

To: Paula Vennells [GRO]
Cc: Rod Ismay [GRO]; Paul M Brown [GRO]; Mark Bryant [GRO]; Gavin Lambert [GRO]; Tom Wechsler [GRO]; Avene O'Farrell [GRO]; Alisdair Cameron [GRO]; Colin Stuart [GRO]; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd [GRO]; [GRO]; Lesley J Sewell [GRO]; Mark R Davies [GRO]; Neil Wilkinson [GRO]
From: Martin George [GRO]
Sent: Fri 29/05/2015 9:27:29 PM (UTC)
Subject: Re: Unreasonable conduct - resolution of Mr Barfoot's complaint
[image006.png](#)

Message received Paula.
Martin

Martin George - Commercial Director

GRO

On 29 May 2015, at 22:13, Paula Vennells <[GRO]> wrote:

Rod, thank you. This is really most helpful. Well done for resolving it.

My attention turns to the cause - we have to insist on automation. Our new front office requirement can be used to go to clients and insist: if they went to any of our competitors, there are few now who would entertain processing paper counterfoils/payment slips.

I'm assuming this is a non-negotiable part of simpler product and customer journeys? And is in the project? I'm copying Martin, Paul and Mark Bryant as this is such a good real life example of the opportunity and surely has to feed into the product simplification and profitability work.

I'd like confirmation.

Thanks,
Paula

Paula Vennells
Chief Executive
Post Office Ltd

T: [GRO]

[GRO]

Sent from my iPad

On 29 May 2015, at 13:43, Rod Ismay [GRO] > wrote:

Paula,

I have now spoken to Mr Barfoot.

He has given me his taxpayer reference code and we are now able to resolve the incident.

Resolution involves contact with Santander as the intermediary who provide account payment information to HMRC. This is in hand today. We have spoken directly to Santander and they will speak with HMRC this afternoon.

I am asking Customer Care to make a goodwill payment to Mr Barfoot.

I am also asking Branch Support to ensure that the branch in which he paid his tax bill are clear on the process for administering such a transaction. It is important that the branch takes the tear off Transcash payment slip and sends it to Santander at the end of the day. That slip contains critical information for Santander and HMRC to ensure that they can allocate the payment against the proper taxpayers account.

In this instance, the tear off slip had not been taken at the counter. Mr Barfoot subsequently queried the branch and helpline. It seems that he could have been given more specific advice to enable the incident to be resolved more swiftly.

I am going to ensure we work with Customer Care to review the scripting and templates used in replies similar to the one to Mr Barfoot. The failure to take tear off slips is not uncommon and the important remedy is to ask the customer to provide a copy of paperwork which includes their unique taxpayer reference code to Santander. It may be the case that we need the call scripts and letter to be clearer about the taxpayer reference code.

Mr Barfoot was grateful for this intervention today but frustrated that he has had to endure several months of distressing correspondence and that he had been told he needed to initiate a formal complaint to get this resolved.

As regards "holding accounts" we have described to Second Sight, face to face and in writing, the situation regarding suspense / holding accounts. The branch is not impacted by this matter, but as a result of the branch not taking the relevant paperwork, the funds would have been in a "holding account" at HMRC pending them being able to allocate the payment to the relevant taxpayer account.

Fundamentally, we would like to be in a situation where all customer bill payments are initiated from barcoded bills as opposed to bills with tear off slips. This is a commercial matter that is on the table for consideration in terms of improved customer and branch experience as well as an enabler for back office efficiency. It would require significant change within corporate clients.

Kind regards

Rod

Rod Ismay | Head of Finance Service Centre

<image001.png>

2nd Floor West Block, No 1 Future Walk, West Bars, Chesterfield, S49 1PF

GRO

Email

GRO

Post Office Finance – 2014 Winners Public & Voluntary Sector

Best Finance Team 2014 Best Annual Report & Accounts

BusinessFinance
Awards 2014



<image007.jpg>

From: Paula Vennells

Sent: 29 May 2015 09:18

To: Gavin Lambert

Cc: Tom Wechsler; Avene O'Farrell; Alisdair Cameron; Colin Stuart; Angela Van-Den-Bogerd; Rod Ismay; Lesley J Sewell; Mark R Davies

Subject: Fwd: Unreasonable conduct

Gavin can you personally handle this please. Although I expect it is a one-off, as I genuinely

haven't heard of anything like this before, we have been inept in handling it and I would like to learn the lessons, once it is resolved.

More immediately and importantly, it will be unhelpful if any Sparrow connection is made, as reference to money held in holding accounts has also been voiced by the JFSA. My understanding is that is not the case. Can I have that reconfirmed as well please.

I would like this case resolved today if at all possible and certainly senior contact made with Mr Barfoot.

Gavin, I've copied a number of colleagues as I'm not entirely sure who is best placed to help you. Could each person copied please read and get in touch with Gavin if you can help, or know where to point him.

Al is away, so Colin and Rod copied in his absence.

Thank you,
Paula

Paula Vennells
Chief Executive
Post Office Ltd

GRO

Sent from my iPad
Begin forwarded message:

From: Paula Vennells <[redacted] GRO>
Date: 29 May 2015 08:57:08 BST
To: Martin Barfoot <[redacted] GRO>
Subject: Re: Unreasonable conduct

Martin, thank you first of all for taking the time to let me know. This is the first time I have heard of anything like this happening - I am very sorry. And would be as frustrated as you rightly are.

Please leave this with me - I will get on to it today and either I or one of my senior managers will respond to you personally.

Thank you for your patience.

Paula

Paula Vennells
Chief Executive
Post Office Ltd

GRO

Sent from my iPad

On 29 May 2015, at 00:23, Martin Barfoot <[redacted] GRO> wrote:

Dear Paula Vennells

I need to contact you directly to bring a matter to your attention.

I paid my income tax bill via the Post Office on 23rd December 2014. The cheque was made payable to the Post Office and the

money (£3885) left my account on 30th December 2014. Since the 31st January deadline for payment HMRC has been sending me many demands for payment, including fines, as they have not received payment. I have had to make several lengthy phonecalls and write 2 letters including scans of my receipt and bank statement.

I re-visited the post office branch at 151 Cowley Rd OX4 1UT on 28th March and was told the payment had been held up in a holding account, but was being directed to the correct account. I did not completely understand these details but was assured the money would go to the correct place.

Still the demands and fines were sent to me, and HMRC have been phoning me. So I re-visited the post office again and was told I needed to raise a complaint. after another lengthy phone call I did so (CAS987745V4Y5M5) on 7th May. I have sent a copy of the scanned receipt as requested, 3 weeks has passed and no response has been forthcoming.

I am a Homephone customer. I am amazed that the Post Office would a) not pay the bill, b) not return the cheque uncashed to the bank, or to me, c) not tell me my bill is unpaid, d) cash the cheque and keep my money for over 5 months now. It is virtually theft.

Yours faithfully Martin Barfoot

<image006.png>