1		Friday, 28 October 2022	1		probably finish around 3 o'clock at the latest, but
2	(10	.05)	2		so I will take you through relatively slowly today,
3	SIF	R WYN WILLIAMS: Morning everyone. Morning, Mr Blake.	3		perhaps slower than those witnesses who were on
4	MR	R BLAKE: Morning, sir. Today's witness is David Miller.	4		yesterday, because we do have time, and if you need any
5		DAVID MILLER (affirmed)	5		time to look at any documents that are on screen, please
6		Questioned by MR BLAKE	6		do say.
7	MR	BLAKE: Thank you. Can you give your full name please?	7		Your witness statement and exhibits are now in
8		David William Miller.	8		evidence, so the areas that I will be covering will be
9	Q.	Mr Miller, in front of you should have a witness	9		supplementary largely, although I will start with your
10		statement in a bundle. Is that witness statement dated	10		background.
11		20 September of this year?	11		You joined the Post Office in 1970 as a management
12	Α.	It is.	12		trainee; is that right?
13		On the final page, or page 18, is that your signature?	13	Α.	That's correct.
14	Α.		14		What was your academic background: was it technical,
15		Is that statement true to the best of your knowledge and	15	σ.	managerial or?
16	Q.	belief?	16	Δ	It was academic.
17	۸	There is one point, if I may, in I think it's	17		Academic. You moved to Post Office Counters Limited in
18	Λ.	paragraph 24	18	Q.	1983?
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19		Perhaps we could bring it on screen. It's WITN03470100.	19		Correct.
20	Α.	Where I have said "I was not aware of any issue with	20	Q.	In 1994 to 1995 you were senior line manager for post
21		ICL's ability to assist with the automation process",	21		offices in South West England.
22		that should have been "I was not aware of any overriding	22	Α.	
23		issue". Clearly there are lots of issues that are in	23	Q.	
24	_	the bundle.	24		is the Programme Development Authority, that's the joint
25	Q.	Thank you. Mr Miller, we have all day. We will	25		programme between the Benefits Agency and Post Office
1 2		Counters Limited, and you were a deputy director in that position; is that right?	1 2	Q.	Sorry, I believe there may be an issue with the transcript? No? No, that's fine, thank you.
3	A.	Yes.	3		You have acknowledged in your statement it is
4	Q.	In 1998, you took over as Horizon programme director.	4		paragraph 51(c) of your statement, if it assists that
5		Your witness statement says it was at short notice. Are	5		Post Office Counters Limited lacked experience in really
6		we to read anything into that in particular?	6		big IT projects at the time. Were you aware of any
7	A.	No. It was but it was at short notice.	7		attempt to recruit people at managerial level with those
8	Q.	Do you know why that was?	8		kinds of expertise?
9	A.	I think there was a view taken about the right people to	9	A.	No. I think there was a tendency to look for when
10		do the right jobs and the person who was doing it at	10		you say "recruit", I'm sorry, there was a tendency to
11		that point, I think, had other skills and therefore	11		use people from other organisations who would be moved
12		I was drafted in.	12		in to do specific roles and functions.
13	Q.	So you were considered to be better skilled for the job?	13	Q.	But at managerial level I mean, we have heard from
14	A.	I believe so.	14		some witnesses who spent a long time in the Post Office
15	Q.	Did you feel qualified for that role?	15		and worked their way up. Did you feel that there was
16	A.	I was conscious that I did not have a technical	16		a sufficient attempt to build technical expertise, for
17		background, but I did have a background in delivering,	17		example, at a higher level in the organisation?
18		nothing of this size, but a significantly sized	18	A.	That was that sort of expertise was held in Group,
19		nationwide project for the Post Office a few years	19		who had a IT director and a IT function, and, in fact,
20		before.	20		a number of people came to work on the programme
21	Q.	Do you remember how you were selected for the role: was	21		eventually from that area, so IT resource tended to be
22		there an interview process, was it a competitive process	22		recruited centrally into Group.
23		or were you handpicked for the role?	23	Q.	When you say "Group", that's the Post Office Group that
24	A.	I was no, there was no selection process. I was	24		included Royal Mail, at the time
0.5		contacted and there was a brief discussion.	25	Α.	Yes.
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Q. -- Post Office Counters Limited --1 2 A. There was an overarching organisation, which I'm 3 referring to as "Group", which sat above the constituent 4 businesses. 5 Q. Would you rely on them to provide that expertise or 6 provide the people who had those expertise? 7 A. Yes. There was some -- in the programme phase, there 8 was some bringing in of expertise from outside, but that 9 would have been coordinated with Group IT. 10 Q. We have heard that it was the Post Office board, not the Post Office Counters Limited board, that took -- where 11 12 the real decisions were made --13 A. Yes. 14 Q. -- would you agree with that? Yes. 15 You have said at paragraph 41 of your statement that 16 the board did not involve itself in day-to-day Horizon 17 matters, only the bigger picture. Was that something you knew at the time? 18 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. Did it concern you at all? 21 A. The sponsor of the project was my immediate boss and he 22 sat on that board. 23 Q. Who was that, sorry? 24 A. Stuart Sweetman. 25 Q. Yes. 5 1 9 May. Could we go over the page to page 3. So this is 2 a meeting, 9 May 1995, and you are listed there as 3 present as a representative of -- as a representative of 4 the Benefits Agency and Post Office Counters Limited, or 5 representing --6 A. "BA/POCL" was a term that was used for the PDA, for the 7 delivery organisation. 8 Q. Can you very briefly remind us what the programme 9 management board was? 10 A. It was looking at progress on what was happening in the PDA. 11 12 Q. Can we turn over the page to page 4 and look at 13 paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6. I don't think I need to read 14 them out aloud, but perhaps you can just briefly look at 15 2.5 and 2.6. There's an update there that PA 16 consultancy have been constructed to study the wider 17 Benefits Agency programme, and there were two further 18

pieces of work. Then at 2.6, it says: "David Miller was concerned that this would result in a delay to the programme." 1995, it's quite early in the story, but were there time pressures at that stage? A. I think in any programme of this sort there are time pressures. Time pressures intensified as the time period went on. 7

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A. So it didn't concern me at that time. Q. Was that because you had faith in Mr Sweetman to tell

A. Yes.

Q. You said "at the time", is that no longer the case?

A. No -- sorry, I thought we were talking about events at this particular time and that was the case.

the board what they needed to know?

Q. And is it still the case?

A. Yes.

Q. Did, in your opinion, the board place a lot of faith then in what they were told?

A. Yes.

Q. John Roberts has given evidence about the commercial importance of the Horizon project. Is that something that you were aware of at the time?

A. Very much.

Q. Did you see it as vital to the survival of the Post Office?

A. I did.

Q. I'm going to take you through chronologically today --I'm going to go far back, I'm going to start in 1995 but I won't stay on those early years for too long. But let's start in 1995 and let's look at DWP00000006, please.

That is a programme management board meeting of

Q. But this is quite early on? A. Yes.

> Q. Were those time pressures felt from the moment you joined in your role?

A. Because it was a programme I was aware that things should be done to time, but there wasn't inordinate pressure at this stage.

Q. Can we look at 2.9, please. Again, I don't think the detail of this particular paragraph is all that relevant. It's the final sentence which says:

> "David Miller had staff come in to these areas shortly."

It looks from that paragraph as though you were building up a technical team of some sort; would that be

A. Yes, that would be right.

Q. Again, I think you told us just earlier, that the managerial technical team had come from the board, but how would you find these staff?

20 A. Well, there would be discussions with the central IT 21 function about what the roles required and they would 22 aim to fill those.

> Q. Can we move on to 1996, please, and look at POL00028451. Now, this is a meeting of the Major Project Expenditure Committee. I don't think you attended that committee,

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did you? 1 2 A. No. 3 Q. Certainly not on this occasion. Can we look at page 3, 4 please. I don't know if you have been following 5 previous hearings, but we have looked at this document 6 before and we have looked at the procurement exercise 7 and the Tom, Dick and Harry exercise. Do you remember 8 9 A. Yes, I'm familiar with it. 10 Q. Can we look at (xxi) on that page, so it's at the bottom, and it says there -- this is just really for 11 12 clarification. 13 In your statement, it is paragraph 26, you said that 14 Pathway wasn't awarded the contract because it was the 15 cheapest option. Just, I think for clarification, you 16 are aware that it was, in fact, the cheapest option? 17 A. It was. Having reviewed the paperwork, at the end of 18 the day, it was the cheapest option. 19 Q. "Harry", which is Cardlink, was eliminated because, 20 amongst other things, it had been the most expensive. 21 Do you remember that? 22 A. I do and -- yes, I do. 23 Q. Can we look at page 4, please, and can we look at (xxvi) 24 so it is: 25 "As a technical solution 'Dick' was the least 1 detail and then there was a further round of discussions 2 and negotiations to try and remedy some of the 3 deficiencies of the first round. 4 Q. Yes. At the bottom of this page, it highlights some of 5 those risks: 6 "The risks associated with 'Dick' were both 7 short-term: liable to be late; pressure to accept 8 incomplete functionality; premature rollout could prove 9 unreliable; and long-term: fragile software system; 10 difficult to enhance; if Dick lost money it would be difficult to do future changes ..." 11 12 Again, you were aware of those risks at the time? 13 A. I haven't seen them put in that way before. 14 Q. But were those risks familiar to you at the time, those 15 kinds of risks? 16 A. Yes, I think so. 17 Q. Then the paragraph below talks about how the risks could 18 be managed. Were you aware from the Major Project 19 Expenditure Committee -- which included John Roberts, 20 and which heard, we know, from Stuart Sweetman -- were 21 you aware that they considered that risks needed to be 22 managed in this way? 23 A. Yes, I think I was. 24 Q. That included what we see there: 25 "rigorous user and system testing prior to rollout

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preferred bidder providing a higher risk to delivering the programme."

Were you aware at the time that ICL Pathway was the least preferred when it came to the technical solution?

- A. I think there were concerns at the time about the technical solution, particularly in relation to the use of the product Riposte, but what -- in reviewing the papers, which I have been, what was interesting is that Riposte appeared to offer, particularly to the BA, distributed functionality, so that data could be passed down and held at post offices. And this was, to the BA, as I recall at the time, a significant matter.
- Q. Thank you. If we look at the paragraph below it says: "The preferred supplier [that's ICL] ... proposed a technical solution for which the architecture was unusual (complex design not proven on a large scale deployment using bespoke code which then had to be modified). Initially 'Dick' did not have the technical or project management expertise within their project team, as compared to the other bidders who had proposed off-the-shelf solutions to be then modified. This had now been addressed by the computer supplier."

Were you aware of those concerns at the time? **A.** I was and the process that we went through, in terms of tendering, the initial bids were then reviewed in great

to be built into the contract."

- A. Yes.
 - Q. Then can we look at that final paragraph, to the bottom of the page --

Sorry, can we scroll down a little bit. Thank you.

Those final paragraphs there effectively stress the importance of making the system work.

- A. Yes.
- Q. Were those messages passed back to you by Stuart Sweetman or John Roberts or somebody else?
- A. I don't remember precisely how that happened at the
- Q. That's fine. The fact that things like this -- the need for rigorous testing prior to rollout -- were being emphasised as a way of meeting the higher technical risks, that was all something that you were aware of at the time?
- A. It was.
- Q. Can we move on another year now to 1997 and can we go to POL00031231, please. This was an internal review in October 1997. Is that something that you remember?
 - A. I don't remember it, but I have read the document.
- Q. Can we look at the third page, please, and it is paragraph 1.3. It seems that you were part of the team at that time. I appreciate it's a long time ago.

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- A. Yes, indeed, I contributed to it but I -- you know, when I read this document, I remembered it, but I previously hadn't.
- Q. No. It says there that:

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"Extensive interviews were held with a wide range of managers spanning the commercial, financial and technical aspects of the programme."

Can we look at the management summary, that's paragraph 2 on the same page, please. It says:

"Horizon remains crucial to POCL's commercial strategy. It is needed as soon as possible and requires the full functionality as currently defined, or improved within acceptable time limits, and is needed throughout the network."

Now, again, that reference to "as soon as possible", echoes of what we heard from 1995: was there some time pressure at that stage?

- A. Yes, in the sense that, in a programme like this,
 I believe there is always time pressure, but this was
 Post Office reaffirming that Horizon was crucial to its
 strategy and it wanted the full functionality and it
 wanted it throughout the network because there are
 questions as to whether the functionality could be
 descoped and there was the questions as to whether the
 whole network needed the same product. So this was
- A. Yes, I -- I think that they were asked the question "Should this programme continue?" and that was what they said.

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- Q. Is your view that "fatally flawed" is too low a baseline for consideration of whether to proceed with a significant IT project?
- **A.** I think, looking at it now, it does rather come off the page.
- Q. Paragraph 2.5:

"Delay to the completion of Horizon certainly enables competitors to attack POCL's share and continued erosion of income and market share is inevitable.

However, there has been no evidence that delays within the broad timescales under review present any market 'show stoppers'."

So, again, delays impacting business potentially, was that something that you remember?

- A. Yes, there was activity in the bill payment market, particularly, from a company called PayPoint, which was of concern to the marketing department.
- Q. Can we scroll down to paragraph 2.8. We don't necessarily need to read that paragraph, but it talks about an opportunity, potentially, given by delay, which is that it may be possible to find something more reliable than EPOSS. Do you remember that at all?

a significant set of conclusions.

Q. Can we go over the page to paragraph 2.4. We read earlier the reference to PA Consulting undertaking their investigations and it says that:

"PA Consultants ... indicates that much improvement is needed", but it is not "fatally flawed"; do you remember that?

- A. Yes. Just -- I wasn't actually on the programme at this point. I contributed to this report.
- Q. When you say you weren't on the programme at this point was that because you were on the development board at this point or because you were --
- A. No, I had -- between the development board and becoming
 Horizon programme director, I went back to Bristol and
 managed the line for South Wales and South West.
- Q. But you kept an eye on what was going on with theHorizon programme?
- A. And my advice was sought in certain matters regardingthis report.
- Q. Now, that term "fatally flawed", I have suggested to
 other witnesses that that seems like a low baseline for
 Horizon to satisfy; would you agree with that?
 - A. Sorry, can you just point me --
 - Q. Paragraph 2.4, it is PA consultants' conclusions that they don't suggest the programme is "fatally flawed".

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- **A.** No.
 - Q. Do you remember early problems with EPOSS?
- A. Not at this time because I wasn't involved with the
 programme. The EPOSS product was very much behind the
 work -- the massive amount of work that went on with
 regard to the Benefits Agency, so I'm aware of that
 order of things.
 - Q. Can you remember discussions in 1997 that it may be possible to revisit the EPOSS system, given that there were delays at that time?
 - A. I don't.
- Q. Can we please look at page 15. There's a section there
 on replacing the manual cash account. I'll read that
 paragraph, it says:

"It will always be difficult to get a definitive statement on this but there appears sufficient evidence that POCL's current accounting system is not fully fit for purpose. Current systems are error prone and incur significant costs to clean up the data before it becomes management information, or used for settlement with clients. The parallel automation projects, TIP/TMS, SAPCON, SAPADS ..."

Do you remember those at all?

- A. I remember some of them.
 - Q. Can you briefly tell us what they were?

A. I remember most of all TIP, which was a backend system that was about communicating information to clients in particular.

Q. "... [they] all need a sort of transaction data to enable them to operate effectively and deliver the benefits in their individual business cases. This is not to say that there might not be alternative routes to achieving these functionalities but, given the need for the platform for BA it remains logical to use that same platform for EPOSS. This functionality appears to duplicate part of that of TIP/TMS and there is a need to review that to see if better value for money is achievable.

"POCL has always suffered from slow, sometimes inaccurate management information of inadequate granularity. The need to squeeze out operational improvements both at outlet level and within the Business' logistics requires a consistent, once only capture of transactional data from outlets. The need to avoid the complexities of dual information streams both for POCL and its clients drives the conclusion that EPOSS is inescapable, albeit further refinements might be possible if time permits."

Do you understand that to mean that, for it to work, all of the parts, including those other automation 17

regarding the continuation of lost transactions, it was anticipated that lost transactions would decline after the software fix dated 16 February 1998. Continuation of this trend will seriously undermine the credibility of the system."

Over the page, the bottom of page 4, please, it talks about the Benefit Payment System and it talks about lost transactions, and it says:

"ICL Pathway are continuing their investigation concerning the four categories of lost transactions identified in the last interim report. The objective is to ascertain the root cause at the POCL customer interface. Service Management has escalated the aforementioned problems to Product Management for action to facilitate a solution within the ICL Pathway domain."

Now, this is very early on, it's 1998, and I think it all relates to the Benefits Agency part of the system, but were you aware, in that period, of concerns relating to lost transactions?

- **A.** It would be something I would have picked up as I was getting into the project or programme.
- Q. So you were aware of it in 1998?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you know if they found the root cause of the problems in this particular document?

1 projects, would need to work effectively together?

- A. I think that's what it says.
- Q. And the Horizon System should be used for EPOSS because it is being used for the Benefits Agency part of the project as well; is that your recollection? Sorry?
- A. Yes, I'm sorry.
 - Q. By logical extension, if Horizon wasn't being used for the Benefits Agency project, a simpler solution might have been sufficient; would you agree with that?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Was that something that was being considered at the time?
- A. I don't -- I'm not sure it was being considered at this time.
- Q. Can we move on to 1998, please, and look at POL00028597.

 Now, that is report that you were sent -- we can see
 there that you were on the distribution list -- and it
 covers the period February 1998. Do you remember this
 document at all?
- A. I think I have seen it subsequently and I would have seen it at the time, I was on the distribution list.
- Q. Can we look at page 3, please. It is the bottom half of page 3, "End to End Business Continuity", and it says:

"Overall there are no major threats to business continuity, however there are still growing concerns

A. There was a lot of work that went into lost transactions, which was then turned into the term "incomplete transactions", and there was a huge amount of work that went on to analyse what was causing this and solutions.

Q. Was the seriousness of those kinds of issues appreciated at the Post Office in 1998.

(Pause)

I'm not asking you about the document itself but just --

- No. I'm sorry, but I am really trying to think about what -- not entirely related to the document.
 I certainly think that people in the programme understood it.
- Q. Can we look at another document, POL00069096. This is a document from March/April of the same year, 1998. You can see there, at the bottom, that you are a recipient of notes from a meeting. Can we go over the page, please. It's the Counter Automation Steering Group and, again, you are named as having been present on 27 March 1998.

Can we look at page 2, please -- sorry, we're on page 2 -- the second half of that page. If you look at the top of the page now, it says:

"The Committee noted the update by Dave Miller",

(5) Pages 17 - 20

1		et cetera.	1		investigated although it was difficult to quantify how
2		So it seems as though you provided an update to that	2		the system would work until after it had been installed
3		meeting. Do you remember that at all?	3		and was operational."
4	A.	I don't my no, I don't remember it but I was	4		Did you understand from that that live testing was
5		clearly there.	5		therefore important and perhaps more important than it
6	SIF	R WYN WILLIAMS: As I understand it, by this time you had	6		had seemed at the procurement stage?
7		become the programme director.	7	Α.	Certainly live testing was going to be important. It's
8	A.	Yes.	8		the there are words here about "its lack of
9	SIF	R WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, fine.	9		robustness could generate high level errors within
10		There was a handover period, sir, of three months,	10		POCL". There was some discussion yesterday of this
11		I think, between as the PDA was wound down and the	11		issue and the depth of knowledge in the two
12		Horizon programme took over.	12		organisations about it. So I'm I was clearly aware
13	MR	BLAKE: We can see from the first bullet point there:	13		of it, but I wasn't aware of the detail that was
14		"The PDA would cease to exist on 31 March which	14		revealed yesterday in the first document I believe you
15		control passing to POCL who intended working more	15		discussed.
16		closely with Pathway to develop integrated plans with	16	0	Can you give us an indication of what kind of detail
17		clear interdependencies, particularly with regard to	17	Q.	that you weren't aware of?
18			18	٨	There was a lot of detail about how ICL Pathway had
		POCL feeder systems and implementation", et cetera.		Α.	•
19		Can we go over the page, please, to point 4.	19		produced the system and ICL Pathway expressing serious
20		I think I have put this to other witnesses, you may have	20	_	concerns about what had gone on.
21		seen it before, it says:	21	Q.	Absolutely, so it's around this period it's August
22		"Work on EPOSS was continuing and Pathway had	22		and September 1998 that ICL was carrying out what we
23		indicated that whilst it could provide a system which	23		know was the EPOSS PinICL task force. Is that something
24		met the contract, its lack of robustness could generate	24	_	that you were aware of at the time?
25		high level of errors within POCL. This was being	25	Α.	I would have been aware at the time, yes.
		21			22
1	Q.	So you were certainly aware that there were significant	1		needed to take note of.
1 2	Q.	So you were certainly aware that there were significant concerns about the EPOSS product?	1 2	Q.	needed to take note of. And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central
				Q.	
2	A.	concerns about the EPOSS product?	2		And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central
2	A.	concerns about the EPOSS product? Yes.	2	A.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage?
2 3 4	A.	concerns about the EPOSS product? Yes. Can we go to another document, a bit later in 1998, and	2 3 4	A.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage? Yes.
2 3 4 5	A.	concerns about the EPOSS product? Yes. Can we go to another document, a bit later in 1998, and the reference is POL00028320. It's a document of	2 3 4 5	A.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage? Yes. There's some handwriting at the bottom. From what it
2 3 4 5 6	A. Q.	concerns about the EPOSS product? Yes. Can we go to another document, a bit later in 1998, and the reference is POL00028320. It's a document of 23 November 1998 and it's the Transformation Steering	2 3 4 5 6	A. Q.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage? Yes. There's some handwriting at the bottom. From what it sounds like, it may be either your secretary's or your own. Do you recognise that?
2 3 4 5 6 7	A. Q.	concerns about the EPOSS product? Yes. Can we go to another document, a bit later in 1998, and the reference is POL00028320. It's a document of 23 November 1998 and it's the Transformation Steering Group. Was this something that you would have received? Yes, I think I would.	2 3 4 5 6 7	A. Q.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage? Yes. There's some handwriting at the bottom. From what it sounds like, it may be either your secretary's or your
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	A. Q.	concerns about the EPOSS product? Yes. Can we go to another document, a bit later in 1998, and the reference is POL00028320. It's a document of 23 November 1998 and it's the Transformation Steering Group. Was this something that you would have received? Yes, I think I would. I don't know if you are able to assist with any of the	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	A. Q.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage? Yes. There's some handwriting at the bottom. From what it sounds like, it may be either your secretary's or your own. Do you recognise that? Yes, I do. Whose handwriting is that?
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A. Q. A. Q.	concerns about the EPOSS product? Yes. Can we go to another document, a bit later in 1998, and the reference is POL00028320. It's a document of 23 November 1998 and it's the Transformation Steering Group. Was this something that you would have received? Yes, I think I would. I don't know if you are able to assist with any of the handwriting that's on it?	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	A. Q. A. Q.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage? Yes. There's some handwriting at the bottom. From what it sounds like, it may be either your secretary's or your own. Do you recognise that? Yes, I do. Whose handwriting is that? That's my handwriting.
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	A.Q.A.Q.	concerns about the EPOSS product? Yes. Can we go to another document, a bit later in 1998, and the reference is POL00028320. It's a document of 23 November 1998 and it's the Transformation Steering Group. Was this something that you would have received? Yes, I think I would. I don't know if you are able to assist with any of the handwriting that's on it? June Lilley was my secretary at the time.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	A. Q. A. Q. A.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage? Yes. There's some handwriting at the bottom. From what it sounds like, it may be either your secretary's or your own. Do you recognise that? Yes, I do. Whose handwriting is that? That's my handwriting. Perhaps could you read that to us?
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	A. Q. A. Q. A. Q.	Yes. Can we go to another document, a bit later in 1998, and the reference is POL00028320. It's a document of 23 November 1998 and it's the Transformation Steering Group. Was this something that you would have received? Yes, I think I would. I don't know if you are able to assist with any of the handwriting that's on it? June Lilley was my secretary at the time. So it definitely went to your secretary and presumably would have been passed to you? Yes. Can we please look at page 6, "Red Light Issues": "There are major concerns about the test results emanating from Model Office and End to End. "The results indicate that cash accounts and transaction data delivered to POCL's downstream systems lack accounting integrity, all of which raises serious doubt about Pathway's ability to enter into the next phase of Model Office and End to End testing without some form of remedial action." What did you understand by a "red light issue"?	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	A. Q. A. Q. A.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage? Yes. There's some handwriting at the bottom. From what it sounds like, it may be either your secretary's or your own. Do you recognise that? Yes, I do. Whose handwriting is that? That's my handwriting. Perhaps could you read that to us? "Remedial analysis has taken place fully involving TIP and Reference Data personnel. Remedial action is now underway. The point must be made that we will not enter the final phase of testing until we are content that we have a robust set of code. The criteria for entering the final stage of testing being complied by the testing manager for review by interested parties this week." Thank you very much. So you're saying there that you won't enter the final phase of testing until you are confident that you have a robust set of data and that was seen by you as the solution to what was then a red light issue. Would you agree with that? From the documentation, yes.
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	A. Q. A. Q. A. A.	Yes. Can we go to another document, a bit later in 1998, and the reference is POL00028320. It's a document of 23 November 1998 and it's the Transformation Steering Group. Was this something that you would have received? Yes, I think I would. I don't know if you are able to assist with any of the handwriting that's on it? June Lilley was my secretary at the time. So it definitely went to your secretary and presumably would have been passed to you? Yes. Can we please look at page 6, "Red Light Issues": "There are major concerns about the test results emanating from Model Office and End to End. "The results indicate that cash accounts and transaction data delivered to POCL's downstream systems lack accounting integrity, all of which raises serious doubt about Pathway's ability to enter into the next phase of Model Office and End to End testing without some form of remedial action."	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	A. Q. A. Q. A.	And accounting integrity, presumably, was pretty central to the overall project at that stage, or at any stage? Yes. There's some handwriting at the bottom. From what it sounds like, it may be either your secretary's or your own. Do you recognise that? Yes, I do. Whose handwriting is that? That's my handwriting. Perhaps could you read that to us? "Remedial analysis has taken place fully involving TIP and Reference Data personnel. Remedial action is now underway. The point must be made that we will not enter the final phase of testing until we are content that we have a robust set of code. The criteria for entering the final stage of testing being complied by the testing manager for review by interested parties this week." Thank you very much. So you're saying there that you won't enter the final phase of testing until you are confident that you have a robust set of data and that was seen by you as the solution to what was then a red light issue. Would you agree with that?

Thank you very much. There is a list of existing issues 1 2 and the second one "Horizon testing": 3 "The testing strategy is not being deployed as 4 originally planned. There is evidence that the early 5 phases of testing are not covering the scope that they 6 should, and there is a danger that the true purpose of 7 MOT testing will be lost, that major faults will be 8 detected during it, and that this will result either in 9 delay or workarounds." 10 You are named as the owner of that particular issue. What do you understand by "owner"? 11 12 A. That it was for me to deal with. 13 Q. And it mentions the red light programme issues there as 14 well. A. Yes. 15 16 Q. Now, there's a date there when it was raised. This 17 seems to be not just an existing issue, but it seems to 18 be an issue that was raised on 24 July 1998, four months 19 before; would you agree with that? 20 A. From the date when it was raised, yes. 21 Q. Now, who should have been testing? 22 A. I'm sorry? 23 Q. It says the testing strategy isn't being deployed as 24 originally planned; whose fault is all of this? 25 A. Well, as I was in charge of the programme it was down to 1 Q. Can we move on to December 1998 and it is POL00038829. 2 Now, on this document I think Paul Rich suggested that 3 he thought "Dave" was you there. Might that be right? 4 A. I don't know, but ... 5 Q. This is the Project Mentors' report being sent? 6 A. Yes. 7 Q. Is that Mena Rego? 8 A. That's Mena Rego, so I think it is likely it was me. 9 I can't say definitely. 10 Q. Can we look at page 5 of this document, please. Now, is 11 this something you remember at all, the Project Mentors' 12 report being received from Bird & Bird? 13 A. I was aware of it. It became a lot clearer to me having 14 read this documentation again. 15 Q. An important passage which I have taken previous 16 witnesses to is slightly further down -- sorry, can we 17 just scroll slightly -- there it is.

It is the quote from Andrew Davies of Project

"... deeply concerned that their findings show

developed the system. The impact of this is likely to

requirements, causing the need for extensive rework

be that there will be failures to meet essential user

before the system can be accepted and potentially 27

a serious problem with the way in which ICL Pathway have

Mentors and it says that his team are:

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1 me to do something about it. 2 Q. But it says it's not covering the scope that it should. 3 What was going on there? 4 A. I'm sorry but I do not recall. 5 Q. Were you aware that that same month ICL were seeking to 6 amend the acceptance procedures which took some emphasis 7 off live testing? I don't need to go to the document, 8 but the relevant document is POL00031119 and it is 9 page 13, for the purpose of the transcript. 10 A. I don't have a memory of that but I would have known at 11 the time, I think. 12 Q. Do you have a memory of late 1998, some emphasis being 13 taken off live testing at all? 14 A. No. I don't. 15 Q. Now, the previous document that I took you to showed 16 that, for example, EPOSS problems would be difficult to 17 quantify until it was operational. So how important was 18 testing at this time? 19 A. I still think it was important to do the testing, to get 20 some indication of what issues might be arising as the 21 thing progressed. 22 Q. Knowing that there were previous errors or concerns 23 going back quite a few years by this stage, would it 24 have been important to live test the system? 25 A. Yes, I think it would. 26 1 operational problems if the system is rolled out." 2 Is that something that you remember? 3 A. I do, having read the documentation. 4 Q. Can we please go to page 9. This is the paper itself 5 and, over two pages to page 11, please, and it is 6 paragraph 1.3 I would like to look at. This outlines 7 the scope of that Project Mentors' report and the second 8 paragraph at the bottom, it says: 9 "We have to date considered only the BPS system 10 [that's the Benefit Payment System]. Further work has 11 recently started to perform a similar assessment of the 12 approach adopted for other elements of the system, such 13 as EPOSS. Nevertheless our findings are, in our view, 14 sufficiently serious to bring into question the whole of 15 Pathway's design process." 16 Again, presumably something you would have read at 17 the time? 18 A. Yes. 19 20 21 that page:

Q. Can we look at page 14 of that document, please, and the bottom of that page. So the very final paragraph on

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"Of particular concern is the EPOSS system. We are informed that at a relatively early stage Pathway wanted the authorities, principally POCL, to be involved with the design of this element. The plan was to use the

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Rapid Application Development ('RAD') methodology to 1 2 design this system. This approach was started, but 3 discontinued after some months, when the Pathway staff 4 member involved left the project. The suggestion to use 5 RAD leads us to believe that more traditional methods 6 have not been used, and since the RAD experiment was 7 abandoned, we have doubts whether any proper 8 requirements analysis has been performed." 9 Onto the next paragraph, please: 10 "Impacts on the Programme in the Future 11 "Our experience of systems where requirements have 12 not been analysed satisfactorily is that the system 13 fails to meet the users' needs. An effective acceptance 14 test will identify many such failings necessitating 15 considerable rework. The result is a significant 16 extension of the time and cost required to complete the

Now, we know that this document was passed to you by Mena Rego. Are you able to tell us who else would have seen this document? Perhaps we can look at page 3. There are obviously some direct recipients but who, within your organisation, would have seen or at least known about the contents of this report?

unacceptable processing in the operational environment,

system and roll it out. The alternative is to allow

with unpredictable and potentially damaging results."

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contribute to an understanding of the situation with regard to BA pulling out of the programme.

- Q. Do you think it wasn't taken seriously enough for that reason?
- A. I think it's not right to say it wasn't taken seriously, but I think there was a different angle of viewing it than just simply: this is a report that's been produced by Project Mentors.
- Q. I mean, the concerns raised about EPOSS, for example, were consistent with those raised in 1997, for example, weren't they?
- 12 **A**. Yes

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- Q. So there are certainly consistencies with --
- A. I was unaware -- there was an earlier Project Mentors report and I was unaware of this featuring strongly in that, in that report.
 - Q. But the concerns about EPOSS were consistent, for example, with concerns raised at the Counter Automation Steering Group on 27 March 1998 that we have already looked at?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you agree with that?
- 23 **A.** Yes.
- Q. Were you aware, at the time, that ICL internal auditshad suggested a redesign and a rewrite of EPOSS?

A. I honestly don't know.

Q. Do you think -- I mean, Stuart Sweetman, would he have known about the report?

- A. I don't know.
- Q. Why would it have been passed to you in particular? If we look at page 1 --
- A. Because it had suggestions that there were issues withEPOSS.
- 9 Q. Do you remember discussing it with anybody?
- 10 A. I'm sure I would, but I have no recollection.
- 11 Q. Do you remember discussing it with ICL at all?
- 12 **A.** No.
 - Q. Do you think you would have discussed it with ICL?
 - A. I would have expected to have got their views on it. The question was: this was a report commissioned by Bird & Bird for the Benefits Agency, so there might have been issues about content, and so on.
- Q. We have heard suggestion that it may not have been
 totally partial. Is that something that you know about
 or shared at the time?
 - A. I mean, the -- can I just remind on the context of this.

 This was, at the time, a few months before BA pulled out of the project. I think there was concern within the Post Office that this exercise by project manager -- Project Mentors, I'm sorry -- was part of an exercise to
 - A. I wasn't at the time.
 - Q. Did you share the kinds of concerns that we have seen in this Project Mentors report about the system?
 - It would have been discussed, definitely.
 - Q. Certainly from the evidence that we have heard, it looks like both Post Office Counters Limited and Pathway had serious concerns about EPOSS at that stage. Were those concerns shared with one another?
 - A. There would certainly have been discussion about EPOSS and what was going on and what needed to be done.
 - Q. Do you think that the two organisations were being open with one another at that stage?
 - A. There was a document that I may already have alluded to that was discussed yesterday morning about -- which was an ICL Pathway internal document, which I was personally unaware of, and was, in my view, a very significant document.
 - Q. You may not be able to give us the title of that document, but can you tell us, in particular, what information was significant to you?
 - A. What was significant was the degree of -- from within ICL Pathway -- was the degree of discussion and going into details about how the thing had been produced from day one and there were significant criticisms in there about the approach.

1	0	Might that have been the report that was produced by Jan	1		failure to most planned dates, and in particular the
1	Q.	Might that have been the report that was produced by Jan	1		failure to meet planned dates, and in particular the
2		Holmes and Mr McDonnell, which, towards the end,	2		5th October 1998 software delivery date for Nile Release
3		I think, was very critical of, for example, the way the	3		2.0 despite all milestones having been hit or on target
4		code was built?	4		for delivery of components from CAPS."
5		Yes.	5		It looks as though it is being critical of ICL's
6	Q.	Thank you. Do you think that ICL was being honest with	6		track record.
7		the Post Office at this stage?	7		I think it was. I
8	A.	I don't know to what extent the sort of very honest	8	Q.	, , ,
9		appraisal of what had happened in EPOSS was being shared	9		the same document, it's a response from Tony Oppenheim
10		with the Post Office.	10		and dated 18 September and it begins, in the second
11	Q.	Can we look at POL00039891, please, and can we go	11		paragraph:
12		straight to page 37, because it's a packet of documents,	12		"We were surprised and disappointed at the
13		so a lot of the pages are not relevant. This is	13		aggressive tone of the letter and by the number of
14		a letter from yourself to Mike Coombs at ICL on	14		gratuitous and unjustified allegations of fault on the
15		17 August 1998 and it encloses a document which is over	15		part of ICL Pathway."
16		the page. Do you remember this at all?	16		Do you remember
17		(Pause)	17	A.	I sorry, I remember having read the documentation.
18		Perhaps I will read from the	18	Q.	Yes. We see quite a lot of letters in this period
19	A.	No, sorry, I'm reading it because I'm not that familiar	19		marked as "Without Prejudice". Was there distrust
20		with it.	20		between the parties?
21	Q.	I will read it for the purpose of the record as well,	21	A.	
22		the first half of that first paragraph. It says:	22		activity going on with regard to the possibility of
23		"The Sponsors wish to make clear that the approach	23		whether this contract would continue.
24		they have proposed in the Replan takes into account	24	0	I mean, reference to "aggressive tone", was there some
25		Pathway's previous track record, for example in terms of 33	25	α.	hostility between the two parties?
1 2	A.	No. I mean, I was representing BA's honest views at that time.	1 2		ICL Pathway reacted to others, particularly the Benefits Agency, trying to get close to the precise nature of the
3	Q.	At that time, did you have faith in ICL's performance?	3		solution. And there was a feeling in BA that they
4	A.	I had concerns about ICL's performance.	4		needed to because of the nature of the product, and
5	Q.	How long did this state of affairs last?	5		I think there was a feeling in ICL Pathway that BA,
6	A.	Which state of affairs? I'm sorry.	6		having defined what they wanted, should let ICL Pathway
7	Q.	The confrontation between the two parties of this	7		go and provide it under PFI rules.
8		nature.	8	Q.	Can we move to the spring of 1999 and look at
9	A.	If I remember correctly, at this stage, we were trying	9		POL00028370. This is a meeting of the Horizon
10		to work a lot more closely and a lot more constructively	10		management team and at page 3 are the actions from
11		with ICL Pathway and there's some reference, I believe,	11		an earlier meeting of 3 March 1999. You are the top
12		to that in some of this correspondence, so we were	12		attendee there. Does that mean were you the chair at
13		deliberately trying not to have I hesitate to use the	13		that stage of the Horizon management team?
14		term "Punch and Judy", but, you know, there was a degree	14	Δ	Yes.
15		at some times, in the early parts of this programme, of	15		
16		that and we were trying to say "We really need to work	16	٠.	a meeting on 10 March 1999 and you are listed there as
17		with the ICL Pathway, we need to get close to them and	17		chair, and the "Purpose" is:
18		closer to them to understand what is going on".	18		
	_				"To ensure the HORIZON Programme is fully scoped,
19	Q.	I think in a document we saw just a few moments ago,	19		planned and managed to deliver in all areas. To monitor
20		there was some concern about the sharing of information	20		the delivery of HORIZON within the agreed Programme
21		there or a lack of sharing of information from ICL. Do	21		timescales and ensure that issues are resolved and risks
22		you agree with that at around that time?	22		are managed."
23	A.	Yes. I mean, remember that we are still in the PFI era	23		At the bottom of the page:
24		here and remember I have certainly heard, over the past	24		"For this meeting, the emphasis is on ensuring
25		couple of weeks, a number of references to how 35	25		action is being taken to manage the key issues and risks 36

and agreeing those that should be escalated to the next Horizon and CAPS and Cards Programme Boards."

Can we look at page 7, please. There, if you look at the top of the page, those are what are called "Horizon Programme Significant Issues" and then, over to page 9, we have there "Programme Risk Status Report, Most Significant Risks", and I'm going to take you to the top box, so that's number 5. It says there:

"Due to a lack of adequate visibility of the ICL Pathway design, and the lack of support from the contract to leverage this visibility, we have been unable to gain a high level of assurance in the adequacy or suitability of the service to support the POCL business. POCL therefore risks the implementation of a service in Live Trial and beyond which will have negative operational impacts, resulting either in a level of service degradation or delay to the start of National Rollout."

So "Due to a lack of adequate visibility", that, again, implies that there was some lack of sharing of information; is that your recollection or not?

A. I think this refers back to the problem that I was talking about a minute ago, which is ICL Pathway were still saying this is a PFI contract and that was a continual problem I think.

a recipient -- do you remember receiving this kind of document, even if you don't remember the specific one?

- **A.** I certainly received documents of this kind.
- Q. Can we look at page 6, please. It is the second paragraph there:

"The final pass of End to End was the culmination of earlier passes, which achieved their test objectives to an extent. However, throughout the earlier passes some areas of functionality were not available in the build being used for the test, and other areas fell short of the expected functionality."

