

ICL PATHWAY

CASE LAW REFERRAL

CS/TEM/013  
VERSION 1.0

|                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| CASE LAW NO.        | 0009                    |
| BIMS REF.           | Not applicable          |
| TIP REF.            | Not applicable          |
| EXCEPTION CLASS     | N/A                     |
| EXCEPTION CATEGORY  | OBCS Encashment Failure |
| DATE FIRST RECEIVED | 08 November 2001        |

**ICL****ACCEPTANCE OF LIABILITY DISPUTED BY: ICL Pathway****DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT:**

At 06.00 on Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> of November the first of many calls was received by the HSH where the Post Master was unable to scan or manually input a pension book. An analysis of the problem was initiated and the problem was identified in the Pathway Reference Data. By 09.30 a fix was produced and distributed to 10 outlets for an initial trial. The major part of the distribution of the fix to the remainder of the outlets was completed by 11.15.

The impact to Post Offices and their customers on that morning was minimised by the use of the Message Broadcast facility and MBS234, which documented the manual process the Post Masters should follow regarding the payment of pensions. Pension groups 5, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 13 were affected by this fault. Following the 11.15 download of the fix for the 6 OBCS Product Modes the HSH were advised that Post Masters would be able to manually enter pension books. In some cases Post Masters were asked to reboot their systems due to the side affect of the OBCS problem. These were due to the Post Masters entering a foil under OBCS manual and the system freezing or having a 'no entry sign on home and log out' which could not be removed using the usual work around. From 11.15 onwards Post Masters were able to manually enter the pension book details into Horizon and, where counters had been rebooted, to scan pension books. (Other scanners may have functioned prior to the reboot.

**ICL PATHWAY STATEMENT:**

ICL Pathway considered the events to be of significant importance and Tony Wicks, in his Pathway Business Continuity Manager (Pathway BCM) role, decided that there was a high risk that this problem could affect the whole estate and decided to escalate the problem.

At 07.45 the Pathway BCM contacted Dave Hulbert, the Post Office Limited National Business Continuity Manager (POL BCM), and informed him of the problem. The POL BCM was asked if the POL NBSC could monitor the call levels for this problem and if POL could conduct any checks which would assist in determining the severity of the problem, in accordance with the Cross-Domain Business Continuity Interface Agreement.

At 09.15 the HSH requested that the NBSC consider changing the 'Single Point of Contact' Interactive Voice Response message to notify Post Masters that there was a known problem with the OBCS service. At 11.30 the HSH contacted the NBSC as the IVR message appeared not to have been updated. **However, it transpired that Post Masters needed to select NBSC via Option 3 before they were able to hear the message, therefore it was likely that most did not hear the message.**

Within ICL it was reported during the Thursday morning that some Post Masters phoning the Single Point of Contact number received the message "Unable to connect you" and the connection was dropped.

At 10.14 ICL Pathway received Message Broadcast MBS234 from Andrew Bradley of POL. In summary this message advised Post Masters that there was a known fault with the OBCS service. With the POL Problem Manager's agreement the message was not distributed by ICL Pathway, because the release of the fix by the SSC caused the message to become obsolete.

It has been reported by POL that inconsistent advice was being given by the HSH desk during the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> of November. This has been investigated and there is no evidence to support this.

ICL Pathway regard the actions taken as complete and feel the problem was dealt with quickly and effectively. The allocation of the IVR message to 'Option 3' by POL exacerbated the problem as many

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callers did not access the IVR informing them of the correct action to take to complete the transaction. ICL Pathway dispute the claim for consequential loss of £22,236.36 laid out in Keith Baines' letter of 14/12/01.

*Detailed report ref: CS/REP/113 Pension Book MBCI Report supports these statements.*

**Version 2 Update: 04/02/02**

**Following receipt of cost information from Liz Tuddenham, ICL Pathway require further detail relating to the calculation of costs in the following areas:**

1. What is the detail behind the staff cost? For example, is it applicable to overtime or the employment of casual / temporary staffing?
2. Can you clarify on what basis 'Additional Calls' were necessary, how many and to whom?
3. Can you verify how the cost of the 'Support Desk' has been calculated?
4. We understand that 'MBS' is applicable to Message Broadcast - how is this cost justified?

**POL STATEMENT:**

As per letter dated 14 December 2001 from Keith Baines, IS Service Manager, Post Office Ltd:

"As you are aware, there was a failure of the OBCS system on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2001 which occurred as a result of invalid Reference Data.

We have calculated that the loss to Post Office Ltd for which Pathway is responsible amounts to £22,236.36, which comprises lost income of £5,867.11 and the additional costs at the National Business Support Centre of £14,369.25. This is in addition to any liquidated damages which may be payable to Post Office Ltd in connection with OBCS transaction times during the relevant Service Level Measurement period. **If you require further details of these costs, Liz Tuddenham will be able to provide these"**

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| <b>FINAL LIABILITY ASSIGNED TO:</b> |  |
| <b>DATE</b>                         |  |
| <b>SIGNED:</b>                      | <b>ICL PATHWAY</b><br><br><b>POST OFFICE LTD</b> |