

Message

From: Mark R Davies [GRO]
on behalf of Mark R Davies [GRO]
Sent: 05/12/2014 10:06:40
To: Belinda Crowe [GRO]
Subject: Re: BBC News - Horizon

Hi

I called. I've just seen Nick W's latest email. I am tempted to offer an interview in which we simply say, in response to questions:

"The BBC is asking us to break the confidentiality of a mediation scheme, the workings of which were agreed by all parties. This is an intolerable position. We have gone over and above the responsibilities we have as a business. In two and a half years there has been no evidence etc...."

If I stick to that line what is the problem with doing an interview? I appreciate you may think I am sliding but I can't sit and take this garbage much more.

Mark

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
Mobile: [GRO]

Sent from my iPhone

On 5 Dec 2014, at 08:40, "Belinda Crowe [GRO]" wrote:

Can we speak at some point soo about this and Monday?
[GRO]

From: Mark R Davies
Sent: Thursday, December 04, 2014 05:02 PM
To: Belinda Crowe
Subject: Fwd: BBC News - Horizon

hi
Read the chain from bottom including the Nick Wallis call note. Sounds like MPs might do something as a collective shortly. If that happens we need to think again about whether to agree to an interview - me, not Paula. Otherwise it could end up back in Parliament.
I pretty much agree with Mel's view here, but we might need to be ready to change approach.
m

Mark Davies
Communications and Corporate Affairs Director
Mobile: [GRO]

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Melanie Corfield [GRO]
Date: 4 December 2014 14:55:07 GMT
To: Ruth X Barker [GRO], Mark R Davies
[GRO] >
Subject: RE: BBC News - Horizon

Hi

Just had a chat with Belinda about this one. We are hoping that Nick Wallis will be given the letter that Paula sent to JA but if he isn't we feel reluctant, on balance, to provide it ourselves. This is really because, in view of the bigger picture - we should if possible maintain our moral high ground re not speaking about the details within the scheme. I do wonder however, if JA is intending to issue a response to Paula's letter to the BBC without even showing them her letter!

On his recent blog Nick Wallis indicated that he was working on an "investigation" that might be broadcast in January - we can assume it is Sparrow. He might already, as part of that work, have interviews from people in the scheme or indeed other subpostmasters with complaints (since he was trawling for these). So there might well be some existing content in the bag that he can bring to life with the new angle of (presumably) POL refusing to mediate some cases, even when Second Sight recommend it.

Our current problem is of course that we do not know what JA's response (or JFSA's) to Paula's letter will be. There will be a Working Group Face to Face on Monday as well as your meeting Mark with Oliver Letwin. It might well be that until those are completed we will remain in the dark about whether there will be any walkaways from the scheme or JA making statement that he is now advising JFSA to move to litigation for example.

Belinda and I think that we should not change our stance to date for the time being (even if this means taking another short "hit"). We can go back to Nick to re-iterate previous points we have made about confidentiality of scheme, inappropriateness of interview but offer statement along the lines pasted below? After all he is essentially asking Paula to respond to something that hasn't even happened yet (ie the response to her letter!) While Nick is still fishing around we need to avoid giving him anything new? Happy to discuss. I am in a meeting this pm and I know you are involved in another issue. I have to leave promptly tonight for a commitment but around in the morning.

Mel

There has now been more than 2.5 years of investigations and independent review which now includes the re-examination of the majority of the individual complaints put forward. The fact that no fault with the Horizon system has been found is welcome re-assurance for the [x] people who work in our network and our [x] customers.

Post Office has gone to great lengths to establish the facts. It instigated an overall independent review as well as an impartially-chaired scheme for the re-investigation of around 150 individual cases, with funding for the complainants to engage professional advisors to support them.

The scheme is continuing and each and every one of the remaining cases will be subject to the same rigorous approach of re-investigation and independent review by forensic accountants Second Sight.

[Post Office continues to act in good faith in responding to the questioning of the integrity of the system which millions of people rely on every day. But, just as it would be wholly wrong to fail to respond to any evidence of flaws in that system, Post Office cannot be expected to ignore clear evidence that directly contradicts accusations made.]

From: Ruth X Barker
Sent: 04 December 2014 13:57
To: Mark R Davies
Cc: Melanie Corfield
Subject: FW: BBC News - Horizon

Hi

For info.

Mel's discussing our response with Belinda and we will feed back later. Re the matter of the letter and whether we share this.

Ruth

From: Gabrielle O'Gara
Sent: 04 December 2014 13:24
To: Ruth X Barker
Subject: BBC News - Horizon

Ruth, Nick Wallis called regarding an interview with Paula on Horizon for BBC News/One Show. They would like to do this tomorrow or over the weekend.

Basically, they have got wind of a letter that Paula sent to a number of MPs regarding PO's position on the mediation system. The MPs are expected to release a response over the coming days which will bring a large degree of information on scheme into the public domain. He hasn't seen the letter but hopes to by the time the interview takes place. The interview will question the integrity of the system and the claims of the spms involved.

Can you give him a call on GRO or email: nickGRO or nick.wallisGRO

Gabrielle

Gabrielle O'Gara I Post Office Press Office

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