Slightly lower down on this page, it says:

"Lessons learnt from previous passes of End to End were implemented prior to the commencement of the final pass. These were ..."

The first one there:

"A reduction in the volume of transactions entered onto the Horizon counter throughout the cycle."

Can we look over the page, please, thank you very much. The first major paragraph there:

"Throughout the final pass issues were identified by all parties. Some issues were remedied and retested within the cycle, ie POCL reference data drop to change the Cash Account type from London to Provincial. It was necessary to apply fixes to the counter environment to

Q. Yes, and let's look on the right-hand side, red, amber green status: red. So this is seen as a serious issue?

A. Ye

Q. There were various actions there. Can we look perhaps at the second one:

"Mike Coombs pressed (by DWM) ..."

Are you "DWM" there?

A. I am.

Q. "... to respond to earlier letters regarding the need for ICL Pathway to cooperate ...

"... No risk reduction possible whilst ICL Pathway continues to use the terms and conditions of the contract to deny Horizon access to the information necessary for technical assurance of NR2."

And you are listed there as the person who is responsible for action there. Is it the case that in March 1999 POCL was concerned that it didn't have enough information to adequately address the adequacy or suitability of Horizon?

A. I think it was. I'm clearly going by the written record before me, yes.

Q. Let's stay in the same month and look at POL00028419. This is an "End to End Testing" report. Can we look at the second page. You are listed there in about the middle of the page, "Dave Miller Horizon" you were

either move forward, or to improve the quality of the test results, ie the incorrect cash account mapping for a stock item would have caused misbalancing Cash Accounts in all offices."

Can we scroll down. There are conclusions there and it says, for example:

"The ability to maintain day for day running was achieved by careful management and communication between all parties."

Then, at the bottom it says, the final sentence:

"Outstanding incidents are under discussion for inclusion on the Known Problem Register ..."

Is a fair reading of those points that I have just taken you to that earlier tests had fallen short of their expected functionality? I think that was page 6, sorry, the page before. It's that part beginning "The final pass", really, and there's reference on that page then to carefully managing testing, such as --

Sorry, can we go one page back. Thank you:

"A reduction in the volume of transactions entered onto the Horizon counter throughout the cycle."

Do you remember that? It appears to be some sort of need to quite carefully manage the testing at that stage?

A. I think -- I'm sorry, I don't recall this level of

1 15 minutes? 1 detail. 2 2 Q. Do you perhaps -- if we can over the page, again, to SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, okay. Well, by that clock, it's 3 3 about 12 minutes past, isn't it. So can we start at that paragraph that started "Throughout", that's the 4 first major paragraph. Do you remember -- it's the 4 25 past, is that all right? 5 final sentence there -- some issues with cash accounts 5 MR BLAKE: Absolutely. Thank you very much. 6 that needed fixes, for example? 6 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you. 7 A. I mean, I was aware of issues with cash accounts at this 7 (11.12 am) 8 8 time, yes. (Short Break) 9 9 Q. So this is March 1999 and there were outstanding -- and (11.26 am) MR BLAKE: Mr Miller, before the break we were going over 10 the very bottom of that page, it's that there are 10 outstanding incidents which need to be included on 11 concerns with EPOSS, Project Mentors' concerns, 11 12 a known problem register. 12 visibility issues, cash account issues and that was 13 Can I just ask you, in that paragraph -- sorry, if 13 1997/1998 and we're into 1999 now. 14 we go slightly up again to "Throughout" -- I don't know 14 Can we go to NSFP000084, please. This is a report 15 the answer to this at all, it says "apply fixes to the 15 of the special meeting of the national executive council 16 counter environment"; do you know what that meant at 16 of the NFSP on 11 June 1999. Can we go over the page, 17 17 please. The second substantive paragraph there, you're 18 18 A. I could think of a few things it could well mean but I'm not listed as present, although you clearly were, 19 afraid I can't give you a definitive answer to that. 19 present because it says: 20 Q. Did you see misbalancing cash accounts as a serious 20 "Executive council members had submitted questions 21 21 issue at that stage? which they wanted to be put to Mr Sweetman and 22 A. Yes, it was an issue that was being dealt with. 22 Mr Miller." 23 MR BLAKE: I have quite a few more questions on this 23 I think you came in halfway through that meeting. 24 24 particular topic. This might be, sir, a convenient A. That's correct, yes. 25 moment for a break for as long as you would like, 10 or 25 Q. Can we look at page 6, please, and that's the point at 1 which you joined the meeting, so there, just below 1 achieved. 2 question 9, it says: 2 "Mr Butlin ..." 3 "Mr Sweetman & Mr Miller joined the meeting." 3 Who was Mr Butlin, do you remember? 4 Do you remember that meeting? 4 A. Yes, I knew Mr Butlin. He was the lead man for the 5 A. I don't have a very good recollection of it but I have 5 National Federation of SubPostmasters in the South West 6 read this document and I'm reasonably content with what 6 and he was a subpostmaster in Torquay. 7 7 I see there. Q. Thank you: 8 Q. Page 9 of this document, please. There are plenty of 8 "Mr Butlin referred to the serious problems that the 9 issues that seem to have been covered by Mr Sweetman, 9 South West was having with the software, especially with 10 but page 9 is the significant part where your name is 10 the balance, and asked Mr Miller whether any changes 11 11 mentioned. I'm going to read those three paragraphs for were to be made in that respect. An assurance was 12 sought by the Committee that the balance would become 12 the purposes of the record. It says: 13 13 "Mr Miller further explained that they were in the more user-friendly, more logical and easier for 14 process of a 'live trial' running the software in 14 subpostmasters to use. Would it be possible for 15 300 offices. If that was done successfully by the end 15 subpostmasters to have more input into the way the 16 of July they would be looking to start the national 16 balance was done. The North East was facing similar 17 rollout in the third week in August. This would be 17 problems, subpostmasters were incurring additional staff 18 built up at a relatively low rate to Christmas, when 18 costs, an example being around £350 in the four weeks 19 they would review how the offices on the system were 19 that his office had been up and running. 20 working. It was probable that there would be around 20 "Mr Miller acknowledged that there was a problem and 21 2,000 offices operation by Christmas and it was 21 said that there would be a software change to improve 22 estimated that by around 10th January 2000 they would 22 the situation. If there were serious problems that 23 start the rollout at the full rate of ..." 23 could not be overcome in the timescale the rollout would 24 It says "£300", it must be "300 per week": 24 be delayed." 25 "Present indications were that this timescale to be 25 So what's going on there is subpostmasters seem to 43 44

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1 be experiencing issues including balancing problems. Do 2 you agree with that? 3 A. Yes, I think Alan was particularly concerned about the 4 time it was taking to balance and I think there was 5 an issue of, because it was taking longer time to 6 balance, they felt they ought to be given some money to 7 support that. 8 Q. But on the second line of that second paragraph from 9 Mr Butlin, it does seem to include some problems with 10 the software and I think your response acknowledged that there was going to be changes to the software. Were you 11 12 aware, at that stage, that the subpostmasters were 13 experiencing software problems? 14 A. At the time I simply cannot remember but it does say 15 16 Q. Part of your response was that if there were serious 17 problems that could not be overcome in the timescale, 18 the rollout would be delayed? 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. Yes. Then if we scroll down, more questions in this 21 document were answered by Mr Sweetman, but this 22 particular one was answered by you. Was that because 23 you were the technical representative, between the two of you at that meeting, or because you were more hands 24 25 on with the Horizon project or ...? 1 already running an automated system. Seven sheets of 2 comments from the North East had been passed to Mr Dave 3 Miller. The difficulties and trauma being experienced 4 by some subpostmasters were giving rise to concerns for 5 their health and emotional wellbeing. It was felt by 6 some that a tragedy was not far away if something was 7 not altered soon. The software was considered to be 8 poor quality and not intended to run such a huge 9 network. The system is based on ECCO which was 10 originally written for a network of 700 -- not 15,500. 11 "Although there may be improvements to the general 12 system, most members present wanted to know if the 13 committee had the power to say that the current system 14 is obviously not working and instruct ICL and the Post 15 Office to review or restart with more 'subpostmaster 16 friendly' software." 17 So, at that stage, at that meeting -- I appreciate 18 you weren't present -- but it appears as though serious 19 problems were being raised by subpostmasters about software issues; would you agree with that? 20 21 A. Yes, and I personally attended a meeting in the North 22 East -- a large number of subpostmasters.

Q. Do you remember receiving those seven sheets of

Well, I think actually one of my members of staff was at 47

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- A. Yes, and I think also because Alan was known to me,
- Q. At that stage, given the evidence that you have already given today, you would have been aware of, for example, the concerns about EPOSS that we have already discussed. Do you agree with that?
- A. Yes.

Q. Can we go to another NFSP meeting, this time on 21 to 23 June 1999 and that's NFSP00000471, please. Thank you very much. This is a meeting of the national executive council on those three days.

I don't think you attended this particular meeting but you're mentioned in it and that's why I'm going to take you to the relevant pages, and it is page 15, please. Thank you very much.

So these are the minutes, or this is the report of the meeting and it's at page 22 where there's discussion of counter automation. It's the bottom of the page. It's at 9(c) where there is discussion of counter automation begins and can we go over the page, please, and it's the bottom half of page 23 that I would like to look at. Again, I'm going to read the relevant passages for the transcript. It says:

"There was general discussion on the severe difficulties being experienced by subpostmasters who are

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the meeting with me in Newcastle and produced that
 document.
 Q. Does that passage reflect the kinds of concerns that you
 heard at your meeting?

- A. Well, that meeting was a very lively meeting. It was held at Newcastle Rugby Club. It -- there was a recital of concerns and problems, quite genuinely from the subpostmasters and, towards the end of the meeting, I actually said "If any subpostmaster here does not want this in their offices, if they can't cope with it or whatever, please say so and it will be removed in the next fortnight". There was one person in the room, one subpostmaster who said they wanted the equipment removed
- Q. Reference here to concerns about their health and emotional wellbeing at this stage, in the summer of 1999. Presumably, it wasn't an all or nothing. They could have had an improved version, couldn't they?
- A. Well, I mean, there was a huge amount of work going on on the products to try and get them into shape, so I think that was a given.

What I was trying to find out, given the words you have quoted to me here, is whether it was as extreme as it may appear here and I'm only saying that, when given the opportunity not to have the equipment in the office,

1 not work satisfactorily and that it must not be rolled 1 only one subpostmaster took up that option. 2 2 Q. Would you accept that, from the information that you out to an excess of [15,000] sub post offices until all 3 3 the problems had been overcome." were told, you were aware that there were, nevertheless, 4 significant concerns with the existing system? 4 It says: 5 A. I think they -- what came over was their concern with 5 "The Richard Jackson automated system ..." 6 it. It was a new system -- just, if you remind me, is 6 Were you aware of something called the Richard 7 the date of this --7 Jackson automated system? 8 Q. 21 to 23 June 1999. 8 A. I believe so, yes. 9 A. Yes, and they had also just been told, remember, that 9 Q. Is that an alternative system of some --10 the BA product was not going to be there and available 10 A. I think it was something that some -- a few for them. 11 subpostmasters were interested in, maybe commercially, 11 12 Q. In fact, one attendee makes very much that point. Can 12 but I couldn't substantiate that. 13 13 Q. So: we go over the page to page 24, please. It is 14 Mr Jannetta. Do you know Mr Jannetta at all? 14 "The Richard Jackson automated system was considered A. I don't. 15 15 by both Mr Marshall and Mr Darvill to be an easier to 16 Q. So: 16 use, preferable, alternative to the present system. 17 "Mr Jannetta said that he and others of his 17 Mr Darvill wanted to know if the lawyers had some hold 18 18 colleagues would have to rely on those subpostmasters in on the Horizon system for some reason, that it could not 19 the North East and South West who currently have this 19 be changed." 20 system in place, to make sure their voices are heard 20 Just pausing there, you have said that you offered 21 21 with their problems and to ensure that all the them "system or no system"; did you, at any stage in 22 22 difficulties encountered are satisfactorily overcome. this period, offer them an improved system, a different 23 The point must clearly be made to the Business that this 23 system? 24 24 automation is not going to do the job, that A. Sorry, what I meant to convey was that, besides what is 25 subpostmasters have learned enough to know that it will 25 said here, we were working hard on the programme with 1 ICL Pathway to improve these systems, so that was going 1 that, in fact, the system was speeding up his balance 2 on all the time, constantly, and -- so, in response to 2 and that he was content with it. 3 part of your question, the thing was being improved, as 3 Now, that's a -- you know, not a documented 4 far as I was concerned. 4 conversation but, as I say, Alan was known to me very 5 5 Q. The next passage: well. I visited his office on two or three occasions and 6 "The General Secretary assured the meeting that 6 I was concerned to maintain contact to see how things 7 7 Mr David Miller had been informed of the difficulties in were going. 8 no uncertain terms. Mr Butlin said we must insist 8 Q. The feedback that's being revealed there, though, isn't 9 access to ICL Pathway so that we can tell them what we 9 just about his personal experience, is it? 10 would like to see. It is not difficult and does not 10 A. No, no, it's not. I agree. 11 11 take long to rewrite software. The problems must be Q. Yes. Did the general secretary -- I think that's Colin 12 12 Baker at that time -- did he inform you "in no uncertain resolved with Pathway and they must sort it out with 13 13 POCL. We cannot continue to have experienced terms" as it says there? 14 subpostmasters/mistresses in distress on the telephone, 14 A. He was certainly expressing concerns through the piece, 15 struggling until all hours to balance. These situations 15 so whatever his members were saying to him would be fed 16 must not be permitted to arise. It was pointed out that 16 back to me. 17 if the Lottery offices had to deal with this situation 17 This is, of course, a report of a general debate at 18 it would not be tolerated." 18 this meeting, an internal debate in the National 19 A. Can I just -- with reference to Mr Butlin, he was 19 Federation of SubPostmasters, and I can't -- I was just 20 concerned, and because I knew him, I made a special 20 aware of fairly continuous feedback from the NFSP. 21 point of keeping in touch with him, to the point where 21 negative and positive, throughout this piece. 22 he had it installed, we had a conversation about his 22 Q. I'm not sure we can see positive feedback in this

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particular --

A. No, I agree, I'm sorry, I wasn't suggesting that.

Q. Knowing what we know happened to subpostmasters, would 52

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experience there. When he did his first balance and we

had a conversation there, and the conversations

continued, to a point where he was able to say to me

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you accept that this kind of information is highly 1 2 relevant information? 3 A. Yes, I do. 4 Q. The next page, Miss Lindon -- do you know Miss Lindon at 5 6 I'm not sure I do. 7 Q. Miss Lindon makes some comments, and it's the second 8 half of that, it says: 9 "Pointing out that it is now three years since the 10 project was first mooted, which is a very long time in the technological world, she suggested that a different 11 12 system be tried, smaller and less complicated, which 13 would be of greater benefit to the smaller offices and 14 probably be a good deal cheaper and easier to operate. 15 POCL seem to be attempting to build an audit system into 16 the project, making the whole thing far too big, too 17 cumbersome and too complicated." 18 Was that a view that you were aware of at the time, 19 not necessarily from this particular --20 A. I wasn't aware of this particular view, no. 21 Q. Not from that individual, but were you aware of views 22 that a simpler system could be adopted if the Benefits 23 Agency project was not going to be going ahead? 24 A. There was an option, which was to say "Stop all work on 25 what's going on in this contract", and to redefine and 1 Q. Absolutely. 2 A. I was never aware of a communication from the 3 National Federation, a formal communication or informal, 4 that said they had lost confidence in the system. 5 Q. I will very shortly take you to correspondence between 6 yourself and the NFSP. 7 A. Okay, all right. 8 Q. Let's just finish with this document by reading that 9 final passage that's on the screen: 10 "Mr Peberdy thanked the Council for their information. These were exactly the problems expressed 11 12 to Dave Miller at their meeting on 11th June. The 13 National President had taken 7 pages of faults and other 14 things the Federation knew to be wrong, including the 15 fact that some faults dated back to January 18997, since 16 when POCL have not addressed the problems, only been 17 fire-fighting. Clearly we cannot accept something which 18 keeps people at work until after 10.00 pm at night." 19 Do you remember those conversations with Mr Baker? 20 A. I know they reflected to me there was concern from their 21 members about how long it was taking to balance. 22 Q. Can we go to NFSP00000073, please. This is the 23 correspondence that I mentioned. 24 Now, this covering letter is dated 24 June but, if 25 we go over the page, it's a letter from you to Colin

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to retender and to have a system that was, as it were, direct for POCL, not one that had been adopted from the BA/POCL routes.

- Q. Do you think the suggestion that's being made here might have been a sensible suggestion?
- A. Well, I think we -- we looked in various parts of the business, when BA unilaterally pulled out, about going forward and, certainly, the advice I was getting was "We need to go forward, and ICL Pathway, because they're there and they have a large degree of experience, are still the best option".
- Q. The final paragraph on the page, currently:

"As no one appeared to be listening to, or acting upon, the problems being experienced by subpostmasters, Mr Ingham suggested the Federation take the bull by the horns and write to whoever is Bruce McNiven's senior ..."

Who was Bruce McNiven's senior?

- A. Me.
- Q. "... stating that we have lost confidence in the system. The national president confirmed that this provide test had already been made to David Miller and we must now wait to see what they come back with."

Can we keep on scrolling --

A. Sorry, could I comment on that?

Baker, it's dated 22 June, so actually it seems to have

been at least sent during that meeting of the NFSP. Do

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you remember that at all?

A. I remember writing to Colin.

Q. Paragraph 1, it refers to dealing with problems and it talks about the meetings:

"Through these meetings we were able to identify the same items that you have raised and these are now all in the process of being dealt with through our negotiations with ICL Pathway. However, it is also the case that we have some very tight timescales in which to convert the Heads of Agreement drawn up by the Treasury and the DTI into a revised contract structure. Unfortunately, our room for manoeuvre has been constrained and we are working extremely hard to ensure all the key issues are identified as part of the acceptance process."

Now, something we discussed at the very beginning of today was tight timescales, time pressures. A that point in time, June 1999, were you feeling some time pressure to get on with the system?

- A. Absolutely.
- Q. Now, the explanation starts by talking about surveys. Could we scroll over the page, please. Thank you very much. "Modifications" -- I want to look at "Training". It says there:

"This is probably our greatest area of concern and is being pursued vigorously with ICL Pathway. The areas you have identified such as balancing and cash account are part of the redesign which is currently taking place and is based on subpostmasters ... experience."

"Training

The next paragraph responds to a suggestion that there be office-by-office training and the response there is "we can't provide that because that is too expensive".

Over the page, please, to "Balancing". It says:

"Your concerns about printing, redeclaration of stocks, the identification of First and Second Class stamps and postal orders are already in the process of resolution and a software drop in July will deal with them. However, there are issues around the balancing process which are part of the training response and have yet to be satisfactorily addressed by Pathway. Clearly, this is something on which we will base our decisions about acceptance and rollout".

Now, it looks very much, by this stage and in this correspondence, that by that time the blame had shifted to focus on training issues. Do you agree with that?

A. I think there were training issues and we ploughed money

in -- I think we ploughed more money in and we had our

think the perception had changed within POCL, by this stage, and the focus had shifted to training?

- A. I don't think the software issues had, in any way, gone away and they were still being worked on, but the pressure on -- to get the training right was very strong, not just from the National Federation, but from people within the programme.
- Q. I mean, let's look at page 4 of this document. It is the final paragraph on page 4. It says:

"I am keenly aware of the pressures and concerns experienced by the subpostmasters at the front end of automation. Subpostmasters feelings of incompetence and abandonment really do hit us hard and understanding their experiences at first hand has been the single most important lesson we have all learned."

Now, "feelings of incompetence" doesn't sound really like the kind of feelings we heard about being expressed at that NFSP meeting. They sounded less of competence and more of concerns with the actual system. Do you think things have shifted here to blaming subpostmasters?

A. Well, I think this -- I think this relates to an increasing understanding that the introduction of this system into a population of very varied IT experience could provoke feelings of incompetence own resource supporting subpostmasters during this process. So I think we were pressuring Pathway but we were also prepared to put our hand in our pocket to actually support subpostmasters through the early stages of this process.

- Q. I think hand in your pocket only to some extent because, under the training, it said that you couldn't do office-by-office training?
- A. No, and I think that would have been prohibitively expensive.
- Q. Looking back at the first paragraph on the first page, so that's page 2 of this particular document, do you remember I took you to this paragraph where it mentions working up against tight timescales. Do you think it was convenient, at that stage, to be focusing on training issues and for it to be seen as an issue with training because of the tight timescales?
- **A.** I think training was genuinely an issue at that time.
- Q. But what we don't see in this document is an explanation such as "We're going to rewrite EPOSS", or any kind of software-type issues that we had previously been discussing and had been raised, for example, by subpostmasters.

I mean, earlier in June, for example, you seemed to accept that balancing was a software issue. Do you

amongst some individuals and we were trying to support that and get through that stage where then they then felt competent.

- Q. But do you accept that, at that stage, it wasn't just feelings of incompetence but feelings of stress and health concerns dealing with a system that wasn't working, rather than a person who couldn't work a system?
- A. Judging by what I was -- was being fed to me and what I learned at Newcastle, I would say yes. I would also take you back to the question I asked them and the fact that only one of them said "I don't want this system".

If I -- I asked that question in the real knowledge that, if a significant number of those people in the room had said "Take it out", that would have stopped me and the programme in my tracks.

- Q. Well, would that be offering them the system or no system, rather than an improved system?
- A. Well, it was -- the system, I think I have said to you, was being improved constantly. What I was trying to get to was, if a significant number of people who had been taking part in the trial simply didn't want to do it, didn't want the system, then that would have given me a signal in one direction.

The signal I got was that, whilst they were very 60

1		conscious of being guinea pigs, of having had to work	1
2		hard, of having to put up with frustrations and all the	2
3		things associated with a live trial, that actually they	3
4		still thought it was worth carrying on with it.	4
5	Q.	,	5
6		problematic?	6
7	A.	On reflection, with the benefit of hindsight, possibly.	7
8	Q.	,	8
9		even incompetence: there were significant problems with	9
10		the software, weren't there?	10
11	Α.	,	11
12		what their members were feeling and the balance just	12
13		to go back, the balancing issue, at that time, was very	13
14		much one of how long is it taking us to do this and is	14
15		it going to improve the time that it takes us to do it,	15
16	_	or is it going to go on being a long time.	16
17	Q.	Were those higher up the chain in the Post Office aware	17
18		of those kinds of concerns that we have heard today that	18
19		were being expressed at those NFSP meetings?	19
20	Α.	You mean above me?	20
21		Yes.	21
22	Α.	I don't know, is the honest answer. That doesn't mean	22
23		to say I mean, Stewart and I discussed the programme	23
24		fairly frequently and I'm sure you will have the	24
25		opportunity to find that out. 61	25
		•	
4		Warnita attack and the Doct Office of the OA May 4000	4
1		"Implication on the Post Office of the 24 May 1999	1
2		Horizon Agreement" and you can see there it says	2
3 4		"PO99/79", so that's the second of those items. Can we just have a look at what it says at the	3 4
5		•	5
6		bottom of that page. So those board minutes, in relation to the implication on the Post Office of	
7			6 7
8		24 May 1999 begin by saying: "The Board has considered the Horizon contract in	8
9		detail"	9
10		Over the page please. It talks about an awayday	10
11		discussion. Do you remember the awayday discussion?	11
12		Were you present?	12
13	Α.	I'm not sure I was.	13
14		I think this took place in a is this the meeting in	14
15	Q.	the manor house in Gloucestershire? Do you remember	15
16		that at all?	16
17	A.	I don't. I'm not in any way saying it didn't happen and	17
18	۸.	what's here is not a record of it, but I just don't	18
19		remember it.	19
20	0	"(ii) The Board had to decide by 31 July 1999 whether	20
21	ω.	it wanted to terminate or sign the revised contract with	21
22			
22 23		ICL for the automation of post offices. Key elements of	22
22 23 24			

"Electronic Point of Sale functionality, automated

IT Inquiry	28 October 2022
Q.	I don't know if you saw the evidence of John Roberts, but he seemed to suggest, in his evidence, that there
	weren't significant complaints from the NFSP at this time. Do you think he was being kept sufficiently informed?
Α.	Well, if that I don't recall that, but if that's what
	was being said then, clearly, that was not right.
Q.	
	that there were these kinds of complaints from members of the NFSP?
A.	I think I mean, there wasn't a general briefing note
	issued on the matter, as far as I remember. I would
	certainly have communicated my experience in Newcastle to my colleagues on the programme.
Q.	So this is June 1999 and I want to take you to one month
	later, 20 July 1999 and can we look at POL00000352
	please. This is the Post Office board meeting on
	20 July and you are listed there as "Others attending".
	I think you were attending for matters PO99/78 and 79.
	Do you remember that?
A.	I don't actually remember it but it is quite clear I was there.
Q.	Can we look at page 8, please. This is where discussion
	of Horizon begins and that's the PO99/78. Can we go over the page, please, at the bottom of this page 62
	payments, local feeder systems and Order Book Control Systems"
	Now, was this, therefore, a, if not the, key
	decision-making moment in respect of the Horizon
	programme?
A.	This was taking place on the please remind me, was it 19 July?
Q.	
Δ.	was a weekend. But, anyway, these minutes are from 20 July.
Α.	·
	point.
Q.	·
	but here the board are saying "We need to decide whether
	we want to terminate or sign a revised contract".
	I mean, that must have been a pretty significant moment
	in the life of the Horizon programme.
Α.	Yes.
Q.	Can we go over the page, please, and look at point (v):
	"System rollout was scheduled for 23 August 1999
	with acceptance needed by 18 August. There were three
	categories of acceptance each with a threshold which
	would determine whether or not rollout could proceed:
	high madium and law

high, medium and low.

"One incident within the high category, or more than

20 incidents within the medium category, would result in 1 2 the system not being accepted. Currently there were 270 3 incidents of which 1 was high and 29 were medium. Of 4 greatest concern was the inadequate training of 5 employees although a new package had been produced and 6 work on the other incidents was underway. At this stage 7 it was expected that there would be no reason for not 8 accepting the system by 18 August." 9 Now, was your impression that those who attended 10 that meeting did or did not understand what an incident was? We know they had read the contract. 11 12 A. I honestly don't know. 13 Q. Now, looking at point (vi): 14 "Excluding the concerns over training, David Miller 15 considered the system robust and fit for service. 16 "(vii) A number of subpostmasters were experiencing 17 difficulties operating the system and in particular with balancing." 18 19 Now. "robust and fit for service". that all sounds 20 quite different to all those documents that we have been 21 looking at this morning; would you agree with that? 22 A. Yes, and I have read this document and I agree with you. 23 Q. This is only a month after the NFSP meeting --24 A. Yes. 25 Q. -- where concern was being raised about the trauma and 1 could not be given on 16th." 2 We see there reference to Acceptance Incident 376. 3 Do you remember that Acceptance Incident? 4 A. I'm aware of it having gone through all the paperwork, 5 yes. 6 Q. So that was high. It had not been retested 7 satisfactorily on time and the only plan seemed to be 8 a workaround. That seems to be the information that you 9 are being given by Chris French. 10 I'm going to go to another document that's two days later, 12 August, it's POL00028362. This is a meeting 11 12 of the Management Resolution -- it's a pre-meeting. 13 Were you involved in this at all or would you have 14 been involved in this? 15 A. It says it's a Management Resolution Pre-Meeting. 16 I don't know. 17 Q. Let's have a look at the top. I think you presumably 18 would have been aware of this information, that, by 19 12 August, there was a clear failure to meet conditions. 20 Acceptance Incident 298 was "Definite high". Acceptance 21 Incident 376 was "high but may not be supported by 21 22 Copping given rectification plan". 22 23 If we look at "KB" -- do you know who "KB" was? 23 24 Keith Baines, the late Keith Baines. 24 25 Q. At the bottom of Keith Baines, it says: 25

67

1 health and wellbeing of subpostmasters. What's your 2 view on this now then? 3 A. That if that is -- if I went in there and said "David 4 Miller considered the system robust and fit for 5 service", that wasn't correct. 6 Q. Do you remember, did the board question you on that at 7 8 A. I'm sorry, and this is genuine, I have no recollection 9 of this 10 Q. If you made that statement do you regret it now? 11 A. If I made that statement, I do regret it. 12 Q. Let's look at what, in fact, unraveled after that 13 statement that it was "robust and fit for service" and 14 then let's look at August 1999 and that's POL00028363. 15 This is 10 August, so not long after, and I think there 16 is an email from Chris French. Who was Chris French, do 17 you remember? 18 A. Chris French was a contractor. He ran a company called 19 French Thornton which advised various levels of the Post 20 Office about IT and he was involved with the Horizon 21 programme. 22 Q. That's an email sent to you on 10 August: 23 "From yesterday's wrap up meeting, you were 24 considering whether or not ... it was in POCL's 25 interests to declare to ICL Pathway that acceptance 1 "Therefore failure would require full retest -- do 2 we want this? Not in our interest to do everything 3 again. 4 "Stability issue 5 "Not an acceptable position 6 "Root and branch review required -- 2 months but the 7 solution is likely to be incremental." 8 Can we go down, "Proposed approach". It says 9 there -- it is the third bullet point: 10 "Also we need assurance that problem will not recur -- we need to be convinced that there is 11 12 a solution that will allow monitoring of this 13 reconciliation and that there is a reporting that 14 demonstrates it is satisfactory 15 "External auditors say this problem could lead to 16 a qualification of the accounts -- although we do need 17 to reach a financial estimate of the likely scale of 18 errors." 19 What's being said there, do you remember? 20

What's being said there, do you remember?

A. Well, I think there was discussion on what we needed to do to sort the issues out and the external auditor problem, specifically, was that I think Stuart Sweetman and I agreed of -- exposure of these issues to our external auditors and I received, yesterday afternoon, a copy of that letter, so we had made the external

auditors aware that there could be issues and they told 1 2 us what would happen if these issues weren't sorted. 3 Q. I'm going to take you to that letter in a moment. Let's 4 look at "Training issue" it says support was needed for 5 subpostmasters to produce their first balance. 6 Can we go over the page please, "View on NRO", so that's the view on national rollout. 7 8 A. Yes. 9 Q. It says: 10 "The steer from the Board is not to accept a sub-standard system." 11 12 But surely, by that stage, you had already told the 13 board that the system was not substandard; would you 14 accept that? 15 A. Well, you quoted from the board comments. You didn't go 16 over the page where I believe there is some reference to 17 board members being aware that there were issues. Am 18 I right? 19 Q. Well, I'm happy to look at that document again and 20 I think I know what you're talking about. Let's have 21 a quick look at POL00000352, and I think it's page 12 22 that you're talking about, which says: 23 "Members were concerned that a number of technical 24 issues remained unresolved and that the BA contract 25 position was still unclear." 69 1 a month earlier that it was "robust and fit for 2 service"? 3 A. I think I was -- the programme was concentrating on 4 sorting out the issues in front of us. 5 Q. So it was looking forward, rather than looking back? 6 A. Yes, it was. 7 Q. Let's look at a couple of incidents during this period. 8 Can we look at POL00028337, please, and that's 9 a document from 15 August 1999 and it looks at Al298 10 "System Stability". Point 2: 11 12 "Evidence from the live trial shows that the counter 13 system is unstable and lacking the 'industrial strength' 14 necessary for a production environment." 15 Over the page, please -- sorry, if we could scroll 16 because I can tell you it looks at the business impact 17 at 3 and one of the business impacts -- or it is, in fact, phrased as an "other impact", over the page, point 18 19 (v), it refers to: 20 "Risk of errors and impact on POCL transaction 21 processing due to increased errors in fall back." 22 Point 4 talks about a severity rating. POCL's 23 severely rating in relation to this issue is high, and 24 I'm going to read that paragraph below the rating of 25 high. It says:

71

28 October 2022 1 So, certainly, I'm happy -- more than happy -- to 2 spend some time on that. You don't deny, though, having 3 said that it was "robust and fit for service"? A. I -- that was the record of the meeting. Whether I was 4 given the minutes to agree or not, I don't know, but 5 6 that's the record of the meeting. 7 Q. So over, sorry, to the document that we were just on, 8 that's POL00028362, and the final page which was the 9 view on the national rollout, where it says: 10 "The steer from the Board is not to accept 11 a sub-standard system." 12 We have, at the bottom there, a long list of high 13 and medium severity incidents. I mean, this whole 14 meeting here seems to be about Pathway not meeting 15 conditions; would you accept that? 16 A. It's an analysis of where that was clearly correct. 17 Q. Were there concerns, at that stage, amongst those who 18 were working on the project? 19 A. Yes. There were also concerns, if you look at Pathway's 20 view and POCL's view, about the view of certain 21 incidents 22 Q. It seems as though POCL's view was things were worse 23 than Pathway were accepting? 24 25 Q. How did you feel at that stage, having told the board

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"POCL assert that this Acceptance Incident is High because it clearly comes under the contractual beginnings of High 'Failure to meet an Acceptance Criterion which would have a substantial impact on the service received by the customer'. Pathway have advised that their understanding of the rate of occurrence constitutes a Low severity rating. However, the statistics on which this conclusion was based has now been proven to be incorrect. In fact, the rate of occurrence has now been shown to be 48 times greater than that on which ICL Pathway based their assessment. In comparing the performance of Horizon with that of POCL's legacy systems (ECCO and ALPS), it should be noted that the reboot rate per terminal for Horizon is 35% compared with ECCO at 0.30% and ALPS at 0.75%."

So this was an Acceptance Incident where the main problems were things like system freezes, non-visible problems -- sorry, visible problems, rather than necessarily --

A. It was.

Q. -- invisible problems but, as we saw slightly above on this page, at page 5, there was, nevertheless, included in this Acceptance Incident a risk of errors and impact on transaction processing. Do you remember that?

A. I -- in this detail at the time, I don't.

1	Q.	At the time, would you have been aware of this detail?	1		due to an (albeit unusual) internal processing error
2		This kind of document, would you have seen that?	2		within Pathway's central systems."
3	A.	I'm not aware of having seen this document before. I am	3		The final sentence in that paragraph is:
4		not saying that I didn't see it at the time.	4		"Pathway have indicated that they would be willing
5	Q.	Do you remember issues of this nature being brought to	5		to discuss with POCL how they might do this (on
6		your attention?	6		an ongoing basis) and admit that there may well be
7	A.	I certainly remember issues of this nature.	7		future occurrences which they cannot predict."
8		Over to page 5 and this looks at Acceptance	8		Can we go over the page, please, to "Business
9		Incident 376, "Lack of data integrity on the data	9		Impact", paragraph 1 I will, unfortunately, spend
10		stream(s) across the TIP interface". Can we look at	10		a bit of time on this document, do let me know if you
11		paragraph 2:	11		need a break at any stage:
12		"Pathway claim that they have discovered all the	12		"The ICL Pathway service is an integral part of
13		root causes"	13		POCL's client accounting system indeed the service is
14		Then, just while we are on this, sorry, it's still	14		an accounting service. As such it accounts for turnover
15		15 August 1999, let's look at paragraph 3:	15		of £140 billion per annum involving some 3 billion
16		"However, Pathway's paper TIP Acceptance Incident	16		transactions. Given the scale of this system even
17		Clearance Update from Lorraine Holt (13/8/99)	17		relatively small defects are capable of generating
18		provided to POCL on [13 August 1999] indicate that this	18		errors within the accounts of very significant amounts.
19		problem can be caused by a number of root causes,	19		POCL's existing manual and legacy automation systems,
20		including faults that do not have the same profile as	20		which Pathway's service will replace, are designed to
21		that described above and not all of which have been	21		minimise and correct such errors by incorporating
22		fully analysed or fixed."	22		controls and appropriate validation procedures."
23		Can we look at paragraph 4:	23		Can we go to paragraph 3, please:
24		"Furthermore, there has been an incident where	24		"Pathway has not provided POCL with a complete
25		wholesale numbers of transactions were not sent to TIP	25		description of all the faults creating the missing data
20		73	20		74
1		and therefore POCL has not received any description of	1		the accounts that they're talking about here because
2		how and when all these faults will be fixed. Pathway	2		this is reflected in the balance sheet accounts
3		has admitted that they do not yet fully understand the	3	0	Yes.
4		root cause of all the problems. A 'workaround' has been	4		and TIP was harvesting information on the front end
5		offered which attempts to trap and correct errors after	5	Α.	and was then settling with major clients. And I think
6		they have occurred but this cannot provide assurance of	6		there was a serious concern if that was not happening
7		a complete solution to the faults in the service, nor	7		correctly. So and it is actually highlighted,
8		has POCL had visibility of the testing plan to ensure	8		I believe, as one of the issues in the Deloittes letter.
9		that the fix does not introduce further problems.	9	0	Absolutely, and I will, I promise you, get to that
10		"It is a fundamental of any accounting system that	10	Q.	letter. I think that's actually the next paragraph,
11		it provides a complete and accurate record of all	11		that's paragraph 6, where it talks about:
12		transactions."	12		"These balances are also the basis of settlement
13					
		It goes on to talk about the problems if there is not a complete and accurate record of all transactions.	13		with clients."
14 15		,	14 15		Might that be the relevant paragraph about Yes.
		including, for example, if we look at paragraph 5, it	15 16	A .	
16		says:	16 47	Q.	It's the final sentence, or final sentences of that
17		"Given the nature of the errors concerned the	17		paragraph, actually, that I wanted to draw to your
18		potential is for these write-offs to be significantly	18		attention, which is:
19		threatening the business performance against shareholder	19		"Integrity failures could thus become a matter of
20		targets and potentially as a going concern."	20		public record damaging the reputation of POCL.
21		I mean, it seems as though they had in mind at that	21		Integrity is one of the major attributes of the brand
22		stage the errors being dealt with by way of write-offs,	22		such damage would, therefore, be substantial."
23		rather than possibly prosecutions.	23		Over the page, paragraph 7:
24		If we look at paragraph	24		"Finally this level of difference is operationally
25	A.	Whether I I would be interested to know what 75	25		unsustainable. The level of resource necessary to 76
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investigate and resolve these differences is significant 1 2 at the 5,500 level and at the higher level the resource 3 requirements are impractical ..." 4 It says a little further on: 5 "... error levels are currently running at twice the 6 normal pre-Horizon baseline." 7 Can we go over the page, please. There's 8 a "Rectification Plan", and it is paragraph 3 of that 9 rectification plan, it says: 10 "POCL require a period of time with no incidents being reported or identified by TIP this must, as 11 12 a minimum, cover two full consecutive cash account weeks 13 and include a cash account period end." 14 Now, would it be fair to say, it looks from this 15 document as though it is seen as a very significant 16 issue relating to accounting integrity and it seems to 17 be so serious that, at that stage, that is August 1999, POCL would like a period of time with no incidents being 18 19 reported or identified by TIP? 20 A. That's what this says, yes. 21 Q. And, I think, even though it seems at this stage ICL are 22 saying that they can't guarantee that there wouldn't be 23 further incidents. Do you remember these kinds of 24 discussions about Al376? 25 A. I don't remember the discussions at that detail, the 1 A. Yes, but I think as a general issue that we wanted to 2 keep our auditors informed of progress and possible 3 impacts. 4 Q. It's the third paragraph down, it talks about the live 5 trial at that stage being limited to 323 outlets, and it 6 now goes on to talk about incident 376. It says: 7 "The following issue, as described to us by POCL gives us concern as to the ability of POCL to produce 8 9 statutory accounts to a suitable degree of integrity. 10 We understand that POCL has attributed a severity rating 11 of 'High' to this matter. 12 "Incident 376. Data Integrity -- In order to test 13 the integrity of weekly polling of Horizon cash account 14 transactions, POCL are reconstructing a weekly total by 15 outlet from daily Horizon pollings. At present this 16 control test is showing discrepancies in that certain 17 transactions do not record the full set of attributes 18 and this results in the whole transaction being lost 19 from the daily polling." 20 So that's talking about in branch, isn't it? 21 A. Yes, it's talking about information in the branch that 22 has not got the attributes that it should have. 23 Q. It says: 24 "We are informed that an incident has also occurred 25 where transactional data committed at the counter has

79

level of detail being dealt with here, but clearly it was -- it was in my view.

