claimant on 22/09/15 (not available). The Claimant then responded in a further email (dated 07/10/15 to "scheme enquiries") that she would provide further supporting evidence. A final email from the Claimant dated 11/10/15 states that the original questions raised in her initial email (22/09/15) had not been answered fully, further evidence was attached from the Claimant. Post Office records show a letter dated 15/10/17 from Angela finalised these previous issues (Extra Documents/Post Mediation Correspondence folder).
Contractual	
•	A signed copy of the Claimant's contract is available, signed 28/11/00. This is not included in the Mediation Evidence file. A Conditions of Appointment document is within that file, signed by the Claimant 03/10/00 (Extra Documents/M005_POL_CR_Evidence folder)
•	Condition of Appointment document states that the Claimant was required to attend two days training. Post Office have no records to show that the Claimant did or did not attend. It should be noted that the Mediation POIR states there are no calls to record dissatisfaction with training.
•	The Contracts Manager, Sue Muddeman, no longer works for Post Office. A full documented Case Closure document, with embedded documents to support the Claimant's suspension, appeal and subsequent termination of contract is available (Extra Documents/Contract Case Summary folder).
•	Sue Richardson who heard the Claimant's appeal, no longer works for Post Office.
•	The Mediation POIR confirms Post Office has no record of extra training being requested by the Claimant.
•	During an interview, with her Contracts Manager on 08/02/10, the Claimant admitted to making additional cash declarations in order to conceal discrepancies (Extra Documents/Contract Case Summary).
Post Office Security	
•	The Claimant was the subject of an investigation by Post Office Security. In an email dated 08/07/10, Andrew Hayward, Senior Security Manager, on the advice of Royal Mail Group Criminal Law Team, advised the Claimant they were being Formally Cautioned. Post Office (John Longman) added on the 23/07/10 the Claimant would not sign the Caution. In a further email dated 28/07/10 from John Longman to Andy

Date	Contact	Additional Info	Outcome
		Entries prior to this are in relation to Alarm problems and closure for an appointment	
11/02/2008	Minor closure	The above office has reported closing today 11/02 @ 9am due to system problems. Will advise when reopen. Callers name is Mrs O'Dell. Tel number is GRO GRO	Reopened 14/02/2008
05/09/2009	Losses at branch	 Gt Staughton e-mails nov-dec 09.doc	
09/12/2009	Letter to Mrs O'Dell re losses	 greatstaughtinlosses dec09.doc	
23/12/2009	Letter received from Mrs O'Dell claiming losses due to Horizon	 Gt Staughton 29DEC09.pdf	
31/12/2009	Intervention request made and NBSC Call log and registered assistants requested	 INTGt Staughton288230.xls  Great Slaughter 288230.doc  Gt Staughton NBSC contacts 09.pdf	
01/01/2010	Checks carried out by Eleanor Kimberley at P&BA	Stephen I have looked at this office for Cathy, but have not found any areas of concern, they are at the moment showing a surplus of £1,853.13 The only thing we can suggest is that someone goes through his paperwork and events. Eleanor Branch Control Manager	

			 Gt Staughton - no to defund.pdf
22/01/2010	Critical closure form sent	 Gt Staughton - Critical Information.d	
27/01/2010	Confirmation of attending interview	 Great Staughton - will attend interview.j	
29/01/2010	2 nd defund request	 Great Staughton 2nd defund arranged..do	Did not go ahead
03/02/2010	3 rd Defund request	 BAU - Gt Staughton defund v2 110210.d	Did not go ahead
03/02/2010	Letter to Mrs O'Dell enclosing call log	 Gt Staughton with NBSC call log.doc	
18/02/2010	4 th Defund request	 Defund Proforma - Gt Staughton (22823)	
19/02/2010	Termination of Contract	 termination19Feb10. doc	
22 - 23/02/2010	Email regarding defund	 Great Staughton - Emails 22022010.d	Letter to confirm date of defund  defundletter23feb.d
25/02/2010	Details from defund	Hi All, I'm pleased to announce that the defund of Great Staughton is now complete. Thank you all for your help in this.	

