

**From:** Maclean, Danny[/O=FUJITSU EXCHANGE ORGANIZATION/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=FF1F15CCB8AC4B24B76B7FC4D9B]  
**Sent:** Wed 02/08/2017 8:38:33 AM (UTC)  
**To:** Newsome, Pete; [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Post Office Horizon story again in the media

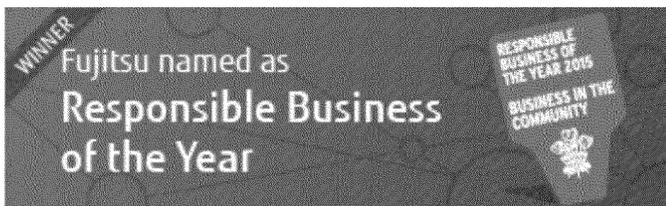
Ta

Sent from my Windows 10 phone

**From:** Newsome, Pete  
**Sent:** 02 August 2017 09:05  
**To:** [Stewart, Garry](#); [Naylor-Smith, Nigel](#); [Randall, David \(IRE02\)](#); [Maclean, Danny](#); [Thompson, Peter](#); [Godeseth, Torstein](#); [Godfrey, Stephen \(Security\)](#); [Kemp, Alex](#); [Bansal, Steve \(BRA01\)](#); [Dunford, Carol](#); [Scott, Steve](#); [Defence Legal \(Chris Jay,\)](#); [Lenton, Matthew](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Post Office Horizon story again in the media

CFI

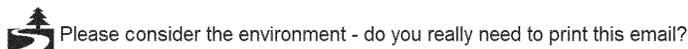
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**From:** Daisy Onida [redacted]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 2, 2017 7:41 AM  
**To:** [Goulden, Graham](#) [redacted]; [Scott, Yuichi Ikeda/池田 裕一](#) [redacted]; [Dubuet, Delphine](#) [redacted]; [Nabais Antunes, João](#) [redacted]; [Joseph, Dean/J o s e p h D](#) [redacted]; [Rishad, Marquardt/リシャド マークアド](#) [redacted]; [Horvath, Isabell](#) [redacted]; [Bonamici, Laura](#) [redacted]; [Millen, James](#) [redacted]; [List - Harvard Team Fujitsu](#) [redacted]; [Cowell, Tim](#) [redacted]; [Patton, Chris](#) [redacted]; [Tait, Duncan](#) [redacted]; [Newsome, Pete](#) [redacted]; [Jones, David M](#) [redacted]

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**Subject:** RE: Post Office Horizon story again in the media

Hi all,

The story has appeared this morning in the FT online but not in print. The article looks at the Post Office facing a class action suit from more than 500 of its sub-postmasters, who claim that a faulty computer system led to them being wrongly accused of false accounting or theft.

The only mention of Fujitsu in the piece is to say "Fujitsu, which built the system, declined to comment" and is not a negative article about Fujitsu.

Below is the full article.

We will continue to monitor of course and share any further updates.

Best wishes,

Daisy

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FT

**Post Office faces class action over 'faulty' IT system**

<https://www.ft.com/content/f420f2f8-75fa-11e7-a3e8-60495fe6ca71?mhq5j=e1>

Britain's Post Office is facing a class action suit from more than 500 of its sub-postmasters, who claim that a faulty computer system led to them being wrongly accused of false accounting or theft.

Some of the postmasters were prosecuted and imprisoned after the Horizon accounting system, which was introduced in 1999, allegedly showed their branches to be in deficit. Sub-postmasters hold the rights to operate smaller Post Office branches.

Others lost their homes, suffered ill health or declared bankruptcy after being told to repay tens thousands of pounds in certain cases, according to the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance (JFSA).

Lawyers for the group allege there was "a pattern of bullying and intimidation" by the Post Office dating back to shortly after Horizon was rolled out.

The system records day-to-day financial transactions at 11,600 branches. The Post Office has previously described it as "extremely robust" but the claimants say errors were caused both by bugs in the software and inadequate training and support.

Alan Bates, of the JFSA, said: "We expect these proceedings will reveal that Post Office Ltd began with a presumption of guilt. They aggressively interviewed sub-postmasters experiencing problems with the Horizon accounting system, telling them they were the only ones with these problems."

People were held and their homes searched, said Mr Bates. "Many were pressured to pay alleged balance shortfalls and to resign."

The Post Office, which remained in public ownership after its former sister company Royal Mail was privatised in 2013, has previously denied any general issues with Horizon.

It said that an examination by independent forensic accountants found no systemic issues. Subsequent investigations of 150 cases, completed in 2015, did not identify any transaction caused by a technical fault that resulted in a postmaster being held responsible for a loss of money.

