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Dear Solicitor to the Inquiry

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY: PROCESS OF MAKING ARQ REQUEST TO FUJITSU

1 SCOPE AND SUBJECT MATTER OF THIS LETTER

- 1.1 We refer to the first witness statement of Melanie Park dated 22 August 2024 (statement number WITN11600100), which stated at paragraph 162 (*inter alia*):

"I understand that Post Office will be writing to the Inquiry separately regarding the present process of making an ARQ request to Fujitsu."

- 1.2 We also refer to the Inquiry's letter dated 19 August 2024 responding to the draft first witness statement of Melanie Park, which requested (*inter alia*):

"What is the current cost of an ARQ data request for a 1-month period?"

- 1.3 We write on behalf of Post Office Limited ("**Post Office**") to provide the abovementioned information on the cost and process of making an ARQ request as we understand that Melanie Park does not have direct knowledge of the relevant facts and matters. We hope that this information will assist the Inquiry.

2 CURRENT PROCESS OF MAKING AN ARQ REQUEST

- 2.1 It is not necessary for Post Office to make ARQ requests for data that is 12 months old, or less. We refer to paragraph 161 of the first witness statement of Melanie Park which stated (*inter alia*):

"Post Office has access to 12 months of data through HORice and Credence. For data outside of that, Post Office would need to submit an ARQ request to Fujitsu from whom the data is sourced."

- 2.2 If an ARQ request is necessary, Post Office's Network Crime and Risk Support Team ("**NCRST**") is responsible for the ARQ request process. To make an ARQ request, a requestor must complete an ARQ form and send it to the NCRST (the template ARQ form has been produced to the Inquiry as POL00448281).

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- 2.3 A member of the NCRST checks that all boxes on the form have been filled out and submits completed ARQ forms to Fujitsu via email to process. Fujitsu will securely send the output data to the NCRST and the NCRST then transfers the data securely onwards to the requestor.
- 2.4 Fujitsu's typical response time for an ARQ request is 2-6 weeks. However, there is a fast-track process for requests from the Remediation Unit, pursuant to which responses are provided within two weeks.
- 2.5 For completeness, Post Office is currently updating and amending its processes as described in paragraph 84 of the third witness statement of Simon Geoffrey Oldnall (statement number WITN03680300).

COST OF MAKING AN ARQ REQUEST

- 2.6 Post Office's contract with Fujitsu provides for Post Office to make 720 ARQ requests on a rolling annual basis for no additional cost above the base contract cost. Post Office is only additionally invoiced for requests above that level. Post Office typically uses and exceeds the full annual allowance of requests for ARQ data.
- 2.7 The cost of any ARQ request additional to the abovementioned annual allowance is £225 (it is a flat fee and does not vary depending on the period for which data is requested). Accordingly, the current cost of an ARQ data request for a 1-month period is £225.
- 2.8 Fujitsu invoices Post Office for additional ARQ requests beyond the current allowance under the contract and those costs are met by the cost centre for the Horizon Shortfall Scheme within Post Office's Remediation Unit (the additional demand is driven largely by the Horizon Shortfall Scheme as in order to assess claims Post Office often requires access to data dating back further than the previous 12 months).
- 2.9 For completeness, Fujitsu recently provided a rebate to Post Office for all additional ARQ requests made between July 2020 and December 2023 in recognition of those requests having been made to support Post Office in resolving queries from Postmasters and, going forward, Fujitsu has told Post Office it will not charge Post Office for any additional ARQ requests that relate to the Horizon Shortfall Scheme.

3 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can further assist the Inquiry in this regard.

Yours faithfully

Burgess Salmon LLP Fieldfisher LLP

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