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**From:** Elliot Jacobs (1)/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=5F1089F532374E92A9910D8CC2A0D942-ELLIOT JACO]

**Sent:** Sat 10/02/2024 1:21:56 PM (UTC)

**To:** Karen McEwan[karen.mcewan@GRO]; Amanda Burton (1)[amanda.burton1@GRO]; Owen Woodley[Owen.Woodley@GRO]; Nick Read[Nick.Read1@GRO]; Benjamin Tidswell[benjamin.tidswell1@GRO]; Saf ismail (1)[saf.ismail1@GRO]; Brian Gaunt (1)[brian.gaunt1@GRO]; Andrew Darfoor (1)[andrew.darfoor1@GRO]; Simon Jeffreys (1)[simon.jeffreys1@GRO]; Lorna.Gratton@GRO; Lorna.Gratton@GRO

**Cc:** Chris Brocklesby[chris.brocklesby@GRO]

**Subject:** Re: Confidential: Project Phoenix and NFSP Announcement

In case it would seem that I'm implying due process and rigour should not be applied, for the avoidance of doubt, I am not saying that.

I do not deny the importance of that- we know this organisation has failed horrifically in doing that before!

It does however seem odd that not a single one is suspended whilst this is ongoing? Why is that? We seem to suspend people on a regular basis when investigations are ongoing? Why not on this matter?

And is redeploying really the only solution? How does this fix the culture challenge we have here?

I think further board discussion and ongoing update on this is vital.

Elliot

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

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**From:** Karen McEwan <karen.mcewan@GRO>

**Sent:** Saturday, February 10, 2024 12:31:54 PM

**To:** Amanda Burton (1) <amanda.burton1@GRO>; Owen Woodley <Owen.Woodley@GRO>; Elliot Jacobs (1) <elliot.jacobs1@GRO>; Nick Read <Nick.Read1@GRO>; Benjamin Tidswell <benjamin.tidswell1@GRO>; Saf ismail (1) <saf.ismail1@GRO>; Brian Gaunt (1) <brian.gaunt1@GRO>; Andrew Darfoor (1) <andrew.darfoor1@GRO>; Simon Jeffreys (1) <simon.jeffreys1@GRO>; Lorna.Gratton@GRO <Lorna.Gratton@GRO>

**Cc:** Chris Brocklesby <chris.brocklesby@GRO>

**Subject:** RE: Confidential: Project Phoenix and NFSP Announcement

Thanks Amanda

We have Nic Marriott, Angela Woolfenden and Janene Mellor all supporting Chris (on Phoenix) and Sarah Gray's team (past roles). They are three of our most capable members of the People team, with significant ER experience. This is our highest priority and is, as you point out, very complex and time consuming.

K

**Karen McEwan**  
Group Chief People Officer

People Team

GRO

PA: Elisabeth.parnaby-myers@GRO

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**From:** Amanda Burton (1) <amanda.burton1@GRO>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 10, 2024 11:31 AM  
**To:** Owen Woodley <Owen.Woodley@GRO>; Elliot Jacobs (1) <elliott.jacobs1@GRO>; Nick Read <Nick.Read1@GRO>; Benjamin Tidswell <benjamin.tidswell1@GRO>; Saf ismail (1) <saf.ismail1@GRO>; Brian Gaunt (1) <brian.gaunt1@GRO>; Andrew Darfoor (1) <andrew.darfoor1@GRO>; Simon Jeffreys (1) <simon.jeffreys1@GRO>; 'Lorna.Gratton@GRO' <Lorna.Gratton@GRO>  
**Cc:** Karen McEwan <karen.mcewan@GRO>; Chris Brocklesby <chris.brocklesby@GRO>  
**Subject:** Re: Confidential: Project Phoenix and NFSP Announcement

Many thanks Owen for the update. This is clearly a very difficult situation and I can see why this work is taking such a long time and we have to follow proper process. Amanda

Sent from Outlook for iOS

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**From:** Owen Woodley <Owen.Woodley@GRO>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 9, 2024 1:33:02 PM  
**To:** Elliot Jacobs (1) <elliott.jacobs1@GRO>; Nick Read <Nick.Read1@GRO>; Benjamin Tidswell <benjamin.tidswell1@GRO>; Saf ismail (1) <saf.ismail1@GRO>; Brian Gaunt (1) <brian.gaunt1@GRO>; Amanda Burton (1) <amanda.burton1@GRO>; Andrew Darfoor (1) <andrew.darfoor1@GRO>; Simon Jeffreys (1) <simon.jeffreys1@GRO>; 'Lorna.Gratton@GRO' <Lorna.Gratton@GRO>  
**Cc:** Karen McEwan <karen.mcewan@GRO>; Chris Brocklesby <chris.brocklesby@GRO>  
**Subject:** RE: Confidential: Project Phoenix and NFSP Announcement

Here is an update from the business, Elliot and Board...

As a reminder, we have two separate programmes of activity underway which Karen is overseeing for us. One is 'Project Phoenix' and the other is 'Past Roles'. These programmes are doing separate activities overseen by separate panels to determine appropriate action. The panels are not decision making fora on individual employment cases. Any actions required on individuals on the back of panel recommendation are then managed separately as part of a relevant employment process. Project Phoenix is a review of all historical investigations where allegations have been made by Postmasters of wrongdoing on the part of Post Office and/or Post Office employees (both current and past) as part of the Public Inquiry Human Impact Hearings. Chris represents SEG on the Phoenix panel and I am sure he would confirm that he and the panel fully grasp the importance of what they are dealing with.

