1		Tuesday, 10 January 2023	1	Q.	Are the contents of that witness statement true to the
2	(10	0.00 am)	2		best of your knowledge and belief?
3	SIF	R WYN WILLIAMS: Good morning, Mr Beer. We're one short	3	A.	They are.
4		here because Ms Eliasson-Norris is unwell today so she	4	Q.	A copy of that witness statement will be uploaded to the
5		will be following either remotely or catching up, as the	5		Inquiry's website, I'm therefore not going to ask you
6		case may be, depending on how well she feels.	6		about every part of it. Do you understand?
7	MR	R BEER: Good morning, sir, thank you. Can I call Bruce	7	Α.	I do.
8		McNiven, please.	8	Q.	Can I start with some questions about your background
9		JAMES BRUCE McNIVEN (sworn)	9		and experience. I think you were first employed by the
10		Questioned by MR BEER	10		Post Office in 1973; is that right?
11	MR	R BEER: Good morning, Mr McNiven. My name is Jason Beer	11	Α.	That's correct.
12		and I ask questions on behalf of the Inquiry. Can you	12	Q.	Did you have a background before then?
13		give us your full name, please?	13		A background before then was largely in science-related
14	Α.	My name is James Bruce McNiven.	14		businesses and then I converted to general management.
15		Thank you for providing a witness statement to the	15	Q.	Did you have any qualifications in management or
16		Inquiry and for attending today. We're very grateful to	16		similar?
17		you for the assistance that you have given to this	17	Α.	I was a member of the Institute of what was then
18		investigation and will give to this investigation. Can	18		Personnel Management, now Human Resources.
19		you look please at the hard copy witness statement that	19	Q.	In 1986 I think you became the district manager of for
20		should be in front of you, which, excluding the	20		Post Office Counters in Newcastle; is that right?
21		exhibits, I think, is 12 pages in length. For the	21	Α.	Correct.
22		transcript, the reference is WITN04120100.	22		And in 1993 you became head of the retail network for
23		Look at the last page, page 12. Is that your	23	-	the north-east area; is that right?
24		signature?	24	Α.	That's correct.
25	A.	-	25	Q.	In 1996 you became the Deputy Director of the Programme
		1			2
1		Delivery Authority, known as the PDA, and responsible,	1	Q.	So would you describe him as your line manager?
2		therefore, for elements of the delivery of the Horizon	2	A.	Yes, very much so. His title was Director of the
3		System; is that correct?	3		Programme Delivery Authority and I was Deputy Director
4	A.	That is correct.	4		of the Programme Delivery Authority.
5	Q.	Was that a promotion?	5	Q.	Who was responsible out of the pair of you for reporting
6	A.	Yes, it was.	6		back to the Post Office as to the work of the PDA?
7	Q.	Can you tell us the role and purpose of the PDA, please?	7	A.	We were jointly responsible through the PDA board, which
8	A.	The PDA was set up to represent the parties to the	8		comprised directors from both Benefits Agency and Post
9		contract, DSS and the Post Office, and to interface with	9		Office Counters.
10		ICL Pathway on the delivery of the solution which was	10	Q.	You tell us in your witness statement there's no need
11		contained within that contract.	11		to look at it up at the moment (it's paragraph 6)
12	Q.	How many people worked in the PDA?	12		that you reported back to the joint BA/PO programme
13	A.	In terms of direct employed people probably of the order	13		board.
14		of 100. The majority, I would say, were from Benefits	14	A.	Yes.
15		Agency, some 40 or so staff from Post Office Counters	15	Q.	How did the pair of you report back jointly to that
16		and also a number of contracted people and advisers from	16		programme board?
17		outside concerns such as accountancy.	17	A.	Peter would take the lead in terms of the overall
18	Q.	Who was your line manager or senior within the PDA?	18		progress of the solution with Pathway. I would report
19	A.	Yes, the PDA director was a chap called Peter Crahan who	19		back on areas within more of my responsibility, such as
20		had been appointed by DSS.	20		progress on implementation plans, rollout plans and,
21	Q.	And that's C-R-E-H-A-N?	21		generally speaking, the work being done by the Post
22	A.	C-R-A-H-A-N.	22		Office constituent of the PDA.
23	Q.	He was, as you said, a DSS or Benefits Agency employee;	23	Q.	Did the BA/Post Office programme board have regular
24		is that right?	24		meetings?
25	A.	That's correct, yes.	25	A.	Yes, at least monthly.
		3			4

1 1 Q. Would you report to that board in writing? Q. Was it a decision-making body? 2 A. There would be a written report to the board and then we 2 A. It was a decision-making body in terms of requiring 3 3 would take questions on the day. myself or Peter or other members of the PDA to take 4 4 Q. Was there any other reporting mechanism to the board or issues back to ICL Pathway and to resolve them as they 5 5 was that the principal way in which reporting was felt appropriate. 6 6 effected? Q. Did it have any broader decision-making role than that, 7 A. That was the principal way in which reporting was 7 8 8 effected. I had, obviously, conversations and dotted A. Is this the board still -- the board we're talking 9 line responsibility back into Post Office Counters 9 about? 10 Limited, with whom I would have conversations with 10 Q. Yes, the board. 11 people like Paul Rich, et cetera, who might just ask 11 A. I think that the board would exercise -- ultimately 12 advice on certain aspects. 12 exercise an authority about the extent to which they 13 Q. That's what I want to ask you about in particular, what 13 were convinced by the progress; they held an authority 14 that dotted line consisted of and to whom it went, 14 about whether or not the programme should continue (that 15 ie outside of the programme board. 15 would be something done with the joint sponsors); and 16 16 they had a responsibility for ensuring that ICL Pathway 17 Q. Just sticking with the programme board for the moment, 17 were held accountable for the progress of the programme. 18 what was the purpose of the programme board? 18 Q. Who from the Post Office can you recall as being 19 A. The programme board was there to confirm that progress 19 a member of the programme board? 20 A. Paul Rich was a member of the programme board. He was was being made relative to the contract with ICL 20 21 Pathway, to deal with any problems which were arising, 21 a principal member of the programme board. 22 22 particularly around the release of software and the Q. Anyone else you can recall now? 23 programme behind that release, and to ensure that 23 A. Not directly. He would report back to the managing 24 24 director of Post Office Counters Limited. Benefits Agency were aware of that progress, so that 25 they could modify or accelerate their plans accordingly. 25 Q. That was the next question: to whom did the programme 6 Q. Had you worked on the delivery of a large project that 1 board report? 1 2 2 involved a Private Finance Initiative contract before? A. The programme board then separately would report back to 3 the sponsor organisations (so Post Office Counters 3 A. No, I had not. 4 Limited board on one hand, the DSS board on the other) 4 Q. Had anyone on the PDA, to your knowledge? 5 and they would then take, I guess, informed 5 Not to my knowledge. 6 6 decision-making from them back to the programme Q. Had anyone within the programme board, to your 7 development board to instruct us and to instruct Pathway 7 knowledge? 8 8 about the process which should then follow and the A. Not to my knowledge. 9 extent to which progress was being made. 9 Q. I think you subsequently became general manager of the 10 Q. So was it a reporting board, ie used to pool information 10 Horizon implementation team; is that right? 11 from the Programme Delivery Authority and then act as 11 A. Yes. When the PDA was wound up and responsibility was 12 a conduit back to the main boards of each 12 moved back to the host businesses, I moved back with 13 organisation --13 that title and that responsibility. 14 A. Yes, I think that's --14 Q. When was that, please? 15 Q. -- or did it enjoy its own decision-making powers? 15 A. I think the last PDA board meeting was towards the end 16 A. I would say a combination of the two. I think the PDA 16 of 1998. I would say September 1998. 17 17 Q. Then you became general manager of the Horizon board were conscious that they were representing the two 18 contracted authorities and that the two contracted 18 implementation team? 19 authorities had the ultimate decision-making. So they 19 A. That's correct. 20 would be helping the contracted authorities to 20 Was that a role within the Post Office alone? 21 understand the extent to which the contract was being 21 Indeed, yes. Α. 22 moved forward and delivered. 22 Was that a promotion? 23 Q. Had you worked in the delivery of a project with a large 23 No, that was a sideways move. 24 company like ICL Pathway or Fujitsu previously? 24 What was the role and purpose of the Horizon 25 No. It was a new experience for me. 25 implementation team?

