



Branch Secretaries' Circular

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Dear Branch Secretary

POST OFFICE UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Over recent weeks the inner workings of the Post Office have undergone more detailed public exposure than it has in many a year. Around a million of our customers now know a lot more about the Post Office than they once did.

The BBC2 documentary 'Signed, Sealed, Delivered - the Inside Story of the Post Office' revealed over three weeks the struggles and strains the business is currently experiencing. Viewers saw the profound impact of change on subpostmasters, some of whom are being taken in a direction they don't want to go. Viewers also got to know some new subpostmasters entering the business, for whom the new Post Office is an opportunity to expand their retail businesses.

They also saw a glimpse of the inner workings of the corporate Post Office, its managers, its peculiar language and shiny new London office. Last night's Panorama BBC1 documentary sought to get underneath the bright shiny exterior of the Post Office and reveal a less palatable side of the business: the long-standing issue of prosecutions of subpostmasters and the alleged systematic failings of Horizon looks set to continue for some time yet.

Over the past few years the NFSP has received thousands of telephone calls from subpostmasters. The majority relate to employment law, contract issues and network transformation. The remainder cover ATMS, cash supply and just about every subject you care to mention, including a handful every month on Horizon connectivity and the problems of getting through to Atos and the help desk.

Put simply, the NFSP has not received calls from subpostmasters querying Horizon and alleging systematic failings. If there were a widespread problem, our subpostmasters would have made us aware of it. As a result, we have no choice but to conclude that Horizon is a fundamentally sound and safe system.

With a new Government and a new chairman on the way, the pressure on the Post Office will intensify over the coming months. We have seen from its latest financial reports that the Post Office remains a struggling business, unable to do more than steady the ship in the face of increasingly fierce competition; navigating a route to growth and commercial success is still some way off. As subpostmasters with a commercial interest in a successful Post Office, we must hope that the organisation is able to successfully focus on the business in hand.

Here is the Post Office's response to Panorama:

<http://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/bbc-panorama-our-response>

Yours sincerely

GRO

GEORGE THOMSON
General Secretary