POL00305595

From: Chris M Day[/O=MMS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=CHRIS M DAY27882EBF-5128-4A48-9E06-EF91E3501C80]

Sent: Sun 10/08/2014 8:45:57 PM (UTC)

To: Martin Edwards GRO Belinda Crowe GRO

Subject: Re: Second Sight: Part 2 Response

Thanks Martin, and I agree with (almost) all of your points, particularly around adding specific examples where possible.
On your first question, I do believe we've gone beyond the point where a more subtle and/or diplomatic approach might yield a more helpful response from SS.
The only one I felt a bit nervous about was making direct reference to the LL work - Belinda, if Chris is reading texts then this would be one I'd like his view on.
Other than that I think it's fine and I'm happy to sign it, so long as bringing in another party (me) doesn't confuse any party.

Happy to discuss tomorrow am.

Chris

From: Martin Edwards
Sent: Sunday, August 10, 2014 10:37 AM
To: Belinda Crowe
Cc: Chris M Day
Subject: Re: Second Sight: Part 2 Response

Hi Belinda

I've read the letter now. Overall I think it's completely the right thing to do. It's obviously very firm, but nothing jumped out at me as going too far. The only reason I'd soften it is if we thought we had a better chance of getting SS on board to make the necessary changes with a more diplomatic approach - but I'm guessing we're not in that place?

Just a couple of other comments:
- if possible without too much additional work, it would be good to include in the letter some specific examples and cross-references to the elements of the report which fall short of the required standards (or cross-refer to where this is covered in the annex). Having read the letter by itself (as I did) it risks sounding like a series of generalised assertions rather than specific, evidence-based comments - which could then be dismissed as just being the Post Office's opinion.
- is it worth mentioning that we've also taken views from Linklaters and they agree in their professional opinion with our assessment of the report? Might help to reinforce the point that, objectively, the report falls short of acceptable professional standards (and it's not just us saying that);
- in the para on the first page where you talk about the significant cost we've invested to date, worth emphasising that this is public money (and perhaps also mention how much has been spent on SS to date?). Will help underline why we have an obligation to demand acceptable standards (and also useful if the letter gets into the public domain).

Give me a shout if useful to discuss.

Thanks,
Martin

From: Belinda Crowe
Sent: Friday, August 08, 2014 04:25 PM
To: Chris M Day; Martin Edwards
Cc: Belinda Crowe
Subject: Second Sight: Part 2 Response

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Chris, we discussed the fact that I am preparing to send a letter to Second Sight in response to their 'generic' report which will go to applicants in the Scheme and may well end up becoming public.

I have left a message for Chris Aujard as I understand he is picking up some texts in the hope that he will clear this over the weekend. However, if he doesn't, Paula asked that you clear it. The text of the letter, which is near final, is attached. Martin is copied as he has agreed to take a look.

There is an annex to go with the addressing the detailed points but they are technical and run to many pages (and are still being worked on).

The aim is to get this out on Monday so I wanted to give you chance to have a look at this rather than hit you with it on Monday.

We have been advised by Linklaters and Brunswick and their comments have been taken on board.

Paula is generally supportive of a robust approach and I am pretty certain Chris is. It is a strong letter but the generic report is potentially very damaging for the Post Office and also the quality of Second sight's work, not only on this report but the individual case reports is so poor that I think we need something formally on the record that shows that we have made attempts to tackle this. the danger of not doing is that we could get criticised for the amount of money we have paid them for such poor quality.

There is a risk that Second Sight pass this to JFSA who make it public as proof that Post Office is attempting to fetter Second Sight's independence and the letter is drafted in a way to mitigate that.

Finally, I may need to ask you to sign it if I cannot get Chris to clear it. I would be happy to sign it but the general view here is that in view of the contents I should not do so as I am secretariat to the Working Group.

I would be happy to discuss and with luck (although not for him) I will manage to get hold of Chris.

Best wishes

Belinda Crowe
148 Old Street, LONDON, EC1V 9HQ

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