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Investigations conducted by Bond Dickinson LLP, on behalf of Post Office Ltd, into complaints about the advice provided by Call Handlers at the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC)

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BACKGROUND

Post Office's Chairman, Tim Parker, is receiving legal advice from Jonathan Swift QC on Post Office's handling of the complaints made by Sub-Postmasters as part of the Complaint Review & Mediation Scheme (the **Scheme**).

To inform and support this advice, some further areas of investigation have been identified, to which end Bond Dickinson have been asked to:

"cross reference specific complaints about misleading advice from NBSC call-handlers with the possible employees who provided that advice and consider their personnel files, where available, for evidence as to the likelihood that the complaint may be well founded".

It was agreed this task could be discharged through making the following queries, in the sequence they are set out:

- (i) identify those applicants who included, in their complaint to the Scheme, an allegation about the advice they received from the NBSC helpline;
- (ii) identify, from the above list of applicants, those who had made sufficiently particularised complaints to allow for further investigation (ie they provided dates and/or other identifying information about specific calls on which, they allege, they received inadequate advice);
- (iii) for those applicants who had particularised their complaints to a sufficient level of detail to enable further investigation, cross reference the calls made to the NBSC helpline (in respect of which the allegations have been made) against the call handlers who took the calls; and
- (iv) check the relevant call handlers' Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) / Coaching Records to see if they had had any complaints made against them in respect of the advice they were providing.

Bond Dickinson have co-ordinated this process and produced the following paper, which sets out the findings of these investigations.

PROCESS

1. Identify those applicants who included, in their complaint to the Scheme, an allegation about the advice they had received from the NBSC helpline.

Post Office provided Bond Dickinson with a spreadsheet which detailed, from the 150 applications made to the Scheme, 107 applicants who had made allegations about the advice they had received from the NBSC Helpline.

2. Identify those applicants who had made sufficiently particularised complaints to allow for further investigation (ie they provided dates and/or other identifying information about specific calls on which, they allege, they received inadequate advice).

Bond Dickinson reviewed the core Scheme documentation (the CQRs and Post Office Investigation Reports) for each of the 107 Scheme cases which contained complaints about the NBSC and identified, from these documents, those cases where applicants made sufficiently particularised complaints to allow for further investigation.

Bond Dickinson then drew up a schedule (appendix 1 to this report) to detail the results of this initial review. In short, it was established that:

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- (a) 16¹ of the applicants provided sufficiently detailed information in their CQR to allow a further investigation; and
- (b) 11² further applicants included vague un-particularised complaints in their CQR.

Bond Dickinson advised that it would be reasonable for Post Office to investigate the 16 cases in category A above but not those in category B as, given the level of presumption required, further investigation of these complaints would involve disproportionate time and expense, with little chance of being able to reach definitive conclusions.

The next stage involved:

- reviewing the NBSC call logs for each of the category A cases to try to identify the NBSC call reference ID numbers for any specific calls mentioned by the applicants;
- reviewing the POIR and CRR for the category A cases to determine what had been said about these calls/issues already; and
- providing an updated schedule to Post Office which included this additional information.

Of the 16 category A cases, it was determined, from our investigations, that only M007, M045 and M144 included a direct allegation of incompetence against the helpline staff. However, for the sake of completeness, it was decided that we would continue to investigate the complaints included in the other 13 cases.

Post Office also requested that Bond Dickinson, as part of their investigations into the remaining 13 cases, pay particular attention to resolving specific queries arising out of the information Bond Dickinson had extracted from the POIRs / CRRs in respect of Applicants M001, M035, M042, M080 and M143. Post Office's queries in respect of these cases were as follows:

- M001: a reference in the scheme documentation about a "complaint" made by the applicant on 22.12.2003. This complaint was found to relate to a Post Office Card Account application rather than the NBSC so no further investigation was necessary.
- M035: a call placed on 23.12.2003 where the applicant alleged the advice caused the discrepancy to double.
- M042: a call placed on 1.6.2011 where the applicant alleged the advice caused the discrepancy to double.
- M080: a letter dated 5.5.2009 made the allegation that the applicant received "conflicting advice". Post Office asked if any further specifics (eg. dates) were contained in the letter to enable it to identify the relevant calls. The letter did not give any specifics in relation to the advice so no further investigation was possible.
- M143: A call placed on 03.06.2009 where the applicant claims she was told to carry out a certain process on Horizon and was subsequently told this process was incorrect.

For those applicants who had particularised their complaints in a sufficient level of detail to enable further investigation, the next stage was to cross reference the calls made to the NBSC helpline, in respect of which the allegations were made, against the call handler who took the call

The results of this exercise are contained in a table at Appendix 2 to this report. This list includes the call references in respect of Post Office's specific queries above in relation to M035, M042 and M143.

¹ M001, M007, M011, M026, M028, M029, M035, M037, M040, M042, M045, M062, M080, M081, M0143, M144

² M008, M036, M038, M048, M051, M056, M073, M132, M135, M139, M146

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It was not possible to identify the call handlers in respect of the complaints made by M011, M080 and M144. This is because the dates provided by applicants did not correlate with any calls received by the NBSC.

3. Check the relevant call handlers' Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) / Coaching Records to see if they had had any complaints made against them in respect of the advice they were providing.

Bond Dickinson is instructed that personnel files of call handlers would not contain any records of concerns raised about their performance. The personnel file would simply be a record of that individual's personal data and any disciplinary actions or warnings for attendance.

If complaints were made against NBSC personnel, or concerns were raised internally about the performance of a call handler, Bond Dickinson are instructed that those complaints and concerns could be recorded in the following places:

- The NBSC call logs themselves; and
- Coaching records

Coaching records are based on a random selection of calls that have been recorded and analysed by a call handler's team leader. Each call handler is marked using a quality framework and feedback is delivered by the team leader in a coaching session, with the advisor also listening to the recorded calls.

The areas reviewed are call handling techniques (politeness, listening skills etc.) and knowledge provided and logged. There is a scoring mechanism that is levelled across all teams and team leaders to ensure consistency.

Having determined the names of the call handlers, Post Office searched the coaching files, to ascertain if there were any concerns about that individual's performance generally or in relation to any specific advice they had given during their time on the NBSC helpdesk. The sources searched and the results of those searches are set out in the table at Annex 3. Where a call handler appears more than once in relation to a specific applicant they are only listed once. Where a call handler appears on the logs for multiple applicants, they are listed against each separate applicant for the sake of having a complete record for each applicant.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the findings of this exercise are as follows:

- Many of the call handlers identified were employees of Royal Mail at the relevant time so Post Office is unable to investigate their personal performance records.
- In relation to those call handlers who did work for Post Office, based on the above searches there is no evidence (aside from the applicants' claims) of complaints having been lodged against specific advisors nor any concerns raised internally at Post Office about the performance of those advisors.
- In the three cases identified where specific allegations of incompetence were made against NBSC staff it has not been possible to identify the call handler who was the subject of the allegation from the information provided by the applicants.

These conclusions are unsurprising as the NBSC staff are comprehensively trained and draw on a central body of information called the Knowledge Base to ensure that the advice they give to postmasters is consistent and accurate.

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APPENDIX 1

Specific complaints about helplines

Case Ref	Reviewed by which paralegal?	Specific complaint raised?				Detail in CQR	Comment in POIR	Comment in CRR	NBSC call ref number
		NBSC	HSD	Help-line	No specific complaint raised				
M001	Kerry Arkins			X		<p>Para 2.3:</p> <p>"Week 43 - Calls to the help desks commenced. Three calls relate to queries on procedural matters. One call on 21 January relating to discrepancies and reporting the shortage."</p> <p>"Week 44 - Three calls to the help desk on 22 January regarding the discrepancies and requesting assistance"</p> <p>"Week 45 - One call on 27 January regarding the Sub-postmaster's meeting. One call on 28 January regarding a system query and another on a procedural matter. Calls to the help desk on 29 January 2004 re "rem" issues, are quest for the Horizon transactional logs to be reviewed to establish if there is a system fault and to report the shortage. A further call on 2 February which relates to the installation of the new base station. On 3 February a query regarding the recording of pre-pay mobile vouchers as well as requests for switchboard numbers."</p> <p>Week 46 - "Further calls during the</p>	<p>Page 2</p> <p>NBSC calls reviewed: Records of call logs applicable from 19/07/03 – 23/03/04 (detailed summary provided in next section of document). (Doc 001 refers)</p> <p>Page 3</p> <p>Helpdesk unable to answer queries when raised. Unable to contact Helpdesk during busy periods. Calls were inappropriately transferred to other Helpdesks.</p> <p>Call logs do not show trends where Post Office has failed to provide advice. (Doc 001 refers)</p> <p>Breakdown of call categories as follows:</p> <p>Call Category</p> <p>Number of Calls</p> <p>Client Accounting Procedures 46</p> <p>Complaint 1</p> <p>Horizon 3</p>	<p>Given the timescales involved, the available evidence is limited to the records of calls maintained by Post Office's Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) Helpline ('the Helpline'); the High Court Judgement and the supporting witness statements; and some other documents retained by the Applicant. We have therefore been unable to determine either the actual cause of the losses (i.e. the types of errors that created them) or who benefitted from those errors.</p> <p>Page 4 Para 2.2</p> <p>Post Office accepts that the Applicant telephoned its Helpline on multiple occasions to report shortages; to voice his</p>	<p>21.1.14</p> <p>H12987381</p> <p>22.1.14</p> <p>H12987919</p> <p>H12987957</p> <p>27.1.14</p> <p>H21268317</p> <p>28.1.14</p> <p>H12999552</p> <p>29.1.14</p> <p>H13003838</p> <p>H13005452</p> <p>2.2.14</p> <p>H13005643</p> <p>H21274188</p>

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					<p>March."</p> <p>"Week 51 - Procedural calls on 15 and 18 March."</p> <p>"Week 52 - Auditor made two calls to the help desk on 23 March."</p> <p>Para 3.44 <i>At the end of a period when Mr Castleton had a misbalance, he found it difficult to contact the Helpline because it was always very busy. From the logs, he does not appear to have been given the assistance requested to discover the actual reason behind each difference rather the differences were transferred as an "unauthorised" suspense transaction to allow a Trading Period to be closed.</i></p>	SPMR.		H21307127 H13071268 26.2.14 H13073926 H13076461 4.3.14 H13093812 15.3.15 H13118632 H13118984 18.3.14 H21330891
M002	Kerry Arkins			X				
M003	Kerry Arkins			X				
M004	Kerry Arkins			X				
M006	Kerry Arkins			X				
M007	Kerry Arkins			X	<p>Para 2.3 Pages 5 - 9</p> <p>"6/4/2005 - Contacted helpline re Horizon issues but was passed between departments requesting an engineer test the kit. No action</p>	<p>Page 3</p> <p><i>The branch contacted NBSC on 238 occasions in the 10 year period from February 2004 to October 2013. The available evidence suggests that calls</i></p>	<p>Page 8 Para 5.5</p> <p><i>In several of the documented Helpline calls, the Applicant</i></p>	11.2.05 <i>No call evident on call log</i>

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		X	X	<p>resulted."</p> <p>"13/4/2005 - Call from Horizon to notify Mr Bilkhu that one terminal had not been transmitting for some time and suggested rebooting - call was during the balancing process so reboot could not take place at that time"</p> <p>"14/4/2005 - Sought assistance from helpline re the issues above and the re-boot but no one appears to have been available"</p> <p>"20/4/2005 - Call to NSBC re losses"</p> <p>"21/4/2005 - NBSC rang to notify Mr Bilkhu of that the £60 transaction on 22/3/2005 had not gone through - helpline suggested a formal complaint re Horizon which Mr Bilkhu did"</p> <p>"22/4/2005 - Terminal went into standby mode - no apparent reason. Reboot took place and called the helpline. Occurred a second time. On the same day another terminal developed a fault on the smartcard reader."</p> <p>"25/4/2005 - Issues with a pin pad - called the helpline and tested the pad which failed. Helpline arranged for an engineer. Other issues were also being suffered on another terminal. Engineer serviced pin pad and replaced keypad on the Gateway terminal."</p> <p>"w/c 25/5/2005 - Helpline called to</p>	<p>were transferred correctly and proper advice given. The log of all calls made are enclosed (Refer to Doc 022) with specific calls as follows:</p> <p>2006 – 1 call on the 8th September 2006 relating to a fault with the online banking system (Refer to Doc 017)</p> <p>2008 – 1 call on the 14th February 2008 relating to replaced terminal being stored by Fujitsu (Refer to Doc 018)</p> <p>2010 – 1 call on 14th July 2010 relating to a bill payment and 2 calls on 4th August 2010 regarding National Lottery processes (Refer to Doc 019).</p> <p>2012 – 4 calls in August 2012 regarding system failure and Fujitsu response to fault (Refer to Doc 020).</p> <p>2013 – 1 call in January 2013 blaming Horizon for on-going shortages in branch (Refer to Doc 021). It would be expected that as a Subpostmaster became more experienced in his role, the level of calls to the NBSC would decrease; it appears the opposite in this case as the level has increased.</p> <p>Page 5</p> <p>Post Office records show that the Applicant lodged a complaint with the NBSC (Refer to Doc 037), and requested a good will payment as Horizon was not working in his branch for one week. At the time, this was investigated by Laura Darby (Post Office Service Support, IT and Change);</p>	<p>complained that the display would skip from one transaction screen to an unrelated one. If this has occurred (and we cannot reasonably expect the Applicant to have produced evidence to prove that it did), it is clear that it would have materially increased the possibility that the wrong keys might be pressed and data would be incorrectly entered into the system. The question as to whether or not one or more of this branch's terminals was sufficiently faulty to generate transactional errors is pivotal in this case. Absent the further investigative work sought by the Applicant, we have been unable to determine whether there really was a localised but serious fault here. If there was, then it seems to us probable that it would have contributed to what Post Office describes as the "operational errors" that caused this branch's losses.</p> <p>Page 8 Para 5.7</p> <p>As the records show, the Applicant made a large number of calls to the Helpline for a variety of</p>	<p>6.4.05</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>13.4.05</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>14.4.05</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>20.4.05</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>21.4.05</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>22.4.05</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>25.4.05</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>25.5.05</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p>
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			X		<p>either system error or probable a software error – transferred to the business helpline who said to reboot all three terminals and told it was not a business issue and to go back to Technical"</p> <p>Para 3.70 – Page 18</p> <p>(iii) Mr Bilkhu asked Deborah to file a complaint with Customer Helpline. This she did and she received a patronising letter noting that: 'investigations continue will take a little longer'.</p> <p>(iv) The letter was sent to Deborah in October but to date (26 November 2013) nothing has been sorted out and it appears that the money is still within POL and the charity has received nothing.</p> <p>Para 3.72 – Page 19</p> <p>"In an attempt to assist, Mr Bilkhu contacted the helpline (Call Ref: H18135135) on 10th October 2013 about this issue. He has heard nothing and notes that nobody has even had the courtesy to ring back and explain what went wrong."</p> <p>Para 3.76 – Pages 19 – 20</p> <p>9/03/05 - CP is overprinting – cleaning required</p> <p>16/05/05 - CP only printing half label and receipt</p>	<p>written. Kevin went on to navigate the Applicant to the correct page on Horizon Help that explained how to complete the transaction. Horizon Help is an integral facility within Horizon which allows individuals to find and also print Post Office instructions on products and services, which can be accessed whilst serving a customer. The Applicant was still not happy on how to process the transaction and advised he would contact NBSC the next time for them to talk him through the transaction. On the 13th January 2014, the Applicant contacted the NBSC and claims he was advised not to cash the cheque unless the branch code is printed on the cheque. NBSC call logs (Refer To Doc 045) show that this call H18250380 is logged as "WANTING TO PAY A CHEQUE INTO A CO OP ACCOUNT". It appears in this instance the Applicant and the NBSC Operator were at cross purposes; further investigation has confirmed this (Refer to Doc 046). Michala Millington (Post Office Client Advisor) contacted the branch on the 23rd January 2014, after another complaint from a customer being refused the service; during this call it came to light that there had been some confusion between the NBSC and the Applicant as to which process to follow. Michala instructed the NBSC to contact the Applicant to explain the correct process (Refer to Doc 047). Sharon Jamasb (NSBC operator) contacted the Applicant on the 23rd January 2014 and made it clear to him that handwritten cheques could be accepted (Refer to Doc 048). Sharon has informed this investigation it was the Applicant that jumped onto the subject about lack of training at the NBSC. Sharon did not get</p>	<p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>24.8.12</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>10.10.13</p> <p>H18135135</p>
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				<p>17/5/05 - Printer label issues – replaced printer</p> <p>3/6/05 - Issues re Tele2 phonecards – RS1 was not received to allow stock returns</p> <p>13/7/05 - Obsolete stock on system – request for assistance to clear entry</p> <p>18/7/05 - Loss for philatelic items when balancing – resolution is noted as "KB" but it is not known to what this relates</p> <p>29/7/05 - 2 calls – Requested procedure then called back to notify shortage from Tele2 phonecards – advised been looked into and SPM needs to make good</p> <p>8/8/05 - Spoilt labels re packages to Argentina</p> <p>03/10/05 - Skipping MLP printing screen – worked using manual keyboard but not screen</p> <p>17/10/05 - Label not printing but transaction settled and authorised</p> <p>07/11/05 - CP not accepting labels</p> <p>23/11/05 - Misbalance on redeemed stamps not showing correct amount – unclear how call closed</p> <p>24/11/05 - Losses on stamps every week – advised to call technical helpline as business helpline believed it to be a system error</p> <p>16/3/06 - Query re how to account</p>	<p>drawn into any conversation with the Applicant and did not comment herself on any issues regarding training at the NBSC.</p> <p>It appears that there may have been some confusion has gone on between the Applicant and the NBSC regarding this issue, with at times both parties talking at cross purposes. In the Applicant's CQR, it could be easily miss-read when the Applicant states "The cheque was crossed and did not have our branch code printed on it"; this could mean one of either the cheques had no branch code on it, or the cheque did have the branch code, but it was handwritten rather than printed.</p>		
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					<p><i>for spoiled label – unclear how resolved</i></p> <p><i>24/3/06 - CP not printing labels – cleaned and replaced ribbons – intermittent so will call back if further problems</i></p> <p><i>24/3/06 - Call back re above – still not working – engineer called and replaced</i></p> <p><i>29/3/06 - Trying to print licence but printer shows no paper – advised to call business helpline – appears to be ongoing</i></p> <p><i>05/04/06 - Printer issues on-going also with Giros – engineer replaced a part</i></p> <p><i>26/04/06 Discrepancy on stamps – unclear how resolved</i></p> <p><i>12/06/06 Not printing certificate of postage – referred to business helpline – new process</i></p> <p><i>28/06/06 Overprinting on labels – printer repaired by engineer</i></p> <p><i>02/08/06 Node 2 not printing labels – engineer repair</i></p> <p><i>16/01/07 Printer started producing receipts for stock products unrelated to Post Office products – contacted helpline and was told it was probably a printer test and not to worry</i></p> <p><i>11/04/07 Barclaycard withdrawal by customer but printer generated a Tesco topup voucher</i></p>		
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					<p>16/04/07 Printer out of paper message – paper there and helpline could not assist</p> <p>09/05/07 Label receipt would not print – a different receipt was printed with no package weight</p> <p>20/06/07 Could not balance on the system – helpdesk said to sell a 1p stamp and then print a receipt – this worked – helpdesk noted that it was a “glitch” in the system</p> <p>29/06/07 Printer started to print zeros with a line through – contacted help desk and was told printer was not configured properly</p> <p>Para 3.79 Pages 20 - 21</p> <p>16/02/05 Pinpad error – not initialised, corrected</p> <p>08/03/05 Keyboard showing orange light – rebooted and restarted after second attempt</p> <p>06/04/05 Problems with Node 2 – technical line referred SPM to business helpline</p> <p>22/04/05 Node 2 switching off unexpectedly – engineer repair</p> <p>22/04/05 Keyboard required replacing by engineer</p> <p>25/04/05 Pinpad not accepting any numbers – engineer installed</p> <p>04/05/05 Critical_NT Error message – keyboard node 2 replaced and</p>		
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				<p><i>tested</i></p> <p><i>11/05/05 Cash account printed was for the previous week – told to roll stock again then roll office to move into next period</i></p> <p><i>16/05/05 CP Printer problems</i></p> <p><i>17/05/05 Printer problems – engineer on site said the issue was software, log then notes considered unlikely – no real resolution</i></p> <p><i>18/06/05 System freeze while scanning BT bill – transferred to technical helpline</i></p> <p><i>26/10/05 System slow when running balance snapshot – advised known issue</i></p> <p><i>09/01/06 Faulty pinpad – call transferred to technical helpline – pinpad replaced</i></p> <p><i>20/03/06 Device lock timed out when using CP – engineer repair</i></p> <p><i>05/04/06 Printer issues re the printing of licences and giros – replaced part and tested ok</i></p> <p><i>02/05/06 Pinpad error – advised reinstallation</i></p> <p><i>14/06/06 Base node errors as keeps looking for PMMC and pin codes – visual checks done – base replaced by engineer</i></p> <p><i>10/07/06 Pinpad error reporting unexpected problem and to contact Horizon – told to reinstall pinpad</i></p>		
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					<p><i>September Nonpolling and BT issues as previously noted</i></p> <p><i>27/10/06 Bar code reader not working – engineer swapped reader</i></p> <p><i>01/11/06 Pinpad not working – cards not accepted on one workstation which then worked when used on the other</i></p> <p><i>02/11/06 Pinpad not working reported to helpline</i></p> <p><i>03/11/06 Pinpad not working reported to helpline</i></p> <p><i>06/11/06 Pinpad not working reported to helpline – engineer replaced unit</i></p> <p><i>17/03/07 Barcode scanner issue – replaced by engineer 20/03/07</i></p> <p><i>13/04/07 Screen locked – suggested waiting to print previous receipt – reprinted and unlocked – helpline unable to explain</i></p> <p><i>27/04/07 Screen froze for 45 minutes</i></p> <p><i>10/09/07 Screen frozen for 1 hour 45 minutes – contacted helpline 3 times and was told to re-boot each occasion – eventually came back on 12/12/07 Base station 3 shut down unexpectedly – contacted helpline and re-booted 17/12/07 Terminal 1 printer would not print – engineer sent out</i></p> <p><i>07/01/08 Terminal 3 crashed – restarted after 30 minutes</i></p>		
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					<p>10/01/08 Terminal 3 crashed again and came back</p> <p>From approximately 2010 Mr Bilkhu notes that the Fujitsu Counter Printers were changed over to Epson printers and significant difficulties encountered since then – telephone logs will demonstrate the extent of these issues</p> <p>Para 3.118 Page 26 - 27</p> <p>06/04/05 Contacted Michelle on the helpline re Horizon issues Mr Bilkhu was passed between departments and did not get anywhere</p> <p>14/04/05 Jeanette from Horizon called and discussed situation with Mr Bilkhu Mr Bilkhu notes that Jeanette confirmed that the RLM role had gone, that no assistance was available and that there were "hundreds of issues with on-line banking"</p> <p>14/04/05 Denise from Area Office called to confirm that no assistance was available</p> <p>20/04/05 Lynne from business helpline re £60 banking anomaly and that transaction had not taken place Per Mr Bilkhu, Lynne stated that she could not do anything and he should submit a formal complaint against Horizon</p> <p>26/05/05 Rang helpline re cash shortage and seeking help Darren</p>		
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				<p><i>called Mr Bilkhu and stated that no help was available</i></p> <p><i>16/06/05 Rang helpline re cash shortage and seeking help Emma called and gave same options: close post office; pay etc</i></p> <p><i>21/09/05 Rang helpline re rollover and balance issues: Spoke to Sandra. Follow-up call agreed the following morning which was never received Mr Bilkhu notes that he explained his difficulties in balancing and rolling over. Sandra on helpline, he has noted that she stated he was in breach of contract, to close and go home and that he would not be able to open in the morning.</i></p> <p><i>21/09/05 Mr Bilkhu called helpline a second time that evening and spoke to Joanne Explained the issues and asked for amounts to be put into suspense as disputed – Mr Bilkhu was told that she could not authorise this and he supervisor would make contact by 10pm</i></p> <p><i>21/09/05 Call scheduled for prior to 10pm was never received</i></p> <p><i>11/04/07 Customer wanted to withdraw £10 but printed a top up voucher for Tesco mobile – contacted helpdesk Told different things – technical issue/ staff error/ previous transaction completing. No help in resolving.</i></p> <p><i>16/05/07 Call from Rachel Oysten</i></p>		
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					<p><i>re Misprint of voucher from 11/04 and called again on 22/05 Promised assistance but at the end of August 07 Mr Bilkhu had not heard anything further</i></p> <p><i>20/06/07 Could not balance on the system Mr Bilkhu states that the helpdesk said to sell a 1p stamp and then print a receipt (this worked) helpdesk noted that it was a "glitch" in the system</i></p>		
M008	Kerry Arkins	X			<p>Para 4b – Page 4</p> <p><i>"In September 2006 a further shortage of £463 occurred on the cheque listing line of the balance. The SPM spoke with Gillian Hoyland at Chesterfield. He sent documents to her which proved that the cheques had been processed correctly. Ms. Hoyland could not explain how the difference had arisen or what could be done to correct it. No Error Notices came through to the SPM subsequently."</i></p>		
M010	Kerry Arkins			X			
M011	Kerry Arkins			X	<p>Para 2.3 – Page 3</p> <p><i>"Subsequently, on 17th December, his daily reconciliation showed a cash shortage of £2400. Mr Prince said he found the shortage inexplicable. Having run the post office for 5 years, he knew the typical size and volume of daily transactions and recognised that occasional small shortages could occur through miscounting or some other oversight. However, £2400 was an exceptional amount – he said there had been no unusually</i></p>	<p>Page 4 to 5 Para 3</p> <p><i>The Applicant complains that two calls to the helpline resulted in conflicting advice. Helpline records for the period, Dec 2010 to Jul 2011 (Doc 08 refers), identified that 27 calls were made; however there is no evidence of the 2 calls made by the Applicant on 17 Dec 2010 and 05 Jan 2011.</i></p> <p><i>Helpline records for the period Dec 2010 to Jul 2011 identify that 27 calls were made (Doc 08 refers). Of the 27 listed calls, 2 relate to transaction processing:</i></p>	<p>Page 3 Para 3.7</p> <p><i>When the Applicant experienced an inexplicable cash shortage on 17 December 2010 he said that the Helpline simply told him not to worry and when a further discrepancy occurred, he says he was advised that the shortage was "nothing to do with us" and that he should "put</i></p>

