

Witness Name: Kevin Fletcher

Statement No.: WITN0600:0100

Dated: 16th November 2022

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF KEVIN FLETCHER

I, Kevin Fletcher, will say as follows...

1. My professional background is briefly as follows: from 1972 to 1994 I was employed by HM Forces in the Royal Corps of Transport (RCT) achieving the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2 and the position of Sergeant Major. Over this time I was employed for a period of 2+ years as a Training Leader at the RCT Junior Leaders Regiment. I also qualified as an instructor/trainer in several military disciplines. On leaving military service in 1994 I joined Peritas as a self-employed training contractor to work on the National Lottery Project. After my initial acceptance into Peritas I was given the further role of training the trainers for the National Lottery Project roll-out. In September 1998 I was given a full time employee contract with Peritas and employed as Training Operations Manager reporting to Sharon McHale, Project Manager, Peritas. From April 2001 my role was changed to Operations Manager reporting to Stuart Kearns, Director Major Contracts, Peritas / KnowledgePool. From October 2001 my role again changed to Director Major Contracts, reporting to Paul Butler, Chief

Executive Officer, KnowledgePool. Following a company restructure in August 2002 the company reporting structure changed and I reported to Mike Byrne, Director Major Contracts, KnowledgePool. At this time, I did retain an operational role in major contracts but was not given a specific job title. I ended my employment with KnowledgePool on 13th December 2002. In December 2002 I took employment with Manchester City Council (MCC) as Strategic Planner, Capital Programs. My role involved developing strategies and processes for programs and projects delivery. I took early retirement from MCC in December 2012. I cannot remember the exact date I started working on the Horizon IT project, however, previously I had gained IT experience through my time in the military using various Microsoft programs. On completing my service with HM Forces I worked on the National Lottery project as a trainer using a bespoke IT system to train individual retailers and blue chip companies within the retail trade. I also trained other trainers to deliver courses to trainees on the National Lottery system up to manager level.

2. In relation to Pathway / Horizon, my role with Peritas / KnowledgePool covered various aspects including: training the trainers; developing training materials; working on the strategic roll-out schedule of Horizon training. My experience of using the Horizon IT system involved the use of the Horizon stand alone training system in the early days of the project. As the training courseware was developed alongside the system I learned the processes on the Horizon IT system with a view to presenting them to POCL for sign off.

3. The Peritas / KnowledgePool role and responsibilities in relation to the Horizon IT project and the training program was to develop the training courses, train the trainers, schedule and deliver the roll-out phases of training. I worked directly for Peritas / KnowledgePool and did not know any details of the ICL Training Services role.
4. During my employment at Peritas / KnowledgePool I worked as a direct report to Stuart Kearns, Director Major Contracts, Peritas / KnowledgePool. Over the period I also worked with: Sharon McHale, Project Manager, Peritas / KnowledgePool; Dave Scott, Training Lead, Peritas / KnowledgePool; Sue Smith, POCL, contact for sign-off of training materials and processes; Mike Byrne, Director Major Contracts, Peritas / KnowledgePool; Paul Butler, Chief Executive Officer, Peritas / KnowledgePool. I also worked with over 200 contract trainers at various times, but as this was over 20 years ago I do not now remember specific names.
5. In relation to the nature and responsibilities of specific positions and individuals I can make the following comments. Training Team Leader: this was my own role early in the project but I cannot recall the exact dates between which I held that role. My key responsibilities were to ensure that trainers were trained to deliver the training program as per the signed off courseware and also to ensure that all scheduled courses had trainers allocated. I reported to Stuart Kearns, Peritas / KnowledgePool, who in turn reported to Paul Butler, Peritas / KnowledgePool. I also reported to various POCL representatives involved with the training roll out and the sign off of courseware as fit for purpose. Project Control Officer: I cannot

recall this role. Evaluation Officer: this role was undertaken by a panel consisting: Peritas / KnowledgePool, ICL Pathway, POCL (including Sue Smith). Development Manager: this role was undertaken by Stuart Kearns, Peritas / KnowledgePool and covered all development and delivery of the training aspect of the project. Further management positions: Project Director, Peritas / KnowledgePool, Stuart Kearns; Project Manager, Peritas / KnowledgePool, Sharon McHale; Training Operations Manager, Peritas / KnowledgePool, my own role from September 1998 to April 2001; Operations Manager, Peritas / KnowledgePool, my own role from April 2001 to October 2001. I cannot recall specific details of all roles, areas of responsibility or reporting lines / hierarchy for individuals involved.

