



ICL Pathway Ltd

Pension Book MBCI Report

Ref: CS/REP/113

Version: 1.0

Commercial-in-Confidence

Date: 16-NOV-2001

## 0.0 Document Control

### 0.1 Document History

Version No.	Date	Reason for Issue	Associated CP/PinICL
0.1	14/11/2001	First draft of the report	
0.2	14/11/2001	Incorporates general comments and improvements	
0.3	15/11/01	Incorporates comments from Martin Riddell	
1.0	16/11/01	Incorporates final comments from Paul Westfield and Martin Riddell	

### 0.2 Approval Authorities

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Martin Riddell	ICL Pathway Customer Services Director		

### 0.3 Associated Documents

Reference	Version	Date	Title	Source
PA/TEM/001			ICL Pathway Document Template	PVCS

**Unless a specific version is referred to above, reference should be made to the current approved versions of the documents.**

### 0.4 Abbreviations/Definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
BCM	Business Continuity Manager
BSM	Business Service Management (POL)
HIT	Horizon Incident Team
HSH	Horizon System Helpdesk
MBS	Message Broadcast Service
NBSC	Network Business Support Centre (POL)
OBCS	Order Book Control Service
POL	Post Office Limited
RDDS	Reference Data Distribution Service
SMC	Systems Management Centre
SSC	System Support Centre
TIP	Transaction Information Processing

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## 0.5 Changes in this Version

Version	Changes
0.2	Incorporates general comments and improvements
0.3	Incorporates comments from Martin Riddell
1.0	Incorporates final comments and improvements from Paul Westfield and Martin Riddell

## 0.6 Changes Expected

Changes

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## 1.0 Introduction

This document provides a report on the activities that occurred on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 2001 for the 'Pension Book' MBCI and applicable related issues e.g. TIP file transfer errors.

This report also details ICL's subsequent actions to prevent a recurrence of the 'Pension Book' problem and the actions being taken for process and communication improvements.

## 2.0 Scope

This document reports on the events relating to the 'Pension Book' MBCI of the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, associated activities and the subsequent investigation into the root cause.

## 3.0 Management Summary

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

The impact to Post Offices and their customers on that morning was minimised by the use of the Message Broadcast facility and MBS234, which documented the manual process the Post Masters should follow regarding the payment of pensions.

Pension groups 5, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 13 were affected by this fault.

From 11.15 onwards Post Masters were able to manually enter the pension book details into Horizon and, where counters had been rebooted, to scan pension books. (Other scanners may have functioned prior to the reboot, please see section 7.2.)

The underlying fault occurred because incorrect Pathway Reference Data was sent to cure anomalies identified by the Scavenger (a tool developed to keep the counter message store data tidy). This data was based on the same criteria that all previous Scavenger tidy ups have been based.

However, in this instance there was a further anomaly in the system because a tidy up of product modes for certain items was still required following the introduction in M1 of the graceful retirement for non-core products.

Because the two anomalies existed at the same time the Scavenger tidy was actually incorrect in this instance and incorrect reference data was released by ICL Pathway.

## 4.0 The Fault Symptoms.

When staff in Post Offices attempted to either scan or manually input pension books for groups 5, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 13 an error message occurred. An example of a group 7 error message is "invalid mode: product returned (%2 is not available in %3 mode)"

For reference, the 6 affected products were:

Item	Long Name	Item	Long Name	Item	Long Name
177	Group 5 Child Benefit	178	Group 6 War Pension	179	Group 7 Disability
182	Group 11 Income Support	183	Group 12 Industrial Injury	184	Group 13 Retirement Pension

## 5.0 'Pension Book' Problem Management 8<sup>th</sup> November

### 5.1 Problem Identification.

The problem was first experienced at 06.00 by the Sub-Post Master at FAD 160116 and reported to the Horizon Systems Helpdesk (HSH). Powerhelp incident E-0111080019 was raised. When the Sub-Post Master was advised to reboot the counter the problem recurred.

By 06.56 a second Post Office outlet, FAD 336306, had reported that they had experienced the same problem.

At 07.07 it was apparent that this problem could affect a significant percentage of outlets as it had also been reported by FADs 336306, 238632, 123818. At this time the problem was voice prompted to the SSC for investigation.

