

HPD/6/003
21 JAN 1998

19th January 1998

Mr D Miller
Horizon Programme Director
Post Office Counters Ltd
King Edward Building
King Edward Street
LONDON EC1A 1AA

Dear David

ICL Pathway, Management Care Visit Programme

I am very pleased to attach a copy of the first report on the Management Care Visit Programme. This report covers the 18 offices we piloted in 1997.

Hopefully the report itself covers any questions you might have about the programme's function, but if you have any further questions or issues about the programme or the report please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

GRO

James Jones

Customer Satisfaction Manager

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ICL Pathway

1997 Management Care Visit Programme

Ref: CS/REP/007
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ICL PATHWAY LIMITED

Report

of

1997 Management Care Visit Programme

Author: Julia Bowes

Date: 9th January 1998

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1 Summary

1.1 Background

The first report of an annual customer care visit programme at 'live' post offices within the North East and South West regions. The care visits consist of a structured survey about the post-implementation services provided by ICL Pathway. These visits are carried out by management staff within ICL Pathway.

The Offices visited in 1997 were using Release 1b (Order Book Control Service).

1.2 Methodology

The 1997 visits were part of the initial pilot. 18 post offices were visited during the latter part of 1997, split equally between the two regions. Subpostmasters were asked to answer questions about the services ICL Pathway provides and also given the opportunity to express their views, concerns and comments about these services.

1.3 Conclusions

- * Overall the Subpostmasters were 90% happy with the services provided.
- * The Subpostmasters in the North East were generally more satisfied than those in the South West.
- * The most positive areas were the services provided by the Horizon System Engineers, the Horizon System Helpdesk and ongoing communication.
- * The least positive area was Training and User Guides. There were concerns that the training was not always local enough, the attendees were out of pocket and the User Guides were of little use at the moment as the system is so simple to use.
- * Concerns were expressed about the local Benefit Agency offices, particularly in the North East, where they seemed to disregard the Stop Notice information held on the Horizon System and give out contradictory information to customers and Subpostmasters.
- * The placement of equipment in the post offices was also of concern. In one case POCL had visited to report on the situation, but the Subpostmaster had not received any further communication.
- * The users were happy to be involved in the live trial and understood the need for automation, but were frustrated at having so little functionality and very much looking forward to being able to do more through the Horizon System.

1.4 Recommendations

- * The differences between the North East and South West levels of satisfaction should be investigated to see if anything done differently in the North East could be mirrored in future in the South West.
- * Action should be taken to improve communication or understanding within local Benefit Agency Offices.
- * Any outstanding issues regarding the placing of equipment should be followed up to a satisfactory conclusion.
- * Some individual actions are being followed through by ICL Pathway as a result of the visits

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2 Introduction

The 1997 care visits were carried out using a small cross section of post offices within the North East and South West regions. 18 offices were visited (evenly split between the regions) as a pilot for the ongoing commitment of visiting a larger cross section of post offices from 1998 onwards.

This pilot was specifically targetted at users of the OBCS release of Horizon software (Order Book Control Service).

Only management level ICL Pathway staff carry out the visits to ensure the highest level of customer care service is maintained. Each nominated ICL Pathway manager is given a detailed briefing of the programme and detailed procedures are documented for them to follow.

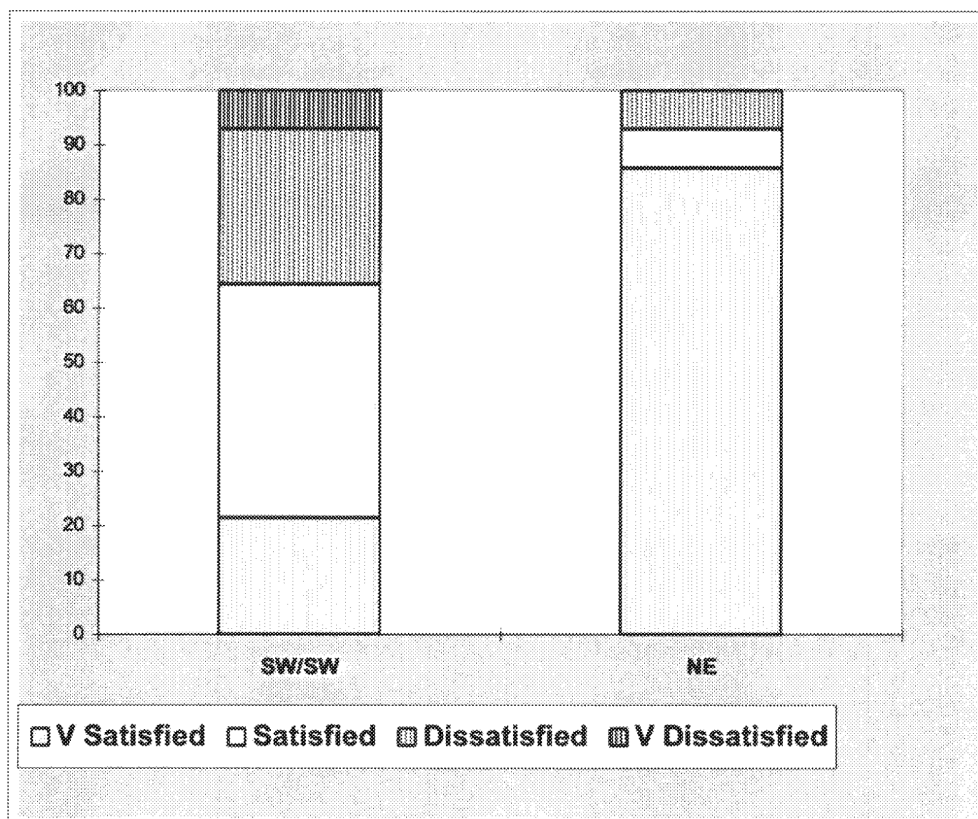
All information is gathered in confidence, but each Subpostmaster is asked if he or she will allow ICL Pathway to possibly contact them again in connection with the care visit, or to follow up any necessary actions as a result of the visit.

After full roll out of the Horizon project, it is planned that 500 post offices will be visited during the course of each year. It is intended that offices are chosen randomly each year. During 1998 ICL Pathway will plan to visit 100 post offices.

6 Results

This section details the percentage results from the questionnaire, and summarises any relevant comments made by the Subpostmasters

6.1 Training and User Guides



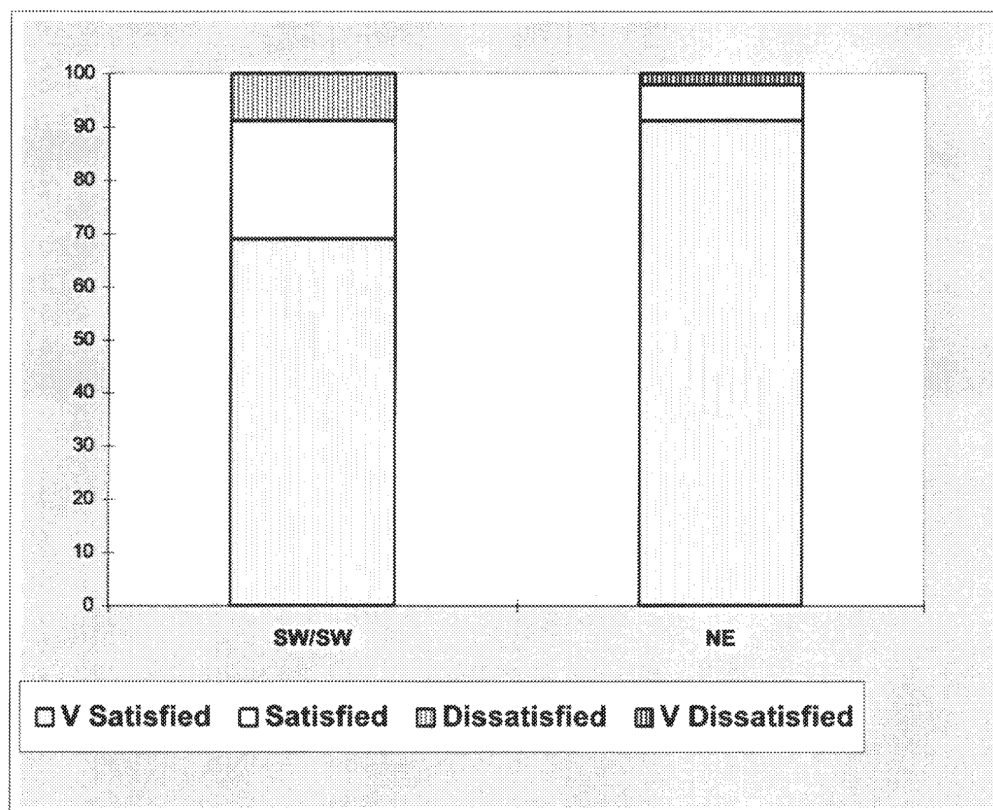
This area had the highest level of dissatisfaction. Issues related to training being arranged with short notice, people being out of pocket when attending the training events, and that the user guides were not really necessary with the level of functionality available on Horizon. In general people found the Horizon Training Workshop manual of high quality and easy to use, and particularly liked the Quick Reference guide.

Overall for the SW 64.3% were satisfied and 35.7% were dissatisfied.

Overall for the NE 92.9% were satisfied and 7.1% were dissatisfied.

See Appendix for detailed breakdown of percentage figures.

