



Post Office finance boss quits after two months sick leave

Exit comes as taxpayer-owned organisation battles fallout of the Horizon IT scandal

The Post Office's finance chief has quit his role at the scandal-hit company after more than a year's absence on sick leave. On Tuesday, staff were told by email that Alisdair Cameron was stepping down after almost a decade at the taxpayer-owned organisation. His exit follows claims that he clashed with Nick Read, the Post Office's chief executive, and that Mr Read tried to "get rid" of him. The row flared as the Post Office was battling the fallout of the Horizon IT scandal, where subpostmasters were wrongly prosecuted and convicted of fraud and theft in the largest-scale miscarriage of justice in British legal history. More than 900 subpostmasters were prosecuted for stealing because of faults with the Horizon computer system, including some 700 who were prosecuted by the Post Office between 1999 and 2015. Mr Cameron took over as finance chief in 2015 and served under former boss Paula Vennells before she was replaced by Nick Read in 2019. In the latest accounts, he was paid a GRO basic salary and a further GRO in bonus payments. But he has been on sick leave since May 2023, he told the inquiry, and has not attended any board meetings since then. This week it emerged Preetha McCann, who stepped down from Selfridges earlier this year after just four months, will take up the role of interim chief financial officer (CFO). At the Post Office Inquiry, Mr Cameron was said to have claimed the "original sin" of the company was that "our culture, self-absorbed and defensive, stopped us from dealing with postmasters in a straightforward and acceptable way". He also apologised to subpostmasters before giving evidence, saying he was "sorry that I accepted that Horizon was working effectively too easily at the time, and for the time that it took us to shift focus from the commercial performance of the business to the experience of postmasters". Earlier this year The Telegraph revealed how Mr Cameron had fallen out with Mr Read, with a source blaming a "clash of personalities". The source claimed Mr Read had been trying to out Mr Cameron "for a while" and that he had sought to get him a government-funded payoff. But "there was no evidence of misconduct or anything that would cause him to be fired and the Government was not prepared to countenance paying him off", the source said. The Post Office has declined to comment previously on relations between Mr Read and Mr Cameron. On Tuesday, a spokesman for the company said: "Alisdair Cameron has stepped down as group chief financial officer and is retiring from [the] Post Office. "Alisdair has been an integral member of our senior team having joined [the] Post Office as chief financial officer in 2015, and also served as interim chief executive officer in 2019. "We would like to thank Alisdair for his significant contribution to [the] Post Office over almost a decade and wish him the very best."