Witness Name: Richard Poulton

Statement No.: WITN07570100

Dated: 06 February 2023

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

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FIRST STATEMENT OF RICHARD POULTON

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I, Richard Poulton, will say as follows…

INTRODUCTION

1.   I am a former employee of Post Office Ltd and held the positions of Service

Assurance 1998 –   1999. Part of the team tasked with using the developing

Horizon system to provide assurance that the system met the outline design.

Using the Horizon system to develop parts of the Horizon System User Guide.

2.   Process Design and Development Analyst 1999 –   2005. Part of the team

tasked with supporting the development of the NBSC tools and providing

operational details to be included in the knowledge base for new products and services.

3. Change Planning Manager 2005 –   2010. Part of the team tasked with ensuring project teams were providing sufficient information for the NBSC to be able to manage incidents for new products and services.

4. Gateway Specialist 2010 –   2015. Part of the team tasked with supporting the Gateway Manager in the readiness of new products and services to be released, focusing on the NBSC having information to support the Network

5. This witness statement is made to assist the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry (the "   Inquiry"   ) with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 03/01/2023 (the "   Request"   ).

BACKGROUND

6. I have been asked to describe my training in respect of Horizon IT, my experiences working in NBSC, the support provided by NBSC, known errors or defects with Horizon and anything else that the Chair should be aware of.

7. In respect of my training in respect of Horizon IT. I had had no specific training in the use of Horizon, but had spent circa 18 months working for Post Office Ltd at the Fujitsu site in Feltham where I was part of the team that provided service assurance on the design and development of the Horizon System User Guide. At NBSC, I was part of the team that developed the Dearne

House site and the development of the NBSC support tools (Remedy and Knowledge Base)

I have been asked to provide details of the Remedy and Knowledge Base tools and the information contained within them

Remedy was the call logging/incident management tool. When a call was received the first line advisor would capture the details of the incident and the details of the caller. The advisor would use the categorization tools to record the incident, the categorization would be used to identify a potential Knowledge Base article to resolve the incident. Categorization was in four levels to determine the Knowledge Base article. The advisor could also use the Brief Description field to search for the Knowledge Base article.

Remedy was also used to escalate the incident to the second tier support or Problem Management if the incident could not be resolved at the lower tier.

The Incident Analysts could identify potential service issues by the volume of particular incident categorizations being raised.

The Knowledge Base was a database of articles loaded by the Knowledge Base team and linked to categorizations for Products and Services.

The articles contained information about Product and Services and how to use Horizon for these.

What action was required by the caller to correct any errors they had made on Horizon.

Known issues and work arounds.

Details of new Products and Services and their " go live" dates

Anything else that was considered useful for the advisors to support the callers

Sources for this data included, the original Horizon System User Guide, Project Managers, Problem Management, Tier 2 Team Leaders, Knowledge Base Team research.

8.   In respect of my experiences working in NBSC, I did not work directly on the NBSC but liaised with the Incident Analysts and Knowledge Base team to provide them with the information required for the introduction of new products and services by liaising with the project managers, this required some engagement with the advisors to understand the types of question that were being asked by the callers. NBSC would use the knowledge base to provide support to the callers and escalate to 2nd line support where these could not be resolved at first line.

I have been asked to indicate if I had any interaction with ICL Pathway / Fujitsu regarding any Problems with the Horizon System. I had no direct interaction with ICL Pathway / Fujitsu regarding any Problems, anything that required engagement for new products or services was escalated via the Project Manager, any existing products or services was escalated via Problem Management.

9.   In respect of the support provided by NBSC, In general, advisors used the tools at their disposal to provide as much support to callers as they were able.

10. In respect of known errors or defects with Horizon, I was aware of some bugs, errors or defects being identified and escalated to the Problem Management

team but had limited involvement in their subsequent investigation or resolution.

I have been asked to describe the nature of the bugs, errors or defects that I was aware of:

It is very difficult after all this time and with no access to any of the information I had at the time to remember the specific details, but from what I can remember of the general scenarios:

New Products and Services introduced and withdrawn after high volume of calls to the NBSC highlighted a problem with the product or service (e.g. wrong price or value).

Item appearing on the wrong side of the balance sheet with a negative sign (e.g. a payment appearing on the receipts as a minus value).

Branches claiming that the previous weeks closing balance did not match the current weeks starting balance.

Regional products were unable to be sold or accounted for in a branch that had been selling them and had stock of the item.

11.   In respect of anything else that the Chair should be aware of, I cannot currently recall anything that would add any further value.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed: GRO

Dated:_____06/02/2023_____