6. There were around 200 contracted individual who delivered training on the training program over the course of the project delivery, however, as this was over 20 years ago I cannot remember specific names and did not stay in touch with trainers following completion of the project. My view on the trainers deployed was that they were fully aware of the standard required for course delivery, that they had been assessed in their general training skills and that they had passed their three week induction course. During the whole period of training rollout I cannot recall any issues with trainers.
7. From my own recollection the role of analysis to determine the baseline competencies of the cohort of trainees was undertaken by Stuart Kearns, Project Director, Peritas / KnowledgePool and I was not involved with this work. I was aware of Training Needs Analysisbut cannot recall to what extent the documents were used in any work on the training program. I do

not recall the analysis details of baseline competencies so cannot comment on whether any analysis done was accurate and / or adequate.

8. I was not involved in any work around determining baseline competencies, implementation strategy and scheduling course specifications so I have no knowledge of these areas of work and do not recognize some of the key names on documents concerned with this work. I cannot recall any seeing any specific documents concerning these areas of work but I am sure that I probably would have had access to some or all of the documents at sometime.
9. The length of the training offered to SPMs and counter assistants was a joint decision between POCL, ICL Pathway and Peritas, taken following Training Needs Analysis.
10. In relation to the training program designed by Peritas / ICL Training Services I can make the following comments. a) The group size of attendees at various stages of the training program was a joint decision between POCL and Peritas. As I recall the group size differed for SPMs and counter assistants but I cannot remember the specific size of any particular group. b) The time dedicated to each topic on the training course was developed to match the current manual processes. Some processes e.g. EPOSS sales were a generic process on the system. There was several practice events running concurrently with development to assess the time needed to learn each process on the Horizon system but I cannot remember any specific details of the practice events including how many events took place, who was involved in these events or how these events

may have influenced the design of the training program. c) I cannot recall how much time was allocated in the training program to cover any individual topic. The training program was designed following Training Needs Assessment and signed off by POCL as 'fit for purpose'. All trainees received supporting documentation in the form of a User Handbook and Quick Reference Guides and had access to a POCL Help Desk. d) The documentary content provided to the trainees was tested against the Horizon stand alone training system. All content provided to the trainees, including written, oral presentations and demonstrations was developed by Peritas / ICL Pathway / POCL and was badged as POCL. It was then tested against the system and trialed by various POCL groups before full sign-off by POCL as 'fit for purpose'. e) The time dedicated to trainees engaging in practical training tasks was decided by Peritas / ICL Pathway / POCL as a group decision and taking into account the training needs analysis. I believe there was sufficient time available for practical training tasks. f) I have no knowledge of why the training medium of classroom based training was chosen for the user training course as I was not involved in that decision process. I do however consider this to be the most appropriate training medium in this case because when it was presented to POCL they signed it off as fit for purpose. g) Within the course schedule there was not a lot of spare time for trainees to ask questions, however, trainees could raise questions with individual trainers during the course and these would be dealt with on a one to one basis at the time as far as possible during the course. I do believe there was

enough time for questions and answers and therefore this did not negatively affect the adequacy of the training program.