	Appeal	30 th April 2010 at Peterborough Mail Centre	
21/05/2010	Appeal decision Appeal 1318 has a number of documents imbedded	 Appeal decision letter - Jennifer O'Del  Appeal 1318.xls	
	Completed case summary has document imbedded	 Gt Staughton 1318.zip	
01/06/2010	Letter enquiring about future of premises	 futureofbranchJune2 010.doc	
30/06/2010	Letter regarding Premises and removal of kit	 futureofbranchJune2 010removalfequip.d	
16/07/2010	Letter regarding removal of kit and enclosing a copy of the Appeal decision letter	 Removal of Kit -  Appeal decision Great Staughton 16 Letter - Jennifer O'Del	
23/07/2013	No access to remove kit	Anita, See the email below from Property Projects Team who have been refused access to the current site for removal of PO equipment - can you advise how the legal process works and copy all parties into any further correspondence sent to Mrs O'Dell. Regards Mike	 Mike J Ball Email Great Staughton 28
02/08/2010	Removal of kit	Anita & NSA, Please hold fire with this	

Final for last
- Great sheet ~~medium~~
will be drawn!

Mrs Jennifer O'Dell, FAD 288/230, Great Staughton Post Office

1st Audit
Meeting

How the debt is made up?

The debt of £9,616.66 is made up of a branch discrepancy settled centrally of £1,853.13 credit on 30/12/2009 and £11,469.79 debit from the Final Account deficiency on 06/01/2010.

Mrs O'Dell was not declaring cash losses of £1,000.00 a month that she claimed only started occurring from May 2009 instead she was inflating the cash on hand to cover the losses.

The first call she made to the helpline regarding any loss in the PO was in August 2009.

Mrs O'Dell continued inflating the cash on hand to cover the losses still continuing at £1,000.00 up to December 2009.

From Nov 2009 – Jan 2010 Mrs O'Dell was an outstanding performer, receiving only 11 transaction corrections from 2005 (4 of these cancelled each other out) therefore it is felt she knew exactly what she was doing regarding accounting and balancing.

Only two branch discrepancies were ever declared.

Before she was employed her history shows she had a computer qualification and she was computer literate however in 2009 she claims to know nothing of how computers or the horizon system worked.

Mrs O'Dell has also blamed the Pin Pad for the losses as well as Horizon.

Have we got all the evidence to support our side of things?

Idocs checked and confirmed - no problem.

Incident Log from the Helpline detailing all calls made and why.

Cash declarations made.

Credence data – Non Sales 26/03/2007 – 06/01/2010

Sales 26/03/2007 – 06/01/2010

Interview notes x 2 admitting false accounting and multiple cash declarations.

Signed Certificate of Appointment paper.

Office copies of some cash declarations, stock on hand figures.

History of previous excellent balancing, performance transaction corrections.

CV showing computer literate can be obtained from the file in storage.

Are we confident of winning the case / or can fully validate the error?

Only Mrs O'Dell, her son who was employed at the post office when not at University and her husband (not a PO employee) had access behind the counter or to the safe.

The loss in the office did not occur as a result of "errors".

We can validate that cash was not in the office when the audit was carried.

We can that Mrs O'Dell did not declare cash on hand correctly to cover up escalating shortages of £1,000.00 every month, discrepancies arising were not shown or made good and the initial loss in May 2009 was not brought to the attention of the helpline until August 2009, even after this Mrs O'Dell carried on false accounting up to Jan 2010.

Mrs O'Dell did not have any issues with her Horizon system prior to the losses commencing in May 2009. The system had not been changed or amended since it was installed.

Branch: Great Staughton

Office FAD: 288/230

SPMR's Name: Mrs Jennifer O'Dell

Debt Break Down:

Final Account Deficiency	£11,469.79 Debit
Settled Centrally Amounts	£1,853.13 Credit
Total	£9,616.66 Debit

Branch History

Mrs O'Dell was employed from 20/11/2000 – 06/01/2010 in this time she had an exemplary record with only 11 transaction corrections (4 of these cancelled each other out) and two branch discrepancies.

Mrs O'Dell contacted the helpline on 04/11/2009 reporting a loss of £7,000.00 that she refused to make good, she reported loosing around £1,000.00 a month since May 2009 but had not shown the losses on Horizon.

In September 2009 Mrs O'Dell reported a problem with her pin pad, this was rectified immediately.

Convictions from Previous court cases

Contact with Former Agents Debt Team

1st, 2nd and 3rd letters sent. The case was forwarded to legal on 25/08/2010.

Why they are claiming Horizon as a reason.

At the audit Mrs O'Dell insisted it was the pin pad that had caused the shortage, the pin pad was also initially blamed at her interview under caution but when it was pointed out to her that she had received instructions on the pin pad and this was proven not to be the case she then blamed Horizon.