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				<p>large transactions that day and nothing untoward had occurred. He spent about an hour and half checking and rechecking his cash count and transaction log but could not find the problem. At about 7 pm he called the Helpline. A man reportedly answered and told him "not to worry" as the shortage would balance out at the end of trading period balancing."</p>	<p>1 call on 17 Dec 2010, made by Sandra, the part time assistant, at 10:55, requested a telephone number and a second call on 06 Apr 2011, made by The Applicant at 10:26, related to a personal banking customer account not being credited. There is no evidence of the 2 calls which the Applicant alleges he made on 17 Dec 2010 nor at the next branch trading balance period on 05 Jan 2011. It should be noted that the helpline would have closed at 19:00 on 17 Dec 2010 and the message in place after 19:00 advises callers to ring back the following day or leave their details for a call back.</p> <p>The Horizon Service Desk (HSD) records (Doc 03 refers) identify that between the periods of Oct 2010 to Jul 2011, 3 calls which should have been made to the helpline were in fact made to the HSD. On all 3 occasions the user was referred back to the helpline.</p> <p>The helpline were asked to produce the guidance that they would provide to subpostmasters if the cash declaration identified a cash shortage (not at period end) and a cash shortage was still evident at period end. The helpline staff would guide the caller to carry out a number of accounting checks (Doc 09 refers). For the initial cash declaration discrepancy, the caller would be advised that checks could only be made on production of a trial balance, whereas at period end there is a requirement for the account to balance. Therefore the guidance would reflect a requirement to make good any resultant losses. It should also be noted that this guidance includes help in settling the account. Settled locally is a term used to describe</p>	<p>the cash in".</p> <p>Page 4 Para 5.2</p> <p>The Applicant reports that, on 17 December 2010, his daily reconciliation showed an inexplicable cash shortage of £2,400. He says that, despite checking the cash and transaction log, he was not able to identify the cause of the shortfall, and that he called the Helpline at about 7pm and was advised "not to worry" and that the shortage would "balance out at the end of Trading Period".</p>	
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						<p><i>repayment at the time of balancing, where the agent physically makes the shortage good; whereas there is a facility to settle centrally, which transfers the shortage to the agents account for repayment at a later agreed date. The Applicant had used the settled centrally facility before for the Lottery debt, so he was evidently aware of this facility.</i></p> <p><i>There is no evidence in the helpline records of the 2 calls, as stated in the CQR, made by the Applicant on 17 Dec 2010 and 05 Jan 2011. However, the guidance held by the helpline would indicate that a loss, incurred during the trading period, would warrant a different response to a loss showing at balance period end. The same guidance would also be given by other areas of the business.</i></p>	
M012	Kerry Arkins			X			
M013	Kerry Arkins			X			
M017	Kerry Arkins			X			
M018	Kerry Arkins			X			
M020	Kerry Arkins			X			
M021	Kerry Arkins			X			
M024	Kerry Arkins			X			

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M025	Kerry Arkins			X				
M026	Kerry Arkins			X	<p>Page 13</p> <p>121. On the posting entry 27 October 2010, a loss of £4,319.38 arises. I recount these events to the best my recollection.</p> <p>122. This discrepancy showed up on the TP. So, as was the practice at the time I sent the paper copy of the TP back to POL at Chesterfield. I sent this on the Thursday following the posting date (28 October 2010).</p> <p>123. On the Thursday I also rang the POL helpdesk and told them that there was a discrepancy at this value and that it had gone down on the TP to them. I explained that I did not know what it was and was advised that they would look into it and get back to me.</p> <p>124. The following day (29 October 2010) I was contacted by POL and advised that the discrepancy did not reflect or appear to correspond to anything. I cannot recall the name of the operator, but I was advised I have to pay the sum back.</p>	<p>Page 14 Para 5.13</p> <p><i>Due to the limited nature of the NBSC call logs, it is difficult for us to assess whether or not questions raised by the Applicant were dealt with in a way that met her expectations. It is clear that the Applicant expected the NBSC to take an active role in investigating discrepancies, which Post Office insists is not within the NBSC's remit.</i></p> <p>Page 15 Para 5.20</p> <p><i>The Applicant reports that, when Horizon was introduced at the branch, she received just three days of on-site training from an auditor. She describes the level of training she received as "appalling" and states that the auditor was "perpetually on his telephone" and showed a general lack of interest towards the Applicant and her branch. She asserts that she made a request through the Helpline for further training, but was told that no one was available to attend the branch.</i></p> <p>Page 15 Para 5.22</p> <p><i>Post Office asserts that the Applicant is unclear as to the identity of the trainer who visited because she refers to him by two different, albeit similar, first names in her CQR. It states there is no record, in the NBSC Helpline logs, of the Applicant at any point complaining about the quality of her training or requesting further training. Post Office reports that two days of further training were provided on 31 March and 1 April 2011,</i></p>	<p>Page Para 4.8</p> <p><i>The Applicant reports that a loss of £4,319.38 arose on 27 October 2010 at the end of the Trading Period. She states that she sent the Trading Period records to Chesterfield the following day and called the Helpline to report the shortfall. She says that the Helpline told her that they would look into it and get back to her. The Applicant asserts that she was contacted by Post Office the next day and told that "the discrepancy did not reflect or appear to correspond to anything". She states that she reluctantly agreed to centrally settle the shortfall and repay through deductions from her remuneration. Post Office's position is that "The Applicant is contractually obliged to make all shortfalls good. Post Office offers the DFR [Deductions From Remuneration] facility to Subpostmasters as a goodwill gesture to reduce financial hardship".</i></p>	<p>26.10.10</p> <p><i>H16950858</i></p> <p>29.10.10</p> <p><i>H16955919</i></p>

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					<p>as a condition of the Applicant's reinstatement. It refers to the notes of the 11 October 2011 Appeal Hearing, in which the Applicant states "a trainer came out one Friday morning (referring to Friday 1 April 2011) but I was serving, no training got done". Post Office asserts that the Applicant knew that training was to take place on that day, but failed to ensure adequate staff were present at the branch for her training to be carried out.</p> <p>The Applicant reports that she received a phone call from Post Office, in November or December 2010, explaining that Horizon was showing £9,000.00 of Stock Vending Machine stock, despite the branch not having a SVM. She says that she was "confused and startled" by the news and took the precautionary measure of placing £9,000.00 into the suspense account. She states that she contacted the Helpline the next day to try to get an explanation, but all that they could tell her was that there was £9,000.00 in the suspense account. The Applicant states that she told the Helpline that she would wait until the end of the Trading Period to see if anything arose and invited them to investigate the matter. This amount is listed on the Applicant's Statement of Debt on 4 January 2011 with the label 'stamp vending machine', the Applicant questions why she is liable for this amount.</p>	Page 7 Para 4.12	
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						<p>Page 7 Para 4.13</p> <p><i>Post Office refers to the Horizon transaction logs (Post Office Document 031), which show that, on 4 January 2011, two entries regarding SVM stock were made on the system. The first entry, made with the Applicant's user ID, decreased the SVM stock by £5,000.00 and the second entry, made using a staff member's user ID, decreased the SVM stock by a further £4,000.00. Post Office states that there is no evidence of the Applicant transferring these amounts into the suspense account.</i></p> <p>Page 7 to 8 Para 4.14</p> <p><i>Post Office reports that it would have taken a deliberate action by the Applicant or one of her staff members to activate the SVM icon on Horizon. It presents evidence of two more entries, made using the Applicant's User ID, which decreased the SVM stock by £6,000.00 on 6 July 2011 and £2,000.00 on 12 July 2011. Both of these entries were cancelled out by reverse</i></p>	
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						<p><i>transactions on 20 July 2011. Post Office states that, whilst it is possible for the SVM icon to have been selected in error, it is unlikely that this error would be made on several occasions. It asserts that any genuine error would result in a corresponding cash surplus, but the erratic pattern of the cash declarations made by the branch have made it difficult to establish any relationship between the figures. It suggests that the Applicant and her staff could have purposefully decreased the SVM stock figures, which would inflate the cash on hand figure, in order to conceal shortfalls. In its comments on the previously issued draft of this report Post Office states that "entries were made in the suspense account against Stamp vending Machine (SVM) losses but as there was no SVM or stock of stamps for an SVM (and there could not, therefore, be a loss associated with this product), this action would have created a gain or covered a loss that was already present".</i></p>	
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M027	Kerry Arkins			X				
M028	Kerry Arkins	X		X	<p>Para 2.7 – Page 3</p> <p><i>(Date identified later in statement as 29/10/09) "The new safe in the Portakabin was completely different and I received no training - as a result I was unable to open the safe and balance at the end of the first day in the Portakabin as I wanted to - the Horizon Helpline told me that I could leave it."</i></p> <p>Para 2.9 – Page 3</p> <p><i>"The next trading statement on 9 December 2009 showed a shortage of £ 2,584.65. I spoke to the NBSC but received no advice. Again I assumed that, as everything had been so chaotic and given that it was the run up to Christmas, some paperwork or stock had been misplaced and would be found."</i></p> <p>Para 2.11 – Page 3</p> <p><i>"It was therefore a major shock to me to produce a trading statement on 6 January 2010 to find that I had a shortage of £ 9,033.79 which I immediately reported. Various calls ensued and I was advised to settle this centrally. Fortunately during one of the calls it was suggested that I should ask that this shortage be declared in dispute, which I did."</i></p> <p>Para 2.24 Page 4</p> <p><i>"The purpose of including the</i></p>	<p>Page 1</p> <p><i>The Applicant asserts that the move of her branch to temporary accommodation in a portacabin was chaotic, that Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) was unhelpful and that Post Office was unwilling to meet with the Applicant to compare Horizon data in order to try and establish reasons for 'unexplainable losses'.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant did raise her concerns on a regular basis and requested support via the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC). Records indicate that the Applicant's concerns were acted on and forwarded for others to take action. The Contract Advisor arranged for intervention visits by a Field Support Advisor. Additionally the Contract Advisor requested checks on transaction logs and investigated whether there were any Horizon issues. Responses received from the Duty Manager confirmed that there were no issues.</i></p> <p>Page 5</p> <p><i>Record of NBSC Logs (Doc 013 refers) 27/10/2009 -08/06/2010 46 calls logged as detailed below:- 23 x relate to issues with the Horizon system, balancing discrepancies or both. 5 x relate to issues regarding the relocation to the Portacabin. 18 x non-relevant enquires e.g. request for a country code etc.</i></p>	X	<p>29.10.09 <i>H16528419</i></p> <p>17.11.09 <i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>5.1.10 <i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>6.1.10 <i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>9.2.10 <i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>10.2.10 <i>H16634409</i></p> <p>13.2.10 <i>H16615606</i></p> <p>8.6.10 <i>No call evident on call log</i></p>

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				<p><i>transaction log for 5 January 2010 is that a serious shortage had been identified in my office on 5 January 2010 by Horizon. They were contacted by someone I spoke to on a call back resulting from my call to the Helpline to report my loss of £ 8,436.86 on 13 February 2010."</i></p> <p>Paras 3.4 – 3.6 – Pages 5/6</p> <p><i>"I telephoned the Helpline immediately after my first full balance after the move on 11 November to query the shortage which I had assumed was due to an administrative error during the move. At the time I assumed this would right itself and put the cash in to cover the shortage.</i></p> <p><i>The next trading statement on 9 December 2009 showed a further shortage of £ 2,584.65 and attempted to telephone the Helpline again. I was unable to speak to anyone and the Helpline were not able to return my call until after I had "rolled over" for the office to open. They did not give me any assistance or advice.</i></p> <p><i>The next trading statement on 6 January 2010 produced a shortage of £ 9,033.79 which I immediately reported. I telephoned many times and it was only during one of these calls that I was told that I had to request that the shortage be put in dispute for it to be registered as such. This I did and: From that point my telephone calls became more frequent and more agitated given the complete lack of any resolution.</i></p>	<p><i>NB Call on 20/11/2009 request for reversal process for cash remittance.</i></p> <p>Page 9</p> <p>NBSC call logs indicate that the Applicant on 27/10/2009 was awaiting arrival of CViT.</p> <p>Page 16</p> <p>Records show that during the period 27/10/2009 to 08/06/2010 46 calls to the NBSC were logged.</p> <p>23 of these relate to issues with Horizon, balancing discrepancies or both.</p> <p>There is also evidence that these calls were actioned by the CA and Branch Support team. There is evidence of the CA requesting Horizon checks and intervention visits to support the branch.</p> <p>NBSC log 03/02/2010 suggests that the BDM had not replied to the specific questions raised. Post Office has assumed that this is the issue referred to.</p> <p>Page 17</p> <p>Records show that 46 calls were made to NBSC during the period 27/10/2009- 08/06/2010. Evidence available indicates that the calls were acted upon as contact was made with FSA, CA, Duty Manager and FSC. The actions are reflected in the correspondence by various parties. However it is noted that the steps taken to try and resolve the Applicant's issues were still not deemed to be sufficient support by the Applicant.</p> <p>The audit shortage differs due to an error</p>	