- Q. The severity of the issues there presumably would have been on your mind in August 1999?
- A. Yes
- Q. Still in August 1999, can we look at POL00090839, please. Now, this is the letter that we have been talking about. I think you were originally provided with an incomplete version of this letter and we have now managed to obtain the entire letter. For the record, the incomplete version was at POL00028439 but this now is the complete version.

It is the second page here which is the letter to you from Ernst & Young. "Horizon acceptance testing":

"As auditors of The Post Office we have been asked by Post Office Counters Limited to provide you with our views in respect of certain accounting integrity issues arising from tests performed by POCL on Horizon data in the live trial."

Can I just confirm, I think you have said that -- did you request this specifically from Ernst & Young?

- **A.** Somebody in the business did, quite possibly Stuart Sweetman.
- Q. Presumably because they were so concerned about the impact on accounting integrity?

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been lost by the Pathway system during the creation of the outlet cash account and has not therefore been passed to TIP in the weekly cash account sub [figures].

"Both types of incident result in a lack of integrity on each of the two data streams used by POCL to populate its central accounting systems. We understand that the cash account data stream is the primary feed for POCL's main ledgers and client reconciliation processes."

Can we go over the page, please. Let's look at the second paragraph, it says:

"It is a fundamental of any accounting system that it provides a complete and accurate record of all transactions. These discrepancies suggest that the ICL Pathway system is currently not supporting this fundamental.

"POCL have informed us that these items have resulted in difficulties substantiating the cash account balances which form the basis of certain items in the balance sheet. We understand that the issues are not attributable to specific outlets or to specific products on a continuing basis. It is not therefore possible to quantify the likely impact on client balances, or the resulting implications for POCL's financial statements, as the incidents cannot be forecast."

Looking at one more paragraph just above "Impact" it

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A. It is.

2 2 says: Q. So I think you are bringing it to Bruce McNiven and 3 "We also understand that POCL have identified 3 Keith Baines' attention --4 a number of other incidents which also impact on the 4 A. Yes. 5 5 accounts. These may also be relevant to us in reaching Q. -- and saying: 6 our audit opinion, as they may be indicative of further 6 "Please ensure that these issues are fully addressed 7 uncertainties." 7 during the remaining acceptance process. Keep me in 8 8 Now, accountants telling a company that its 9 statutory accounts are at risk is very serious indeed, 9 Do you know if there was follow up from that? 10 isn't it? 10 A. I'm sure there would have been. A. Yes. 11 Q. How well-known would this issue have been within the 11 12 Q. Did you understand the term "fundamental uncertainty"? 12 organisation? 13 13 A. I don't think it was generally known but I think it was 14 Q. If we go over the page, it is explained there. What did 14 known by the people who ought to have known about it. 15 you understand by that? 15 Certainly, Stuart Sweetman would have been aware of 16 A. That was a qualification on the account. 16 this. 17 Q. Now, surely this was something to bring to the attention 17 Q. Do you remember discussing it with Stuart Sweetman? 18 of the board, wasn't it? A. I don't remember but, given what it's about, I find it 18 19 A. Yes. 19 very difficult to think it wasn't discussed with him. 20 Q. If we look at the first --20 Q. Wasn't this the time to go back to the board and say 21 21 A. Sorry, I think what this was saying is, if these things "I made a mistake with the assurance I previously gave 22 22 aren't sorted, this will what will happen when we do you"? 23 your next audit. 23 A. I'm not sure. I was -- I was, again, looking to solve 24 24 Q. Yes, and if we look at page 2 of this document, is that the problem. You have pointed out very clearly what was 25 your writing at the top? 25 said in the board minutes to me. Whether my awareness 81 1 of that was sufficiently strong at that time, I really 1 A. I think there was an awareness amongst the people who 2 can't remember. In reviewing all this, I admit to 2 should have known about it. 3 3 a certain unease. SIR WYN WILLIAMS: When you say "the people who should have 4 Q. So are you saying that, looking back, things should have 4 known about it", can you actually tell me their names, 5 5 so I've got them on my radar, so to speak? been done differently? 6 6 A. Possibly, but I would point out that this -- Stuart A. Well, certainly, the finance director, people preparing 7 7 Sweetman was the managing director and he was a member the accounts. And I'm sorry, sir, I cannot tell you the 8 of the board that we have been discussing. So there was 8 names. 9 an assumption, I think, on my part that, as a member of 9 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, no, all right. I follow you might 10 10 that board, he would be taking forward key issues. not remember precisely their names, but you started with Q. It was you at that original board meeting though who was 11 11 the finance director. Are there any other particular 12 the technical man? 12 directors or senior managers that you think should have A. Yes. 13 13 been aware of this at the time? 14 Q. It lay on your shoulders, at least at that meeting, to 14 A. Well, certainly the managing director, sir. 15 assure them in terms of the robustness of the system? 15 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So finance director, managing director. 16 A. Yes. 16 A. Yes. SIR WYN WILLIAMS: And you knew, obviously. 17 17 Q. So do you think, looking back now, that, having received 18 a pretty significant letter from Ernst & Young about 18 A. Yes. 19 accounting integrity, that might have been the moment to 19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. 20 go back to the board? 20 MR BLAKE: We know that the route to the Post Office board 21 A. I'm -- the route back to the board was through Stuart 21 was through the managing director but also -- who would 22 Sweetman, as far as I was concerned. 22 have been the route to the Post Office board, the 23 Q. Were there high-level meetings taking place within Post 23 overall board for this kind of information. 24 Office Counters Limited about the significance of this 24 A. Stuart Sweetman, the managing director. He was on that 25 25 document? board. 83 84

	Q.	I think he wasn't technically a member but he attended			Detween ICL Falliway and FOCL is that.
2		the board; is that correct?	2		"During the Observation Period not more than 0.6 $\%$ of
3	A.	Yes, he did.	3		cash accounts sent to TIP will be found by TIP not to
4	Q.	While we're on Acceptance Incident 376, can we look at	4		reconcile to the Cash Account derived by TIP from the
5		FUJ00079178, please. Now, this was a resolution plan at	5		transaction stream due to Pathway processing error."
6		September 1999. You may well not have seen this	6		Now, we saw earlier the document that I took you to.
7		document. I don't think you are named on the document.	7		It seemed as though POCL originally wanted no errors
8		I'm just going to take you to a couple of points there	8		relating to this particular Acceptance Incident. Do you
9		and you can tell me if you do or don't recall anything.	9		recall a move over this period where, in essence, it was
0		Can we go to page 5, please. This sets out the	10		accepted that a degree of error was inevitable?
1		"Purpose", and it says:	11	Α.	I don't recall directly, but I'm not surprised that
2		"This document sets out ICL Pathway's proposal that	12		there was a move away from zero.
3		Acceptance Incident 376, currently categorised as Medium	13	Q.	Would you, at that period, August 1999, or September
4		by Pathway and High by POCL, should be recategorised by	14		1999, have been well aware that there would, inevitably,
5		POCL as Medium, and that the Resolution Plan is	15		be issues that arose and therefore a degree of
6		satisfactory and should be agreed."	16		acceptance would be required?
7		Do you remember that, ICL wanting this particular	17	Δ	Yes.
8		incident	18	Q.	Essentially, a degree of error is inevitable?
9	Δ	I don't, I'm afraid. But it wouldn't be uncommon for	19	A.	Yes.
20	Α.	there to be debate at this time across a range of issues	20		Can we look at POL00028338, please. This is a different
21		about their severity.	21	Q.	Acceptance Incident. It is Acceptance Incident 211,
22	0	Let's have a look at page 9 and see if it assists at	22		what we know as the receipts and payments mismatch.
23	Q.	all. It discusses "Closure Criteria" there. It's the	23		Now, let's look at the first paragraph:
			23 24		
24 25		bottom of page 9, please. Thank you. We see there the	2 4 25		"A large number of incidents have been reported
.5		third point, "Closure criteria", that's being agreed 85	23		during the live trial period whereby the receipts and 86
1		normante totale de not belonce en the criticat weekly Cook	4		rate (less than 10 in three weeks). Some of these have
1		payments totals do not balance on the outlet weekly Cash	1		rate (less than 10 in three weeks). Some of these have
2		Account. This exposes a lack of integrity in the double	2		been attributed to migration errors which are accepted",
3		entry accounting functions of the Horizon System,	3		et cetera.
4		contrary to requirement 803."	4		So even in this incident, when Pathway had closed,
5		Can we turn over the page, please. About halfway	5		fixes LT1 and LT2 had been introduced, there were still,
6		down that page, it begins "Prior":	6		it seems, at least some problems occurring; would you
7		"Prior to the introduction of LT2"	7		accept that?
8		I think is LT2 is a fix of some sort; do you	8	A.	Yes, but the sense of this is that those are at a very
9		remember?	9		much reduced level.
0	Α.	I don't, I'm afraid.	10	Q.	Absolutely but, again, it couldn't possibly be zero,
1	Q.	,	11		could it? It seems to be an acceptance that there
2		related to a fix, LT?	12		would, nevertheless, still be some problems?
3	A.	Yes, I think so.	13	A.	,
4	Q.	I think, in fact, the paragraph before says:	14	Q.	Yes, but the impression you get here is that there are
5		"Fixes were introduced into the LT1 system to	15		fixes applied but, even where there are purported fixes,
6		correct the single sided sales problem and the print	16		you need to be careful. Would you agree with that?
7		preview corruption. The revised balancing process	17	A.	Yes. I think it's saying that, whilst this has had
8		introduced at LT2 addressed the two other identified	18		a good impact, it's not yet a complete impact.
9		causes.	19	Q.	Let's look at November 1999, POL00028550. So this is
20		"Prior to the introduction of LT2 incidents were	20		now November 1999, very late in the day, quite close to
21		occurring at a rate of around 30-50 outlets per week.	21		the national rollout. There is an email that is from
22		Following LT2 it was anticipated no further incidents	22		Keith Baines to yourself and others.
23		would arise, other than the accepted migration problem.	23		Can we go over the page, please actually, sorry,
24		"Since the introduction of LT2 there have been some	24		if we could stay with that page, I think it explains
25		recurrences of the incident although at a much reduced 87	25		that Keith Baines has written you some speaking notes.

1 "The third area was the reduction in errors in 1 Do you remember this? 2 2 A. I don't, but if Keith wrote that then I accept it. accounting data passed from your systems into TIP, and 3 Q. I think it's called "Negotiation Brief". 3 the development of appropriate integrity controls for 4 A. Mm-hm. 4 that interface. Progress in this area had not been 5 Q. Then we look over the page, and there's the briefing. 5 encouraging. The overall level of errors has greatly 6 Let's look at paragraph 3, it says: 6 exceeded the 0.6% target level -- by an order of 7 "It is now clear that some of the criteria will not 7 magnitude or more." 8 8 be met. This is serious cause for concern." What does that mean, "an order of magnitude or 9 9 more"? It goes on to list the various key issues and, at 10 paragraph 7, it talks about the first issue: 10 A. I don't know. "The first of these, system stability, has been 11 Q. Does it mean significantly over that --11 12 a success. The level of incidents has reduced and the 12 A. Yes, it does, sorry. I don't know precisely. 13 target level has been met -- though only just. The one 13 Q. "Other criteria have also not been met. Analysis of the 14 remaining concern is that there have been a number of 14 causes of in you incidents has not met the 10 day 15 one-off events that have resulted in 'spikes' and 15 turnaround target." 16 clearly we need you to continue making progress, both 16 It says: 17 the make [or 'to make'] the further level in overall 17 "DN John Meagher to confirm if this is correct. incidents, in line with the rectification plan, and to 18 Also, there have been new incidents that it seems would 18 19 eliminate the occurrence of 'spikes' which would be 19 not have been trapped by the integrity control you are 20 increasingly disruptive as the automated estate 20 21 21 increases." So potential new incidents that won't be met by 22 22 Can we go over the page, please, to paragraph 9. an integrity control: 23 Paragraph 9 talks about area of concern about the 23 "Thus there is cause for concern, both at the level 24 24 helpdesk. of work that will be required to manage errors, and that 25 Paragraph 11 is a third area, and that says: 25 some errors may 'slip through the net' and cause errors 1 in POCL's or even worse our Client's systems." 1 A. Well, in what I have read, it was -- the issue was not 2 Can we scroll down -- sorry, who would it mean when 2 about the information that was produced in the branch 3 it says the "Client's systems"? Is that talking 3 and being produced in the branch, it was how the about --4 4 relevant bits of that information, that had to go 5 5 A. Yes, this is -- what the TIP system was doing, as forward to settle with the client, were being taken out 6 I understand it and understood it, was that it was 6 and was this being done completely and properly. So 7 7 taking certain data from the data available in the I don't think it was interfering with the accounts in 8 branch. It identified -- there were parts of the system 8 the branch but it was meaning that we wouldn't be 9 that -- front and back of those pieces of data, that 9 billing our major clients properly if this was 10 should have identified it to the harvester, it would 10 happening. That is my understanding. then be taken to TIP. 11 11 Q. Would you accept that, at that particular time, there 12 were incidents that were affecting the cash accounting 12 TIP would then assemble a set of accounts and the 13 13 clients, that is the -- from us -- not customers who of individual subpostmasters? 14 came in off the street, but the clients were the big 14 A. Yes, I think so, but my point is we spent, 15 people like Benefits Agency, and so on, and would settle 15 understandably, quite a bit of time on this. But it was 16 with them. And I think this is expressing a concern 16 looking at our clients, as opposed to our subpostmasters 17 about whether we'd be accurately charging our large 17 and customers. 18 18 Q. The focus is certainly on the clients, would you accept 19 19 that? Q. Yes, so it seems to be an acknowledgement that some 20 errors may slip through the net but the concern seems to 20 A. Absolutely, yes. 21 be focused on POCL's clients rather than, for example, 21 Q. Paragraph 12: 22 on subpostmasters and the effect on them? 22 "We also have some concerns about progress with the 23 A. Because I think, in this respect, that was probably 23 new integrity control. While Pathway have been 24 24 reporting satisfactory progress against plans, our 25 25 people on the ground perceive that there has been Q. What do you mean, sorry? 91 92

a reversion to the old ways of working with the shutters 1 1 2 2 being brought down." 3 3 Do you know what that means there? 4 A. It means that, under PFI and the contract which involved 4 5 5 the Benefits Agency, there was a Pathway way of working, 6 which was not to encourage close involvement from either 6 BA or POCL. We had worked very hard to try and break 7 7 8 that down. There is a lot of evidence in the bundle 8 9 9 about the workshops that were going on, the intense 10 activity which was focusing on the key problems. This 10 is saying that -- "reversion to old ways of working with 11 11 A. No. 12 the shutters being brought down" means that we were not 12 Q. Do you think you should have been? 13 being allowed in so we could satisfy ourselves what was 13 14 14 happening. 15 Q. It continues: 15 16 "We have seen no progress on development of the 16 17 joint processes that will be needed to manage the errors 17 18 18 trapped by the control, and on this, and on the 19 specification of interface processes, we have found 19 20 Pathway unwilling to engage in meaningful discussions." 20 Q. In what way? 21 21 Perhaps we can briefly look over the next page, so 22 22 this goes on to talk about reference data and it says: 23 "The prime responsibility under the contract is 23 24 24 Pathway's. The requirement ... is for Pathway to 25 provide a robust service that checks the consistency of 25 1 have a role and you were meant to fulfil that role at 1 2 2 that level. 3 Q. Was it difficult in the organisation to speak up? 3 4 A. No. I'm just saying there were channels through which 4 5 5 things went. 6 Q. So it was too hierarchical or ...? 6 7 7 We're interested from a governance perspective. 8 A. Absolutely, and I understand that. The business had 8 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. 9 been through a process which it called "Customer First", 9 10 10 the whole corporation had, where there was a lot of 11 11 emphasis on being quite clear what people were meant to I may hand over to others. 12 12 do and deliver, and letting them get on with it and 13 13 making appropriate checks at the appropriate time. And 14 the idea that -- I think, John Roberts alluded to this 14 remember at all? 15 when he spoke -- that he would constantly be diving into 15 A. Yes, I do. 16 the organisation and interfering was something he 16 17 resisted, so -- and I think most of the organisation --17 18 well, probably all the organisation understood that. 18 19 Q. I don't want to put words into your mouth, but is it the 19 out, it says: 20 left hand not speaking to the right hand? 20 21 A. No, it's: there is a defined channel for doing it and 21 22 that needs to happen. 22 23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I follow that you may have thought it 23 24 appropriate to raise these issues -- those are my words, 24

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not yours -- with Mr Sweetman, as a means of taking it

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reference data. POCL does not have access to Pathway's reference data design, and so it is Pathway's responsibility to ensure that any reference data that complies with the interface specification is implemented safely and with the expressed effect."

Now, I mean, this is all, as I say, late on -- we're in November 1999 -- four months on from the board meeting where it was described as "robust and fit for service"; were you not, at that stage, banging on the doors of the board and saying "Hang on a minute"?

- A. I'm afraid I will go back to what I was saying to you before. The project sponsor was a member who attended that board and my view was the route back to the board was through Stuart Sweetman. I -- in retrospect, thinking about it now, should I have looped and gone directly to the board? The organisation and the way that was deployed certainly didn't encourage that.
- A. Well, because we were given responsibilities at a certain level. Those -- and the targets to meet. The targets to meet would be monitored, sometimes more intensely than others. But looping back up and down the organisation was not encouraged because you were seen to

to the board, but, having raised them with him, was there any kind of discourse between you as to what would happen and, if so, what was the result of what was to happen, if I can put it in that way.

A. I'm sorry, sir, but I genuinely can't remember, but I would be meeting with Stuart Sweetman and being in contact with him on a regular basis, very regular basis.

MR BLAKE: Thank you. I only have very few matters now to deal with before lunch, and I may not be on after lunch,

Can we go to FUJ00118186, please. This is the third supplemental agreement. Is this something that you

Q. Can we look at page 5, please, and it is 5.3, so it's at the bottom of 5. This is something that some other witnesses have been asked about. I will just read that

"The Contractor shall from the date of this Agreement until the end of the TIP Integrity Checking Period make available to POCL promptly upon request appropriate experts to explain to POCL the Contractor's analysis of all root causes of Cash Account Discrepancies and the measures which the Contractor

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shall have implemented in order to prevent the 1 2 recurrence of any Cash Account Discrepancies which would 3 not have been detected by the Accounting Integrity 4 Control Release." 5 I think we have heard from some witnesses, and tell 6 me if you agree with this, that this provision was 7 an acknowledgement that it was not always possible to 8 get to the root cause of an imbalance or to make the 9 appropriate correction? 10 A. I think that's correct. Q. Thank you. I'm going to move to January 2000. Can we 11 12 look at POL00028507. Now, this is a document -- you 13 don't seem to be a recipient of this document, so 14 I won't go into it in any detail? 15 A. Possibly because I was on my way out of the programme at 16 that point. 17 Q. Absolutely. There is a discussion in this document 18 about receipts and payments still not matching. Perhaps 19 we can go to page 4, it's the final page, and it is 20 paragraph (d), and the final sentence: 21 "Even if in the future we have an increased number 22 of these errors, posting them to a discrete line will 23 not help TP to manage them." 24 The point is very simple but, in that period, so at 25 the time when you were on your way out, were you aware 1 were around -- was that there were, during that period 2 it seems, an increase in incidents. 3 Would it surprise you that there were an increase of 4 incidents after you left? We can look at page 6, if it 5 assists. It probably won't. I mean, this wasn't 6 a document that you would ever have seen anyway, but it 7 8 "During November the number of incidents received by 9 MSU increased to 109, in comparison to October where 10 91 received and resolved by MSU." A. I'm sorry, I just wasn't there --11 12 13 A. -- and this is actually some time after I -- a number of 14 months after I departed. 15 Q. Yes, but when you departed, would it have been in your 16 contemplation that things might get worse, not better? 17 A. I would have been very disappointed. 18 Q. In terms of handover, how did you hand over the 19 knowledge that you had gained over those years? 20 A. Well, I handed over to David Smith, who is known to this 21 Inquiry, who was the Automation Steering Group project 22 manager -- sorry, the broad Automation Steering Group, 23 who was heavily involved with TIP, and we would -- we 24 would have discussed things, he would have been aware of

issues. So it wasn't as though somebody who was

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that it may be possible that errors could even increase after the time that you were there? It doesn't have to be in relation to this --

A. Sorry, I had a view at the time that we had done our very best to tie ICL Pathway down to an increasingly improving system and that was what we planned to do, from the point where it was clear that Benefits Agency were getting out, that a deal was done by the Group board, the DTI, permanent secretary, and so on, and a set of criteria were handed down about how this thing was going to be going forward.

It was clear to us that we needed to get as close as we possibly could to ICL Pathway, so I -- so that was my view

How that stands up to a reading of the Horizon judgment is something, as you can imagine, I have been grappling with for a while.

- Q. Yes. One very final document, and it may be that this is after your time. Can we look at POL00029221, please. So this is an ICL management monthly incident review, covering the period 1 to 30 November 2000. Were you still in post at that point?
- A. Oh, no. I was -- by then, I was away.
- Q. I think the point that's made in this -- and I don't need to take you to the page because it wasn't when you

completely fresh to all this was moved in to replace me. It was somebody who was part of the programme, a qualified accountant who had significant experience in all the systems that were going on in the business.

MR BLAKE: Thank you very much, Mr Miller. It is now approaching lunchtime. There are some questions from other Core Participants.

Is there anything before they speak that you would like to say at all?

A. No, I don't think at this stage.

MR BLAKE: Very good.

Sir, did you have any questions at this stage?

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No. Let me ascertain how we should best proceed.

First of all, it became clear to me that some people were cold, not least because extra clothing was being put on, but I also saw the usher attempting to fix it, to use the word "fix", as we often do. Have we succeeded in fixing it?

NEW SPEAKER: Very much so, sir, we're very grateful. **SIR WYN WILLIAMS:** Right, well, I'm glad of that.

MR BLAKE: Sir, may I say, it may be fixed for some but not others. It's a problem with this room and the problem is some of us are under the lights and Mr Stein also seems to be --

1 MR STEIN: Quite comfortable. 1 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine, then that's what we will do. We 2 MR BLAKE: So, unfortunately, in this building we will never 2 will break for ten minutes and then we will complete the 3 3 satisfy everyone. witness. 4 4 MR BLAKE: Thank you. SIR WYN WILLIAMS: The consensus appears to be that things 5 did get better after the usher's intervention. So thank 5 (1.00 pm) 6 you very much. 6 (Short Break) 7 Secondly, I make no secret of the fact that I have 7 (1.10 pm) 8 8 Questioned by MR JACOBS an important legal meeting with my team this afternoon, 9 9 MR JACOBS: Thank you, sir. some of whose members are joining by video, and so 10 I would like to do it -- you know, I would like to have 10 I ask questions on behalf of 153 subpostmasters and some idea where we're going from here. So what is the 11 11 mistresses who are represented by Howe+Co and, Mr Blake, 12 consensus view about how much longer we need for 12 we are grateful for him dealing with many of the 13 additional questions? 13 questions we would raise, so I only have a couple of 14 MR JACOBS: Sir, if it assists, I'm not going to be very 14 points for you, Mr Miller. 15 long, probably five minutes at the most. 15 I want to ask you about Post Office IT capabilities. 16 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right. Mr Henry or Ms Page? 16 Can we perhaps turn up paragraph 21 of your witness 17 MR HENRY: Forgive me, sir, may I ask for 20 minutes. 17 statement, and I think Frankie has the reference for 18 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So if we say 30 minutes, is that 18 that. 19 reasonable, do you think? Then I'm going to ask the 19 It is WITN03470100, and we can see that there. 20 witness something now. 20 You say in your statement that there were 21 21 If we were to break for say ten minutes to stretch differences in the organisations' approach to major IT 22 22 our legs, would you prefer to do that 30 minutes and get projects and the Benefits Agency had a well-established 23 it out of the way, or would you prefer to have a normal 23 process for undertaking large computer projects but POCL 24 24 lunch break? did not and this did not assist smooth working. 25 A. I would prefer to do the first thing, sir. 25 Now, do you accept that the Post Office lacked 1 technical competence to fully understand all the 1 knowledge to understand the errors within the Horizon 2 complexities of the Horizon System? 2 that were causing the shortfalls? 3 A. Yes, but I would caveat that by saying it wasn't just 3 A. I'm pausing --4 the Post Office. 4 Q. It's a long question, I'm sorry. 5 5 Q. Right. Who else was it then? A. No, I understand exactly. There was, for instance, 6 A. Well, all three parties. 6 training courses for auditors as part of the Horizon 7 7 Q. But you do accept that the Post Office were lacking in programme, so I couldn't say I couldn't agree with you. 8 technical competencies in this regard? 8 What I'm not sure about is what training the 9 A. I think we learned about it as time went on but it was 9 investigators got but there was certainly a package for 10 10 a huge and extremely complex system. training auditors. 11 11 Q. Now, we know that subpostmasters were in court in 2001 Q. If we turn to investigators then, did you hear the 12 12 and, therefore, they were being investigated by the Post evidence that was given between February and May of this Office in 2000; you accept that? 13 13 year by the subpostmasters? 14 A. Yes. 14 A. I have heard a number of those sessions, yes. 15 Q. Our clients say, and they have given evidence between 15 Q. The evidence that was largely given was that the 16 February and May of this year, that the Post Office 16 investigators -- and the auditors -- did not appear to 17 auditors and investigators who investigated them and 17 be interested in what the subpostmasters were saying 18 suspended them on the basis of apparent shortfalls, 18 about problems with the system. Do you accept that from 19 appeared to know very little, if anything at all, about 19 what you heard? 20 the Horizon System. 20 A. Oh certainly, they were saying that, yes. 21 My question for you is: do you agree that when the 21 Q. What you say in your statement is that Post Office didn't have well-established processes for undertaking 22 Post Office started to pursue subpostmasters, very 22 23 shortly after rollout, when you were still in post, that 23 projects of this kind? 24 those auditors and investigators who pursued them for 24 A. In the statement, I think what I'm saying is that the 25 these shortfalls didn't have the necessary technical 25 Benefits Agency had very well-established processes. It 103 104

1		had done a number and was doing an number of significant
2		major programmes in this area, and Post Office Counters
3		didn't. So the Benefits Agency took the lead, the
4		Benefits Agency was saying, basically, "This is how we
5		do it", and there was a certain tension there, I think,
6		but
7	Q.	When you say "this didn't assist smooth working", what
8		do you mean by that?
9	A.	Well, there was a lot of work that went on to try and
10		ensure smooth working with the original development
11		agency and the guy who ran that was from Benefits
12		Agency, but he really tried and I think the Post
13		Office tried to get that going.
14		What happened in the and this may sound too
15		convenient, if so I apologise, but what happened in the
16		period when I had left that original and before I came
17		back, I can't comment on. I'm just aware that, when
18		I came back, I said "Where's the spend been on this
19		programme?" and over 80 per cent of it, at the time
20		I came back in 1998, was on the Benefits Agency part.
21	Q.	Are you able to say anything more about the training
22		that the auditors received?
23	A.	I don't, I'm sorry.
24	Q.	But you're not aware of any training that investigators
25		received on the IT system?
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		105
1	A.	105 No.
	A . Q.	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the
1		No.
1 2		No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the
1 2 3	Q.	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"?
1 2 3 4	Q. A .	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct.
1 2 3 4 5	Q. A .	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed
1 2 3 4 5	Q. A .	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Q. A .	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Q. A .	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Q. A .	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if I could describe it as a clean bill of health for Horizon, your character reference for Horizon perhaps, it would be better if the board knew about those things,
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Q. A .	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if I could describe it as a clean bill of health for Horizon, your character reference for Horizon perhaps,
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Q. A .	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if I could describe it as a clean bill of health for Horizon, your character reference for Horizon perhaps, it would be better if the board knew about those things,
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Q. A. Q.	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if I could describe it as a clean bill of health for Horizon, your character reference for Horizon perhaps, it would be better if the board knew about those things, yes? I see you nodding and I don't
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	Q. A. Q.	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if I could describe it as a clean bill of health for Horizon, your character reference for Horizon perhaps, it would be better if the board knew about those things, yes? I see you nodding and I don't I'm sorry.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14	Q. A. Q. A. Q.	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if I could describe it as a clean bill of health for Horizon, your character reference for Horizon perhaps, it would be better if the board knew about those things, yes? I see you nodding and I don't I'm sorry. Absolutely.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15	Q. A. Q. A. Q.	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if I could describe it as a clean bill of health for Horizon, your character reference for Horizon perhaps, it would be better if the board knew about those things, yes? I see you nodding and I don't I'm sorry. Absolutely. Yes.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	Q. A. Q. A. Q.	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if I could describe it as a clean bill of health for Horizon, your character reference for Horizon perhaps, it would be better if the board knew about those things, yes? I see you nodding and I don't I'm sorry. Absolutely. Yes. Now, you have said that Mr Sweetman was the person best
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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	Q. A. Q. A. Q. A.	No. Then, whatever the case, you certainly did not tell the board that it was not "robust and fit for service"? That's correct. Now, subsequent to that board meeting matters developed which Mr Blake has asked you about this morning: the Ernst & Young letter and things of that nature. You have acknowledged that, in the wake of your if I could describe it as a clean bill of health for Horizon, your character reference for Horizon perhaps, it would be better if the board knew about those things, yes? I see you nodding and I don't I'm sorry. Absolutely. Yes. Now, you have said that Mr Sweetman was the person best placed to bring those matters to the attention of the board for the reasons that you have explained. Yes.

A. I'm not. That doesn't mean to say they weren't trained 1 2 but I'm not aware of it. MR JACOBS: I'm not sure I have any further questions for 3 you but I will just check with Mr Enright. 4 I don't have anything else for you. Thank you very 5 6 much, Mr Miller. 7 MR HENRY: Sir, could Mr Maloney go before me, at his own 8 request? 9 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Certainly. 10 MR MALONEY: Thank you, and thank you to Mr Henry. 11 Questioned by MR MALONEY 12 MR MALONEY: My name is Tim Maloney and I represent a number 13 of subpostmasters. 14 We have seen from various documents this morning that there were, if I could use this generic term, 15 16 problems with acceptance, and, in fact, it's probably 17 now beyond dispute within the Inquiry that there were 18 problems with acceptance. 19 There are board minutes that suggest that you, if 20 I could paraphrase, said to the board that Horizon was "robust and fit for service" and I acknowledge that you 21 22 may or may not have seen the minutes, Mr Miller, and 23 that -- but, firstly, is there any reason you might wish 24 to convey to the Inquiry as to why the minutes might be 25 inaccurate? 106 1 Q. Right. When did you leave this project? 2 A. I can't remember exactly, but working back from -- it 3 would have been early 2000. 4 Q. Early 2000. When did you find out that you were going 5 to be leaving the project? How many months notice, 6 effectively, did you have before --7 A. I didn't have "months" notice. 8 Q. Sorry? A. There wasn't a month in it, it was --9 Q. "You're going"? 10 11 A. -- days. 12 Right. You now know that many subpostmasters were 13 unjustly convicted --14 A. I do. 15 Q. -- and their lives have been ruined, in many cases. **A.** I do. 16 17 Q. Many of the difficulties that you saw in the testing of Horizon were the problems that those subpostmasters 18 suffered before they were prosecuted. So if I may just 19 20 give an example, that it took them many hours to 21 balance -- we have seen that in documents this morning, 22 the feedback from the NFSP -- and that it was causing 23 them real upset, and those were the problems that they

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Q. Right. When did you leave?

experienced before they were prosecuted, ultimately.

Has it ever crossed your mind, Mr Miller, that,

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1 well, "Is there anything I personally could have done 2 but didn't" to try and prevent that? 3 A. Yes, it has. Just for the record, I bitterly regret 4 what's happened to the subpostmasters. 5 Q. No, of course. 6 A. Sorry, I --7 Q. No, no, of course. But you, no doubt, would have asked 8 yourself "Right, well, here I am in this position of 9 responsibility, I'm seeing these problems when we are 10 live testing Horizon. Actually, as it turns out, the problems that were suffered by subpostmasters ultimately 11 12 were the very same problems that were experienced during 13 live testing. I was in this position, is there anything 14 I could have done?" 15 Have you asked yourself that question and have you 16 ever asked yourself the question "Could I've got this 17 information to the board?" 18 A. No on the latter, although I have been forced by the 19 questioning to think should I have looped around. 20 21 A. I only became aware of this problem, I regret to say, 22 well into the period when the trial, Bates v, were going 23 on and I'm, you know -- sorry, I -- you know, I'm not 24 proud of that, but that's true. 25 Q. You only became aware of it as a problem -- would you 1 A. I am sorry, but I honestly have no recollection of 2 20-odd years ago of those discussions. 3 Q. Have you thought about it? 4 A. I clearly have thought about it. 5 MR MALONEY: Thank you, sir, that's all I ask. 6 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Henry. 7 Questioned by MR HENRY 8 MR HENRY: Thank you so much. 9 Mr Miller, I suppose so much depends on who writes 10 the minutes and whether you were given an opportunity to 11 approve them? 12 A. Are we talking about the board minutes? 13 Q. Yes, 20 July at Charingworth Manor. It says that you 14 were present -- no need to pick it up, but it says that 15 you were present for item agendas 99/78 and 79. That's 16 on page 1. But I will come back to that. What I wanted 17 to really ask you, sir, is who appointed you in the 18 first place as Horizon programme director? 19 A. Stuart Sweetman. Q. And did Mr John Roberts have anything to do with your 20 21 appointment?

A. I -- I assume that John would have had to approve it,

but I was appointed as a line reportee to Stuart

Sweetman, so I was unaware of who else in the

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corporation had been part of that decision.

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mean as a continuing problem -- after you had left the project, because you were aware of the problems that subpostmasters were facing in the feedback that you received from the NFSP and, indeed, we see it in that crucial document of the audit qualification that would be necessary that you received that letter, so you were aware of problems with the operation of Horizon at the time that you were in post, weren't you?

A. Yes.

- 9 **A.** Ye
 - Q. Yes. But essentially the full extent of the problem you weren't aware of, you say, until the Bates litigation?
 - A. Of -- I'm sorry?
 - Q. Until the Bates litigation.
- 14 **A.** Yes.
- Q. What I was asking you about -- you have talked about
 looping around, "Could I have looped around?" Your
 point of contact was Mr Sweetman, yes?
 - A. Correct, sorry.
 - Q. Now, the chair has asked you this morning about the conversations or any conversations that you may have had with Mr Sweetman about this issue. If you have racked your brain about what you might have done differently, have you ever racked your brain about what it was that you said to Mr Sweetman, if anything, about whether or not what you were coming to know should go to the board?
 - Q. Yes. We know, don't we, that this was a time that the project was bedevilled by delay?
 - A. Yes. Sorry, yes.
- Q. We also know that there were emerging very, very
 considerable rifts between the DTI on the one hand and
 the DSS on the other. The Benefits Agency on the one
 hand and POCL on the other.
 - A. Are we talking -- sorry, can I be very clear about the context that you're asking me about. Is this in 1998, at the beginning of 1998 that you're asking me about?
 - Q. No, I'm talking now, moving on -- and I should have made that clear to you, sir -- certainly by April 1999.
 - A. By April 1999 there had been a number of reviews, the Corbett review, the Treasury review and so on, and there was clearly work going on at the highest levels of politics in this country to decide where this programme was going.
- Q. Yes, of course. I think I have been given permission to
 put a document to you, but I will defer to Counsel to
 the Inquiry, but it was a letter that you wrote to
 a Mr Vince Gaskell, CAPS and cards programmes director
 of the Benefits Agency dated 8 April 1999. Have you
 seen it, sir?
- 24 **A.** I have.
 - Q. You have. Well, I'm going to take it that you have had

A. Illave.

112

(28) Pages 109 - 112

1		an opportunity to study it in some
2	A.	Well, I haven't got it in front of me.
3	Q.	You haven't got it in front of you. May it be shown
4		if it isn't possible to be shown I will then just
5		concentrate on the final paragraph. It is 00028406 but
6		obviously I will defer to Mr Blake if it isn't ready
7		then we will not
8	MR	BLAKE: Sorry, what does it start with?
9	MR	HENRY: It is POL00028406.
10	MR	BLAKE: We can have a look. Mr Miller, if it's not
11		a document that you have seen before today please do let
12		us know.
13	A.	Okay. Was Mr Henry indicating that he wished to talk
14		about the end of it or?
15	MR	HENRY: I will take the letter really just to the
16		conclusion. May I read out the conclusion, sir, to you.
17		There are substantial points that have been dealt
18		with beforehand, so outstanding faults, factually there
19		are no known outstanding faults that prevent entry to
20		live trial. Can you remember how this conclusion was
21		reached?
22	A.	This is talking about DSS and the CAPS, I believe, being
23		migrated onto the system and trialled.
24	Q.	I see. So be it. "Additional testing", which is the
25		second page:
		113
1		before he went to that Select Committee and I mean
1 2		before he went to that Select Committee and I mean I'm sorry, I cannot I cannot comment on what it was
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2		I'm sorry, I cannot I cannot comment on what it was
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2 3 4	Q.	I'm sorry, I cannot I cannot comment on what it was appropriate which senior very senior person, it was appropriate to go to a DTI Select Committee. I'm sorry, Mr Henry, I can't.
2 3 4 5	Q.	I'm sorry, I cannot I cannot comment on what it was appropriate which senior very senior person, it was appropriate to go to a DTI Select Committee. I'm sorry, Mr Henry, I can't.
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	A. Q. A. Q.	I'm sorry, I cannot I cannot comment on what it was appropriate which senior very senior person, it was appropriate to go to a DTI Select Committee. I'm sorry, Mr Henry, I can't. Of course, of course, Mr Miller, and I don't want to put you in an invidious position at all, but you said to Mr Blake this morning that you were aware of Mr Roberts' view as to the commercial importance of Horizon, you said in fact you were very much aware, and you seemed to agree with his point of view that it was vital to the survival of the Post Office. Post Office Limited. Sorry? Post Office Counters Limited. Post Office Counters, yes. That you concurred, in other words, with that view. It is no secret that Mr Roberts saw the future of the Post Office Counters Limited as being wedded to automation. Well, I think if you look at the documents in the bundle, the work on strategy and so on, it was pretty

a company -- letters, parcels and counters -- which was

about 7 or 8 billion quid, so there were many other 115

"We did not intend to suggest that the additional testing that is due to take place will simply replace the previous model office end to end cycles."

Changes during live trial, et cetera, et cetera, but I really come to this, your conclusion:

"Both of our organisations have made their different viewpoints clear to each other in recent months. We have also sought to co-operate with each other in taking the Programme forward. But it has been my role and responsibility as the Horizon Programme Director to lead in the delivery of this service. This has required me to balance the interests of all parties, and to consider both programme delivery and contractual implications."

Mr Miller, who gave you that task, that objective? Was it Mr Roberts together with Mr Sweetman?

- **A.** I worked with Stuart Sweetman. He was the sponsor of the project.
- Q. Of course, but I mean -- I'm not suggesting that you remember the meeting, but in open source material, Mr Roberts, Mr Sweetman and yourself attended the DTI Select Committee. You weren't asked to give evidence, but Mr Roberts, in June 1999, effectively answered nearly every question that was put by that committee. I mean he was really the dominant force, wasn't he?
- A. He was called to the Select Committee and he was briefed 114

issues on his agenda than just the Horizon project.

