

TYLORSTOWN POST OFFICE

GRO

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URGENT

Fad Code: 416611

12th Feb 2017

Dear Sirs

Re: Horizon Issues at above office

I am writing to express my serious concerns. This is not new information for the post office. I have been in regular contact with various people over many months, anyone who would listen in fact.

When the previous manager Mark Morgan (formerly recommended by the Post Office) left my employ in Aug 2015 there was a deficit of over £50 due to an issue with scratch cards. I absorbed the loss. I had requested the audit by contacting someone I knew in the Post Office and as a favour they arranged for the sub postmaster of Aberdare PO to do it for me.

Losses continued and when the then replacement manager Phil Jones formerly SPM at Pontygwaith PO, left approx 7 months later, there was a deficit of over £500. At that time I again called on someone I knew – your own trainer auditer who's name is Paul, (last name I believe is Jones) I again made up the loss.

There was a further incident where a loss showed on Horizon. This time it was easy to identify as it occurred in 'real time' and it was obvious to the counter staff concerned, it was to do with Moneygram where the transaction had been reversed but refused to show up on Horizon.. Helpline was told but did nothing, at one point suggesting I contact Moneygram to ask for the money back?

It was only after this did I contact the then Field Change Manager Gareth saying I was completely lost and needed help. At that point he put me in touch with a person called Judy Balderson. She was absolutely wonderful, identified the problem and said it was

a systems error re Moneygram, said not to worry she would credit the office. The problem was however there were further losses over that period, the cause of which wasn't readily identifiable. Judy said they were able to do some back office investigating and she would come back to me. I waited and heard nothing. I tried to make contact after several months as the account still showed a deficit. I was told at that stage Judy had left the Post Office.

Other anomalies continued to occur. I once again had no option other than to give the PO the benefit of the doubt and agree a repayment programme which is currently on going. I was however approaching the 'end of my tether', this time putting rigorous and daily checks and balances in place including two staff at any given time to supervise one another. The cost of this was astronomical.

November, matters were coming to a head. I had called the Helpline asking for assistance. I was refused point blank. The reason given was that there were no resources available for training, auditing or investigation. I remember hanging up in sheer frustration.

By the end of November I was still suffering sustained losses. I contacted the Fiend change manager Gareth asking for help. This was the only point of contact I had. I explained I was at the point of closing the office. I stressed there was something very wrong somewhere which could not be accounted for by staff mistakes or theft. I told him I felt unsupported and all the PO could be assured of doing was demanding money when there was a deficit.

I told him I had called Helpdesk and been refused any assistance saying that they had no resources available for monitoring, training or indeed any forensic examination of Horizon.

He agreed to send help & with this in mind I received a text from Paul (Jones) who is an auditor/trainer on 9th December saying he was coming to the office on 14th at the request of Gareth who is his boss. I explained it was not an auditor that was needed but also a phorensic investigator that could identify where the shortfalls were occurring.

I was by now convinced losses were not occurring because of lack of training or theft etc. I had employed an ex-sub postmaster Jean Walters to attend the office purely to investigate this. I paid them personally. This was to ensure Horizon was working properly and to investigate further losses. She failed and despite years of experience we were no nearer getting an answer. Paul visited my office on 14th December 2016.

It was the audit by Paul Jones that threw up further losses of over £3,000 and which is the subject of this current claim back by the Paul.

By mutual agreement Paul confirmed he had some ability to ask for assistance on a phorensic basis and he would report back. This is exactly what Judy Balderson had said she would do. He said the PO has the ability to run reports that were not available to us or indeed at branch. I have waited but with no response. The PO are now again demanding money back.

I contacted Paul by text message on two occasions, most recently on 23rd January asking for feedback. I received no acknowledgment or reply.

With the utmost respect, I have been personally subsidising the running of the office for over 8 months. I have received no help from the PO having to call in favours from staff whom I have had contact with over the years. I relied on goodwill and pestering.

I have been officially via the helpline, formally denied any help and left to flounder. I have had enough. The stress this has caused has been instrumental in making my already failing health, much worse. I have no hesitation in saying it's had an extremely detrimental effect on my health and mental wellbeing and in that regard I believe the PO are in serious breach of its duty of care to workers, whether staff or agency.

An interview took place on Wednesday 8th February 2017 for a new Subpostmaster to take over the office / contract, under the 'network transformation process'. He was successful but if the applicant had been rejected, be on notice I fully intended to close the office with immediate effect. That is the state I have found myself in.

As for repayment of the current balance, that is a different matter. I believe the conduct of the PO has been neglectful and unacceptable. I am willing to enter discussions on this point only but at this time will make no agreement at repayment.

This matter is at a crucial point. Losses continue to accrue on an almost daily basis. And you can not expect my replacement SPM to accept the same level of problems with Horizon etc that I have had to endure. You now have a pressing duty to sort out whatever is going wrong and quickly.

We ourselves were able to identify an issue with Moneygram. The staff are convinced some of the problems that are occurring are down to scratch cards, where numbers are checked at opening and closing of day and money tallies up as its kept separate. Despite this the number we is still out.

To attribute sustained losses to theft or human error is no longer tenable. Losses occurred when 3 long standing ex sub postmasters were in charge as well as present counter staff, one of which has been working in the PO for 15 yrs.

I am awaiting a date for the new SPM to be appointed. In the meantime I await your advices as to what the Post Office intend to do as far as this current and totally unacceptable situation is concerned?

Yours faithfully

GRO

Mrs T Thomas
Subpostmaster.

cc; Agents accounting team

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