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1	Α.	The Horizon implementation team largely focused on the actual physical rollout mechanism. So helping to enable	1 2	0	January of the following year.
2 3			3		Why did you move on in December 7 I think roles changed. I think on the
4		the office surveys that had to be proceeded with before an office could be converted, with any physical	4	A.	people there who had responsibility f
5		modifications that were required at those offices, with	5		implementation. Many things were in
6		the actual commissioning going live with individual	6		rollout. So, really, the job had transfe
7		offices, and playing all that into the joint programme	7		component parts and the role that I s
8		that existed between the Post Office and Pathway.	8		not have the same strength of purpo
9	Q.	How many people were in the Horizon implementation team?	9	Q.	As in nobody took over from you?
10	Α.		10	A.	
11		Who was your line manager or to whom did you report?	11		his role was expanded to the Horizor
12	A.	Then I would report to Dave Miller.	12		implementation role. I think latterly s
13	Q.	Were you, therefore, in charge of the Horizon	13		the business was brought in to perha
14		implementation team?	14		the former responsibilities I had and
15	Α.	Yes.	15		direct management input to the team
16	Q.	So you were responsible for the management of that 40 or	16	Q.	Did you report back to the Post Office
17		50 people?	17		role?
18	A.	I was, yes.	18	A.	No.
19	Q.	I think your role in relation to the Horizon System	19	Q.	Did you report back to the Post Office
20		ended at some point in 1999; is that right?	20		board in that role?
21	A.	That's correct, yes.	21	A.	Not directly. I reported back to Dave
22	Q.	Can you help us as to precisely when, not necessarily	22		member of the Post Office Counters
23		a date but maybe a month?	23		a Horizon management team that he
24	A.	Yes, I think it was probably December 1999 when	24		I was a member.
25		arrangements were in place to renew the rollout in 9	25	Q.	How regularly did that body meet? 10
1	Δ	Latterly, at least a month formally but the same people	1		host organisations, it was becoming
2	,	would be drawn together probably almost on a weekly	2		difficult, I have to say, because the o
3		basis because of the pace of events by that time.	3		party were beginning to move further
4	Q.	How did you understand that reports back to the Post	4	Q.	You said that it worked well, given th
5		Office Counters Limited board were made?	5		which it was working or the constrain
6	Α.	We all made our constituent parts. So I would perhaps	6		under. What were those constraints
7		write about or contribute to a report about the pace of	7		different objectives or were there oth
8		rollout, the readiness of the Post Office estate, the	8	Α.	No, I think they were principally abou
9		situation regarding training, et cetera; so I would	9		objectives which were becoming clea
10		report back on my individual responsibilities. Other	10		I mean, the other constraints within v
11		people would do the same and it would be combined into	11		the whole relationship with ICL Pathy
12		a full report.	12		has been rehearsed previously by ot
13	Q.	Looking back now, having had the benefit of some years	13		that was a constant source of frustra
14		of reflection, what would be your overriding view of the	14	Q.	Why was it a source of frustration?
15		work of the Programme Delivery Authority?	15	A.	The inability well, the PFI contract
16	A.	I think the work of the Programme Delivery Authority did	16		barrier. The role we had in the PDA
17		as well as it could within the constraints it was	17		assurance, so and largely documen
18		working under. I think there was a will to work	18		we could actually see anything devel
19		together. The staff in the PDA, both POCL and BA worked	19		requirements would be translated by
20		well together, but we were conscious that we were a bit	20		a solution. That solution would be re
21		of a forced marriage. We had somewhat different	21		documented and the role we largely
22		objectives. I think that was always realised. So we	22		a POCL perspective, was to try and u
23		were trying to make the best of what we had.	23		intended to do and to try and assure
24		I think as the Programme Delivery Authority	24		intentions met the requirements.

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developed and just before they split back into their

1999?

e ground there were for the field in place to renew the sferred into its specifically had did ose.

- orked for me, I think, on field someone else from aps take over some of d to provide a more
- ice Board in that
- ice Counters Limited
- ve Miller, who was s board, through ne chaired, of which

g increasingly objectives of each er and further apart.

- the constrains under ints it was working ts? Were they only ther constraints?
- out different earer as time passed. which it worked was hway, which I think other witnesses, and ration.
- ct was the primary A was one of ented assurance before eloping. So a set of y ICL Pathway into recorded and y had, certainly from understand what they e that their

As I say, often this was a nebulous process based

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on a document before we could actually see things operating.

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So it was frustrating and trying to get behind that to find out a bit more about the processes, the thinking, how that was going to come together, was extremely difficult. Now, I'm talking particularly from a POCL interest here but, working with the Benefits Agency, I was party to their frustrations as well as not seeing how things were developing and the constant requirement for re-plans.

I think my first six months to a year of working at the PDA was almost entirely involved in re-planning exercises as the timescale slipped, so new plans had to then be devised. That had impact onto the implementation and rollout plans of course, of which I had a particular interest, but I think within that first year this happened three times. So that was a very frustrating aspect.

- Q. Any other reflections overall on the way in which the PDA works or how it functioned or the pressures under which you were operating?
- A. Along with Peter Crahan I met frequently with ICL Pathway, normally at their premises, and we would go through a long list of issues that were arising. They were as helpful, I think, as they could be but it was

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The decision, obviously, eventually was taken that it was in Post Office's interest to continue because to stop and try and restart the whole process would put POCL so far behind the momentum of the DSS to move to different payment methods that we would probably never catch up.

They had withdrawn from the card payment process, which is where we had come in. That was seen to be the way ahead for both parties. Very guickly, I think it became apparent that DSS did not favour that solution. I think that position was amplified by a change of Government. I think when the Blair Government came in in May 1997 they had a vision of social inclusion which was about people having bank accounts rather than physical payment methods over a post office counter and I think DSS regarded that as the way ahead.

So what we were trying to develop with Benefits Agency was something which was to preserve the Post Office position for as long as we possibly could until we could adopt a technological solution which would allow us to work alongside those decisions.

So, ultimately, the decision was taken that, without technology and without technology soon and without the technology which had at least in part been developed, the whole future of the Post Office, as it

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becoming clear that their development processes were lagging behind and all we could do was take back as much information as we could and try to understand how lags in that process were going to impact on the plans which we had developed.

It was difficult. I don't think through any ill-will. I think Pathway's perspective on our assurance was probably that we strayed too far into interference and I think that constant tension was always there.

- Q. Given what you've mentioned as to the fundamentally different objectives of the two client contracting parties and constant frustrations with the way that ICL was operating and working and delivering, why did, in your view, the project proceed? Why was it not brought to a stop?
- A. Well, it was brought to a stop in terms of its initial condition. I mean, the joint programme was brought to a stop by BA when they essentially withdrew from the programme. So there was a point, I guess, in 1998 where Post Office Counters had to decide whether to continue a relationship with ICL Pathway to get something over the line, which was to the Post Office's benefit, or to withdraw and there were many, many discussions around this subject.