11. In my view, there was enough time provided to train SPMs to adequately use the Horizon IT system. There would have been a lot more vocal comments from trainees had the time not been adequate. In most cases I would say there was adequate time, however, the wide age range of SPMs and Counter Managers, together with the different levels of computer literacy, was so varied that some delegates found it more difficult than others. It would be impossible to quantify the number of delegates who found it more difficult based on the volume of trainees, the differing levels of IT experience and the wide age range of trainees. It was inevitable that some trainees would need further assistance which was available to them. Other methods of assistance, both written and in the form of a help desk were available to all. In some cases additional training was undertaken. I believed that the training program delivered was appropriate as the Post Office network required continuity in the business model. There were training courses available for SPMs and Counter staff in relation to their specific roles. This still remains my view today however I have no knowledge of how the Post Office and the system have further developed.
12. The initial training program for SPMs and counter managers was designed to provide sufficient training to enable them to train counter assistants. This was also supported by the written materials of a User Handbook and Quick Reference Guides, plus the POCL help desk and the Horizon System itself when in training mode. All these factors together

were all enablers for SPMs and Counter Managers to train Counter Assistants.

13. I do not know if the design of the user training assumed that all trainees would have attended the User Awareness Event. I believe that the User Awareness Event was attended by SPMs and Counter Managers but I am not sure about the attendance of Counter Assistants or other POCL staff.
14. I have no knowledge or recollection of a Specialist Training Helpdesk proposal to support distance learning.
15. a) Written materials were prepared for the training program by a small group from Peritas / KnowledgePool including myself. Post Office processes were transposed onto the system and then written up in training materials. I cannot remember the specific task of each group member, however, all written materials produced were reviewed, reworked where necessary then approved and signed off by POCL as fit for purpose. b) I cannot remember how often comments would be received on drafts of training materials or the nature of any comments but all training materials, including the Style Guide, were approved and signed off by POCL as fit for purpose.
16. The design of the training program was tested through a series of pilot and practice events but I cannot recall exactly how many were held in total. There was several practice events running concurrently with development but I cannot remember any specific details of these including who was involved in these events or if any issues were identified from the events. I do believe that any issues identified during or post pilot events

would have been rectified in the program which was finally signed off by POCL as fit for purpose.

17. a) The report titled "Horizon System Training 'The First 14' Report on Training Events" dated 28 March 1999 was prepared using information from feedback forms completed by trainees at the practice events and from individual trainers. b) The questions asked on the feedback form given to trainees were determined by representatives from Peritas and ICL Training and approved by POCL. I did consider the questions on the form to be adequate and to cover all necessary details. c) I was not involved in the compilation of the feedback form so cannot say why the form had two positive columns and one negative. At the time I did consider it appropriate to have the different columns on the feedback form as no questions were raised around the form by POCL and it was approved for use as was. I do not know if the responses of SPMs on the feedback form were affected by the columns in the form. d) As a result of the findings in the report I think that more time on some subjects would have been beneficial, however, it would be difficult to quantify what more time, if any, would have been beneficial. It was the nature of the Horizon IT system that there was a lot of new information to be taken in by trainees. More time on any training program is always of some benefit but it needs to be recognized that the training time available was finite and does need to be assessed with the post training support that was available to all trainees. e) From the report it was obvious that time constraints were an issue and in my experience this is quite often the case on a new system. It is difficult to quantify if this was a significant issue and time constraints are generally applied to training

programs of this type. The time allocated per course was agreed between ICL Pathway / Peritas / POCL. f) I do not recall if any changes were or were not made to the training program following the report. At the time of the report I considered the training course adequate in its form at that time as it had been assessed and signed off as fit for purpose by POCL.

