
From: Paula Vennells [GRO]
Sent: Fri 02/03/2012 8:07:42 AM (UTC)
To: Shane O'Riordain [GRO]; Mike Granville [GRO]
Subject: Fwd: URGENT - Horizon Media Coverage - 2 Mar 2012

Shane, thx. Note below and Alana will keep you in the loop. P

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Paula Vennells [GRO]
Date: 2 March 2012 08:06:09 GMT
To: Alana Renner [GRO], Mike Granville [GRO], Lesley J Sewell [GRO], Mike Young [GRO], Kevin Gilliland [GRO], Martin Moran [GRO], Nicholas Kennett [GRO], Chris M Day [GRO], Susan Crichton [GRO], Pauline Holroyd [GRO], Alwen Lyons [GRO]
Subject: URGENT - Horizon Media Coverage - 2 Mar 2012

FYI.

Mike/Lesley, Alwen will brief you on work to be done for the board on this. But more urgently today, we need to get some messages out to show we are on top of things and most importantly to reassure staff/agents and to provide them with the right words to say in response. (suggest you read the first 4 articles below then the rest of this note.)

The CF release is perfectly acceptable in my view (of course I wish they hadn't issued it but ... they are correct, from a customer point of view, this looks very concerning).

4 high profile failures in 9 months is right to be called out.

Alana/Mike/Lesley, what do we want to issue in response to this? And even if we don't issue anything to the press, we need something to go out to staff and agents to counter the implication that Horizon is getting unreliable. By mid-morning pls.

Finally, I will brief the two boards: Mike, there is a further angle to be dealt with re Fujitsu/compensation questions. Can you brief me pls.

Paula

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Shane O'Riordain <[redacted] GRO >
Date: 2 March 2012 07:35:10 GMT
To: Paula Vennells <[redacted] GRO >
Subject: Fw: Royal Mail Group Media Coverage - 2 Mar 2012

Paula, coverage below.

From: Carol Hayden
Sent: Friday, March 02, 2012 08:24 AM
To: Shane O'Riordain
Subject: Royal Mail Group Media Coverage - 2 Mar 2012

Post offices hit by computer failure

Daily Telegraph

POSTAL services throughout the country were affected yesterday when a computer glitch hit all 12,000 post offices. Thousands of people could not post parcels or complete transactions that required a computer after the network's main IT system crashed. The problems started in the morning and carried on until early afternoon. Some post offices had to close early. It is the fourth time in recent months that the network has experienced problems. On the busiest day of the year last December, 4,000 offices were hit by two 30-minute IT shutdowns, meaning that the branches were unable to print electronic stamps. A Post Office spokesman said: "We apologise to all our customers for the service problems experienced in our branches and the inconvenience this may have caused. We are continuing to monitor the situation closely to make sure our services remain available as normal." Cash payments were still able to be made to pensioners and benefit claimants using a Post Office card account, however. Andy Burrows, head of Post Office services at Consumer Focus, said that this was the fourth time that computers have gone down since last summer.

Post Office meltdown

Daily Mirror

Thousands of customers were hit when the Post Office's computer system crashed yesterday. All 11,800 branches were affected for most of the day, with many closing early. Staff had to make some benefits manually. It is the fourth major fault with the Post Office's electronics in nine months. The PO said last night: "We apologise to all customers for the problems they experienced on our branches. "Service has been fully restored and customers will now be able to complete all their transactions."

Computer crash hits thousands of customers at the Post Office

Metro

THOUSANDS of people were kept waiting for their benefits and pensions yesterday after the Post Office's computer system crashed. Customers were told staff could not deal with anything which required a computer, including posting parcels. It was the 'fourth major service interruption' in the Post Office's electronic systems

in nine months, according to Consumer Focus spokesman Andy Burrows. The system crashed yesterday morning and was not resolved for several hours.

'Customers need Post Office services, including the collection of benefits and pensions, to be reliable and resilient,' said Mr Burrows.

'The problems seem to be nationwide and have resulted in several hours of inconvenience for Post Office customers.

'We have heard some branches have decided to close early for the day – leaving customers without access to services. Most branches have only been able to accept cash payments and do manual transactions such as selling stamps.

'We will be meeting with Post Office Limited to understand how the problem will be addressed.'

A Post Office spokesman apologised to customers for the problems.