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was constituted, was very much in doubt.

- Q. You sat in your position, I think, would this be right, in a space between directors and executives on the one hand -- so the very senior management of POCL -- and those responsible at a lower level on the ground for actual delivery.
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did you feel any pressures from above to ensure that this project proceeded?
- A. At the point at which I have been talking, when BA withdrew, the pressure was the pressure of continuity, that we had something to deliver, that we had a business at the end, and that was significant and I think people signed up to that concept. As we go further downstream towards the whole process of acceptance of the then ICL Pathway solution for Post Office Counters, I think the pressures changed. I think we still had that pressure to deliver something for the future of the business.
  - Q. In what way did the pressures change? We're talking here from April '99 onwards?
  - A. Yes. I think as part of -- if I can step back, when I was working for the PDA, the impetus was from the PDA to Pathway to get something done. When Post Office took on the contract, very quickly, I think, the impetus changed to being from ICL and Pathway to get this thing

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Q. Thank you:

1 over the line as soon as possible because, quite 2 clearly, it was clear to us, there were enormous 3 pressures on Pathway and the people in Pathway to get 4 this delivered because of the pressures on ICL and 5 Fujitsu, given the background and the degree of finance 6 they had put into the project. 7 Q. This switch, am I understanding it correctly, to say 8 that it was a move from pressure being placed on ICL to 9 a pressure coming from ICL for contractual and fiscal 10 reasons? 11 A. I think, in the broadest sense, that's probably true. 12 There was still pressure from ourselves in Post Office 13 Counters back to ICL Pathway in terms of this whole 14 aspect of assurance and making sure that what they were 15 delivering was fit for purpose. So we had these 16 competing pressures of ICL Pathway wanting to move this 17 contractually over a line at which they were paid and 18 most of us on the ground in Post Office Counters trying 19 to ensure that what was being delivered was of 20 a satisfactory quality to allow that to happen. 21 I mean, also I think at the time we were all -- we 22 all knew everything else that was happening, the 23 Treasury review, there was a political interest. So, 24 although these things were happening at a different 25 level, at the working level contact with ICL Pathway 17 1 Q. Can we now look at some of the material with that 2 background in mind. There are a large number of 3 documents that might be raised with you concerning your 4 earlier involvement in the project between '96 and '98. 5 I'm not going to go through all of those because they 6 principally relate to what we call Phase 2 matters, 7 which have already been addressed with other witnesses 8 and, in the interests of proportionality, it's more 9 important that we concentrate on the Phase 3 issues. 10 There are a few exceptions to that, which I just 11 want to look at now, please. Can we look at 12 POL00028591. It will come up on the screen. 13 Thank you very much. 14 This is a Post Office Counters Limited service 15 management report. 16 17 Q. I think you'll be familiar with the style of the 18 document. 19 A. Yes. 20 Q. You will see that this one is dated 30 June 1998 and it 21 relates to the period of May 1998. You'll see the 22 author is Dennis Wong, who, in the bottom left, is 23 described as a Horizon performance analyst, and we can 24 see the distribution list that includes you, first 25 column, fourth down.

1 these were quite apparent. 2 Q. In what way --3 A. In --4 Q. -- were they tangible? 5 A. In the way in which we were -- Post Office Counters was 6 under pressure perhaps to accept conditional changes to 7 whatever it was, training or software or whatever, to 8 get to that point of acceptance. 9 Q. Just explain what you mean there. I think I understand 10 it but for those that may not. So a pressure to accept 11 conditional changes to get to acceptance? 12 A. So the key process as the development with Pathway 13 proceeded, as a Post Office solution, began to focus on 14 contractual acceptance; that is, the conditions under 15 which Post Office Counters would say "Yes, we accept the 16 solution and, because of that, we will meet certain 17 contractual conditions about payment". So we were aware 18 of that. 19 The individuals concerned as well, on the Pathway 20 side, were obviously working under pressure to get this 21 done. Again, I think there was goodwill to try and get 22 it done as well as possible and I think that many of my 23 colleagues in Post Office Counters did enormously good 24 work to try and ensure that we had a satisfactory 25 solution and outcome. 18 1 A. Sure. 2 Q. So this is before the Benefits Agency withdrew from the 3 project --4 Indeed. Α. 5 Q. -- May '98? 6 A. Yes. 7 Q. Can we look at page 6 of the document, please. We're 8 dealing here with the Benefit Payment System, so the BA 9 part. Under the sub-heading "Lost Transactions (LT)" 10 the document reads: 11 "A baseline has been introduced this month to 12 regularly indicate current levels of [lost transactions] 13 in an easily readable form. This has been carried out 14 to reflect TP ..." I think that's transaction processing; is that 15 16 right? A. That's correct, yes. 17 18 Q. What was transaction processing? 19 A. Transaction processing was a unit within Post Office 20 Counters which derived information from the cash 21 accounts to produce the Post Office accounts.

"... and Service Management concerns. These

manageable, may not be acceptable to the business when

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concerns are that current levels, while presently