6.2 Horizon System Helpdesk

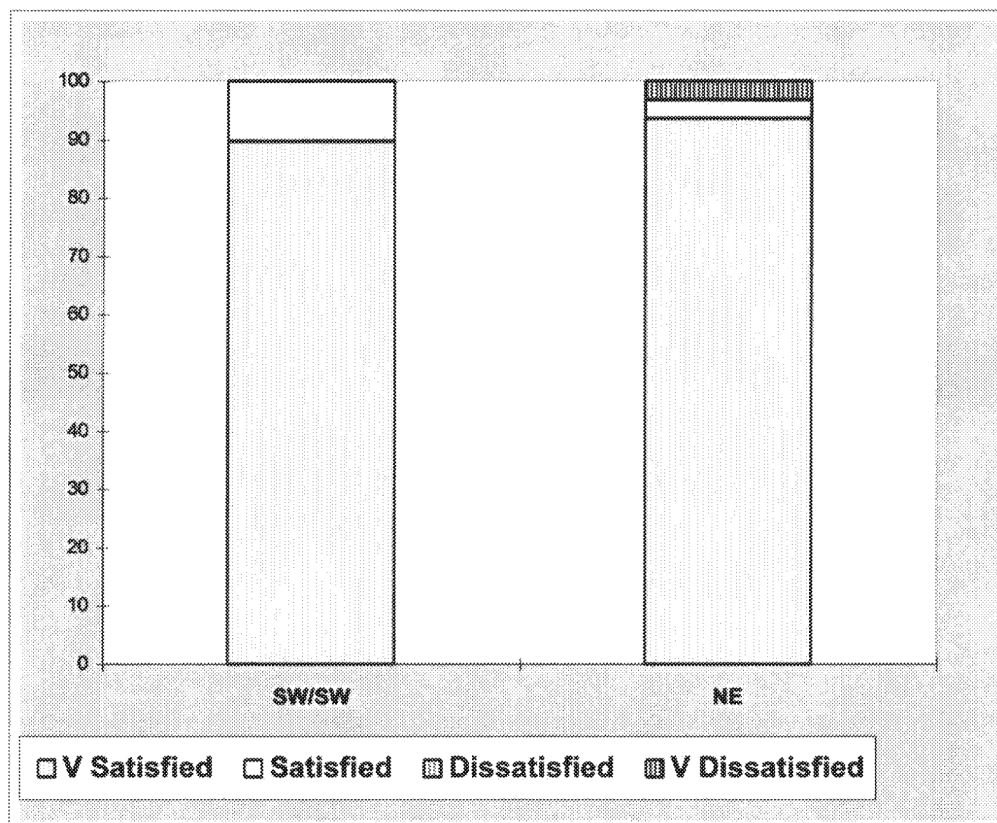


This area has among the highest levels of satisfaction. Subpostmasters found the Helpdesk staff to be polite, professional, and able to resolve problems in acceptable timescales. One Subpostmaster suggested the length of time required to validate the caller when they called the Helpdesk was too long.

Overall for the SW 91.1% were satisfied and 8.9% were dissatisfied.
Overall for the NE 97.8% were satisfied and 2.2% were dissatisfied.

See Appendix for detailed breakdown of percentage figures.

6.3 Horizon System Engineer Visits



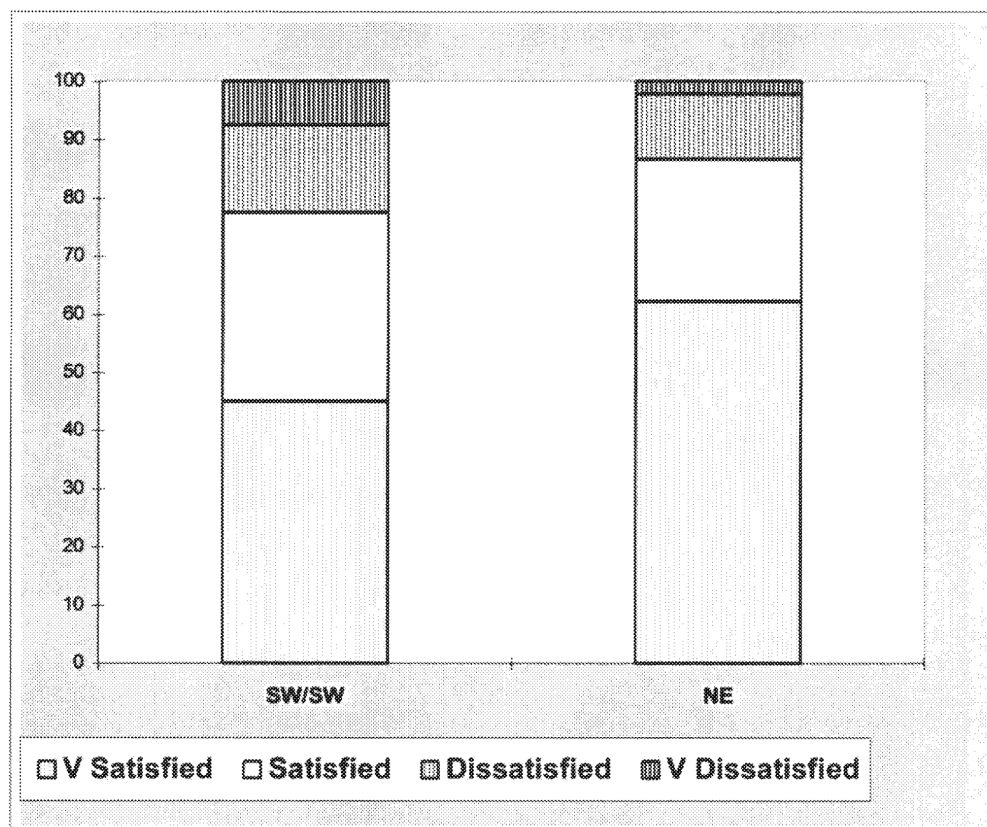
This area holds the highest level of satisfaction. A few Subpostmasters had not had any engineer visits at the point of the interview and so were unable to comment, however, those that had were always impressed with the engineer's help and professional attitude. The only negative response was one post office who did not bother to complete the SVR feedback cards.

