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Sent: Thur 18/12/2014 11:43:17 PM (UTC)
To: Mark R Davies; **GRO**
Subject: Thoughts

Mark

Apologies in advance for length of thoughts!

I haven't read Tom's attachment yet but agree re his top lines. From comms perspective I would say

- need to break apart the "150 can't be wrong/ are all innocent" stuff asap as this is essentially the driver for "there must be something in it" perception. There are in fact around 50 that have been through legal process - some through full court process, lots of guilty pleas but some juries, a few cautions I think. Noticeably only a small proportion going public. And this is all over around a decade. We can break this story down now through some of the more sensible MPs and a sensible journalist. The quicker we get the number down the better. We need to stop referring to 150 immediately anyway now Tony's letter is public.

- positioning by Nick Wallis and MPs that false accounting is just "ok-ing" some figures that people knew were not right. Harder to address perception of this. But we have cases that are a matter of public record that can demonstrate how ludicrous this positioning is. And we can bring into play serving subpostmasters (Ruth has ideas on some more who might speak for us).

- Remote access - I am working on the dismissal of the "remote access conspiracy" theory. It is so totally loony and need right words to explain that

- we must also not lose sight of fact that NW positioned "new cases" - we need to shut this myth down before it goes anywhere. I am in regular touch with Craig and Anne and they are aware of course re recent publicity. We can be clear that there are not "new cases" at all

- finally the Second Sight question - the hardest of all. Chatting to Ruth today about the difficulties, she wondered if we should think again about bringing in a big accountancy firm to finish the job, but positioning SS as still involved as consultants in some way eg some of the issues and volumes of material to go through mean they need extra help because we acknowledge that this must all progress more quickly? It would of course cost even more money and no idea if it is in any way workable contractually.....let alone practically. I think we will still potentially still be unfairly accused of trying to selectively use independent experts to "support" but more difficult to argue it if SS have a role.

However before we do anything about SS I think we have to break the story apart quickly as above in terms of the kind of cases we are actually dealing with (and the lengthy period over which they occurred). That is priority in my view. We might only need a few sensible MPs and one proper journalist to do it?

I will (of course!) give it all more thought. Sorry - prob not saying anything you haven't already thought about!

Mel

Mel Corfield

Communications Team

GRO