As further occurrences of this problem were reported to the HSH the calls were linked into the master Powerhelp incident E-0111080019.

At 07.21 the incident was formally reassigned to the SSC and PINICL PC 0071427 was created.

### 5.2 Management Escalation.

At 07.40 the Pathway Duty Manager (Tony Wicks) was paged by the HSH and briefed on the problem. The Pathway Duty Manager was advised that at this time approximately 20 outlets had reported the problem and that the SSC were investigating the problem. Tony Wicks, in his Pathway Business Continuity Manager (Pathway BCM) role, decided that there was a high risk that this problem could affect the whole estate and decided to escalate the problem.

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

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of the problem, in accordance with the Cross-Domain Business Continuity Interface Agreement.

At 07.47 the problem was escalated, via voice message, to the Pathway CS Support and Operations Manager.

The 08.00 hand-over from the SMC team to HSH operational teams included details of this problem and the potential of a very high number of telephone calls from Post Masters to the Helpdesks. (Note that between 20.00 and 08.00 the HSH is resourced by SMC staff.)

At 08.10 the ICL Horizon Incident Team (Steve Barber) telephoned the NBSC, as per the Cross Domain Helpdesk Interface Agreement, to inform them of the potential influx of incidents. At 08.45 the NBSC phoned and provided an update to Glynis Stokes, an HSH Team Manager.

Throughout the morning of Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> of November the Pathway BCM, as Problem Manager, advised appropriate staff in POL, i.e. Richard Ashcroft (on Dave Hulbert's behalf) and Mary Love, of the situation and progress.

### **5.3 Problem Investigation and Release of the SSC Fix.**

At 08.00 the Pathway BCM telephoned the SSC Manager and discussed the problem. At this time the problem had been reported on pension book groups 5 and 7 and was urgently being investigated by the SSC team in BRA01.

At approximately 08.20 the Pathway BCM spoke with Mary Love, POL Problem Management, and exchanged problem information. (In accordance with the Cross-Domain Problem Management Interface Agreement). Mary advised the Pathway BCM that pension group 13 products were also affected.

At 08.30 the Pathway BCM visited the SSC and a brief situation review was held. At this time it was established that the cause of the failure was incorrect Pathway Reference Data for these pension groups and SSC consultants were investigating the possibly of producing a fix for this.

At approximately 08.45 the Pathway BCM telephoned the POL Problem Manager and provided an update. A further telephone conversation was held by the Pathway BCM with Richard Ashcroft (POL BC team) and it was identified that Post Masters could in fact make the pension payment by retaining the pension payment foil and, at a later time, scanning these in bulk.

At approximately 09.00 it was confirmed by the SSC that a fix could be produced and shortly after this it was confirmed that the fix had been tested on the Live System Test Rig.

Shortly after this the Pathway BCM was advised that approval had been given by the Pathway CS Infrastructure Manager (Paul Westfield) and by Don Gray (POL) for the SSC to test the fix on 10 outlets and, if successful, release it to all outlets.

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At approximately 09.30 the drop to the first 10 outlets was undertaken. SSC staff then liaised with Post Office staff on the testing of the fix at these outlets.

At approximately 10.30 the release of the fix to the rest of the estate was started and this was completed around 11.15.

## 5.4 Communication with Post Office Outlets.

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

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

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

Note: For completeness MBS messages 234, (Approved) 235 and 236 have been included in Appendix One of this report.

ICL Pathway produced a revised MBS message (Draft MBS235) which was sent at approximately 11.00 to POL for amendment and approval. This message in the form of Message Broadcast MBS235 was transmitted by ICL at 13.09.

During the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> of November various discussions were held between POL and ICL Pathway CS Service Management on the wording of a further message - MBS 236. This was withdrawn because of concerns of introducing further operational problems due to the rebooting of counters, e.g. lost Post Master passwords.

Following the 11.15 download of the fix for the 6 OBCS ProductModes the HSH were advised that Post Masters would be able to manually enter pension books. In some cases Post Masters were asked to reboot their systems due to the side effect of the OBCS problem. These were due to the Post Masters entering a foil under OBCS manual and the system freezing or having a 'no entry sign on home and log out' which could not be removed using the usual work around.