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1		large volumes of encashments are returned by newly	1		manager. Did he work under you?
2		automating post offices. [Lost transactions] indicate,	2		Not directly, no.
3		when extrapolated (for BES only)"	3	Q.	We can see that this relates to the period of June 1998;
4		That's the Benefit Encashment Service; is that	4		so the period following the one that we just looked at.
5		right?	5	Α.	
6		That's correct.	6	Q.	Again, you are on the distribution list.
7	Q.	" volumes that may be startling in the live service.	7	Α.	Yes.
8		It is worth noting however, that caution needs to be	8	Q.	Again, if we just look at page 6 of the document and
9		exercised when viewing raw figures as there may be	9		you'll see that under the same heading "Benefit Payment
10		variables and arguments that might effect	10		System", the title of "lost transactions", as the text
11		extrapolations."	11		says, has been changed to "incomplete transactions", as:
12		That's a relatively significant warning, isn't it?	12		"This is considered to be a better description of
13	A.	3	13		the problem. To date all transactions have been
14		encashments at an early stage of development. But it's	14		recovered by manual fallback."
15	0	a signal that there is something not right.	15		Then the second paragraph:
16	Q.	It was essentially being based on what was being seen in	16		"It has been agreed both POCL and ICL Pathway that
17		the operation of the Horizon System in relation to the	17		the current levels of incomplete transactions is not
18		Benefit Payment System?	18		acceptable for a system where the primary function is to
19		That's correct.	19		record and manage transactions."
20	Q.	We're here about 18 months or so before national	20		Just looking at that, that's obviously right
21		rollout; is that right?	21		something that you would agree with
22		Yes.	22		It did, yes.
23	Q.	Can we look, please, next at POL00028589, and the same	23	Q.	that lost or incomplete transactions is not at all
24		style of document. This one is dated 28 July 1998,	24		acceptable for a system whose raison d'etre is to record
25		I think produced by Mr Turnock, a Horizon performance 21	25		and manage transactions?
					<u></u>
1	Δ	That's correct.	1		ICL about digging underneath the issues that arise here,
2	Q.		2		so that solutions might be found.
3	Q.	expect that the Horizon System has integral safeguards		0	These two documents that we've looked at look at the
4					
			3 4	Q.	
		to protect and preserve transaction data."	4	Q.	issue of the importance of integrity, consistency and
5		to protect and preserve transaction data."  No doubt you would agree with that sentence too?	4 5	Q.	issue of the importance of integrity, consistency and durability from the context of a transaction processing
		to protect and preserve transaction data."  No doubt you would agree with that sentence too?  It's not unreasonable for the Post Office to expect that	4 5 6	_	issue of the importance of integrity, consistency and durability from the context of a transaction processing system.
5 6 7		to protect and preserve transaction data."  No doubt you would agree with that sentence too?  It's not unreasonable for the Post Office to expect that the Horizon System had safeguards within it, that were	4 5 6 7	Α.	issue of the importance of integrity, consistency and durability from the context of a transaction processing system.  Mm-hm.
5 6 7 8		to protect and preserve transaction data."  No doubt you would agree with that sentence too?  It's not unreasonable for the Post Office to expect that the Horizon System had safeguards within it, that were integral to it, to protect and preserve transaction	4 5 6 7 8	_	issue of the importance of integrity, consistency and durability from the context of a transaction processing system.  Mm-hm.  Were you ever aware that one of the core requirements of
5 6 7 8 9	Δ	to protect and preserve transaction data."  No doubt you would agree with that sentence too?  It's not unreasonable for the Post Office to expect that the Horizon System had safeguards within it, that were integral to it, to protect and preserve transaction data?	4 5 6 7 8 9	Α.	issue of the importance of integrity, consistency and durability from the context of a transaction processing system.  Mm-hm.  Were you ever aware that one of the core requirements of the system was for data that it produced to be available
5 6 7 8 9		to protect and preserve transaction data."  No doubt you would agree with that sentence too?  It's not unreasonable for the Post Office to expect that the Horizon System had safeguards within it, that were integral to it, to protect and preserve transaction data?  Absolutely fundamental, yes.	4 5 6 7 8 9	<b>A.</b> Q.	issue of the importance of integrity, consistency and durability from the context of a transaction processing system.  Mm-hm.  Were you ever aware that one of the core requirements of the system was for data that it produced to be available to support investigations and prosecutions?
5 6 7 8 9 10	<b>A.</b> Q.	to protect and preserve transaction data."  No doubt you would agree with that sentence too?  It's not unreasonable for the Post Office to expect that the Horizon System had safeguards within it, that were integral to it, to protect and preserve transaction data?  Absolutely fundamental, yes.  "Integrity, consistency and durability are fundamental	4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Α.	issue of the importance of integrity, consistency and durability from the context of a transaction processing system.  Mm-hm.  Were you ever aware that one of the core requirements of the system was for data that it produced to be available to support investigations and prosecutions?  Yes, it's a good question. I mean, I think there is
5 6 7 8 9 10 11		to protect and preserve transaction data."  No doubt you would agree with that sentence too? It's not unreasonable for the Post Office to expect that the Horizon System had safeguards within it, that were integral to it, to protect and preserve transaction data? Absolutely fundamental, yes. "Integrity, consistency and durability are fundamental requirements of any transaction processing IT system."	4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	<b>A.</b> Q.	issue of the importance of integrity, consistency and durability from the context of a transaction processing system.  Mm-hm.  Were you ever aware that one of the core requirements of the system was for data that it produced to be available to support investigations and prosecutions?  Yes, it's a good question. I mean, I think there is documentation along the way that refers to the role of
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1 prosecutions? 1 So there was a check process that said, "Yes, 2 A. I don't think I was conscious of that in the way in 2 audit have found this, this is what we found" and, very 3 3 which you have expressed it. I was very conscious of often as a manager, I would interview the subpostmaster 4 the requirement for the whole system to have data 4 concerned, and very often they would have the support of 5 5 integrity. I was not specifically focused on the the Federation of SubPostmasters' representative and 6 6 requirement for that to reflect into the audit process. I would go through the whole thing with them about how 7 7 Q. Was that, in your time on the Programme Delivery this had arisen, what were the issues behind it, were 8 8 Authority and then as general manager of the Horizon there any mitigating circumstances. 9 implementation team, ever discussed, ie the issue looked 9 So, at that time, line management had a key role 10 at from that angle? 10 to play in the prosecution decision. 11 A. Not to my recollection. 11 Q. What role did line management play? You mentioned 12 Q. Did you know that the Post Office had the facility to 12 interviewing and talking it through with the 13 and, indeed, did prosecute its own subpostmasters and 13 subpostmaster. Did they have a role in decision-making 14 other staff for criminal offences? 14 as to prosecution? A. Yes. 15 A. Yes, indeed. When I was a local manager, I was often 15 16 involved in the decision taken along that line towards 16 What role did they have in relation to decision-making? 17 prosecution. Local management were a key component. 17 **A.** Ultimately, they would endorse a decision to prosecute. 18 Q. In what way were local management a key component? 18 I mean, it would be taken by the audit people with the 19 A. Well, if the audit team had been into an office and 19 legal stream within Post Office Counters but it was, 20 found discrepancies, that would be reported back to the 20 I think, inherently important, and written into the 21 local management. So, ultimately, dependent upon the 21 arrangement, that the local manager had sight of and 22 22 decision required, it could reach the head of retail endorsed the decision. 23 network, who was a senior man in charge of the field 23 Q. Do you mean by that that they always endorsed? 24 24 force, or when I was district manager I was often A. Oh no, no, not at all. In fact, again, I recall, as 25 involved in decision-making of that sort. 25 a district manager, there was an arrangement whereby if 25 26 1 the Federation representatives felt that the case was 1 all this on the understanding that the system was sufficiently robust to be providing information which 2 wrong, the decision was wrong in district A, there was 2 3 an appeal process and some of us from district offices 3 was sufficiently supportive of these decisions. 4 outwith that decision-making could be called in to hear 4 Q. Why --5 5 A. That would be my belief. appeal. 6 So we exercised a kind of independent perspective, 6 Q. On what basis did you reach that understanding, as you 7 bringing knowledge from our own experience into that 7 called it? 8 8 decision-making process and I'm pretty sure from my A. Of what -- my view of it? 9 experience that there were occasions whereby the appeal 9 Q. Yes. You said that -- you were saying it on the 10 manager might say "I'm not sure this is right, I'm not 10 understanding that the system was sufficiently robust to 11 sure it's the right decision, I'm not sure about the 11 produce reliable data. Where did you get that 12 12 understanding from? degree of the severity of the decision and maybe you 13 should go back and have a look at other aspects". 13 A. I had no reason to doubt that it had. 14 So there were checks and balances, I think, is 14 Q. So it was a presumption of rectitude? what I'm trying to say. 15 15 A. It was a presumption of rectitude, at the point at which 16 Q. With that knowledge that you had and that role that you 16 we reached when acceptance was given to the Horizon performed, wouldn't it have been obvious to you, 17 17 System. 18 therefore, when you became Deputy Director of the PDA 18 Q. Was that ever tested, the presumption? 19 and then general manager of the implementation team, 19 A. The presumption of the information being sufficiently 20 that the Horizon data would be used for the purpose of 20 robust to support prosecution? 21 investigation and potentially prosecution? 21 Q. Yes. 22 A. Inevitably it would be used. It was a source of the 22 A. Not as such. The presumption was that the information

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accounting process. As I said before though, I was not

aware of any concerns from the audit community about

their engagement with this and, of course, I'm saying

was sufficiently robust for business purposes.