He added: 'Post Office branches remained open and arrangements were put in place to ensure that special cash payments were made to pensioners and benefit claimants using the Post Office Card Account.

'Post Office ATMs, Post & Go services and Paystation bill payment and E-top up transactions were unaffected by this problem.

'Services have now fully been restored and customers are able to complete all transactions across the Post Office network. We are continuing to monitor the situation closely to make sure our services remain available as normal.'

Post Office fails to post

Daily Mirror Northern Ireland

Post Office customers could not send parcels yesterday because of a computer meltdown across the UK.

A spokesman said: "We are doing everything we can to fix the problem. Branches are making special cash payments to card account customers.

"ATMs and Post & Go services are unaffected. Bill payments and E Topups for phones can be made."

Computer Failure Hits Post Services

Press Association

Postal services were hit today when the Post Office's computer system went down.

Customers said they were unable to post parcels and were told that staff could not deal with anything which required a computer.

The system went down this morning, hitting branches across the country.

A Post Office spokesman said: "The Post Office apologises to its customers for the inconvenience caused by a computer problem currently affecting the service at branches across the UK.

"We are very sorry for any difficulties this has caused our customers. We are doing everything we can to fix the problem as quickly as possible and restore a full service to all branches.

"Branches are making special cash payments to Post Office Card Account customers. Post Office ATMs and Post & Go services in branch are unaffected. Bill payments and E-topups for mobile phones can be made at Paystation terminals in Post Office branches."

Andy Burrows, of Consumer Focus, said: "We are concerned that this is the fourth major service interruption in the Post Office's electronic systems in nine months.

We will be meeting with Post Office Limited to understand how the problem will be addressed.

"The problems seem to be nationwide and have resulted in several hours of inconvenience for Post Office customers. Most branches have only been able to accept cash payments and do manual transactions such as selling stamps.

"We have heard some branches have decided to close early for the day - leaving customers without access to services. Customers need Post Office services, including the collection of benefits and pensions, to be reliable and resilient."

A Post Office spokesman said later: "Post Offices across the network are again working normally after a computer problem which had earlier affected branches nationwide for several hours. We apologise to all our customers for the service problems experienced in our branches and the inconvenience this may have caused.

"Services have now fully been restored and customers are able to complete all transactions across the Post Office network. We are continuing to monitor the situation closely to make sure our services remain available as normal.

"Post Office branches remained open and arrangements were put in place to ensure that special cash payments were made to pensioners and benefit claimants using the Post Office Card Account. Post Office ATMs, Post & Go services and Paystation bill payment and E-top up transactions were unaffected by this problem."

Stamp costs to be frozen at Christmas

Shropshire Star

The Royal Mail is planning to keep stamp prices this Christmas the same as last year for people of "modest" means, the postal group's chief executive revealed today.

Moya Greene said she realised any increase in stamp prices was a problem for some families, especially at Christmas, the busiest time of the year for post. She told the Business Select Committee that the Royal Mail was planning a special programme this Christmas under which the cost of posting letters and cards would be the same as last year for those with modest means.

The Royal Mail is expected to announce soon that stamp prices will rise from the current 46p for first class and 36p for second class post.

She told MPs the core business had lost £1 billion in four years.

Royal Mail delivers an improved service

Peterborough Evening Telegraph

PETERBOROUGH posties delivered thousands of Christmas cards, presents and letters on time to residents and businesses.

Quality of service results for the Royal Mail in the weeks leading up to Christmas showed that more than 93 per cent of post met delivery targets in Peterborough. The target is 91 per cent.

The statistics for the Peterborough area show that 93.4 per cent of all mail was delivered on time between September and the end of December – that is within one working day for First Class mail, and within three days for Second Class.

While the score means a fall of 0.6 per cent from the previous quarter, it still represents a large rise from the beginning of 2011, when Peterborough mail was delivered on time only 90.4 per cent of the time.

Peterborough MP Stewart Jackson said he was pleased to see the improvement.

He said: "We did have complaints about the service not that long ago, and it was something I took up with the senior management at Royal Mail, so I am pleased they have looked at this.

"It has also come at a good time, when Royal Mail is considering closing the sorting office in Cambridge and moving a significant number of jobs to Peterborough.

"This is a big vote of confidence for workers in Peterborough."

The results mean the postal service in the city is one of the best performing in the east of England – beaten only by Ipswich and Colchester – and one of 83 out of 118 to hit the targets.