18. Following any testing such as practice events, I do not recall whether any changes were or were not made to the design of the training program.
19. I do not recall any details of a Management Infrastructure Brief (MIB) but I do believe that a MIB went ahead.
20. I believe there was some form of MIB but I have no recollection of any details.
21. I have no recollection as to whether the User Awareness Event (UAE) was compulsory or not.
22. I have no recollection of any details of the content that was delivered to the attendees of the UAE or who was involved in creating said content.
23. Whilst I do not recall any details of the UAE within this training program, I do consider UAEs in general to be useful because they provide awareness to future users about the implementation of a program or system and they inform them of any support mechanisms.
24. a) Persons were appointed to deliver the UAE by Peritas / ICL Training Services through all potential trainers undergoing a 3 week induction with an assessment after each week. The form of the assessment was: week 1 general training techniques; week 2 introduction to the system and training

on the system; week 3 presenting sessions on the training system. Any person not reaching the required standard on any of the weekly assessments was not employed as a trainer on the program. I cannot recall specifically who was involved in the design of the induction and assessments for Peritas trainers. The entire selection process would have been approved by Stuart Kearns, Director Major Contracts, Peritas / KnowledgePool. b) To the best of my knowledge there would be no requirement for a Peritas trainer to use the Horizon IT System in a live environment as the Horizon training system used was a stand-alone system which mirrored the live system.

25. I have no recollection of any details on how any persons appointed to deliver the UAE were instructed or trained to do so.
26. I cannot recall specific feedback from any UAE event but all events would usually involve feedback from attendees which would then be reviewed by both provider and client.
27. I was not involved in preparing or approving any briefing packs in relation to the UAE and I have no recollection of any details of such.
28. I have no recollection of any details contained within UAE briefing packs and whether they contained any baseline skills questionnaires or not.
29. The training did not differ at all from the designed training program. Once the training program was signed off by POCL as fit for purpose it was delivered as is.
30. The training program content that was delivered to the attendees of the user training was created by KnowledgePool against the specifications

given by POCL. A development team, including myself, created some of the training materials which were approved and signed off by POCL. I cannot remember details of training content but it did include: an introduction to the system hardware; sales of products; accounting. The whole training program was approved and signed off by POCL before training commenced.

31. Persons were appointed to deliver the user training courses by Peritas / ICL Training Services through sitting an interview. From the CVs initially submitted any previous work experience and / or qualifications were considered prior to the offering of a formal interview. The types of professional backgrounds of persons invited for interview included those who had experience of training staff, preferably on IT systems, and the minimum qualifications of an understanding of IT systems. The formal interview included a presentation of their own choosing to demonstrate their ability to train and also their use of training aids to deliver course content. I cannot recall what proportion of applicants were deemed suitable following interview. If a candidate was deemed suitable following their interview they were offered a place on a 3 weeks induction course. Their full utilization as a trainer on the program was dependant on them passing 3 assessments over the period of the induction course.
32. Following a successful interview all potential trainers underwent a 3 weeks induction course with an assessment after each week. The form of assessment was: week 1 general training techniques; week 2 introduction to the system and training on the system; week 3 presenting sessions on the training system. All potential trainers used the Horizon IT stand alone

system, there was no live environment. Any potential trainer not reaching the required standard on any of the week assessments was not employed as a trainer on the program. This was the same course as that used for the appointment of persons to deliver the UAE (see point 24). Basic training was the same for all trainers but there were some additional training sessions for those trainers delivering the UAE.

33. With regards to the user training program I believe there were no issues in scheduling or resourcing and the quality of training delivered was consistent and not affected in any way. To my best recollection not one training event was missed. It was a credit to the trainers and administration staff that all events were delivered on time out of the hundreds that were scheduled daily. It is worthy of note that this was the case even through a national fuel strike, some adverse weather conditions and some very remote locations for training.
34. I do not recall if there was any specific person requesting or analyzing feedback on the UAE from its attendees. I cannot comment on specific details regarding any feedback from the UAE. I do believe that this would have been done as a matter of course by all parties concerned. And that any feedback received would have been considered and action taken as necessary.
35. During the life of the training program I do not recall whether any specific changes were made to the training. As far as I was aware the training program was delivered as approved and signed off by POCL.