Mrs O'Dell has stated that she cannot prove the loss was down to Horizon but is convinced that because her son declared cash on 17/12/2009 that showed a gain of £5,000.00 and then on 21/12/2009 Mrs O'Dell looked at the discrepancy without doing a cash declaration and Horizon then showed a £7,000.00 gain that it is the Horizon equipment that is at fault. The office paperwork shows that Horizon only showed the gains of £5,000.00 and £7,000.00 as multiple cash declarations had been done on different terminals.

Mrs O'Dell never reported problems with the Horizon system and did not have any balancing issues prior to May 2009.

Any Other Extra Information

Mrs O'Dell's CV show she had a computer qualification and claimed to be computer literate however in her interview under caution Mrs O'Dell claimed to have no computer knowledge and knew nothing of how the Horizon system or any other computer worked. Also In the interview Mrs O'Dell did admit to 2 counts of false accounting and doing multiple cash declarations. Mrs O'Dell was issued with an Adult Caution but refused to accept it.

The case was flagged up to the Exec Team as Mrs O'Dell claimed storage charges of £290.00 and legal action for the POL equipment kept on her property, no Horizon issues were mentioned by Mrs O'Dell to the Exec Team. The storage charges were paid by POL to avoid action in the small claims court.

Only Mrs O'Dell and her son, a student at the time, had access to Horizon although her husband did have access to the secure area but he was not a PO employee.

Actions taken by Former Postmasters Accounts Team

A 1st letter and the statement of debt was sent to Mrs O'Dell on 01/06/2010 by recorded delivery, this was received and signed for by "ODELL" on 03/06/2010 9.21am.

As no reply was received, a 2nd letter was sent on 29/06/2010 and a reply dated 01/07/2010 was received from Mrs O'Dell.

In response to Mrs O'Dell's letter she was contacted by phone on 19/07/2010, tel. **IRRELEVANT** as a courtesy to inform her that a reply to her letter would be sent as soon as possible. During the telephone call Mrs O'Dell brought up the fact that her training was an issue as well as the horizon system was malfunctioning.

The helpline call log was obtained.

A history of Mrs O'Dell's transaction corrections was obtained, this showed only 5 transaction corrections issued in 2009, had training been an issue the number of transaction corrections issued would be far greater than 5 in a year, Mrs O'Dell had been postmaster for 9 years, was very experienced and had not brought training up before this.

Horizon was also checked to see if there had been any problems and there had not.

On 23/07/2010 a "Letter before Action" was sent and a very short reply received from Mrs O'Dell, dated 27/07/2010.

Mrs O'Dell was sent an in depth explanation of why she was being held responsible for the loss of £9,616.66 on 28/07/2010 accompanied by :- (This was all in the case so not copied again)
the audit report,
statement of debt,
19/02/2010 letter by Sue Muddeman,
statement of all transaction corrections issued showing only 5 issued in 2009 and the text of these transactions,
a copy of the helpline call log,
the letter of contract termination of 21/05/2010
Mrs O'Dell's signed contract.

A reply was received from Mrs O'Dell dated 29/07/2010 and a further letter explaining the facts was sent in reply, dated 02/08/2010.

Another letter was received from Mrs O'Dell, dated 05/08/2010 now referring to an issue over Christmas stamps and a telephone call she received from a department not known to this office, as neither of these issues related to the case in hand a reply was sent on 06/08/2010, stating this and informing her the case would now proceed to legal.

RATIONALE TO SUPPORT DECISION

Insert the rationale to support the decision

Mrs O'Dell had rang the Helpline during 2009 alleging losses at the branch of around £1k per month – there was no evidence of any losses shown on the BTS or settled centrally. . The calls to the Helpline were on

4/8/09 – PM says ongoing discrepancies where to look for them

7/9/09 – Pinpad malfunctioning

23/10/09 – Problems with Pinpad thinks this is causing office discrepancy

4/11/09 – office has loss of £7k carrying since May refused to make good as says not her loss emailed NSA team PM wants call back from Tier 2

5/11/09 – Spoke to Mrs O'Dell explained loss needs to be made good she refused

5/11/09 – SPMR losses of over £7000 refuses to make good as she blames the system for the losses – SPMR done many checks and not had any corrections, SPMR insisting on escalating...

The message was relayed to the NSA team and I wrote to her on 9 December 2009 re the alleged losses. In the letter I stated that as no losses were showing in the accounts I assume that if any losses had been occurring they had been made good at the time of the loss. Also if she is saying that there is a problem with Horizon then can she send me any proof.