However, nationally Royal Mail missed its 93 per cent target for First Class mail delivered on time, with 92.7 per cent.

It matched its target of 98.5 per cent for Second Class mail.

Nicola Scrivings, the Royal Mail's regional operations director for Anglia, said: "Royal Mail's target for next day delivery of First Class mail is challenging and we are disappointed on behalf of our customers to have narrowly missed hitting it in the autumn.

"Our postmen and women remain determined to deliver the best possible service to our customers.

"On an average four week period the PE postcode area handles around 60 million items. "We do of course aim to deliver all first class mail the next day. No postal service in the world can guarantee 100 per cent first class service.

"Royal Mail prices are among the lowest in Europe, and a First Class stamp can take a letter on a journey of up to many hundreds of miles to one of the UK's 29 million addresses."

Peterborough's service was boosted in the lead up to Christmas thanks to a new parcel hub, opened in Shrewsbury Avenue.

The facility employed 400 people at its peak, and was part of a £15 million nationwide project to deal with the extra 150 million items delivered at Christmas, and make sure they were all delivered on time.

John Bridge, chief executive of Peterborough Chamber of Commerce, said: "It is critical that businesses get mail delivered on time.

"There are still plenty of businesses who rely on the mail service for orders and deliveries, as well as payment.

"For some firms it is imperative that cheques arrive on time to keep the cash flow going.

He added: "It is good news that Peterborough is ahead of targets, but at the end of the day it is just the service we should expect, for the money we pay for mail to be delivered.

"There have been concerns in the past, so it is good news that Royal Mail is addressing those problems."

A spokeswoman for the Communication Workers Union, the union that represent postal workers, said they were happy with the findings.

She said: "We are delighted that, due to the hard work and dedication of postal

workers in the area, the quality of service enjoyed by Royal Mail customers in Peterborough is high.”

Royal Mail staff exceed targets

Express & Star

Royal Mail workers in the Exeter area exceeded their minimum service standards in the final three months of 2011, according to a new report.

New figures showed 93 per cent of first-class post was delivered the next day in the EX postcode area, beating the 91.5 per cent target in the South West.

Nationally, Royal Mail – which delivers 59m letters, packets and parcel in an average day – missed its first-class stamped mail target in the months leading up to Christmas but second-class mail hit its quality target.

Geoff Braden, Royal Mail’s regional operations director for the South West, said: “We are pleased that 10 out of our 12 postcode sectors in the South West exceeded the individual quality of service target of 91.5 per cent. In those cases where we failed to meet the target, our services were affected by changes we are making to our operations. We remain committed to ensuring we deliver the best possible service to all our customers across the region.”

Royal Mail hits delivery targets

The Wrexham Leader

Royal Mail said it beat its quarterly target for first class deliveries in Wrexham and Flintshire.

About 92 per cent of mail posted first class was delivered the next day, surpassing the target of 91.5 per cent.

Performance to the LL and CH postcodes were measured between the second week of September and the first week of December.

Final results were 92.2 per cent for the LL postcode and 92.1 per cent for the CH postcode.

Postman now calls at different times

The Basildon Echo

Changes to postal services will have seen some homes in Basildon getting their mail at different times.

Royal Mail has reorganised the town’s delivery routes, resulting in some residents and businesses seeing their delivery times change and different postmen delivering their letters.

The postcodes affected are SS14 and SS15 covering Basildon, SS15 covering Laindon and SS16 cover Langdon Hills. The changes come into force on Monday as part of the modernisation of the postal services across the UK.

Royal Mail says fewer people are sending letters, but more parcels are being delivered because of a rise in online shopping.

As a result, more postmen are using trolleys to transport their heavy loads around for health and safety reasons. Post vans are being driven to central locations and several postmen are picking up mail from the same van to deliver on their individual routes on surrounding streets.

They return to the vans for further loads throughout the day.

Royal Mail continues to employ 200 staff in Basildon.

Phil Fay, Royal Mail’s Collection and Delivery Sector Manager, said: “We are proud of the high regard in which our postmen and women are held in Basildon.

“These changes to our delivery routes mean members of our local and experienced team will still be delivering to our customers in Basildon.”

Anyone with questions about the changes can call Royal Mail on

GRO

Department Manager
Royal Mail Group
Communications
100 Victoria Embankment, LONDON, EC4Y 0HQ
Tel: