

### Incident 298 (System Stability)

Pathway's latest response lists some 7 categories of problem that have been diagnosed by Pathway as a result of this incident. The status of these varies between a fix being produced and put into service (although lacks the details of when these went into service), a fix awaiting distribution, a fix in test, and the problem still under investigation. The response does not provide a detailed analysis of the cause of each problem or the fixes that have been implemented.

Until **all** these fixes are in place and we have had an opportunity to observe the service in live operation for an adequate period (eg 2 full CAPs after distribution to all offices), we can have little confidence that the stability of the system has been adequately improved. The current level of instability, reported from a live environment in which a number of fixes have apparently been applied, does not give adequate confidence that the service will be adequate stable.

A period of monitoring is therefore recommended to provide evidence that these fixes have indeed have the desired effect, and that these 7 areas of deficiency do indeed account for the problems experienced during the live trial. This monitoring should be obviously be performed having removed any manual workarounds (by positive communication with the outlets if required) to ensure that the fixes would be valid in a "green field" office.

Pathway have not offered a Resolution Plan to handle the underlying lack of stability in the system. Given that the system was supposedly of adequate quality when offered to enter into a live trial, and the number of stability-affecting problems found to date, we would expect a Resolution Plan aimed at bringing the overall system stability up to the "industrial strength" claimed by Pathway. It is insufficient to just attack and resolve the user-visible signs of instability. This plan could include:

- analysis of the complete design and code to look for similar faults (ie faults caused by similar design and/or coding errors to those behind these 7 problem areas)
- execution of further specific tests aimed at flushing out any aspects of instability which are current hidden but may be exhibited when the system is modified in some way (eg with new reference data, new software).
- analysis of the design, development, test and integration methods and controls to determine what corrective actions can be taken to avoid such faults "slipping through the net" for future release.

[NB. POCL dispute the validity of the table attached to the latest Pathway response giving the number of faults identified from helpdesk calls]

### Specific points

Problem (1) (6) It is not clear from the Status of "Fixes produced and in service" where the quantification of the effectiveness of the fix is shown.

Problem (2) is still being diagnosed. No forecast on analysis or remedy or deployment and measure of fix.

Problem (3) (4) (8) fix yet to be deployed and effectiveness quantified.

Problem (7) fix still to be proven and then deployed