Past Roles is a review of any current employee who may previously have undertaken a role in the past - between 1999 and 2017 - related to the subject of the Public Inquiry. This is to ensure that they create no conflict and pose no risk to either the integrity and independence of work being done now, or to Postmaster/public confidence in that work.

On Phoenix, six current employees fall within scope, linked to twenty allegations. Of those, fourteen relate to one specific employee ('X'). Conclusions have now been reached on two of the six employees, both of which resulted in no further action. Employee X is now being investigated on misconduct charges. It looks

unlikely that the other three individuals will move to misconduct investigations but the position is not yet concluded.

The current view of the team is that on the basis of wide-ranging evidence reviewed so far, and the extensive systemic and process failures which it is now apparent were in place at the time of the allegations, dismissal is unlikely to be the outcome. But since you are likely to have particular interest in Employee X, here is a bit more detail. The allegations include :-

1. Inappropriate transportation of a disabled Postmaster in a goods lift
2. Calling a Postmaster a 'bitch' during an interview
3. Accusing a Postmaster in Northern Ireland of using stolen funds to support paramilitary activity
4. Aggressive and accusatory behaviour during interviews

Significant investigations have already been done on the evidence available and so far, the allegations have not been corroborated. Indeed in some instances, the investigation has seen evidence contrary to the allegations. However, relevant Postmasters are now being interviewed, subject to availability, to gather additional evidence and this case is expected to conclude by the end of March.

On Past Roles, 127 employees are in scope with 35 employed in the Remediation Unit and the remaining 92 spread across other functions in the business. For obvious reasons, the individuals still working in the RU have been prioritised for review.

We can confirm that no employee is in a position as a decision maker on cases that they were directly involved in historically. However, four RU employees have been identified as being in positions that at least carry a theoretical risk of undermining confidence. All four cases have now been reviewed and the individuals recommended for redeployment. That redeployment process is now underway.

All these cases, especially on Phoenix, are enormously complicated with formal investigations that have to gather evidence across many years, and involve real human beings to whom we have a duty of care as the employer. In some instances, the investigations involve taking testimony from Postmasters and unsurprisingly, some of those Postmaster meetings are taking weeks or even months to get arranged. So you can be assured you that we are moving as fast as we can here.

I have no recollection of you asking for an update before the next Board meeting. Perhaps we missed that, but I'm sure Karen would be happy for you to give her a call between Board meetings if needed. Irrespective, a paper is already being drafted for February Board which Karen will present, giving more detail and an update on all the above.

Owen

**Owen Woodley**  
Deputy CEO

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**From:** Elliot Jacobs (1) <elliott.jacobs1@GRO>  
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**To:** Nick Read <Nick.Read1@GRO>; Benjamin Tidswell <benjamin.tidswell1@GRO>; Saf ismail (1) <saf.ismail1@GRO>; Brian Gaunt (1) <brian.gaunt1@GRO>; Amanda Burton (1) <amanda.burton1@GRO>; Andrew Darfoor (1) <andrew.darfoor1@GRO>; Simon Jeffreys (1) <simon.jeffreys1@GRO>; Lorna Grattor <Lorna.Gratton@GRO>  
**Cc:** Owen Woodley <Owen.Woodley@GRO>  
**Subject:** Confidential: Project Phoenix and NFSP Announcement  
**Importance:** High

Dear Board,

Following on from our meeting almost 2 weeks ago where I expressed in the strongest of terms my frustration and utter disbelief that the matter of Project Phoenix was still nowhere near resolved I am concerned we have not received any update on the activity since.

This is important and urgent, and it seems to me that the committee currently undertaking the review has failed to grasp the importance of the matter and the speed with which it should be working. I don't doubt activity may well be on-going, but the pace and decision making is simply not appropriate to the task, and neither is the level of feedback to us as a Board. We are the ones who will be blamed for this not being properly resolved....it is happening on our watch - not a past Board, our Board.

The claim that this is "difficult" will simply not cut it. If it was easy someone might have done it by now; but it is the fact that it is hard that we must grasp the nettle and get it done. It is both optically and morally wrong that this has not be dealt with before. This is not a "witch hunt" (as it has been verbalised previously) - this is about making certain the culture and frankly the future of this business is not mired in the wrong-doing of bad people who did truly awful things some of whom - to this very day - believe they did the right thing!

We were told the committee was due to meet last week, but I am not aware of any outcome from that meeting - I would be grateful of an update on that meeting and the decisions that came from it - I do not believe we can wait until the next Board to find out what actions (or not) have taken place....or wait to read them on the Sky News website or the front page of the Daily Mail!

Additionally, I attach a copy of a link to the NFSP press release yesterday - we risk getting behind the curve again here too.

<https://nfsp.org.uk/news/view?name=nfsp-statement-on-why-an-oversight-committee-is-the-right-way-ahead-for-the-post-office-network>

Sincerely,

Elliot