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**From:** Belinda Crowe[/O=MMS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=BELINDA CROWE79B93F11-569F-4526-A078-F5B4958A8917220]  
**Sent:** Fri 16/01/2015 2:00:25 PM (UTC)  
**To:** Mark Underwood1 [GRO]  
**Subject:** Fw: suspense accounts - Legally privileged for the purpose of seeking advice

[GRO]

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**From:** Alisdair Cameron  
**Sent:** Friday, January 16, 2015 01:58 PM  
**To:** Chris Aujard  
**Cc:** Belinda Crowe; Ruth Phillips; Peter Goodman; Rod Ismay  
**Subject:** RE: suspense accounts - Legally privileged for the purpose of seeking advice

Chris, Belinda thanks very much.

Rod Ismay is the right person to do this. He will fill in any blanks on the attached document and send it back to us. I suggest that you and I review the final draft before it goes back.

As ever, I may be more inclined to be open, while recognising the desire not to set more hares running. Talking to Rod, he is comfortable that we work systematically to stop branches being disadvantaged and where we have worked through client suspense accounts and released monies back to credit the p/l account, this operates independently of the branch accounting and the branches have not been disadvantaged. That is a good clear story.

In terms of the daily run of differences between the till and the system, which we used to call suspense accounts (but don't any more), we don't know what has happened and start from the premise that we are owed any till shortfall. There have been two circumstances where we identified that by pressing a particular sequence of keys a branch could create such a gap, erroneously. Those have been corrected and the branch compensated. So while we can demonstrate that we are alive to the possibility of error and behave correctly when it is identified and can state that we are not aware of any other such systematic issues, we cannot, I would suggest, categorically state that it couldn't happen elsewhere.

In addition, there can be circumstances in which by making a series of errors, a branch can, for example, create a cash deficit and a cheque surplus but make it impossible for us to align the two, which would benefit us at their expense. But we do try and stop this. Rod will try and quantify this in the expectation that the amounts are tiny compared to the agents' remuneration.

While Rod and I agree that he is the guy to sit with the Working Group and answer questions, I think he needs to be properly prepared. I would ask your team to arrange a rehearsal for Rod at which you can hurl all the most hostile questions at him, to make sure that the balance of the script doesn't set hares running.

I assume that you will be in the Working group and can offer some protection to Rod if required?

Does that work? Thanks Al

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**From:** Chris Aujard  
**Sent:** 16 January 2015 08:28  
**To:** Alisdair Cameron  
**Subject:** FW: suspense accounts

Al - FYI – just in case the well-oiled PA machine fails to ensure that this gets to you promptly.

As you will see, I really need someone from your team who is technically switched on re suspense accounts, and can handle themselves in front of an adversarial audience.

As you can imagine, I am concerned that we give Second Sight no more information than is necessary to address the narrow proposition that money that is “missing” from an SPMR account is somehow taken into our suspense account and then appropriated to our P&L.

Chris

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**From:** Belinda Crowe  
**Sent:** 15 January 2015 16:59  
**To:** Ruth Phillips  
**Cc:** Chris Aujard; Belinda Crowe  
**Subject:** suspense accounts

Tracy

As discussed, could you please pass this to Alisdair. Many thanks Belinda

Dear Alisdair

I understand that Chris Aujard has spoken to you about the discussion at yesterday’s Working Group meeting of the Complaint and Mediation Scheme. For some months, Second Sight and the independent chair of the Working Group – Sir Anthony Hooper – have been asking for information on the operation of the Post Office’s Suspense Account. Put simply, this amounts to:

- How much is absorbed into Post Office P&L from the suspense account each year; and
- How much of that relates to money which is/may be properly due to Subpostmasters.

The nub of the issue is whether it is possible for a Subpostmaster/Subpostmasters to have made good a loss in branch or held accountable for a loss where it later transpires that the money was not owed therefore Post Office gains.

Please find attached a more detailed note on Second Sight’s questions which you will see ask for rather more detail. It has become essential that we address these questions as a matter of urgency (although it could be that we cannot provide all the information Second Sight have requested in the attached document). The Chair of the Working Group is now pressing to provide answers as he has been asking for answers for some time. I’d be very grateful if you could give this your urgent consideration.

In addition, we have taken an action from the Working Group to organise a meeting between Second Sight and POL finance on these issues. I’d be grateful if you would also urgently consider who might attend such a meeting. Thank you in anticipation

Belinda

**Belinda Crowe**  
148 Old Street, LONDON, EC1V 9HQ

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