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Post Office boss Nick Read led 'campaign to defame and ostracise me', ex-HR director claims

MPs release a letter by a whistleblower days after Nick Read was cleared of all misconduct claims by an independent barrister appointed by the Post Office.



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12/07/2024, 15:58

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The Post Office announced last week Nick Read had been cleared of misconduct by an independent barrister



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A former HR director at the Post Office, whose misconduct claims against chief executive Nick Read were dismissed following an internal investigation, has written to MPs in a bid to plead her case.

Jane Davies, who was in post for seven months from December 2022 until she was dismissed, claimed Mr Read led a "deliberate campaign to defame and ostracise me" after she failed to secure him a satisfactory pay rise.

In the March-dated letter released by the business and trade committee on Tuesday, Ms Davies said she spent the first eight weeks in her role as group chief people officer dealing with Mr Read's "pay demands".

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He has previously denied an allegation by sacked **Post Office** chairman Henry Staunton that he had threatened to resign numerous times on the pay issue.

Ms Davies said she was writing to the committee in support of Mr Staunton's version of events in his evidence to the committee in February.



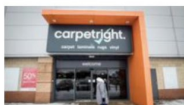
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"He [Mr Read] regarded the final offer of 5% increase as insulting," she wrote.

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"As a result, he regarded me as a failure for not getting the remuneration increase. What followed was a deliberate campaign to defame and ostracise me.

"From my perspective, his charm had been replaced by someone who was not authentic or honest and importantly who lacked genuine concern or care for others, employees, hard-working postmasters and those that had been wronged.

"The role that I was being asked to do, looked nothing like the role that had been sold to me when I was recruited. It was clear that cultural change that needed to start with the senior leaders, was simply not high on Nick Read's agenda."

The Post Office announced last week that its chief executive had been "exonerated of all misconduct allegations" following an independent review into the bullying allegations.

The issue has proved to be a further thorn in the organisation's side as it faces a public inquiry over the handling of the Horizon IT scandal that saw hundreds of sub-postmasters wrongly convicted of theft and fraud.

At the same time, the government has moved to speed up redress for all those failed.

Mr Staunton, who also wrote to the committee in correspondence that was released on Tuesday, expressed concerns over a "lack of clarity around the investigation" into Mr Read's conduct.




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The former Post Office chair, who was **sacked by the government in January**, was also the subject of a complaint raised by a whistleblower that he said related to an alleged use of politically incorrect and potentially offensive language.

"The implications of the allegations, namely that I am racist and misogynistic, are ones that are deeply distressing, would be contested by everyone who knows me, and are definitely not borne out by my behaviour as a champion of diversity in all the organisations I have worked for, including the Post Office", Mr Staunton wrote.

"It is not clear to me how these allegations became incorporated into an investigation which was prompted by a whistleblower complaint about alleged bullying by the chief executive, particularly as the complaint was directed at no-one else, and did not mention me by name."



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The business and trade committee issued no comment when it released the contents of the letters.

A Post Office spokesperson responded: "Just last week a highly reputable barrister produced an extensive, robust, and impartial report that fully exonerated Nick Read of all the misconduct allegations levelled against him, and in so doing discredited many of the claims raised in these letters.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the barrister was fully empowered to investigate and conclude as she saw fit.

"Our focus remains on providing redress for postmasters; learning from the grievous errors of the past; and building an organisation able to meet the challenges of the future."

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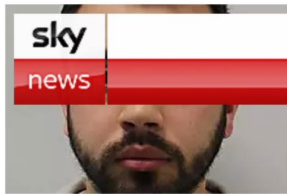
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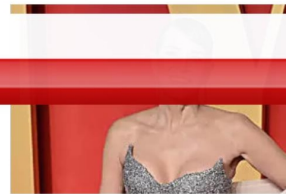
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