Q. In your role in the PDA and then the HIT, as I am going

to call it -- Horizon Implementation Team -- to your 28

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3 4		requirements of the system in order to produce data that had sufficient reliability and integrity for criminal	3
5		justice purposes?	5
6	Α.	I'm afraid not to my knowledge not within the area in	6
7		which I was operating.	7
8	Q.	If they had had involvement in the design of the system	8
9		the specification of the requirements and ensuring that	9
10		they were being delivered, I think in your roles in the	10
11		PDA and the HIT you would have known about it?	11
12	A.	I'm sure that there was a requirement in the	12
13		requirements index of the contract that referred to this	13
14		availability in this report but, to be I really	14
15		cannot recall it.	15
16	Q.	That requirement that you're referring to, is that	16
17		something that you now remember because you've seen the	17
18		process of the Inquiry unfold over the last three or	18
19		four months and seen people ask questions about it?	19
20	A.	In any of the roles in which I was involved, I don't	20
21		think I was ever at any stage consciously aware of the	21
22		audit requirement or specifically focused on an audit	22
23		requirement and ensuring that that was delivered.	23
24	Q.	, ,,	24
25		that second paragraph, at the end of it, where it 29	25
1	Q.	You will see the handwriting in the middle of the top of	1
2		the page, where Mr Miller, it seems, has added a note.	2
3		Do you see where it says "DWM", underneath that that is	3
4		Mr Miller's signature	4
5	A.	Right.	5
6	Q.	that's been redacted for data protection reasons and	6
7		his note is dated 24 August 1999, so the day after the	7
8		letter. You will see that it addresses the letter to	8
9		you.	9
10	A.	Mm-hm.	10
11	Q.	"1. Bruce McNiven	11
12		"2. Keith Baines"	12
13		There's a tick through your name. Would that be	13
14		done to record that you had been sent it or received it?	14
15	A.	I should assume so, yes.	15
16	Q.	Thank you. He says:	16
17		" Mr Miller.	17
18		"Please ensure that these issues are fully	18
19		addressed during the remaining acceptance process. Keep	19
20		me in touch."	20
21		If we look at the letter itself, Ernst & Young	21
22		say:	22
23		"As auditors of The Post Office we have been asked	23
24		by [POCL] to provide you with our views in respect of	24
25		certain accounting integrity issues from tests 31	25

knowledge, was anyone from audit investigation or

prosecution involved in discussions as to the

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records that there seem to be a variety of situations where the system reacts unpredictably and loses data, you said that that's the system in operation in live time, not model office testing or other types of testing.

To your knowledge, were these lost or incomplete transactions on the BPS (Benefit Payment System) ever seen as relevant to or a threat to the accounting integrity of the system on the POCL side?

- A. I'm sure they would be. Again, from my recollection and knowledge, I can only presume that it would be. I cannot comment beyond that.
- Q. Can we look on please, moving the story forwards, to POL00090839 and the second page, please. Just give me a moment to catch up in my hard copy.

You will see this is a letter dated 23 August 1999 -- top right -- from Ernst & Young, the well known auditors and accountants, to David Miller. I think he was the MD of POCL at that time; is that right?

- A. No, I don't think -- no Stuart Sweetman would be the managing director, I believe.
- Q. Yes, quite right.
- A. So Dave Miller would still be director of counter automation.

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performed by POCL on Horizon data in the live trial."

We can skip the next paragraph. Paragraph 3:

"The live trial is limited to 323 outlets. We make our comments on the assumption that this sample of outlets will be representative of the full network of outlets."

Then paragraph 4, if we scroll down, thank you: "The following issue, as described to us by POCL gives us concern as to the ability of POCL to produce statutory accounts to a suitable degree of integrity. We understand that POCL has attributed a severity ... of "High" to this matter."

Paragraph 5:

"Incident 376. Data integrity -- In order to test the integrity of weekly polling of Horizon cash account transactions, POCL are reconstructing a weekly total by outlet from daily Horizon pollings. At present this control test is showing discrepancies in that certain transactions do not record the full set of attributes and this results in the whole transaction being lost from the daily polling."

To your knowledge, was that the same or a different issue, this time in relation to the Horizon System being operated by POCL, not the Benefits Agency, that we just looked at?

1	A.	The one previously was the Initial Go Live offices of	1		understand that the cash account data stream is the
2		which there were relatively few and they were only doing	2		primary feed for POCL's main ledgers and client
3		business encashment for child benefit.	3		reconciliation [purposes]."
4	Q.	I realise the difference in subject matter.	4		Then over the page, similar language used in the
5	A.	Sorry, I beg your pardon.	5		second paragraph on the page to the language we have
6	Q.	My question was: was the issue the same, to your	6		been reading:
7		knowledge?	7		"It is a fundamental of any accounting system that
8	A.	To my knowledge, the issue was the same in terms of	8		it provides a complete and accurate record of all
9		outcomes, in that, if there was a discrepancy between	9		transactions. These discrepancies suggest that the ICL
10		the two, that was a serious problem.	10		Pathway system is currently not supporting this
11	Q.	But the reasons for it you don't know is this	11		fundamental."
12		right one way or the other the technical reasons for	12		Then skipping a paragraph:
13		the outcome are the same or different?	13		"The nature of the gaps in both the cash account
14	A.	Honestly, I don't know.	14		and transaction data streams is such that POCL believe
15		In the last paragraph sorry, in the penultimate	15		that they would not be able readily to explain them, and
16		paragraph on the page, Ernst & Young say:	16		that significant balances might have to be written off
17		"We are informed that an incident has also	17		to the profit and loss account."
18		occurred where- transactional data committed at the	18		Then it goes tong deal with the impact of all of
19		counter has been lost by Pathway system during the	19		that on the auditors' opinion on the statutory accounts.
20		creation of the outlet cash account and has not	20		The message being given by Ernst & Young here is
21		therefore been passed to TIP in the weekly cash account	21		very similar to the message being delivered by the
22		subfiles.	22		analyst the year before.
23		"Both types of incident result in a lack of	23	A.	Yes.
24		integrity on each of the two data streams used by POCL	24	Q.	Never mind from an auditing or accounting perspective,
25		to populate its central accounting systems. We	25		did this letter cause you and the senior management of
		33			34
1		POCL to stop, take stock and say "Hold on, this system	1		being there, in fairness. Working trying to prove that
2		POCL to stop, take stock and say "Hold on, this system has fundamentally insufficient integrity and ought not	2		being there, in fairness. Working trying to prove that this would operate properly was still going on.
2	_	POCL to stop, take stock and say "Hold on, this system has fundamentally insufficient integrity and ought not to be rolled out"?	2		being there, in fairness. Working trying to prove that this would operate properly was still going on.  Even that point of you leaving in December '99?
2 3 4	A.	POCL to stop, take stock and say "Hold on, this system has fundamentally insufficient integrity and ought not to be rolled out"?  Yes, simple answer to that is yes, and this issue and	2 3 4		being there, in fairness. Working trying to prove that this would operate properly was still going on.  Even that point of you leaving in December '99?  Yes, beyond that. I think it went into January. When
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25

and the impact that they would have on both acceptance

and rollout. Work went on this continuously, beyond my

You'll see that on 4 December Andrew Simpkins, 36

POL00028429.

