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POST OFFICE LTD CONFIDENTIAL: INVESTIGATION, LEGAL

POLTD/1213/0127

OFFENCE

1. Theft – Contrary to Section 1 (1) of the Theft Act 1968

Name:	GRO		
Rank:	Counter Clerk	Identification Code:	IC3
Office:	Brixton Road	Branch Code:	059008
Age:	GRO	Date of Birth:	GRO
Service:	1 Year 3 months	Date Service Commenced:	03/10/2011

Personnel Printout: At Appendix: C

Nat Ins No:

Home Address:

GRO

Suspended/Contract for Services Suspended: N/A

Handed into custody: N/A

At: N/A

To be prosecuted by: Post Office Ltd

Designated Prosecution Authority: John Scott, Head of Security

Discipline Manager: Elaine Ridge

Post Office Ltd Legal & Compliance Team

Investigation background

These papers refer to non-authorised withdrawals on Post Office Card Account customers. GRO is suspected of carrying out duplicate transactions at Brixton Road Post Office which is based at 68-70 Brixton Road, London, SW9 6BH and has 2 counters. The branch is a sub-office and part of a Pharmacy.

The Postmaster is Bolaji Oladuji and she had two assistants including GRO but the other employee left GRO

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The suspicions were raised from Grapevine analytical work which identified several suspected fraudulent duplicate transactions. The theft occurred when elderly customers were asked to re-enter their PIN number for their Post Office Card Account and two transactions would be withdrawn but only one amount paid out. The total suspected loss to Post Office Card Account customers is £3,160.00 of which £1,860.00 has been confirmed by customers to be fraudulent.

Post Office Card Accounts (POCA) are provided by Post Office Ltd and they allow state pensions and benefits to be paid into by government bodies. Customers are provided with a Chip & Pin card and must visit a branch to make withdrawals. The customer would enter their card into the card terminal, advise the clerk how much they wish to withdraw, enter their PIN and receive the cash and receipt from the clerk. During the suspected fraudulent transactions, the procedure was repeated twice but only one payment and receipt was provided, with the clerk suspected of benefiting from the second amount.

Enquiries conducted

The personnel file data was requested.

The stakeholder notification was prepared and sent to the Stakeholders and also updated them of the current situation

Aftab Ali collated POCA transaction data and identified suspect transactions and the corresponding customer details. The respective customers were contacted and arrangements to meet and discuss the transactions were agreed. Aftab Ali obtained 4 witness statements, which are now associated in Appendix A of this file. All 4 customers denied authorising two simultaneous transactions which were for various amounts carried out at Brixton Road Post Office, all by the Horizon Login ID PWI001.

The Horizon Login ID PWI001 is registered to GRO therefore it was suspected that she was the clerk who processed the transactions.

Planning & Operation

A Planned Operation Risk Assessment was carried out on 14/01/2013 and Darrell Kennedy authorised for the operation to go ahead. A copy can be found in Appendix C.

Offender approach reported

An audit was carried out on 15/01/2013 at Brixton Road Post Office. GRO was invited to a voluntary interview whilst the audit took place which she agreed to. Aftab Ali and Mark Dennett interviewed GRO on 15/01/2013 at 11:05 in Brixton Post Office meeting room. Aftab Ali explained the procedures of a tape recorded interview, issued the caution and POL001 and POL003 were completed. GRO declined the opportunity to seek legal representation or have a friend present.

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A notebook entry of the approach was recorded and is associated in Appendix B of this file (identifying Mark AA/1)

Details of suspect interview & searches

On 15/01/2013, following the audit, Aftab Ali interviewed GRO under caution in a meeting room within the Brixton Road Post Office. Also present was Mark Dennett, Security Manager. The interview commenced at 11:05am and concluded at 12:15pm. A taped summary has been prepared and is associated at pages to . The interview consisted of two tapes, bearing master tape seals 060384 and 060385. Copies of the working tapes are associated in Appendix B of this file; Aftab Ali has retained the master tapes.

GRO declined legal representation, her legal rights were explained and form POL001 (Identifying Mark AA/2) was signed and is associated at Appendix B. GRO was cautioned and confirmed she understood the caution.

GRO declined to have a friend present and form POL003 was signed and is associated at Appendix C.

After confirming how long GRO had worked in the Post Office for, routine questions relating to password sharing, logon usernames and losses & gains were answered. GRO was then asked to explain the procedure of POCA transactions, namely withdrawals. During this conversation, GRO stated that some customers do not realise how much funds they have available in their accounts and once they see the balance on the receipt, they decide to then make additional withdrawals and she advises customers to remember that they made these withdrawals. She stated that it is not uncommon for customers to make double/duplicate withdrawals, including those that do them regularly.

