

## Message

**From:** Mark R Davies [GRO]  
**on behalf of** [GRO]  
**Sent:** 08/07/2013 06:48:03  
**To:** Paula Vennells [GRO]  
**CC:** Martin Edwards [GRO]; Susan Crichton [GRO] Alwen  
Lyons [GRO]; Lesley J Sewell [GRO]  
**Subject:** Re: Draft statement

Paula

On my way in now and will think this through.

But you are right - we must stick with systemic.

Mark

Sent from my iPhone

On 8 Jul 2013, at 07:30, "Paula Vennells" [GRO] wrote:

Morning all!

Can we do something to diffuse this? See below note from Alan Bates. Helpful that we now have a relationship is the starting point. The subsequent is that he has a problem - he has been using the word systemic in relation to the PO and not Horizon.... I suggest you read the note.

I could do with a line before I speak with Alan at 9am. The problem is that the statement he doesn't like is in the SS report, which of course produced the outcome we needed in respect of Horizon. I do not wish to change that. We could show willing by adapting something in our statement. But I need to understand better from him what is wrong as we have clearly said there were shortcomings in handling and response. Mark, if you are in, it might be good if you sit in the 9am call, so that you can hear his issue.

What is good news is that he is looking for another word (last line). It would be good to find one because if he goes back to using 'systemic' in relation to the PO failures to respond, we are not necessarily in a much better place.

Paula

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Alan Bates [GRO]  
**Date:** 7 July 2013 21:59:17 BST  
**To:** 'Paula Vennells' [GRO]  
**Subject:** RE: Draft statement

Hello Paula, I know we will be speaking in the morning, but I thought it only fair let you know that apart from a few general points there is one comment that we, JFSA, would have a problem with if asked.

"The report confirms that no systemic problems have been found in relation to the Horizon system, but suggests that the Post Office should examine its support and training processes for subpostmasters."

It is the "no systemic problems" comment, and from reading the report it seems to be because they replaced the word "systemic" with "thematic".

In the past I have made it very clear to many others that it is the "systemic failures of Post Office" in areas relating to investigation, support, training, etc., that we believe have been the root cause of so many victims problems. With that comment as it stands undoubtedly I would be asked many questions about it.

It seems the use of the word "systemic" is causing us both concern, is there an alternative?

Regards  
Alan

-----Original Message-----

From: Paula Vennells [GRO]  
Sent: 07 July 2013 20:26  
To: Alan Bates  
Subject: Fwd: Draft statement

Dear Alan, I haven't heard back from you, so I trust you don't mind receiving this mail on a Sunday evening. (I texted earlier this evening to check if it would be ok to send you our draft statement and a copy of the SS report.)

I understand you already have the report. I attach the Post Office draft statement. We have worked hard on this to retain balance but also to demonstrate as I mentioned when we spoke on Thursday and Friday, that I am very serious about how we do respond - with openness to listen and with a keenness to improve where things could be better.

You will see that I have suggested three commitments, which we will put in place and I hope as you indicated on our calls, that you will be prepared to work with us to participate collaboratively and to oversee or help implement the recommendations.

Additionally, I will as promised meet with you personally after tomorrow, to hear the detail on how one or two of the past cases were handled, which you think should be brought to my attention.

Alan - I have just received your text. That is fine, I will try to call you around 9am tomorrow. And we can fix up where to meet at 3pm at the same time.

Kind regards,

Paula

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