- Q. Mr Miller, are you trying to protect him?
- A. I'm not trying to protect him at all. I'm trying to --I'm sorry, I do apologise. I am trying to get a sense of perspective because it seems to me, from your line of questioning, you are trying to say "Mr Roberts was responsible for all this" and I don't -- I don't agree with that.
- Q. Well, I'm not saying solely responsible, sir, but what about Mr Sweetman, because you said earlier to Mr Blake, very close to the beginning of your evidence, that he would tell the board what they needed to know -- not your exact words but that was the essence.
- **A.** Well, he was the project sponsor, Mr Henry, and he was on that board, or he attended that board.
- Q. Yes, of course.

Could I -- I mean surely in relation -- no need to put it up on the screen, but a document you were taken to this morning, POL00028451, talking about the short-term and the long-term risks, short-term liable to be late, incomplete functionality, premature rollout could prove unreliable, long-term fragile software system, difficult to enhance if TIP lost money, difficult to do future changes. I mean surely Mr Roberts, together with Mr Sweetman, would have been

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- A. I'm sorry, I don't have this document in front of me.
- Q. It was one that you were actually taken to, but it was the Tom, Dick and Harry document where there was an analysis of short-term and long-term risks associated with this. If you would wish to see it, sir --
 - A. The date would -- sorry, it would be 1996 perhaps?
 - Q. I believe it was. I believe it was. So in other words, from a very early stage they were aware of potential risks associated with Dick?
 - A. Yes, there was a whole raft of things that are documented in the bundle about each of the suppliers, so, Mr Henry, yes, you know, there was stuff in there about ICL Pathway quite clearly.
 - Q. Well, it's up on the screen now. I don't need to take you to it but I just want to concentrate on your background very, very briefly because obviously you had worked at the Post Office since 1970 and you had had a distinguished career in management and you had, for example, been the senior line manager for south west England. We know as well that you were sent off to Bristol to deal with Bristol and South Wales at one point during the currency of this project and so therefore you were, perhaps better than most, aware of the problems and pressures that subpostmasters would

The only reason I mention it is because, you see, two of the clients I represent, Ms Felstead and Ms Arch, were prosecuted very, very near the beginning, Ms Felstead almost at the beginning of the rollout and she went to prison, you see. Ms Arch was acquitted. But can I ask you, was that ever considered, to your knowledge, by anybody in the working group, as to how the prosecution arm of the Post Office, with which you must have been familiar, how they should treat this data, how they should treat the product generated by Horizon?

- A. I am unaware of any such consideration, Mr Henry.
- Q. Right. Could I ask you now to consider this. Would it be fair to say, from the evidence that you have given, that as far as compatibility issues and EPOSS, that you were effectively saddled with Horizon because Horizon had been very, very important, as perceived by the Benefits Agency, because of the fact that there was a way of getting functionality of data passed down to post offices which was, as you said this morning, a significant matter for the Benefits Agency?
- A. I wouldn't say "saddle", but certainly a change of direction would have involved significant and very difficult changes for Post Office Counters Limited.
- Q. I see, because obviously if you had had a free choice

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- 1 encounter.
 - A. Yes.
- 3 Q. Yes. I just want to bring this back to "fatally 4 flawed", which has been suggested to be a low baseline 5 and I think it is -- if I may respectfully submit -- ask 6 you to consider this, whether we should look at that in 7 two senses: from a commercial point of view "fatally 8 flawed", it would be a low baseline and there may have 9 been, I do not know, from the commercial perspective the 10 sense that "these are teething problems, we can work our 11 way through it". Do you follow?
 - A. Was the phrase, "not fatally flawed?
 - Q. Yes, exactly, "not fatally flawed", and that being, as it were, too low a baseline. But from a commercial point of view, eminently pragmatic it might be thought, particularly if there were insuperable political pressures from above, you would have to make it work. But from the point of view of prosecuting people, from the point of view of having unimpeachable and infallible data for prosecutions, that would be a hopeless test, wouldn't it?
- 22 A. I don't understand that, sir.
 - SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I don't think he needs to answer that, Mr Henry, because it's obvious.
 - MR HENRY: It's obvious, yes. Thank you, sir.

- 1 you might not necessarily have gone for Horizon -- gone 2 to Horizon for the EPOSS function.
 - A. In an ideal world we would have -- we probably wouldn't have started with a system that originated with the Benefits Agency.
 - Q. Exactly. Could I also just ask you to consider now the issue of rifts and the Project Mentors' report and you talked about a different angle --
 - MR BLAKE: Sorry, sir, I'm just rising. Mr Henry is straying quite far outside, I think, of the --
- 11 MR HENRY: So be it. I was given permission to deal with 12 this document though.
- 13 MR BLAKE: Is this the final issue?
 - MR HENRY: Yes.
- 15 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I think I would just like to say 16 generally that I understand the temptation to pick up on 17 points --
- 18 MR HENRY: I'm so sorry, sir.
- 19 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: -- that you think haven't been quite 20 pushed to their logical conclusion by Mr Blake, or for 21 that matter by me, but the idea is that you ask 22 additional and different points, not go for the jugular 23 so to speak.
 - MR HENRY: Oh, I'm sorry, sir. I hope I wasn't going for the jugular.

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1 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, no, I'm just being gentle at the 2 moment. 3 MR HENRY: Very sorry. 4 I will return to the board minutes, if I may, 5 because we can see from the documents that you were 6 shown this morning that you were also expressing views 7 around that time, for example an email that passed 8 between you and Mr Baines, as to whether Horizon should 9 be accepted at all. Do you recall that? 10 A. I don't recall it exactly, but I'm sure there were 11 conversations between me and Keith and other people 12 about whether we should be accepting. 13 Q. Exactly, which would be inconsistent with what you are 14 reported to have said at the board. 15 16 Q. And you were present, weren't you, at that meeting with 17 the NFSP on 11 June? 18 A. I was. 19 Q. And wasn't it made clear by Mr Baker, Mr Colin Baker, at 20 that meeting that essentially government had given an 21 ultimatum and you had been told, "You have just got to 22 work with this, POCL have just got to get on and get it 23 done"? 24 A. I have read those lines in the -- in that report. 25 Q. Do you disagree with them? 121 1 Sir, may I be permitted to ask, finally, some 2 questions in respect of POL00028419? 3 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, you will forgive me for not having 4 that document at my fingertips, Mr Henry. Is this 5 a significant document, Mr Blake? 6 MR BLAKE: I don't have that document at my fingertips 7 either. 8 MR HENRY: Paragraph 2.1, sir: 9 "The incorrect cash account mapping for a stock item 10 would have caused misbalancing cash accounts in all offices." 11 12 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, we've got it up on the screen now, 13 so ask your question, Mr Henry. 14 MR HENRY: I'm very grateful. 15 The date of that document, sir, can you help? Is it 16 September --17 A. It is. 18 Q. -- or is it earlier? 19 A. Oh, no, sorry. Is it the 3rd -- March --20 Q. March. And so this would have been before the letter to 21 Mr Gaskell. Again, the rift with the Benefits Agency 22 would have been apparent by then, would it not? 23 A. The rift with the Benefits Agency, in my mind, is very

A. Certainly there was a degree -- a very high degree of pressure to get on with it.

Q. Yes. And do you think, sir, that as a result of that pressure it may have clouded -- and you can only speak for yourself, sir, but it may have clouded at times your judgment?

A. I was balancing a number of pressures about getting this done and a lot of people in various parts of the UK who were very interested in getting it done, and what was happening on the ground.

One of the problems I've got at the minute is there is a raft of documents which will explain decisions that took place between August and probably January, release board papers, acceptance papers, which I have not had sight of, and that would explain why we did what we did in terms at the time and in detail and I have asked and I think the Inquiry has asked on my behalf, but, so far, I'm not aware of those documents being forthcoming.

So I would like to know, in detail, going over the ground, the considerations that took place at the time. I'm not denying that there was significant pressure to be coped with.

Q. I hope it is apparent by the tone of my questioning that one has sympathy for your position in respect of that but, in conclusion, could I just ask --

122

Q. Yes.

A. We were aware, because of the various reviews going on, that they wanted to leave the project, but I think that -- I mean, that was a fraught period.

Q. Of course, we know that they left the project in May 1999?

7 **A.** Yes.

Q. Then, by June, agreements had been signed?

A. Yes. I mean, those agreements were quite heavily prescribed in the agreement that was done by the Treasury board, and so on.

Q. Thank you. Because at 2.1, we have -- you remember the reduction in the number of transactions throughout the cycle. Do you remember reference --

MR BLAKE: Sorry, can I just ask Mr Henry which rule 10 question this relates to?

MR HENRY: Well, I'm afraid it doesn't and I was hoping for a little bit of indulgence.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, I think -- just tell me what the point is, Mr Henry, rather than -- is there a specific point in this document that I should underline, so to speak?

MR HENRY: I suppose it is the question about whether you would want to do your driving test in London or whether you would choose to do it in the Highlands, because it's

124

123

much when they -- when we were told that they were

leaving the project.

24

1	basically I wanted to take the witness, Mr Miller, if	1		
2	he could, to help me about reading between the lines	2	INDEX	
3	about the reduction in the way in which testing was	3	DAVID MILLER (affirmed)	1
4	managed by all parties.	4	Questioned by MR BLAKE	1
5	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, I think we will call it a day, if	5	Questioned by MR JACOBS	102
6	we may, Mr Henry, and I think I would like to say	6	Questioned by MR MALONEY	106
7	MR HENRY: I do apologise.	7	Questioned by MR HENRY	111
8	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: that as a result of the evidence that	8		
9	I have heard in the last two weeks, I'm not suggesting	9		
10	for a minute that what occurred in the run-up to the	10		
11	Benefits Agency removing themselves from the contract is	11		
12	irrelevant, but I'm becoming increasingly of the view	12		
13	that what happened afterwards is much more significant,	13		
14	as far as I'm concerned. All right? Just to give	14		
15	everybody a broad hint.	15		
16	On that happy hint we shall adjourn now and start	16		
17	again at 10 o'clock on Tuesday. Thank you.	17		
18	MR HENRY: Sir, thank you very much for your indulgence.	18		
19	(1.49 pm)	19		
20	(The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am on Tuesday,	20		
21	1 November 2022)	21		
22		22		
23		23		
24		24		
25		25		
	125		126	

	00028406 [1] 113/5	1997 [4] 12/19 12/21	24 July 1998 [1]	105/19
MR BLAKE: [19] 1/4	1	16/8 31/10	25/18	803 [1] 87/4
1/7 21/13 41/23 42/5	1 November 2022 [1]	1997/1998 [1] 42/13 1998 [22] 3/4 18/15	24 June [1] 55/24	9
42/10 84/20 96/9	125/21	18/18 19/3 19/16	24 May 1999 [2] 63/1 63/7	9 May [1] 7/1
100/5 100/11 100/22	1.00 pm [1] 102/5	19/22 20/7 20/16	25 past [1] 42/4	9 May 1995 [1] 7/2
101/2 102/4 113/8 113/10 120/9 120/13	1.10 pm [1] 102/7	20/21 22/22 23/4 23/6		91 received [1] 99/10
123/6 124/15	1.3 [2] 12/24 28/6	25/18 26/12 27/1	27 March 1998 [2]	99 [1] 73/17
MR HENRY: [17]	1.49 pm [1] 125/19	31/19 33/15 34/2	20/21 31/19	99/78 [1] 111/15
101/17 106/7 111/8	10 [3] 41/25 88/1 124/15	42/13 105/20 112/9	270 [1] 65/2	A
113/9 113/15 118/25	10 August [2] 66/15	112/10 1999 [35] 36/8 36/11	28 October 2022 [1]	abandoned [1] 29/7
120/11 120/14 120/18	66/22	36/16 38/17 41/9	29 [1] 65/3	abandonment [1]
120/24 121/3 123/8	10 day [1] 90/14	42/13 42/16 46/9	298 [1] 67/20	59/13
123/14 124/17 124/23 125/7 125/18	10 March 1999 [1]	48/17 49/8 56/19		ability [4] 1/21 23/21
MR JACOBS: [3]	36/16	62/15 62/16 63/1 63/7		40/7 79/8
101/14 102/9 106/3	10 o'clock [1] 125/17	63/20 64/20 66/14	3 billion [1] 74/15	able [6] 23/9 29/21 32/18 51/25 56/7
MR MALONEY: [3]	10.00 [1] 125/20 10.00 pm [1] 55/18	71/9 73/15 73/18 77/17 78/4 78/6 85/6	3 March 1999 [1] 36/11	105/21
106/10 106/12 111/5	10.05 [1] 1/2	86/13 86/14 88/19	3 o'clock [1] 2/1	about [125] 3/9 6/6
MR STEIN: [1] 101/1	109 [1] 99/9	88/20 94/7 112/12	30 minutes [2]	6/13 8/21 10/5 11/17
NEW SPEAKER: [1] 100/20	10th January 2000	112/13 112/22 114/22	101/18 101/22	15/23 17/2 19/7 19/8
SIR WYN WILLIAMS:	[1] 43/22	124/6	30 November 2000	20/9 20/11 22/8 22/12
[29] 1/3 21/6 21/9	11 [2] 20/3 09/23	2	[1] 98/21	22/18 22/20 23/2 23/16 23/21 26/1
42/2 42/6 84/3 84/9	11 June [1] 121/17 11 June 1999 [1]	2 months [1] 68/6	30-50 [1] 87/21 300 [2] 43/24 43/24	29/25 30/3 30/17
84/15 84/17 84/19	42/16	2,000 offices [1]	300 offices [1] 43/15	30/19 31/9 31/17 32/3
95/23 96/8 100/13	11.12 [1] 42/7	43/21	31 July 1999 [1]	32/7 32/9 32/14 32/23
100/21 101/4 101/16	11.26 [1] 42/9	2.0 [1] 34/3	63/20	32/25 35/4 35/20
101/18 102/1 106/9 111/6 118/23 120/15		2.1 [2] 123/8 124/12	31 March [1] 21/14	37/23 38/24 42/3 45/3
120/19 121/1 123/3	12 [3] 42/3 69/21	2.4 [2] 14/2 14/24	323 [1] 79/5	46/5 47/19 48/15
123/12 124/19 125/5	92/21	2.5 [3] 7/13 7/15 15/9		51/22 52/9 54/7 55/21 56/6 56/22 57/12
125/8	12 August [2] 67/11 67/19	2.6 [3] 7/13 7/15 7/18 2.8 [1] 15/21	37 [1] 33/12	57/20 59/17 63/10
•	13 [2] 26/9 73/18	2.9 [1] 8/8	376 [7] 67/2 67/21	65/25 66/20 69/20
'Diak' [2] 0/25 10/19	13/8/99 [1] 73/17	20 [1] 65/1	73/9 79/6 79/12 85/4	69/22 70/14 70/20
'Dick' [3] 9/25 10/18 11/6	14 [1] 28/19	20 July [4] 62/18	85/13	71/22 75/13 76/1
'Failure [1] 72/3	140 billion [1] 74/15		3rd [1] 123/19	76/11 76/14 77/24
'High' [1] 79/11	15 [2] 16/12 46/14	20 July 1999 [1]	4	78/8 78/24 79/4 79/6 79/20 79/21 82/14
'industrial [1] 71/13	15 August 1999 [2] 71/9 73/15	62/16 20 minutes [1]	41 [1] 5/15	82/18 83/18 83/24
'live [1] 43/14	15 minutes [1] 42/1	101/17	45 [1] 34/8	84/2 84/4 85/21 87/5
'RAD' [1] 29/1	15,000 [1] 50/2	20 September [1]	48 [1] 72/10	89/10 89/23 89/23
'show [1] 15/15 'slip [1] 90/25	15,500 [1] 47/10	1/11	5	91/4 91/17 92/2 92/22
'spikes' [2] 89/15	153 [1] 102/10	20-odd [1] 111/2	l	93/9 93/22 94/17
89/19	16 February 1998 [1]	2000 [6] 43/22 97/11	5,500 [1] 77/2 5.3 [1] 96/16	96/18 97/18 98/10 101/12 102/15 103/9
'subpostmaster [1]	19/3 16th [1] 67/1	98/21 103/13 108/3 108/4	50 [1] 87/21	103/19 104/8 104/18
47/15	17 August 1998 [1]	2001 [1] 103/11	51 [1] 4/4	105/21 107/6 107/11
'to [1] 89/17	33/15	2006 [1] 107/25	5th October 1998 [1]	110/15 110/15 110/19
'workaround' [1] 75/4	18 [1] 1/13	2022 [2] 1/1 125/21	34/2	110/21 110/22 110/23
	18 August [2] 64/21	21 [3] 46/8 49/8	7	110/24 111/3 111/4
•	65/8	102/16	700 [1] 47/10	111/12 112/8 112/9 112/10 113/14 113/22
[4] 27/20 38/9	18 September [1] 34/10	211 [1] 86/21 22 [1] 46/17	78 [3] 62/19 62/24	115/25 116/10 116/19
54/20 77/5	18997 [1] 55/15	22 June [1] 56/1	111/15	117/12 117/14 120/8
deeply [1] 27/20 error [1] 77/5	19 July [1] 64/7	23 [1] 46/21	79 [3] 62/19 63/3	121/12 122/7 124/23
stating [1] 54/20	1970 [2] 2/11 117/18	23 August 1999 [1]	111/15	125/2 125/3
to [1] 38/9	1983 [1] 2/18	64/20	8	above [6] 5/3 61/20
	1994 [1] 2/20	23 June 1999 [2]	8 April 1999 [1]	72/21 73/21 81/1
0	1995 [7] 2/20 2/23 6/21 6/23 7/2 7/21	46/9 49/8 23 November 1998	112/22	118/17 Absolutely [10]
0.30 [1] 72/15	13/16	[1] 23/6	8 billion [1] 115/25	22/21 42/5 55/1 56/21
0.6 [2] 86/2 90/6 0.75 [1] 72/15	1996 [2] 8/23 117/7	24 [2] 1/18 49/13	80 per cent [1]	76/9 88/10 92/20 95/8
0.73[1] 72/13				
				(22) MD BLAVE. About 4
				(33) MR BLAKE: - Absolutely

allow [2] 29/17 68/12 anybody [2] 30/9 agency [28] 2/25 7/4 across [2] 73/10 85/20 7/17 16/6 18/4 18/8 allowed [1] 93/13 119/7 Absolutely... [2] acting [1] 54/13 19/17 30/16 36/2 alluded [2] 32/13 anything [10] 3/6 97/17 107/14 85/9 100/8 103/19 action [5] 19/14 53/23 91/15 93/5 98/7 95/14 academic [3] 2/14 23/23 24/13 36/25 102/22 104/25 105/3 almost [1] 119/4 105/21 106/5 109/1 2/16 2/17 105/4 105/11 105/12 aloud [1] 7/14 109/13 110/24 111/20 38/16 accept [18] 11/7 49/2 ALPS [2] 72/13 72/15 105/20 112/6 112/22 actions [2] 36/10 anyway [2] 64/9 99/6 53/1 55/17 58/25 60/4 119/18 119/21 120/5 already [8] 31/19 38/4 apologise [3] 105/15 69/10 69/14 70/10 activity [3] 15/18 123/21 123/23 125/11 32/13 46/3 46/5 47/1 116/4 125/7 70/15 88/7 89/2 92/11 34/22 93/10 54/22 57/14 69/12 agenda [2] 36/15 apparent [3] 103/18 92/18 102/25 103/7 116/1 also [22] 46/1 49/9 122/23 123/22 actual [1] 59/19 103/13 104/18 actually [15] 14/8 56/10 58/3 60/10 agendas [1] 111/15 appear [2] 48/24 acceptable [2] 13/13 47/25 48/9 56/1 58/4 **aggressive** [2] 34/13 68/10 70/19 76/12 104/16 68/5 61/3 62/21 76/7 76/10 34/24 79/24 81/3 81/4 81/5 **appeared [3]** 10/9 acceptance [29] 26/6 76/17 84/4 88/23 ago [4] 12/25 35/19 84/21 90/13 90/18 54/13 103/19 29/13 56/16 57/20 99/13 109/10 117/3 37/23 111/2 92/22 100/17 100/24 **appears [5]** 16/16 64/21 64/22 66/25 112/4 114/8 120/6 17/10 40/22 47/18 additional [5] 44/17 agree [22] 5/14 14/22 67/2 67/3 67/20 67/20 101/13 113/24 114/1 18/9 24/23 25/19 121/6 101/4 72/1 72/3 72/16 72/23 31/22 35/22 45/2 46/6 altered [1] 47/7 120/22 Application [1] 29/1 73/8 73/16 78/14 82/7 47/20 52/10 52/24 address [1] 38/18 alternative [4] 17/7 applied [1] 88/15 85/4 85/13 86/8 86/16 57/23 65/21 65/22 addressed [5] 10/22 29/17 50/9 50/16 apply [2] 39/25 41/15 86/21 86/21 88/11 55/16 57/18 82/6 70/5 88/16 97/6 although [8] 2/9 22/1 appointed [2] 111/17 106/16 106/18 122/14 87/18 103/21 104/7 115/11 42/18 47/11 65/5 111/23 accepted [6] 27/25 adequacy [2] 37/12 116/7 68/16 87/25 109/18 appointment [1] 65/2 86/10 87/23 88/2 agreed [4] 36/20 38/18 always [4] 13/19 111/21 121/9 16/15 17/14 97/7 adequate [2] 37/9 68/23 85/16 85/25 appraisal [1] 33/9 accepting [3] 65/8 37/19 am [12] 20/11 38/8 agreeing [1] 37/1 **appreciate** [2] 12/25 70/23 121/12 42/7 42/9 59/10 69/17 47/17 adequately [1] 38/18 agreement [6] 56/12 access [3] 38/13 adjourn [1] 125/16 63/2 64/13 96/13 73/3 109/8 111/1 appreciated [1] 20/6 51/9 94/1 adjourned [1] 125/20 116/4 119/12 125/20 96/21 124/10 approach [6] 28/12 account [19] 16/13 admit [2] 74/6 83/2 agreements [2] amber [1] 38/1 29/2 32/25 33/23 68/8 33/24 39/24 40/2 **admitted [1]** 75/3 124/8 124/9 amend [1] 26/6 102/21 42/12 57/4 77/12 ahead [1] 53/23 adopted [3] 28/12 amongst [5] 9/20 approaching [1] 77/13 79/13 80/2 80/3 53/22 54/2 **Al298 [1]** 71/9 60/1 62/8 70/17 84/1 100/6 80/7 80/18 81/16 86/4 advice [2] 14/18 54/8 Al376 [1] 77/24 **amount [3]** 16/5 20/3 appropriate [9] 74/22 87/2 96/24 97/2 123/9 advised [2] 66/19 90/3 95/13 95/13 aim [1] 8/22 48/19 accountant [1] 100/3 72/5 Alan [3] 45/3 46/1 **amounts [1]** 74/18 95/24 96/23 97/9 accountants [1] 81/8 affairs [2] 35/5 35/6 52/4 115/3 115/4 analyse [1] 20/4 accounting [16] albeit [2] 17/22 74/1 analysed [2] 29/12 **affecting [1]** 92/12 approve [2] 111/11 16/17 23/20 24/2 all [79] 1/25 5/20 8/9 **affirmed [2]** 1/5 73/22 111/22 74/13 74/14 75/10 126/3 12/16 15/25 16/23 analysis [6] 24/12 **April [4]** 20/16 77/16 78/17 78/25 aforementioned [1] 17/1 17/4 17/25 18/19 29/8 70/16 90/13 112/12 112/13 112/22 80/6 80/12 83/19 87/3 19/14 19/17 21/3 23/20 96/24 117/5 Arch [2] 119/2 119/5 90/2 92/12 97/3 25/24 26/13 27/11 afraid [5] 41/19 85/19 **Andrew [1]** 27/18 architecture [1] accounts [18] 23/18 87/10 94/13 124/17 30/11 33/16 34/3 angle [2] 31/6 120/8 10/15 40/4 41/5 41/7 41/20 36/19 39/22 40/4 40/9 after [17] 19/2 22/2 **annum [1]** 74/15 are [99] 1/23 1/23 2/5 68/16 74/14 74/18 41/15 41/17 42/4 29/3 55/18 65/23 another [7] 12/19 2/7 3/5 7/2 7/23 9/16 76/1 76/2 79/9 81/5 66/12 66/15 75/5 48/17 49/14 49/21 20/15 23/4 32/8 32/12 13/22 16/18 18/24 81/9 84/7 86/3 91/12 96/10 98/2 98/19 99/4 50/2 51/2 51/15 53/5 46/8 67/10 18/25 19/9 20/17 92/7 123/10 53/24 55/7 56/3 56/8 99/13 99/14 101/5 answer [4] 41/15 20/20 22/8 23/9 23/16 accurate [3] 75/11 103/23 110/1 56/15 59/15 61/2 41/19 61/22 118/23 24/15 24/20 25/5 75/14 80/13 63/16 65/19 65/20 answered [3] 45/21 25/10 27/19 28/13 afternoon [2] 68/24 accurately [1] 91/17 66/7 67/4 67/13 73/12 45/22 114/22 28/22 29/21 29/23 101/8 achievable [1] 17/13 73/21 74/25 75/2 75/4 anticipated [2] 19/2 31/13 33/13 35/23 afterwards [1] achieved [3] 39/7 125/13 75/11 75/14 80/13 87/22 36/10 36/11 36/16 40/8 44/1 again [18] 8/8 8/17 83/2 84/9 84/19 85/23 any [31] 1/20 1/22 36/21 36/22 37/4 37/4 achieving [1] 17/8 94/6 95/18 96/8 96/14 2/4 2/5 4/6 7/23 15/14 38/7 38/15 38/24 40/5 11/12 13/15 15/16 acknowledge [1] 20/20 27/14 28/16 96/24 100/1 100/4 23/9 24/3 29/7 44/10 40/11 41/10 43/8 106/21 37/20 41/2 41/14 100/9 100/15 103/1 48/9 50/21 58/20 59/3 46/16 46/25 49/20 acknowledged [4] 46/22 68/3 69/19 103/6 103/19 111/5 63/17 74/11 75/1 49/22 54/10 56/8 4/3 44/20 45/10 107/8 114/12 115/7 116/3 82/23 88/10 123/21 75/10 80/12 84/11 56/14 56/15 57/5 acknowledgement 125/17 116/7 121/9 123/10 94/3 96/2 97/2 97/14 57/14 57/16 57/17 **[2]** 91/19 97/7 100/12 105/24 106/3 62/18 64/9 64/14 67/9 against [3] 58/14 125/4 125/14 acquitted [1] 119/5 75/19 92/24 allegations [1] 34/14 106/23 110/20 119/12 73/14 74/17 74/20

119/15 119/15 119/17 auditors [11] 68/15 55/15 58/11 60/11 **becoming [2]** 14/13 119/20 121/8 122/3 68/24 69/1 78/15 79/2 61/13 71/5 71/21 125/12 are... [36] 76/12 77/3 125/8 125/14 125/14 103/17 103/24 104/6 82/20 83/4 83/17 bedevilled [1] 112/2 77/5 77/21 79/14 ascertain [2] 19/12 104/10 104/16 105/22 83/20 83/21 91/9 been [114] 1/22 5/9 79/24 80/20 81/9 82/2 100/13 audits [1] 31/24 94/13 94/15 94/24 7/16 9/4 9/20 10/8 82/6 83/4 84/11 85/7 ask [16] 41/13 August [19] 22/21 105/17 105/18 105/20 10/22 15/13 18/9 88/2 88/8 88/14 88/15 101/17 101/19 102/10 33/15 43/17 64/20 108/2 111/16 118/3 20/20 22/2 22/25 90/19 95/24 100/6 102/15 111/5 111/17 64/21 65/8 66/14 23/13 25/21 26/24 backend [1] 17/1 100/24 101/9 102/11 118/5 119/6 119/13 66/15 66/22 67/11 **background** [5] 2/10 29/6 29/8 29/12 30/5 102/12 105/21 106/19 67/19 71/9 73/15 120/6 120/21 122/25 2/14 3/17 3/17 117/17 30/17 30/18 31/7 32/4 109/9 111/12 112/8 123/1 123/13 124/15 73/18 77/17 78/4 78/6 Baines [6] 67/24 32/9 32/23 33/1 34/3 113/17 113/19 116/2 86/13 122/13 67/24 67/25 88/22 37/11 43/9 44/19 46/4 asked [14] 15/1 116/6 117/11 118/10 44/10 60/11 60/13 authorities [1] 28/24 88/25 121/8 47/2 49/9 50/3 51/7 121/13 78/15 96/18 107/6 **Authority [1]** 2/24 54/2 54/5 54/22 55/16 Baines' [1] 82/3 area [7] 4/21 57/2 109/7 109/15 109/16 automated [6] 47/1 Baker [5] 52/12 56/2 56/14 58/9 58/21 89/23 89/25 90/1 90/4 110/19 114/21 122/16 50/5 50/7 50/14 63/25 55/19 56/1 121/19 58/22 59/14 60/21 64/13 64/16 65/5 122/17 89/20 121/19 areas [6] 2/8 8/11 asking [4] 20/9 automation [15] 1/21 **balance [16]** 44/10 65/20 67/6 67/14 36/19 39/9 39/10 57/3 110/15 112/9 112/10 16/21 17/25 20/19 44/12 44/16 45/4 45/6 67/18 72/9 72/10 73/1 aren't [1] 81/22 23/25 31/18 46/18 51/15 51/23 52/1 73/21 73/24 75/4 78/4 aspects [1] 13/7 arise [2] 51/16 87/23 55/21 61/12 69/5 76/2 78/7 78/15 80/1 80/2 assemble [1] 91/12 46/20 49/24 59/12 arising [2] 26/20 assert [1] 72/1 63/22 74/19 99/21 80/20 87/1 108/21 82/10 82/11 82/15 78/18 assessment [2] 99/22 115/19 114/12 83/5 83/8 83/19 84/13 arm [1] 119/8 28/11 72/11 available [4] 39/9 balances [3] 76/12 84/22 86/14 86/24 arose [1] 86/15 49/10 91/7 96/22 80/19 80/23 87/24 88/2 88/5 89/11 assist [4] 1/21 23/9 around [13] 2/1 89/13 89/14 90/4 102/24 105/7 avoid [1] 17/20 **balancing** [9] 45/1 22/21 35/22 43/20 assists [4] 4/4 85/22 awarded [1] 9/14 57/4 57/11 57/16 90/13 90/18 90/19 43/22 44/18 57/16 92/23 92/25 94/12 99/5 101/14 aware [61] 1/20 1/22 58/25 61/13 65/18 87/21 99/1 109/19 associated [4] 11/6 4/6 6/15 8/5 9/16 10/3 87/17 122/7 95/9 96/18 97/3 98/16 110/16 110/16 121/7 61/3 117/5 117/10 10/23 11/12 11/18 99/15 99/17 99/24 banging [1] 94/9 as [121] 2/11 3/4 5/3 assume [1] 111/22 11/21 12/16 16/6 **base [1]** 57/19 105/18 108/3 108/15 6/17 7/2 7/3 7/3 7/24 assumption [1] 83/9 19/18 19/22 22/12 based [4] 47/9 57/6 109/18 111/25 112/13 8/13 9/25 10/12 10/20 112/18 113/17 114/9 22/13 22/17 22/24 72/8 72/11 **assurance** [6] 37/12 12/15 13/11 13/11 22/25 23/1 26/5 27/13 baseline [6] 14/21 38/14 44/11 68/10 116/25 117/20 118/4 13/12 13/15 13/15 75/6 82/21 31/24 41/7 45/12 46/4 15/4 77/6 118/4 118/8 118/9 119/9 119/17 13/23 13/24 18/5 49/3 50/6 52/20 53/18 118/14 120/19 121/21 123/20 assure [1] 83/15 19/20 20/20 21/2 21/6 53/20 53/21 55/2 assured [1] 51/6 basically [2] 105/4 123/22 124/8 21/11 24/22 25/3 59/10 61/17 67/4 125/1 before [24] 3/20 9/6 at [305] 25/10 25/13 25/23 67/18 69/1 69/17 73/1 basis [7] 74/6 76/12 11/13 16/19 21/21 at August 1999 [1] 25/25 26/20 28/13 80/19 80/22 96/7 96/7 66/14 73/3 82/15 84/13 25/19 27/25 30/22 33/21 34/5 34/19 at risk [1] 81/9 86/14 97/25 99/24 103/18 38/21 40/16 42/10 36/16 38/2 38/15 attack [1] 15/11 105/17 105/24 106/2 **Bates [3]** 109/22 73/3 87/14 94/14 40/18 41/20 41/25 attempt [2] 4/7 4/16 109/21 109/25 110/2 110/11 110/13 96/10 100/8 105/16 41/25 42/18 47/18 110/7 110/11 115/8 106/7 108/6 108/19 **attempting [2]** 53/15 be [171] 48/23 48/23 51/3 51/4 115/10 117/9 117/24 became [4] 27/13 108/24 113/11 115/1 100/17 52/4 52/13 54/1 54/13 100/15 109/21 109/25 attempts [1] 75/5 122/18 124/2 123/20 56/16 57/4 58/16 attended [8] 8/25 because [48] 2/4 6/2 beforehand [1] awareness [2] 82/25 58/20 62/12 62/12 46/12 47/21 65/9 85/1 84/1 8/5 9/14 9/19 13/22 113/18 62/18 70/22 71/18 away [5] 47/6 59/4 94/14 114/20 116/15 14/11 14/12 16/3 18/3 begin [1] 63/7 72/21 73/20 74/14 30/7 33/12 33/19 36/4 beginning [6] 40/16 attendee [2] 36/12 64/8 86/12 98/23 75/20 75/21 76/8 49/12 awayday [2] 63/10 42/19 45/5 45/22 56/17 112/10 116/11 77/11 77/15 77/15 63/11 45/24 46/1 51/20 54/9 119/3 119/4 attending [2] 62/18 78/15 79/1 79/7 79/8 57/9 58/6 58/17 61/8 beginnings [1] 72/3 62/19 80/25 81/6 83/9 83/22 71/16 72/2 76/1 78/24 begins [4] 34/10 attention [5] 73/6 83/22 85/13 85/15 **BA [13]** 7/6 10/9 76/18 81/17 82/3 91/23 94/21 94/25 46/20 62/24 87/6 86/7 86/22 89/20 91/5 10/11 17/9 30/22 31/2 107/17 97/15 98/25 100/16 behalf [2] 102/10 92/16 94/6 94/8 95/25 36/3 36/5 49/10 54/3 110/2 116/5 116/10 attributable [1] 80/21 122/17 96/2 98/12 98/12 54/7 69/24 93/7 attributed [2] 79/10 117/17 118/24 119/1 behind [2] 16/4 34/21 98/16 99/25 100/18 **BA's [1]** 35/1 119/16 119/18 119/25 being [66] 12/14 18/4 88/2 103/9 104/6 106/24 **BA/POCL [2]** 7/6 121/5 124/2 124/12 18/7 18/11 18/13 attributes [3] 76/21 107/9 109/10 109/25 54/3 79/17 79/22 124/25 21/25 24/17 25/3 110/1 111/18 111/23 back [29] 6/21 12/9 become [3] 21/7 audit [4] 53/15 81/6 25/23 26/12 27/5 114/10 115/9 115/18 14/14 26/23 37/22 27/12 32/11 33/6 33/9 81/23 110/5 44/12 76/19 117/21 118/13 119/7 40/19 52/16 54/23 auditor [1] 68/21 becomes [1] 16/19 34/5 36/25 39/10

В being... [48] 41/22 44/18 46/25 47/3 47/19 51/3 52/8 54/4 54/14 56/9 57/3 59/4 59/17 60/9 60/20 61/1 61/16 61/19 62/4 62/7 65/2 65/25 67/9 68/19 69/17 73/5 75/22 77/11 77/18 78/1 79/5 79/18 85/25 92/3 92/5 92/6 93/2 93/12 93/13 95/11 96/6 100/16 103/12 113/22 115/19 118/13 121/1 122/18 belief [1] 1/16 believe [12] 3/14 4/1 13/19 22/14 29/5 35/11 50/8 69/16 76/8 113/22 117/8 117/8 below [4] 10/13 11/17 43/1 71/24 benefit [4] 19/7 28/10 53/13 61/7 benefits [28] 2/25 7/4 124/11 7/17 16/6 17/6 18/4 18/8 19/17 30/16 36/1 53/22 91/15 93/5 98/7 102/22 104/25 105/3 105/4 105/11 105/20 112/6 112/22 119/18 119/21 120/5 123/21 114/13 123/23 125/11 besides [1] 50/24 bespoke [1] 10/17 best [5] 1/15 54/11 98/5 100/13 107/16 better [6] 3/13 17/12 99/16 101/5 107/11 117/24 between [18] 2/25 14/13 21/11 34/20 34/25 35/7 40/8 45/23 110/23 55/5 86/1 96/2 103/15 104/12 112/5 121/8 121/11 122/13 125/2 beyond [2] 37/15 106/17 bidder [1] 10/1 bidders [1] 10/20 bids [1] 10/25 102/6 big [3] 4/6 53/16 91/14 bigger [1] 5/17 **bill [2]** 15/18 107/9 89/5 billing [1] 92/9 **billion [3]** 74/15 74/15 115/25 Bird [4] 27/12 27/12 30/16 30/16 bit [5] 12/5 23/4 74/10 92/15 124/18 117/22 117/22 bits [1] 92/4 broad [3] 15/14

99/22 125/15 **bitterly [1]** 109/3 Blake [10] 1/3 1/6 **brought [3]** 73/5 93/2 102/11 107/6 113/6 115/8 116/10 120/20 123/5 126/4 blame [1] 57/22 blaming [1] 59/20 **board [59]** 5/10 5/11 5/16 5/22 6/3 6/10 6/25 7/9 8/18 14/11 14/13 62/17 63/5 63/8 63/20 64/14 66/6 69/10 69/13 69/15 69/17 70/10 70/25 81/18 82/20 82/25 83/8 83/10 83/11 83/20 83/21 84/20 84/22 84/23 84/25 85/2 94/7 94/10 94/15 94/15 94/18 96/1 98/9 106/19 106/20 107/3 107/5 107/11 107/18 109/17 110/25 111/12 businesses [1] 5/4 116/12 116/15 116/15 but [153] 121/4 121/14 122/14 **Boards [1]** 37/2 **Book [1]** 64/1 boss [1] 5/21 both [10] 11/6 17/17 17/20 32/6 50/15 80/4 89/16 90/23 114/6 bottom [20] 9/11 11/4 12/3 18/22 19/6 20/17 24/5 28/8 28/20 36/23 40/10 41/10 46/18 46/21 62/25 63/5 67/25 70/12 85/24 96/17 **box [1]** 37/8 **BPS [1]** 28/9 brain [2] 110/22 branch [7] 68/6 79/20 79/21 91/8 92/2 92/3 92/8 **brand [1]** 76/21 break [9] 41/25 42/8 42/10 74/11 93/7 101/21 101/24 102/2 brief [2] 3/25 89/3 briefed [1] 114/25 briefing [2] 62/11 briefly [5] 7/8 7/14 16/25 93/21 117/17 **bring [5]** 1/19 28/14 81/17 107/17 118/3 **bringing [2]** 5/8 82/2 **Bristol [3]** 14/14

93/12 **Bruce [3]** 54/16 54/18 82/2 build [3] 4/16 39/9 53/15 building [2] 8/14 101/2 built [3] 12/1 33/4 43/18 **bull [1]** 54/15 bullet [2] 21/13 68/9 bundle [5] 1/10 1/24 93/8 115/21 117/12 business [15] 15/16 17/6 18/23 18/24 37/14 49/23 54/7 71/16 71/17 74/8 75/19 78/22 95/8 100/4 107/21 Business' [1] 17/18 Butlin [7] 44/2 44/3 44/4 44/8 45/9 51/8 51/19 call [1] 125/5 called [8] 15/19 37/4 50/6 66/18 89/3 95/9 107/21 114/25 came [8] 4/20 10/4 42/23 49/5 91/14 105/16 105/18 105/20 can [118] 1/7 7/8 7/12 7/14 8/8 8/23 9/3 9/10 9/23 9/23 12/3 12/5 12/19 12/19 12/23 13/8 14/2 14/23 15/21 16/8 16/12 16/25 18/15 18/16 18/22 20/15 20/17 20/18 20/22 21/13 21/19 22/16 23/4 23/15 24/25 27/1 27/10 27/16 27/25 28/4 28/19 29/22 30/21 32/19 33/11 33/11 34/8 36/8 36/15 37/3 38/4 38/23 39/4 39/19 40/5 40/19 41/2 41/13 42/3 42/14 42/16 42/25 46/8 46/20 49/12 51/9 51/19 52/22 54/24 55/22 62/16 62/23 62/24 63/2 63/4 64/19 caveat [1] 103/3 68/8 69/6 71/8 71/16 73/10 73/19 73/23 74/8 74/23 77/7 78/6 78/20 80/10 84/4 85/4 85/9 85/10 86/20 87/5 centrally [1] 4/22