Overall for the SW 100% were satisfied.

Overall for the NE 96.8% were satisfied and 3.2% were dissatisfied.

See Appendix for detailed breakdown of percentage figures.

6.4 System Usability



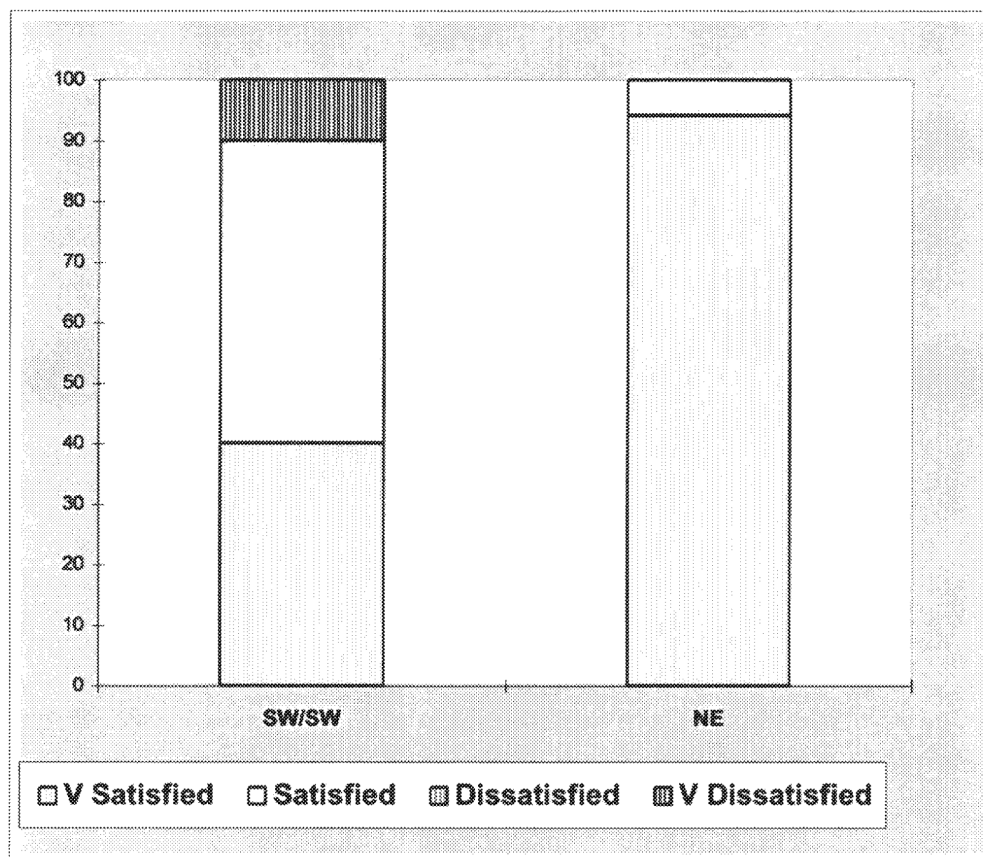
One of the higher levels of dissatisfaction. The problems were based around a slight degradation in time taken to serve customers (especially when the software was new to users) and the layout of the equipment in the office (ICL Pathway maintain a snagging list for actioning any agreed outstanding work at offices). Most were happy with how easy the system was to use.

Overall for the SW 77.5% were satisfied and 22.5% were dissatisfied.

Overall for the NE 86.7% were satisfied and 13.3% were dissatisfied.

See Appendix for detailed breakdown of percentage figures.