When asked regarding transaction receipts, GRO states that she always hands them over to customers regardless of how many transactions there are but some customers ask her to discard one or more receipts following the transactions.

GRO when asked about customer complaints in relation to unauthorised transactions, argued that these occurred around Christmas of 2012 as customers were making additional withdrawals due to the festive period. She also stated that customers had complained to her in the branch and raised their concerns of transactions they did not authorise. Aftab Ali clarified that the disputed transactions which the customers had provided statements to confirm they did not process were before Christmas 2012 as GRO highlighted. Aftab Ali then read out transaction data asking GRO if she knew anything about them or whether she would like to state anything in relation to them. (identifying Mark AA/3)
GRO said she would need to see the customers in person to be able to identify whether they withdrew two amounts from their Post Office Card Accounts. Her consistent answer to specific duplicate transactions was that the customers request these and there is no other reason behind the unusual patterns except the customers own preferences and demands.

Aftab Ali put to GRO, that only her login had excessive duplicate withdrawals, customers have confirmed that they did not authorise or request duplicate withdrawals and were not

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provided with receipts to support duplicate withdrawals but GRO continuously denied any wrongdoing and claimed that any duplicate transactions were done at the customers' request and some would leave their receipts behind for her to discard. GRO argued that the witness statements provided by 5 customers are not true or accurate. She also claimed that the customers are the actual benefiters of the withdrawals and are falsely accusing her. GRO also denied any wrongdoing when a customer's collection of receipts which lacked any receipts reflecting duplicate transactions were presented. GRO does not deny that duplicate transactions took place but denies that she took the money from those transactions.

No searches took place as part of this investigation.

POL019 was handed over to GRO explaining what will happen to the tapes and the interview was concluded at 12:15pm.

Admissions / denials identified / reported and points to prove covered

GRO denies Theft from Post Office Card Account customers and continuously argued that on the incidents mentioned and on other occasions, POCA customers voluntarily requested second withdrawals for their own benefit and at no point has GRO been dishonest or had any intention to steal from Post Office Ltd or its customers.

Period of offences identified

Theft – Contrary to Section 1 (1) of the Theft Act 1968 on 20 occasions between 05/07/12 to 21/12/2012.

Assessment of evidence available to support charges

4 Witness Statements confirming no request or authorisation to withdraw two amounts
Excel spreadsheet created by Aftab Ali to illustrate unusual patterns and duplicate withdrawals

Details of domestic and financial details of offender

GRO stated her financial situation was 'OK'. She has a daughter living in GRO with her Grandmother and GRO only contributes towards the Electricity bill. GRO lives in GRO herself.

Reliability of witness

Unfortunately the 4 witnesses who provided statements are elderly and fragile. This is normal due to the transactions being made on Post Office Card Accounts which are pensions and benefits based.

Outstanding enquiries reported

The Post mistress Bolaji Oladuji offered to help Post Office Ltd with their investigation by providing CCTV. Aftab Ali pursued this avenue but unfortunately due to the time passed, the

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CCTV footage for the relevant dates was no longer available. This was confirmed by Bolaji Oladuji following a visit and phone call from Aftab Ali. No other outstanding enquiries, though should this matter progress to prosecution, further analysis will be conducted. This is due to other customers potentially being affected by this fraud, especially in light of GRO indicating that duplicate transactions occurred around Christmas 2012.

Loss to Post Office Ltd

No loss to Post Office Ltd but suspected loss to Post Office Card Account customers is £3,160.00 of which £1,860.00 has been confirmed by customers to be fraudulent.

NPA forms / antecedents

NPA forms and Antecedents have been completed and are associated in Appendix C

Copy reports / tape summaries

All original exhibits in this case are currently retained at Aftab Ali's office, with copies associated at Appendix B. A copy of this report is also associated at Appendix B.

An electronic copy of this report, a discipline report and the tape summaries have been sent to the Post Office Security Team generic address on 11 December 2012

Failures in security, supervision, procedures and product integrity

There is a Post Office Ltd integrity issue as a result of this case. Post Office Card Accounts are provided for the use of State Pensions and Benefits from DWP. As it is suspected that essentially a Post Office Clerk, although not employed by Post Office Ltd, has deceived and taken advantage of the elderly and fragile to take their money through POCA withdrawals, it poses a reputational and credibility risk for Post Office Ltd. It could also potentially influence the DWP's future decision to award Post Office Ltd the contract for Pensions & Benefits.

Reason for file submission

These papers are now submitted for advice on the sufficiency of the evidence as to whether criminal charges are brought against GRO

Aftab Ali
Security Manager

Contact Number: GRO

Date: 18/02/2013