

Process for seeking relief on losses

Version 1
15th Dec 2005

Owner:

This process, consistent with the contractual relationships between Post Office Ltd and its agents, is designed to clarify circumstances where mitigation may be appropriate and to provide a clear framework to handle individual cases.

The overall purpose of the process is to:

- Ensure probity, objectivity and conformity across the network in a commercial manner
- Clarify roles and responsibilities;
- Ensure equality and fairness of treatment of Subpostmasters and other agents.

As noted above, the agent is responsible for all branch losses. Occasionally, there may be exceptional circumstances that allow for relief (either repaying the loss by instalments or writing-off part or all of the loss). The main circumstances where consideration may be given are:

- losses incurred by a new agent (one without previous post office experience and who offers personal service at the branch) during the first six weeks of appointment;
- where there is clear evidence of financial hardship
- Distressing personal circumstances incurred at the branch that impacted the sub postmaster's ability to function on the day in question

If a subpostmaster considers that there are mitigating circumstances he must apply in writing to the area performance manager who will assess whether relief from the loss is justified (or whether a face to face meeting is required). The subpostmaster must be prepared to give full details to support his request.

The area performance manager will forward the case and a recommendation to the Branch Accounting and control manager in Product and Branch accounting. A

representative of the Finance Director within PBA has the right to challenge the recommendation.

A decision will be taken within 28 days. The decision taken and communicated via the area performance manager will be final and no further appeals will be allowed.

It must be emphasised that this process will operate by exception and is not a means by which subpostmasters can abrogate their contractual responsibilities.