
From: Paula Vennells[GRO]
Sent: Sun 14/12/2014 5:28:54 PM (UTC)
To: Kevin Gilliland[GRO]
Cc: Gavin Lambert[GRO]; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd[GRO]; [GRO]; Chris Aujard[GRO]
Subject: Fwd: Griffithstown 342632
Attachment: image002.jpg
Attachment: image003.png

Kevin, hi.

This may be more complex than it sounds and I know that Angela will look into it properly.

I want to be really sure - not just on the individual case raised but as much on the issues Heydi identifies in the whole process around this. And I would like you to sponsor the review of this case and see if it raises any wider issues. You will need to bring in other SLT colleagues and Exco. At this stage, I'm only flagging to Chris A, in case you do uncover more than meets the eye, so that you can decide if it needs to be registered as a wider risk. See below.

Why didn't security get in touch?

Why if we put a block in place for a particular account as happened with Heydi, do we not contact the branch if further issues arise? How do we monitor situations where the block is in place?

How many other branches are in this situation?

Is it monitored and controlled? What regular review is in place between Rod's team and yours/Neil's?

How up to date is Chesterfield? There was a time a few years back where TCs were backing up. How do you/Angela's team know that is not the case?

Hopefully, this is a one off. It sounds unusual (but we have said that before!). And hopefully, with the emphasis on risk, Rod's team is completely up to date.

If you read her story, whether or not the branch genuinely is responsible, we have been poor in looking after a colleague. She identifies delays and lack of communication. If she is right, it isn't good enough and the process needs changing, and colleagues speaking to. And I know I don't need to point out the sensitivity of this, as we face yet more difficult times over Sparrow.

Can you lend some care and control and be sure you are happy with what is happening and how we are managing Heydi as well as the wider point. Angela and I have already spoken and I know she will take great care with this. It is important that we do handle it with care because that is our value. If we have been less than careful here, then we should consider how we recognise that in some way.

Thanks, Paula

Paula Vennells
Chief Executive
Post Office Ltd

T: [GRO]

[GRO]

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Haydi O'Brien [GRO]
Date: 12 December 2014 21:27:11 GMT
To: Paula Vennells [GRO]
Subject: Griffithstown 342632

Dear Paula,

Further to our conversation on the evening of 9 December, I am writing to you as you requested me to do. I have also since been contacted by Angela Van-Den-Bogerd. It was out of sheer frustration and desperation that I felt compelled to contact you.

I have worked for the Post Office for 15 years initially on the counter and the last eight years in Training and Auditing as an FSA. I used to have so much faith in the Post Office and its processes, so much so that I bought my own branch in Griffithstown in December 2010.

I bought this as a family investment with the intention of employing my daughter as Manager. For the first three years I regularly attended my branch, serving on the counter and balancing weekly, however, it was always the intention to step back once my daughter was confident and competent in running the branch which I strongly believe she is. I took the step back in September last year and gave her the increased responsibility of managing the branch, working alongside another lady who I have employed since I was appointed.

In May I decided to conduct a full cash and stock check of the branch and on completion I was stunned to find that it was £33000 short. I immediately reported this to Colin Burston my Contracts Advisor and he arranged an audit for the following day. The audit confirmed my findings and my Contract for Services was suspended and I was also suspended from my role as FSA.

Following a Reasons To Urge interview with Colin I was reinstated to both roles on 4 August on condition that the full shortage is repaid which I am currently paying at £500 a month from my remuneration.

On discovering the shortage I questioned my daughter on the cause of it and she stated that she had been having problems with the ATM. She cited one such problem in December 2013 when a day's withdrawals had been 'lost' on the printouts obtained from the ATM. She had been naively continued to declare the cash as reported by Horizon instead of declaring the actual amount of cash on hand. I contacted the Finance Service Centre at the time that I discovered the shortage and they replied "oh yes, there are £13000 of withdrawals that need to be put through". They were unable to tell me when these withdrawals related to. It seems that they had been 'sat' on this since December 2013.

I was told by the auditor that the shortage would be fully investigated and was promised that the Security Team would be involved which I was more than happy with as I have certainly not taken the money and I am certain that neither my daughter or assistant have. None of the Security Team have contacted me at any stage.

I was left to conduct my own investigations and as an FSA I have more contacts in the business than a normal Subpostmaster would have. Due to the large amount and the outstanding discrepancies in the Finance Service Centre I decided to start with the ATM.

The first set of withdrawal figures supplied to me by Stacey Harper bore absolutely no resemblance to the ATM figures processed through my branch (over the period covering January 2013 to May 2013 only

two figures actually agreed). Stacey confirmed that the figures were supplied direct from Wincor and numerous emails were exchanged over a period of two months trying to arrive at an explanation for the differences, to date this has not been forthcoming.

I contacted Wincor and requested the withdrawal figures from them and was told that they would not supply them and to obtain them from the Post Office. I was given Sarah Haywood as a contact point and she eventually supplied a second set of figures. Unfortunately these figures had large chunks of data missing from them and when questioned, I was told that the data had 'archived' and could be no longer obtained. I fail to see how data from the middle of a timeframe can be archived and nobody has been able to give me an explanation for this.

Due to an anomaly in Drop and Go transactions recently and a customer's account being frozen in mid transaction, I was aware of a Transaction Correction which was due to the office. On not receiving this TC I contacted the Finance Service Centre and was told that it could not be issued due to a 'block' being put in place at the time of my suspension. Therefore, since 16TH May this year, no Transaction Corrections can be issued to the branch until HR update their records regarding POLSAP Accounting Procedure which currently states 'Customer line item needs updating'.

I raised the point that if TCs were due from other departments whether they would be issued and was told that none could be sent while the block was in place. I also asked whether they were notified when this block was removed by HR and was told No and that it was up to each individual analyst trying to issue a TC to check on a regular basis. I was dismayed by this and wonder how many more TCs in the pipeline which may relate to my shortage?

I have been left throughout this process to carry out my own investigations as to how the shortage occurred and feel that I am hitting obstructions every step of the way. The last seven months have been absolute hell for myself and my family, I feel like I have been hung out to dry.

I have been an ambassador for Post Office for many years, and have carried out my role as Trainer/Auditor with the utmost integrity, even to the point where my own branch is in the firing line. I feel totally let down by the apathy and indifference I have encountered in response to my enquiries.

Angela has arranged to meet on Thursday 18th December to discuss things further, following which I look forward to a thorough investigation.

Yours sincerely

Haydi O'Brien



Haydi O'Brien | Network Field Support Advisor

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