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Migration Activities at Post Offices

Requirement 498 reads: “ The Contractor shall migrate existing POCL products and POCL systems from current platforms..... to the POCL Service Infrastructure. The Contractor shall work closely with POCL to plan how best to achieve effective migration. At Outlets, data transfer and associated tasks shall be expedited as efficiently as possible with minimum staff/ subpostmaster involvement.”

Unfortunately, this begs a few key questions. Putting the extremes:

- What was migrating a product or system to the POCL Service Infrastructure intended to mean? Providing a technical bridge from old to new and the training required to enable subpostmasters to switch over, or the physical keying in of data on behalf of the subpostmaster? If the latter, why the separate and specific references to “data transfer and associated tasks” after the “agreement to agree” clause?
- “How best to achieve effective migration” - from whose perspective? The subpostmasters’ (we do it all?) or ours (we enable him to do it all)?
- What does “minimum staff/ subpostmaster involvement” mean (noting the word “expedited” as opposed to “carried out”)?

Not surprisingly, we hold a position much closer to the “enable” end of the spectrum than do the PDA.

This is a difficult area, and a considerable amount of “working closely” has been going on over many weeks. Much good work has been done to establish what exactly needs to be done and under what types of conditions and constraints. The experts have got bogged down over the vexed question

of who pays. PDA assert the responsibility is all ours, hence we should pay POCL to do any work which it is judged they might best do. We disagree.

As an outstanding "Agreement to Agree", there is a special contractual status to this issue which you will understand. We need to find a sensible way forward, quickly.

As with the Education programme, this will need your involvement and assistance. Perhaps we could add this to the Hedsor agenda for a preliminary discussion?

Tony Oppenheim

Commercial and Finance Director