On 21 December Mrs O'Dell replied stating that there was a loss of £8506 by 16 December, she also indicated that the branch has been losing around £1k per month. On 17 December her son declared cash and it came to over £5k gain. On 21 December 2009 she says that she took a look at the discrepancy without doing a cash declaration and it showed a £7k gain.

On 31 December 2009 I requested an intervention visit to the branch. I asked for the subpostmaster not to be made aware of this visit.

The visit was conducted on 6 January 2010 by Lesley Frost, Field Support Advisor assisted by Keith Skelton FSA and from the findings during this visit it developed into a Tier 2 audit.

The discrepancy at the audit was £9616.66. This was made up of £15412.52 shortage in the cash

£3906.90 plus in the stock

£35.83 plus in the currency

£1853.13 plus settled centrally.

The surplus was settled centrally during the BTS on 30 December 2009 – Mrs O'Dell told us that someone had told her to do this but could not remember who. I think it was probably within my letter sent to her in December 2009.

Discovered at the audit

Up to 16 December 2009 only one cash declaration made Till 01

17 December 2009 – ID DOD001 made actual cash declaration in Till 02

18 December 2009 – ID JOD001 made actual cash declarations in Till 01 and Till 03

From 18 December there were 3 cash declarations on the system thereby increasing the cash figures in the accounts.

30 December 2009 – BTS completed – actual cash declarations made ID JOD 001

Since the termination of the Contract for Services I have re-looked at the BTS statements and analysed the declared cash on hand figures to ascertain if there was any pattern to the figures. I concluded : -

BTS 4/3/09 – cash on hand c/Fwd £3738.73

BTS 1/4/09 – cash on hand c/ fwd £1546.64

BTS 6/5/09 – cash on hand c/fwd £4256.36 – Mrs O'Dell indicating loss started in May at £1k per month

BTS 3/6/09 – cash on hand c/fwd £4296.73

BTS June/July not in file – but cash on hand b/fwd on 5/8 statement £4731.12

BTS 5/8/09 – cash on hand c/fwd £7788.46

BTS 2/9/09 – cash on hand c/fwd £4075.12

BTS 30/9/09 – cash on hand c/fwd £4630.12 – call to Helpline 9/9 stating pinpad malfunctioning

BTS 4/11/09 – cash on hand c/fwd £8125.03 – call to Helpline indicating loss of around £7k (4/11) and pin pad malfunctioning (23/10)

BTS 2/12/09 – cash on hand b/fwd £12463.20

BTS 30/12/09 – cash on hand c/fwd £20734.28 (reprint from the FSA)

If we take the figure declared on 1 April BTS there was an increase of around £3k declared in May. The amount of cash on hand declared remains at around £4k until there is a sharp increase in the cash on hand figure 5/8 of around a further £3k this then returns to a cash on hand figure of £4k for August and September.

In October (BTS 4/11) the amount of cash c/fwd increases from £4.6K to £8.1k an increase of £3.5k (as comparison 3/11 cash declaration - £4102.00 compared to 4/11 of initially £1600.50 rising to £8125.03 an increase of £4k on the previous evening – or if the cash on hand was £1600 an increase of £6.5k)

In November (BTS 2/12) – the amount of cash c/fwd increases from £8.1k to £12.4k an increase on the previous month of £4k

(as comparison cash declared on 1/12 of £6352.30 compared to 2/12 of initially £3414.94 rising to £12499.52 an increase of £6k on the previous evening – or if the cash on hand was £3414.92 an increase of £9k)

Therefore up to December there appears to be a total cash shortage in branch of £10.5k approx

During December additional cash declarations were added to the value of £12394.24. The cash on hand figure c/fwd rose to £20734.28.

During the audit on 6 January 2010 there was a total cash discrepancy of -£15412.52 but a stock and currency increase making the shortage in the branch -£11469.79. There was also a surplus settled centrally of £1853.13 making the total shortage in the branch of £9616.66.

In conclusion to the BTS statements as above

- there appears to be an increase in the declared cash BTS 6/5 of £3k approx.
- the cash on hand figures remains at around £4k, although there is an increase in July of approx £3k, it returns to around the £4k on hand level
- on 4/11 the cash on hand figure increases by a further £3.5 approx.
- on 2/12 the cash on hand figure rises from the previous months cash on hand figure by approx £4k
- additional cash declarations added in December