24

1		said to be of Horizon release management, wrote to	1	Α.
2		a number of key figures in POCL and, indeed, ICL	2	Q.
3		Pathway, I think, on that list.	3	
4	A.	Yes.	4	
5	Q.	What was Horizon release management?	5	A.
6	A.	As I recall, Horizon release management was looking at	6	Q.
7		it from a POCL perspective about the conditions being	7	
8		put on acceptance and the way in which those conditions	8	A.
9		were going to be met.	9	Q.
10	Q.	Was Mr Simpkins in charge of it?	10	
11	A.	Yes, he was.	11	
12	Q.	So it was responsible for the management of the	12	
13		acceptance criteria?	13	
14	A.	As I understand it, yes.	14	
15	Q.	You see this memo is copied to you just on the	15	
16		right-hand side, underneath the two GRO redactions, and	16	
17		underneath the title of "Horizon Testing and Programme	17	
18		Plan Current Status", there's an abstract:	18	
19		"This memo summarises progress made in the last	19	
20		week, the agreed next steps, and issues for management	20	
21		attention, and highlights the continuing uncertainty	21	
22		between ourselves and Pathway with regard to the testing	22	
23		plan."	23	
24		You'll see under "Progress this Week", if you just	24	
25		read that to yourself	25	
		37		
1		on the POCL side of the project?	1	
2	Δ	Yes, I think this is the continuing dialogue about those	2	
3	,	underlying problems. This is about the underlying	3	Α.
4		problems in relation to entering model office testing	4	,
5		and then, from there, into live trials, and I think you	5	
6		are drawing out that it's a continuing theme. People	6	
7		had seen throughout that this issue was never resolved	7	Q.
8		satisfactorily along the way, until we got to the actual	8	۵.
9		acceptance and, as you say, the conditions on the	9	
10		contract.	10	
11	Q.	The document is emphasising that both live testing and	11	
12	Ψ.	the acceptance process will be important?	12	
13	Α.	Fundamental, yes.	13	
14	Q.		14	
15	α.	that this is a memorandum, an update, from Dave Miller	15	
16		to Stuart Sweetman on Horizon acceptance, dated	16	
17		8 September 1999, copied to you in the top right. Can	17	
18		you see that?	18	
19	Α.	Yes, I can.	19	Α.
20	Q.		20	
21	٠.	look at some of the headings in here, look at some	21	
22		documents relating to them coming back to this each	22	
23		time, if you understand.	23	
24	A.	Yes.	24	
25	Q.	So if we, firstly, look at paragraph 1.1, where it's	25	
_0	٠.	39	20	

said to be of Horizon release management, wrote to

1

A. Mmm. (Pause)

Q. -- that it highlights some problems including testing, including in relation to, as we go through the memo, EPOSS and the TIP interface?

A. Mm-hm

It includes problems concerning cash account imbalances and problems with reference data and code problems.

A Yes

Q. Then if we go to the third page, please, under "Impact on Plan", and if we look at the third line, Mr Simpkins says:

"We do not have however an understanding of Pathway's prognosis for fault clearances which would help inform this assessment nor an alternative proposal from them as to how this confidence could be achieved in a faster timescale."

Then three lines on:

"Our position remains, however, that based on the nature of the business processes involved, we need to see clear evidence of, firstly, a stable accounting and reconciliation position in the outlet followed, secondly, by the transfer of accurate data across the TIP/HAPS/BES and Reference Data interfaces."

So was this alerting you to known issues arising with TIP and its interface and cash account imbalances 38

noted that you and Ruth Holleran -- can you help us as to the role that Ruth Holleran undertook?

- A. Ruth Holleran was in the POCL structure, she took a more commercial perspective on this. So if some of these failures affected the contract or the commercial outcome, she would be involved in that transition.
- Q. So:

"Bruce McNiven and Ruth Holleran have done excellent work squeezing a better training deal out of ICL Pathway. The incident remains at high because of the need to support Training with a better Helpdesk facility. However this will in all likelihood be downgraded today medium incident with an agreed rectification plan and therefore no obstruction to acceptance."

Can you help us: in what way did ICL Pathway need to be squeezed in order to provide a better training deal?

A. I think, going right back to the earlier requirements, they eventually said that counter staff had to be trained to a degree that they could confidently, accurately handle the new process, in terms of their interaction with customers, and that managers of the outlet could do that and be able to use the information to produce a satisfactory balance in the office.

It was difficult along the way to get a clear understanding and an acceptable outcome from ICL Pathway that, from our perspective, met those requirements. I think right back at the beginning the proposed training schedule was something like half a day and then workbooks and, essentially, distance learning. So through iterations over months and indeed over a year or a year and a half, we had moved this along to provide a much better classroom training environment, much more appropriate content, a beefing up of the balancing training content and, ultimately, a defined role within POCL to support offices as they went live and. subsequently, on first and sometimes second balancing, which we attributed to failures of the training product. which ICL contested. So, ultimately, there had to be an agreement, at the end of the day, about how this would operate, how subpostmasters would be supported through training and how they would be supported post training in the live environment. We did succeed in reaching an agreement, which actually involved the deployment of a large part of the Post Office resource in the retail line into the support mechanism. Q. We're going to come to that a little later but can we 

look first at the Acceptance Incident relating to training, which is Al218, and look at POL00029130. Look at page 4, please. You will see this is the Al relating to training --

- A. Yes.
- Q. -- 218 and under the description of the incident, it records that:

"The Managers Training Course is not acceptable due to deficiencies in the accounting modules. In the live environment the training given did not equip the users to perform the completion of office cash accounts. This is a ..."

And I think that should read "basic":

"... [basic] POCL function that is central to running and accounting for the POCL network."

So just dealing with the two issues that are being raised there, firstly the managers' training course is not acceptable due to deficiencies in the accounting modules. Can you recall what the deficiencies in the accounting modules were?

A. I can't specifically recall each individual component. The testing of how well it was operating was in the confidence and the accuracy with which a subpostmaster, say, could complete his cash account in his office within a reasonable time scale. So what we were

observing was the outcomes, and the outcomes being unsatisfactory.

I think, in terms of content, I can't remember. I could not go into detail. But there was insufficient time initially given to allow subpostmasters to work with the system to gain that confidence. So that time was expanded and different scripts were written to enforce -- to enhance, rather, their experience.

But, honestly, I just cannot remember in terms of individual components of that training script.

- Q. So you couldn't recall now what was done to address the deficiencies in the accounting modules?
- A. Not individually, apart from the length of time given to it, devoted to it and an increase in the detail. But
   I was not involved at that granular level.
- Q. Then it says:

"In the live environment which training given did not equip the users to perform the completion of office cash accounts. This is a [basic] POCL function ..."

Can you recall whether any work was done to establish, where errors were arising, whether they were due, in fact, to poor training rather than a systematic or structural bug, error or defect in the system?

**A.** It's a key question. From the perspective of training, if we regard the deficiencies as a training issue in

that people had not sufficiently understood how to interact with the system. If it subsequently transpired that that was never going to work because of deficiencies in the software, that may have appeared later.

I think we have to remember that it didn't apply to everybody. Although there were subpostmasters who struggled, there were subpostmasters who succeeded and I think because of that, we regarded it more of a training issue than an underlying software issue.