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	X			<p><i>I asked for, but was refused, direct access to Horizon/Fujitsu. I was told that the Helpline would contact them since I was convinced the issues had arisen as a result of the move."</i></p> <p>Para 3.20 – Page 7</p> <p><i>"Yes, I did request assistance. On every occasion from the November 2009 balance but particularly from the 6 January 2010 balance until my suspension on 8 June 2010. I made many phone calls and sent letters asking that Horizon/Fujitsu compare my data logs with their records, in my presence. All were ignored or refused and I simply received requests to give all my paper evidence to the Post Office. I was passed to the Second Tier Helpline and was informed that they had been told that Horizon investigations were requested. Nothing has ever happened."</i></p> <p>Document 1 – Page 12</p> <p><i>"The next Trading Statement on 9/12/09, showed a shortage of £ 2584.65. I spoke to the NBSC (Judith) about this, but received no advice and paid the shortage by cheque. Again, everything had been so chaotic that I assumed that some paperwork or stock had been misplaced, and would be found. This was the period leading up to the rush of Christmas Post.</i></p> <p><i>"When I produced the Trading Statement on 6/1/10 the shortage</i></p>	<p>on the audit report. The decision at this time was taken not to precautionary suspend. Cash declarations were to be completed 3 times a day with a variance check and anything over £50 to be reported to NBSC. The NBSC would advise the CA. Records indicate that this was carried out. (Doc 007 refers).</p>		
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				<p><i>had leapt to £ 9033.79. I reported this immediately to NBSC. I was advised to settle this centrally as this would give me time to check all the figures for extra 'Os'. None were found. During one of the phone calls when we were discussing my Post Office history and the two previous shortages, it was suggested that I should actually ask that this shortage be declared 'in dispute'.</i></p> <p>Document 1 – Page 13</p> <p><i>"The system would only allow me to go back to 17/11/09 so I had to be content with that. I made a further telephone call to the NBSC to confirm that this loss was listed as disputed' as I had just received a demand from the Agent Debt Recovery Team. This was confirmed."</i></p> <p>Document 1 – Page 13/14</p> <p><i>"My next Trading Statement was on 13/2/10 and this resulted in a further loss of £8436.86. I rang the help line to report and ask again for some help (ref:H16615606). On call back I spoke to a young man who contacted Horizon for me. He came back with the message "the nodes are working, there is nothing wrong with Horizon". However, Horizon had identified a serious shortage in my office on 5/1/10:ONCH 4/1 £ 30,275 5/1 Cash Dep.of £ 6063 Cash wdrwl of £ 1663 ONCH 5/1 £ 8940 Short Approx. £ 26,000 I asked if they had happened to mention a remittance out on that day of £</i></p>		
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				<p>26,000. He said he would get back to them and check. I never heard another word. Nobody ever notified me of this "serious" shortage on 5/1/10. I also rang Horizon about the balance shortage and asked for it to be checked. The young lady I spoke to just said, "We've checked our nodes, it's your problem". After a fruitless discussion with her, I asked to speak with a Manager. I got a Supervisor called Ken (Hor.Ref:1960164). He added very little to the conversation about checking that Horizon was working, but brought up the "shortage" on 5/1/10. I asked him if he had any knowledge of a remittance of £ 26,000 on that day. He went away to check and then came back to ask me for the time and Trans.Ref.. So much for Horizon being infallible. However, even this did not trigger any form of investigation. I pointed out to him that I had actually printed out all the transaction logs for the Office since 17/11/09 and that I would not accept that the Horizon system was not at fault until someone from Horizon/Fujitsu had come out with copies of their logs and put them side by side with mine to prove they were exactly the same. My offer was ignored or declined"</p>		
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M029	Kerry Arkins				<p>Para 2.3 - Page 6/8</p> <p>25/05/01 Technical helpdesk call (0105250519) – engineer being sent</p> <p>27/12/01 Problems logging on – 1 system would not accept new password – had to telephone</p> <p>12/02/02 Rang helpline re Horizon</p> <p>13/12/02 Horizon disconnected 12.10pm also problems with printer – called technical helpline (E021213044)</p> <p>28/05/03 Horizon not processing APT error – rang Horizon</p> <p>16/07/03 Horizon frozen on confirming printing rollover (E0307160857) called three times</p> <p>09/10/03 - Horizon off – rang helpline – reboot (E0310090063 + 0225) Horizon still freezing transfer to online – rebooted 4 times and still the same</p> <p>19/11/03 - Printer not working (E0312100198 and E0312100928)</p> <p>16/02/05 - Call to technical helpline re difference of remitting cheques – technical helpline referred call to business helpline</p> <p>02/07/05 - Reboot had been done but could not pass Automated Payment recovery – technical</p>	<p>Page 1 0 Technical Issues</p> <p><i>The Applicant estimated that he contacted the helpdesk once a week from when the system was installed in October 2000. Unfortunately, Horizon Service Desk (HSD) call logs for the period in question are no longer available so these numbers cannot be verified.</i></p> <p><i>Call logs from the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) indicate that only 3 out of 138 calls received in the 5 year period between October 2000 and October 2005 were relevant to the HSD and transferred accordingly.</i></p> <p>Page 3 Para 2</p> <p>The Horizon service Desk (HSD) call logs are no longer available (Doc 004 refers). However, the NBSC call logs from October 2000 – Oct 2005 are available (Doc 003 refers).</p> <p>The NBSC call data for the 5 year period shows that 36 calls out of a total 138 logged were Horizon related (highlighted in yellow on Doc 003). However, as stated above, details of the calls made to the HSD are no longer available so interrogation of this data is not possible.</p> <p>Page 5 Para 4</p> <p>There are several instances on the NBSC call logs of the Applicant requesting guidance on the procedure when "cut off" hadn't been performed</p>	<p>Page 3 Para 1.13</p> <p><i>In regard to how the shortfall arose, the Applicant states that he received inadequate training in handling problems and a lack of support when he needed it, despite his numerous requests to the Helpdesk, especially given the remote location of the branch. Post Office notes however that there were no calls recorded in the NBSC helpdesk call logs in which the Applicant requested additional training. As referenced in paragraph 2.3. below it would appear that the Applicant had a weak understanding of how to properly operate the Horizon system which introduces the possibility that errors made at the counter could have caused some of the losses.</i></p> <p>Page 4 Para 2.3</p> <p><i>The Applicant states that he made frequent calls to the Helpline, averaging approximately one per week over an extended period. The Post Office notes that</i></p>	<p>25.1.01</p> <p><i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>16.5.01</p> <p><i>H20338009</i></p> <p>25.5.01</p> <p><i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>27.12.01</p> <p><i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>12.2.02</p> <p><i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>13.12.02</p> <p><i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>28.5.03</p> <p><i>No call evident on call log</i></p>
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		X	X	<p><i>helpline referred call to business helpline</i></p> <p><i>02/07/05 - Business helpline referred call to technical helpline as screen had frozen – advised reboot</i></p> <p><i>02/07/05 - Counter frozen and screen goes to AP recovery screen – advised to leave off for 5 minutes and reboot but did not work so advised to re-calibrate the screen</i></p> <p><i>13/10/05 - Card account withdrawals have a zero value - technical helpline referred call to business helpline</i></p> <p><i>29/11/05 - Ms Shodes returned to reboot Horizon and noted to Mr Thomas that she was having difficulty. She apparently called Horizon and her manager Mr Hughes and that Horizon later went out to check the system.</i></p> <p><i>Para 3.30 Page 12</i></p> <p><i>16/05/01 - Horizon off twice 1.15pm (H20338009)</i></p> <p><i>25/05/01 - Technical helpdesk call (0105250519) – engineer being sent</i></p> <p><i>06/06/01 - Frozen screen reported 8.20am – power off and reboot</i></p> <p><i>27/12/01 - Problems logging on – 1 system would not accept new password – had to telephone</i></p>	<p>(Doc 003 lines 6,13,46,61,62,114 refer). This suggests the Applicant was struggling to understand this element of the Horizon process over an extended period of time despite help being provided by NBSC.</p> <p>Page 7 – Helpline Assistance</p> <p>Within the NBSC call logs (Doc 003), there are 3 calls (highlighted in green on lines 44, 115, 121) in relation to attempts to contact the RLM (Retail Line manager) although no mention is made of the subject matter. On one of these occasions (01/03/02), a call was escalated as the Applicant hadn't received a response. Other than the aforementioned escalation, there is no evidence of calls or requests being refused or ignored from the available data.</p> <p>In addition, 3 calls to the NBSC were transferred to the HSD (Doc 003, lines 10, 11 and 68 refer).</p> <p>NBSC call logs show a high volume of calls from the office on a variety of subjects. There is nothing in the available data to indicate that the Applicant received anything other than a professional service with satisfactory outcomes to the issues raised in the calls.</p>	<p><i>the Horizon Helpdesk call logs are no longer available but that such of the NBSC call logs that could be accessed "show a high volume of calls from the office on a variety of subjects", although Post Office consider that these averaged approximately one per month. These call logs confirm the frequency of reported hardware problems and may also indicate a weak understanding by the Applicant of the basic operations of the Horizon system and how some important aspects were meant to operate.</i></p>	<p>16.7.03 H12530313 9.10.03 H12760581 19.11.03 H12855576 16.2.05 H13813795 2.7.05 <i>No call evident on call log</i> 13.10.05 H21903612 29.11.05 <i>No call evident on call log</i></p>
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					<p>12/02/02 - Rang helpline re Horizon</p> <p>13/12/02 - Horizon disconnected 12.10pm also problems with printer – called technical helpline (E021213044)</p> <p>28/05/03 - Horizon not processing APT error – rang Horizon</p> <p>16/07/03 - Horizon frozen on confirming printing rollover (E0307160857) called three times</p> <p>08/10/03 - Horizon problem with online server – reboot. Off again 2.15pm and stopped printing during final cash account (E0310080263)</p> <p>09/10/03 - Horizon off – rang helpline – reboot (E0310090063 + 0225) Horizon still freezing transfer to online – rebooted 4 times and still the same</p> <p>19/11/03 - Printer not working (E0312100198 and E0312100928)</p>		
M030	Kerry Arkins			X			
M031	Kerry Arkins			X	<p>Para 3.7 & 3.8 Page 9</p> <p><i>"Mrs Jack states that the Helpline did not give correct advice, and on a number of occasions did not answer the telephone, and when they did, Post Office staff were often unsure what advice to give."</i></p> <p><i>"This was acknowledged by Glen</i></p>		

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					<p><i>Chester of Post Office (Mobile GRO) and Lesley Post Office (Mobile GRO) and that a series of errors over time had been due to lack of understanding by Post Office staff, which in turn was as a result of lack of training and support."</i></p>			
M032	Kerry Arkins			X				
M033	Kerry Arkins			X				
M034	Kerry Arkins			X				
M035	Kerry Arkins		X		<p>Para 2.5 - Page 2</p> <p><i>"The first major difference arose for the week ended 23 December 2003 when a net shortage discrepancy of £ 2,032.67 arose after I closed at 1pm. I called the Helpdesk who gave me instructions on how to clear these. I followed these, but this only led to the difference increasing. Attached to this questionnaire (as Document 1) are balance snapshots taken at 15.18pm on 30 December 2003 and 15.21pm on 30 December 2003. During this three minute period the cash balance held was reduced by £ 2,140.40, the stamp total by 46 pence and three £ 5 commemorative coins excluded. I have no idea why the stamp, coin and cash figures should have been amended as I did not amend them in any way. Afterwards a supervisor called Janette called back to try and</i></p>	<p>Page 1 – Issue 1</p> <p><i>Due to retention periods, Post Office does not hold training records for this time (Doc 008 refers); however, the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) call logs indicate that Colin Woodbridge, Rural Support Manager from the Post Office, visited the branch on the 21st January 2004 to help locate the shortage.</i></p> <p>Page 1 – Issue 2 – TV Licence</p> <p><i>At the time there were two types of TV Licence application, the manual process for first time applicants and the barcode renewal. Both transactions required the user to enter the transaction on Horizon (Doc 009 refers). On the 25th May 2005 the branch called the NBSC because they had given a TV licence form back to the</i></p>	<p>Page 3 Para 3.1 (b)</p> <p><i>She had come to distrust the Helpline, because following its advice in the past had sometimes resulted in the doubling of her shortages;</i></p> <p>Page 3 Para 4.1</p> <p><i>Post Office's records indicate that the Applicant made comparatively few calls to the Helpline to seek support. The Applicant comments that the difficulties she encountered in being able to get through to the Helpline on many occasions, and</i></p>	<p>24.12.03</p> <p>30.12.03</p>

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				<p><i>sort the issue out but we could not get the figures back to their original position. Eventually I was told that I had to repay the money under the contract terms and so accepted a deduction from my pay for the amount."</i></p> <p>Para 3.17 & 3.18 – Page 6</p> <p><i>On the first occasion that I had a large deficit I rang the Helpdesk and eventually, after following their instructions, the difference that I had called about had approximately doubled. Even though a supervisor called me back to try to resolve the issue they were unable to help me get the difference back to its original figure. In the event I eventually repaid the money from my own salary.</i></p> <p><i>The next time that I had a substantial deficit I rang again but no attempt was made to help me or find out why another large amount of money was missing and I was merely pressured to pay in the difference myself. After this I lost faith with the Helpdesk and felt unable to ring for help as I did not believe that any assistance would be given to me to resolve the matter.</i></p>	<p><i>customer when it should have been retained by the branch (Doc 010 refers). There is nothing to suggest this error on 25 May was connected with the transaction complained about on 23 May. However, it is possible that what has happened is that during the transaction on the 23rd May 2005, the clerk has given the whole documentation back to the customer without entering or scanning the Licence onto Horizon. This would be a reasonable explanation as to why the cheque was on the system and the TV Licence was not.</i></p> <p>Page 2 – Audit and Prosecution</p> <p><i>The Applicant claims in her case questionnaire she eventually called for an audit, but there is no evidence in the NBSC call logs of the Applicant requesting an audit. There is an email (Doc 011 refers) from Rebecca Porch, Retail Cash Management Support, sent on the 6th March 2006 to the area intervention office highlighting problems at the Post Office. There is a security report (Doc 012 refers) that the Applicant allegedly told Mrs Kan Matharu, who represented National Federation of Sub Postmasters, that there were some problems at the Post Office. Mrs Matharu informed Colin Woodridge, Rural Support Manager for Post Office, who in turn informed Mr Adrian Skinner, Area Performance Manager, and this is confirmed by Mr Skinner's response (Doc 011 refers).</i></p> <p>Page 2 – Applicants Issues and Post Office Headline Response</p>	<p><i>particularly when new products and procedures were introduced, would have distorted any statistics on this matter.</i></p> <p>Page 3 Para 4.2</p> <p><i>The Applicant's failure to use the Helpline when problems occurred resulted in the Post Office having no knowledge of those problems. The false accounting by the Applicant compounded this situation, ensuring that Post Office was ignorant of the rising shortfall.</i></p>	
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					<p><i>The lack of training that was provided by Post Office: Post Office does not hold training records for this time. Operations Manuals were available in branch and a weekly "Counter News" was sent to every branch in the network. These publications provided details on how to process all transactions in branch and also included a detailed balancing guide. The NBSC helpline was also available.</i></p> <p><i>Page 3 - Issue 2: The perceived lack of support provided via the helpdesk</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant claims that there was a lack of support from the NBSC from Dec 2003 to March 2006.</i></p> <p><i>Page 5</i></p> <p>NBSC call logs</p> <p><i>Network Business Support Centre answered 203 calls from the branch during the period under review.</i></p> <p>2003- 16 calls to the helpline, all in the month of December: seven calls from 1/12/03-30/12/03 relate to the misbalance call on the 3/12/03 £2082 shortage reported; a further call on the 30/12/03 about another £2000 loss.</p> <p>2004- 99 Calls to the helpline: two calls in relation to previous month misbalance on the 2nd and 6th January.</p> <p><i>Call on the 2nd Jan 2004 relates to £4,188.53 loss, it is most likely that this is the previous two losses added together.</i></p> <p><i>Call on the 3rd February 2004 regarding £3,191.00 loss; again it is most likely that</i></p>	
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					<p><i>this is part of the previous loss. Six calls about faults with Horizon System; all other calls were general enquires.</i></p> <p>2005- 69 calls to the helpline, 30 of which relate to issues processing and despatching cheques and other accounting problems.</p> <p>24/2/05 Call in relation to £750 loss</p> <p>25/5/05 Call in relation to TV Licence transaction</p> <p>2006- 19 calls between Jan-March: 15 calls in January in relation to cheques, system crashing, and branch trading</p> <p>Call on 5/1/06 in relation to £1000 loss after system crashed when processing postage label.</p> <p><i>There are no calls suggesting any shortage in the region of £36,000</i> <i>There is no evidence in the call logs that the Applicant could not contact the helpline. There is evidence that on one occasion she had to chase a call in relation to cheques despatch in January 2006 (Doc 006 refers).</i></p> <p>Page 6 – The lack of training that was provided by post Office:</p> <p>The NBSC helpline was also available, should the Applicant have issues with accounting for the error notice.</p> <p>Page 7</p> <p><i>Call logs to the NBSC are available from 1st December 2003-24 February 2004; calls in relation to error notices and the</i></p>	
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					<p><i>issues that arose during December 2003 are submitted)Doc 004 refers; specifies highlighted in yellow).</i></p> <p>Page 7 – Para 3</p> <p>Call logs made to the NBSC suggest that this may have been the case (Doc 004 refers). On 1st December 2003 the Applicant contacted the NBSC regarding a problem with the despatch of cheques, the Application called back again on the 2nd December and asked to speak with someone else as she was not happy with the help she had received the previous day. It appears from the comments section on the call logs that the NBSC contacted the team at Chesterfield who dealt with error notices at the time and confirmed that the cheques had not been despatched from the branch correctly and arranged for an error notice to be issued to the branch to clear the loss.</p> <p>The Applicant was therefore clearly aware of how to seek support in order to investigate losses.</p>		
M036	Kerry Arkins				<p>Par 2.14-3.34 – Page 4/7</p> <p><i>The Incidents relating to the shortfall arose between February and March 2003.</i></p> <p><i>I was doing my weekly balance on a Wednesday when the system showed a shortfall of £15,000.00.</i></p> <p><i>I contacted the Post Office help line immediately on the day the</i></p>		

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				<p><i>discrepancy arose.</i></p> <p><i>I was shocked as I could not understand why the system was showing a shortfall of £15,000.</i></p> <p><i>The staff at the Post Office helpline were extremely unhelpful.</i></p> <p><i>This was my general experience with the Post Office helpline.</i></p> <p><i>I cannot recall ever having had a helpful conversation with the Post Office helpline.</i></p> <p><i>I had asked the Post Office for help to trace the shortfall however all of my requests for help were ignored.</i></p> <p><i>The Post Office did not investigate the possible cause of the shortfall. Given that the Post Office failed to investigate the cause of the shortfall, I would like the Post Office to explain the basis on which they accepted the payment of £15,000 from me.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, I would like the Post Office to provide me with a detailed breakdown with dates and details of the transactions the shortfall of £15,000 relate to.</i></p> <p><i>I was always told by the Post Office that we had to repay any discrepancies.</i></p> <p><i>I therefore felt that I had no option but to repay the £15,000 to the Post Office.</i></p>		
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				<p><i>I took out a personal loan for £15,000 to repay the Post Office.</i></p> <p><i>I was struggling financially as I was paying the mortgage on my mother's home as I was living with her at the time, the mortgage on the Post Office and the £15,000 personal loan.</i></p> <p><i>I paid the £15,000 to the Post Office in good faith as I believed that an error notice would eventually come through. I knew I had not taken the money from the Post Office. I also knew that Gemma had no involvement with the shortfall.</i></p> <p><i>I genuinely believed that an error notice would eventually come through and the Post Office would refund me the £15,000 I had paid.</i></p> <p><i>It was not unusual for error notices to come through up to six months after. The Post Office should have records of the error notices I was issued and I would like the Post Office to present these notices which will confirm the delay in which they were issued.</i></p> <p><i>3 weeks after I paid the £15,000, the Horizon system stated that there was a further shortfall of £19,000.</i></p> <p><i>I again contacted the Post Office helpline immediately for assistance. This time I asked the Post Office to send in auditors. I had already parted with £15,000 in good faith as I was expecting an error notice to come through putting the system</i></p>		
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					<p>right. However, this had not happened and the system was now showing a second shortfall of £19,000.00.</p> <p>The Post Office failed to act on my concerns and did not send auditors out until three weeks after my plea for help.</p> <p>I had made the Post Office aware that in the space of two months I was told that there was a shortfall of £34,000. I therefore am at a loss as to why they waited 3 weeks before sending auditors in.</p>			
M037	Kerry Arkins	X			<p>Para 2.5 – 2.13 : Page 2/3</p> <p><i>"Initially when the differences first started to occur I called up the Helpline (Networks Business Support) a number of times. Initially they told me to just roll over the loss until the end of the period on May 21. By that time the shortfall was over £3,000. At that stage they then told me to put in funds personally to cover the differences in cash or cheque. I refused as the losses were unexplained, I was confident that the money had not been taken or misposted and the situation had not been fully investigated as far as I could see."</i></p> <p><i>I received a letter regarding the shortfall on 28 May and I called Chesterfield on 29 May as I was concerned about what might happen. They said to let the loss go as the sum was not significant enough to send anyone out.</i></p>	<p>Page 6 – Para 4 Support Issues</p> <p>The Applicant claims that when discrepancies initially occurred he called NBSC a number of times and was told to rollover the loss until May 2013.</p> <p><i>Records show that the Applicant made a call to NBSC on 7 May 2013 stating that he had balanced the Balance Period and had a discrepancy of £2,358.44 and 'still didn't know what was causing it'. He was advised to wait until Trading Period Rollover (21 May 2013) (Doc 004).</i></p> <p>Page 7</p> <p>The Applicant alleges that NBSC were of no help when he called on 3 June 2013.</p>	<p>Page 2 Para 1.8</p> <p><i>According to the Applicant, the branch started to encounter significant losses at the end of April 2013. On 7 May 2013, he called the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) Helpline to report a discrepancy of £2,358.44, which he could not explain. The losses continued and accumulated and, as of 12 October 2013, totalled £17,549.83. The current value of the outstanding debt is £17,969.04.</i></p>	<p>22.5.13</p> <p><i>H23209354</i></p> <p>29.5.13</p> <p><i>H23213129</i></p> <p>3.6.13</p> <p><i>H18001128</i></p> <p>6.6.13</p> <p><i>H23226490</i></p> <p>5.7.13</p> <p><i>H23236947</i></p> <p>8.7.13</p> <p><i>H23248271</i></p> <p><i>H23239054</i></p>

