



**Our Ref:** AF/LS/106

**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018

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From the office of Andy Furey Assistant Secretary

Email: [afurey@GRO](mailto:afurey@GRO) | Direct line: [GRO]

Dear Paula

**[GRO] LLANDUDNO CROWN - PRECAUTIONARY SUSPENSION**

I am taking the unusual step of writing to you regarding a potential discipline case that was brought to my attention only yesterday. As a consequence of the events described below, I am seeking your intervention to resolve this matter without further delay as I am genuinely worried about the wellbeing of the member concerned who has been subjected to precautionary suspension for the last 9 weeks.

The background to the case is that [GRO] who is 61 years old and has worked for the Post Office for a considerable number of years, was given a formal warning last year for a counter loss of £80. This is my first area of concern as I fundamentally believe it is totally inappropriate to award a disciplinary penalty for a loss of this nature as it essentially contravenes the "Losses and Gains Procedure". Against this backdrop, [GRO] unfortunately incurred a further loss of £450 on 12<sup>th</sup> January. Incredibly, [GRO] in recognising she had made an accounting error, decided to personally make good the loss of £450 and through her till transacted two payments via her savings and bank accounts. I fully accept that [GRO] has compounded the initial accounting error by using her own money to make up for the loss of revenue to the Post Office. However, whilst [GRO] action in making good the loss from her own personal money is inappropriate, this doesn't make her a bad person or a dishonest employee. In fact many would argue the opposite is the case.

Whilst I am astonished that [GRO] took the action she did, I have empathy for [GRO] as she was extremely worried about being subjected to further disciplinary action as a consequence of the £450 loss, having been disciplined only last year for an £80 loss. Had the original disciplinary penalty not been awarded, [GRO] in all probability would have acted very differently. At the fact finding interview, [GRO] was totally honest about her actions and said she was "embarrassed" by the £450 loss and stated "I realised I had made a mistake and I was really worried."

I am not privy to all the details surrounding this case as our Sector Representative is currently abroad on annual leave. I am though aware that [GRO] has been precautionary suspended from duty since Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January. I have to say, I am extremely concerned with the way [GRO] has been treated in this regard. Indeed I shudder to think how she is feeling and can well imagine that she is exceptionally stressed and is feeling anxious for her future. I acknowledge that no disciplinary penalty has been awarded as yet; however, I am struggling to understand what benefit there is to the Post Office and certainly to the individual for the use of precautionary suspension. Basically, the Post Office has been paying [GRO] for the last 9 weeks whilst she remains

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at home, which has obviously cost the Post Office significantly more than the initial £450 loss. This doesn't make good commercial sense bearing in mind she hasn't stolen any money. Clearly she poses no threat or risk to the funds of the Post Office. Furthermore I am worried that justification for the lengthy period of suspension may ultimately result in **GRO** being dismissed. Also, there has to be consideration given towards a human wellbeing perspective which should be applied in circumstances of this nature.

I understand the initial date for the discipline hearing had to be postponed due to the extreme weather conditions, which is fair enough. However, this has simply meant that the period of precautionary suspension has been extended, which to my mind doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

As a consequence of the above, I would encourage you to ensure that **GRO** is restored to duty without further delay, the disciplinary case is dropped as **GRO** has no doubt suffered enough as a result of the precautionary suspension and that the £450 is refunded to **GRO** as it was inappropriate for her to use her own personal money to make good this loss. In regard to the use of the discipline procedure for counter losses, representations have been made to your IR team as we have an agreed Losses and Gains Procedure that should be followed in all instances unless theft is suspected. A response is awaited.

I sincerely hope you are able to look favourably on **GRO** exceptional case.

Yours sincerely

**GRO**

Andy Furey  
Assistant Secretary

c.c. Debbie Smith - Chief Executive, Retail  
Roger Gale - Sales and Trade Marketing Director  
John Whitefoot - Employee Relations Policy Director