

Elizabeth Stockdale

Branch: Sandsacre Post Office® Branch, Wheatley Drive, Bridlington, East Yorkshire, YO16 6TN

Dates of service: 8 May 2014 to 16 September 2016

Loss claimed: At least £65,000 for (wrongly) repaid shortfalls and loss of investment / earnings

Contract model: Network Transformation Contract (Local Post Office® Branch, On Site Variant, Post Office Limited Cash)

Background:

Ms Stockdale operated the Sandsacre Post Office Branch from 8 May 2014.

She alleges that the first shortfall she suffered took place shortly after opening while a Post Office trainer was providing support in branch. Post Office's position is that this is incorrect. Mrs Stockdale subsequently declared (and partly repaid) further shortfalls during the period October 2014 to August 2015. She then continued to experience shortfalls after this date but did not declare them to Post Office.

Eight months later, on 27 April 2016, Ms Stockdale declared the further shortfalls, totalling at that point £18,891.47. The growing shortfalls in the Branch prompted Post Office to audit the Branch. An audit was carried out on 13 May 2016 and identified an undeclared shortfall of cash and stock in the sum of £7,917.09, in addition to the sums that were already outstanding before the audit. In total, including sums declared on 27 April 2016, the further shortfall found at audit, and sums outstanding before these events, there was a total shortfall of £28,693.84.

Ms Stockdale was suspended by Post Office on the day of the audit. After an investigation, her contract was terminated by Post Office for breach of contract on 16 September 2016.

Key allegations made:

Ms Stockdale claims, in addition to the generic complaints made by all Claimants, that:

She had no confidence that Post Office would assist her to discover the reason for apparent shortfalls so she stopped declaring them and kept paper records instead.

She was never able to identify the cause of the shortfalls. Although she requested help from Post Office numerous times, this was never forthcoming.

Post Office staff visited her branch numerous times following shortfall declarations however they could never identify the cause of the shortfall.

Reason for termination:

The undeclared loss found at the audit indicated that Ms Stockdale had been falsifying her accounts to conceal the loss. Ms Stockdale admitted false accounting in meetings and calls with Post Office, and at a formal interview on 19 August 2016.

Ms Stockdale's contract was terminated on 16 September 2016 due to falsification of her accounts, failing to act honestly, and failing to pay sums due to Post Office by the due date, in breach of her contract.