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				<p><i>I called the Helpdesk on 3 June 2013 but they were no help at all so I called Chesterfield and spoke to Andrew about my shortfall. He agreed to go through everything and from his end, but I did not hear back from him.</i></p> <p><i>I received a second letter regarding the shortfall on 6 June 2013 and called Chesterfield on 7 June. They said they would contact my contract manager, Colin Burston, in respect of the issue.</i></p> <p><i>Chesterfield called me back and said they would send someone out. On 26 June 2013 Michelle Keohane visited to go through things and observe me working for a couple of hours. She could not find anything and told me that she could see nothing wrong with how I worked.</i></p> <p><i>Nothing was resolved so I called Horizon (Ref: A3087487) and also called Chesterfield and the Helpline (Ref: H23226490) to no avail.</i></p> <p><i>On 5 July I called the Helpline again regarding a further loss (spoke to Sarah Ref: H23236947) and also called Chesterfield and spoke to Dawn.</i></p> <p><i>On 8 July I called the Helpline again and spoke to Kirsty (H23239054) and on 9 July I called Chesterfield again. I also called the Helpdesk again on 23 July and spoke to Sarah again (Ref: H23248271) and Chesterfield.</i></p>		
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					<p><i>The upshot was that Paul Jones, a post office training manager visited on 24 July 2013 and went through the system and observed me working. Again he could not find anything."</i></p>			
M038	Kerry Arkins			X	<p>Para 4(b) - Page 3</p> <p><i>"The first discrepancy of any real significance arose in May 2008 when a shortage of £1.7k appeared on the balance with regards to stamps. Despite checking and re-checking by the SPM and his staff, no posting errors could be identified at the branch. The SPM contacted the Helpline with regards to this issue. The POL staff he spoke with had no interest whatsoever in investigating the difference or in supplying the SPM with any transactions documentation which might have assisted the identification of errors and corrections. The Helpline's only response was 'how do you want to pay?'"</i></p>			
M039	Kerry Arkins			X				
M040	Kerry Arkins			X X X	<p>Para 2.3 – Page 6</p> <p><i>06 February 2009 - Telephone helpline call6 re stock discrepancy 12 March 2009 - Helpline call re ADSL fault reported 17 April 2009 - Call to helpline requesting assistance 22 April 2009 - Helpline call10 re</i></p>	<p>Page 2</p> <p><i>Call logs from the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) show that the Applicant did not seek help for problems with discrepancies or balancing issues. Post Office has been unable to determine whether or not assistance was provided by BOI and/or Wincor Nixdorf2as there are no telephone call logs available .</i></p>	<p>Page 4 Para 3.2</p> <p><i>The Applicant also referred to "the BT modem not working" as the primary reason why the ATM training was ineffective, although Post Office states there are "no records of the BT issue reported by the</i></p>	<p>6.2.09</p> <p>H16256754</p> <p>12.3.09</p> <p>H22610115</p> <p>17.4.09</p> <p>No call</p>

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				<p><i>incorrect stock unit as accidentally operating in ATM screen rather than AA</i></p> <p><i>6 May 2009 - Telephoned business helpline and spoke to Sarah (H16734127) requesting assistance – told someone from the ATM department would call Mrs Burgess-Boyde back</i></p> <p><i>27 May 2009 - Contacted both Bank of Ireland helpline and business helpline notifying period end difference and requesting assistance. Bank of Ireland response was that someone would look at the fax and come back to Mrs Burgess-Boyde. Business helpline response was that someone would come back to Mrs Burgess-Boyde. No response from either helpline.</i></p> <p><i>9 June 2009 - Contacted both Bank of Ireland helpline and business helpline requesting assistance. No response from either helpline.</i></p> <p><i>24 June 2009 - Contacted both Bank of Ireland helpline and business helpline notifying ATM cash was being declared incorrectly and requesting assistance. No response from either helpline</i></p> <p>Para 3.35 – 3.37 (Page 16)</p> <p><i>"The full telephone logs from the Post Office and also those of the Bank of Ireland would be of assistance. The logs that are available cover the period from 01</i></p>	<p>Page 3 Para 2 (a) – Process issues at the end of each trading period</p> <p><i>At the end of each period in which she found differences contact was made with the Helpline and BOI requesting assistance;</i></p> <p>Page 4 Par 4 (e) – Lack of support from Post Office (pre and post audit)</p> <p><i>The Helpline, audit team and investigation team were of no assistance to her, she was unhappy with the way the audit was conducted, which led to her suspension, specifically the use of her own counting machine to count the ATM cash.</i></p> <p>Page 6 – NBSC call logs: (Doc 019)</p> <p><i>Records show that there were 205 calls to the NBSC between 31 January 2007 and 25 November 2009. One call on 22 April 2009 related to an issue with the ATM: a user had mistakenly served customers while attached to the ATM stock unit instead of the AA stock unit. Whilst this causes discrepancies between the stock units themselves, those discrepancies cancel each other out and do not cause an overall branch discrepancy and transaction and event logs show that this issue was resolved on the day. The remainder relate to operational issues around transactions, reversals and matters unrelated to the issues raised in the Applicant's complaint.</i></p> <p>Page 8 – Conclusion</p> <p><i>In conclusion, whilst the records are no</i></p>	<p><i>Applicant". The Applicant says that it was because of this, that the Wincor installation engineer said he was unable to demonstrate the necessary processes until the ATM was back in communication with its host. She also later inferred that the serious and repeated problems that she experienced with the ATM might have been partially attributable to the same sort of telecommunications interrupts that had truncated the training session. Post Office observes that "There are no records of calls to the NBSC regarding this issue nor was there any contact with the Applicant's Business Development Manager".</i></p> <p>Page 4 Para 3.3</p> <p><i>The Applicant also describes how her calls to the various Helplines (Post Office's NBSC Helpline; and the separate Wincor and Bank of Ireland Helplines) were, in her opinion, frustrating and ineffective, often involving each Helpline directing her to another,</i></p>	<p>evident on call log</p> <p>22.4.09</p> <p>H16326259</p> <p>6.5.09</p> <p>H16734127</p> <p>27.5.09</p> <p>H22626029</p> <p>9.6.09</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>24.6.09</p> <p>H22652224</p>
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				<p>January 2009 to 30 June 2009.</p> <p>A review of these logs show the "Resolution" against most calls as "KB" and does not provide any details.</p> <p>The review further shows that the listing is not complete, for example Mrs Burgess-Boyde lists a call reference H16734127 on 6 May 2009 which is not shown on the telephone logs provided as part of the criminal prosecution."</p>	<p>longer available to confirm what training the Applicant received, Post Office cannot find any evidence that supports the allegation that the Applicant's training was inadequate. Whilst the Applicant expressed her dissatisfaction in relation to the training, she was viewed as being very capable in operating the ATM and the associated procedures. There also do not appear to be any additional requests for training made to NBSC.</p> <p>Page 8 – Para 2 – Process issues at the end of each trading period</p> <p>Records show that no calls were made to the NBSC regarding discrepancies on completion of trading period balances.</p> <p>Page 10 – Para 4</p> <p>No response from Post Office or BOI in relation to differences in the ATM figures.</p> <p>A. The Applicant alleges that there was no response from Post Office in relation to issues raised in light of the differences in ATM figures. Records show no calls to the NBSC from the branch regarding ATM discrepancy issues. Records of calls to the ATM Helpdesk provided by Wincor Nixdorf are not available (Doc 016). Although there is evidence that the Applicant sent a fax relating to a balancing query to Wincor Nixdorf (Docs 002, 003, 016), it is not clear whether Wincor Nixdorf responded to the fax as records are not available.</p>	<p>and frequently with no response, or no promised call back, at all. In its comments on the previously issued draft of this report Post Office states that it "has only one call for the period of 31 January 2007 to 25 November 2009 regarding an ATM issue" and that "There are no records for the calls to the Wincor helpline and therefore [it is] impossible to comment".</p> <p>Page 6 Para 4.3</p> <p>Not only were those ATM output figures clearly incorrect, but we are satisfied, on the balance of probabilities (there being little in the way of call records now available), that the Applicant was inadequately supported by the three helpdesks that she says repeatedly passed her to and from each other without ever addressing the important and urgent matters that she raised. In its comments on the previously issued draft of this report Post Office states that "There are no call logs recorded at NBSC for this issue" and that "In the absence of</p>	
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						<p><i>records from Wincor/BOI it is not understood on what evidence the CRR relies to support the conclusion on this paragraph".</i></p> <p>Page 9 Para 4.12</p> <p><i>The Applicant has also referred to being unaware that she could (and ought) to have 'settled centrally' the ATM-related shortfalls. She claimed, during the disciplinary interview, that she "was not aware of that option being open to me". The fact that the Applicant had never settled any shortfall centrally lends support to her claim. Post Office states that "If the Applicant had informed Post Office through the NBSC of her losses then the option of settling centrally would have been explained as an option whilst the investigation had been completed".</i></p> <p>Page 10 Para 5.3</p> <p><i>In that context, Post Office asserts, on page 2 of its POIR, that its Network Business Support Centre (NBSC)</i></p>	
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M041	Lisa West			X			
M042	Lisa West		X	<p>Page 4 to 5 Para 2.3</p> <p>Approx. 2008 - Installation of the ATM</p> <p>November 2010 - Difference arose – blamed on the branch manager who Mrs Watson suspended and investigated. Funds paid by the manager and after establishing no other differences allowed back in January 2011</p> <p>January 2011 - Allowed manager to</p>	<p>call logs show that the Applicant did not seek help for problems with discrepancies or balancing issues, noting that it "has been unable to determine whether or not assistance was provided by Bol and/or by Wincor Nixdorf as there are no telephone call logs available". This, in our view, is an un-evidenced and unacceptable dismissal of the Applicant's seemingly valid complaints, which were in any event not about general "discrepancies or balancing issues" but about specific, serious and repeated issues arising from the ATM itself.</p> <p>Page 3 – Commercially sensitive and prepared in connection with Mediation</p> <p><i>Other Issues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No advice given by NBSC when £19,055.00 discrepancy reported <input type="checkbox"/> Errors not resolved despite numerous telephone calls to NBSC <p>Page 4</p> <p>Record of Network Business Centre Call logs – (Doc 002, 018 refers)</p> <p>27/11/2007 – 31/12/2007 - 14 calls were</p>	<p>Page 3 Para 3.2</p> <p><i>She and her manager found the Helpline advice to be ineffectual, misleading and contradictory. In its comments on the previously issued draft of this report Post Office states that the NBSC call logs indicate that the Applicant had only made two calls personally as</i></p>	<p>1.6.11</p> <p>1.7.11</p> <p>28.7.11</p> <p>H17203918</p> <p>H22890493</p> <p>H17261033</p>

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				<p>return – all fine between January and May 2011 – Mrs Watson had no concerns and now considers that the manager may have been unjustly accused – given the subsequent events</p> <p>April 2011 - ATM machine started "chewing up" notes</p> <p>April 2011 - Two engineers came: First could not fix the problem and a week later the second Engineer came Reset/Reboot ATM machine zeroing balances – differences thereafter</p> <p>18/04/11 - ATM "chewed up" £870 of notes – sent with a claim</p> <p>19/04/11 - £20 cassette showed 4,294,966,803 rejected notes = £85,899,335,580. Overall difference on Horizon £12,050</p> <p>04/5/11 - Branch Discrepancy Shortfall £836.69</p> <p>20/5/11 - "Chewed up notes – evidence of posting provided as Post Office appear to have lost the documents</p> <p>31/5/11 - Didn't realise what screen they were in and remmed cash £31,000 (loaded figure should be £31,810) to AA not ATM, called the helpline</p> <p>01/6/11 - In conjunction with the helpline tried to reverse and managed to double up correction!</p> <p>01/6/11 - Gain on ATM was</p>	<p>recorded, 4 refer to ATM or ATM balancing issues</p> <p>01/01/2008 – 31/12/2008 - 89 calls were recorded, 21 refer to ATM or ATM balancing issues</p> <p>01/01/2009 – 31/12/2009 - 120 calls were recorded, 25 refer to ATM or ATM balancing issues</p> <p>01/01/2010 – 31/12/2010 - 125 calls were recorded, 13 refer to ATM or ATM balancing issues</p> <p>01/01/2011 – 31/12/2011 – 199 calls were received, 35 refer to ATM or ATM balancing issues</p> <p>01/01/2012 – 31/01/2012 - 10 calls were recorded, 2 refer to ATM or ATM balancing issues</p> <p>In summary, 100 calls to NBSC regarding ATM between 27 November 2007 and 31 January 2012</p> <p>NBSC other calls: 275 Customer Service, 95 Operational Procedures, 50 Balancing Procedures, 15 Security, 8 Auditors, 6 Contractual, 8 Printer faults</p> <p>Page 8 Para 2</p> <p>NBSC call logs show a total of 100 calls over a 4 year period relating to ATM issues.</p> <p>2011 – total of 199 logs of which 35 refer to ATM accounting on Horizon or the ATM</p> <p>2012 – total of 10 logs which 2 refer to ATM accounting on Horizon or the ATM. (Doc 002 refers).</p>	<p>she was an 'absent Subpostmistress', which in its opinion would not provide sufficient evidence for her to make this statement. Its position is that the advice provided by the Helpline was correct.</p> <p>Page 4 Para 3.5</p> <p>At the end of Trading Periods from June to December 2011, when seeking help from the Helpline, the Applicant was simply told to await instructions, which led to process issues at the end of those Trading Periods. Post Office note that the NBSC call logs indicate that it was the manager rather than the Applicant who made these calls.</p> <p>Page 6 Para 4.8</p> <p>However, by contrast, the following extract has been taken from the Applicant's own notes, as set out in her CQR:</p> <p>31/5/11 - Didn't realise what screen they were in and remmed cash £31,000 to AA not ATM, called the Helpline</p>	<p>17.8.11 H22908953</p> <p>6.9.11 H22915051</p> <p>11.10.11 H22932938</p> <p>11.1.12 H22975018</p>
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				<p><i>£93,625.07 but cash in ATM was £108,000 and had not been rolled over although the stock unit had been rolled as part of Trading Period end</i></p> <p><i>01/6/11 - When rolled over – gain £13,540 in suspense</i></p> <p><i>15/6/11 - Ended up with an overall gain of £14,080 on 15 June 2011</i></p> <p><i>29/6/11 - Next Trading Period showed overall Loss of £19,055 – called helpline spoke to Vicki and manager Sarah (H22890493 and H22978018)</i></p> <p><i>17/8/11 - Helpline call H22908953 re Differences and Peter Jackson Email</i></p> <p><i>6/9/11 - Phoned Scott at Wincor re ATM machine</i></p> <p><i>14/9/11 - Final Balance: Net shortfall £601.19</i></p> <p><i>21/9/11 - Final Balance: gain £801.60, shortfall £601.19, Net Gain £200.41</i></p> <p><i>27/9/11 - Trial Balance: Gain £55,200</i></p> <p><i>3/11/11 - Phoned Robert at Wincor to query figures and engineer fitted skimming device</i></p> <p><i>11/11/11 - Helpline calls H22932938/H17261033/H22915051 and H22908953 re Differences</i></p> <p><i>30/11/11 - Helpline call H17411409</i></p>	<p>NBSC use a knowledgebase from which they take the information required to provide a satisfactory response, based on the information provided by the called.</p> <p>This knowledgebase is managed by the Post Office Core information team within NBSC and there are provided with the information by product managers and other Post Office lead teams etc. They also have some information from the help pages embedded in Horizon.</p> <p>NBSC advisors receive full training on Horizon. The expectation is where possible, to stick to knowledge provided to them from knowledgebase and not "assume" any responses. Although their expertise can often require the right questions to be asked in order to understand what it is the branch needs help with- not all questions asked are straightforward.</p> <p><i>The Tier 2 element within NBSC is used if an advisor cannot:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>find the information required;</i> • <i>is not 100% sure on how to address the issue;</i> • <i>if information is not actually available or on the knowledgebase; and/or</i> • <i>if there is something new that has not yet been provided to NBSC.</i> <p><i>They will then liaise with other Post Office departments, (Product managers etc.) to gain the information.</i></p> <p><i>Without the Applicant providing specific examples of "ineffectual, misleading and contradictory" advice allegedly provided</i></p>	<p><i>1/6/11 - In conjunction with the Helpline tried to reverse and managed to double up the correction</i></p> <p><i>1/6/11 - Gain on ATM was £93,625.07 but cash in ATM was £108,000 and had not been rolled over although the stock unit had been rolled as part of Trading Period end</i></p> <p><i>1/6/11 – When rolled over – gain £13,540 in suspense</i></p> <p><i>15/6/11 – Overall gain £14,080</i></p> <p><i>29/6/11 – Overall loss £19,055</i></p> <p><i>Page 6 Para 4.9</i></p> <p><i>The differing descriptions quoted above demonstrate the apparent confusion between the Applicant and her branch manager on the one hand, and the Helpline on the other, as to how, and when, the discrepancies arose and what needed to be done to bring the branch back into balance.</i></p>	
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				<p><i>re Differences</i></p> <p>14/12/11 - Transaction Correction Settled Centrally Shortfall £560.00</p> <p>18/12/11 - Mrs Watson requested an audit as she was concerned as to why the differences had arisen and assumed that the auditors would help</p> <p>28/12/11 - Branch Discrepancy Shortfall £20,557.94</p> <p>28/12/11 - Helpline call H17479884 <i>re Differences</i> – spoke to Neil Page 8 Para 3.10</p> <p><i>The telephone logs are not available which would be of assistance. The helpline references supplied are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) H22975018 (ii) H22890493 (iii) H22908953 (iv) H22932938 (v) H17261033 (vi) H22915051 (vii) H22908953 (viii) H17411409 (ix) H17479884 	<p><i>by NBSC it is difficult for Post</i></p> <p>Page 13 Para 9</p> <p><i>There are no recorded contacts with NBSC on 29 June 2011 requesting assistance with branch accounting. Contact on 1 July 2011 shows the Applicant asking to send paperwork to NBSC for investigation. However, this is not a role undertaken by NBSC (it would be undertaken by FSC where appropriate). The notes on the call log show that NBSC advised the caller to call back on next balance if still a problem.</i></p> <p>28 December 2011 Branch Manager contacts NBSC to ask if authorisation is required to settle centrally, this is some six months after when the discrepancy occurred.</p> <p><i>This means that the cash on hand figure has been inflated at each Trading Period from June to December 2011. This constitutes a falsification of the Branch accounts during this period.</i></p> <p><i>As part of this investigation an extensive examination of the figures taken from the ATM print outs compared to entries on Horizon has been completed for the period 04 May 2011 to 29 June 2011. These dates were selected because the applicant claims that a shortfall of £19055 was reported to NBSC on 29 June 2011.</i></p>	<p>Page 7 Para 4.13</p> <p><i>The branch had sought advice from the NBSC on 6 June 2011 regarding the first counterfeit device that was found, but no investigations were undertaken by Post Office, as it was considered to be a police matter. The proximity of this attempted fraud to the subsequent ATM problems cannot be easily dismissed.</i></p> <p>Page 8 Para 4.19</p> <p><i>In relation to the Applicant's view that the Helpline was ineffectual and gave misleading advice, she gives the example of calling to seek help when the ATM printout showed over four billion rejected notes. She says that no one knew why this had happened and that she was told not to worry about it. She also says that when a difference (a surplus) of £93,000 was discovered, the Helpline advice did not make sense, and she was simply advised that "it would all become clear on rollover". She adds</i></p>	
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						<p><i>that they were "often told to await instructions that never came". In its comments on the previously issued draft of this report Post Office explains that the call log of 2 June 2011 states that "the £93K has gone and the office is now balancing".</i></p> <p><i>Page 8 Para 4.20 – Mis-advice by Post Office's Helpline</i></p> <p><i>Post Office responds by saying that its records show that, between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2011, the branch made 35 calls to the NBSC regarding the ATM or ATM balancing issues, and that without specific examples of the type of advice complained of, it is difficult to comment further. It notes that there are no records of complaints being made at the time and no repeated calls, suggesting that issues were resolved. Post Office again also comments that very few of the calls to the Helpline were made by the Applicant but rather by her manager.</i></p> <p><i>Page 8 Para 4.21</i></p>	
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						<p><i>We consider that, whilst Post Office records show that there was considerable input in terms of Helpline assistance and further training, there appears to have been a mismatch between what Post Office considered to be effective advice, and how the Helpline's advice worked in practice for this branch as it appears that much of the guidance provided was not followed by branch staff. Additional comments in an addendum to the NBSC call logs (see Post Office's Document 26) show that, whilst the NBSC operator is attempting to assist the office with ATM balancing, he does not appear to have been able to assist the branch to resolve the issues remotely. His comment, following a call from the branch on 15 August 2011, is recorded as saying "at this point I could think of nothing further to be done, so the request for a trainer went out". It is not clear from Post Office's records whether or not this further training took place.</i></p>	
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						<p><i>What is clear is that the branch was unable to trace and resolve the differences even with the help that was being provided.</i></p> <p>Page 9 Para 4.22 – Limitations in the Audit Trail available by Subpostmasters</p> <p><i>In relation to the Applicant's complaint that deficiencies in the audit trail meant that she was unable to investigate how discrepancies had arisen, Post Office responds by saying that Horizon transaction and event logs are available to branches for a period of 60 days. It also says that NBSC call logs show no calls from the Applicant regarding assistance in identifying transaction audit trails. Post Office's NBSC call log shows that, for the period 27 November 2007 to 31 January 2012, out of a total of 557 calls made by the branch, 100 were calls relating to the ATM. Of those, 50 related to ATM and other balancing procedures.</i></p> <p>Page 10 Para 4.7</p>	
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						<p><i>Of the two Helpline references cited by the Applicant in relation to this £19,055 shortfall, Post Office responds by saying that there were no recorded contacts with NBSC on 29 June 2011 requesting assistance with branch accounting. There was however a record of a call requesting assistance with branch accounting on 1 July 2011 which appears to relate to the same query (call reference H22890493).</i></p> <p><i>Page 10 Para 4.29</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant says that, after phoning the Helpline on a daily basis, she finally became so concerned at the unexplained shortfall that she requested an Audit to assist her with identifying the cause of the differences. However, the result of the Audit was that she was suspended and her contract later terminated, in her view with no investigation as to the true cause having been carried out despite the fact that crime was clearly suspected. Post Office states that there is no evidence to</i></p>	
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							<i>support the statement that daily calls were made so there is clearly a difference of opinion on this important matter. As noted earlier, Post Office also maintains that the Audit was requested by a Contracts Advisor.</i>	
M043	Lisa West			X				
M044	Lisa West			X				
M045	Lisa West			X	<p>Page 6 Para 3</p> <p><i>(ii) Also see my call logs to the POL helpline (Appendix 3 (Notes 1 – 10) which have records of numerous requests I made for further training. Often I made these requests in desperation; given the discrepancies I was incurring and why I could not explain them.</i></p> <p><i>The dates that I placed these calls for training alone were as follows:</i></p>	<p>Page 3 to 4 – The lack of training on Horizon</p> <p><i>Training records from the time of the Applicant's appointment are not available. However, a number of records have been retained on the Post Office Electronic Filing Cabinet (EFC) and the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) call logs show that several intervention visits were requested by the Applicant which took place between August 2008 and February 2009. An intervention visit is delivered by the Post</i></p>	<p>Page 3 Para 3.4</p> <p><i>She says that the training and support provided to her by Post Office was very poor. In its comments on the previously issued draft of this report Post Office states that "There is no evidence that this training was in any way sub-standard. The available evidence in relation to the</i></p>	<p>5.8.08</p> <p>H16060445</p> <p>9.10.08</p> <p>H16138223</p> <p>14.10.08</p> <p>H16143695</p> <p>3.12.08</p>

