

Message

From: Alwen Lyons [GRO]
on behalf of Alwen Lyons [GRO] [GRO]
Sent: 29/07/2016 09:48:58
To: Tim Parker [GRO]; 'kenmccall' [GRO] [GRO];
'carl' [GRO]; 'carla' [GRO]; Virginia Holmes [GRO]; Tim Franklin
[GRO]; richard.callard [GRO]; Paula Vennells
[GRO]; Alisdair Cameron [GRO]
CC: Kevin Gilliland [GRO]; Nicholas Kennett [GRO]; Martin
George [GRO]; Neil Hayward [GRO]; David Hussey
[GRO]; Alwen Lyons [GRO]; Jane MacLeod
[GRO]; Tom Wechsler [GRO]
Subject: Postmaster Litigation - Update to Board

Dear All

Please find below a message from Jane.

Thanks

Alwen

Dear All

As you will recall from the briefing provided at the May board, although formal proceedings have still not been served on Post Office (although we expect these by 11 August), we have been in discussion with Freeths (the solicitors acting for the claimants) on a range of issues and we were advised yesterday that the number of claimants has now increased to 198; again this was not unexpected.

As mentioned in my briefing at the May board, on 28 April Freeths had sent to us a lengthy Letter of Claim. Bond Dickinson (on our behalf) responded to this last night. The response letter (which runs to 99 pages) provides a detailed rebuttal to each and every issue raised in the Letter of Claim, and was discussed at length within Post Office and has been reviewed by our QC Tony Robinson.

While none of the allegations set out in the Letter of Claim are new, and we are not relying on any new information in our rebuttal, the tone of our response is more assertive than we have used previously, given that our rebuttal arguments will help to shape the issues that will form the basis of any litigation. Although the rebuttal is a legal letter between the two firms of solicitors, we fully expect that it will be made available to the claimants and therefore we should assume that its contents will become public, and it has been written with this risk in mind.

Should we become aware of any planned media coverage, we will let you know, however our communications approach will continue to be the Postmasters have sought to resolve the matter through litigation and that is the appropriate forum through which the issues in the case should be resolved. Therefore we do not plan to make any external comment beyond "we are aware of a claim and are defending our position through the legal processes". To do otherwise will only serve to provoke further coverage.

In addition we have a range of reactive messaging ready to go to staff and postmasters; we have briefings ready to use for relevant managers, and will direct postmasters and staff to our established support procedures in the event of any concerns. We are also updating BIS on the risk of adverse coverage.

Please call me on [GRO] if you would like any further information.

Jane

Jane MacLeod
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