88/23 89/22 91/2 93/21 96/4 96/12 96/16 97/11 97/19 98/16 98/19 99/4 102/16 102/19 112/8 119/6 121/5 122/4 123/15 124/15 can't [11] 27/9 41/19 48/10 52/19 57/9 77/22 83/2 96/5 105/17 108/2 115/5 cannot [9] 45/14 80/25 84/7 115/2 115/2 capabilities [1] 102/15 capable [1] 74/17 **CAPS [4]** 34/4 37/2 112/21 113/22 capture [1] 17/19 Cardlink [1] 9/19 cards [2] 37/2 112/21 career [1] 117/19 careful [2] 40/8 88/16 channel [1] 95/21 carefully [2] 40/18 40/23 carrying [2] 22/22 61/4 case [6] 6/5 6/7 6/8 38/16 56/10 107/2 **cases [2]** 17/6 108/15 cash [25] 16/13 23/18 39/24 40/2 40/3 check [1] 106/4 57/4 77/12 77/13 79/13 80/2 80/3 80/7 80/18 86/3 86/4 87/1 92/12 96/24 97/2 123/9 123/10 categories [2] 19/10 64/22 categorised [1] 85/13 category [2] 64/25 65/1 cause [7] 19/12 19/24 75/4 89/8 90/23 90/25 97/8 caused [3] 40/3 73/19 123/10 causes [5] 73/13 73/19 87/19 90/14 96/24 causing [4] 20/4 27/24 104/2 108/22 cease [1] 21/14 **cent [1]** 105/19 central [4] 8/20 24/2 74/2 80/6

certain [9] 14/18 70/20 78/17 79/16 80/19 83/3 91/7 94/22 105/5 certainly [27] 9/3 113/10 113/20 118/10 15/10 20/13 22/7 23/1 31/13 32/5 32/9 35/24 39/3 52/14 54/8 62/13 70/1 73/7 82/15 84/6 84/14 92/18 94/19 104/9 104/20 106/9 107/2 112/12 119/22 122/1 51/13 55/17 74/7 75/6 cetera [5] 21/1 21/18 88/3 114/4 114/4 chain [1] 61/17 **chair [3]** 36/12 36/17 110/19 **change [3]** 39/23 44/21 119/22 changed [2] 50/19 changes [6] 11/11 44/10 45/11 114/4 116/24 119/24 **channels** [1] 95/4 **character [1]** 107/10 charge [1] 25/25 **charging [1]** 91/17 Charingworth [1] 111/13 cheaper [1] 53/14 **cheapest [3]** 9/15 9/16 9/18 41/5 41/7 41/20 42/12 Checking [1] 96/21 **checks [2]** 93/25 95/13 **choice [1]** 119/25 **choose [1]** 124/25 Chris [4] 66/16 66/16 66/18 67/9 **Christmas [2]** 43/18 43/21 chronologically [1] 6/20 claim [1] 73/12 clarification [2] 9/12 9/15 Class [1] 57/13 clean [2] 16/19 107/9 clear [14] 21/17 33/23 62/21 67/19 89/7 95/11 98/7 98/12 100/15 112/8 112/12 114/7 115/22 121/19 Clearance [1] 73/17 clearer [1] 27/13 clearly [18] 1/23 21/5 22/12 38/20 42/18 49/23 55/17 57/18 62/7 64/11 70/16 72/2

78/1 82/24 89/16

C 17/2 61/18 65/14 70/17 content [4] 24/15 corporation [2] 95/10 communication [3] 70/19 92/22 30/17 43/6 52/2 111/25 clearly... [3] 111/4 40/8 55/2 55/3 conclusion [8] 17/21 contents [1] 29/25 correct [14] 2/13 112/15 117/14 72/8 113/16 113/16 company [4] 15/19 context [2] 30/21 2/19 2/22 42/24 66/5 client [4] 74/13 80/8 66/18 81/8 115/24 113/20 114/5 120/20 112/9 70/16 74/21 75/5 85/2 80/23 92/5 compared [2] 10/20 122/25 continual [1] 37/25 87/16 90/17 97/10 Client's [2] 91/1 91/3 72/15 conclusions [3] 14/1 continuation [2] 19/1 107/4 110/18 clients [14] 16/21 comparing [1] 72/12 14/24 40/5 19/3 correction [1] 97/9 17/2 17/21 76/5 76/13 comparison [1] 99/9 concurred [1] 115/16 continue [4] 15/2 correctly [2] 35/9 91/13 91/14 91/18 **conditions [3]** 38/12 34/23 51/13 89/16 compatibility [1] 76/7 91/21 92/9 92/16 119/15 67/19 70/15 **continued [2]** 15/11 correspondence [4] 92/18 103/15 119/2 **confidence [2]** 54/20 35/12 55/5 55/23 competence [2] 51/25 clock [1] 42/2 59/18 103/1 55/4 **continues [2]** 38/12 57/22 close [6] 35/17 36/2 corruption [1] 87/17 competencies [1] confident [1] 24/21 93/15 88/20 93/6 98/12 103/8 **confirm [2]** 78/20 continuing [4] 19/9 cost [1] 29/16 116/11 competent [1] 60/3 90/17 21/22 80/22 110/1 costs [2] 16/19 44/18 closed [1] 88/4 could [45] 1/19 7/1 competitive [1] 3/22 confirmed [1] 54/21 **continuity [2]** 18/23 closely [2] 21/16 10/10 11/8 11/17 competitors [1] confrontation [1] 18/25 35/10 35/7 **continuous** [1] 52/20 13/23 21/23 21/24 15/11 closer [1] 35/18 22/9 24/11 41/18 complaints [2] 62/3 **conscious** [2] 3/16 contract [18] 9/14 Closure [2] 85/23 12/1 21/24 34/23 41/18 44/23 45/17 62/9 61/1 85/25 complete [9] 29/16 consecutive [1] 37/11 37/24 38/13 48/18 50/18 53/22 clothing [1] 100/16 74/24 75/7 75/11 77/12 53/25 56/13 63/8 54/25 56/23 59/25 clouded [2] 122/4 64/23 67/1 68/15 69/1 75/14 78/12 80/13 consensus [2] 101/4 63/21 63/23 64/15 122/5 88/18 102/2 65/11 69/24 93/4 71/15 76/19 88/11 101/12 **Club** [1] 48/6 88/24 93/13 98/1 consider [4] 114/12 93/23 125/11 completely [2] 92/6 co [2] 102/11 114/8 98/13 106/7 106/15 118/6 119/13 120/6 contractor [3] 66/18 100/1 co-operate [1] 114/8 106/20 107/9 109/1 completion [1] 15/10 considerable [2] 96/20 96/25 code [3] 10/17 24/16 complex [2] 10/16 29/15 112/5 109/14 109/16 110/16 Contractor's [1] 33/4 103/10 116/17 116/22 119/13 consideration [2] 96/23 **cold [1]** 100/16 complexities [2] 15/5 119/12 contractual [2] 72/2 120/6 122/25 125/2 Colin [4] 52/11 55/25 17/20 103/2 considerations [1] 114/13 couldn't [7] 48/18 56/4 121/19 complicated [2] 122/20 contrary [1] 87/4 50/12 58/7 60/7 88/10 colleagues [2] 49/18 104/7 104/7 53/12 53/17 **considered** [11] 3/13 **contribute** [1] 31/1 62/14 complied [1] 24/17 11/21 18/11 18/13 contributed [2] 13/1 council [4] 42/15 come [6] 8/11 8/18 complies [1] 94/4 28/9 47/7 50/14 63/8 42/20 46/11 55/10 14/9 15/7 54/23 111/16 components [1] 34/4 65/15 66/4 119/6 control [8] 21/15 Counsel [1] 112/19 114/5 computer [2] 10/22 64/1 79/16 90/19 counter [10] 20/19 considering [1] comes [1] 72/2 31/18 39/18 39/25 90/22 92/23 93/18 102/23 66/24 comfortable [1] 97/4 40/21 41/16 46/18 concentrate [2] consistencies [1] 101/1 113/5 117/16 31/13 controls [2] 74/22 46/19 71/12 79/25 coming [1] 110/25 concentrating [1] consistency [1] 90/3 counters [15] 2/17 commencement [1] 71/3 convenient [3] 41/24 3/1 4/5 5/1 5/11 7/4 93/25 39/14 **consistent [3]** 17/18 concern [20] 5/20 58/15 105/15 32/6 78/16 83/24 comment [3] 54/25 6/1 15/20 28/22 30/23 31/10 31/17 105/2 115/15 115/16 conversation [3] 105/17 115/2 35/20 49/5 55/20 57/2 constantly [3] 51/2 115/18 115/24 119/24 51/22 51/24 52/4 comments [4] 47/2 65/4 65/25 75/20 76/6 **country [1]** 112/16 60/20 95/15 conversations [5] 47/24 53/7 69/15 79/8 89/8 89/14 89/23 constituent [1] 5/3 51/24 55/19 110/20 couple [4] 35/25 71/7 commercial [7] 6/13 90/23 91/16 91/20 constitutes [1] 72/7 110/20 121/11 85/8 102/13 13/6 13/10 115/9 concerned [12] 7/19 constrained [1] convert [1] 56/11 course [9] 52/17 118/7 118/9 118/14 27/20 38/17 45/3 51/4 56/14 convey [2] 50/24 109/5 109/7 112/18 commercially [1] 51/20 52/6 69/23 constructed [1] 7/16 106/24 114/18 115/6 115/6 50/11 75/17 78/24 83/22 116/16 124/5 **convicted [1]** 108/13 constructively [1] commissioned [1] 125/14 courses [1] 104/6 35/10 **convinced** [1] 68/11 30/15 **concerning** [1] 19/10 consultancy [1] 7/16 **Coombs [2]** 33/14 court [1] 103/11 **committed** [1] 79/25 cover [1] 77/12 concerns [33] 10/5 Consultants [1] 14/5 38/6 **committee [11]** 8/25 10/23 18/25 19/18 cooperate [1] 38/10 consultants' [1] covered [1] 43/9 8/25 11/19 20/25 coordinated [1] 5/9 covering [5] 2/8 25/5 22/20 23/2 23/16 14/24 44/12 47/13 114/21 26/22 31/9 31/17 Consulting [1] 14/3 26/2 55/24 98/21 cope [1] 48/10 114/23 114/25 115/1 31/18 32/2 32/7 32/8 contact [3] 52/6 96/7 coped [1] 122/22 covers [1] 18/18 115/4 35/4 42/11 42/11 46/5 110/17 Copping [1] 67/22 creating [1] 74/25 communicated [1] 47/4 48/3 48/7 48/15 contacted [1] 3/25 creation [1] 80/1 copy [1] 68/25 62/13 Corbett [1] 112/14 49/4 52/14 57/12 contemplation [1] credibility [1] 19/4 communicating [1] Core [1] 100/7 59/10 59/19 60/6 99/16 criteria [6] 24/16

C 108/11 110/22 19/25 20/9 20/12 deployed [3] 25/3 deal [8] 25/12 51/17 25/23 94/19 difficult [11] 11/10 20/15 20/16 22/14 criteria... [5] 85/23 53/14 57/15 96/10 deployment [1] 11/11 16/15 22/1 23/4 23/5 26/7 26/8 85/25 89/7 90/13 98/8 117/22 120/11 10/17 26/16 51/10 82/19 26/15 27/2 27/10 98/10 dealing [3] 56/5 60/6 depth [1] 22/11 95/3 116/23 116/24 28/19 29/20 29/22 **Criterion** [1] 72/4 102/12 deputy [1] 3/1 119/24 32/13 32/15 32/17 critical [2] 33/3 34/5 dealt [5] 41/22 56/9 derived [1] 86/4 32/19 33/15 34/9 difficulties [7] 46/25 **criticisms** [1] 32/24 75/22 78/1 113/17 47/3 49/22 51/7 65/17 35/19 39/2 43/6 43/8 descoped [1] 13/24 **crossed [1]** 108/25 debate [3] 52/17 describe [1] 107/9 80/18 108/17 45/21 48/2 55/8 58/12 **crucial [3]** 13/10 52/18 85/20 direct [2] 29/23 54/2 58/19 59/8 65/22 described [3] 73/21 13/20 110/5 **December [1]** 27/1 79/7 94/8 direction [2] 60/24 67/10 69/19 70/7 71/9 culmination [1] 39/6 description [2] 74/25 119/23 73/2 73/3 74/10 77/15 decide [3] 63/20 cumbersome [1] 64/14 112/16 75/1 directly [2] 86/11 81/24 83/25 85/7 85/7 53/17 decision [3] 64/4 94/18 85/12 86/6 97/12 design [6] 10/16 **currency [1]** 117/23 64/11 111/25 28/15 28/25 29/2 director [17] 3/1 3/4 97/13 97/17 98/18 **current [3]** 16/17 37/10 94/2 4/19 14/14 21/7 83/7 99/6 110/5 112/19 decision-making [1] 16/18 47/13 84/6 84/11 84/14 113/11 116/18 117/2 64/4 designed [1] 74/20 **currently [8]** 13/12 **decisions** [3] 5/12 despite [1] 34/3 84/15 84/15 84/21 117/4 120/12 123/4 49/19 54/12 57/5 65/2 57/19 122/12 detail [14] 8/9 11/1 84/24 111/18 112/21 123/5 123/6 123/15 77/5 80/15 85/13 declare [1] 66/25 22/13 22/16 22/18 114/10 115/23 124/21 customer [2] 19/12 41/1 63/9 72/25 73/1 decline [1] 19/2 directors [1] 84/12 documentation [4] 95/9 deeply [1] 27/20 77/25 78/1 97/14 disagree [1] 121/25 24/24 27/14 28/3 customer' [1] 72/5 defects [1] 74/17 122/16 122/19 disappointed [2] 34/17 **customers** [2] 91/13 defer [2] 112/19 details [1] 32/23 34/12 99/17 documented [2] 52/3 92/17 113/6 detected [2] 25/8 discontinued [1] 117/12 cycle [4] 39/18 39/23 deficiencies [1] 11/3 documents [10] 2/5 97/3 29/3 40/21 124/14 defined [3] 13/12 **determine** [1] 64/23 33/12 39/3 65/20 **discourse** [1] 96/2 cycles [1] 114/3 discovered [1] 73/12 36/6 95/21 develop [1] 21/16 106/14 108/21 115/20 **Definite** [1] 67/20 developed [2] 27/22 discrepancies [4] 121/5 122/12 122/18 D definitely [3] 23/12 107/5 79/16 80/14 96/25 does [13] 15/7 36/12 daily [2] 79/15 79/19 45/9 45/14 48/3 48/9 27/9 32/4 developing [1] 90/20 97/2 damage [1] 76/22 **definitive [2]** 16/15 development [7] discrete [1] 97/22 51/10 75/9 90/8 90/11 damaging [2] 29/19 2/24 14/11 14/13 29/1 discuss [1] 74/5 90/12 94/1 113/8 41/19 76/20 degradation [1] 90/3 93/16 105/10 discussed [9] 22/15 doesn't [5] 59/16 danger [1] 25/6 30/13 32/4 32/14 46/5 61/22 98/2 106/1 37/17 Dick [4] 9/7 11/10 **Darvill [2]** 50/15 degree [10] 32/21 117/4 117/10 56/17 61/23 82/19 124/17 50/17 32/22 35/14 54/10 doing [4] 3/10 91/5 did [47] 3/15 3/16 99/24 data [27] 10/10 16/19 79/9 86/10 86/15 3/17 4/15 5/16 5/20 **discusses [1]** 85/23 95/21 105/1 17/4 17/19 23/19 86/18 122/1 122/1 6/10 6/17 6/19 9/1 discussing [5] 30/9 domain [1] 19/15 24/13 24/21 39/23 delay [6] 7/20 15/10 10/18 22/4 23/24 32/2 30/11 58/22 82/17 dominant [1] 114/24 73/9 73/9 74/25 78/18 15/23 25/9 37/17 35/3 35/5 41/20 50/21 83/8 don't [69] 7/13 8/8 79/12 79/25 80/5 80/7 112/2 51/23 52/11 52/12 discussion [13] 3/25 8/25 9/4 12/11 12/22 90/2 91/7 91/7 91/9 delayed [2] 44/24 65/10 65/10 66/6 22/10 32/9 32/22 14/25 15/21 16/11 93/22 94/1 94/2 94/3 70/25 78/21 78/22 40/11 46/17 46/19 18/13 21/4 21/4 23/9 45/18 118/20 119/10 119/19 delays [3] 15/13 81/12 81/14 85/3 46/24 62/23 63/11 26/7 26/10 26/14 27/4 date [8] 25/16 25/20 15/16 16/10 99/18 100/12 101/5 63/11 68/20 97/17 30/1 30/4 33/8 39/2 28/9 34/2 49/7 96/20 deliberately [1] 35/13 102/24 102/24 104/11 discussions [7] 8/20 40/25 41/14 43/5 117/7 123/15 104/16 107/2 107/20 deliver [3] 17/5 36/19 11/1 16/8 77/24 77/25 46/12 49/15 58/19 dated [7] 1/10 19/3 95/12 107/24 108/1 108/4 93/20 111/2 59/3 60/12 61/22 62/1 34/10 55/15 55/24 delivered [1] 23/19 108/6 111/20 114/1 dispute [1] 106/17 62/6 62/21 63/17 56/1 112/22 delivering [2] 3/17 122/15 122/15 disruptive [1] 89/20 63/18 65/12 67/16 dates [1] 34/1 didn't [14] 6/1 38/17 distinguished [1] 70/2 70/5 72/25 77/25 10/1 Dave [5] 20/25 27/3 delivery [6] 7/7 34/2 60/22 60/23 63/17 82/13 82/18 85/7 85/9 117/19 38/25 47/2 55/12 34/4 36/20 114/11 69/15 73/4 94/19 distress [1] 51/14 85/19 86/11 87/10 David [11] 1/4 1/5 1/8 89/2 90/10 90/12 92/7 103/25 104/22 105/3 114/13 **distributed** [1] 10/10 7/19 8/11 51/7 54/22 **Deloittes** [1] 76/8 105/7 108/7 109/2 distribution [2] 18/17 95/19 97/13 98/24 65/14 66/3 99/20 100/10 105/23 106/5 demonstrates [1] difference [1] 76/24 18/21 126/3 68/14 differences [2] 77/1 distrust [1] 34/19 107/12 112/1 115/6 **Davies [1]** 27/18 deny [2] 38/13 70/2 116/7 116/7 117/2 102/21 diving [1] 95/15 day [10] 1/25 5/16 denying [1] 122/21 different [8] 31/6 **DN [1]** 90/17 117/15 118/22 118/23 5/16 9/18 32/24 40/7 121/10 123/6 departed [2] 99/14 50/22 53/11 65/20 do [136] 40/7 88/20 90/14 **Do you [1]** 57/23 99/15 86/20 114/6 120/8 done [16] 8/6 32/10 125/5 department [1] 15/20 43/15 44/16 83/5 92/6 120/22 **document [68]** 9/5 days [3] 46/11 67/10 depends [1] 111/9 differently [2] 83/5 12/22 13/2 18/19 98/4 98/8 105/1 109/1

103/10 D either [6] 24/6 25/8 **EPOSS [25]** 15/25 example [19] 4/17 eye [1] 14/16 37/16 40/1 93/6 123/7 16/2 16/4 16/9 17/10 26/16 31/9 31/10 done... [6] 109/14 **Electronic [1]** 63/25 17/22 18/3 21/22 31/18 33/3 33/25 40/6 110/22 121/23 122/8 element [1] 28/25 22/23 23/2 26/16 41/6 44/18 46/4 58/22 122/9 124/10 facilitate [1] 19/15 elements [2] 28/12 28/13 28/22 30/8 31/9 58/24 63/24 75/15 doors [1] 94/10 63/22 31/17 31/25 32/7 32/9 91/21 108/20 117/20 facing [2] 44/16 double [1] 87/2 33/9 42/11 46/5 58/20 121/7 110/3 eliminate [1] 89/19 doubt [2] 23/21 109/7 fact [17] 4/19 9/16 eliminated [1] 9/19 119/15 120/2 **exceeded** [1] 90/6 doubts [1] 29/7 12/13 34/8 49/12 52/1 else [5] 12/10 29/21 **equipment [2]** 48/13 excess [1] 50/2 down [20] 10/11 12/5 55/15 60/11 64/8 103/5 106/5 111/24 48/25 **Excluding [1]** 65/14 15/21 21/11 25/25 66/12 71/18 72/9 email [4] 66/16 66/22 era [1] 35/23 **executive [3]** 42/15 27/16 39/12 40/5 Ernst [4] 78/14 78/21 87/14 101/7 106/16 42/20 46/10 88/21 121/7 45/20 68/8 79/4 87/6 exercise [4] 9/6 9/7 115/10 119/18 **emanating** [1] 23/17 83/18 107/7 91/2 93/2 93/8 93/12 30/24 30/25 factually [1] 113/18 emerging [1] 112/4 erosion [1] 15/12 94/24 98/5 98/10 failings [1] 29/14 **eminently [1]** 118/15 error [6] 16/18 74/1 **exhibits** [1] 2/7 119/19 **emotional** [2] 47/5 77/5 86/5 86/10 86/18 exist [1] 21/14 fails [1] 29/13 downstream [1] failure [3] 34/1 67/19 48/16 errors [24] 21/25 **existing [4]** 25/1 23/19 68/1 emphasis [4] 26/6 22/9 26/22 68/18 25/17 49/4 74/19 drafted [1] 3/12 26/12 36/24 95/11 failures [2] 27/23 71/20 71/21 72/23 expected [4] 30/14 draw [1] 76/17 74/18 74/21 75/5 39/11 40/15 65/7 76/19 emphasised [1] drawn [1] 56/12 75/17 75/22 86/7 88/2 Expenditure [2] 8/24 fair [3] 40/13 77/14 12/15 drives [1] 17/21 119/14 **employees** [1] 65/5 90/1 90/5 90/24 90/25 11/19 driving [1] 124/24 fairly [2] 52/20 61/24 **enable [1]** 17/5 90/25 91/20 93/17 **expensive [3]** 9/20 drop [2] 39/23 57/15 enables [1] 15/11 97/22 98/1 104/1 57/10 58/10 faith [3] 6/2 6/10 35/3 **DSS [2]** 112/6 113/22 fall [1] 71/21 **encloses [1]** 33/15 **escalated** [2] 19/13 experience [9] 4/5 **DTI [5]** 56/12 98/9 fallen [1] 40/14 **encounter** [1] 118/1 29/11 51/23 52/9 37/1 112/5 114/20 115/4 familiar [4] 9/9 11/14 especially [1] 44/9 54/10 57/6 59/25 encountered [1] dual [1] 17/20 33/19 119/9 49/22 essence [2] 86/9 62/13 100/3 due [6] 37/9 37/19 far [10] 6/21 47/6 116/13 **encourage** [2] 93/6 experienced [7] 71/21 74/1 86/5 114/2 51/4 53/16 62/12 46/25 47/3 51/13 94/19 **essential** [1] 27/23 duplicate [1] 17/11 83/22 119/15 120/10 encouraged [1] essentially [3] 86/18 54/14 59/11 108/24 during [13] 25/8 56/2 122/17 125/14 94/25 110/10 121/20 109/12 58/1 71/7 80/1 82/7 fatally [8] 14/6 14/20 encouraging [1] 90/5 established [3] experiences [1] 86/2 86/25 99/1 99/8 14/25 15/4 118/3 end [23] 9/17 18/23 102/22 104/22 104/25 59/14 109/12 114/4 117/23 experiencing [3] 118/7 118/12 118/13 18/23 23/17 23/17 estate [1] 89/20 During November [1] 23/22 23/22 33/2 fault [2] 25/24 34/14 45/1 45/13 65/16 estimate [1] 68/17 99/8 faults [9] 25/7 55/13 38/23 38/23 39/6 39/6 **estimated** [1] 43/22 experiment [1] 29/6 **DWM [2]** 38/6 38/7 **expertise [7]** 4/8 4/16 55/15 73/20 74/25 et [5] 21/1 21/18 88/3 39/13 39/13 43/15 DWP00000006 [1] 75/2 75/7 113/18 48/8 59/11 76/4 77/13 114/4 114/4 4/18 5/5 5/6 5/8 10/19 6/23 113/19 96/21 113/14 114/3 et cetera [5] 21/1 **experts** [1] 96/23 featuring [1] 31/15 Ε 114/3 21/18 88/3 114/4 **explain [3]** 96/23 engage [1] 93/20 114/4 122/12 122/15 February [4] 18/18 each [5] 64/22 80/5 even [9] 39/2 61/9 **explained** [3] 43/13 19/3 103/16 104/12 **England [2]** 2/21 114/7 114/8 117/12 February 1998 [1] 117/21 74/16 77/21 88/4 81/14 107/18 earlier [13] 8/17 14/3 18/18 enhance [2] 11/10 88/15 91/1 97/21 98/1 explains [1] 88/24 31/14 36/11 38/9 39/7 explanation [2] 56/22 fed [2] 52/15 60/9 events [2] 6/6 89/15 116/23 39/8 40/14 58/24 71/1 Federation [7] 44/5 enough [3] 31/3 eventually [1] 4/21 58/19 86/6 116/10 123/18 52/19 54/15 55/3 38/17 49/25 ever [5] 99/6 108/25 exposes [1] 87/2 early [12] 6/22 7/21 55/14 59/6 61/11 109/16 110/23 119/6 Enright [1] 106/4 **exposure** [1] 68/23 8/1 16/2 19/16 25/4 feed [1] 80/8 ensure [8] 36/18 every [1] 114/23 **expressed [4]** 55/11 28/23 35/15 58/4 everybody [1] 125/15 59/17 61/19 94/5 feedback [5] 52/8 36/21 49/21 56/15 108/3 108/4 117/9 52/20 52/22 108/22 75/8 82/6 94/3 105/10 **expressing [4]** 22/19 **everyone** [2] 1/3 easier [3] 44/13 110/3 ensuring [1] 36/24 101/3 52/14 91/16 121/6 50/15 53/14 feeder [2] 21/18 64/1 enter [3] 23/21 24/14 everything [1] 68/2 **extension** [2] 18/7 East [4] 44/16 47/2 feel [3] 3/15 4/15 24/20 evidence [18] 2/8 29/16 47/22 49/19 6/13 15/13 16/16 25/4 extensive [2] 13/5 70/25 entered [2] 39/17 **ECCO [3]** 47/9 72/13 feeling [4] 36/3 36/5 40/20 32/5 46/3 62/1 62/2 27/24 72/15 56/19 61/12 entering [1] 24/16 71/12 93/8 103/15 extent [4] 33/8 39/8 **echoes [1]** 13/16 entire [1] 78/10 104/12 104/15 114/21 feelings [6] 59/12 58/6 110/10 effect [2] 91/22 94/5 59/16 59/17 59/25 entirely [1] 20/12 116/11 119/14 125/8 **external [4]** 68/15 effective [1] 29/13 60/5 60/5 entry [2] 87/3 113/19 exact [1] 116/13 68/21 68/24 68/25 effectively [6] 12/6 fell [1] 39/10 exactly [7] 55/11 extra [1] 100/16 environment [4] 17/5 18/1 108/6 29/18 39/25 41/16 104/5 108/2 118/13 Felstead [2] 119/2 **extreme** [1] 48/23 114/22 119/16 119/4 71/14 120/6 121/10 121/13 **extremely [2]** 56/15

92/18 39/9 39/11 40/15 Gloucestershire [1] ground [3] 92/25 focused [1] 91/21 63/25 116/21 119/19 63/15 122/10 122/20 felt [5] 8/3 45/6 47/5 functions [2] 4/12 go [51] 6/21 7/1 focusing [2] 58/15 group [15] 4/18 4/22 60/3 115/22 93/10 87/3 12/19 14/2 20/18 4/23 4/23 5/3 5/9 few [8] 3/19 26/23 follow [4] 82/9 84/9 fundamental [4] 21/19 23/4 24/25 26/7 20/19 23/7 23/25 30/22 35/19 41/18 95/23 118/11 75/10 80/12 80/16 28/4 33/11 36/7 36/15 31/19 98/8 99/21 41/23 50/10 96/9 40/19 41/14 42/14 following [3] 9/4 79/7 81/12 99/22 115/23 119/7 fighting [1] 55/17 growing [1] 18/25 further [13] 7/17 11/1 42/16 46/8 46/20 87/22 figures [1] 80/3 force [2] 22/23 17/22 27/16 28/10 49/13 54/9 55/22 guarantee [1] 77/22 fill [1] 8/22 114/24 43/13 75/9 77/4 77/23 55/25 61/13 61/16 guinea [1] 61/1 final [26] 1/13 8/10 guy [1] 105/11 forced [1] 109/18 81/6 87/22 89/17 62/24 64/19 67/10 12/3 12/6 24/15 24/17 106/3 68/8 69/6 69/15 74/8 forecast [1] 80/25 24/20 28/20 39/6 Н forgive [2] 101/17 Furthermore [1] 74/23 77/7 80/10 39/14 39/21 40/10 had [93] 3/11 4/19 73/24 81/14 82/20 83/20 123/3 40/17 41/5 54/12 55/9 5/6 6/2 8/11 8/18 9/20 form [2] 23/23 80/19 future [6] 11/11 85/10 88/23 89/22 59/9 70/8 74/3 76/16 10/17 10/20 10/21 formal [1] 55/3 29/10 74/7 97/21 92/4 94/13 96/12 76/16 97/19 97/20 forthcoming [1] 14/13 21/6 21/22 22/2 115/18 116/24 97/14 97/19 106/7 98/18 113/5 120/13 107/20 110/25 115/4 22/6 22/18 22/20 30/7 122/18 finally [2] 76/24 31/25 32/6 32/23 33/9 fortnight [1] 48/12 120/22 123/1 35/4 40/14 42/20 forward [8] 40/1 54/8 gain [1] 37/12 goes [4] 75/13 79/6 finance [3] 84/6 gained [1] 99/19 44/19 47/2 47/13 54/9 71/5 83/10 92/5 89/9 93/22 84/11 84/15 48/18 49/9 50/3 50/17 Gaskell [2] 112/21 98/11 114/9 going [54] 6/20 6/21 financial [3] 13/6 51/7 51/17 51/22 6/21 14/16 22/7 26/3 found [3] 19/24 86/3 123/21 68/17 80/24 51/22 51/24 54/2 93/19 gave [2] 82/21 26/23 32/10 32/22 find [6] 8/19 15/24 four [4] 19/10 25/18 114/14 34/22 35/18 37/7 54/22 55/4 55/13 48/22 61/25 82/18 general [7] 46/24 38/20 42/10 43/11 57/22 57/25 58/21 44/18 94/7 108/4 58/22 59/1 59/2 59/3 47/11 51/6 52/11 44/25 45/11 46/13 four months [2] findings [2] 27/20 52/17 62/11 79/1 60/15 60/21 61/1 46/22 48/19 49/10 25/18 94/7 28/13 63/20 64/13 65/5 generally [2] 82/13 fragile [2] 11/9 49/24 51/1 52/7 53/23 fine [4] 4/2 12/13 65/11 67/6 68/25 120/16 116/22 53/23 53/25 54/7 21/9 102/1 69/12 75/8 75/21 88/4 generate [2] 21/24 58/20 61/15 61/16 Frankie [1] 102/17 fingertips [2] 123/4 22/9 88/5 88/17 90/4 92/4 fraught [1] 124/4 67/10 69/3 71/24 123/6 generated [1] 119/10 93/7 95/8 95/10 98/4 free [1] 119/25 75/20 85/8 93/9 97/11 finish [2] 2/1 55/8 generating [1] 74/17 98/4 99/19 100/3 freezes [1] 72/17 98/11 98/11 100/4 fire [1] 55/17 generic [1] 106/15 101/11 101/14 101/19 102/22 104/25 105/1 French [5] 66/16 fire-fighting [1] 55/17 gentle [1] 121/1 105/16 110/1 110/20 66/16 66/18 66/19 105/13 108/4 108/10 first [23] 11/3 21/13 genuine [1] 66/8 111/22 111/25 112/13 67/9 109/22 112/15 112/17 22/14 33/22 33/22 genuinely [3] 48/7 112/25 117/17 117/18 frequently [1] 61/24 112/25 120/24 122/19 39/16 39/20 41/4 58/18 96/5 117/18 117/19 119/17 124/2 fresh [1] 100/1 51/23 53/10 57/13 get [22] 16/15 26/19 119/25 119/25 121/20 gone [6] 22/20 59/3 Friday [1] 1/1 58/11 58/11 59/14 35/17 36/2 48/20 121/21 122/14 124/8 friendly [1] 44/13 67/4 94/17 120/1 69/5 81/20 86/23 56/20 59/5 60/2 60/20 120/1 hadn't [1] 13/3 friendly' [1] 47/16 89/10 89/11 95/9 76/9 88/14 95/12 97/8 good [4] 43/5 53/14 half [5] 18/22 20/23 front [8] 1/9 59/11 100/15 101/25 111/18 71/4 76/4 91/9 113/2 98/12 99/16 101/5 33/22 46/21 53/8 88/18 100/11 firstly [1] 106/23 101/22 105/13 116/4 halfway [2] 42/23 113/3 117/2 got [12] 30/14 60/25 fit [10] 16/17 65/15 121/22 121/22 122/2 79/22 84/5 104/9 87/5 frustrations [1] 61/2 65/19 66/4 66/13 70/3 hand [10] 38/1 58/3 getting [6] 19/21 54/8 109/16 113/2 113/3 FUJ00079178 [1] 71/1 94/8 106/21 98/8 119/19 122/7 58/6 59/14 95/20 121/21 121/22 122/11 85/5 107/3 122/9 95/20 96/11 99/18 FUJ00118186 [1] 123/12 five [1] 101/15 give [7] 1/7 22/16 112/5 112/7 96/12 governance [1] 95/7 five minutes [1] 32/18 41/19 108/20 handed [2] 98/10 fulfil [1] 95/1 government [1] 101/15 114/21 125/14 full [8] 1/7 13/12 121/20 99/20 fix [6] 19/3 75/9 87/8 given [27] 6/13 15/23 13/21 43/23 68/1 handover [2] 21/10 granularity [1] 17/16 87/12 100/17 100/18 16/9 17/8 45/6 46/3 99/18 77/12 79/17 110/10 grappling [1] 98/17 fixed [3] 73/22 75/2 46/4 48/21 48/22 handpicked [1] 3/23 fully [8] 16/17 24/12 grateful [3] 100/20 100/22 48/24 60/23 67/1 67/9 102/12 123/14 hands [1] 45/24 36/18 73/22 75/3 82/6 fixes [7] 39/25 41/6 67/22 70/5 74/16 103/1 117/1 handwriting [4] **gratuitous** [1] 34/14 41/15 87/15 88/5 23/10 24/5 24/9 24/10 75/17 82/18 94/21 function [3] 4/19 great [1] 10/25 88/15 88/15 $103/15 \ 104/12 \ 104/15 | \bar{g}reater [2] \ 53/13$ Hang [1] 94/10 8/21 120/2 fixing [1] 100/19 111/10 112/18 119/14 72/10 happen [6] 63/17 functionalities [1] flawed [8] 14/6 14/20 120/11 121/20 69/2 81/22 95/22 96/3 17/8 greatest [2] 57/2 14/25 15/4 118/4 gives [1] 79/8 96/4 functionality [12] 65/4 118/8 118/12 118/13 giving [1] 47/4 happened [7] 12/11 10/10 11/8 13/12 greatly [1] 90/5 focus [3] 57/23 59/2 glad [1] 100/21 33/9 52/25 105/14 13/21 13/23 17/10 green [1] 38/2

Н 13/5 48/6 happened... [3] 105/15 109/4 125/13 **happening [5]** 7/10 76/6 92/10 93/14 122/10 happy [4] 69/19 70/1 70/1 125/16 hard [5] 50/25 56/15 59/13 61/2 93/7 Harry [3] 9/7 9/19 117/4 harvester [1] 91/10 harvesting [1] 76/4 has [41] 6/13 15/13 17/14 19/13 24/12 28/10 29/8 56/14 59/14 63/8 72/8 72/10 73/24 74/24 75/1 75/3 75/4 75/8 79/10 79/22 79/24 79/25 80/2 88/17 88/25 89/11 89/12 89/13 90/5 90/14 92/25 102/17 107/6 108/25 109/3 110/19 114/9 114/11 118/4 122/17 122/24 have [256] haven't [4] 11/13 113/2 113/3 120/19 having [18] 9/17 20/20 27/13 28/3 34/3 34/17 36/6 44/9 61/1 61/2 67/4 70/2 70/25 73/3 83/17 96/1 118/19 123/3 he [41] 5/21 27/3 30/2 44/4 44/6 49/17 51/19 51/22 51/23 51/25 52/2 52/12 52/14 62/2 62/4 66/18 66/20 83/7 83/10 84/24 85/1 85/1 85/3 95/15 95/15 95/16 99/24 105/12 113/13 114/16 114/24 114/24 114/25 114/25 115/1 116/11 116/14 116/14 116/15 118/23 125/2 heads [2] 56/12 64/13 health [5] 47/5 48/15 60/6 66/1 107/9 hear [1] 104/11 heard [15] 4/13 5/10 11/20 13/16 30/18 32/5 35/24 48/4 49/20 59/17 61/18 97/5 104/14 104/19 125/9 hearings [1] 9/5 heavily [2] 99/23 124/9 held [4] 4/18 10/11

help [3] 97/23 123/15 125/2 helpdesk [1] 89/24 Henry [17] 101/16 106/10 111/6 111/7 113/13 115/5 116/14 117/13 118/24 119/12 120/9 123/4 123/13 124/15 124/20 125/6 126/7 here [19] 22/8 35/24 45/15 48/9 48/15 48/23 48/24 50/25 54/4 59/20 63/18 64/14 70/14 76/1 78/1 78/13 88/14 101/11 109/8 hesitate [1] 35/13 hierarchical [1] 95/6 high [17] 21/25 22/9 37/12 64/24 64/25 65/3 67/6 67/20 67/21 70/12 71/23 71/25 72/1 72/3 83/23 85/14 122/1 high-level [1] 83/23 higher [5] 4/17 10/1 12/15 61/17 77/2 highest [1] 112/15 Highlands [1] 124/25 highlighted [1] 76/7 highlights [1] 11/4 highly [1] 53/1 him [9] 51/20 51/21 52/15 82/19 96/1 96/7 102/12 116/2 116/3 hindsight [1] 61/7 hint [2] 125/15 125/16 his [13] 27/19 44/19 49/17 51/22 51/23 52/1 52/5 52/9 52/15 62/2 106/7 115/11 116/1 hit [2] 34/3 59/13 **hm [1]** 89/4 hold [1] 50/17 Holmes [1] 33/2 **Holt [1]** 73/17 honest [4] 33/6 33/8 35/1 61/22 honestly [3] 30/1 65/12 111/1 hope [2] 120/24 122/23 hopeless [1] 118/20 hoping [1] 124/17 Horizon [62] 2/23 3/4 5/16 6/14 13/10 13/20 14/14 14/17 14/22 15/10 18/3 18/7 21/12 25/2 36/9 36/13 36/18 I assume [1] 111/22 36/20 37/2 37/5 38/13 I be [2] 112/8 123/1

38/19 38/25 39/18 40/21 45/25 50/18 62/24 63/2 63/8 64/4 64/17 66/20 72/12 72/14 77/6 78/14 78/18 79/13 79/15 87/3 98/15 103/2 103/20 104/1 104/6 106/20 107/10 107/10 | can't [6] 27/9 41/19 108/18 109/10 110/7 111/18 114/10 115/9 116/1 119/11 119/16 119/16 120/1 120/2 121/8 Horizon System [5] 18/3 50/18 87/3 103/2 I clearly [1] 111/4 103/20 horns [1] 54/16 hostility [1] 34/25 hours [2] 51/15 108/20 house [1] 63/15 how [30] 3/21 8/19 11/17 12/11 22/1 22/18 26/17 32/23 35/5 35/25 43/19 52/6 I did [3] 3/16 3/17 55/21 61/14 70/25 74/5 75/2 82/11 92/3 98/10 98/15 99/18 100/13 101/12 105/4 108/5 113/20 119/7 119/9 119/10 Howe [1] 102/11 however [7] 15/13 18/25 39/8 56/10 57/16 72/7 73/16 huge [4] 20/3 47/8 48/19 103/10 l accept [1] 89/2 I acknowledge [1] 106/21 I actually [1] 48/9 I admit [1] 83/2 lagree [3] 52/10 52/24 65/22 l agreed [1] 68/23 I also [2] 100/17 120/6

I am [8] 20/11 38/8 59/10 73/3 109/8 111/1 116/4 119/12 I apologise [1] 105/15 I appreciate [2] 12/25 47/17 lask [5] 101/17 102/10 111/5 119/6 119/13 lasked [2] 60/11 60/13

I believe [11] 3/14 4/1 13/19 22/14 35/11 50/8 69/16 76/8 113/22 117/8 117/8 I bitterly [1] 109/3 I came [3] 105/16 105/18 105/20 I can [2] 71/16 96/4 52/19 105/17 108/2 115/5 I cannot [3] 84/7 115/2 115/2 I certainly [3] 20/13 39/3 73/7 I comment [1] 54/25 14/9 I could [5] 41/18 106/15 106/20 107/9 109/14 I couldn't [3] 50/12 104/7 104/7 I departed [1] 99/14 6/19 I discussed [1] 61/23 I do [14] 9/22 9/22 24/8 26/4 28/3 53/3 53/6 66/11 96/15 108/14 108/16 116/4 118/9 125/7 I don't [58] 7/13 8/8 8/25 9/4 12/11 12/22 27/4 30/4 33/8 40/25 41/14 43/5 46/12 49/15 59/3 60/12 63/17 67/16 70/5 72/25 77/25 82/13 82/18 85/7 85/19 86/11 87/10 89/2 90/10 90/12 92/7 95/19 98/24 100/10 105/23 106/5 107/12 115/6 116/7 116/7 117/2 117/15 118/22 118/23 121/10 123/6 I find [1] 82/18 I follow [2] 84/9 95/23 I genuinely [1] 96/5 I got [1] 60/25 I had [4] 14/13 35/4 98/4 105/16 I handed [1] 99/20 I have [30] 1/20 10/8 12/22 14/20 18/20 21/20 27/15 30/10 35/24 40/13 41/23

43/5 60/19 65/22 66/8 92/1 94/17 98/16 101/7 104/14 106/3 109/18 109/19 110/16 112/18 112/24 121/24 122/14 122/16 125/9 I haven't [2] 11/13 113/2 I hesitate [1] 35/13 I honestly [3] 30/1 65/12 111/1 I hope [2] 120/24 122/23 I just [10] 30/21 41/13 51/19 63/18 78/20 99/11 117/16 118/3 122/25 124/15 I contributed [2] 13/1 | I knew [2] 44/4 51/20 I know [2] 55/20 69/20 I learned [1] 60/10 I made [3] 51/20 66/11 82/21 I make [1] 101/7 I may [7] 1/17 32/13 96/10 96/11 108/19 118/5 121/4 I didn't [2] 73/4 108/7 | I mean [25] 4/13 30/2 30/21 31/9 34/24 35/1 35/23 41/7 48/19 58/24 59/8 61/23 62/11 64/16 70/13 75/21 94/6 99/5 114/18 114/24 115/1 116/17 116/24 124/4 124/9 16/11 18/13 21/4 21/4 I meant [1] 50/24 23/9 26/7 26/10 26/14 I mention [1] 119/1 I mentioned [1] 55/23 I need [1] 7/13 61/22 62/1 62/6 62/21 only [3] 96/9 102/13 109/21 I personally [2] 47/21 109/1 I previously [2] 13/2 82/21 I promise [1] 76/9 I read [2] 13/2 113/16 I really [2] 83/1 114/5 I recall [1] 10/12 I received [1] 68/24 I regret [1] 109/21 I remember [6] 16/24 17/1 34/17 35/9 56/4 62/12 I remembered [1] 13/2 I represent [2] 106/12 119/2 I right [1] 69/18 I said [1] 105/18 I say [3] 52/4 94/6 100/22

97/15 98/23 98/23 33/6 33/14 34/8 34/15 117/6 118/5 118/16 80/25 81/4 86/24 109/13 110/15 111/23 35/11 35/17 35/21 119/25 121/4 125/1 87/20 87/22 89/12 I see [4] 43/7 107/12 111/24 120/11 121/18 36/1 36/5 36/6 37/10 125/5 89/18 90/14 90/18 113/24 119/25 122/7 124/17 37/23 38/10 38/11 ii [1] 63/20 90/21 92/12 99/2 99/4 I should [2] 112/11 I wasn't [7] 14/8 16/3 47/14 51/1 51/9 54/9 imagine [1] 98/16 99/8 124/21 22/13 32/1 52/24 56/10 57/3 63/22 **imbalance** [1] 97/8 include [2] 45/9 I simply [1] 45/14 66/25 72/11 74/12 immediate [1] 5/21 53/20 120/24 77/13 **I still [1]** 26/19 77/21 80/15 85/12 I went [3] 14/14 66/3 impact [13] 27/22 included [5] 4/24 I suppose [2] 111/9 85/17 86/1 98/5 98/13 71/16 71/18 71/20 107/21 11/19 11/24 41/11 124/23 I will [17] 2/2 2/8 2/9 98/20 117/14 72/4 72/23 74/9 78/25 72/22 I think [107] 1/17 3/9 80/23 81/1 81/4 88/18 including [5] 17/25 33/18 33/21 55/5 74/9 ICL Pathway [30] 3/11 4/9 7/23 8/17 76/9 94/13 96/18 10/3 19/9 19/15 22/18 88/18 45/1 55/14 73/20 9/15 10/5 11/16 11/23 106/4 111/16 112/19 22/19 27/21 32/22 **impacting [1]** 15/16 75/15 15/1 15/7 18/2 18/20 113/4 113/6 113/15 34/15 35/11 35/17 impacts [4] 29/10 inclusion [1] 40/12 19/16 21/11 21/20 121/4 36/1 36/5 36/6 37/10 37/16 71/17 79/3 income [1] 15/12 23/8 26/11 26/25 27/2 I won't [2] 6/22 97/14 37/23 38/10 38/11 implementation [2] incompetence [7] 27/8 30/23 31/5 31/6 51/1 51/9 54/9 56/10 59/12 59/16 59/25 I worked [1] 114/16 21/18 37/14 33/3 34/7 35/19 36/5 implemented [3] I would [23] 18/20 57/3 66/25 72/11 60/5 61/5 61/8 61/9 37/22 37/25 38/20 74/12 80/15 86/1 98/5 19/20 22/25 23/8 39/14 94/4 97/1 incomplete [5] 11/8 40/15 40/25 42/23 26/10 28/6 30/10 98/13 117/14 20/3 78/9 78/11 implication [2] 63/1 45/3 45/4 45/10 46/1 30/14 46/21 60/10 ICL Pathway's [1] 63/6 116/21 46/2 47/25 48/21 49/5 60/10 62/12 75/25 85/12 implications [2] inconsistent [1] 50/10 52/11 54/6 83/6 96/6 99/17 ICL's [4] 1/21 34/5 80/24 114/13 121/13 57/24 57/25 58/2 58/6 101/10 101/10 101/25 35/3 35/4 implies [1] 37/20 incorporating [1] 58/9 58/18 59/22 103/3 120/15 122/19 idea [3] 95/14 101/11 importance [3] 6/14 74/21 59/22 60/19 62/11 120/21 125/6 12/7 115/9 incorrect [3] 40/2 62/19 63/14 64/8 I wouldn't [1] 119/22 ideal [1] 120/3 **important [10]** 22/5 72/9 123/9 64/13 66/15 67/17 22/5 22/7 26/17 26/19 increase [3] 98/1 **I'II [1]** 16/13 identification [1] 68/20 68/22 69/20 **I'm [94]** 4/10 5/2 6/20 57/13 26/24 27/15 59/15 99/2 99/3 69/21 71/3 76/5 76/10 6/21 6/21 9/9 16/6 identified [10] 19/11 101/8 119/17 increased [3] 71/21 77/21 78/8 78/20 79/1 18/6 18/13 20/9 20/11 39/21 56/16 57/4 impractical [1] 77/3 97/21 99/9 81/21 82/2 82/13 83/9 22/12 25/22 26/4 77/11 77/19 81/3 impression [2] 65/9 increases [1] 89/21 84/1 85/1 87/8 87/13 30/10 30/25 33/19 87/18 91/8 91/10 88/14 increasing [1] 59/23 87/14 88/17 88/24 33/19 35/6 37/7 38/20 identify [2] 29/14 improve [4] 40/1 increasingly [3] 89/3 91/16 91/23 40/25 41/18 43/6 56/7 44/21 51/1 61/15 89/20 98/5 125/12 92/14 95/14 95/17 43/11 46/13 46/22 ie [2] 39/23 40/2 improved [6] 13/12 incremental [1] 68/7 97/5 97/10 98/24 48/24 52/22 52/24 ie POCL [1] 39/23 48/18 50/22 51/3 incur [1] 16/18 102/17 103/9 104/24 53/6 61/24 63/13 incurring [1] 44/17 ie the [1] 40/2 60/18 60/20 105/5 105/12 112/18 indeed [4] 13/1 74/13 63/17 66/8 67/4 67/10 if [93] 1/17 2/4 4/4 improvement [1] 115/20 118/5 120/15 69/3 69/19 70/1 71/24 9/4 10/13 11/10 17/12 14/5 81/9 110/4 122/17 124/3 124/19 73/3 82/10 82/23 17/23 18/7 19/24 improvements [2] **INDEX [1]** 126/2 125/5 125/6 83/21 84/7 85/8 85/19 20/23 23/9 28/1 30/5 17/17 47/11 indicate [2] 23/18 I thought [1] 6/6 86/11 87/10 94/13 35/9 37/3 39/2 41/2 73/18 improving [1] 98/6 I took [3] 26/15 58/13 95/4 96/5 97/11 99/11 41/13 43/15 44/22 **inaccurate [2]** 17/15 indicated [2] 21/23 86/6 100/21 101/14 101/19 45/16 45/20 47/6 106/25 74/4 I understand [5] 21/6 104/3 104/4 104/8 47/12 48/9 48/10 49/6 inadequate [2] 17/15 indicates [1] 14/5 91/6 95/8 104/5 104/24 105/17 105/23 50/17 51/17 53/22 indicating [1] 113/13 65/4 120/16 106/1 106/2 106/3 55/24 60/13 60/14 incident [25] 64/25 indication [2] 22/16 I visited [1] 52/5 107/13 109/9 109/23 60/21 62/1 62/6 62/6 65/10 67/2 67/3 67/20 26/20 I want [3] 56/24 109/23 110/12 112/11 64/3 66/3 66/3 66/10 67/21 72/1 72/16 indications [1] 43/25 62/15 102/15 112/25 114/18 115/2 66/11 67/23 69/2 72/23 73/9 73/16 indicative [1] 81/6 I wanted [3] 76/17 115/4 116/3 116/3 70/19 71/15 74/10 73/24 79/6 79/12 individual [3] 17/6 111/16 125/1 116/4 116/9 117/2 75/13 75/15 75/24 79/24 80/4 85/4 85/13 53/21 92/13 I was [48] 1/20 1/22 120/9 120/18 120/24 76/6 81/14 81/20 85/18 86/8 86/21 individuals [1] 60/1 3/12 3/16 3/24 3/24 81/21 81/24 82/9 85/9 121/1 121/10 122/18 86/21 87/25 88/4 indulgence [2] 8/5 10/24 11/23 18/21 122/21 123/14 124/17 85/22 88/24 89/2 98/20 124/18 125/18 19/20 21/4 22/12 125/9 125/12 125/14 90/17 92/9 96/3 96/4 Incident 211 [1] inescapable [1] 25/25 27/13 31/14 I've [3] 84/5 109/16 97/6 97/21 99/4 86/21 17/22 31/15 32/15 35/1 101/14 101/18 101/21 Incident 376 [2] 67/2 inevitable [3] 15/12 122/11 37/22 41/7 48/22 51/4 ICL [47] 10/3 10/14 103/19 104/11 105/15 73/9 86/10 86/18 52/6 52/19 54/8 55/2 106/15 106/19 107/8 19/9 19/15 22/18 incidents [25] 40/11 inevitably [1] 86/14 60/9 60/20 62/21 22/19 22/22 26/5 107/11 108/19 110/21 41/11 65/1 65/3 65/6 infallible [1] 118/19 63/13 70/4 71/3 82/23 27/21 30/11 30/13 110/24 113/4 113/6 70/13 70/21 71/7 inform [1] 52/12 82/23 83/22 94/13 31/24 32/15 32/22 113/10 115/20 116/23 77/10 77/18 77/23 informal [1] 55/3

into [22] 3/6 4/22 57/23 57/24 58/16 86/22 90/10 90/12 **July [10]** 25/18 43/16 12/1 19/21 20/1 20/2 58/21 59/3 68/21 57/15 62/16 62/18 93/3 101/10 103/11 information [22] 23/21 28/14 32/23 68/23 69/1 69/2 69/17 63/20 64/7 64/8 64/10 103/19 108/12 109/23 16/20 17/2 17/15 33/24 42/13 44/15 69/24 71/4 73/5 73/7 111/13 109/23 110/25 112/1 17/20 32/20 35/20 48/20 53/15 56/13 76/8 78/3 78/17 80/20 June [13] 23/11 112/4 113/12 116/12 35/21 37/21 38/13 59/24 87/15 90/2 82/6 83/10 85/20 42/16 46/9 49/8 55/12 117/13 117/21 118/9 38/18 49/2 53/1 53/2 55/24 56/1 56/19 95/15 95/19 97/14 86/15 89/9 95/24 122/19 124/5 55/11 67/8 67/18 76/4 99/25 116/1 119/15 58/24 62/15 114/22 109/22 **Knowing [2]** 26/22 79/21 84/23 92/2 92/4 introduce [1] 75/9 it [491] 121/17 124/8 52/25 109/17 introduced [3] 87/15 it's [54] 1/17 1/19 **June 1999 [1]** 56/19 knowledge [6] 1/15 informed [6] 28/23 87/18 88/5 7/21 8/10 9/10 12/25 just [57] 7/14 8/17 22/11 60/13 99/19 51/7 62/5 79/2 79/24 19/16 20/19 22/7 9/11 9/15 14/8 14/23 104/1 119/7 introduction [4] 80/17 59/23 87/7 87/20 22/21 22/21 23/5 23/6 20/10 25/17 27/17 known [16] 26/10 Ingham [1] 54/15 87/24 26/2 31/5 33/12 34/9 30/21 31/7 35/19 29/25 30/3 40/12 initial [1] 10/25 40/16 41/4 41/10 42/2 investigate [1] 77/1 40/13 41/13 43/1 49/6 41/12 46/1 52/4 62/8 **Initially [1]** 10/18 investigated [3] 22/1 46/17 46/18 46/19 49/9 50/20 51/19 52/9 82/11 82/13 82/14 inordinate [1] 8/6 46/21 52/10 53/7 52/19 55/8 59/6 60/4 82/14 84/2 84/4 99/20 103/12 103/17 **input [1]** 44/15 investigation [1] 55/25 56/1 67/11 61/8 61/12 63/4 63/18 113/19 Inquiry [6] 99/21 67/12 67/15 69/21 70/7 73/14 78/20 81/1 19/9 106/17 106/24 112/20 85/8 89/13 95/4 96/18 **L** 70/16 73/14 76/16 investigations [1] 122/17 125/20 lack [11] 21/24 22/8 79/4 79/21 82/18 99/11 103/3 105/17 14/4 insist [1] 51/8 23/20 35/21 37/9 investigators [6] 85/23 88/17 88/18 106/4 108/19 109/3 installed [2] 22/2 37/10 37/19 37/20 103/17 103/24 104/9 89/3 95/21 96/16 113/4 113/15 116/1 51/22 73/9 80/4 87/2 104/11 104/16 105/24 97/19 100/23 104/4 117/16 118/3 120/6 **instance** [1] 104/5 invidious [1] 115/7 106/16 113/10 117/15 120/9 120/15 121/1 lacked [2] 4/5 102/25 instruct [1] 47/14 118/24 118/25 124/25 lacking [2] 71/13 invisible [1] 72/21 121/21 121/22 122/25 insuperable [1] 103/7 124/15 124/19 125/14 it's August [1] 22/21 involve [1] 5/16 118/16 large [6] 10/16 47/22 involved [9] 16/3 item [3] 40/3 111/15 integral [1] 74/12 54/10 86/24 91/17 28/24 29/4 66/20 123/9 integrated [1] 21/16 **KB [2]** 67/23 67/23 102/23 67/13 67/14 93/4 items [4] 56/8 63/3 integrity [20] 23/20 largely [2] 2/9 104/15 keenly [1] 59/10 99/23 119/23 80/17 80/19 24/2 73/9 76/19 76/21 keep [3] 54/24 79/2 last [3] 19/11 35/5 involvement [1] 93/6 its [6] 13/20 17/21 77/16 78/17 78/25 82/7 125/9 21/24 22/8 80/6 81/8 involving [2] 24/12 79/9 79/12 79/13 80/5 keeping [1] 51/21 late [6] 11/7 26/12 74/15 itself [3] 5/16 20/9 83/19 87/2 90/3 90/19 **keeps [1]** 55/18 67/24 88/20 94/6 irrelevant [1] 125/12 28/4 90/22 92/23 96/21 Keith [8] 67/24 67/24 116/21 is [283] 97/3 67/25 82/3 88/22 later [3] 23/4 62/16 is August 1999 [1] intend [1] 114/1 Jackson [3] 50/5 88/25 89/2 121/11 67/11 77/17 intended [2] 21/15 kept [2] 14/16 62/4 50/7 50/14 latest [1] 2/1 is June 1999 [1] 47/8 **JACOBS [2]** 102/8 key [8] 36/25 56/15 latter [1] 109/18 62/15 intense [1] 93/9 63/22 64/3 64/11 126/5 lawyers [1] 50/17 is March 1999 [1] intensely [1] 94/24 83/10 89/9 93/10 41/9 **Jan [1]** 33/1 lay [1] 83/14 intensified [1] 7/24 Jannetta [3] 49/14 lead [4] 44/4 68/15 kind [11] 22/16 39/1 isn't [7] 25/23 42/3 interdependencies 49/14 49/17 39/3 53/1 58/20 59/17 105/3 114/10 52/8 79/20 81/10 **[1]** 21/17 January [4] 43/22 73/2 84/23 87/11 96/2 leads [1] 29/5 113/4 113/6 interest [1] 68/2 55/15 97/11 122/13 104/23 learned [4] 49/25 isn't it [2] 42/3 81/10 **interested [6]** 24/18 kinds [8] 4/8 11/15 issue [30] 1/20 1/23 January 2000 [1] 59/15 60/10 103/9 50/11 75/25 95/7 20/6 32/2 48/3 61/18 learnt [1] 39/13 4/1 22/11 23/24 23/25 97/11 104/17 122/9 job [2] 3/13 49/24 62/9 77/23 least [8] 9/25 10/4 24/23 25/10 25/17 interesting [1] 10/8 knew [6] 5/18 44/4 25/18 38/2 41/21 jobs [1] 3/10 29/24 56/2 83/14 interests [2] 66/25 John [9] 6/13 11/19 51/20 55/14 84/17 87/11 88/6 100/16 41/22 45/5 58/16 114/12 12/10 62/1 90/17 107/11 58/18 58/25 61/13 leave [3] 107/24 **interface [5]** 19/13 68/4 69/4 71/23 77/16 95/14 111/20 111/22 know [58] 2/23 3/8 108/1 124/3 73/10 90/4 93/19 94/4 79/1 79/7 82/11 89/10 115/22 6/3 9/4 11/20 13/1 leaving [2] 108/5 interfering [2] 92/7 joined [4] 2/11 8/4 19/24 22/23 23/9 27/4 123/25 92/1 110/21 120/7 95/16 43/1 43/3 29/20 30/1 30/4 30/19 ledgers [1] 80/8 120/13 interim [1] 19/11 33/8 35/14 41/14 joining [1] 101/9 left [7] 29/4 95/20 issued [1] 62/12 internal [5] 12/20 issues [49] 1/23 20/6 | joint [2] 2/24 93/17 41/16 47/12 49/14 99/4 105/16 107/20 31/24 32/15 52/18 Judging [1] 60/9 49/25 50/17 52/3 110/1 124/5 23/15 25/1 25/13 74/1 52/25 53/4 55/20 judgment [2] 98/16 legacy [2] 72/13 26/20 30/7 30/17 intervention [1] 122/6 61/22 62/1 65/11 74/19 36/21 36/25 37/5 101/5 65/12 67/16 67/23 39/21 39/22 41/5 41/7 **Judy [1]** 35/14 legal [2] 34/21 101/8 interview [1] 3/22 42/12 42/12 43/9 45/1 **jugular [2]** 120/22 69/20 70/5 74/10 legs [1] 101/22 **interviews** [1] 13/5 120/25 75/25 82/9 84/20 less [3] 53/12 59/18 47/20 56/15 57/16

less... [1] 88/1 lesson [1] 59/15 **Lessons** [1] 39/13 let [4] 36/6 74/10 100/13 113/11 let's [18] 6/23 6/23 38/1 38/22 55/8 59/8 66/12 66/14 67/17 69/3 69/20 71/7 73/15 80/10 85/22 86/23 88/19 89/6 letter [18] 33/14 34/13 55/24 55/25 68/25 69/3 76/8 76/10 78/7 78/9 78/10 78/13 83/18 107/7 110/6 112/20 113/15 123/20 letters [3] 34/18 38/9 115/24 letting [1] 95/12 level [25] 4/7 4/13 4/17 17/17 21/25 22/9 34/21 37/12 37/17 40/25 76/24 76/25 77/2 77/2 78/1 83/23 88/9 89/12 89/13 89/17 90/5 90/6 90/23 94/22 95/2 levels [3] 66/19 77/5 112/15 leverage [1] 37/11 liable [2] 11/7 116/20 life [1] 64/17 light [4] 23/15 23/24 24/23 25/13 lights [1] 100/24 like [19] 12/13 13/18 14/21 24/6 28/6 32/6 41/25 46/21 51/10 59/17 72/17 77/18 91/15 100/9 101/10 101/10 120/15 122/19 125/6 likely [5] 27/8 27/22 68/7 68/17 80/23 Lilley [1] 23/11 limited [15] 2/17 3/1 4/5 5/1 5/11 7/4 32/6 78/16 79/5 83/24 107/23 115/13 115/15 115/18 119/24 limits [1] 13/13 **Lindon [3]** 53/4 53/4 53/7 line [8] 2/20 14/15 45/8 89/18 97/22 111/23 116/5 117/20 lines [2] 121/24 125/2 list [5] 18/17 18/21 25/1 70/12 89/9

listed [6] 7/2 36/16

38/15 38/24 42/18 62/18 listening [1] 54/13 **litigation [2]** 110/11 110/13 little [4] 12/5 77/4 103/19 124/18 live [15] 22/4 22/7 26/7 26/13 26/24 37/15 61/3 71/12 78/19 79/4 86/25 109/10 109/13 113/20 114/4 lively [1] 48/5 lives [1] 108/15 local [1] 64/1 logical [4] 17/9 18/7 44/13 120/20 logistics [1] 17/18 **London [2]** 39/24 124/24 long [18] 4/14 6/22 11/9 12/25 35/5 41/25 **LT1 [2]** 87/15 88/5 51/11 53/10 55/21 61/14 61/16 66/15 70/12 101/15 104/4 116/20 116/22 117/5 long-term [4] 11/9 116/20 116/22 117/5 longer [3] 6/5 45/5 101/12 look [79] 2/5 4/9 6/23 7/12 7/14 8/8 8/23 9/3 9/10 9/23 9/23 10/13 12/3 12/23 13/8 16/12 18/15 18/22 20/15 20/22 20/23 23/15 27/10 28/6 28/19 29/22 30/6 33/11 36/8 37/3 37/3 38/1 38/4 38/22 38/23 39/4 39/19 42/25 46/22 56/24 59/8 62/16 62/23 63/4 64/19 66/12 66/14 67/17 67/23 69/4 69/19 69/21 70/19 71/7 71/8 73/10 73/15 73/23 75/15 75/24 78/6 80/10 81/20 81/24 85/4 85/22 86/20 86/23 88/19 89/5 89/6 93/21 96/16 97/12 98/19 99/4 113/10 115/20 118/6 looked [4] 9/5 9/6 31/20 54/6 looking [13] 7/10 15/7 43/16 58/11 65/13 65/21 71/5 71/5 81/1 82/23 83/4 83/17 92/16 looks [8] 8/13 32/5

34/5 57/21 71/9 71/16

looped [3] 94/17 109/19 110/16 looping [2] 94/24 110/16 Lorraine [1] 73/17 lost [13] 11/10 19/1 19/2 19/8 19/10 19/19 24/18 30/24 99/22 20/1 25/7 54/20 55/4 79/18 80/1 116/23 lot [12] 6/10 20/1 22/18 27/13 33/13 34/18 35/10 35/10 93/8 95/10 105/9 122/8 lots [1] 1/23 **Lottery [1]** 51/17 low [8] 14/21 15/4 43/18 64/24 72/7 118/4 118/8 118/14 lower [1] 39/12 LT [1] 87/12 **LT2 [7]** 87/7 87/8 87/18 87/20 87/22 87/24 88/5 lunch [3] 96/10 96/10 123/9 101/24 **lunchtime** [1] 100/6 made [15] 5/12 24/14 44/11 49/23 51/20 54/4 54/22 66/10 66/11 68/25 82/21 98/24 112/11 114/6 121/19 magnitude [2] 90/7 90/8 Mail [1] 4/24 main [2] 72/16 80/8 maintain [2] 40/7 52/6 major [12] 8/24 11/18 119/21 120/21 18/24 23/16 25/7 39/20 41/4 76/5 76/21 92/9 102/21 105/2 make [7] 33/23 49/20 89/17 96/22 97/8 101/7 118/17 make' [1] 89/17 makes [2] 49/12 53/7 making [5] 12/7 53/16 64/4 89/16 95/13 Maloney [4] 106/7 106/11 106/12 126/6 man [2] 44/4 83/12 manage [5] 36/25 40/23 90/24 93/17 97/23 managed [7] 11/18 11/22 14/15 36/19 36/22 78/10 125/4

73/8 77/14

management [16] 2/11 6/25 7/9 10/19 13/8 16/20 17/15 19/13 19/14 36/10 36/13 40/8 67/12 67/15 98/20 117/19 manager [5] 2/20 117/20 managerial [4] 2/15 4/7 4/13 8/18 managers [2] 13/6 84/12 managing [7] 40/18 83/7 84/14 84/15 84/21 84/24 115/23 manoeuvre [1] 56/14 manor [2] 63/15 111/13 manual [2] 16/13 74/19 many [8] 29/14 102/12 108/5 108/12 108/15 108/17 108/20 115/25 mapping [2] 40/2 March [10] 20/16 20/21 21/14 31/19 36/11 36/16 38/17 41/9 123/19 123/20 March 1999 [1] 38/17 meaning [1] 92/8 marked [1] 34/19 market [3] 15/12 15/14 15/18 marketing [1] 15/20 **Marshall [1]** 50/15 massive [1] 16/5 matching [1] 97/18 material [1] 114/19 matter [6] 10/12 62/12 76/19 79/11 matters [6] 5/17 14/18 62/19 96/9 107/5 107/17 may [48] 1/17 4/1 7/1 7/2 15/24 16/8 21/20 24/6 30/18 32/13 32/18 47/11 48/24 63/1 63/7 64/13 67/21 74/6 81/5 81/6 85/6 90/25 91/20 95/23 96/10 96/11 98/1 98/18 100/22 100/22 101/17 103/16 104/12 105/14 106/22 106/22 108/19 110/20 113/3 113/16 118/5 118/8 121/4 122/4 122/5 123/1 124/6 125/6 May 1999 [1] 124/6 maybe [1] 50/11

McDonnell [1] 33/2 McNiven [1] 82/2 McNiven's [2] 54/16 54/18 me [44] 6/1 14/23 25/12 26/1 27/8 27/13 38/21 46/1 48/1 48/23 49/6 51/25 52/4 52/16 54/19 55/20 60/9 60/15 60/23 61/11 61/20 64/6 74/10 82/7 82/25 84/4 85/9 97/6 100/1 100/13 100/15 101/17 106/7 112/9 112/10 113/2 114/11 116/5 117/2 120/21 121/11 123/3 124/19 125/2 Meagher [1] 90/17 mean [37] 4/13 17/24 30/2 30/21 31/9 34/24 35/1 35/23 36/12 41/7 41/18 48/19 58/24 59/8 61/20 61/22 61/23 62/11 64/16 70/13 75/21 90/8 90/11 91/2 91/25 94/6 99/5 105/8 106/1 110/1 114/18 114/24 115/1 116/17 116/24 124/4 124/9 March/April [1] 20/16 meaningful [1] 93/20 means [4] 93/3 93/4 93/12 95/25 meant [4] 41/16 50/24 95/1 95/11 measures [1] 96/25 medium [6] 64/24 65/1 65/3 70/13 85/13 85/15 meet [7] 27/23 29/13 34/1 67/19 72/3 94/22 94/23 meeting [53] 6/25 7/2 8/24 12/15 20/18 21/3 36/9 36/11 36/16 36/24 42/15 42/23 43/1 43/3 43/4 45/24 46/8 46/10 46/12 46/17 47/17 47/21 48/1 48/4 48/5 48/5 48/8 51/6 52/18 55/12 56/2 59/18 62/17 63/14 65/10 65/23 66/23 67/11 67/12 67/15 70/4 70/6 70/14 70/14 83/11 83/14 94/8 96/6 101/8 107/5 114/19 121/16 121/20 meetings [4] 56/6 56/7 61/19 83/23 member [5] 29/4 83/7 83/9 85/1 94/14

40/3 41/20 123/10 43/9 43/13 44/2 44/3 43/13 44/10 44/20 Μ nationwide [1] 3/19 mismatch [1] 86/22 44/4 44/8 44/10 44/20 100/5 102/14 106/6 **nature [7]** 35/8 36/2 members [10] 42/20 Miss [3] 53/4 53/4 45/9 45/21 47/2 49/14 106/22 108/25 111/9 36/4 73/5 73/7 75/17 47/12 47/25 52/15 53/7 49/14 49/17 50/15 113/10 114/14 115/6 107/7 55/21 61/12 62/9 **Miss Lindon [3]** 53/4 50/15 50/17 51/7 51/8 116/2 125/1 near [1] 119/3 69/17 69/23 101/9 53/4 53/7 51/19 54/15 55/10 Mr Peberdy [1] 55/10 nearly [1] 114/23 memory [2] 26/10 55/19 95/25 100/5 missing [1] 74/25 Mr Roberts [6] necessarily [4] 15/22 26/12 100/24 101/16 102/8 114/15 114/20 114/22 53/19 72/19 120/1 mistake [1] 82/21 Mena [3] 27/7 27/8 mistresses [2] 51/14 102/11 102/14 106/4 115/17 116/6 116/25 necessary [6] 38/14 29/21 106/6 106/7 106/10 39/25 71/14 76/25 102/11 Mr Roberts' [1] 115/8 mention [1] 119/1 Mm [1] 89/4 106/11 106/22 107/6 Mr Stein [1] 100/24 103/25 110/6 mentioned [3] 43/11 **Mm-hm [1]** 89/4 107/16 108/25 110/17 Mr Sweetman [14] necessitating [1] 46/13 55/23 model [3] 23/17 110/21 110/24 111/6 6/2 42/21 43/3 43/9 29/14 mentions [2] 25/13 111/7 111/9 111/20 45/21 95/25 107/16 need [30] 2/4 7/13 23/22 114/3 58/13 **Modifications** [1] 112/21 113/6 113/10 110/17 110/21 110/24 12/13 15/22 17/4 17/8 **Mentors [5]** 27/19 113/13 114/14 114/15 114/15 114/20 116/10 17/11 17/16 17/19 56/24 30/25 31/8 31/14 32/3 114/15 114/20 114/20 116/25 18/1 26/7 27/24 35/16 **modified [2]** 10/18 Mentors' [5] 27/5 10/21 114/22 115/5 115/6 **Ms** [5] 101/16 119/2 35/17 38/9 40/23 27/11 28/7 42/11 moment [7] 8/3 115/8 115/8 115/17 119/2 119/4 119/5 41/11 54/9 64/14 120/7 41/25 64/4 64/16 69/3 116/2 116/6 116/10 68/10 68/11 68/16 **Ms Arch [2]** 119/2 messages [1] 12/9 83/19 121/2 116/10 116/14 116/25 119/5 74/11 88/16 89/16 met [6] 21/24 89/8 moments [1] 35/19 116/25 117/13 118/24 Ms Felstead [2] 98/25 101/12 111/14 89/13 90/13 90/14 money [6] 11/10 119/12 120/9 120/20 119/2 119/4 116/17 117/15 17/12 45/6 57/24 121/8 121/19 121/19 Ms Page [1] 101/16 needed [16] 6/3 methodology [1] 57/25 116/23 123/4 123/5 123/13 MSU [2] 99/9 99/10 11/21 13/11 13/13 29/1 monitor [1] 36/19 13/25 14/6 24/1 32/10 123/21 124/15 124/20 much [26] 6/16 14/5 methods [1] 29/5 125/1 125/6 126/4 16/4 24/19 25/1 39/20 monitored [1] 94/23 36/4 41/6 64/21 68/20 middle [1] 38/25 126/5 126/6 126/7 69/4 93/17 98/12 **monitoring [1]** 68/12 42/5 46/10 46/15 might [20] 17/7 17/22 month [6] 26/5 38/22 Mr Baines [1] 121/8 49/12 56/24 57/21 116/12 18/8 26/20 27/3 30/16 62/15 65/23 71/1 61/14 87/25 88/9 needs [3] 29/13 Mr Baker [2] 55/19 33/1 41/24 54/4 61/5 95/22 118/23 108/9 121/19 100/5 100/20 101/6 74/5 76/14 83/19 84/9 monthly [1] 98/20 Mr Blake [8] 1/3 101/12 106/6 111/8 **negative [2]** 37/16 99/16 106/23 106/24 months [10] 21/10 102/11 107/6 113/6 111/9 115/10 123/24 52/21 110/22 118/15 120/1 25/18 29/3 30/22 68/6 115/8 116/10 120/20 125/13 125/18 Negotiation [1] 89/3 migrated [1] 113/23 94/7 99/14 108/5 123/5 must [12] 24/14 negotiations [2] 11/2 migration [2] 87/23 108/7 114/7 43/24 49/23 50/1 51/8 56/9 Mr Butlin [7] 44/2 88/2 44/3 44/4 44/8 45/9 mooted [1] 53/10 51/11 51/12 51/16 net [1] 91/20 Mike [2] 33/14 38/6 more [24] 15/24 51/8 51/19 54/22 64/16 77/11 net' [1] 90/25 milestones [1] 34/3 network [6] 13/14 21/15 22/5 29/5 35/10 **Mr Colin [1]** 121/19 119/9 Miller [33] 1/4 1/5 1/8 35/10 41/23 44/13 Mr Darvill [2] 50/15 my [29] 5/21 14/18 13/22 13/25 47/9 1/9 1/25 7/19 8/11 44/13 44/15 45/20 50/17 21/4 23/11 24/10 47/10 107/22 20/25 38/25 42/10 45/24 47/15 57/25 Mr Dave [1] 47/2 32/16 47/25 60/16 never [2] 55/2 101/2 42/22 43/3 43/13 59/19 64/25 70/1 81/1 Mr David [1] 51/7 62/13 62/14 78/2 nevertheless [4] 44/10 44/20 47/3 51/7 86/2 90/7 90/9 94/23 82/25 83/9 84/5 92/10 Mr Gaskell [1] 28/13 49/3 72/22 54/22 55/12 65/14 105/21 125/13 123/21 92/14 94/15 95/24 88/12 66/4 100/5 102/14 97/15 98/13 101/8 morning [13] 1/3 1/3 Mr Henry [15] 101/16 new [6] 49/6 63/23 106/6 106/22 108/25 103/21 106/12 114/9 1/4 32/14 65/21 106/10 111/6 113/13 65/5 90/18 90/21 111/9 113/10 114/14 122/17 122/23 123/4 106/14 107/6 108/21 115/5 116/14 117/13 92/23 115/6 116/2 125/1 110/19 115/8 116/19 118/24 119/12 120/9 123/6 123/23 **Newcastle [4]** 48/1 126/3 119/20 121/6 123/4 123/13 124/15 48/6 60/10 62/13 mind [4] 75/21 78/4 Ν most [8] 9/20 17/1 124/20 125/6 next [10] 23/21 29/9 108/25 123/23 name [3] 1/7 43/10 37/1 48/12 51/5 53/4 37/7 47/12 59/14 Mr Ingham [1] 54/15 minimise [1] 74/21 95/17 101/15 117/24 106/12 57/7 76/10 81/23 MR JACOBS [2] minimum [1] 77/12 named [3] 20/20 **MOT [1]** 25/7 102/8 126/5 93/21 minute [4] 37/23 25/10 85/7 mouth [1] 95/19 Mr Jannetta [3] NFSP [13] 42/16 46/8 94/10 122/11 125/10 move [9] 8/23 12/19 names [3] 84/4 84/8 49/14 49/14 49/17 52/20 55/6 56/2 59/18 minutes [19] 42/1 18/15 27/1 36/8 40/1 84/10 61/19 62/3 62/10 Mr John [1] 111/20 42/3 46/16 63/5 64/9 **national** [13] 37/18 86/9 86/12 97/11 Mr Maloney [1] 106/7 65/23 108/22 110/4 70/5 82/25 101/15 42/15 43/16 44/5 moved [4] 2/17 2/23 Mr Marshall [1] 121/17 101/17 101/18 101/21 46/10 52/18 54/21 4/11 100/1 NFSP00000073 [1] 50/15 101/22 102/2 106/19 55/3 55/13 59/6 69/7 moving [1] 112/11 Mr McDonnell [1] 55/22 106/22 106/24 111/10 70/9 88/21 Mr [99] 1/3 1/6 1/9 NFSP00000471 [1] 33/2 111/12 121/4 **National Federation** 1/25 6/2 33/2 42/10 Mr Miller [19] 1/9 46/9 misbalancing [3] 1/25 42/10 42/22 43/3 [2] 55/3 59/6 42/21 42/22 43/3 43/3 **night** [1] 55/18

