

MS/LW

31 August 2012



NFSP

Dave Hulbert
Senior Service Manager
IT - Post Office Ltd
Dearne House
Cortonwood Drive
Barnsley
S73 0UF

Dear Dave

Re: Semilong Post Office – Mrs Jane Brewer

Further to my initial conversation with you this week I am writing formally to ask that Post Office Limited instigate a full investigation and report on the circumstances at Semilong Post Office and the concerns that the Subpostmistress has regarding the performance of her Horizon equipment.

The Subpostmistress has had real concerns over a period of two years, during which she has suffered unexplained losses, and it seems that recently Fujitsu too have expressed some doubts that the kit has been functioning properly. This follows a visit by their engineer on August 2nd to replace a faulty pin-pad, when I believe that further issues were identified. I understand that since then there have been ongoing investigations and monitoring.

I will give a resumé of facts and events as a useful background and which I believe to be relevant to this case:

- The Subpostmistress has been in office at Semilong since 1987, has a wealth of experience and involvement in the business that pre-dates her taking on this office.
- Her assistants too are fully experienced, have been with her for many years and have been very reliable over that extended period.
- The office has had a good record of accuracy and performance up until two years ago when significant losses started occurring for which no explanation was evident. The losses were in the region of approximately £80 a week initially, averaging around £300 - £500 per month.
- This led to the Subpostmistress making repeated calls to the helpline – she reckons at least one every other month – and always declaring and making good these significant losses.
- I am told that she regularly checked the tills, adding to pressure on staff, and that the losses were random – not always on the same day or time of day.

- On the advice of her Contracts Manager who responded to the repeated Helpline calls, Mrs Brewer contacted the police, who interviewed all at the office.
- Individual stock units were set up and CCTV was installed at the Subpostmistresses cost. Still unexplained losses continued.
- The Subpostmistress was concerned that components of her equipment needed replacing but was advised that this was not necessary as no signs of failure or error were evident.
- Over the period in question I believe that the Subpostmistress has made good a total sum of branch discrepancies amounting to £10,755.35. A further branch discrepancy of just over £1,760 issued on 3rd August has, I believe, been blocked pending further investigation – as a consequence of the engineers visit on 2nd August.

- **GRO** The Subpostmistress has spent endless time analysing accounts, reports and stock and has drawn down money from savings and a personal pension to make good losses.

- On August 2nd it seems that when replacing a faulty pin-pad the Fujitsu engineer identified further issues with the equipment and reported his findings upwards there and then.
- Since then a replacement plate and AD cable have been fitted and following further monitoring by the Horizon team more replacement parts were authorised, including a land cable and hub.
- I am advised that Subpostmistress' Contract Manager and the Fujitsu/Horizon Team are monitoring the situation further. Mrs Brewer has been made aware of the involvement of various parties including 'technical design' and of issues such as 'looping', 'packet losses', 'drop outs' and 'time outs'.
- The Subpostmistress reports that since the replacement of various components she has experienced no significant losses.

I am sure you will appreciate our concern over this case and the fact that it seems that the Subpostmistress is still awaiting a formal response from the business with regard to these circumstances.

I appreciate your commitment to investigating this fully and look forward to your response and comments once you have been able to look at all aspects of this case.

Yours sincerely

GRO

MARILYN STODDART
Assistant General Secretary