I honestly -- we had concerns about the underlying software but we -- in my experience, we did not relate that software issue to --

- Q. Was that consciously addressed, ie we know on the one hand that this system has got quite a significant number of errors, bugs and defects that we know about through a range of measures --
- A. Yes.
- Q. -- some of them we are being told about by ICL Pathway, some of them we saw in model office testing, some of them we're seeing in live testing, some of them we're seeing as the system is being rolled out: Issue 1. Issue 2: there are problems being reported to us with the adequacy of the training that subpostmasters are receiving and, in particular, they're struggling to

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-		a connection between the trio	_
3	A.	I think it depends on the point in time at which you	3
4		look at this. In model office testing, where Post	4
5		Office staff were invited in to run the system as live	5
6		but in a model office environment, there were	6
7		deficiencies because things were not working properly.	7
8		That was early on.	8
9		Throughout all this and lying in parallel with all	9
10		this, was the Pathway process and assurance that, as	10
11		these issues arose, they were being fixed. So we have	11
12		what we see, visibility of issues and, alongside it,	12
13		a reassurance that these things were being fixed. So in	13
14		model office, I would say, yes, model office was	14
15		probably about software issues, that it wasn't working	15
16		properly.	16
17		When it came to live trial, there were two parts	17
18		to that. This is in May 1999. So there were the	18
19		Initial Go Live offices which were being upgraded, as it	19
20		were, from what they did to the full release software	20
21		and they had a training process there which was not	21
22		working very well. Again, alongside it, things were	22
23		being done by Pathway.	23
24		When we came to the next batch of live trial	24
25		offices, the new offices being brought into the process, 45	25
1	A.	I'm honestly not aware of any conversations or	1
2		interactions of that kind.	2
3	Q.	Would you agree that it was a logical thing to do?	3
4	A.	It may have been done. I'm not aware whether or not it	4
5		was being done. I know that auditors were being trained	5
6		alongside.	6
7	Q.		7
8		would be a logical thing to have done?	8
9	A.		9
10	Q.	Can we move to page 7 of the same document, please,	10
11		which is a letter from you dated 10 August '99. Scroll	11
12		to the bottom, please. You're given the title here	12
13		"Director Horizon Programme"?	13
14	A.	I think that's wrong. That's erroneous. I never	14
15	_	carried that title.	15
16	Q.		16
17		can see that it's to Mr Dicks at ICL Pathway. Was he	17
18	_	your opposite number?	18
19	Α.	Not really. I think he was brought in to try and	19
20	_	resolve this issue.	20
21	Q.	The training issue?	21
22	Α.	The training issue	22
23	Q.	I see.	23
24	Α.	because it was a high level incident.	24
25	Q.	The title is "Review of Acceptance Incident 218" and you 47	25

perform basic accounting functions. Is there

a connection between the two?

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of which there were about 100, it was observed that the training was -- the outcome of the training was better but subpostmasters were saying of that batch that they felt more confident about their ability to complete a balance.

However, there was still sufficient concern that, written back into the acceptance process an additional group of offices -- I think about 25 or 26 -- were brought into what was a final training product and put through that training product as part of a live trial, in addition to the baseline numbers and, as I recall, the feedback from that was actually quite positive. So we had gone from a position of concern, suspicion and not working over months, to a position of rectification seeming to indicate that the training product was operating and one -- this is a leap -- but that the basis of the system on which that training process was working was also operating because balances were being maintained and were being reached.

Q. Was there, to your knowledge, any communication to Post Office auditors, investigators or prosecutors about imbalances and discrepancies that may be being caused by training inadequacies in this early period that should be taken into account in investigatory and prosecutorial decision making?

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said:

"An analysis of the evaluation against the business impacts identified in the Acceptance Incident is attached."

I'm not going to go through but there's a five-page spreadsheet attached:

"Although many of the criteria have been met, it is regarded as significant that the training and Go Live process relies on the deployment of POCL HFSO resource."

Is that Horizon Field Support Officers?

- A. That's correct.
- Just explain please what Horizon Field Support Officers were
- A. Yes, there were two aspects. One was support to the actual Go Live event at an office and the migration of data and then, subsequent to that, they were also deployed to support, as I said before, the first balance and also potentially the second balance, to provide support and confidence to the subpostmasters.
- Q. "On the basis of this evaluation, we are not prepared to reduce the severity rating from 'high'.

"POCL's view is that without this resource ..." That's the HFSO resources:

"... there would have to be a complete revision of the training approach in order to ensure helpdesks were

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1 not rendered ineffective by the high level of calls 2 following the first and, to some extent, subsequent 3 balances." 4 Just to make clear what you are saying here, 5 you're saying that "Your training, ICL Pathway, is too 6 heavily reliant on the need for our Field Support 7 Officers to be deployed out on the ground to help 8 subpostmasters balance their accounts"; is that it? 9 A. That's correct, yes. 10 Q. So "Your training's inadequate because it needs us to 11 put people -- boots on the ground to actually help 12 subpostmasters do the most basic function, which is 13 balancing their accounts"? 14 A. That's the perspective we are taking there. I think ICL 15 Pathway would say we have fulfilled the obligation for 16 training. We don't know the competencies that exist out 17 there amongst 18,000 post offices. 18 Q. Wasn't that obvious to them, that there would be some 19 people who were 18 and keen and some people who were 87 20 and had never switched an electronic device on in their 21 lives? 22 A. Yes, I think it might have been obvious to everybody. 23 I don't think, in fairness, POCL would say they had 24 a clear understanding of the competencies of the estate of subpostmasters and assistants. So I don't think, 25 49 1 Q. Just very quickly before the break, if we just look at 2 the headline of the ICL response, that's at page 12 of 3 this document. I'm not going to read the whole 4 document. It's on the system that's available for 5 reading but, in essence, in replying to your letter of 6 the previous day, Mr Dicks, who is the author of this 7 letter, says: 8 "Pathway is convinced that it has done everything 9 that it can to improve the training and prepare users 10 for Horizon, and that the essence of the remaining 11 issues that you are seeking to address relate to POCL's 12 own management of change." 13 So he's saying "it's you, not us" essentially? 14 A. Yes, he is. He's saying that we -- the kind of things 15 that you have talked about about understanding levels of 16 competence, and also I think he's inferring that some of 17 the back-end processes, which we were changing to adapt 18 to Horizon being an office, were contributors to the 19 whole end-to-end training knowledge and that was the 20 position they took. 21 MR BEER: Thank you. Sir, might that be an appropriate 22 moment to take a 15-minute break? SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. Do you want to make it 25 to or 20 23 24 to, Mr Beer? 25 MR BEER: 25 to is fine. Thank you, sir. 51

coming in, POCL were able to say, "We know who will adapt to this more quickly and we know who won't adapt to this". We have an understanding of offices which maybe cause problems, but we don't really understand the whole estate.

- Q. Just stopping at that point, was thought ever given to taking a sample of SPMs beforehand to gauge the level of competence?
- A. I think you're going to talk to Kathryn Cook later this week, who was custodian of training within POCL. Kathryn Cook did some work in association with this debate about what competencies we knew about out there.

Now, I know this is downstream, and maybe all that work should have been done as a management of change process and perhaps it would be done if we started again, but I think we were trying to understand this as we went along. But what we were convinced about was the training product did not meet the requirements of every individual and some individuals had to be supported post Go Live.

- Q. Again, if you're designing a training course, don't you first establish what the level of existing competence is and the training needs of the likely cohort to whom it is to be delivered?
- A. I think that's fair comment.

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(11.24 am)

## (A short break)

(11.38 am)

MR BEER: Thank you, sir. Mr McNiven, can we go back to POL00028571. You remember we were using this document as our basis for exploring a range of issues and we looked at training. Can we go on, please, to the second page -- to the third page, actually. The second page is blank. Thank you.

Under "Summary", and just see what Mr Miller says:
"Of our six key players (Keith Baines, Ruth
Holleran, John Meagher, Bruce McNiven, David Smith, Andy
Radka) the first 4 ..."

So I think that includes you?

- A. Yes.
- Q. "... would opt (somewhat reluctantly) for conditional acceptance towards the end of September. Andy Radka and David Smith would not accept and seek to use the full period until 15 November to force improved performance from ICL Pathway."

Can you help us: why did you consider it was preferable to push on with acceptance in circumstances where the criteria had not yet been met?

