

Witness Name: Alvin Finch  
Statement No.: WITN08060100  
Dated: 10 March 2023

## **POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY**

---

### **FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF ALVIN FINCH**

---

I, Alvin Finch, will say as follows...

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. I am a former employee of Fujitsu.
2. This witness statement is made to assist the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry (the "**Inquiry**") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 30 January 2023 (the "**Request**").

#### **BACKGROUND**

3. I have been asked to set out my professional background. Prior to working at Fujitsu I worked in the defence and travel industries. A lot of this work was in computer communications, I also worked on document and book keeping/accounting systems.

4. I joined Fujitsu in around 2004 and worked there for about three months before leaving. I do not recall my exact job title but it was a support engineer of some kind. I spent time with different “experts” of parts of the system. Much of the software/techniques employed was similar to previous projects I had worked on in other companies.
5. Due to my short period at Fujitsu I never actually had a proper day-to-day role. I was working through different areas that people in the team were supporting. This include reading tickets that were coming in and deciding how they were to be administered.
6. I left because I was very uncomfortable working there as I felt there was culture of fear. I found myself being bullied by a member of staff and walked out of the company.

#### **KEL system**

7. I have been asked about the KEL system and database. I remember looking at this and going over how these records were brought in, categorised and distributed to local teams.
8. I cannot recall whether the KEL system was adequate.
9. I cannot recall the process a person would follow to search a KEL database to determine if a similar error or problem had arisen before. I had started looking at this but then I left the company.

#### **PInICL and PEAK systems**

10. I remember these systems but not their names.
11. I do not remember how service tickets were assigned and prioritised, or when they would be considered closed.

## SSC

12. I believe I was in the SSC during my time at Fujitsu. It was a very strange environment. We were told everything had to be fixed as quickly as possible in any way that it could. This was because any long-term outages would cost money.
13. I felt there was a huge pressure on staff to get things fixed. There was one individual in particular who placed a lot of pressure on me. There seemed to a priority of short-term fixes over long term solutions. I felt this pressure came from the top.
14. I can't remember the structure of the teams in the support services.
15. I don't recall how many people worked on the SSC. I was gradually getting to know people before I left.
16. I don't recall the different positions or roles of people on the SSC.
17. I don't recall what qualifications or experience were required to be a member of the SSC. I remember a lot of the team seemed to have been there for a number of years, having been pulled through from ICL to Fujitsu. There didn't seem to be many newer employees. I appeared to be the exception coming from the outside. In terms of my own recruitment I just went through an interview and was asked about various aspects of the system which I had worked on in the past.
18. I never finished the training which would have consisted of working in each area of the system before specializing in one.
19. I don't know how members of the SSC were briefed or instructed to carry out their work.

20. I don't know about the working relationship between the SSC and other teams. I was aware of other parts of the support services but I was not directly involved.

21. I remember there being some contention about the proportion of service tickets being referred to the SSC and here being issue of calls being put through that shouldn't. However I cannot recall the detail.

**Identification and rectification of bugs, errors or defects**

22. I have looked through the bugs listed in Appendix 2 of *Bates and others v Post Office Limited (No. 6) "Horizon Issues"* [2019] EWHC 3408 (QB).

However, I do not recall or remember any of the bugs listed.

23. I never got on to any proper bugs fixing. There were bits and pieces people went through with me but it was too long ago to remember.

24. I do not recall the process Fujitsu would follow when a bug, error or defect was identified.

25. I have been asked in what circumstances a work around would be offered to an identified bug rather than implementing changes to the Horizon IT System code. In the first instance you would look for a work around to keep things running, but I can't remember the details.

26. I can't remember much interaction with SPMs.

27. I don't think there was pressure not to pass information to SPMs in relation to potential bugs, errors and defects as such, but we were told to keep things confidential.

28. I don't know if the SSC investigated problems that were suspected to be related to third-party software.



29. I have been asked if I ever felt under pressure to avoid finding bugs, errors and defects in the Horizon IT software. It certainly seemed like that. The approach was to keep everything going rather than reporting back. There seemed to be a pressure to get a fix in and keep going. For overnight transactions, there seemed to be an approach of finding a quick fix and getting everything working, even though it didn't seem that the issue had been resolved.

30. I have been asked whether any pressure was placed upon me or colleagues not to pass information to Post Office in relation to potential bugs, errors and defects within the Horizon IT System. I don't know, but the protocol was that we kept it confidential within the system.

### **Remote access**

31. I do not recall anything about remote access.

### **General**

32. I didn't know what happened on the SPM end so I do not know if SPMs had access to adequate advice and assistance in how to use the Horizon IT System.

33. I think a cause of the problems experienced in using the Horizon system was the worry about keeping the system running at all costs.

### **Statement of Truth**

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

**GRO**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ 10-March-2023