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

## 6.0 Technical Description of the Underlying Fault.

On counters, each product has a ProductModes collection which controls the modes that product is available in, e.g. Serve Customer, Remit In, etc. It is data within this collection which disappeared, due to incorrect Pathway Reference Data, for the six OBCS pension book products in the live estate on the 8<sup>th</sup> November.

With the introduction at release M1 of the facility for the graceful retirement of Non-Core products an on-going process provided by business as usual change has been updating the ProductModes data for all Non-Core products. There were originally 1200 products which has reduced through this business as usual change. The 6 OBCS products have not yet been updated. The Reference Data Team had already initiated a plan to complete the task on the remaining products and this is scheduled to complete by the end of this year.

For the S10 release, POL introduced a Change Request R0141 to extend OBCS to N Ireland. This involved receiving data from POL to make the OBCS products core as of 19<sup>th</sup> November. To minimise the risk of offices not receiving this data, it was agreed between CS RDT and POL EPOSS Service Provision that this data would be released on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> of November, well ahead of its effective date, to minimise the effect on any non-pollled offices. However, for the 6 OBCS products, it is now apparent that this resulted in 2 active core versions of the ProductModes on N Ireland counters - and only NI counters.

The Scavenger was run on the nights of Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> of November and Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> of November. On Monday, when the results were analysed, it was observed that anomalies had been reported including ProductModes anomalies against 14 unique products, 6 of these being the fact there were 2 active core versions for the OBCS ProductModes. ProductModes anomalies are not unexpected on Scavenger runs as they had been reported on all previous 8 runs.

ProductModes anomalies had previously been reported by Scavenger and successfully corrected, and there was no reason to believe that these 14 would be any different. The data fix for these anomalies was then applied on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> of November via Operational Change Proposal 4343.

The data fix took the form of removing the unwanted active version of the ProductModes. However, as mainland offices only had 1 active version the net effect was to remove the only active version

On diagnosis of the problem, the SSC undertook an exercise to reinsert the ProductModes for the OBCS products, by correcting the Pathway Reference Data. This fix allowed the manual input of pension books for the 6 affected products. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of November it was expected that the scanning of pension books for these 6 product groups would be available after a Post Master initiated counter reboot or the automated reloading of counters at 3.00 am on the Friday morning. Subsequent analysis shows this was not the case see 7.2

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## 7.0 Issues Relating to the SSC Fix

Two further issues were raised as a result of the fix by the SSC.

### 7.1 TIP Processing Issues.

When the SSC fix was applied to the 6 pension groups it was inadvertently made on version 7 ProductModes across the 6 groups. This was incorrect as two of the pension groups are version 5 products.

The consequence of this mistake was that approximately 1800 TIP files from ICL were rejected on the Thursday night transfer. This error was addressed on Friday and all the TIP files were retransmitted successfully on Friday night (9<sup>th</sup> November).

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November slow processing was reported on the OpTIP system and this problem was raised with the SSC team. A joint SSC/OpTIP investigation took place on Saturday afternoon. At that time it was believed that the OpTIP processing would catch-up over the weekend. Subsequent investigation identified that the underlying cause of this slow processing was a change made to Product 1 – ‘Serve Customer - Settle To Cash’ OpTIP. This change was introduced by POL and had nothing to do with the original problem.

On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November this problem was addressed by OpTIP and as at 16.30 on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> of November all TIP processing was up to date.

### 7.2 Pension Book Scanning Issue

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of November ICL Pathway reported that the scanning of the 6 OBCS pension books would not work until either the Post Master initiates a reboot or the overnight reload completes. However, during that afternoon Mary Love (POL Problem Management) reported that the scanners at FADs 259246, 473340, 011207, 273340 and 275340 started working without a Post Master manual reboot.

As a result of additional analysis of the code, since the event, it has been established that some forms of OBCS transaction, e.g. an Issue or a no-barcode transaction would reset the necessary flags and allow the new reference data to be loaded. This meant that some scanners became operational after these transactions, i.e. before a reboot.

## 8.0 Follow-up Actions

### 8.1 Reference Data Follow-up Actions

Actions have been taken to ensure there is no recurrence of the Reference Data problem.

1. The Reference Data Team had already identified the need to clear out the remaining items from the M1 activity and the work is scheduled for completion by the end of the year. The immediate safety net for future Scavenger activity is to check if the Scavenger tidy is to any item in the table of M1 items. This check has now been implemented.
2. As this problem was as a direct result of two anomalies overlapping each other, with the added check ICL Pathway has already implemented and the clear out of the table of M1 items in the longer term (item 1 above), there will be no recurrence of the problem.

### 8.2 Problem Management Follow-up Actions

Whilst 8.1 addresses the underlying technical issue, Pathway CS consider improvements could be made in the general handling of similar failures e.g.

1. Escalation processes;
2. Communication with Post Masters, e.g. a pre-approved MBS message for such circumstances;
3. A review of the Single Point of Contact system to reduce the abandoned call rate;
4. A review of and improvements to the IVR message processes.

Eric Hillier, who is the Senior Problem Manager within Pathway Customer Service, will investigate these areas. His findings along with POL's will be presented at the HSRF on 26th November for discussion, so that the necessary ICL, POL and cross-domain process improvements can be introduced.

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## 9.0 Appendix One – MBS Messages

### Message Broadcast 234

Post Office Limited - Message Broadcast Service Emergency Cascade

**Important information - Any urgent messages that impact on Horizon in anyway must be fully approved by BSM before submitting this form to the Communication Team. Any urgent operational messages should also be communicated in the next available Counter News where necessary.**

Reference number (to be allocated by Communication Team): **MBS234**

Date: **8 November 2001**

1.

*The following characters cannot be used: pound sterling character {£}, single quote {}, double quotes {}, bullet points (-), colon {:}, brackets {}, greater than {>} and smaller than {<}. Do not use italics, underlining or bold type,*

**Title** (up to 18 characters including space characters) OBCS Failure

**Message** (up to 1,670 characters including space characters. The Communication Team will insert message reference number, date and, helpline details, which will form part of the message)

MBS234 - OBCS failure - 8 November 2001

A fault has occurred in the OBCS system affecting certain groups which has resulted in offices not being able to scan order books or use the OBCS Foils entry. An error message is displayed on screen

Please follow these instructions until further notice when encashing orders from affected books:-

-check order books against the stop list you printed last night [or most recent available]

-perform the normal manual checks on the order book

-pay the due foil/s and file these foils separately

Please do not contact NBSC, HSH or PON external helpline regarding this problem.

A further MBS will follow giving you an update on the situation and instructions on how to input the foils you have filed.

2.

**Target branches for cascade** (insert one or more branch types -BO, CFPO, IFPO, ISPO, MSPO, SO, SPSO - or the words 'All branches' or supply a list of outlet names and FAD codes for other selection e.g. product specific)

**All branches**

**You must ensure the helpline you use is aware this message is being sent and they have background information or**

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additional information as appropriate. Relevant helpline e.g. NBSC, HSH or other *(for outlets with queries)*

Priority *(insert 'high' or 'low' meaning, respectively, 'open immediately' or 'open as soon as possible')* High

Retention period *(10 to 37 days)* 10

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**Message Broadcast 235**

**Post Office Limited - Message Broadcast Service Emergency Cascade**

**Important information - Any urgent messages that impact on Horizon in anyway must be fully approved by BSM before submitting this form to the Communication Team. Any urgent operational messages should also be communicated in the next available Counter News where necessary.**

**Reference number (to be allocated by Communication Team): MBS235**

**Date: 8 November 2001**

1.

*The following characters cannot be used: pound sterling character {£}, single quote {'}, double quotes {"}, bullet points (·), colon (:), brackets {()}, greater than {>} and smaller than {<}. Do not use italics, underlining or bold type,*

**Title (up to 18 characters including space characters)** OBCS Failure

**Message (up to 1,670 characters including space characters. The Communication Team will insert message reference number, date and, helpline details, which will form part of the message)**

MBS235 - OBCS failure - 8 November 2001

A fault has occurred in the OBCS system affecting certain groups which has resulted in offices not being able to scan order books or use the OBCS Foils entry. An error message is displayed on screen.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD CUSTOMERS BE TURNED AWAY - MANUAL PROCEDURES MUST BE FOLLOWED UNTIL SERVICE IS RETURNED. PLEASE NOTE NEW ORDER BOOKS CAN BE ISSUED FOLLOWING HORIZON SYSTEM USER GUIDE, TRANSACTIONS - SERVE CUSTOMER - PART TWO, OBCS PENSIONS & ALLOWANCES, SUBSECTION 9.1

A correction has been released this morning which will allow manual entry of the barcode details via the OBCS Manual or OBCS Foils button. You will need to select YES on the System Failure question on entry.

The scanning facility for OBCS books will be available Friday 9 November 2001. If you have logged a call with the HSH about this problem, it will be closed.

Please log a new call if you still have a problem on Friday.

All foils already taken manually should be entered via the Bulk Input facility i.e.

Transactions [F1]

Bulk Input [F9]

Other Products [F13]

P&A [F1]

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OBCS foils [F9]  
See Horizon System User Guide, Booklet D, Section 9.2.  
  
If you continue to experience problems please call HSH.  
  
We apologise for any inconvenience this has caused you and your customers.  
  
If you do not understand any part of this message please contact NBSC on **GRO** selecting Option 3.

2.

**Target branches for cascade** (*insert one or more branch types -BO, CFPO, IFPO, ISPO, MSPO, SO, SPSO - or the words 'All branches' or supply a list of outlet names and FAD codes for other selection e.g. product specific*)  
**All branches**  
**You must ensure the helpline you use is aware this message is being sent and they have background information or additional information as appropriate. Relevant helpline e.g. NBSC, HSH or other** (*for outlets with queries*)  
  
**Priority** (*insert 'high' or 'low' meaning, respectively, 'open immediately' or 'open as soon as possible'*) **High**  
  
**Retention period** (*10 to 37 days*) **10**

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### Message Broadcast 236

#### Post Office Limited - Message Broadcast Service Emergency Cascade

***Important information - Any urgent messages that impact on Horizon in anyway must be fully approved by BSM before submitting this form to the Communication Team. Any urgent operational messages should also be communicated in the next available Counter News where necessary.***

Reference number (to be allocated by Communication Team):

Date:

1.

*The following characters cannot be used: pound sterling character {£}, single quote {'}, double quotes {"}, bullet points (·), colon {:}, brackets {()}, greater than {>} and smaller than {<}. Do not use italics, underlining or bold type,*

**Title** (up to 18 characters including space characters) OBCS Update

**Message** (up to 1,450 characters including space characters. The Communication Team will insert message reference number, date and, helpline details, which will form part of the message)

MBSxxx - OBCS Failure Update - 8 November 2001

A fix for the fault in the Order Book Control System has been sent to your office. This will enable you to start scanning bar-coded order books when you receive it.

You can receive the fix immediately at your counter[s] by restarting your workstation[s]. You will need your PMMC and PIN record to perform this operation. This operation can take up to about 15 minutes at each workstation so you are advised to take this action only if you are able to do so without it adversely impacting on customer service. For further information see the Horizon System User Guide, booklet B, Subsection 14, page 46.

Alternatively, you need take no action now and the fix will be received automatically during the night. If you decide on this course of action you will NOT need to restart your workstation[s] tomorrow morning.

Until you have received the fix by either of the above methods you will not be able to scan bar-coded order books and should enter foils as advised in MBS 235.

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience caused to you and your customers by this fault. If you do not understand this message or you still encounter problems after receiving the fix contact the Horizon System Helpdesk by calling the NBSC on 0845 601 1022 and selecting OPTION 2.

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2.

**Target outlets for cascade** *(insert one or more outlet types -BO, CFPO, IFPO, ISPO, MSPO, SO, SPSO - or the words 'All outlets' or supply a list of outlet names and FAD codes for other selection e.g. product specific)*

**You must ensure the helpline you use is aware this message is being sent and they have background information or additional information as appropriate. Relevant helpline e.g. NBSC, HSH or other** *(for outlets with queries)*

**Priority** *(insert 'high' or 'low' meaning, respectively, 'open immediately' or 'open as soon as possible')*

**Retention period** *(10 to 37 days)*

3.

Contact details	Budget code
Name:	
Title: <i>(insert POL or ICL Pathway after title)</i>	
Telephone number:	