N Nile [1] 34/2 no [66] 3/7 3/24 3/24 4/2 4/2 4/9 6/5 6/6 9/2 13/4 14/13 15/13 16/1 18/24 20/11 21/4 26/14 30/10 30/12 33/19 34/21 35/1 38/11 50/21 51/8 52/10 52/10 52/12 52/24 53/20 54/13 58/9 60/17 65/7 66/8 77/10 77/18 84/9 84/9 86/7 87/22 93/16 94/11 95/4 95/21 98/23 99/12 100/10 100/13 101/7 104/5 107/1 109/5 109/7 109/7 109/7 109/18 111/1 111/14 112/11 113/19 115/17 116/17 121/1 121/1 123/19 no one [1] 54/13 **nodding [1]** 107/12 non [1] 72/17 non-visible [1] 72/17 **nor [1]** 75/7 normal [2] 77/6 101/23 North [4] 44/16 47/2 47/21 49/19 not [162] note [2] 24/1 62/11 noted [2] 20/25 72/14 notes [2] 20/18 88/25 **nothing [2]** 3/18 48/17 notice [4] 3/5 3/7 108/5 108/7 **November [7]** 23/6 88/19 88/20 94/7 98/21 99/8 125/21 November 1999 [3] 88/19 88/20 94/7 now [67] 2/7 8/24 10/22 12/19 13/15 14/20 15/7 18/16 19/16 20/24 24/13 25/16 25/21 26/15 27/2 27/10 29/20 42/13 52/3 53/9 54/22 55/24 56/8 56/17 56/22 57/21 59/16 64/3 65/9 65/13 65/19 66/2 66/10 72/8 72/10 77/14 78/7 78/10 78/12 79/6 81/8 81/17 83/17 85/5 86/6 86/23 88/20 89/7 94/6 94/17 96/9 97/12 100/5 101/20 102/25 103/11 106/17 107/5 107/16 108/12 110/19 112/11

117/15 119/13 120/6 123/12 125/16 NR2 [1] 38/14 NRO [1] 69/6 NSFP000084 [1] 42/14 number [23] 4/20 34/13 35/25 37/8 47/22 60/14 60/21 65/16 69/23 73/19 81/4 86/24 89/14 97/21 99/8 99/13 104/14 105/1 105/1 106/12 112/13 122/7 124/13 numbers [1] 73/25 0 o'clock [2] 2/1

125/17 **objective [2]** 19/11 114/14 objectives [1] 39/7 Observation [1] 86/2 obtain [1] 78/10 **obvious [2]** 118/24 118/25 obviously [6] 29/23 47/14 84/17 113/6 117/17 119/25 occasion [1] 9/3 occasions [1] 52/5 occurred [3] 75/6 79/24 125/10 occurrence [3] 72/6 72/10 89/19 occurrences [1] 74/7 occurring [2] 87/21 88/6 October [4] 1/1 12/21 34/2 99/9 October 1997 [1] 12/21 odd [1] 111/2 off [7] 10/21 15/7 26/7 26/13 89/15 91/14 117/21 offer [2] 10/9 50/22 offered [2] 50/20 75/5 offering [1] 60/17 office [59] 2/11 2/17 2/25 3/19 4/5 4/14 4/23 5/1 5/10 5/11 6/18 7/4 13/20 20/7 23/17 23/22 30/24 32/6 33/7 33/10 44/19 47/15 48/25 52/5 57/8 57/8 58/8 58/8 61/17 62/17 63/1 63/6 66/20 option [6] 9/15 9/16 78/15 78/16 83/24 84/20 84/22 102/15 102/25 103/4 103/7 103/13 103/16 103/22

104/21 105/2 105/13 107/21 107/22 114/3 115/12 115/13 115/15 115/16 115/18 117/18 37/13 37/17 37/21 119/8 119/24 offices [13] 2/21 10/11 40/4 43/15 43/19 43/21 48/10 50/2 51/17 53/13 63/22 119/20 123/11 offs [2] 75/18 75/22 often [1] 100/18 Oh [4] 98/23 104/20 120/24 123/19 okay [3] 42/2 55/7 113/13 old [3] 93/1 93/11 107/22 on [215] once [1] 17/18 one [35] 1/17 25/2 32/8 32/12 32/24 38/5 order [6] 16/7 64/1 39/2 39/16 40/19 45/22 47/25 48/12 48/12 49/1 49/12 54/2 54/13 60/12 60/24 61/14 62/15 64/25 71/17 76/8 76/21 81/1 89/13 89/15 98/18 112/5 112/6 117/3 117/22 122/11 122/24 4/11 22/12 32/11 one-off [1] 89/15 ongoing [1] 74/6 only [17] 5/17 17/18 28/9 48/24 49/1 55/16 original [3] 83/11 58/6 60/12 65/23 67/7 89/13 96/9 102/13 109/21 109/25 119/1 122/4 onto [4] 29/9 39/18 40/21 113/23 open [2] 32/11 114/19 operate [3] 17/5 53/14 114/8 operating [1] 65/17 operation [2] 43/21 110/7 operational [6] 17/16 37/16 operationally [1] 76/24 opinion [2] 6/10 81/6 **Oppenheim** [1] 34/9 48/25 61/25 111/10 113/1 opposed [1] 92/16 9/18 49/1 53/24 54/11 114/6 118/10 or [76] 1/13 2/15 3/23 ourselves [1] 93/13 5/5 7/4 10/19 12/10 12/10 13/12 14/12

16/20 19/21 24/3 24/6 25/9 26/22 29/24 30/20 34/3 35/21 38/18 40/1 41/25 45/24 45/25 46/16 47/15 48/10 48/17 50/21 52/5 54/13 55/3 58/20 60/17 61/8 61/16 63/21 64/15 64/23 64/25 65/10 66/24 67/13 70/5 71/17 73/22 76/16 77/11 77/19 80/21 80/23 84/12 85/9 86/13 89/17 90/7 90/8 outstanding [5] 91/1 93/7 95/6 97/8 101/16 101/23 106/22 113/18 113/19 115/25 116/15 120/20 123/18 124/24 79/12 90/6 90/8 97/1 orders [1] 57/14 organisation [12] 4/17 5/2 7/7 29/24 82/12 94/18 94/25 95/3 95/16 95/17 95/18 115/22 organisations [4] 114/6 organisations' [1] 102/21 105/10 105/16 originally [5] 25/4 25/24 47/10 78/8 86/7 originated [1] 120/4 other [27] 3/11 4/11 9/20 10/20 14/21 17/25 21/20 28/12 39/10 55/13 65/6 71/18 81/4 84/11 87/18 87/23 90/13 96/17 100/7 112/6 112/7 114/7 114/8 115/16 115/25 117/8 121/11 22/3 26/17 28/1 29/18 others [7] 36/1 49/17 62/18 88/22 94/24 96/11 100/23 ought [2] 45/6 82/14 our [26] 28/13 28/13 29/11 56/9 56/13 57/2 opportunity [5] 15/23 57/19 57/25 58/3 58/3 68/2 68/23 78/16 79/2 81/6 91/1 91/17 92/9 92/16 92/16 92/24 98/4 101/22 103/15 out [30] 7/14 17/16 22/22 28/1 29/17

30/22 31/2 48/22 50/2 51/12 51/16 53/9 54/7 60/15 61/25 68/21 71/4 82/24 83/6 85/10 85/12 92/5 96/19 97/15 97/25 98/8 101/23 108/4 109/10 113/16 outlet [4] 17/17 79/15 80/2 87/1 outlets [4] 17/19 79/5 80/21 87/21 outlines [1] 28/6 outside [2] 5/8 120/10 40/11 41/9 41/11 110/20 110/24 113/14 over [51] 3/4 7/1 7/12 14/2 19/6 20/18 21/12 21/19 24/25 28/5 33/15 35/24 37/5 39/19 41/2 42/10 42/16 46/20 49/5 49/13 55/25 56/23 57/11 62/25 63/10 64/19 65/14 69/6 69/16 70/7 71/15 71/18 73/8 74/8 76/23 77/7 80/10 81/14 86/9 87/5 88/23 89/5 89/22 90/11 93/21 96/11 99/18 99/19 99/20 105/19 122/19 overall [5] 18/24 24/3 84/23 89/17 90/5 overarching [1] 5/2 overcome [4] 44/23 45/17 49/22 50/3 overriding [1] 1/22 own [3] 24/7 58/1 106/7 owner [2] 25/10 25/11

PA [4] 7/15 14/3 14/5 14/24 package [2] 65/5 104/9 packet [1] 33/12 page [118] 1/13 1/13 7/1 7/1 7/12 7/12 9/3 9/10 9/23 11/4 12/4 12/23 13/9 14/2 15/8 16/12 18/22 18/23 19/6 19/6 20/18 20/22 20/23 20/23 20/24 21/19 23/15 24/25 24/25 26/9 27/10 28/4 28/5 28/19 28/20 28/21 29/22 30/6 33/12 33/16 34/8 36/10 36/15 36/23

73/16 74/2 74/20 P **paperwork** [2] 9/17 parallel [1] 16/21 phase [4] 5/7 23/22 67/4 paraphrase [1] 85/12 93/24 94/1 94/2 24/15 24/20 page... [74] 37/3 37/4 paragraph [66] 1/18 106/20 Paul [1] 27/2 phases [1] 25/5 37/6 38/24 38/25 39/4 4/4 5/15 8/9 8/13 9/13 parcels [1] 115/24 Pause [2] 20/8 33/17 phrase [1] 118/12 39/12 39/19 40/15 10/13 11/17 12/3 part [20] 12/24 17/11 pausing [2] 50/20 phrased [1] 71/18 40/16 40/17 40/19 18/4 19/17 30/25 12/24 13/9 14/2 14/24 104/3 pick [2] 111/14 41/2 41/10 42/16 15/9 15/21 15/22 34/15 40/16 43/10 payment [3] 15/18 120/16 42/25 43/8 43/10 16/14 28/6 28/8 28/20 45/16 51/3 56/16 57/5 19/7 28/10 picked [1] 19/20 46/14 46/17 46/18 29/9 33/22 34/11 39/5 57/17 60/22 74/12 payments [4] 64/1 picture [1] 5/17 46/20 46/21 49/13 39/20 41/3 41/4 41/13 83/9 100/2 104/6 86/22 87/1 97/18 piece [2] 52/14 52/21 49/13 53/4 54/12 42/17 45/8 54/12 56/5 105/20 111/25 PayPoint [1] 15/19 pieces [2] 7/18 91/9 55/25 56/23 57/11 57/7 58/11 58/13 59/9 partial [1] 30/19 pigs [1] 61/1 **PDA [4]** 7/6 7/11 58/11 58/12 59/8 59/9 71/24 73/11 73/15 Participants [1] 21/11 21/14 PinICL [1] 22/23 62/23 62/25 62/25 73/23 74/3 74/9 74/23 place [11] 6/10 24/12 100/7 **Peberdy [1]** 55/10 63/5 63/10 64/19 69/6 75/15 75/24 76/10 particular [22] 3/6 people [21] 3/9 4/7 49/20 57/5 63/14 64/6 69/16 69/21 70/8 76/11 76/14 76/17 6/7 8/9 17/3 19/25 4/11 4/20 5/6 20/13 83/23 111/18 114/2 71/15 71/18 72/22 76/23 77/8 79/4 80/11 25/10 28/22 30/5 55/18 59/7 60/14 122/13 122/20 72/22 73/8 74/8 76/23 81/1 86/23 87/14 89/6 32/19 34/1 41/24 60/21 82/14 84/1 84/3 placed [1] 107/17 77/7 78/13 80/10 89/10 89/22 89/23 45/22 46/12 52/23 84/6 91/15 92/25 plan [9] 28/25 67/7 81/14 81/24 85/10 89/25 92/21 97/20 53/19 53/20 58/12 95/11 100/15 118/18 67/22 75/8 77/8 77/9 85/22 85/24 87/5 87/6 102/16 113/5 123/8 65/17 84/11 85/17 121/11 122/8 85/5 85/15 89/18 88/23 88/24 89/5 paragraph 1 [2] 56/5 86/8 92/11 per [5] 43/24 72/14 planned [5] 25/4 89/22 93/21 96/16 74/9 particularly [7] 10/6 74/15 87/21 105/19 25/24 34/1 36/19 98/6 97/19 97/19 98/25 10/9 15/19 21/17 36/1 perceive [1] 92/25 plans [2] 21/16 92/24 paragraph 1.3 [2] 99/4 101/16 111/16 45/3 118/16 12/24 28/6 perceived [1] 119/17 **platform [2]** 17/9 113/25 perception [1] 59/1 Paragraph 11 [1] parties [9] 24/18 17/10 page 1 [2] 30/6 89/25 34/20 34/25 35/7 please [67] 1/7 2/5 **perform [1]** 28/11 111/16 Paragraph 12 [1] 39/22 40/9 103/6 performance [4] 35/3 6/24 8/8 8/23 9/4 9/23 page 11 [1] 28/5 92/21 114/12 125/4 35/4 72/12 75/19 12/20 12/23 13/9 page 12 [1] 69/21 parts [5] 17/25 35/15 16/12 18/15 18/22 **paragraph 2 [2]** 13/9 **performed** [2] 29/8 page 13 [1] 26/9 54/6 91/8 122/8 19/6 20/19 20/22 73/11 78/18 page 14 [1] 28/19 pass [4] 39/6 39/15 perhaps [15] 1/19 21/19 23/15 24/25 Paragraph 2.1 [1] page 15 [2] 16/12 39/21 40/17 2/3 7/14 22/5 24/11 27/10 28/4 28/5 28/19 123/8 46/14 29/22 33/18 38/4 41/2 paragraph 2.4 [2] passage [4] 27/15 29/9 33/11 36/15 37/3 page 18 [1] 1/13 14/2 14/24 48/3 51/5 55/9 93/21 97/18 102/16 39/4 39/19 42/14 page 2 [4] 20/22 passages [1] 46/22 107/10 117/7 117/24 42/17 42/25 43/8 46/9 Paragraph 2.5 [1] 20/23 58/12 81/24 46/15 46/20 48/11 15/9 passed [10] 10/10 period [21] 7/25 page 22 [1] 46/17 12/9 23/13 29/20 30/5 18/18 19/18 21/10 49/13 55/22 56/23 paragraph 2.8 [1] page 23 [1] 46/21 47/2 80/3 90/2 119/19 57/11 62/17 62/23 22/21 34/18 50/22 15/21 page 24 [1] 49/13 62/25 63/10 64/6 paragraph 21 [1] 121/7 71/7 77/10 77/13 page 3 [6] 7/1 9/3 102/16 passes [3] 39/7 39/8 77/18 86/2 86/9 86/25 64/19 69/6 71/8 71/15 18/22 18/23 29/22 39/13 96/22 97/24 98/21 74/8 74/23 77/7 78/7 paragraph 24 [1] 36/10 99/1 105/16 109/22 80/10 82/6 85/5 85/10 1/18 passing [1] 21/15 page 37 [1] 33/12 85/24 86/20 87/5 past [3] 35/24 42/3 124/4 paragraph 26 [1] page 4 [6] 7/12 9/23 42/4 88/23 89/22 96/12 9/13 **period**, [1] 86/13 19/6 59/8 59/9 97/19 96/16 98/19 113/11 **Pathway [55]** 9/14 period, August 1999 paragraph 3 [4] page 45 [1] 34/8 73/15 74/23 77/8 89/6 10/3 19/9 19/15 21/16 **[1]** 86/13 plenty [1] 43/8 page 5 [5] 27/10 21/22 22/18 22/19 paragraph 4 [1] **permanent** [1] 98/9 ploughed [2] 57/24 72/22 73/8 85/10 73/23 27/21 28/23 29/3 32/6 permission [2] 57/25 96/16 32/15 32/22 34/15 paragraph 41 [1] 112/18 120/11 **pm [4]** 55/18 102/5 page 6 [6] 23/15 35/11 35/17 36/1 36/5 permits [1] 17/23 5/15 102/7 125/19 36/15 39/4 40/15 36/6 37/10 37/23 **permitted** [2] 51/16 **PO99 [3]** 62/19 62/24 paragraph 5 [1] 42/25 99/4 38/10 38/11 51/1 51/9 123/1 75/15 63/3 page 7 [2] 24/25 37/3 51/12 54/9 56/10 57/3 person [6] 3/10 paragraph 51 [1] 4/4 **PO99/78 [2]** 62/19 page 8 [1] 62/23 57/18 58/2 66/25 38/15 48/12 60/7 62/24 paragraph 6 [1] page 9 [6] 28/4 37/6 76/11 70/14 70/23 72/5 107/16 115/3 PO99/79 [1] 63/3 43/8 43/10 85/22 72/11 73/12 74/4 paragraph 7 [2] personal [1] 52/9 pocket [2] 58/3 58/6 85/24 74/12 74/24 75/2 80/1 personally [3] 32/15 76/23 89/10 **POCL [50]** 7/6 17/14 pages [4] 28/5 33/13 80/15 85/14 86/1 86/5 47/21 109/1 17/21 19/12 21/15 paragraph 9 [2] 46/14 55/13 88/4 92/23 93/5 93/20 personnel [1] 24/13 21/18 21/25 22/10 89/22 89/23 pages of [1] 55/13 28/24 37/13 37/14 paragraphs [3] 7/13 93/24 98/5 98/13 perspective [3] 95/7 paper [2] 28/4 73/16 12/6 43/11 117/14 116/5 118/9 38/17 39/23 51/13 papers [3] 10/8 53/15 54/2 54/3 55/16 paragraphs 2.5 [1] Pathway's [11] 23/21 PFI [4] 35/23 36/7 122/14 122/14 7/13 28/15 33/25 70/19 37/24 93/4 59/1 62/8 71/20 72/1

18/15 pre [3] 67/12 67/15 95/18 99/5 101/15 50/25 59/7 60/16 P POL00029221 [1] 77/6 106/16 120/3 122/13 61/23 62/14 64/5 **POCL... [28]** 73/18 98/19 pre-Horizon [1] 77/6 problem [20] 27/21 64/17 66/21 71/3 74/5 74/24 75/1 75/8 POL00031119 [1] Pre-Meeting [1] 37/22 37/25 40/12 97/15 100/2 104/7 76/20 77/10 77/18 26/8 67/15 41/12 44/20 68/10 105/19 111/18 112/16 78/18 79/7 79/8 79/10 POL00031231 [1] precise [1] 36/2 68/15 68/22 73/19 114/9 114/10 114/13 79/14 80/5 80/17 81/3 82/24 87/16 87/23 12/20 precisely [3] 12/11 programmes [2] 85/14 85/15 86/1 86/7 88/13 100/23 100/23 POL00038829 [1] 84/10 90/12 105/2 112/21 93/7 94/1 96/22 96/23 predict [1] 74/7 109/21 109/25 110/1 progress [7] 7/10 27/1 102/23 112/7 115/22 110/10 79/2 89/16 90/4 92/22 POL00039891 [1] prefer [3] 101/22 121/22 101/23 101/25 problematic [1] 61/6 92/24 93/16 33/11 **POCL's [15]** 13/10 preferable [1] 50/16 POL00069096 [1] problems [45] 16/2 progressed [1] 26/21 15/11 16/17 23/19 19/14 19/24 26/16 20/15 preferred [3] 10/1 prohibitively [1] 58/9 66/24 70/20 70/22 28/1 44/8 44/17 44/22 project [45] 2/23 POL00090839 [1] 10/4 10/14 71/22 72/13 74/13 78/6 **Prejudice [1]** 34/19 45/1 45/9 45/13 45/17 3/19 5/21 6/14 8/24 74/19 80/8 80/24 91/1 political [1] 118/16 47/19 48/7 49/21 50/3 10/19 10/19 11/18 **premature** [2] 11/8 51/11 54/14 55/11 15/6 18/5 18/8 19/21 politics [1] 112/16 116/21 point [41] 1/17 3/11 **polling [2]** 79/13 prepared [1] 58/3 55/16 56/5 61/9 72/17 24/3 27/5 27/11 27/18 14/9 14/10 14/12 79/19 preparing [1] 84/6 72/18 72/18 72/21 28/7 29/4 30/23 30/24 14/23 21/13 21/19 pollings [1] 79/15 75/4 75/9 75/13 88/6 30/25 31/8 31/14 32/3 prescribed [1] 24/14 42/25 49/12 42/11 45/25 53/10 poor [1] 47/8 124/10 88/12 93/10 104/18 49/23 51/21 51/21 present [14] 7/3 populate [1] 80/6 106/16 106/18 108/18 53/16 53/23 70/18 51/25 56/19 63/25 population [1] 59/24 15/14 20/20 42/18 108/23 109/9 109/11 94/14 99/21 107/20 64/12 64/19 65/13 position [7] 3/2 68/5 42/19 43/25 47/12 109/12 110/2 110/7 108/1 108/5 110/2 68/9 71/11 71/18 69/25 109/8 109/13 47/18 50/16 63/12 117/25 118/10 122/11 112/2 114/17 116/1 71/22 83/6 85/25 79/15 111/14 111/15 116/14 117/23 120/7 115/7 122/24 procedures [2] 26/6 92/14 97/16 97/24 123/25 124/3 124/5 positive [2] 52/21 121/16 74/22 98/7 98/22 98/24 52/22 president [2] 54/21 **proceed [3]** 15/5 projects [6] 4/6 110/17 115/11 117/23 possibility [1] 34/22 55/13 64/23 100/14 16/21 18/1 102/22 118/7 118/15 118/18 possible [12] 13/11 102/23 104/23 pressed [1] 38/6 process [17] 1/21 118/19 124/20 124/21 13/15 15/24 16/9 pressure [9] 8/7 11/7 3/22 3/22 3/24 10/24 promise [1] 76/9 pointed [2] 51/16 17/23 38/11 44/14 13/17 13/19 56/20 28/15 43/14 56/9 promptly [1] 96/22 82/24 56/16 57/14 57/17 79/2 80/22 97/7 98/1 59/5 122/2 122/4 prone [1] 16/18 **Pointing [1]** 53/9 113/4 122/21 58/2 58/5 82/7 87/17 proper [1] 29/7 points [6] 40/13 85/8 possibly [7] 61/7 pressures [9] 7/22 95/9 102/23 properly [2] 92/6 102/14 113/17 120/17 75/23 78/22 83/6 7/24 7/24 8/3 56/18 **processes** [5] 80/9 92/9 120/22 88/10 97/15 98/13 59/10 117/25 118/17 93/17 93/19 104/22 proportion [1] POL00000352 [2] post [57] 2/11 2/17 122/7 107/22 104/25 62/16 69/21 2/20 2/25 3/19 4/5 processing [5] 29/18 proposal [1] 85/12 pressuring [1] 58/2 POL00028320 [1] 71/21 72/24 74/1 86/5 4/14 4/23 5/1 5/10 presumably [7] proposed [4] 10/14 23/5 5/11 6/17 7/4 10/11 23/12 24/2 28/16 procurement [2] 9/6 10/20 33/24 68/8 POL00028337 [1] 13/20 20/7 30/24 32/6 48/17 67/17 78/3 22/6 prosecuted [3] 33/7 33/10 47/14 50/2 78/24 108/19 108/24 119/3 produce [2] 69/5 POL00028338 [1] 61/17 62/17 63/1 63/6 pretty [4] 24/2 64/16 79/8 prosecuting [1] 86/20 83/18 115/21 118/18 63/22 66/19 78/15 produced [8] 22/19 POL00028362 [2] 31/7 32/23 33/1 48/1 78/16 83/23 84/20 prevent [3] 97/1 prosecution [1] 67/11 70/8 84/22 98/22 102/15 109/2 113/19 65/5 92/2 92/3 119/8 POL00028363 [1] 102/25 103/4 103/7 preview [1] 87/17 product [8] 10/7 prosecutions [2] 66/14 103/12 103/16 103/22 **previous** [7] 9/5 13/25 16/4 19/14 23/2 75/23 118/20 POL00028370 [1] 103/23 104/21 105/2 26/15 26/22 27/15 36/4 49/10 119/10 protect [2] 116/2 36/9 105/12 107/21 107/22 33/25 39/13 114/3 **production [1]** 71/14 116/3 POL00028406 [1] 110/8 115/12 115/13 **previously [3]** 13/2 products [2] 48/20 **proud [1]** 109/24 113/9 115/15 115/16 115/18 58/21 82/21 prove [2] 11/8 116/22 80/21 POL00028419 [2] 117/18 119/8 119/20 primary [1] 80/8 profile [1] 73/20 proven [2] 10/16 72/9 38/22 123/2 119/24 prime [1] 93/23 programme [53] 2/24 provide [9] 5/5 5/6 POL00028439 [1] postal [1] 57/14 principally [1] 28/24 2/25 3/4 4/20 5/7 6/25 21/23 36/7 54/21 57/9 78/11 7/8 7/17 7/20 7/23 8/5 75/6 78/16 93/25 posting [1] 97/22 print [1] 87/16 POL00028451 [2] potential [3] 75/18 10/2 13/7 13/18 14/8 provided [4] 21/2 printing [1] 57/12 8/23 116/19 90/21 117/9 prior [6] 11/25 12/14 14/10 14/14 14/17 73/18 74/24 78/8 POL00028507 [1] **potentially [5]** 15/16 39/14 87/6 87/7 87/20 14/25 15/2 16/4 19/21 **provides [2]** 75/11 97/12 20/13 21/7 21/12 15/23 27/25 29/19 prison [1] 119/5 80/13 POL00028550 [1] 75/20 probable [1] 43/20 25/13 25/25 29/10 **providing** [1] 10/1 88/19 31/2 35/15 36/18 **power [1]** 47/13 probably [10] 2/1 **Provincial** [1] 39/24 POL00028597 [1] pragmatic [1] 118/15 53/14 57/2 91/23 36/20 37/2 37/5 37/6 **provision [1]** 97/6

(48) POCL... - provision

	5: TOT 117/11 100/10	17/00		4 1001 4 4 10
P	raft [2] 117/11 122/12		register [2] 40/12	report [22] 14/9
provoka [41 50/25	raise [2] 95/24	recent [1] 114/7	41/12	14/19 18/16 19/11
provoke [1] 59/25	102/13	recently [1] 28/11	Rego [3] 27/7 27/8	27/5 27/12 28/7 29/25
public [1] 76/20			29/21	30/3 30/15 31/7 31/15
pulled [2] 30/22 54/7	raised [11] 25/16	recipient [3] 20/17		
pulling [1] 31/2	25/18 25/20 31/9	39/1 97/13	regret [4] 66/10	31/16 32/3 33/1 37/6
	31/10 31/18 47/19	recipients [1] 29/23	66/11 109/3 109/21	38/23 42/14 46/16
Punch [1] 35/14	56/8 58/22 65/25 96/1	recital [1] 48/6	regular [2] 96/7 96/7	52/17 120/7 121/24
purported [1] 88/15				
purpose [6] 16/18	raises [1] 23/20	recognise [1] 24/7	related [2] 20/12	reported [4] 77/11
25/6 26/9 33/21 36/17	ran [2] 66/18 105/11	recollection [6] 18/5	87/12	77/19 86/24 121/14
	range [2] 13/5 85/20	30/10 37/21 43/5 66/8	relates [3] 19/17	reportee [1] 111/23
85/11	Rapid [1] 29/1	111/1	59/22 124/16	reporting [2] 68/13
purposes [1] 43/12				92/24
pursue [1] 103/22	rate [7] 43/18 43/23	reconcile [1] 86/4	relating [3] 19/19	∪ _/
pursued [2] 57/3		reconciliation [2]	77/16 86/8	represent [2] 106/12
103/24	88/1	68/13 80/9	relation [5] 10/6 63/6	119/2
	rather [8] 15/7 60/7	reconstructing [1]	71/23 98/3 116/17	representative [3]
pushed [1] 120/20	60/18 71/5 72/18	79/14		7/3 7/3 45/23
put [12] 11/13 21/20			relatively [4] 2/2	
42/21 58/3 61/2 95/19	75/23 91/21 124/20	record [15] 33/21	28/23 43/18 74/17	represented [1]
96/4 100/17 112/19	rating [5] 71/22	33/25 34/6 38/20	release [3] 34/2 97/4	102/11
	71/23 71/24 72/7	43/12 63/18 70/4 70/6	122/13	representing [3] 7/5
114/23 115/6 116/18	79/10	75/11 75/14 76/20	relevant [9] 8/10 26/8	
Q	reach [1] 68/17	78/11 79/17 80/13	33/13 46/14 46/22	reputation [1] 76/20
qualification [3]	reached [1] 113/21	109/3	53/2 76/14 81/5 92/4	request [3] 78/21
	reaching [1] 81/5	recruit [2] 4/7 4/10	reliable [1] 15/25	96/22 106/8
68/16 81/16 110/5	reacted [1] 36/1	recruited [1] 4/22	rely [2] 5/5 49/18	require [2] 68/1
qualified [2] 3/15			, , ,	
100/3	read [24] 3/6 7/13	rectification [4]	remained [1] 69/24	77/10
quality [2] 40/1 47/8	12/22 13/2 14/2 15/22	67/22 77/8 77/9 89/18	remaining [2] 82/7	required [6] 8/21
	16/13 24/11 27/14	recur [1] 68/11	89/14	29/16 68/6 86/16
quantify [3] 22/1	28/3 28/16 33/18	recurrence [1] 97/2	remains [2] 13/10	90/24 114/11
26/17 80/23				
question [16] 15/1	33/21 34/17 43/6	recurrences [1]	17/9	requirement [2] 87/4
28/14 30/15 43/2 51/3	43/11 46/22 65/11	87/25	remedial [3] 23/23	93/24
	65/22 71/24 92/1	red [6] 23/15 23/24	24/12 24/13	requirements [4]
60/11 60/13 66/6	96/18 113/16 121/24	24/22 25/13 38/1 38/2	1	27/24 29/8 29/11 77/3
103/21 104/4 109/15				
109/16 114/23 123/13	reading [5] 33/19	redeclaration [1]	remedy [1] 11/2	requires [2] 13/11
124/16 124/23	40/13 55/8 98/15	57/12	remember [70] 3/21	17/18
1	125/2	redefine [1] 53/25	9/7 9/21 12/11 12/21	resisted [1] 95/17
Questioned [8] 1/6	ready [1] 113/6	redesign [2] 31/25	12/22 14/7 15/17	resolution [5] 57/15
102/8 106/11 111/7				
126/4 126/5 126/6	reaffirming [1] 13/20	57/5	15/25 16/2 16/8 16/23	
126/7	real [3] 5/12 60/13	reduced [3] 87/25	16/24 17/1 18/18 21/3	85/15
	108/23	88/9 89/12	21/4 27/11 28/2 30/9	resolve [1] 77/1
questioning [3]	really [13] 4/5 9/11	reduction [6] 38/11	30/11 33/16 34/16	resolved [3] 36/21
109/19 116/6 122/23	00/44 05/40 40/47		l .	
questions [12] 13/23	20/11 35/16 40/17	39/17 40/20 90/1	34/17 35/9 35/23	51/12 99/10
13/24 41/23 42/20	59/13 59/16 83/1	124/13 125/3	35/24 39/1 39/2 40/22	resource [4] 4/21
45/20 100/6 100/12	105/12 111/17 113/15	reference [19] 13/15	41/4 43/4 44/3 45/14	58/1 76/25 77/2
	444/5 444/04	14/3 23/5 24/13 34/24	l .	
101/13 102/10 102/13	reason [5] 31/4 50/18		56/4 58/13 62/12	64/4 78/17 91/23
106/3 123/2				
quick [1] 69/21	65/7 106/23 119/1	48/15 51/19 67/2	62/20 62/21 63/11	122/24 123/2
quid [1] 115/25	reasonable [1]	69/16 93/22 94/1 94/2		respectfully [1]
quite [18] 7/21 8/1	101/19	94/3 102/17 107/10	66/17 67/3 68/19	118/5
	reasonably [1] 43/6	124/14	72/24 73/5 73/7 77/23	
26/23 34/18 40/23			77/25 82/17 82/18	
41/23 48/7 62/21	reasons [1] 107/18	references [1] 35/25	l .	responds [1] 57/7
65/20 78/22 88/20	reboot [1] 72/14	referred [1] 44/8	83/2 84/10 85/17 87/9	
92/15 95/11 101/1	recall [9] 10/12 26/4	referring [1] 5/3	87/11 89/1 96/5 96/14	34/9 45/10 45/16 51/2
	10/05 00/0 05/0 00/0	refers [3] 37/22 56/5	108/2 113/20 114/19	57/8 57/17
117/14 120/10 120/19	86/11 121/9 121/10	71/19	124/12 124/14	responsibilities [1]
124/9				
quote [1] 27/18	recategorised [1]	refinements [1]	remembered [1] 13/2	94/21
quoted [2] 48/23	85/14	17/22	remind [4] 7/8 30/21	responsibility [4]
	receipts [3] 86/22	reflect [1] 48/3	49/6 64/6	93/23 94/3 109/9
69/15	86/25 97/18	reflected [2] 55/20	removed [2] 48/11	114/10
D				
<u>R</u>	received [13] 23/7	76/2	48/14	responsible [3]
racked [2] 110/21		reflection [1] 61/7	removing [1] 125/11	38/16 116/7 116/9
110/23	75/1 83/17 99/8 99/10	regard [5] 16/6 21/17	replace [3] 74/20	restart [1] 47/15
	105/22 105/25 110/4	31/2 34/22 103/8	100/1 114/2	result [8] 7/19 25/8
RAD [2] 29/5 29/6				
radar [1] 84/5	110/6	rogarding [2] 1//10	ronlacina [41 46/19	70/15 65/1 20// 06/2
	110/6	regarding [3] 14/18	replacing [1] 16/13	29/15 65/1 80/4 96/3
	110/6 receiving [2] 39/1	regarding [3] 14/18 19/1 38/9	Replan [1] 33/24	29/15 65/1 80/4 96/3 122/3 125/8

38/22 56/8 73/20 123/12 40/10 41/5 74/3 76/16 R Roberts [13] 6/13 11/19 12/10 62/1 109/12 scroll [8] 12/5 15/21 97/20 resulted [2] 80/18 95/14 111/20 114/15 **SAPADS [1]** 16/22 27/17 40/5 45/20 sentences [1] 76/16 89/15 114/20 114/22 115/17 **SAPCON [1]** 16/22 56/23 71/15 91/2 **September [6]** 1/11 resulting [2] 37/16 115/23 116/6 116/25 sat [2] 5/3 5/22 scrolling [1] 54/24 22/22 34/10 85/6 80/24 Roberts' [1] 115/8 satisfactorily [5] second [16] 20/23 86/13 123/16 results [5] 23/16 29/12 49/22 50/1 25/2 28/7 34/10 38/5 robust [12] 24/16 September 1999 [1] 23/18 29/19 40/2 24/21 65/15 65/19 38/24 39/4 42/17 45/8 85/6 57/18 67/7 79/18 66/4 66/13 70/3 71/1 45/8 53/7 57/13 63/3 serious [16] 22/19 satisfactory [3] retender [1] 54/1 93/25 94/8 106/21 68/14 85/16 92/24 23/20 23/25 27/21 78/13 80/11 113/25 retest [1] 68/1 satisfy [3] 14/22 **Secondly [1]** 101/7 107/3 28/14 32/7 38/2 41/20 retested [2] 39/22 robustness [3] 21/24 93/13 101/3 secret [2] 101/7 44/8 44/22 45/16 67/6 22/9 83/15 saw [7] 35/19 62/1 115/17 47/18 76/6 77/17 81/9 **retrospect** [1] 94/16 72/21 86/6 100/17 secretary [5] 23/11 89/8 role [7] 3/15 3/21 return [1] 121/4 3/23 8/4 95/1 95/1 108/17 115/18 23/12 51/6 52/11 98/9 **seriously [3]** 19/4 revealed [2] 22/14 114/9 say [39] 2/6 4/10 4/23 secretary's [1] 24/6 31/3 31/5 52/8 14/10 17/7 27/9 31/5 roles [2] 4/12 8/21 **section [1]** 16/12 seriousness [1] 20/6 **reversion** [2] 93/1 see [29] 6/17 11/24 **roll [1]** 29/17 35/16 45/14 47/13 **service [21]** 19/13 93/11 rolled [2] 28/1 50/1 48/11 51/25 52/4 17/12 18/16 20/17 37/13 37/15 37/17 review [10] 12/20 53/24 60/10 61/23 21/13 34/8 34/18 65/15 65/19 66/5 rollout [17] 11/8 15/14 17/12 24/18 68/15 77/14 82/20 41/20 43/7 51/10 52/6 66/13 70/3 71/2 72/5 11/25 12/14 37/18 43/19 47/15 68/6 43/17 43/23 44/23 84/3 94/6 100/9 52/22 54/23 58/19 74/12 74/13 74/14 98/20 112/14 112/14 45/18 57/20 64/20 100/22 101/18 101/21 63/2 67/2 73/4 85/22 74/20 75/7 93/25 94/9 reviewed [2] 9/17 64/23 69/7 70/9 88/21 102/20 103/15 104/7 85/24 102/19 107/12 106/21 107/3 114/11 10/25 103/23 116/21 119/4 104/21 105/7 105/21 110/4 113/24 117/6 sessions [1] 104/14 reviewing [2] 10/7 106/1 109/21 110/11 119/1 119/5 119/25 room [4] 48/12 56/14 set [7] 14/1 24/16 83/2 116/6 119/14 119/22 60/15 100/23 121/5 24/21 79/17 91/12 reviews [2] 112/13 root [8] 19/12 19/24 120/15 125/6 seeing [1] 109/9 98/10 107/21 124/2 68/6 73/13 73/19 75/4 saying [23] 24/19 seeking [1] 26/5 sets [2] 85/10 85/12 revised [4] 56/13 96/24 97/8 37/24 48/24 52/15 seem [5] 43/9 44/25 settle [2] 91/15 92/5 63/21 64/15 87/17 round [2] 11/1 11/3 63/7 63/17 64/14 73/4 45/9 53/15 97/13 **settlement [2]** 16/20 revisit [1] 16/9 route [4] 83/21 84/20 77/22 81/21 82/5 83/4 seemed [6] 22/6 76/12 rework [2] 27/24 84/22 94/15 88/17 93/11 94/10 58/24 62/2 67/7 86/7 **settling [1]** 76/5 29/15 routes [2] 17/7 54/3 94/13 95/4 103/3 115/10 seven [2] 47/1 47/23 rewrite [3] 31/25 Royal [1] 4/24 104/17 104/20 104/24 seems [20] 12/24 severe [1] 46/24 51/11 58/20 Royal Mail [1] 4/24 105/4 116/9 14/21 21/2 25/17 **severely [1]** 71/23 Rich [1] 27/2 25/17 56/1 67/8 70/14 severity [6] 70/13 **Rugby [1]** 48/6 says [64] 3/5 7/18 Richard [3] 50/5 50/6 ruined [1] 108/15 8/10 9/11 10/13 13/4 70/22 75/21 77/16 71/22 72/7 78/3 79/10 50/14 77/21 88/6 88/11 13/9 14/4 16/14 18/2 85/21 rule [1] 124/15 rift [2] 123/21 123/23 18/23 19/8 20/24 90/18 91/19 91/20 shall [3] 96/20 97/1 rule 10 [1] 124/15 rifts [2] 112/5 120/7 rules [1] 36/7 21/21 25/23 26/2 99/2 100/25 116/5 125/16 right [27] 2/12 3/2 3/9 run [2] 47/8 125/10 27/19 28/8 33/22 37/8 seen [22] 11/13 **shape [1]** 48/20 3/10 8/15 8/16 27/3 run-up [1] 125/10 39/12 40/6 40/10 18/20 18/21 21/21 share [3] 15/11 15/12 31/5 38/1 42/4 55/7 24/22 29/22 29/24 running [5] 40/7 41/15 42/19 43/2 32/2 59/5 62/7 69/18 84/9 43/14 44/19 47/1 77/5 43/12 43/24 46/23 32/2 38/2 58/16 73/2 shared [3] 30/20 32/8 84/19 95/20 96/8 50/4 52/13 53/8 56/25 73/3 77/15 85/6 93/16 33/9 100/21 101/16 103/5 57/11 59/9 63/2 63/4 94/25 99/6 106/14 shareholder [1] 107/24 108/1 108/12 saddle [1] 119/22 67/15 67/25 68/8 69/4 106/22 108/21 112/23 75/19 109/8 119/13 125/14 saddled [1] 119/16 69/9 69/22 70/9 71/25 113/11 **sharing [3]** 35/20 right-hand [1] 38/1 safely [1] 94/5 75/16 77/4 77/9 77/20 Select [4] 114/21 35/21 37/20 rigorous [2] 11/25 said [32] 1/20 5/15 79/6 79/23 80/11 81/2 114/25 115/1 115/4 **she [2]** 53/11 119/5 12/14 6/5 9/13 15/3 44/21 85/11 87/14 89/6 sheet [2] 76/2 80/20 **selected** [1] 3/21 Riposte [2] 10/7 10/9 48/9 48/13 49/17 89/25 90/16 91/3 selection [1] 3/24 sheets [2] 47/1 47/23 rise [1] 47/4 50/20 50/25 51/8 55/4 93/22 96/19 99/7 senior [7] 2/20 54/17 **shelf [1]** 10/21 rising [1] 120/9 58/7 60/12 60/15 111/13 111/14 54/18 84/12 115/3 shifted [3] 57/22 59/2 risk [6] 10/1 37/6 60/19 62/7 66/3 68/19|scale [3] 10/16 68/17 115/3 117/20 59/20 38/11 71/20 72/23 70/3 78/20 82/25 short [10] 3/5 3/7 74/16 sense [4] 13/18 88/8 81/9 105/18 106/20 107/16 scenes [1] 34/21 116/4 118/10 11/7 39/10 40/14 42/8 risks [15] 11/5 11/6 110/24 115/7 115/10 102/6 116/20 116/20 scheduled [1] 64/20 senses [1] 118/7 11/12 11/14 11/15 116/10 119/20 121/14 scope [3] 25/5 26/2 sensible [1] 54/5 117/5 11/17 11/21 12/16 Sale [1] 63/25 28/7 sent [7] 18/16 27/5 short-term [4] 11/7 36/21 36/25 37/7 sales [1] 87/16 56/2 66/22 73/25 86/3 scoped [1] 36/18 116/20 116/20 117/5 37/14 116/20 117/5 same [10] 13/9 13/25 screen [6] 1/19 2/5 117/21 **shortfalls [3]** 103/18 117/10 17/9 20/16 26/5 34/9 55/9 116/18 117/15 **sentence [6]** 8/10 103/25 104/2