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				<p>5/8/2008, 9/10/2008, 14/10/2008 and 3/12/2008</p> <p>(iii) Given the size of the POL, I am shocked that my Area Contract Branch Manager only came to my knowledge personally once POL decided to take issue with me. Despite that, I even tried to contact the Contract Support Team on 8/1/2009 and speak to Tina Gibson.</p> <p>Page 7 Para i</p> <p>I have contacted and attempted to contact POL on countless occasions due to: cash discrepancies; transaction corrections; cash declarations; balancing issues; printer issues, and faults with Horizon. These dates are noted in my POL helpline call logs as follows:</p> <p>09/04/2008; 10/04/2008; 15/05/2008; 17/05/2008; 22/05/2008; 04/07/2008; 07/07/2008; 04/08/2008; 13/08/2008; 14/08/2008; 21/08/2008; 06/10/2008; 09/10/2008; 15/10/2008; 12/11/2008; 13/11/2008; 03/12/2008; 08/01/2009; 12/02/2009; 16/04/2009; 28/04/2009; 18/05/2009; 26/05/2009; 05/06/2009; 10/06/2009; 11/06/2009; 18/06/2009.</p> <p>ii. I have also had limited conversations with the error notice department in Chesterfield and had</p>	<p>Office Field Support team, and would involve a visit to the branch by a Field Support Advisor (FSA) to deliver training</p> <p>On 5 August 2008 the Applicant contacted NBSC (refer to Doc 001, Tab1) to request additional training and NBSC referred the request to the Outlet Intervention Team (OIT). The intervention visit was allocated to FSA Jacqui Swinney (refer to Doc 002). Ms Swinney was scheduled to attend the branch on 21 August 2008 to assist the Applicant with issues regarding account balancing. Evidence suggests that the training was not delivered due to the Applicant being ^{GRO} at the time (refer to Doc 003).</p> <p>On 14 Oct 2008 the Applicant contacted NBSC again to request further training (refer to Doc 001, Tab2). OIT allocated the intervention visit to Nitin Patel (FSA) (refer to Doc 004). Mr Patel joined the Post Office as a Crown Office counter clerk in 1978 and worked on the counter until leaving in 1984. Mr Patel re-joined the Post Office in April 1999 again as a counter clerk, before joining the training team in 2001. Post Office records show that Mr Patel attended Rake Post Office on 15 October 2008 and documented the agreed actions/outcome of the visit (refer to Doc 004). During the visit Mr Patel covered the balancing process with the Applicant and advised the Applicant to balance on a weekly basis going forward rather than monthly (which contradicts the Applicant's claim that she balanced on a weekly basis throughout her tenure). Mr Patel also noted in his report that the Applicant was losing, on</p>	<p>Applicant's interaction with the Post Office helplines does not show Post Office to have been unsupportive in any way". In her comments on the previously issued draft of this report the Applicant states that "I was complaining about shortages/Surplus to help me find the cause of it, so I could nip in bud early, instead they were showing me how to balancing which I did not ask for".</p> <p>In relation to her training, the Applicant says that shortly after the introduction of Horizon in 2001, she received one day of training and a manual. She adds that there were numerous occasions when she called the Helpline to request further training on balancing and other matters, and that the lack of training meant she was unable to resolve any of the problems she experienced.</p> <p>The Applicant says that</p>	<p>H16197531 8.1.09</p> <p>H16227417 9.4.08</p> <p>H15925877 H22500243 10.4.08</p> <p>H15927120 H22500368 15.5.08</p> <p>H15970185 17.5.08</p> <p>H15972435 22.5.08</p> <p>H15979976 H15980039 4.7.08</p> <p>H16028728 7.7.08</p> <p>H16029302</p>
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				<p>problems trying to get through to Cash Management. In fact, my POL helpline call logs record my effort placed on 22/12/2008 to that effect.</p> <p>Page 8 Para iii</p> <p>I have also contacted POL regards problems with stamp declarations previously. I called the helpline on 11/09/2008.</p> <p>Page 9 Para 4 (C)</p> <p><i>There were numerous occasions where I called to the helpline to request further training (see Appendix 3 (Notes 1-10)). On 05/08/2008 (see Appendix 3(Note 3)) — I notified the operator that I required further training on balancing correctly. Initially my concerns were not taken seriously and the operator attempted to talk me down on the issue. Reluctantly the operator acknowledged my request. The entire call was very frustrating and left me anxious.</i></p> <p>Page 9 Para D</p> <p><i>I made a similar request to the helpline on 10/06/2009 (see Appendix 3(Note 8)).</i></p> <p>Page 10 to Para</p> <p>I would invite POL to disclose all</p>	<p>average, £1,000 in each trading period. The report notes that this pattern appeared to begin when Rake Post Office was converted to an 'open plan' arrangement on 2 November 2006. Mr Patel's view was that the open plan arrangement may have been causing paperwork to be lost, though this was purely speculation on his part when trying to ascertain the cause of the account shortfalls and is not supported by evidence.</p> <p>Page 4</p> <p><i>On 3 December 2008 the Applicant contacted NBSC again to request further training (refer to Doc 001, Tab3). Information provided to this investigation from the Network Support Admin Team, formally OIT, suggests that the Applicant's daughter, Ms Jyoti Fatania attended a Post Office classroom course starting on 1 December 2008 in Portsmouth (refer to Doc 005). The course was led by Adam Shaw (FSA). At the time, Mr Shaw had been working for Post Office for 19 years. When delegates attend this course, they usually receive a Performance Standards Assessment (PSA) at the end of the course. Evidence (refer to Doc 005) shows that Ms Fatania achieved a final course score of 75% .</i></p> <p><i>On 8 January 2009 the Applicant called NBSC (refer to Doc 001, Tab 4) and requested that her Contracts Advisor, Tina Gibson, contact the branch. Ms Gibson worked in the OIT and the Contracts Advisor for the branch was actually Carol Ballan. Evidence shows (refer to Doc 006) that</i></p>	<p><i>the support provided by Post Office was very poor, and she often found that "the people who were answering the phone calls sounded as frustrated as I did as they were unable to help us. On lots of occasions all I was told was that someone would call me back". She also says that the Helpline demonstrated a limited ability to guide her through the frequent discrepancies, and that as a result, they simply became bigger.</i></p> <p>Page 4 to 5 Para 4.7</p> <p><i>She says that the Helpline was very limited in its support, particularly after the operating hours were reduced and no calls were answered after 6pm, rather than the prior 9pm close, and that on a number of occasions, following the Helpline's advice resulted in the loss increasing rather than being rectified. She complains that her concerns were not taken seriously, which left her feeling frustrated and anxious.</i></p>	<p>4.8.08 H16058685</p> <p>05.8.08 H16060445</p> <p>13.8.08 H16444475</p> <p>14.8.08 H16069889</p> <p>21.8.08 H16079103</p> <p>11.9.08 H16099766</p> <p>6.10.08 H16131222</p> <p>9.10.08 H16136785</p> <p>15.10.08 H16146212</p> <p>12.11.08</p>
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				<p>helpline logs concerning my branch between 2007 — 2009, as I am certain further unhelpful and empty comments will be noted.</p> <p>a) POL helpline called on 15/05/2008 (see Appendix 3(Note 1))</p> <p>BALANCING - notified the operator that I was having issues with balancing and I requested assistance. I was merely advised to rollover ASAP. No further assistance was offered to the best of my recollection.</p> <p>b) POL helpline called on 04/08/2008 (see Appendix 3(Note 2)) — CASH DECLARATIONS - I notified the operator that I was having incurring fluctuations in my cash declarations and could not understand how Horizon would yield an incorrect higher result, only to then return the lower correct result. No resolve or answer was offered to me to the best of my recollection.</p> <p>c) POL helpline called on 09/10/2008 (see Appendix 3(Note 4)) - BALANCING SHORTAGE - I notified the operator that when undertaking the TP balance from the previous day I incurred an anomaly of £846.75 - a shortage. I explained that I could not understand how this arose and stressed that I had to make good on countless unexplained shortages worth hundreds of pounds. No</p>	<p><i>Ms Gibson did contact the Applicant to discuss the problems she was having regarding balancing. Ms Gibson arranged a further intervention visit and passed on the information to Ms Ballan.</i></p> <p>Page 8 - Unhelpful and negative communication from Post Office Helpline and Personal</p> <p><i>NBSC call logs are available from 3 January 2006 to 17 December 2009 (refer to Doc 001). During this period, the branch contacted NBSC on 376 occasions. All enquires were either resolved by reference to the operator's knowledge base or transferred to the relevant department.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant highlights seven calls in her CQR that she believes the NBSC did not deal with effectively. NBSC records (Refer to Doc 001) confirm that these calls were logged with the NBS, although the comments logged do not contain much information. However, there is other information available (some of which are already included within this report) that does not support the Applicant's claim that the helpline was unsupportive.</i></p> <p><i>15 May 2008- The Applicant contacted the NBSC regarding balancing issues, NBSC records support the Applicant's claim that she was advised to follow standard procedure and rollover. No information is provided in the logs that this resolved the issue; however the Applicant makes no further calls regarding</i></p>	<p>Page 5 Para 4.8</p> <p><i>In regard to the Applicant's expectations of answers from the Helpline as to the cause of discrepancies, it is clear to us that, as in other cases that we have reviewed, this Applicant had an expectation that the Helpline would be able to tell her how those discrepancies had arisen. It is also clear however that Post Office's Helpline and its Chesterfield-based staff (who were issuing ENs and TCs) cannot reasonably be expected to determine the cause from afar, though the Applicant did expect them to be able to do that</i></p> <p>Page 5 Para 4.9</p> <p><i>Post Office responds to the Applicant's complaints by saying that there is no evidence to suggest that correspondence between the Applicant and the Helpline was anything but professional and that every effort was made to help the Applicant with any issues raised.</i></p>	<p>H16176898</p> <p>13.11.08</p> <p><i>No call evident on call log</i></p> <p>03.12.08</p> <p>H16197531</p> <p>22.12.08</p> <p>H16213318</p> <p>8.1.09</p> <p>H16227417</p> <p>12.2.09</p> <p>H22597827</p> <p>16.4.09</p> <p>H16320504</p> <p>28.4.09</p> <p>H16331667</p> <p>18.5.09</p> <p>H22635080</p> <p>26.5.09</p>
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				<p>answer was offered to the best of my recollection by the operator.</p> <p>d) POL helpline called on 15/10/2008 (see Appendix 3(Note 5)) -SOFTWARE/HARDWARE -Due to ongoing problems with Horizon that were causing discrepancies, I requested a new Horizon Kit at the branch; which I believe offered a potential cause of the problem. To the best of my recollection, I requested that the operator confirm this request had been processed. By the next day I had heard no confirmation from POL, so I called again and placed a chaser request.</p> <p>e) POL helpline called on 13/11/2008 (see Appendix 3(Note 6)) - BALANCING SURPLUS— Again, I notified the operator that I was continually having issues with balancing and loses. On this occasion I had to settle a gain centrally of £428.75. I advised the operator that I was receiving transaction corrections continually and could not explain how the discrepancy arose. Furthermore, frustrated I vented a measure of exasperation and explained that these issues had been going on for up to 10 years to the best of my recollection. The response of the operator was to rebalance again to see where that left me by the end of the day.</p>	<p><i>the issue.</i></p> <p>4 August 2008- The Applicant contacted NBSC regarding issues with cash declarations. This call is logged as being answered by the knowledge base, however the Applicant contacts the NBSC again the next day with the same issue (refer to Doc 001) and this is escalated to an intervention visit which is detailed within this report in "The lack of training on Horizon" section.</p> <p>9 October 2008 and 15 October 2008- The Applicant contacted NBSC regarding balancing issues and issues with the Horizon system. The Applicant had also contacted the NBSC on the 14 October (Refer to doc 001) regarding the same issues. This was again escalated to an intervention visit, which is detailed within this report in "The Lack of training on Horizon" section</p> <p>13 November 2008 - The Applicant again contacted the NBSC regarding balancing issues. The Applicant was advised to balance again and check postage figures. No information is provided in the logs that this resolved the issue; however the Applicant makes no further calls regarding the issue. When the Applicant contacted NBSC on 3 December 2008 with similar issues this was again escalated to an intervention visit which is detailed within this report in "The lack of training on Horizon" section of this report.</p> <p>28 April and 10 June 2009 - The Applicant contacted NBSC regarding issues with REMS shortage and balancing issues. On both occasions the Applicant is requesting that someone contacts her regarding these issues. In</p>	<p>Page 5 Para 4.10</p> <p><i>The Applicant's complaints in relation to the Helpline have been voiced by other Applicants, as can be seen from our Briefing Report – Part Two. However, we consider that this Applicant was provided with considerable support by way of four intervention visits, which were carried out to further train her and help her to trace and correct discrepancies. We return to those intervention visits below.</i></p> <p>Page 5 Para 4.11</p> <p><i>In answer to the Applicant's complaints in relation to her training, and subsequent support, Post Office says that the Applicant's training records are no longer available. The Applicant says in her CQR that she was given one day's training in 2001, although Post Office's HR records only date from her appointment as a temporary Subpostmistress in July 2002. However,</i></p>	<p>H16358130</p> <p>5.6.09</p> <p>H16369060</p> <p>10.6.09</p> <p>H16373014</p> <p>H16373385</p> <p>11.6.09</p> <p>H16374669</p> <p>18.6.09</p> <p>H22649725</p> <p>4.8.09</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>5.8.09</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p>
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				<p>f) POL helpline called on 28/04/2009 (see Appendix 3(Note 7)) — REMS - I notified the operator that I was continually incurring inexplicable shortages of small values. I advised the operator that before any remittance is returned to POL; the tender values are checked by myself and double checked by a member of staff. To the best of my recollection, no resolve or answer was offered to me. The matter was treated as "Priority: low".</p> <p>g) POL helpline called on 10/06/2009 (see Appendix 3(Note 9)) BALANCING DISCREPANCIES — Again I called and notified the operator of my losses and gains. I explained my sheer frustration and that I did not know what was causing the problems. The matter was treated as "Priority: low".</p> <p>i) Furthermore see my handwritten contemporaneous notes at Appendix 5(a) of calls that I placed to the POL helpline on 04/08/2009 [re Balancing issue]; 05/08/2009 [re Training request], and 15/08/2009 [re Shortage at branch].</p> <p>Page 14 Para D (i)</p> <p>The support provided by POL was very poor and did not resolve the issue at the time it occurred. Often I found that the people who were answering the phone calls sounded</p>	<p><i>April 2009, Ms Ballan contacted the Applicant to arrange a meeting (refer to Doc 013) to discuss the branch losses. The Applicant was unable to attend (refer to Doc 014) and the meeting was rearranged for June 2009, these issues are addressed in the "Accounting discrepancies and lack of proper audit trail" section of this report.</i></p> <p><i>There is no record of the Applicant making any complaints to NBSC regarding the service provided. There is no evidence to suggest that any correspondence between the Applicant and the operators at NBSC was anything but professional and every effort was made to help the Applicant with any issues raised.</i></p>	<p><i>following requests by the Applicant and/or her Contracts Manager, four intervention visits took place, when a Field Support Advisor (FSA) visited the branch to deliver further training, in October 2008, and again in February, April and August 2009. The Applicant's daughter also received classroom training in December 2008. It is not clear whether the Applicant ever received any formal classroom training, however, Post Office says in its POIR that the Applicant had been operating Horizon without issue from the time of her appointment, until 2008. Indeed, we note that she was recorded as having said, in a call to the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) Helpline on 13 November 2008, that she had "been in office for 10 years and concerned as to why things are now going wrong". Taking that statement into account, and notwithstanding the lack of availability of training records, we have formed the view that this branch's problems are not primarily attributable to</i></p>
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					<p>as frustrated as I did as they were unable to help us. On lots of occasions all I was told was that someone would call me back.</p> <p>Page 15 Para D (ii)</p> <p>They never demonstrated any ability to guide me through my queries which we had in relation to the Horizon system on a frequent basis. These queries then became bigger problems as a result of their failure to adequately guide us through the queries.</p>	<p><i>training and support deficiencies.</i></p> <p>Page 6 to 7 Para 4.18</p> <p><i>The Applicant says that on one occasion, when she contacted the Helpline for assistance with balancing, she was simply advised to roll over, and that no further assistance was offered. She also says that, following a meeting to discuss the branch's outstanding debt, she was warned in a letter (Post Office's Document 016 refers) that she was not to settle anything centrally, and that any losses were to be made good immediately. The letter told her that if she failed to meet this requirement, Post Office would "seriously have to consider [her] suitability to remain as a Subpostmaster". The Applicant says that there seems to have been a presumption by Post Office that they could "just hold her liable for everything without explanation". She adds that she was "regrettably forced to accept and roll over, time after time".</i></p>	
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M046	Lisa West			X			
M047	Lisa West			X			
M048	Lisa West		X		<p>Page 2 Para 10</p> <p><i>The Telephone calls that you made to the Post Office's helpline. Can you recall and recount the advice or help that you received?</i></p> <p><i>On the first occasion April/May 2009, I phoned the helpline and arranged payment by instalment. Despite requesting a full report of my personal data, the report I received is inconclusive and does not clearly show this transaction. The subsequent 3 errors I made good myself without referring to the helpline.</i></p>		
M049	Kayleigh Whitman		X		<p>Para 27</p> <p><i>"I recall having a shortfall in excess of £4,000 on one occasion in either 2006/2007. I am unable to recall the exact date due to the passage of time. I contacted the helpline and I was told to wait for an error notice. This never materialised and the Post Office thereafter demanded I repay the £4,000 out of my salary on a monthly basis for one year. This in itself was surprising as the staff at the helpline had initially told me that I should receive an error notice"</i></p>		
M051	Kayleigh		X		Para 3.10		