The Post Office said it would defend the case and added: "We welcome [the group litigation order] as offering the best opportunity for the matters in dispute to be heard and resolved.

"We will be continuing to address the allegations through the court's processes and will not otherwise comment on litigation whilst it is ongoing."

The High Court this year granted a group litigation order, to which 522 current and former postmasters attached as eligible claimants before a deadline last week.

A procedural hearing with a managing judge will take place in October, which should lead to a timetable for final resolution by the court.

Among the allegations are that the Post Office failed to act upon warnings about Horizon, or adequately investigate once sub-postmasters fell under suspicion.

Deirdre Connolly ran the Killeter Post Office in a rural part of County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, between 2006 and 2010. She said she was often told the Horizon system would "sort itself out" when she reported problems with balancing the accounts.

But when an alleged deficit of nearly £15,600 was revealed during an unannounced audit, Ms Connolly said she was not given a proper opportunity to respond. Out of fear she repaid the amount by borrowing from relatives and was dismissed by the Post Office, though she did not face prosecution.

Bankruptcy followed and Ms Connolly's son later attempted suicide, which she put down to witnessing the stress she was under. Today she is unable to work and is on benefits after her health deteriorated.

"It's a real struggle to pay the mortgage," she said. "I worked my whole life and now I can hardly go out into a crowd. I don't have any confidence — I'm a different person."

The law firm Freeths, which is leading the sub-postmasters' collective legal action, said the claim was being pursued on various grounds, including breach of contract, negligence, breach of fiduciary duty, harassment and unjust enrichment, among others.

James Hartley, a partner, said: "We are confident that this will enable the full extent of this systemic behaviour by Post Office Ltd to be brought to light, wrongdoers held to account, victims compensated and hopefully a broken Post Office culture mended."

The litigation threatens to cast a shadow over efforts to turn round the Post Office.

Following a wave of strikes in the run-up to last Christmas over redundancies and pension cuts, Paula Vennells, chief executive, said in March that the institution was on the verge of breaking even for the first time in more than a decade.

In parallel with the collective legal action, the Criminal Cases Review Commission is reviewing 29 convictions where applicants say the Horizon system played a part. More than 10 postmasters participating in the class action went to prison, with sentences of between three weeks and two years.

"This litigation isn't just about money but about lives being destroyed," said Mr Bates.

Fujitsu, which built the system, declined to comment.

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'How soon can you make good the shortfall?'

Phil Cowan was once a successful businessman with several ventures, including a Post Office in Edinburgh. His life was turned upside down in 2004 when more than £30,000 appeared to be missing from the branch's electronic ledger account.

After being alerted to the deficit by his wife, who ran the office with her friend, Mr Cowan informed a local area manager.

"They only asked me one question: 'How soon can you make good the shortfall?'" he said. "I said: 'Surely this has to be some kind of technical glitch?' [but] they basically scoffed."

Although Mr Cowan was able to pay the money back and received a redundancy payment, he says his wife and her friend were accused of fraud — but never prosecuted.

The stigma weighed heavily on Mr Cowan's wife, who already suffered from mental health issues and struggled to find work. Five years later at the age of 47, she died of an accidental overdose of prescription anti-depressants, alcohol and cold medicine.

Mr Cowan believes this was closely connected with the events in their Post Office. "This situation I know for a fact had a huge contribution to her passing away. It had a massive effect on her."

As a result of the allegations, Mr Cowan says that contracts he had for three franchised petrol stations were not renewed. He describes the impact on his life as "devastating". Today he lives in Thailand, partly because of the lower living costs.

"Compensation and an open apology would be the best result" from the legal case, he said.

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**From:** Graham.Goulden; GRO  
**Sent:** 01 August 2017 19:13  
**To:** Scott, Yuichi Ikeda <GRO>; Delphine.Dubuet; GRO; Joao.Antunes; GRO  
Joseph, Dean <GRO>; Rishad, Marquardt <GRO>;  
Isabell.Horvath; GRO; Laura.Bonamic; GRO; James.Millen; GRO; List - Harvard Team  
Fujitsu <GRO>; Tim.Cowell; GRO; Chris.Patton; GRO  
Duncan.Tait; GRO; pete.newsome; GRO; David.JonesM; GRO  
**Subject:** Post Office Horizon story again in the media

Hi Scott,

This story has surfaced again due to the on-going litigation. The FT are planning on running it tomorrow. The Post Office are making no comment and we, as per standing and today renewed instructions, have not made any comment either. No comment is the line we will take to any other enquiries.

Will keep you advised

Regards  
Graham

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