111/17 112/12 112/23 somebody [4] 12/10 80/21 80/21 124/20 S still [17] 6/8 18/25 113/16 116/9 117/6 78/22 99/25 100/2 specifically [2] 68/22 26/19 35/23 37/24 **shortly [3]** 8/12 55/5 118/22 118/25 120/9 something [27] 5/17 78/21 54/11 59/4 61/4 69/25 103/23 120/18 120/24 122/3 6/14 12/16 12/21 specification [2] 73/14 78/6 88/5 88/12 **should [31]** 1/9 1/22 122/5 123/1 123/8 15/17 15/24 18/11 93/19 94/4 88/13 97/18 98/22 8/6 15/2 18/3 25/6 19/20 22/23 23/7 26/1 speeding [1] 52/1 123/15 125/18 103/23 25/21 26/2 36/6 37/1 27/11 28/2 28/16 stock [2] 40/3 123/9 **situation** [3] 31/1 **spend [3]** 70/2 74/9 72/13 79/22 83/4 84/2 30/19 47/6 50/6 50/10 105/18 44/22 51/17 stocks [1] 57/13 84/3 84/12 85/14 situations [1] 51/15 55/17 56/17 57/19 **spent [2]** 4/14 92/14 Stop [1] 53/24 85/16 91/10 94/12 **spoke [1]** 95/15 81/17 95/16 96/13 size [1] 3/18 **stopped [1]** 60/15 94/17 100/13 109/19 96/17 98/16 101/20 sponsor [4] 5/21 **sized [1]** 3/18 **stoppers' [1]** 15/15 110/25 112/11 118/6 94/14 114/16 116/14 **skilled [1]** 3/13 sometimes [2] 17/14 story [1] 7/21 119/9 119/10 121/8 94/23 **Sponsors [1]** 33/23 **skills [1]** 3/11 **straight** [1] 33/12 121/12 124/21 **soon [3]** 13/11 13/15 slightly [5] 27/16 **spring [1]** 36/8 **strategy [5]** 13/11 **shoulders [1]** 83/14 27/17 39/12 41/14 47/7 **squeeze [1]** 17/16 13/21 25/3 25/23 **show [1]** 27/20 sorry [63] 4/1 4/10 72/21 **stability [3]** 68/4 115/21 **showed [1]** 26/15 5/23 6/6 12/5 14/23 **slip [1]** 91/20 71/10 89/11 **straying [1]** 120/10 **showing [1]** 79/16 slow [1] 17/14 18/5 18/6 20/11 20/22 **staff [5]** 8/11 8/19 stream [3] 73/10 80/7 **shown [4]** 72/10 slower [1] 2/3 25/22 26/4 27/16 29/3 44/17 47/25 86/5 113/3 113/4 121/6 stage [40] 7/22 8/7 30/25 33/19 34/17 slowly [1] 2/2 streams [2] 17/20 **shows [1]** 71/12 13/17 22/6 24/3 24/3 small [1] 74/17 35/6 40/16 40/19 80/5 **shutters [2]** 93/1 smaller [2] 53/12 40/25 41/13 50/24 24/17 26/23 28/23 street [1] 91/14 93/12 53/13 52/24 54/25 66/8 70/7 32/7 32/12 33/7 35/9 **strength'** [1] 71/13 side [1] 38/1 Smith [1] 99/20 71/15 72/18 73/14 36/13 40/24 41/21 stress [2] 12/6 60/5 **sided [1]** 87/16 81/21 84/7 88/23 45/12 46/3 47/17 stretch [1] 101/21 **smooth [3]** 102/24 **sight [1]** 122/15 90/12 91/2 91/25 96/5 48/16 50/21 57/21 105/7 105/10 strong [2] 59/6 83/1 sighted [2] 117/1 58/15 59/2 60/2 60/4 98/4 99/11 99/22 so [127] **strongly [1]** 31/15 117/1 104/4 105/23 107/13 61/8 65/6 69/12 70/17 software [19] 11/9 **structure** [1] 56/13 sign [2] 63/21 64/15 19/3 34/2 43/14 44/9 108/8 109/6 109/23 70/25 74/11 75/22 **struggling [1]** 51/15 signal [2] 60/24 77/17 77/21 79/5 94/9 Stuart [16] 5/24 44/21 45/10 45/11 110/12 110/18 111/1 60/25 11/20 12/9 30/2 68/22 100/10 100/12 117/9 45/13 47/7 47/16 112/3 112/8 113/8 **signature** [1] 1/13 47/20 51/11 57/15 115/2 115/5 115/14 stages [1] 58/4 78/22 82/15 82/17 **signed [2]** 64/13 58/21 58/25 59/3 116/4 117/2 117/7 **stamps [1]** 57/14 83/6 83/21 84/24 124/8 61/10 116/22 120/9 120/18 120/24 standard [2] 69/11 94/16 96/6 111/19 significance [1] software-type [1] 121/3 123/19 124/15 70/11 111/23 114/16 83/24 sort [9] 4/18 7/23 **stands** [1] 98/15 study [2] 7/16 113/1 58/21 significant [30] 10/12 **solely [1]** 116/9 8/14 17/4 33/8 40/22 start [9] 2/9 6/21 6/23 stuff [1] 117/13 14/1 15/6 16/19 23/1 sub [4] 50/2 69/11 **solution [11]** 9/25 51/12 68/21 87/8 37/17 42/3 43/16 29/15 32/16 32/20 43/23 113/8 125/16 10/4 10/6 10/15 18/8 sorted [2] 69/2 81/22 70/11 80/3 32/21 32/24 37/5 37/7 19/15 24/22 36/3 68/7 sorting [1] 71/4 started [6] 28/11 **submit [1]** 118/5 43/10 49/4 60/14 68/12 75/7 sought [3] 14/18 29/2 41/3 84/10 submitted [1] 42/20 60/21 61/9 62/3 64/16 solutions [2] 10/21 44/12 114/8 103/22 120/4 subpostmaster [4] 74/18 77/1 77/15 20/5 starts [1] 56/22 44/6 48/9 48/13 49/1 sound [2] 59/16 83/18 100/3 105/1 **solve [1]** 82/23 105/14 state [2] 35/5 35/6 subpostmasters [43] 119/21 119/23 122/21 **statement [17]** 1/10 some [64] 4/14 5/7 sounded [1] 59/18 44/5 44/14 44/15 123/5 125/13 1/10 1/15 2/7 3/5 4/3 5/8 8/14 11/2 11/4 44/17 44/25 45/12 **sounds [2]** 24/6 significantly [3] 3/18 13/16 16/24 22/10 4/4 5/15 9/13 16/16 46/25 47/4 47/19 65/19 75/18 90/11 23/23 24/5 26/6 26/12 **source [1]** 114/19 66/10 66/11 66/13 47/22 48/8 49/18 similar [2] 28/11 south [8] 2/21 14/15 26/20 29/3 29/23 102/17 102/20 104/21 49/25 50/11 51/14 44/16 34/24 35/11 35/12 14/15 44/5 44/9 49/19 104/24 52/19 52/25 54/14 simple [1] 97/24 35/15 35/20 37/20 117/20 117/22 **statements** [1] 80/24 57/6 58/1 58/4 58/23 simpler [2] 18/8 39/8 39/22 40/22 41/5 South Wales [2] 59/11 59/12 59/21 **stating [1]** 54/20 53/22 45/6 45/9 47/4 47/6 65/16 66/1 69/5 91/22 14/15 117/22 statistics [1] 72/8 simply [4] 31/7 45/14 50/9 50/10 50/17 **status [2]** 37/6 38/2 92/13 92/16 102/10 **South West [2]** 44/5 60/22 114/2 50/18 53/7 55/15 44/9 **statutory** [2] 79/9 103/11 103/22 104/13 since [5] 29/6 53/9 56/11 56/19 58/6 60/1 spanning [1] 13/6 104/17 106/13 108/12 81/9 55/15 87/24 117/18 69/16 70/2 74/15 87/8 speak [6] 84/5 95/3 108/18 109/4 109/11 stay [3] 6/22 38/22 **single [2]** 59/14 87/24 88/1 88/6 88/12 100/8 120/23 122/4 88/24 110/3 117/25 87/16 88/25 89/7 90/25 124/22 steer [2] 69/10 70/10 subpostmasters/mist sir [32] 1/4 21/10 91/19 92/22 96/17 speaking [2] 88/25 Steering [6] 20/19 resses [1] 51/14 41/24 84/7 84/14 96/5 97/5 99/13 100/6 95/20 23/6 23/25 31/19 subsequent [1] 100/12 100/20 100/22 special [2] 42/15 100/15 100/22 100/24 99/21 99/22 107/5 101/14 101/17 101/25 101/9 101/11 113/1 51/20 Stein [1] 100/24 subsequently [1] 102/9 106/7 111/5 123/1 specific [5] 4/12 39/2 Stewart [1] 61/23 18/20

91/11 92/5 116/18 11/13 16/24 17/5 S **surprise** [1] 99/3 terminology [1] surprised [2] 34/12 117/3 87/11 35/17 35/18 48/20 substandard [1] takes [2] 33/24 61/15 86/11 terms [8] 10/24 33/25 49/11 50/21 50/22 69/13 surveys [1] 56/22 taking [12] 45/4 45/5 38/12 51/8 52/13 51/9 57/16 60/11 substantial [3] 72/4 55/21 57/5 60/22 survival [2] 6/17 83/15 99/18 122/16 60/12 60/17 83/15 76/22 113/17 115/12 61/14 64/6 83/10 test [11] 23/16 26/24 84/5 91/16 91/22 substantiate [1] 83/23 91/7 95/25 29/14 39/7 39/10 40/2 95/12 96/1 97/22 suspended [1] 50/12 114/8 54/21 79/12 79/16 97/23 103/17 103/18 103/18 substantiating [1] Sweetman [30] 5/24 talk [4] 75/13 79/6 118/20 124/24 103/24 108/20 108/23 80/18 6/2 11/20 12/10 30/2 93/22 113/13 111/11 121/25 testing [30] 11/25 substantive [1] 42/17 talked [2] 110/15 42/21 43/3 43/9 45/21 12/14 22/4 22/7 23/22 themselves [1] succeeded [1] 24/15 24/17 24/17 68/22 78/23 82/15 120/8 125/11 100/19 82/17 83/7 83/22 talking [15] 6/6 37/23 24/20 25/2 25/3 25/5 then [37] 6/11 7/18 **success [1]** 89/12 84/24 94/16 95/25 56/22 69/20 69/22 25/7 25/21 25/23 26/7 10/17 10/21 10/25 successfully [1] 96/6 107/16 110/17 76/1 78/8 79/20 79/21 26/13 26/18 26/19 11/1 11/17 12/3 20/2 43/15 110/21 110/24 111/19 91/3 111/12 112/8 38/23 40/18 40/23 24/22 37/5 40/10 such [10] 28/12 111/24 114/15 114/16 112/11 113/22 116/19 75/8 78/14 108/17 40/18 45/20 60/2 60/2 29/14 40/18 47/8 57/4 60/23 62/7 66/2 66/14 114/20 116/10 116/25 talks [11] 11/17 109/10 109/13 113/24 58/20 74/14 74/21 sympathy [1] 122/24 15/22 19/7 19/7 56/6 114/2 125/3 73/14 76/5 89/2 89/5 76/22 119/12 63/10 71/22 76/11 tests [2] 40/14 78/18 91/11 91/12 98/23 system [94] 11/9 suffered [3] 17/14 than [21] 2/3 15/25 11/25 12/7 16/9 16/17 79/4 89/10 89/23 101/19 102/1 102/2 108/19 109/11 17/1 18/3 19/5 19/7 target [4] 34/3 89/13 22/5 31/7 60/7 60/18 103/5 104/11 107/2 sufficient [3] 4/16 19/18 21/23 22/2 90/6 90/15 64/25 70/1 70/23 71/5 113/4 113/7 123/22 16/16 18/9 22/19 26/24 27/22 targets [3] 75/20 72/11 72/18 75/23 124/8 sufficiently [3] 28/14 86/2 87/23 88/1 91/21 there [239] 27/25 28/1 28/9 28/10 94/22 94/23 62/4 83/1 28/12 28/22 29/2 94/24 116/1 117/24 there's [9] 7/15 16/12 task [2] 22/23 114/14 suggest [5] 14/25 29/12 29/17 32/3 124/20 24/5 25/16 35/11 team [8] 8/14 8/18 62/2 80/14 106/19 43/19 47/1 47/9 47/12 10/20 12/24 27/19 thank [33] 1/7 1/25 40/17 46/17 77/7 89/5 114/1 47/13 49/4 49/6 49/20 36/10 36/13 101/8 4/2 10/13 12/5 24/19 therefore [12] 3/11 suggested [6] 14/20 50/5 50/7 50/9 50/14 technical [19] 2/14 24/25 25/1 33/6 39/19 22/5 37/14 64/3 68/1 27/2 31/25 53/11 50/16 50/18 50/21 40/19 42/5 42/6 44/7 75/1 76/22 80/2 80/22 3/16 4/16 8/14 8/18 54/15 118/4 50/21 50/22 50/23 9/25 10/4 10/6 10/15 46/9 46/15 56/23 86/15 103/12 117/24 suggesting [3] 52/24 52/1 53/12 53/15 10/18 12/15 13/7 85/24 96/9 97/11 these [31] 8/11 8/19 114/18 125/9 17/8 39/15 46/16 51/1 53/22 54/1 54/20 55/4 38/14 45/23 69/23 100/5 101/5 102/4 suggestion [5] 29/4 83/12 103/1 103/8 56/20 59/19 59/24 102/9 106/5 106/10 51/15 55/11 56/7 56/8 30/18 54/4 54/5 57/7 60/6 60/8 60/12 60/17 103/25 106/10 111/5 111/8 62/9 64/9 68/23 69/2 suggestions [1] 30/7 60/18 60/18 60/19 118/25 124/12 125/17 75/2 75/18 76/12 77/1 technically [1] 85/1 **suitability [2]** 37/13 60/23 64/20 65/2 65/8 technological [1] 125/18 77/23 80/14 80/17 38/19 65/15 65/17 66/4 81/5 81/21 82/6 88/1 53/11 thanked [1] 55/10 suitable [1] 79/9 69/11 69/13 70/11 89/11 95/24 97/22 teething [1] 118/10 that [753] **summary [1]** 13/8 that's [48] 2/13 2/22 71/10 71/13 72/17 telephone [1] 51/14 103/25 109/9 118/10 summer [1] 48/16 74/13 74/16 75/10 tell [13] 6/2 16/25 2/24 4/2 4/23 10/14 they [67] 6/3 6/11 supplemental [1] 80/1 80/12 80/15 29/21 32/19 51/9 12/13 13/8 18/2 23/10 8/21 11/21 14/25 15/1 96/13 83/15 87/3 87/15 71/16 84/4 84/7 85/9 24/10 27/8 28/10 31/7 15/2 16/25 17/4 19/24 supplementary [1] 89/11 91/5 91/8 98/6 97/5 107/2 116/12 37/8 41/3 42/24 42/25 25/5 31/11 33/24 36/3 2/9 103/2 103/10 103/20 46/9 46/13 52/3 52/8 36/6 42/21 43/13 124/19 supplier [2] 10/14 104/18 105/25 113/23 telling [1] 81/8 52/11 54/4 55/9 58/12 43/16 43/19 43/22 10/22 116/23 120/4 temptation [1] 62/6 62/24 63/3 66/14 45/6 45/6 48/10 48/13 suppliers [1] 117/12 systems [15] 16/18 120/16 66/22 67/10 69/7 70/6 48/17 48/18 49/5 49/9 support [6] 37/10 21/18 23/19 29/11 70/8 71/8 76/10 76/11 51/12 54/10 54/23 ten [2] 101/21 102/2 37/13 45/7 58/4 60/1 51/1 64/1 64/2 72/13 ten minutes [2] 77/20 79/20 85/25 55/4 55/20 59/4 59/18 74/2 74/19 80/6 90/2 101/21 102/2 97/10 98/24 102/1 60/2 60/25 61/3 65/11 supported [1] 67/21 107/4 109/24 111/5 91/1 91/3 100/4 69/1 73/12 74/4 74/5 tended [1] 4/21 supporting [2] 58/1 tendency [2] 4/9 4/10 111/15 74/7 75/3 75/6 75/21 80/15 their [29] 4/15 10/19 77/22 78/24 81/6 tendering [1] 10/25 **suppose [2]** 111/9 take [19] 2/2 6/20 tension [1] 105/5 14/3 17/6 19/9 27/20 88/13 100/8 103/12 124/23 term [14] 7/6 11/7 24/1 37/7 46/14 51/11 30/14 39/7 40/15 47/5 103/15 104/20 106/1 sure [12] 18/13 30/10 54/15 55/5 60/11 11/9 14/20 20/2 35/14 48/10 48/15 49/5 108/19 108/23 108/24 49/20 52/22 53/6 60/15 62/15 69/3 85/8 81/12 106/15 116/20 49/20 49/21 55/10 116/12 117/9 119/9 61/24 63/13 82/10 98/25 112/25 113/15 116/20 116/20 116/22 55/12 55/20 59/14 119/10 123/24 123/24 82/23 104/8 106/3 114/2 117/15 125/1 117/5 117/5 61/12 69/5 72/6 72/11 124/3 124/5 121/10 taken [13] 3/9 24/12 terminal [1] 72/14 84/4 84/10 85/21 they're [2] 54/9 76/1 surely [4] 69/12 26/13 27/15 31/3 31/5 thing [6] 26/21 32/23 108/15 114/6 120/20 terminate [2] 63/21 81/17 116/17 116/24 36/25 40/14 55/13 64/15 them [31] 5/5 7/14 51/3 53/16 98/10

F				
T	tie [1] 98/5	too [9] 6/22 15/4	true [4] 1/15 25/6	91/6 95/18
thing [1] 101/25	tight [4] 56/11 56/18	53/16 53/16 53/17	91/24 109/24	undertaking [3] 14/3
things [20] 8/5 9/20	58/14 58/17	57/9 95/6 105/14	try [5] 11/2 48/20	102/23 104/22
12/13 16/7 41/18 52/6	Tim [1] 106/12	118/14	93/7 105/9 109/2	underway [2] 24/14
55/14 59/20 61/3	time [95] 2/4 2/5 4/6	took [13] 3/4 5/11	trying [13] 20/11 35/9	65/6
70/22 72/17 81/21	4/14 4/24 5/18 6/1 6/5	21/12 26/6 26/15 49/1	35/13 35/16 36/2	unease [1] 83/3
83/4 95/5 99/16 99/24	6/7 6/15 7/22 7/23	58/13 63/14 86/6	48/22 60/1 60/20	unfortunately [3]
101/4 107/7 107/11	7/24 7/24 8/3 8/6 10/3	105/3 108/20 122/13	116/2 116/3 116/3	56/13 74/9 101/2
117/11	10/5 10/12 10/23	122/20	116/4 116/6	unilaterally [1] 54/7
think [142]	11/12 11/14 12/12	top [6] 20/24 36/11	Tuesday [2] 125/17	unimpeachable [1]
thinking [1] 94/17	12/17 12/25 12/25	37/4 37/8 67/17 81/25	125/20	118/19
third [8] 12/23 43/17	13/13 13/16 13/19	topic [1] 41/24	turn [4] 7/12 87/5	unit [1] 107/21
68/9 79/4 85/25 89/25	16/3 16/10 17/23	Torquay [1] 44/6	102/16 104/11	unjustified [1] 34/14
90/1 96/12	18/12 18/14 18/21	total [1] 79/14	turnaround [1] 90/15	unjustly [1] 108/13
this [318]	21/6 22/24 22/25	totally [1] 30/19	turned [1] 20/2	unpredictable [1]
Thornton [1] 66/19	23/11 26/11 26/18	totals [1] 87/1	turnover [1] 74/14	29/19
those [51] 2/3 4/7 5/6	28/17 29/16 30/20	touch [2] 51/21 82/8	turns [1] 109/10	unraveled [1] 66/12
6/22 8/3 8/22 10/23	30/22 31/24 32/1 35/2	towards [2] 33/2 48/8	twice [1] 77/5	unreliable [2] 11/9
11/5 11/12 11/14	35/3 35/22 41/8 45/4	TP [1] 97/23	two [15] 7/17 22/11	116/22
11/14 12/6 12/9 16/23	45/5 45/14 46/8 51/2	track [2] 33/25 34/6	28/5 32/11 34/25 35/7	unresolved [1] 69/24
17/25 20/6 31/10 32/7	52/12 53/10 53/18	tracks [1] 60/16	45/23 52/5 67/10	unstable [1] 71/13
37/1 37/4 40/13 43/11	56/18 56/19 56/19	traditional [1] 29/5	77/12 80/5 87/18	unsustainable [1]
46/11 47/23 49/18	57/22 58/18 61/13	tragedy [1] 47/6	118/7 119/2 125/9	76/25
55/19 60/14 61/17	61/15 61/16 62/4 67/7	trained [1] 106/1	two days [1] 67/10	until [11] 22/2 24/15
61/18 61/19 62/8 63/3	70/2 72/25 73/1 73/4	trainee [1] 2/12	two weeks [1] 125/9	24/20 26/17 50/2
63/5 65/9 65/20 70/17	74/10 77/10 77/18	training [21] 56/24	type [2] 39/24 58/21	51/15 55/18 96/21
88/8 91/9 94/22 95/24	82/20 83/1 84/13	57/1 57/8 57/17 57/23	types [1] 80/4	110/11 110/13 125/20
99/19 103/24 104/14	85/20 92/11 92/15	57/24 58/7 58/8 58/16	11	unusual [2] 10/16
107/11 107/17 108/18	95/13 97/25 98/2 98/4	58/17 58/18 59/2 59/5	U	74/1
108/23 111/2 121/24	98/19 99/13 103/9	65/4 65/14 69/4 104/6		unwilling [1] 93/20
122/18 124/9	105/19 110/8 112/1	104/8 104/10 105/21	ultimately [2] 108/24	up [26] 4/15 8/14
though [15] 8/13	121/7 122/16 122/20	105/24	109/11	16/19 19/20 41/14
21/2 34/5 47/18 52/8	times [3] 35/15 72/10		ultimatum [1] 121/21	43/18 44/19 49/1 52/1
70/2 70/22 75/21	122/5	23/19 71/20 72/24	unable [1] 37/12	56/12 58/14 61/2
77/15 77/21 83/11	timescale [3] 43/25	79/18 86/5	unacceptable [1]	61/17 66/23 82/9
86/7 89/13 99/25	44/23 45/17	transactional [2]	29/18	94/24 95/3 98/15
120/12	timescales [6] 15/14	17/19 79/25	unaware [5] 31/14	102/16 107/21 111/14
thought [7] 6/6 27/3	36/21 56/11 56/18	transactions [17]	31/15 32/16 111/24	116/18 117/15 120/16
61/4 95/23 111/3	58/14 58/17	19/1 19/2 19/8 19/10	119/12	123/12 125/10
111/4 118/15	TIP [21] 16/21 17/1			update [4] 7/15 20/25
threatening [1] 75/19	17/11 24/12 73/10	40/20 73/25 74/16	52/12	21/2 73/17
threats [1] 18/24	13/10/13/23/10/4	75/12 75/14 79/14	uncertainties [1]	upon [2] 54/14 96/22
three [8] 21/10 43/11	77/11 77/19 80/3 86/3		81/7	upset [1] 108/23
46/11 52/5 53/9 64/21	86/3 86/4 90/2 91/5	transcript [3] 4/2	uncertainty [1] 81/12	
88/1 103/6	91/11 91/12 96/21	26/9 46/23	unclear [1] 69/25	16/25 22/16 24/11
three days [1] 46/11	99/23 116/23	Transformation [1]	uncommon [1] 85/19	
three months [1]	TIP/TMS [2] 16/21	23/6	under [8] 15/14 36/7	32/19 59/13 61/14
21/10	17/11	trap [1] 75/5	40/11 58/7 72/2 93/4	61/15 69/2 71/4 79/7
three weeks [1] 88/1	title [1] 32/18	trapped [2] 90/19	93/23 100/24	79/8 80/17 81/5 91/13
three years [1] 53/9	TMS [2] 16/21 17/11	93/18	underline [1] 124/21	98/12 100/24 113/12
threshold [1] 64/22	today [6] 2/2 6/20	trauma [2] 47/3	undermine [1] 19/4	use [11] 4/11 10/6
through [18] 2/2 6/20	46/4 56/18 61/18	65/25	understand [21]	17/9 28/25 29/4 35/13
10/24 42/23 52/14	113/11	Treasury [3] 56/12	17/24 21/6 22/4 23/24	
56/7 56/9 58/4 60/2	Today's [1] 1/4	112/14 124/11	25/11 35/18 65/10	100/18 106/15
67/4 83/21 84/21	together [3] 18/1	treat [2] 119/9 119/10	75/3 79/10 80/7 80/20	used [8] 7/6 16/20
90/25 91/20 94/16	114/15 116/25	trend [1] 19/4	81/3 81/12 81/15 91/6	
95/4 95/9 118/11	told [9] 6/11 8/17	trial [10] 37/15 60/22	95/8 103/1 104/1	39/10 80/5
throughout [10]	49/3 49/9 69/1 69/12	61/3 71/12 78/19 79/5		user [3] 11/25 27/23
13/13 13/22 39/8	70/25 121/21 123/24	86/25 109/22 113/20	understandably [1]	44/13
39/18 39/21 40/21	tolerated [1] 51/18	114/4	92/15	user-friendly [1]
41/3 41/14 52/21	Tom [2] 9/7 117/4	trial' [1] 43/14	understanding [5]	44/13
124/13	tone [3] 34/13 34/24	trialled [1] 113/23	31/1 59/13 59/23 72/6 92/10	
thus [2] 76/19 90/23	122/23	tried [3] 53/12 105/12		usher [1] 100/17
	Tony [1] 34/9	105/13	understood [3] 20/14	usner's [1] 101/5

113/2 115/20 116/9 55/16 75/2 81/22 84/3 91/2 91/13 94/14 U W 116/14 117/15 117/21 88/4 91/2 95/15 97/25 99/20 99/21 99/23 wait [1] 54/23 using [1] 10/17 123/3 123/12 124/17 98/25 99/15 103/21 99/25 100/2 100/3 wake [1] 107/8 103/23 105/7 105/16 124/19 125/5 102/11 103/5 103/17 Wales [2] 14/15 well-established [2] 105/17 107/20 107/24 103/24 105/11 111/9 validation [1] 74/22 117/22 104/22 104/25 108/1 108/4 109/9 111/17 111/24 114/14 value [1] 17/12 want [14] 48/9 56/24 109/22 123/24 123/24 122/8 well-known [2] 62/8 varied [1] 59/24 60/12 60/22 60/23 where [29] 1/20 5/11 82/11 whoever [1] 54/16 various [7] 38/4 54/6 62/15 64/15 68/2 wellbeing [3] 47/5 29/11 43/10 46/17 whole [8] 13/25 66/19 89/9 106/14 95/19 102/15 115/6 48/16 66/1 46/19 51/21 51/25 28/14 53/16 70/13 122/8 124/2 117/16 118/3 124/24 went [14] 7/25 10/24 58/13 60/2 62/23 79/18 95/10 115/22 version [4] 48/18 wanted [15] 13/21 14/14 16/5 20/1 20/4 65/25 69/16 70/9 117/11 78/9 78/11 78/12 13/22 28/23 36/6 23/12 66/3 95/5 103/9 70/16 72/16 73/24 wholesale [1] 73/25 very [74] 6/16 7/8 42/21 47/12 48/13 105/9 107/21 115/1 76/11 79/25 86/9 whose [3] 24/9 25/24 16/4 19/16 24/19 25/1 50/17 63/21 76/17 119/5 88/15 94/8 95/10 98/7 101/9 28/20 32/16 33/3 33/8 79/1 86/7 111/16 99/9 101/11 107/20 why [5] 3/8 30/5 were [208] 39/19 41/10 42/5 43/5 124/3 125/1 weren't [12] 14/10 112/16 117/4 46/13 106/24 122/15 46/10 46/15 48/5 wanting [1] 85/17 22/17 31/11 47/18 Where's [1] 105/18 wide [1] 13/5 49/12 52/4 53/10 55/5 was [450] wider [1] 7/16 whereby [1] 86/25 61/10 62/3 69/2 106/1 56/11 56/17 56/23 wasn't [30] 8/6 9/14 110/8 110/11 114/21 will [53] 1/25 2/2 2/8 whether [23] 13/23 57/21 59/5 59/24 14/8 16/3 18/7 22/13 13/24 15/5 29/7 34/23 2/8 2/9 16/15 19/4 121/16 60/25 61/13 74/18 31/3 31/5 32/1 48/17 west [6] 2/21 14/15 44/10 48/23 63/20 24/14 25/7 25/7 25/8 77/15 81/9 82/19 52/24 53/20 60/4 60/6 44/5 44/9 49/19 64/11 64/14 64/23 27/23 29/14 33/18 82/24 88/8 88/20 93/7 61/8 62/11 66/5 81/18 66/24 70/4 75/25 117/20 33/21 37/15 48/11 96/7 96/9 97/24 98/5 82/19 82/20 85/1 what [103] 2/14 2/23 82/25 91/17 110/24 49/25 55/5 57/15 98/18 99/17 100/5 98/25 99/5 99/11 111/10 118/6 121/8 6/3 6/11 7/8 7/10 8/21 57/19 61/24 68/10 100/11 100/20 100/20 99/25 103/3 108/9 10/7 10/8 11/24 13/16 121/12 124/23 124/24 68/12 74/9 74/20 75/2 101/6 101/14 103/19 114/24 120/24 121/19 14/16 15/2 16/25 18/2 which [78] 5/2 5/3 76/9 81/22 81/22 86/3 103/22 104/25 106/5 way [20] 4/15 11/13 20/4 20/12 22/16 8/10 9/19 10/8 10/15 89/7 90/24 93/17 109/12 112/4 112/4 11/22 12/15 27/21 22/20 22/22 23/24 10/17 11/19 11/20 94/13 96/18 97/22 112/8 115/3 115/10 33/3 44/15 59/3 63/17 24/5 24/22 25/11 26/3 15/19 15/23 17/1 20/2 101/2 102/1 102/2 116/11 117/9 117/17 75/22 93/5 94/18 26/20 32/10 32/10 21/14 21/23 23/20 102/2 106/4 111/16 117/17 119/3 119/3 94/20 96/4 97/15 32/19 32/21 33/8 33/9 26/6 27/15 27/21 112/19 113/4 113/6 119/17 119/17 119/23 97/25 101/23 118/11 35/18 36/6 37/4 41/16 32/14 32/15 33/2 113/7 113/15 114/2 121/3 122/1 122/9 119/19 125/3 33/15 35/6 37/15 43/6 48/22 49/5 50/24 121/4 122/12 123/3 123/14 123/23 125/18 ways [2] 93/1 93/11 50/24 51/9 52/25 37/23 39/7 41/11 125/5 vi [1] 65/13 we [269] 54/23 58/19 60/9 60/9 42/21 43/1 47/9 53/10 William [1] 1/8 video [1] 101/9 we'd [1] 91/17 60/20 61/12 62/6 63/4 53/12 53/24 55/17 willing [1] 74/4 view [27] 3/9 15/4 we're [8] 20/22 42/13 65/10 66/12 68/20 56/11 57/5 57/17 wish [3] 33/23 28/13 32/16 53/18 58/20 85/4 94/6 95/7 69/2 69/20 75/25 57/19 64/22 65/3 106/23 117/6 53/20 66/2 69/6 69/7 100/20 101/11 66/19 69/22 70/8 72/4 wished [1] 113/13 77/20 81/14 81/21 70/9 70/20 70/20 we've [1] 123/12 81/22 82/18 82/24 72/8 72/11 73/21 74/7 within [22] 10/19 70/20 70/22 78/2 wedded [1] 115/19 86/22 90/8 91/5 91/25 74/20 75/5 76/18 13/13 15/13 17/17 94/15 98/4 98/14 week [4] 24/18 43/17 92/1 93/3 93/13 94/13 78/13 80/19 81/4 88/2 19/15 21/25 22/9 101/12 115/9 115/11 43/24 87/21 94/20 95/11 96/2 96/3 89/19 93/4 93/6 93/10 29/24 30/23 32/21 115/17 118/7 118/15 weekend [2] 64/8 96/3 98/6 101/11 95/4 95/9 96/25 97/2 36/20 39/23 59/1 59/7 118/18 118/19 125/12 64/9 102/1 104/8 104/8 107/6 107/22 113/24 64/25 65/1 74/2 74/18 viewing [1] 31/6 weekly [4] 79/13 104/17 104/19 104/21 115/3 115/23 115/24 82/11 83/23 104/1 viewpoints [1] 114/7 79/14 80/3 87/1 104/24 105/7 105/14 118/4 119/8 119/20 106/17 views [5] 30/14 35/1 weeks [5] 35/25 without [2] 23/22 105/15 110/15 110/22 121/13 122/12 122/14 53/21 78/17 121/6 44/18 77/12 88/1 110/23 110/25 111/16 124/15 125/3 34/19 **vigorously** [1] 57/3 125/9 113/8 115/2 116/9 while [4] 73/14 85/4 WITN03470100 [2] vii [1] 65/16 well [51] 8/20 18/5 116/12 121/13 122/9 92/23 98/17 1/19 102/19 Vince [1] 112/21 25/14 25/25 33/21 122/15 124/19 125/10 whilst [4] 21/23 witness [9] 1/4 1/9 visibility [5] 37/9 41/18 42/2 47/25 48/5 125/13 38/11 60/25 88/17 1/10 2/7 3/5 101/20 37/11 37/19 42/12 48/19 52/5 54/6 59/22 what's [6] 44/25 who [48] 2/3 3/10 102/3 102/16 125/1 75/8 60/17 60/19 62/6 62/8 53/25 63/18 66/1 4/11 4/14 4/19 5/6 witnesses [7] 2/3 visible [2] 72/17 68/20 69/15 69/19 68/19 109/4 5/23 10/20 21/15 4/14 14/21 21/20 72/18 74/6 82/11 84/6 84/14 whatever [3] 48/11 25/21 29/21 29/23 27/16 96/18 97/5 visited [1] 52/5 85/6 86/14 92/1 94/21 52/15 107/2 38/15 44/3 46/25 won't [5] 6/22 24/20 vital [2] 6/17 115/11 95/18 99/20 100/21 when [35] 4/9 4/23 48/13 49/19 54/18 90/21 97/14 99/5 voices [1] 49/20 102/22 103/6 104/22 10/4 13/1 14/10 25/16 60/7 60/21 65/9 66/16 word [2] 61/5 100/18 volume [2] 39/17 104/25 105/9 109/1 67/23 70/17 82/14 25/20 29/3 43/18 words [7] 22/8 48/22 40/20 109/8 109/22 112/25 48/24 51/23 54/7 83/11 84/1 84/3 84/21 95/19 95/24 115/17

W	you know [7] 13/1		
words [2] 116/13	35/14 52/3 101/10 109/23 109/23 117/13		
117/8 work [28] 4/20 7/18	you're [9] 24/19		
12/7 16/5 16/5 17/24	42/17 46/13 69/20 69/22 105/24 108/10		
18/1 20/1 20/4 21/22 22/2 28/10 35/10	112/9 112/10		
35/16 48/19 50/1	Young [4] 78/14 78/21 83/18 107/7		
53/24 55/18 60/7 61/1 65/6 90/24 105/9	your [61] 1/7 1/13		
112/15 115/21 118/10	1/15 2/7 2/9 2/14 3/5 4/3 4/4 5/15 6/10 8/4		
118/17 121/22	0/13 15// 18/5 23/12		
workaround [1] 67/8 workarounds [1]	24/6 24/6 29/24 37/21		
25/9	43/10 45/10 45/16 48/4 51/3 57/12 58/6		
worked [5] 4/15 59/4 93/7 114/16 117/18	05/9 00/1 /3/0 /0/1/		
working [17] 21/15	78/4 81/23 81/25 83/14 90/2 95/19		
43/20 47/14 50/25 56/15 58/14 60/7	97/25 98/19 99/15		
70/18 88/13 93/1 93/5	102/16 102/20 104/21 107/8 107/10 108/25		
93/11 102/24 105/7 105/10 108/2 119/7	110/16 110/22 110/23		
workshops [1] 93/9	111/20 114/5 116/5 116/11 116/13 117/16		
world [2] 53/11 120/3 worse [3] 70/22 91/1	119/6 122/5 122/24		
99/16	123/13 124/24 125/18 yours [1] 95/25		
worth [1] 61/4 would [160]	yourself [8] 33/14		
wouldn't [6] 77/22	55/6 88/22 109/8 109/15 109/16 114/20		
85/19 92/8 118/21 119/22 120/3	122/5		
wound [1] 21/11	Z		
wrap [1] 66/23 write [3] 54/16 75/18	zero [2] 86/12 88/10		
75/22			
write-offs [2] 75/18 75/22			
writes [1] 111/9			
writing [2] 56/4 81/25 written [3] 38/20			
47/10 88/25			
wrong [1] 55/14 wrote [2] 89/2 112/20			
X			
xxi [1] 9/10			
xxvi [1] 9/23			
year [5] 1/11 12/19			
20/16 103/16 104/13			
years [6] 3/19 6/22 26/23 53/9 99/19			
111/2			
yes [139] yesterday [5] 2/4			
22/10 22/14 32/14			
68/24 yesterday's [1] 66/23			
yet [3] 57/18 75/3			
88/18 you [506]			
, 5 % [5 5 6]			
			(EE) words
			(55) words zero