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	Whitman				<p><i>Mr Rudkin has highlighted one example which took place on in September 2004 when £600 was to be transferred from one account to another and was incorrectly put to the wrong account. The information which he was given by the Helpline was incorrect as he was told to put £1,200 in Suspense. This then replicated itself without any intervention and created a £1,200 error.</i></p>				
M052	Kayleigh Whitman			X – no reference to any helpline throughout					
M053	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M054	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M055	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M056	Kayleigh Whitman		X		<p>Page 6, Para 30.</p> <p><i>Specific instances of POL demonstrating their poor investigative processes:</i></p> <p><i>9 September 2010 Calls placed to POL helpline</i></p> <p><i>Page 7 Paras 39 (later discussed at Para 69-74)</i></p> <p><i>"In early July 2010 (1st or 2nd) a nearby Post Office Blaydon Post Office was closed for a week for refurbishment.</i></p>				

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					<p><i>At the end of a day's trading, during this time I had a loss of £33,000 on a single day.</i></p> <p><i>Having checked my figures several times I contacted the helpline who advised me to use the settle centrally function at the end of the trading period. They said that if it proved to be an error that I had made then I would be informed later"</i></p> <p><i>Phantom Login 29 July 2010</i></p> <p>Para 94 -</p> <p><i>"I therefore went back to the office the next morning. I call the Helpline for assistance. When I got through to the Helpline I advised them of the situation and in clear terms was told that this was not possible and that no other user was logged in. Initially the first member of staff who answered the phone advised me that they were unable to rectify the issue and escalated it to the second line. I was transferred through and spoke to a member of staff, but I cannot recall their name. I was advised in blunt and firm terms that there was no possibility for any other user to be logged in I was left with the impressions that this was impossible and it simply had to be some sort of malfunction with the Horizon system".</i></p>			
M058	Kayleigh Whitman			X				

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M059	Kayleigh Whitman			X				
M062	Kayleigh Whitman			X	<p>Page 2</p> <p>24-4-2006 Call ref No H1444 7370 Clerk Glenice</p> <p>24-4-2007 Call Ref No H1534 2593 Clerk Vicky</p> <p>Helpline told me there is software error and there is no problem from their point of view and cash shortage will resolve itself in due course.</p> <p>Page 3</p> <p>Through the helpline. They told me to roll over soon as possible or risk losing data. Balance showed shortage when I tried to correct it doubled. Helpline also tried it doubled again. They told me there is no problem from their point of view. Cash shortage will resolve itself in due course.</p> <p>Page 4</p> <p>24-4-2007 Call ref no> H1534 2593 Clerk Vicky</p> <p>On 20-21-23 April 2007 message came up on the screen saying "branch roll over due you risk losing data until branch is rolled over into next TP. Stock unit CC rolled into current TP 38 days ago. So balance was done and branch rolled over into next TP. Helpline questioned me why I did not put the cheque for</p>	<p>Page 1 – 2 Para 2 – Support</p> <p>The Applicant states that he made a call to the helpdesk on 24th April 2006 under reference number H14447370. However, the aforementioned reference number relates to a query raised in December 2005 which is unrelated to the Applicant's complaint.</p> <p>The Applicant states that when he tried to correct the "shortage" it doubled and when he rang NBSC it doubled again following their assistance. The Applicant states that NBSC told him that the discrepancy would resolve itself in due course "within a maximum of 42 days".</p> <p>Page 3 – Passwords</p> <p>Record of call reference number H14447370 to NBSC. Record of calls to NBSC 1 April 2006 – 31 May 2007</p> <p>NBSC call logs:</p> <p>The Applicant states in his complaint that he called NBSC on 24th April 2006 and provides a</p>	<p>Page 2 Para 1.10</p> <p>The Applicant reports that he reported hardware problems to the Helpline and that some advice was provided. The Applicant says that he had, in March 2007, received a notice from Fujitsu informing him that a workstation had disconnected, during which time transactions had been entered into Horizon.</p> <p>Page 3 Para 3.1</p> <p>The Applicant is firmly of the view that the losses listed in paragraph 1.8 above are directly related to hardware problems. Also, the Applicant maintains that he followed advice from the Helpline that resulted in a discrepancy doubling in size and then doubling again. The Applicant says that he was then told that the problem would sort itself out within 42 days, though it did not. Post Office's position on this is that there is no evidence to corroborate the Applicant's claim that he received advice, in April 2006, which resulted in a discrepancy doubling and we have established that Post Office's NBSC Call Log records show no record of any such a dialogue, but we do</p>	<p>15.12.05</p> <p>H14447370</p> <p>24.4.06</p> <p>H14447370</p> <p>24.4.07</p> <p>H15342593</p>

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				<p>£2000 when I found it the balance showed no shortage but the snapshot showed the shortage. They said why I had not shown the shortage on the balance but the balance is done every four or five weeks and not weekly.</p> <p>24-04-2006 Call ref no H1444 7370 Clerk Glenice</p> <p>Helpline told me to roll over soon as possible or risk losing data. Phoned Steve Taylor and was told to pay up and wait for error notice. I forgot the call ref no at the time of investigations interview.</p>	<p>reference number of H14447370. Details of this reference number were requested from NBSC and the reference number applies to an unrelated call made in December 2005 (Doc 001 refers).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 1st April 2006 and 15th May 2007 there were 146 logged calls to NBSC (Doc 011 refers) of which: 7 relate to balancing issues; and • 2 relate to issues with Horizon. <p>Page 6</p> <p>The Applicant gives an NBSC reference number of H14447370 relating to the call made regarding the discrepancy on 24 April 2006. However, examination of call logs (Doc 001 refers) shows that this preference number relates to an unrelated incident reported to NBSC in December 2005.</p> <p>The call logs also show that the only call made on 24 April 2006 was to inform NBSC that the branch had run out of cash (call reference H14688547). The call logs show no evidence of calls to NBSC regarding balancing on or around 24 April 2006.</p>	<p>address virtually identical assertions, made by other Applicants, in our Part Two Briefing Report.</p> <p>Page 3 Para 4.1</p> <p>Where there is disagreement, a logical and fully evidenced opinion on the merits of that Subpostmaster's complaint where it is possible to do so</p> <p>The Applicant has provided a number of Helpline call reference numbers together with a screen print out dated 19 March 2007 showing a "Workstation Disconnected" warning message. Unfortunately these do not appear to correspond with Post Office records and it has not been possible to match any of these events to the reported losses.</p>	
M063	Kayleigh Whitman		X	<p>Page 6 Para 4.2.1</p> <p><i>In the period of 2011-2012 shortages continued, contacts were made with the Help Desk but all requests for assistance were</i></p>			

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					<i>refused.</i>				
M064	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M065	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M066	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M067	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M068	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M070	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M071	Kayleigh Whitman			X					
M073	Lisa West		X		<p>Page 4 Para 2.2</p> <p><i>April 2010 - Differences began to arise which Mr Dickson could not explain despite checking paperwork which appeared to be correct, yet Horizon system showed a different figure to the cash and stock held.</i></p> <p><i>April 2010 - Mr Dickson estimates that the first difference was around £200/£300.</i></p> <p><i>April 2010 - Differences continue to rise and reach around £3,000</i></p> <p>Page 6 Para 3.6</p>				

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					<p><i>Mr Dickson has also stated that when he started to have differences around April 2010, he called the Helpline for assistance, as he was unable to resolve the position himself. However, he found the helpline of no assistance whatsoever. He was told either to put through a transaction correction, or to refund the amount of the difference.</i></p> <p>Page 6 Para 3.9</p> <p><i>At the end of a period when Mr Dickson had a misbalance, he did speak to the helpline, but he did not find that they were of assistance, as is set out in Paragraph 3.6 above.</i></p> <p>Page 10 Para 4.3</p> <p><i>Mr Dickson has stated and a set out in Paragraph 3.6, that his initial calls to the helpline were of little assistance, and thereafter he did not feel that calling would resolve the issue of the differences.</i></p>		
M076	Lisa West		X		<p>Page 3 Para 3.2</p> <p><i>The lack of competent and adequate support, via the helpdesk or any other means, which meant the difference that arose could not be resolved.</i></p> <p>Page 4 Para 3.3</p> <p><i>Over the period from December 2008 to February 2009 as outlined above.</i></p>		

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M077	Lisa West			X				
M078	Lisa West			X				
M080	Lisa West	X			<p>Page 20 Para 176:</p> <p>On 19, 22, 23, 24 June 2010, disconnections from the Horizon system happened. We called the helpline and they promised to call me back but it was a day later before I received any response. We could not serve people during the interning and because of this we had to close the shop.</p>	<p>Page 3 - Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) Call Logs: 29 August 2008-17 June 2011 (Doc 001 refers)</p> <p>There are records of 114 calls: 38 relating to transaction and operational enquiries; 44 relating to errors made or balancing enquiries; 13 relating to Horizon issues; 19 reporting limited service or branch closure.</p> <p>Page 7</p> <p>Records indicate that the Applicant was present in the branch on 29 August 2008, being the day of the transfer of assets, as the Applicant has signed the appointment papers which are contained within the CQR and dated 28 and 29 August 2008.</p> <p>Page 8</p> <p>NBSC records show that both the Applicant and her daughter knew how to obtain assistance from NBSC with balancing issues as support was obtained as early as September 2008, only three months after appointment. There is also evidence that the Applicant was given additional support by a Subpostmaster from a nearby branch. (Doc 001 refers)</p>	<p>Page 5 Para 3.5</p> <p>In relation to the National Business Support Centre (NBSC) Helpline, the Applicant says that the support provided by Post Office was, in her opinion, "very poor" and that it "did not resolve the issue at the time it occurred". In her comments on the previously issued draft of this report the Applicant states that "These issues needed immediate response... what we were told is that they would get back to you in 24 to 48 hours & then you would speak to someone different that would give you different advice". She also says: "Overall, despite the many telephone calls, letters and attendances, there was little or no energy devoted to resolving the issues reported by me". Post Office's reaction is to note that "she only made a small proportion of the calls to the NBSC made by her branch" and "Therefore, whilst she claims that support provided was "very poor" she does not have first-hand knowledge of a substantial amount of the support that was provided to her branch".</p>	<p>19.6.10</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>22.6.10</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>23.6.10</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p> <p>24.6.10</p> <p>No call evident on call log</p>