6.5 Ongoing Communication

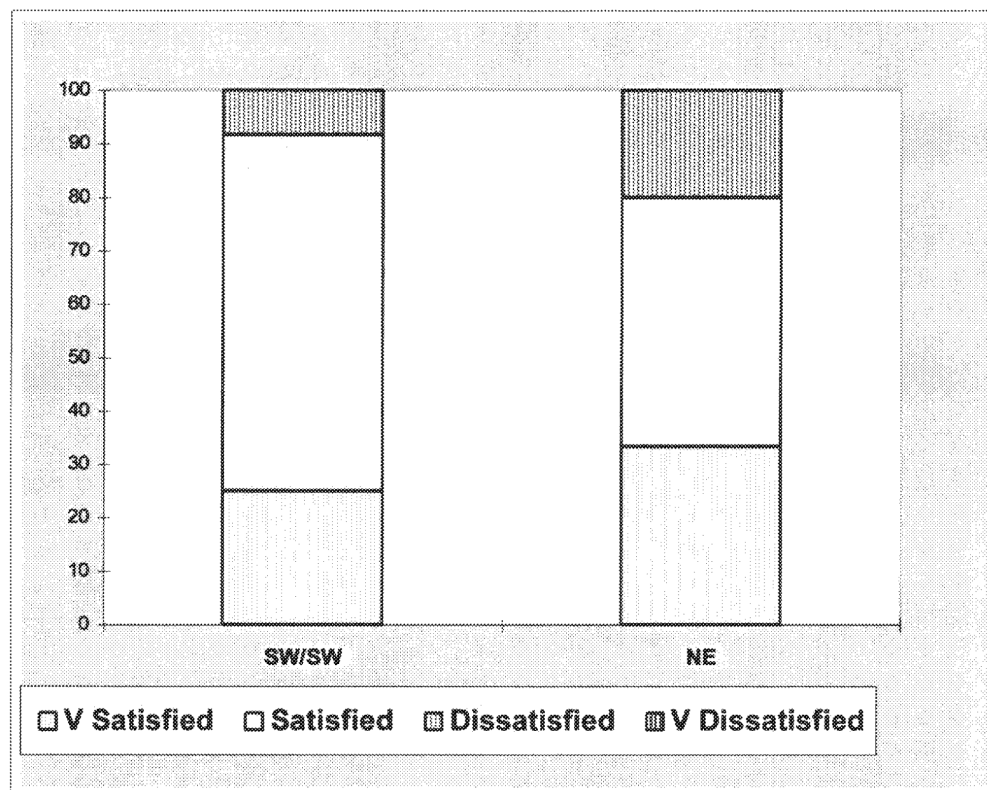


Only one Postmaster was very dissatisfied with communication. The concern was that not enough communication was received from POCL. The communications sent out during the implementation phase were considered to be thorough.

Overall for the SW 90% were satisfied and 10% were dissatisfied.
Overall for the NE 100% were satisfied.

See Appendix for detailed breakdown of percentage figures.

6.6 Customer and Staff Reaction



Dissatisfaction was with users frustrated that the system has limited use, some nervousness about using computers and that it takes longer to serve customers than the manual system does at present. Some interest has been expressed by customers, and generally users and customers see the system as a positive step.

Overall for the SW 91.7% were satisfied and 8.3% were dissatisfied.
Overall for the NE 80% were satisfied and 20% were dissatisfied.

See Appendix for detailed breakdown of percentage figures.

7 Conclusions

The Subpostmasters were given the opportunity to provide additional comments against each question asked in the questionnaire, and to provide any general comments, suggestions, concerns or good news stories.

In general the views were very positive, but because of the limited functionality of the software at this stage it was felt there was not much to comment on.

The Horizon System Helpdesk staff and Horizon System Engineers were highly regarded as professional, polite and helpful at all times. Only one concern was how long it took to validate the Subpostmaster when calling the desk. This put off some users from calling and encouraged their own 'network' of communication for advice and guidance.

A more general concern was the communication between the local Benefits Agency (particularly in the North East area), the users and the general public. Often the BA has given out information which contradicted that of the Horizon System (namely whether a book should be impounded or if a payment should be made). The Subpostmasters were concerned that the BA was causing the public to question the Subpostmasters professionalism or ability.

There were a few mix ups over training events. Some were arranged at very short notice or some venues were changed at short notice, and some Subpostmasters felt the events were not local enough. Most were concerned that attending the events put them out of pocket, and would have liked to have received remuneration.

The Manuals provided at the training events (i.e. Horizon Training Workbook and the Quick Reference Guide) were well received as easy to follow and thorough, although were rarely needed with the current level of functionality available.

All users found the system easy to use and 'IT phobics' were cured after attending the training. There was frustration that the system had a limited use, particularly when the users first start using the system. They found the time it took to serve a customer was longer than using the manual system, but for a perceived minimum benefit.

The placement of equipment in offices was of some concern. Many had little space which meant that printers and keyboards were not easily accessible. Replacement of equipment during the upgrade to Release 1c should improve the situation.

Subpostmasters were happy with the level of ongoing communication about the Horizon project. Some felt that there was not enough information provided by POCL.

The encashment total is too small and can cause the Subpostmasters to mis-read it.