36. Remedial training was offered to some attendees of the training program.
- a) I believe there was an assessment at the end of each training course but I cannot remember any specific details. I cannot recall the competence test specifics so cannot say if it was adequate or not or who passed the test. Any trainees struggling on the system were offered a further full course but I cannot recall the specific process.
 - b) I do not recall who was responsible for deciding if any remedial training was offered to a trainee.
 - c) As far as I can recall any remedial sessions were generic and not focused to the needs of a particular trainee. I believe any issues trainees had on the original course would have been known to the trainer and, though remedial training was generic, the trainer would have focused where possible to address these issues with the trainee during remedial training.
 - d) The content of remedial training consisted of another full course for a trainee.
 - e) Any focused remedial training could have been offered to trainees but potentially it would have been one to one training which would have had both cost and time implications.
 - f) I believe that in the case of remedial training, seminar style teaching would not have been practical as Horizon was a hands-on system. During the training program the Horizon systems used were stand alone systems and at no time were they used in a live environment. Once installed, the full Horizon IT system had a training mode setting which could be used to enable practice on the system outside of the live environment.
 - g) I do not recall who determined the nature and scope of any remedial training that was offered.

37. As I understood it the 'The Four Level Approach' to evaluating training around 1998 – 2000 was to provide an indicator of a trainee's reaction to the training and any subsequent action to remedial training required.
38. I am not aware of any Peritas / ICL Training Services involvement in Level 3 or Level 4 evaluation of the Horizon System and as such I cannot comment on the nature and extent of any involvement.
39. I do not know who was responsible for analyzing the results of the course appraisal forms collected for Level 1 assessment.
40. I do not remember any details of TPAS and cannot recall what information from the course appraisal form for the user training courses was recorded onto TPAS.
41. As I do not remember any details of TPAS I cannot say under what circumstances any detailed comments on the course appraisal form from the training program would be recorded on TPAS.
42. I do not recall why the course appraisal form had two positive categories and one negative category. I was not part of the development of the course appraisal form and have no knowledge of why it was constructed as it was. At the time I did consider the course appraisal form to be appropriate and this was based on the POCL approval of the form and sign off by POCL as fit for purpose. I do not know if the responses of SPMs on the course appraisal form were affected by the number or type of columns in the form.

43. The course appraisal form was completed at the end of the course and prior to the competency test. This was the agreed format of the course but I do not know why it was done in this order.
44. I cannot recall if the trainers did, or were instructed to, record their own evaluation of any attendees' performance on the user training day.
45. I cannot recall any specific feedback on the training program that I received from trainers and / or trainees.
46. The general gist of feedback from trainees was that it was a lot of information to take in. Trainees often commented on the professionalism and helpfulness of the trainers. The trainers commented on the widely different levels of computer competency and the varied age of the trainees with some trainees having little or no previous IT knowledge or experience.
47. I cannot recall the types of transaction and / or the uses of the Horizon IT System that would be tested as part of the competence test at the end of the training program.
48. I cannot recall what areas of competence were defined as critical or how these areas of competence were assessed.
49. I was not aware of any initially proposed After Care Visit (Training Visit Review) and so do not know why ICL Pathway did not undertake any of this work.
50. In relation to any potential computer issues during training I can say the following points. a) In the early days of system development some aspects on the training machines were slower than would have been expected. b)

To the best of my knowledge any issues on the training machines were rectified prior to roll-out of the training program. The full program was delivered as approved and signed off by POCL and within the allotted timescale.

51. I do believe the training program provided was adequate. However, it has to be taken into account the wide age range and differing levels of computer literacy of all trainees. Many of the trainees had been working with a mostly manual system for a considerable period of time and the change to a fully automated system was a steep learning curve.
52. a) In my view the training program fully enabled trainees to balance. If this had not been the case then POCL would not have approved and signed off the program as fit for purpose. b) It is hard to evaluate if the training program was adequate to enable trainees to investigate the cause of discrepancies or shortfalls without being specific about any details of the type of possible discrepancy or shortfall. The training program was supported by a POCL Help Desk which, in my understanding was to enable any specific issues of this nature to be fully resolved on an ongoing basis following implementation of the full Horizon IT system.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed: GRO

Dated: 16th November 2022