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					<p><i>There is evidence that the settle centrally option was used on 6 May 2009.</i></p> <p><i>NBSC could also offer appropriate advice.</i></p> <p>Page 8 - Conclusion</p> <p><i>There is no evidence that support or training provided to the Applicant/her daughter was inadequate. It is Post Office's view that in the unfortunate circumstances of the Applicant [redacted] GRO [redacted] during the initial training, Post Office acted swiftly and was supportive in offering the training to her daughter. Whilst it is acknowledged the classroom training did not include ATM training this is for good reason as set out above. There is evidence that the Applicant and her daughter knew how to contact NBSC and how to use the settle centrally function. There is evidence of considerable support for this branch, which exceeded the standard training package. It is Post Office's view that the Applicant's claims that the off-site training focussed on daily transactions only is unfounded and that she is not in a position to comment on this given that she did not attend the full course. In recognition of the Applicant's [redacted] GRO [redacted] further training courses were offered however the Applicant failed to take up these opportunities.</i></p>	<p>Page 9 Para 4.5</p> <p><i>On 5 May 2009, the Applicant's husband emailed Post Office in relation to a £5,000 discrepancy that the office was unable to resolve. In that email, he complained of conflicting advice he says the branch had received from the trainer and the Helpline in relation to variance checks and balance snapshots. He also requested training for all the branch staff "with a competent trainer and for more than two hours, also one that knows about the ATM because the last two trainers knew nothing about the ATM". In its comments on the previously issued draft of this report Post Office "questions why the Applicant's husband felt able to criticise the knowledge of its trainers in relation to the ATM [as he] was not trained on the ATM [and] should not have been as he was not registered to work in the branch". In regard to Post Office's reference to the Applicant's husband not being registered to work in the branch, the Applicant says, in her comments on the previously issued draft of this report: "POL was always made aware that Mr G Etheridge was part owner of the post office" and that he "had all the deals with POL management". This matter is also referenced in paragraph 4.8. below.</i></p>	
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					<p>Page 11 Para 2</p> <p>On 20 February 2009 the Outlet Intervention Team (OIT) received an email from the NBSC relating to a call received from the Applicant's daughter.</p> <p>NEEDS TO SPEAK TO THE AREA OFFICE REGARDING ANOTHER MEMBER OF STAFF OVER THE BALANCE & A PROBLEM SHE HAS CAUSED. A member of staff created a zz unit and put £210 in suspense account and was then told to take it out; now there is an amount of £649 which keeps coming up on the system and pm does not know where it's come from and what to do about this.</p> <p>Page 12 Para 5</p> <p>On 30 September 2009 a FSA attended the branch re ATM issues, the outcome of the visit is recorded as:-</p> <p><i>Mr Etheridge has been dealing with the ATM and his accounting and paperwork appear to be correct. They have a separate stock unit for the ATM. Problems arose when Mr and Mrs Etheridge were on holiday. The money came into the office and was not transferred to the ATM stock. ATM money was used to fund the post office during August and September. Explained to them that on no account must the ATM money be used to top up the Post office. On the day that they receive</i></p> <p>Page 15 Para 5.2</p> <p>As noted at paragraph 3.7. above, sometime after January 2011, the Applicant discovered that the 'Deputy Manager', LP, had been inflating the branch's cash declarations. On 12 May 2011, the Applicant informed the Helpline that she suspected that a member of staff was stealing cash from the branch and "not entering customer's deposits as she had had a few complaints". We also note that, on 24 November 2011, a TC Invoice for £1,421.91 was issued to the branch, when a cash pouch, that had been remmed out of Horizon, was not despatched to the Cash Centre. It would appear that no investigations were carried out at the time either by Police or by Post Office. From the available evidence, we are unable to conclude whether LP was stealing cash from the branch, or whether she was inflating the cash declarations to hide discrepancies caused by errors. In either event, it would have made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the Applicant to trace the source of those discrepancies. We note the Applicant's comment that "LP was inflating cash declarations to hide discrepancies...".</p>	
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					<p><i>the money it needs to be transferred to the ATM stock and accounted for daily. Suggested that Mr Gareth Etheridge runs through the loading of the machine and how to obtain the figures with a member of staff or all the staff. So that if he is unable to take the figures there is a competent person to do it. The training cannot be done while the office is open because it is a very busy benefit office, so not practical for a trainer to arrive at 17.30 and train all members of staff. Mrs Etheridge the postmaster could do with some additional training as she is unsure of some of the weekly balancing procedures. Her daughter and members of staff have been trying to tell her what to do. The office had not been balanced since the last Trading Statement. Confirmed with Chesterfield the ATM shortage of £6210 and asked them to send the evidence to Gurnos. It appears that during the month of August incorrect figures were inputted. Sunday figures were omitted totally. It has been correct since 27 September.</i></p> <p><i>Page 13 Para 2 (i)</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant claims she logged calls with NBSC requesting further training. The Applicant requests sight of the call logs. The Applicant claims that she often found communications to be vague or unhelpful</i></p> <p><i>Page 15</i></p>	
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					<p><i>NBSC call logs have been examined and there is no evidence of incorrect or unhelpful advice being given to the Applicant or her staff. 114 calls were made during the Applicant's period of tenure, of which were made by the Applicant. There is a steady increase in the number of calls made during the Applicant's period of tenure. It is significant that in 2010 (the last full year of the Applicant's tenure) 41 calls were made by persons other than the Applicant, who made 3 calls. This year also included a period when the branch was closed. Appropriate responses and action when required was taken, which on numerous occasions led to additional on-site support being provided. NBSC call logs are provided as part of this response (Docs 001 and 002 refer).</i></p> <p><i>Records show that an email was sent by the Applicant's husband to the BDM on 5 May 2009 in which he complains that he had been given conflicting advice regarding the end of day balancing. The Applicant's husband stated in that email that the "trainer" (FSA) had advised that the variance check should be used to complete the end of day balance and the "helpline" (NBSC) are advising that the balance snapshot should be used for this task.</i></p> <p><i>(b) Producing an office snapshot or a balance snapshot, viewing the cash on hand figure and deducting this amount from the cash declared figure (as advised by</i></p>	
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					<p>NBSC)</p> <p>Page 16</p> <p><i>NBSC call logs have been examined for the entire period the Applicant was in post. There are thirteen calls logged relating to issues with Horizon.</i></p> <p>Page 17</p> <p><i>A further call is logged on 19 January 2010 reporting the branch closed due to a system failure but an engineer was expected. There are two calls relating to the recovery process, both logged in August 2010. The first call is recorded on 17 August 2010 and reports that the system went down half way through a card account transaction; the second call is recorded on 24 August 2010 and refers to the recovery process. On both occasions advice was provided to the caller from the NBSC knowledge base.</i></p> <p><i>On 1 April 2010, 7 May 2010, 12 May 2010 and 21 September 2010 calls were made to NBSC which were transferred to HSD relating to on line services, rebooting, and printer or faults, no other information was provided. Analysis of further HSD call logs is contained in document 054.</i></p> <p><i>On 25 March 2011 a call was made to NBSC to report discrepancies that the Subpostmaster thought had been caused by Horizon; the call is</i></p>		
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					<p><i>transferred to HSD and there are no further details logged. There are two calls relating to engineer visits on 10 March 2011 and 25 May 2011. The first call related to a system failure which may have been related to phone lines and states that an engineer was coming; the records do not indicate if the engineer was from HSD or BT. The office is logged as closed at 08:55 and reopened at 10:03. Given the time of the initial call (08:55) it is unlikely that the branch was open and therefore this incident could not have occurred mid transaction or affected a transaction. The second call was a chaser to an expected engineer visit the previous day; on call back by NBSC the engineer had been on site and resolved the pin pad issue raised.</i></p> <p>Page 22</p> <p><i>There is a call logged at NBSC on 12 December 2008 which refers to an amount of £210.00 which it is presumed, given the limited data available, is held on the cheque line of the branch accounts. If this was removed, as it should be if the cheques were not physically on hand, this could have created a loss in the branch. However, the actual cause of the loss would be the fact that the cheques were not physically on hand.</i></p> <p><i>On 20 February 2009 the Applicant's daughter logged a request for OIT to contact her</i></p>		
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					<p><i>regarding another staff member and a balancing issue and a problem she had created. The OIT logged the call as :-</i></p> <p><i>NEEDS TO SPEAK TO THE AREA OFFICE REGARDING ANOTHER MEMBER OF STAFF OVER THE BALANCE & PROBLEM SHE HAS CAUSED. A member of staff created a zz unit and put £210 in suspense account and was then told to take it out now there is an amount of £649 which keeps coming up on the system and pm does not know where it's come from and what to do about this.</i></p> <p><i>The OIT raised a request for additional training which was delivered on 4 March 2009 (see 1(v) above). However, as referred to below, there was a call on 31 December 2008 about this.</i></p> <p><i>There are no calls logged to NBSC during March 2009 in relation to a loss or referring to a ZZ stock unit. No TC's were issued during March 2009.</i></p> <p><i>On 27 April 2009 a call was logged by NBSC from the Applicant's daughter reporting a £5,500.00 discrepancy due to an incorrectly processed ATM figure. The correct advice to reverse the entry was provided by NBSC. If the correct advice provided by NBSC was followed there would not be a discrepancy in the branch accounts.</i></p>		
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					<p><i>There are numerous other errors and discrepancies reported to NBSC. These are either mentioned in other parts of this report or recorded in the NBSC call log analysis. (Docs 001, 002 refer)</i></p> <p><i>Although the Applicant claims that the £700.00 discrepancy in March 2009 was her first loss and her Manager was advised to create a ZZ stock unit to resolve the issue which it failed to do, records show:-</i></p> <p><i>On 31 December 2008 a call was logged with NBSC requesting assistance with creating a ZZ stock unit.</i></p> <p>HOW TO CREATE A ZZ SU ON HORIZON SPMR HAS MESSAGE THAT SAYS TO CORRECT DISC ON BALANCE NEEDS TO CREATE A CORRECTION SU ZZ.</p> <p><i>The branch was advised using the knowledge base held at NBSC. On 20 August 2009 a call was logged at NBSC from the Applicant's daughter relating to an ATM discrepancy which it is reported was "made worse by figures being reversed". The call log is further annotated "£700 down on cash tried to reverse cash dec and it didn't work". A call back to the branch to speak to the Applicant is requested after 1pm the following day when the Applicant will be in the branch. It is not known if this is the £700.00 discrepancy the Applicant refers to (see 6(ii) below).</i></p>	
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					<p><i>There is one further reference to the ZZ stock unit in the NBSC call logs on 1 April 2010, when the following is recorded:-</i></p> <p>DID MONTHLY ROLLOVER YESTERDAY BUT IS UNABLE TO ROLLOVER OFFICE</p> <p><i>The resolution states that instruction was given on the ZZ stock unit, the most likely explanation is that the branch was attempting to roll the office but had failed to 'roll' the ZZ stock unit. Records show that the ZZ stock unit had been deleted by 1 June 2010 although Post Office cannot determine from the available records exactly when it was deleted.</i></p> <p>Page 25</p> <p><i>NBSC records show a call made by the Applicant's daughter on 27 April 2009 reporting a shortage of £5,500.00. The logs are annotated as "balance last week-Postmaster put through ATM dispensed figure incorrectly. Has attempted to reverse but unable to do so". The Applicant's daughter was advised to process the transaction as a new reversal rather than as an existing one. (The facility is available via Horizon to correct an error made by reversing the transaction and then inputting it correctly. There are two types of reversals, new and existing. A new reversal is used when the Horizon user sells a stock item incorrectly</i></p>		
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					<p><i>for example a first class stamp when the customer wants a second class stamp. An existing reversal is usually transactions input to Horizon incorrectly and is completed with the use of a session number obtainable either from the customer's receipt or from the Horizon produced transaction log.) In this specific instance the user was attempting to reverse the ATM dispensed figure input to Horizon as an existing reversal. However, the ATM dispensed figure had been input into Horizon as the sale of a product and therefore the correct method would have been to process as a new reversal. This would have corrected the discrepancy reported. It is not known if this is the £5,000.00 shortfall the Applicant refers to.</i></p> <p><i>On 6 May 2009 there is a call logged at NBSC at 18:10 by the Applicant. This is recorded as "office has got large discrepancy." A second call was made on the same day at 18:30, again by the Applicant, and the log states that the large discrepancy related to a transfer from the BOI stock unit to AA stock unit. The Applicant requested permission to place the amount into the branch suspense account, but was advised to settle the shortfall centrally. There is no amount recorded on the log however records show that a balancing discrepancy of £4,824.78(-) was settled centrally on 6 May 2009 which would correlate with both</i></p>	
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					<p><i>the advice given by NBSC and the shortfall the Applicant refers to in her CQR (Doc 024 refers).</i></p> <p><i>There were further calls made to NBSC during 2009. On 24 June 2009 the Applicant reported cheques possibly being remitted out of the branch twice. If this error had been made then a surplus would have been generated of the additional amount remitted out but for which no actual cheques were sent. The call logged does not record a value of the error made and no balancing discrepancy was settled centrally in August 2009 when the trading period balance was completed (Doc 024 refers).</i></p> <p><i>On 19 August 2009 the Applicant again contacted NBSC regarding cheques. By this time the Applicant believed that she may have remitted the same amount out three times and reversed the transaction once. The log records that a TC had been received for £832.00 and records show that a charge TC was issued to the branch on 23 July 2009 for £832.42. It is apparent at this time that the Applicant was receiving assistance from a Subpostmaster from a branch nearby, but he was unable to resolve the issue either.</i></p> <p><i>Page 26</i></p> <p><i>The following day, 20 August 2009, the Applicant's daughter made a call to NBSC relating to a discrepancy with the ATM "made worse by figures being reversed". The logs show that the branch was</i></p>	
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					<p><i>reporting £700.00 in cash and that they had tried to reverse the cash declaration and it did not work. (The correct procedure would have been to re-declare the cash by overwriting the previously declared incorrect figure(s)).</i></p> <p><i>On 8 December 2009 a call was made to NBSC by the Applicant's daughter regarding the ATM and reporting that the ATM dispensed figure of the 27th (the exact date is not recorded but it is believed this refers November 2009) had not been entered. There was no amount specified but the caller was advised to the omitted figure to Horizon on the day of the call.</i></p> <p><i>Page 32</i></p> <p><i>There is one call logged with NBSC on 6 May 2010 which relates to an enquiry as to whether a Premium Bond transaction for £2,000 had been processed via Horizon (Doc 003 refers). The advice is given to review the end of day reports. There is no evidence (chaser calls for example) to indicate that there are any further issues with this transaction. Records show that a credit TC for £2,000.00 was issued on 22 February 2010, as the TC was issued prior to the call logged with NBSC it is unlikely to be related. However this could be the issue to which the Applicant refers (Doc 003 refers).</i></p>		
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M081	Lisa West		X		<p>Page 7 Para 3.35:</p> <p><i>Mrs Ward contacted the helpline as seen in Telephone Log H14900151 on 18 August 2006 to report the flood. A printer was replaced following the flood but no checks were undertaken by the Post Office on any other equipment. Mrs Ward was informed that nobody would come to inspect the system until she could demonstrate it would not occur again¹⁹. No further checks were undertaken.</i></p>	<p>Page 1 Findings</p> <p><i>The evidence shows that all calls that were made to the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) were resolved and closed, which would indicate that the issue raised had been dealt with. There is no evidence in the call logs of the Applicant requesting assistance with discrepancies or the other issues raised within her case questionnaire response CQR) such as postage labels or activation of scratch cards.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant's claims regarding the transaction audit trail and difficulties at the end of each trading period are not supported by contemporaneous; no calls were made to the NBSC in relation to either issue during the Applicant's time in post.</i></p> <p>Page 3</p> <p>NBSC</p> <p><i>The NBSC call logs are available for Priory Road Post Office for the duration of the Applicant's tenure and provide both a category for every call and the resolution. From 6 June 2002 to 11 January 2007 a total of 118 calls for the branch were logged at the NBSC, although eight of these were made to the branch and not by the branch (Doc 004). All Calls' Tab highlighted in yellow).</i></p>	<p>Page 7 Para 3.14</p> <p><i>The Applicant comments that in August 2006 the office suffered a water leak, as a result of which the back office printer was damaged and the office was closed for two days. The Applicant states that nobody from Post Office would agree to come to check the equipment until it could be proved that the leak had been properly and permanently repaired and she says that they never did carry out any checks. Post Office agrees that there is evidence that the branch was closed as a result of the flood and it also appears to us from the evidence that equipment was checked following the incident, although there are no records available to confirm the conclusion of calls made to NBSC or HSD on this matter.</i></p> <p>Page 7 Para 3.19</p> <p><i>The Helpline logs also refer to a number of issues relating to cheques and deposits for which no further information was available to the Applicant but which has now been provided by Post Office as part of its POIR submission. A review of these call logs indicate that a number of calls were resolved by reference to the Knowledge Base, a database containing</i></p>	<p>18.8.06</p> <p>H14900151</p>
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					<p><i>The calls to NBSC can be broken down into the following categories:</i></p> <table><tbody><tr><td><i>Call Type</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>Total</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>Branch Trading Procedure</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>11</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>Client Counter Procedure</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>50</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>Horizon</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>2</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>Horizon Balancing</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>7</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>Network Implementation and Equipment Team</i></td><td><i>2</i></td></tr><tr><td><i>Office Process</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>18</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>Performance</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>9</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>Switchboard</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>18</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>Utilities – Gas</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td><i>1</i></td><td></td></tr><tr><td colspan="2"><i>Grand Total 118</i></td></tr></tbody></table> <p><i>NBSC Horizon related records</i> The Applicant claims in her CQR (Doc 001 3.33, 3.36, 3.66 and 3.41) that telecommunication failures were a common occurrence at the branch. There are no HSD call logs available to substantiate this claim, however there is some relevant information within the NBSC call records.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three calls were made to NBSC (on 20 December 2004, 14 March 2005 and 9 May 2005 where the Applicant requested contact with HSH and the calls were transferred; two calls were noted as a <p><i>information relevant to specific products, services and accounting matters. Post Office has additionally stated that "If reference is made to the Knowledge Base without further escalation it is likely that the query was straightforward and easily resolved".</i></p> <p><i>Page 8 Para 3.20</i></p> <p><i>In 2006 a shortfall was caused by a mis-keying of £2,776.95 as £27,779.95. The Applicant states that although this was not a cash loss, Chesterfield informed her that she would be required to immediately pay in £25,000 to cover the difference. It was only some three weeks later that the branch received a TC to correct the problem. Post Office comments that the call logs indicate that the processing errors which generated the need for the TC represent an additional area of a lack of controls in checking bill payment counterfoils. It does however agree that the Applicant did raise calls with NBSC about this matter and it states that she received appropriate support and guidance to bring the TC to account and to resolve the earlier mis-keying error. It is not clear to us why the Applicant would have been told to immediately pay in the</i></p>	<i>Call Type</i>		<i>Total</i>		<i>Branch Trading Procedure</i>		<i>11</i>		<i>Client Counter Procedure</i>		<i>50</i>		<i>Horizon</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>Horizon Balancing</i>		<i>7</i>		<i>Network Implementation and Equipment Team</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>Office Process</i>		<i>18</i>		<i>Performance</i>		<i>9</i>		<i>Switchboard</i>		<i>18</i>		<i>Utilities – Gas</i>		<i>1</i>		<i>Grand Total 118</i>		
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					<p>system issue and one call was noted as an offline indicator. It should be noted that these three calls from the branch were made before the Applicant states problems started at the branch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A call was instigated by Fujitsu on 15 December 2005 regarding British Telecom work that was due to take place at the branch (Doc 004 Telecomm). • A call was made on 25 April 2006 which was noted as a system issue and the call was transferred to HSD. • A call was made on 2 May 2006 which was noted as on line services unavailable; this entry was resolved by <p>Page 6 Para 1.2</p> <p><i>From 6 June 2002 to 11 January 2007 a total of 118 calls for the branch were logged at the NBSC, although eight of these were made to the branch and not by the branch.</i></p> <p><i>These were categorised under a number of "Call Types" as can be seen below:-</i></p> <table> <tr> <td><i>Call Type</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Total</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Branch Trading Procedure</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><i>11</i></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td><i>Client Counter Procedure</i></td><td></td></tr> </table>	<i>Call Type</i>		<i>Total</i>		<i>Branch Trading Procedure</i>		<i>11</i>		<i>Client Counter Procedure</i>		<p><i>£25,000 rather than settling it centrally and await the offsetting TC.</i></p> <p>Page Para 4.1</p> <p><i>In regard to the Applicant's expectations of answers from the Helpline, and of practical on-site help from Post Office's Investigations team, to help her find out how discrepancies had arisen, it is clear to us that, as in other cases that we have reviewed, this Applicant had an expectation that the Helpline would be able to tell her how her branch's discrepancies had arisen and perhaps also that she could call for experienced investigators to come to the branch and help her and her staff to isolate and correct them. The Applicant's position is that, as a result of her experience regarding differences, she ceased to notify the Helpline, which she now accepts was "incorrect and foolish". It is our view that Post Office's Helpline and its Chesterfield-based staff cannot reasonably be expected to determine from afar how every discrepancy has arisen.</i></p> <p>Page 9 Para 4.2</p> <p><i>A review of the call logs, that have been provided for the period March 2006 to February</i></p>
<i>Call Type</i>																
<i>Total</i>																
<i>Branch Trading Procedure</i>																
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<i>Client Counter Procedure</i>																

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				<p>50 Horizon 2 Horizon Balancing 7 Network Implementation and Equipment Team Office Process 18 Performance 9 Switchboard 18 Utilities – Gas 1 Grand Total 118</p> <p>Although there are calls categorised as 'Horizon Balancing', analysis of all of the logs has not identified any call reporting a discrepancy or asking for assistance in finding a discrepancy was made. Furthermore, the Applicant was asked about the losses at interview</p> <p>Interviewer: "did you not think to speak to somebody in the area office or the helpline or whatever?" Applicant: "No. And I felt [redacted] every week since just waiting for somebody to knock on the door".</p> <p>In conclusion, calls to the NBSC were made throughout the Applicant's tenure and did not reduce over her years in post. However, there is nothing to suggest that the answers she was provided with by NBSC did not resolve her</p>	<p>2007, reveal that the Applicant sought assistance from the Helpline on a variety of transaction-related matters on numerous occasions. These appear to also include calls from the Interim Subpostmaster, appointed following the Applicant's suspension. However, as many of the records do not include information about the amounts involved or how the calls were resolved, it is difficult to assess the extent to which they may have had an impact on differences.</p> <p>Page 9 Para 4.3</p> <p>In its POIR Post Office states that there are no records of calls being made to the Helpline regarding transaction audit trail problems; difficulties at the end of a trading period; or postage labels or Scratchcards. Post Office also notes in its comments on the previously issued draft of this report that "the Applicant did not make any calls to seek assistance in relation to the discrepancies".</p> <p>Page 9 Para 4.4</p> <p>From the available evidence it can be seen that 118 calls to and from the branch were logged at the NBSC, which is the main point of contact for Subpostmasters and their staff with respect to non-technical</p>		

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				<p>issues. There is no evidence that the Applicant made any calls to NBSC or the area office requesting support or assistance with the Horizon balance, contrary to the Applicant stating in the CQR, on more than one occasion (Doc 001, 3.9, 3.10 and 3.27), that she had contacted the NBSC for help. Page 10 Para 3.2</p> <p>Three calls were made to NBSC on 20 December 2004, 14 March 2005 and 9 May 2005 where the Applicant requested contact with HSH and the calls were transferred; two calls were noted as a system issue and one call was noted as an offline indicator. It should be noted that these three calls from the branch were made before the Applicant states that problems started at the branch.</p> <p>According to the NBSC log (Doc 004 Tab Printer Faults) NBSC were notified of water leaking through the ceiling and a printer being damaged. Notes made in the incident log column seem to suggest that the branch re-opened on 21 August 2006. The resolution column only reports that all parties have been advised, but as HSD call logs are no longer available, it cannot be assumed that Fujitsu were one of the advised parties. A further call was made to NBSC on 23 August 2006 to report two faulty printers and this call was transferred to HSD, but again there are no records to confirm the outcome of this call</p>	<p>issues. Of these many related to enquiries about procedures and some to Horizon balancing. Post Office states that an analysis of these calls has not identified calls requesting assistance in finding a discrepancy. We agree with this analysis, which appears to be supported by statements made by the Applicant during interview. Post Office also considers that all calls were marked as resolved and closed, which would it assert would indicate that the issue raised had been dealt with. We do not ascribe any particular value to this observation.</p> <p>Page 10 Para 4.8</p> <p>It is clear that this Applicant experienced a number of hardware issues, especially those subsequent to the flooding of the branch in August 2006, and that she reported these to the Helpdesk. The Applicant reports that, when a printer was replaced, the engineer also investigated the main computer and was concerned whether, due to the level of dirt inside the machine, it was operating correctly.</p>	
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M082	Lisa West			X				
M084	Lisa West			X				
M085	Lisa West			X				
M087	Lisa West			X				
M088	Lisa West			X				
M089	Lisa West			X				
M090	Lisa West			X				
M094	Lisa West			X				
M095	Lisa West			X				
M096	Lisa West			X				
M098	Lisa West			X				
M100	Lisa West			X				
M101	Lisa West			X				
M102	Lisa West			X				
M103	Lisa West			X				
M105	Lisa West		X	Page 7 Para 16: <i>I recall phoning the helpline and speaking to one of my few contacts at the Post Office, a gentleman called Colin McKingney. I was told that the Post Office would not authorise the fitting of surge protection devices to their equipment and so they were the pieces of electrical hardware within</i>				

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					<i>out premises that were not protected.</i>			
M106	Lisa West			X				
M108	Lisa West			X				
M109	Lisa West			X				
M110	Lisa West			X				
M113	Lisa West			X				
M114	Lisa West			X				
M119	Lisa West			X				
M121	Lisa West			X				
M127	Lisa West			X				
M128	Lisa West			X				
M129	Lisa West			X				
M130	Lisa West			X				
M131	Lisa West			X				
M132	Lisa West		X		<p>Page 2 Para 2.1:</p> <p><i>He had made repeated requests to Helpline during 2007 and 2008 and also later through his union representative for help in sorting out what he firmly believed were accounting errors, caused largely he then believed, by his son's inexperience and inadequate training.</i></p>			

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					<p>Page 4 Para 2.3:</p> <p><i>Mr Khan told Ms Risk his repeated requests to Helpline either for advice over the telephone, a meeting or a chance to speak to someone more senior had led nowhere.</i></p> <p>Page 6 Para 3:</p> <p><i>Mr. Khan made repeated calls to Helpline throughout 2007 and 2008 and also asked advice from his union, the NFSP. He got nowhere and so asked for a meeting with his Business Development Manager Mr. David Overstreet which took place on 28th October 2008.</i></p>		
M133	Lisa West			X			
M134	Lisa West			X			
M135	Lisa West	X			<p>Page 11 Para 2.6:</p> <p><i>I then spoke to two different women at Horizon. One was called Lindsey and one was called Doreen. They said there is no such thing as a "polling issue". I told them what I have been told by Mark Baker but they just laughed it off.</i></p>		
M137	Lisa West			X			
M138	Lisa West			X			
M139	Lisa West		X		<p>Page 6 Para 2.3</p> <p><i>August 2001 - On return, found £20,000 shortage. Helpline called,</i></p>		

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					<i>advised not to worry "will fix itself". Put into suspense account.</i>			
M141	Lisa West			X				
M142	Lisa West			X				
M143	Lisa West		X		<p>Para 2.4:</p> <p><i>3 June 2009 - Rang helpline (H16340369) re Inactive stock and sold to zero stock out – later told this was incorrect by Paul Jones4</i></p> <p><i>11 August 2009 - Rang helpline (H16440286) re stock differences was told to check everything and call back by Paul Jones. Called Paul Jones back with the figures and was told to settle centrally5</i></p>	<p>Page 2</p> <p><i>It is clear that accounting issues were experienced throughout the whole of the Applicant's tenure and that he regularly called the Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) for assistance. However, despite the Applicant's propensity for accounting errors, the errors did not seem to result in significant shortfalls on the account until 2009 following the onset of the Applicant's condition.</i></p> <p>Page 3 – Limitations in the transaction audit trail available to Subpostmasters</p> <p><i>Calls to Helpline which appear to have given contradictory advice leading to errors on the Horizon record.</i></p> <p>Pages 6 – 7 – Record of NBSC call logs. (Doc 001 refers)</p> <p><i>NBSC call logs were reviewed for the period 04 July 2001 – 08 November 2013. During this period 1069 call logs were recorded. Detailed in a separate document are the total of logs per year and a breakdown of the incidents that</i></p>	X	<p>6.5.09</p> <p><i>H16340369</i></p> <p>10.8.09</p> <p><i>H16440286</i></p>

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					<p><i>potentially relate to the issues raised. (Doc 030 refers.)</i></p> <p><i>The incidents relating to 2009 when the discrepancies highlighted by the Applicant occurred are listed below; a breakdown of the total number of calls for the other years of tenure is also given below:</i></p> <p><i>2009 – Total 138 logs</i></p> <p><i>Total breakdown of calls by issue:</i></p> <p><i>Branch trading procedure – 43 calls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>23 calls related to balancing discrepancies, call log H16332348- 29 April 2009, the Applicant had a discrepancy due to working in the wrong stock unit.</i><i>4 calls related to cheque procedure, call log H22589178- 27 January 2009, the Applicant had received a call but still confused, had cheques for over £3,000.00 but not remitted out - have added to cheque line and now remitted out but still left with cheque figure of £274.71 that he can't account for not on any listings.</i><i>1 call related to Transaction Corrections, the Applicant wanted advice with regards to a</i>	
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					<p><i>Transaction Correction of £6,000.00, call log H16374026- 10 June 2009 refers.</i></p> <p><i>Client counter procedures – 37 calls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>2 calls related to Giro accounting and dispatch, the Applicant asking what the procedures were, call log H16503887-7 October 2009 refers.</i>• <i>2 calls related to banking transactions, the Applicant mis-keyed a transaction and wanted to reverse the transaction, during the call the Applicant said that he does not know why he wants to reverse this, call log H16540734-9 November 2009 refers.</i> <p><i>Forms/manuals/stores ordering – 1 call</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>No calls related to issues cited.</i> <p><i>Horizon – 10 calls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>8 calls related to Horizon, where the Applicant asks how to modify users, create stock units and attach users to a stock unit, call logs H16313836-9 April 2009 and H16353316-19 May 2009 refer.</i> <p><i>Horizon online – 1 call</i></p>	
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Call in readiness for 2010 migration. Did not relate to issues cited.</i> <p>Office process – 17 calls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>2 calls related to the Applicant asking for assistance from a Trainer as there was a discrepancy in the office due to someone serving in the incorrect stock unit and he needed help resolving them, call log H16328862-24 April 2009 refers.</i>• <i>3 calls related to office closures, the Applicant having [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED] GRO call log H16499619-3 October 2009 refers.</i>• <i>Call log H16501804-6 October 2009, the Applicant's wife calls asking for the Contracts Manager to call with regards to selling the office due to the Applicants [REDACTED] GRO [REDACTED]</i>• <i>Call log H22705236-11 November 2009, the Applicants wife called to notify NBSC that the office would be closed until further notice as the Applicant was [REDACTED] The branch closed on the 11 November 2009 and re-opened on 16 November 2009 with a relief staff member carrying out the Applicant's duties.</i>	
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					<p>Switchboard – 29 calls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <input type="checkbox"/> 2 calls related to the Applicant requesting contact with an Auditor and Trainer.• 8 calls related to discrepancies in the branch, call log H16285069-11 March 2009 refers to a positive discrepancy that was settled centrally by the Applicant previously. <p>2 calls related to Horizon, the Applicant was transferred to Horizon Helpdesk, call logs H16342641-8 May 2009 and H22635630-19 May 2009</p> <p>Breakdown of calls for 5 July 2001-8 November 2013</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Number of Calls to NBSC</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2001</td><td>51</td></tr><tr><td>2002</td><td>97</td></tr><tr><td>2003</td><td>115</td></tr><tr><td>2004</td><td>96</td></tr><tr><td>2005</td><td>101</td></tr><tr><td>2006</td><td>127</td></tr><tr><td>2007</td><td>93</td></tr><tr><td>2008</td><td>71</td></tr></tbody></table>	Year	Number of Calls to NBSC	2001	51	2002	97	2003	115	2004	96	2005	101	2006	127	2007	93	2008	71		
Year	Number of Calls to NBSC																								
2001	51																								
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2005	101																								
2006	127																								
2007	93																								
2008	71																								

