
From: Communications Team GRO

Sent: Tue 27/08/2013 9:27:15 AM (UTC)

To: Communications Team GRO

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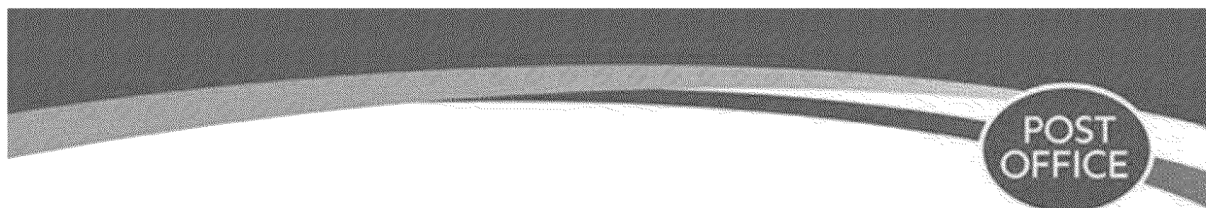
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Subject: Strike Contingency Plan - Tuesday 27 August



focusonline special

For your information, please find below our statement on Horizon that has been issued today.

Post Office announces independent mediation scheme for subpostmasters

The Post Office has today announced the introduction of an independent mediation scheme to address the concerns raised by some subpostmasters regarding cases which they feel require further resolution.

This follows the publication of the interim report into the Horizon system produced by Second Sight in July. The report stated that so far no evidence of system wide (systemic) problems with the Horizon software had been found. However, it noted that improvements could be made in the training and support processes provided to subpostmasters. In response to the report the Post Office has made a number of commitments, one of which is to create this independent mediation scheme for subpostmasters and the Post Office to investigate and try to resolve a subpostmaster's concerns.

The Post Office, JFSA (Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance), and Second Sight, the independent investigators, have formed a working group to collaboratively develop and monitor this scheme which is available to current and former subpostmasters from 27 August 2013.

Commenting on the launch of the Scheme, Angela van den Bogerd Post Office Head of Partnerships said: "The Post Office is committed to addressing any outstanding concerns among subpostmasters swiftly and transparently.

"As part of this commitment we set up an independent review which recently published an interim report which found that so far there was no evidence of any systemic issues with Horizon but did identify some further improvements we could make to our training and support arrangements, which we are taking forward.

"In addition, the independent mediation scheme we are announcing today will provide an effective way to assess and address any outstanding cases where subpostmasters feel they have been unfairly treated.

"Subpostmasters are the lifeblood of our business and we take their concerns extremely seriously. We hope the package of measures we are announcing will demonstrate our commitment to working closely with them to further improve our network."

Commenting on the announcement, James Arbuthnot MP, who is spearheading interest in the matter at Parliament, said: "I am very pleased indeed with the working group's proposed process. To my mind, it represents the very best chance all parties – individual subpostmasters and mistresses, and the Post Office have of ensuring the best outcome for everyone. It is fair, thorough, and independent."

Subpostmasters wishing to submit an application can visit www.jfsa.org.uk for further information.