

IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE

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FROM: Dave Miller DATE: 26 November 1998

SUBJECT: TESTING

PO/DSS

The rehearsal stages of testing completed on Friday 20 November. The final test runs are due to commence 14 December 1998. During the last ten days a full review has been undertaken of the quality and robustness of the Pathway System and its End to End process.

We have concluded that whilst Counter activity on the system is showing improvements in quality it has not yet demonstrated the capability to produce fully accurate accounting information in the outlets and then move this data through to POCL systems in order to achieve financial integrity.

The POCL TIP system has identified and rejected many data files with validation and integrity failures. In reality the scope and the volume of the data it has processed has been insufficient to give full confidence in POCL reconciliation and cash account process. The fundamental reason for this situation was the relatively poor state of the Pathway code .

Horizon is therefore insisting that these problems need to be corrected and addressed and that some specific targeted re-testing activity should be undertaken prior to entry to final testing. Before these specific tests are run Pathway will be required to fix outstanding faults and we will need to make some relatively small changes to TIP.

Horizon and Pathway agree that the final run of testing cannot start as planned on 14 December. Pathway now think that they will be in a position to start the final test runs around the middle of January but we are concerned that this is a reaction to financial pressure and that quality may be compromised .

Horizon has proposed a revised work programme that postpones the start of the final run of testing from 14 December to 22 February. The re-testing activities to be undertaken during this period would give much greater comfort to both contracting authorities that the final run of testing would result in a robust system to go into live trial.. Because of the extra quality of assurance earlier in this process and by using contingency at the latter stages we would expect National Rollout to be early September. This approach has been brokered with senior POCL and BA managers and has strong support.

Pathway have stated that they have the right to present the system for the final stage of testing when they consider it fit . I am checking the legal position but have pointed out that final testing is a rigorous business and that serious quality problems at that stage will cause further delays and significant exposure for Pathway . We have agreed to embark on a programme of joint working over the next two weeks which will enable us to come to a common view on when the system is likely to be ready for final test . Both parties agree that a robust code set is essential before final trial .

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In summary then , the 14 December date for final testing wont be met and there is a difference of view amounting to a month between Pathway and ourselves on when testing will begin (18 Jan - 22 Feb). We will work jointly over the next two weeks with the declared aim of achieving a robust code set into final testing at the earliest possible date without compromising quality . The knock on effect of the worst date (22 Feb) will be a delay of 3 weeks on the Corbett date for national roll out (16 August - 6 September).

DAVE MILLER

Footnote:

Simon Rilot the Horizon Testing Manager will be phased out of the Programme at the end of the calender year. He was due to go before March anyway but we have taken the opportunity of the availability of a SEMA consultant John Wheeler, who has worked successfully with SSL to effect the change earlier. Simon will be avaiable during January on an as required basis . Steve Landles from French Thornton will also be available to the Programme during the change over period.