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						<p>2009 138</p> <p>2010 95</p> <p>2011 41</p> <p>2012 27</p> <p>2013 17</p> <p>Page 13</p> <p><i>6 May 2009 – NBSC call reference H16340369</i></p> <p><i>Post Office findings are that there were no instructions by NBSC to zero the stock a claimed.</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant stated he has an incorrect figure and a discrepancy of £30,000.00 in the suspense account.</i></p> <p><i>The problem appeared to be in relation to the Applicant's use of stock.</i></p> <p>Page 15</p> <p><i>Post Office findings are that there are no NBSC call logs evidencing that the Applicant's wife made a request for an audit. Further, there is no record of an audit having been carried out on 30 September 2009. Rather, 30 September 2009 was the end of a Trading Period and on the date the Applicant was required to complete a balance.</i></p> <p>Page 18 - 29 September 2009</p>	
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					<p><i>A balance snapshot produced by the Applicant showed a negative figure against the cheque amount for the reasons explained above. The Applicant contacted NBSC for advice to correct this negative figure. (Doc 021 refers). NBSC advised the Applicant to adjust the figure positively so that there were no discrepancies on the cheque listing (i.e. the Applicant added £10,490.08 to the cheque on hand figure to create a zero balance). This adjustment created a surplus in the branch accounts of £10,490.08 (+) (i.e. the branch declared that it had £10,490.08 more than it should have based on the transaction records recorded on Horizon).</i></p> <p><i>Page 22 – Process Issues at the end of each Trading Period</i></p> <p><i>Post Office findings are that NBSC call logs confirm that the Applicant did contact the NBSC when he experienced issues with balancing at the end of each Trading Period. There is no evidence that NBSC failed to provide a suitable response to any of the questions raised by the Applicant. Records indicate that there was only a slight increase in calls to NBSC in 2009. Although it was the year when most calls to NBSC were placed, it was not by any means exceptional, with 127 calls being made in 2006 and 115 in 2003.</i></p>	
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M144	Lisa West	X			<p>Page 11 Para 3.25</p> <p>On 8 April 200447, Mr English received an error notice from Chesterfield regarding one of a group of 10 pension dockets for £102.25 which had allegedly gone missing in the week ending 21 January 2004. Mr English was adamant that he had followed the correct procedure at his end, and requested evidence from the Post Office to support their claim.</p> <p>Page 11 Para 3.27</p> <p>Mr English wrote again to Steve Gibbs after receipt of the letter disallowing the £102.25, but does not appear to have received a response⁵¹.</p>	<p>Page 9</p> <p><i>It is clear from NBSC call logs and the correspondence presented by the Applicant that his wife accepted this TC, but his wife subsequently disputed it.</i></p> <p>Page 9 to 10 – Para 2 Shortfall of £500 experienced sometime between 2008 and 2010</p> <p>The Applicant claims to have suffered losses of £250.00 per month for two months running at some point between 2008 and 2010. The Applicant claims he had no option but to repay the losses, despite his belief that he was not responsible.</p> <p>The Applicant has not specified when this issue is said to have occurred nor has he provided any evidence in relation to it.</p> <p><i>There is no record in the NBSC call logs (Doc 003) of any calls placed during the time period quoted by the Applicant.</i></p> <p><i>The record of TCs (Doc 002) and NBSC call logs show that whilst errors were rare at the branch, they did occur and sometimes resulted in losses and surpluses which the Applicant would make good by paying in or taking out cash as appropriate. The Applicant</i></p>	<p>Page 3 Para 3.3</p> <p><i>The Applicant also complains about the lack of support he says he received from Post Office. He says that he requested help on "several occasions" both by letter and by calling the Helpline, asserting that, in his opinion, "they would assist up to a certain point and then would ignore him". In describing the Applicant's experiences of the Helpline, the Applicant's Professional Advisor says, in the CQR, "whilst he felt comfortable with the advice the Horizon helpline provided him, the Helpline could only assist with what he described as "immediate things", adding that they would "often refer him to a different department rather than deal with him". Post Office states that "the unsatisfactory level of service experienced by the Applicant prior to April 2012 was addressed by way of the apology and explanation made in Post Office's letter dated 21 May 2012 (Doc 006) sent on behalf of the Chief Executive".</i></p> <p>Page 5-6 Para 4.1</p> <p><i>In its POIR, Post Office says</i></p>	

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					<p>gives no detail regarding how he reached the conclusion that neither he nor his wife was responsible for the £500.00 loss experienced or what type of transaction the losses are thought to have related to.</p> <p>Post Office rejects the Applicant's claim that he had no option but to pay back the missing money. It would have been open to the Applicant to dispute any shortfall if, as he claims, he knew that neither he nor his wife was responsible. However, there is no evidence of the Applicant disputing the shortfalls either in the NBSC call logs or in any correspondence available to Post Office.</p> <p>Page 10 Para 3 Shortfall of £373.06 arising when a balance was undertaken on 17 August 2011.</p> <p>A shortfall of £373.06 appears to have been declared when a balance was carried out on 17 August 2011.</p> <p>Records show that a call to NBSC was placed the same day (Doc 003) stating that the branch had a loss of £373.06 and asking how to settle it. Records show that NBSC advised the caller to settle the amount centrally.</p> <p>The Applicant claims that his wife placed two calls to NBSC and that she requested that the branch</p> <p>that a discrepancy in the sum of £147.12 arose because the Applicant accepted payment for a water bill but failed to obtain and/or supply the counterfoil to Santander. It says that a further discrepancy in the sum of £3,873.05 occurred because the Applicant failed to follow the proper 'cut off' procedure. In his comments on the previously issued draft of this report the Applicant states that "I told P.O. of my error but enclosed payment and a letter of apology with the account. That would have been in October 2011 I think. A week later I submitted the counterfoil also with a letter". He also states "At no stage, and I ask P.O. to produce my October account, was there a shortfall of £3,873". This resulted in the report sent to Santander showing figures that were greater than those recorded on Horizon. Post Office also says that it issued Transaction Corrections (TC Invoices) in relation to both errors, and that once those TCs were processed, the branch's accounts showed a shortfall of £4,020.17. It says that, as soon as the sources of both accounting errors were identified, two more TCs were issued (TC Credits) in order to bring the accounts back into balance. In his comments on the previously issued draft of this report the Applicant states</p>	
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					<p>accounts be checked as the Applicant and his wife did not feel that they were responsible for the loss (see the applicant's letter to FSC of 5 September 2011 at CQR Tab 19). However, the Applicant's recollections are contrary to NBSC call records and there is no evidence of such requests being made. The NBSC call logs showing only a request for assistance regarding the process for settling a discrepancy centrally.</p> <p>Page 11</p> <p>However, in the absence of evidence to the contrary the explanation for the loss of £373.06 declared on 17 August 2011 is that there was an actual shortage of cash or stock at the branch meaning that value of actual cash and stock in the branch was less than the amounts that should have been held according to Horizon. Cash declaration records (Doc 004) show that the Applicant was aware of a cash discrepancy as early as 1 August 2011 and that each cash declaration for which a variance check was performed up to and including 17 August showed a loss. Despite this, there are no records of calls being placed to NBSC between 1 August and 17 August 2011 querying the cause of the shortfall.</p> <p>Page 11 Para C</p> <p>The Applicant states that he requested help from Post Office on several occasions via both letter</p> <p>that "I requested evidence which didn't come and several phone calls took place between Chesterfield and myself and this is when I found (later the following year) that Nikki [Cook] had left the business in the October I made the error for £147". He also explains in some detail the process that he followed in processing this payment and states that "I did not err in this region. My accounts balanced. That's why I was happy when I was accused by Cook. Before the end of the 2011 the Post Office had my Giro account three time before Cook accused me. There wasn't a shortfall. There wasn't a gain".</p> <p>Page 6 Para 4.6</p> <p>In relation to the Applicant's suggestion that he was helped up to a certain point and then ignored, or passed on to a different department, Post Office says that the Applicant made regular calls to its National Business Support Centre (NBSC) Helpline. It says that the vast majority of the Applicant's enquiries were dealt with at the time of the call, and that where the issue could not be dealt with over the phone, only then was Applicant referred to a different department. It says that the reason for referring the issue to other departments was to "ensure the Applicant received</p>	
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					<p><i>and NBSC. The Applicant claims that Post Office would assist up to a certain point and then would ignore him. He claims that NBSC were only able to deal with "immediate things" and would often refer him to another department rather than deal with him.</i></p> <p><i>the specialist support appropriate to the issues being experienced".</i></p> <p><i>Page 7-8 Para 4.12</i></p> <p><i>We consider it to be clear that the Applicant did not understand the effect of settling centrally, but we are unsure as to the reasons why that should have been the case. It is possible that this 'settle centrally and dispute' option had not been explained when the old method (whereby disputed amounts could be held in a branch suspense account) was discontinued. This explanation is consistent with what we have learned from other Applicants in the Mediation Scheme, some of whom have reported that they were not aware of that option. In its comments on the previously issued draft of this report Post Office states that "NBSC call logs show that the Applicant did request assistance regarding the process for settling a discrepancy centrally. If the Applicant did not understand the effect of settling centrally, he could have asked NBSC. The process of settling centrally and its effect is also covered in the manuals available to every Subpostmaster and via Horizon Online Help".</i></p> <p><i>Page 8 Para 4.13</i></p>	
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						<p><i>Post Office says that "in the absence of evidence to the contrary the explanation for the loss of £373.06 declared on 17 August 2011 is that there was an actual shortage of cash or stock at the branch". It says that its cash declaration records show that the Applicant was aware of a cash discrepancy as early as 1 August 2011 and that each cash declaration for which a variance check was performed up to and including 17 August showed a loss. It says that despite this, there are no records of calls being placed to NBSC between 1 August and 17 August 2011 querying the cause of the shortfall. It adds that "the Applicant had access to NBSC and Horizon Online if he wished to investigate the cause of the shortfall, but he does not appear to have used either of those services".</i></p> <p><i>Page 11 – 12 – Findings</i></p> <p><i>The Applicant made regular calls to NBSC from his appointment and throughout his tenure. Call logs (Doc 003) show a total of 1543 calls between 9 November 2000 (the earliest date for which records are available) and 21 December 2013 and show that the vast majority of enquiries were dealt with at the time of the call. Where the issue could not be dealt with over the</i></p>	
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						<p><i>phone the Applicant was referred to a different department e.g. Horizon Service Desk for Horizon equipment issues or the Post Office cash management team for issues relating to the supply of cash. Post Office has a tiered approach to its support services and does not agree with the Applicant's claim that NBSC staff referred him to other departments to avoid dealing with the issues themselves. In fact the reason for referring the issue to other departments was to ensure the Applicant received the specialist support appropriate to the issues being experienced.</i></p> <p>Page 14 – Problems in 2011</p> <p><i>NBSC call logs (Doc 003) and records of calls to the Horizon Service Desk (Doc 009) show that the branch experienced issues with Horizon in July and August 2011. Records show that there were some occasions when the recovery process was used for transactions that did not complete because of an interruption to the power supply or loss of connectivity to the Post Office Data Centre.</i></p> <p>Page 14 – a) Lack of cash supplied by Post Office forcing the branch to close</p> <p><i>NBSC call logs (Doc 003)</i></p>	
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						<p><i>show a total of 16 calls during the Applicant's tenure relating to the branch being short of cash; 4 in 2006, 3 in 2008, 5 in 2009, 3 in 2012 and 1 in 2013. Cash is supplied from Post Office cash centres to branches based on what the branch declares it has on hand compared to the expected cash movements (data from recent Horizon transactions) until the branch's next scheduled delivery day. Shortages of cash can be caused by a variety of reasons such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• The failure of a cash delivery to arrive on time</i><i>• Higher than normal customer withdrawals</i><i>• Branch fails to order extra cash for a known peak period i.e. prior to a Bank Holiday</i><i>• Branch does not declare cash on hand accurately on Horizon</i><i>• A large deposit customer stops using the branch</i> <p><i>It is not clear from available records what caused the Applicant's branch to run short of cash. The calls to NBSC suggest that the Applicant believed he was not being sent enough however this could be for a number of the reasons listed above. Whilst Post Office</i></p>	
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							<i>accept that this would impact on the branch's ability to service customers, the lack of enough operating cash would not in itself cause the branch to experience losses.</i>		
M146	Lisa West			X	<p>Page 5 Para 2.3</p> <p><i>July 2001 - Mrs Stewart states that she recorded a loss of £7,000. The Helpline was contacted, but the amount was not put into Suspense. Telephone logs are required.</i></p> <p><i>August 2012 - Mrs Stewart recorded a loss of £6,000. Mrs Stewart stated that she was "too frightened" to contact the Helpline, as on previous occasions when she did the amount increased and she had lost confidence in the Helpline.</i></p> <p>Page 7 Para 3.8:</p> <p><i>No further losses were discovered at the branch until June 2010 when Mrs Stewart discovered a difference when balancing. She contacted the Helpline and they instructed her to carry out certain actions on the Horizon system, giving her step-by-step instructions and talking her through the process. Mrs Stewart cannot recall the instructions she was given but she followed them exactly as she considered the Helpline staff to be experts in the matter. When she had completed the steps, the difference had not changed.</i></p>				

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					<p>Page 8 Para 3.9:</p> <p><i>Mrs Stewart was told to put the amount into Suspense. The Helpline assured her and told her not to worry about the amount in Suspense as this was the correct procedure. She was told that the Horizon system would reverse the error and in time, everything would be resolved. The difference never corrected.</i></p> <p>Page 15 Para 4.14:</p> <p><i>Mr El Kasaby also believes that advice from the Helpline staff after the initial loss in June 2010 was discovered also contributed to the amount. Mrs Stewart states she contacted the helpline, followed their instructions, yet the amount of losses increased.</i></p>			
M149	Lisa West			X				
M150	Lisa West			X				

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APPENDIX 2

Applicant	Call References	Call Handler
M001	H13118632 H21330891 Note - the remaining call references for this case were not present in NBSC's records despite a search having been carried out back to 2000.	Joel Herbert Smiths
M007	H21971036 H22439562 H22488683 H18135135	wright1 priorv coateb ryan.bryson
M011	NO CALL REFERENCES – calls could not be identified in call logs from info provided	
M026	H16950858 H16955919	spare1 hultzs
M028	H16528419 H16634409 H16615606	laverm moorej fishwicks02
M029	H20338009 H12530313 H12760581 H12855576 H13813795 H21903612	hadramk cawthot robsong01 hutchij joel.herbert doylejo
M035	H21244679 H21244829 H12935449 H12927693	bennetle glen.watson rotherc Call reference could not be located
M037	H23209354 H23213129	tracy.wilson robsj

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	H18001128 H23226490 H23236947 H23248271 H23239054	sandra.warriner lawsb sarah.prest01 sarah.prest01 kirsty.harvey
M040	H16256754 H22610115 H16326259 H16734127 H22626029 H22652224	carter01 maddisd alan.staves Call reference could not be located wrightj1 maddisd
M042	H17203918 H22890493 H17261033 H22908953 H22915051 H22932938 H22975018	paul.taylor01 priorv02 paul.taylor01 brownna2 wrightj3 priorv02 sarah.prest01
M045	H16060445 H16138223 H16143695 H16197531 H16227417 H15925877 H22500243 H15927120 H22500368 H15970185 H15972435	wardr01 james.unsworth malcolm.laver plattc alan.staves guestl maddisd carol.johnson coateb guestl kevin.jarosz

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	H15979976	alan.staves
	H15980039	john.ashton
	H16028728	lyndsay.fishwick01
	H16029302	paul.mann
	H16058685	mick.jezzard01
	H16060445	wardr01
	H16444475	brigid.brook
	H16069889	guestl
	H16079103	malcolm.laver
	H16099766	kevin.jarosz
	H16131222	gillats01
	H16136785	rotherc
	H16138223	james.unsworth
	H16146212	browna2
	H16176898	james.unsworth
	H16197531	plattc
	H16213318	kevin.jarosz
	H16227417	alan.staves
	H22597827	alison.walton
	H16320504	clive.robson
	H16331667	shaun.gray
	H16331664	shaun.gray
	H22635080	brayb
	H16358130	carterr01
	H16369060	lavern
	H16373014	fishwicks
	H16373385	sawickg01
	H16374669	paul.taylor
	H22649725	wrightj1

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M062	H14447370 H15342593	sawickg alan.staves
M080	NO CALL REFERENCES – calls could not be identified in call logs from info provided	
M081	H14900151	lipscov01
M143	H16340369 H16440286	paul.taylor01 fishwicks
M144	NO CALL REFERENCES – calls could not be identified in call logs from info provided	

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APPENDIX 3

Applicant	Call Handler Reference	Coaching File checked?	Result
M001	Joel Herbert	Yes	Mr Herbert was dismissed from his position at Post Office for <u>GRO</u> reasons entirely unconnected to his performance as a call advisor. There were no issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records.
M001	Smiths	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M007	wright1	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M007	priorv	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M007	coateb	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M007	ryan.bryson	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M011	The details provided by the applicant did not match with the call logs so no specific calls could be identified against which to cross reference the call handler.		
M026	Spare1	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M026	hultzs	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M028	laverm	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M028	moorej	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M028	fishwicks02	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M029	batleyi	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M029	cawthot	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M029	robsong01	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee

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M029	huthij	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M029	joel.herbert	Yes	Mr Herbert was dismissed from his position at Post Office for GRO reasons entirely unconnected to his performance as a call advisor. There were no issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records.
M029	jaroszk	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M035	bennetle	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M035	greenr1	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M035	moorej	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M037	tracy.wilson	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M037	robsj	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M037	sandra.warriner	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M037	lawsb	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M037	sarah.prest01	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M037	Kirsty.harvey	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M040	carter01	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M040	maddisd	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M040	alan.staves	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records

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M040	sagwickg	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M040	wrightj1	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M042	paul.taylor01	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
	priorv02	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
	browna2	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
	wrightj3	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
	sarah.prest01	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M045	wardr01	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M045	james.unsworth	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	malcolm.laver	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	plattc	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	alan.staves	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	guestl	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	maddisd	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M045	carol.johnson	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M045	coateb	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee

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M045	kevin.jarosz	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	john.ashton	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M045	lyndsay.fishwick01	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	paul.mann	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	mick.jezzard01	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M045	brigid.brook	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M045	gillats01	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M045	rotherc	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	browna2	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	alison.walton	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M045	clive.robson	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	shaun.gray	Yes	Mr Gray has now left Post Office. There were no issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records. There is a reference in the coaching records to his call handling time (ie. the time taken to give an answer) being an issue but there were no issues with the quality of his advice.
M045	brayb	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee

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M045	carterr01	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	lavern	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	fishwicks	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	sawickg01	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	paul.taylor	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M045	wrightj1	No – former Royal Mail advisor – does not work for POL	Not Post Office employee
M062	sawickg	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M062	alan.staves	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M080	The details provided by the applicant did not match with the call logs so no specific calls could be identified against which to cross reference the call handler.		
M081	lipscov01	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M143	paul.taylor01	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M143	fishwicks	Yes	No issues or concerns about advice given present in coaching records
M144	The details provided by the applicant did not match with the call logs so no specific calls could be identified against which to cross reference the call handler.		