It is apparent from the questionnaire results that the North East region is more positive than the South West. This was also found in an earlier questionnaire about the Release 1b implementation carried out by POCL Research Services.

Overall the Subpostmasters were 90% happy with services provided during 1b live trial. Generally the concerns raised were by single offices with the exception of Benefits Agency communication, the placement of equipment and the increased time taken to serve customers.

All understood the need for the Horizon project, were happy to be involved, and were keen to receive more functionality.

8 Recommendations and Further Work

Some individual actions are being followed through which are specific to particular post offices. These are noted on a spreadsheet and the responsibility for pursuing the actions through to a satisfactory conclusion will be on the ICL Pathway Customer Satisfaction Manager.

General recommendations are that we pursue and investigate further the issues below

- * Why, again, the North East Region are more positive than the South West. Should investigate whether any services are provided in a different way in either region .
- * Ongoing efforts to improve Benefits Agency's understanding of Horizon project and for the communication within the organisation to be effective. Any instances of problems received from Subpostmasters will be passed to PDA for information.
- * Discuss possibility of POCL providing some remuneration for Subpostmasters attending training events in future.
- * Ensure maximum notice possible given for training events in future and avoid changing venues whenever possible.
- * Any offices which require further attention after the 1c upgrade will be reviewed and possibly placed on a 'Snagging List' of outstanding items to be rectified. Discussions on the rules for the positioning of equipment in future installations should take place.
- * Investigate the possibility of enlarging the 'encashment total' figures.

Appendices

1 Questionnaire

The following is a copy of the questionnaire used when interviewing the Subpostmasters. The first page is an introductory script which can be used to provide further information about the nature of the care visit.

HORIZON SYSTEM

CARE VISIT QUESTIONNAIRE AND REPORT

INTRODUCTION SCRIPT

On arrival ensure you show your Pass. Give your name and explain you work for the Customer Service department of ICL Pathway, explaining what our department does.

'The Customer Service department is responsible for the ongoing support of the Horizon system itself, after installation. These responsibilities cover all aspects of support and services relating to the Horizon system, for example supporting you the user with advice and guidance, and ensuring that customer satisfaction is monitored and maintained to a satisfactory level.'

In summary, this interview will help us monitor how satisfied you are with the system and related services, and will be key to recognising where improvements may need to be made, plus recognising particularly positive areas and using those examples to help improve other areas of service.

Whilst there is no time limit set for the interview, the survey should take no more than 20 minutes, and how long you would like in addition to the survey is up to you.

After the meeting we will be sending you a letter summarising the details of this interview so that you can check we have accurately interpreted the interview.'

If asked you can explain the background of why we are doing this survey.

'This year we expect to talk to approximately 20 users of the Horizon system.

Similar visits will be carried out each year, throughout the year. Most Post Offices will be picked randomly and therefore whilst you probably won't be approached every year, it is possible you will be approached again at some time in the future. When the programme is in full operation we would expect to survey approximately 500 Post Offices each year (full operation is expected to commence in 1999).

Your individual visit reports will remain confidential between you and ICL Pathway. However, we will be publishing general results, and following up any individual user problems when relevant, if you agree to further contact as a result of the visit.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Contacts & Environment

(You can pre-fill some of the following information but you must ensure you check with the interviewee that the details are correct.)

Interviewer Name:

Interview Date & Time:

Interviewee Name:

Interviewee Position:

PO Name:

FAD Code:

Region:

No. of Counters:

Installation Date (mm/yy):

2. Background

(Very briefly check installation background to highlight any underlying problems, but quickly move into next section to ensure objective of post-implementation survey is maintained.)

Very briefly, how did the installation of your Post Office go in general?:

3. Training and User Guides

3.1 Do you feel the training you have received has fully prepared you for using the Horizon System?

(This will relate to Pathway training, but they may wish to comment on Field Support Officers from POCL)

Completely prepared
Generally prepared
Partly prepared
Unprepared
Not Applicable

3.2 When using the Horizon System how useful do you find the training workbook and quick reference guide?

(Users should have been provided with a training workbook and 'quick reference' guide on their training course.

SHOW SAMPLE DOCUMENT 1)

Very useful
Useful
Of little use
No use at all
Not Applicable

3.3 When required for reference, how satisfied are you with the quality of the POCL Counters

Operations Manual 'Horizon User Guide'?

(SHOW SAMPLE DOCUMENT 2)

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Unsatisfied
Very Unsatisfied
Not Applicable

4. Horizon System Helpdesk

4.1 Do you find it is easy to make initial contact with the Horizon System Helpdesk?

Very easy
Easy
Difficult
Very difficult
Not Applicable

4.2 On average how often do you contact the Horizon System Helpdesk in a typical month?

Up to 2 times
Up to 4 times
Up to 6 times
More than 6 times
Not Applicable

4.3 When contacting the Horizon System Helpdesk do you find them polite and helpful?

(Clarify that this question is related to their attitude and willingness to help, not the quality of the help provided.)

