

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE POST OFFICE TRIAL

1. This note summarises media coverage of the trial involving Post Office and 557 claimants.
2. The opening week of the trial saw the most coverage, with 16 pieces of coverage; mostly in top-tier publications (this included a number of articles previewing the trial).
3. Most articles were neutral to negative in sentiment, and largely covered historic allegations. Most journalists characterised the legal proceedings as a chance for individuals to claim justice against the Post Office. Tabloid journalists tended to focus hard on the 'human interest' angle of the story, as well as the costs of the hearing and the number of claimants.
4. All articles carried some form of the Post Office's statement, and in the most influential outlets this featured prominently. The message of 0.01 percent of affected users since the year 2000 was well carried.
5. The FT reported on the Post Office claim that legal proceedings could have a 'material' impact.
6. There was a significant decrease in coverage in the second week of the trial, with only four articles and only one in a leading outlet (the Financial Times). The remainder were published in Computer Weekly.
7. The third week saw a slight increase in coverage, with nine articles published which mentioned the hearing.

8. Most notably, the case of former Postmaster, Seema Misra, was featured as part of a three-minute segment on ITV News. The item included the Post Office's statement but was negative in tone. This has not, however, led to much pick-up on social media or elsewhere. The Daily Mail published a lengthy article on the same case in print and online (<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6403711/Mother-jailed-stealing-74-000-Post-Office-bosses-hushed-error.html>), and Private Eye also covered the story. It is not the first time Ms Misra's case has been featured in the media.
9. Other than the ITV feature, there has been very limited broadcast coverage: the trial has featured once in the BBC radio news headlines. BBC Wales Online has covered the case of ex-postmaster Noel Thomas <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-46110905>
10. In the trade and regional media there has been sustained low-level interest. The Shropshire Star published an article on the case of a Shrewsbury-based Postmaster.
11. Computer Weekly and the website www.postofficetrial.com, created by journalist Nick Wallis, covering the trial on a daily basis, with the latter live Tweeting from the Courtroom, as well as writing extensive daily blog posts. Both Mr Wallis and Computer Weekly have covered the issue regularly for a number of years.
12. There has been some activity on social media during the trial, but this has largely been confined to campaigners.
13. Post Office continues to actively monitor media and social media coverage and will update colleagues after the closing arguments in the trial (w/c 3rd December).

ANNEX – selection of coverage in the main media outlets plus dedicated outlets that are reporting daily from court (Computer Weekly and journalist Nick Wallis' blog)

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2018/11/07/post-office-taken-court-system-blamed-causing-health-criminals/>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6352691/Post-Office-legal-battle-former-branch-managers-claim-wrongly-accused-theft.html>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6403711/Mother-jailed-stealing-74-000-Post-Office-bosses-hushed-error.html>

<https://www.pressreader.com/uk/daily-mail/20181105/281874414415425>

<https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252452444/Post-Office-trial-throws-up-more-known-computer-problems>

<https://www.ft.com/content/0d5cd8f8-e82e-11e8-8a85-04b8afea6ea3>

<https://www.ft.com/content/23ba0376-e2ae-11e8-8e70-5e22a430c1ad>

www.postofficetrial.com

Private Eye Article (scanned separately)