Branch Support Programme – Terms of Reference

Background

To address the concerns about the Horizon system that have been raised by some subpostmasters over recent years, the Post Office commissioned an independent review of their cases. The company that conducted the review issued an interim report on Monday 8th July 2013. The review made it clear that the Horizon computer system and its supporting processes function effectively across our network. It did however raise questions about the training and support we have offered some subpostmasters. It has been acknowledged that this needs to be investigated further and improvements need to be made.

The purpose of this Programme is to understand the current business processes, operational procedures and ways of working which are in place to support branches, identify the gaps and produce recommendations to rectify the issues.

Scope

The interim report identified the following areas of concern which will be included within the scope of the Programme.

- Post Office's attitude to subpostmasters which is often defensive and unsympathetic, with a focus to recover assets rather than to identify the root cause of the problem. There is a lack of a subpostmaster "voice" or opportunities for them to raise their concerns.

- Inadequate Helpdesk support with responses that are script based, coupled with a decrease in overall branch support

- Lack of timely, accurate and complete information provided to subpostmasters to support them in resolving issues

- Inexperienced trainers and gaps in training coverage

- Lack of centralised data or files specific to each branch which hinders a quality investigation from taking place.

Whilst the review has concentrated on the cases raised by subpostmasters, each branch segment within the network will be considered within the programme.

Approach

The approach will be to operate the Programme following normal project management principles. A governance structure will be established, key stakeholders identified and a project plan with key milestones and deliverables will be developed. The initial activity will be to engage with the key people to ensure they are committed to delivering the specific activity required within their respective work areas. The progress with the Programme will be tracked against the successful delivery against the plan.

Governance and key stakeholders

Alice Perkins and Paula Vennells have requested the establishment of the Programme which will be led by Angela Van-Den-Bogerd. Gayle Peacock and Amanda Stevens will be accountable for running the Programme on an operational level.

The following table outlines the different key stakeholders, their areas of responsibility and suggested people who would input at the working group level. The Programme Board will agree how the Programme should be managed to ensure the objectives are delivered.

Business Area	Programme Board	Working Group level	Reason for inclusion within the group
Network – Contact Centres	Amanda Stevens	Kendra Dickinson	Responsible for managing NBSC who are the first point of help for subpostmasters. Programme could also have an impact on POEX.
Network – Performance	Gayle Peacock	TBC	Responsible for outbound interventions to drive performance for non-sales area. Data team sit within this area. Multiple partner non-sales relationship.
Network – Network Services	Craig Tuthill		Responsible for agent contractual policy and deployment, including the recovery of agent debt
Network – Field Support	Drew McBride	Sue Richardson	Responsible for training, support and audits to all branch network
Network – Sales	Karl Oliver/Andy Kingham/Pam Heap		Responsible for engaging subpostmasters on sales.
Network – Crown & WHSmith	Julie Thomas	Tom Pegler	Responsible for supporting Crown branches both in training and performance management
Network – Agent Development	Nick Beal		Responsible for agent pay and relationship with NFSP
Finance	Rod Ismay	Andy Winn/Alison Bolsover/Paul Lebeter	Responsible for branch accounting and client settlement. Also responsible for resolving specific branch accounting issues
Security	John Scott/Sally Smith	Joanne Hancock/Dave	Responsible for detecting, investigating and preventing branch fraud

Business Area	Programme Board	Working Group level	Reason for inclusion within the group
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Network – Cash Services	Doug Brown	Graham Tilley/Clive Holmes/Rebecca Portch	Responsible for managing cash provision to branches
IT	Dave Hulbert	TBC	Responsible for branch systems (and management of HSD?
IT RoadMap	TBC	TBC	Potential development of IT infrastructure to support activity may be required
Communications	Alana Renner	Richard Weaver	Responsible for internal and branch communication
HR	Ann Miller/Fay Healey	TBC	Responsible for colleague induction and training and development

Other people will be brought into the Programme if and when required as part of the individual work streams.

Key Deliverables

The Programme will be responsible for delivering the following:

- Mapping the "as-is" process for providing branch support and the various touch points for branches

- Undertaking a gap-analysis for each of the respective areas regarding the concerns raised in the interim report

- Producing recommendations for how the relevant gaps will be closed, supported by a deployment and resource plan

The Programme will establish key work streams which will be responsible for delivering an agreed set of lower level deliverables.

(Need to agree timescales with Angela)

Key Performance Indicators and Measures

The measure of success for the Programme will be to have consistent and effective training and support mechanisms in place for all types of branches, resulting in an engaged network of subpostmasters and colleagues, whilst protecting the assets and brand of Post Office. Measures for the Programme will include:

Key Performance Indicator	Measures
Agent and colleague engagement/satisfaction	Branch survey – which focuses on value driven by each interaction, advisor knowledge, behaviour, follow up High profile complaints/flag cases Contact centre measures Reducing effort for branches to receive the right support First time resolution
Quality of training and support provided	Improve branch performance against conformance standards, including volume of transaction corrections Kendata (?) feedback on support provided at training Consistency of contract case management – (measure to be defined) Number and type of training/support interventions FTR QA/follow up check with branch that intervention/contact met needs
Branch losses and debt	Number and value of current agent debt – amounts not to increase Number and value of former agent debt – amounts not to increase Suspense account entries –measure to be confirmed FTR QA/follow up check with branch that intervention/contact met needs
Costs	Cost of resource to deliver required improvement changes
Structure	How is POL organised to deliver high quality levels of branch support and engagement consistently?
System	Robustness of the system Calls into HSD Number and type of issues not to be increased

Risks and Issues

Each area will define their respective risks and issues. The known Programme risks and issues at this stage are:

- Lack of resource/funds to develop a technical solution to support consistent working across business functions.

- Inability to change people's mind-sets and ways of working

- Technical infrastructure and product transaction flow too complex to make things easier for branches and our customers.

Dependencies

There are a number of other business activities which the Programme will be either a dependency for or have a dependency on which include:

- Royal Mail Group Separation for the Network Business Support Centre.

- Network Agency Sales Engagement activity and revised organisation structure.

- Digital Channel Strategy

- Network Transformation Programme.

- Fraud Software Programme pilot to help improve the detection of fraud.

Version control

Date	Version	Reason for change	Name of sign off
12.7.2013	v.1	Initial terms of reference draft	
19.7.2013	v.2	Revised following input from Amanda	