Very polite
Polite
Impolite
Very impolite
Not Applicable

4.4 When contacting the Horizon System Helpdesk how satisfied are you with the outcome of the help provided?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Unsatisfied
Very Unsatisfied
Not Applicable

4.5 Are your queries resolved in acceptable timescales?

- Always acceptable
- Mostly acceptable
- Sometimes unacceptable
- Always unacceptable
- Not Applicable

5. Horizon System Engineer Visits

5.1 On average how often do you have Horizon System Engineers, or other related Engineers, visit?

(In a typical month, not relating to implementation)

- Twice a quarter or less
- Once a month
- More than once a month
- More than 4 times a month
- Not Applicable

5.2 Do you find the Engineers polite and helpful?

(This relates to their attitude and willingness to help, not ability to resolve the problem. If disappointed try to establish which type of engineers in Comments)

- Very polite
- Polite
- Impolite
- Very impolite
- Not Applicable

5.3 How satisfied are you with the outcome of the work the Engineers carry out?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Very Unsatisfied
- Not Applicable

5.4 Do the Engineers resolve your problems in acceptable timescales?

- Always acceptable
- Mostly acceptable
- Sometimes unacceptable
- Always unacceptable
- Not Applicable

5.5 Do you return the SVR Feedback cards left by the Horizon Engineers

*(A card is left after each Sorbus engineer visit. In 'comments' try to establish what they think of these cards.
SHOW SAMPLE DOCUMENT 3)*

Always
Often
Only occasionally
Never
Not Applicable

6. System Usability

6.1 How easy do you find the Horizon system to use?

Very Easy
Easy
Difficult
Very Difficult
Not Applicable

6.2 Has the Horizon System had an effect on the service you provide to your customers?

Positive effect
No noticeable effect
Minor adverse effect
Significant adverse effect
Not Applicable

6.3 How reliable do you find the Horizon System (e.g. does the system fail when in use, or take too long to recover after failure)?

*(If there is a negative response try to establish if it is purely the number of system failures or the time taken to recover
is where the problem really lies, or both.)*

Very reliable
Reliable
Unreliable
Very Unreliable
Not Applicable

6.4 How often do you revert to using manual procedures in preference to using the Horizon system?

*(This only relates to instances when the Horizon System should be used but cannot be used for whatever reason, e.g.
benefit book problems, procedural problems or lack of user knowledge, not system down time.)*

Very infrequently
Infrequently

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Frequently
Very frequently
Not Applicable

6.5 How satisfied are you with the layout of the Horizon equipment in your office?

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Not Applicable

7. Ongoing Communication

7.1 Are you satisfied with the quality of information, received via written communications, relating to the Horizon project?

(E.g. Courier received monthly, Regional Bulletin received weekly, or direct Mailshots received ad hoc. SHOW SAMPLE DOCUMENT 4 - 'OVER THE HORIZON')

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Unsatisfied
Very Unsatisfied
Not Applicable

7.2 If you have had contact with ICL Pathway staff directly were you satisfied with the quality of the service provided?

(Eg. this could relate to site visits made by Pathway Liaison Mgrs, or responding to complaints)

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Unsatisfied
Very Unsatisfied
Not Applicable

8. Customer and Staff Reaction

8.1 What has your customer's attitude been towards the Horizon System?

(I.e. are they keen to ask about it, do they consider it to impact on quality of service?)

Very Positive
Positive
Negative

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Very Negative
Not Applicable

8.2 What is the attitude and morale of other staff, towards using the Horizon System?

Very Positive
Positive
Negative
Very Negative
Not Applicable

9. Comments and Suggestions

Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the Horizon System or the service provided, and can you highlight any particularly positive experiences?

I am *willing/*unwilling to be contacted in the future to confirm any points contained within this questionnaire, or to follow up any issues which ICL Pathway consider require action.

*(*Delete as appropriate)*

Appendices**2 Individual Question Scores**

Percentage Totals by Section	V Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	V Dissatisfied
3. Training and User Guides				
SW/SW	21.4	42.9	28.6	7.1
NE	85.7	7.1	7.1	0.0
4. Horizon System Helpdesk				
SW/SW	68.9	22.2	8.9	0.0
NE	91.1	6.7	0.0	2.2
5. Horizon System Engineer Visits				
SW/SW	89.7	10.3	0.0	0.0
NE	93.5	3.2	0.0	3.2
6. System Usability				
SW/SW	45.0	32.5	15.0	7.5
NE	62.2	24.4	11.1	2.2
7. Ongoing Communication				
SW/SW	40.0	50.0	0.0	10.0
NE	94.1	5.9	0.0	0.0
8. Customer and Staff Reaction				
SW/SW	25.0	66.7	8.3	0.0
NE	33.3	46.7	20.0	0.0

Percentage Totals by Question	V Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	V Dissatisfied
Training and User Guides				
Has training fully prepared you for using sys				
SW/SW	22.2	44.4	22.2	11.1
NE	77.8	11.1	11.1	0.0
Quality of Horizon Training Manuals				
SW/SW	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Quality of POCL Horizon User Guide				
SW/SW	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Horizon System Helpdesk				
How easy contacting helpdesk				
SW/SW	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Frequency of contacting helpdesk				
SW/SW	55.6	22.2	22.2	0.0
NE	66.7	22.2	0.0	11.1
Are staff polite and helpful				
SW/SW	77.8	22.2	0.0	0.0
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Satisfied with outcome of help				
SW/SW	77.8	22.2	0.0	0.0
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Are queries resolved in acceptable time				
SW/SW	66.7	11.1	22.2	0.0
NE	88.9	11.1	0.0	0.0

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Horizon System Engineer Visits				
Frequency of engineer visits				
SW/SW	83.3	16.7	0.0	0.0
NE	85.7	14.3	0.0	0.0
Are Engineers polite and helpful				
SW/SW	83.3	16.7	0.0	0.0
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Satisfied with outcome of the work				
SW/SW	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Are problems resolved in acceptable time				
SW/SW	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Do you return SVR Feedback cards				
SW/SE	80.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
NE	83.3	0.0	0.0	16.7
System Usability				
How easy is system to use				
SW/SW	88.9	11.1	0.0	0.0
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Effect on service to customers				
SW/SW	22.2	33.3	44.4	0.0
NE	11.1	44.4	44.4	0.0
Reliability of the system				
SW/SW	33.3	55.6	11.1	0.0
NE	44.4	55.6	0.0	0.0
Frqncy reverting to manual procedure				
SW/SW	62.5	37.5	0.0	0.0
NE	88.9	11.1	0.0	0.0
Layout of Horizon Equipment				
SW/SW	0.0	20.0	20.0	60.0
NE	66.7	11.1	11.1	11.1
Ongoing Communication				
Quality of info via written communications				
SW/SW	33.3	50.0	0.0	16.7
NE	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Quality of service of Pathway staff				
SW/SW	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0
NE	87.5	12.5	0.0	0.0
Customer and Staff Reaction				
Customer's attitude towards system				
SW/SW	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
NE	25.0	75.0	0.0	0.0
Staff morale & attitude to system				
SW/SW	37.5	50.0	12.5	0.0
NE	42.9	14.3	42.9	0.0

Appendices

3 Additional Comments by Subpostmasters

The following comments were given when the Subpostmasters were asked the question:
"Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the Horizon System or the service provided, and can you highlight any particularly positive experiences?"

"Post Office Counters need more business people for commercial reasons."

"The DSS are contradicting what the Horizon system Stop Notice says."

"Is there a £10 payment for the upgrade training? My RNM mentioned it in passing."

"No negatives. Looking forward to more functionality. My only frustration is the limited use. There is a minor degradation in service because it takes a little more time to incorporate both Horizon and manual systems."

"Several issues relating to the equipment and layout which are negative."

"Too much time elapsed between training and the receipt of the system, there could also be more focus on user hands on experience."

"Great help in fraud prevention, and also the positive effect of removing the 'impounding' decision from the clerk."

"Post Office Counters came and produced a report about the unsatisfactory layout of the equipment, but we have heard nothing."

"DSS are calling Post Offices to say they shouldn't call books in, contradicting the system and asking the Postmasters to 'just cash a docket anyway'."

"Who is responsible for supplying anti static sprays? We have never received any."

"The position for the monitors offered by WTL was not very professional."

"The position of the card swipe slot should be at the front of the keyboard, not at the back."

"Before we were able to switch off screens overnight the heat was too much. Now it's ok."

"Positive response from customers when the system says to impound a book. Less room for argument. Encashment total could be bigger."

"I hope the support from the HFSO is a bit more reliable for the upgrade."

"The project has gone remarkably smoothly bearing in mind the size of the project."

"More thought could be put into shelves/brackets for layout of equipment, and more consultation with Postmaster before equipment installation."

"Horizon/Pathway staff more friendly and helpful than Post Office staff."

"Training at Bath Spa had been cancelled 1 week before but I had not been informed and therefore turned up for training."

"Not pleased with increase in electricity bill."

"POCL Security person came to visit and said I needed a speech screen. He measured up and said he couldn't see a solution, but that he would take it away and make more suggestions. He said the plastic stand provided was obsolete and a new one that doesn't fit anyway has taken its place."

"Report printer is not in a usable place at the moment. It will need to be moved when it is required."

Training was too long and too little practical hands on experience. Also it was not close enough to the start of operations, at least 1 month before we needed to use the system.

"We get good, fast and effective support."

"When the full scope of the system is available then life will be very much easier for the P staff. The level of service and services offered will increase. Looking forward to the full system."

"When encashment total displayed on screen it could be larger."