A. Conditional acceptance because we did recognise, I did recognise there were issues. I can only reflect on what

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was being said at the time, that resolution programmes were in place, that the people who understood those felt that the resolution would be effective. People like John Meagher -- I knew John Meagher, I had many conversations with John Meagher, and I had faith in his judgement and he was on the technical side. And other people who have been here before were saying that, yes, there are still problems but these problems are reducing and the resolution is effective and we expect that it will be sufficient to go to acceptance with conditions, and the conditions, I think we spoke about before, about some demonstration of that effectiveness continuing beyond the conditional agreement for rollout.

So I just tried to take it in the round.

I listened to what is being said, I look at the area

I listened to what is being said, I look at the area that I had most responsibility for, which was the physical infrastructure and rollout and training and, from that perspective, I was reasonably confident.

I was very confident about the physical implementation side and I was accepting the judgement of colleagues that it was capable of being fixed. And I suppose, ultimately, I would say that, in all my dealings with ICL, how frustrating they may have been, the battles that may have been involved, this was a world-class IT company and I fundamentally did not think that they

could be done. What more can I say? I accepted advice from the people closer to the technical end that things would be resolved.

Q. Can we look to the foot of this page, please, under the heading "Where To Go From Here?"

At point 4, Mr Miller says:

"Bruce is preparing the bullet point brief for John Roberts and I will incorporate Acceptance into it."

So I think John Roberts, at that time he would have been chief executive of Post Office Counters --

- A. Yes.
- 12 Q. -- and a member of the board, obviously?
- 13 **A.** Yes.

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- Q. At this point in time, you were obviously a key member of the Horizon Implementation Team. You have moved on from the PDA?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You were the senior member of the Horizon managementteam.
- 20 A. Of the Horizon field implementation team, yes.
- 21 Q. Thank you. You worked under Mr Miller?
- 22 **A.** Yes
- 23 Q. You had a good working relationship with him presumably?
- 24 **A.** I did.
- 25 Q. He trusted you?

- would allow over the line a system in which they had no confidence.
- Q. Was the system in front of you at the beginning of September working as a world-class system?
- A. No, fair comment. It was not and that's why the acceptance process still had significant issues attached to it and those issues would continue until they were resolved.
- Q. This is only four weeks after your letter of 10 August to John Dicks --
- A. Yes
- Q. -- which, in the letter and in the annex to it, set out a full range of issues known to both POCL and to Pathway. What had changed in that four weeks to make you, by this time, in September, reluctantly agreeable for conditional acceptable to proceed?
  - A. The letter to John Dicks was specifically about training. I was content that there were procedures in place. There was a new document from ICL Pathway that outlined changes to the whole training process, including an awareness event which had not been there before. We had essentially agreed that there would be post implementation support and, ultimately, that was paid for by ICL Pathway.

So from a training perspective, I was confident it 54

- A. I hope.
- Q. Presumably that's why he, when he deputed somebody to draw up a bullet point memo for the chief executive officer, he chose you to draft it; is that right?
  - A. I would think so.
- Q. At this time, did you understand that this wasn't simply a transition from a paper books ledger system to a digital accounting system; there was a much broader process of change that the implementation of Horizon brought with it?
- 11 A. It was becoming apparent, yes.
  - Q. Was it your view and those around you that the Post Office would, going forwards, not wish subpostmasters to have the facility to challenge the data produced by Horizon?
- A. I really can't comment on that. I don't know -- I did
   not know and I do not know, with hindsight, whether they
   had that opportunity or not.
- Q. Were you not party to any discussions or did you not become aware of the absence of a facility allowing subpostmasters to challenge the data produced?
  - A. To my recollection, I can't remember being aware of that at that time. I have seen subsequent documentation that refers to it.
- 25 Q. Did you understand that this was -- had a dual purpose:

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2 challenge but also to reduce the costs and resources 3 expended on the issue at Chesterfield? 4 A. I'm totally unaware of that issue. 5 Q. Was there any sense in the discussions that you were 6 a party to that automation had the benefit of exercising 7 greater control, central control, over the accounting 8 process by the Post Office, both by the IT and by reason 9 of the contractual terms of subpostmasters? 10 A. I think I would have been aware of a movement towards 11 conformance, that things would be done in a coherent and 12 repeatable way by subpostmasters across the whole Post 13 Office estate, which would be to benefit of the Post 14 Office, if that was done and done well. 15 Q. Were you aware that the obligation was placed upon 16 subpostmasters to cover any accounting shortfalls with 17 their own money? 18 A. As I recall, going back to my previous line management, 19 local management responsibilities, there had always been 20 a provision to that extent and there were mechanisms in 21 place to try and work out, say, how much of a deficit 22 might be accountable to the subpostmasters' actions. It 23 could be that a subpostmaster just gave someone a double 24 benefit and that then came back to evidence for us and 25 we would then say, "Well, you know, ultimately, that was 57 1 sent at about the same time as this paper that we've 2 been looking at that also concerns a briefing of 3 Mr Roberts. That's POL00043705. Look at the second 4 page, please. Just wait a moment whilst I catch up. 5 Sorry, if we go back to the first page, I called 6 it an email. It's an electronic memo. 7 Can you see that? Then go to the page afterwards, 8 please. You'll see this is dated 10 September 1999 and 9 so a couple of days after the document we've just been 10 looking at and it's from Stuart Sweetman -- sorry, it's to Stuart Sweetman from Mr Miller and we can see that 11 12 you're copied in on the top right. 13 A. Yes. 14 Q. It's an update about acceptance at 10.30 am on Friday, 15 10 September. In paragraph 1 there's a full update on 16 Horizon generally being sent, enabling Mr Stuart (sic) 17 to brief Mr Roberts on Monday, and then if we go to the 18 numbered paragraphs under 1: 19 "Very considerable progress has been made in the 20 joint workshops with ICL Pathway but as of today there 21 were still 2 high incidents (Data integrity across the 22 TIP interface and system stability around screen 23 freezes) which would, in the Post Office view, make it

difficult to accept on 24 September."

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Then paragraph 4:

it was intended to limit or remove the SPM right to

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1 your doing and therefore you must make that good". 2 So there was always a provision of sorts about 3 subpostmasters rectifying financial shortfalls of which 4 they were a part. 5 Q. What about a change to irrespective of cause? 6 A. I'm not aware and I was not party to any conversations 7 of that type. 8 I find it now, being faced with that, hard to 9 understand that that would have been an outcome. 10 I would have thought there would always be a management 11 intervention in that decision. 12 Q. When the system was being rolled out, does it follow 13 that you weren't aware that the contractual terms for 14 SPMs required them to make good shortfalls, irrespective 15 of cause? 16 A. I'm absolutely not aware of that. My previous 17 experience was a requirement to make shortfalls but 18 there was a decision-making process within it. 19 Q. The briefing that you prepared for Mr Roberts, did that 20 just relate to training or did it extend to other 21 things? 22 A. I mean, I've read that and I've seen that I was 23 preparing a bullet point brief. I can't recall the 24 outcome of that. 25 Q. No, we haven't got it. Can we look at an email that was 58 1 "... if we were to stick rigorously to our agreed process I would not be allowing further rollout." 2 3 So were you a party to the creation of this 4 document or were just a recipient of it? 5 A. I think I was only a recipient. 6 Q. But overall the document is highlighting that the 7 outstanding incidents aren't related to training. They 8 include data -- or they are data integrity across the TIP interface and system stability. 9 10 A. Yes. 11 Q. So this memorandum, I think you'll agree, makes it clear 12 that these two important issues were being raised with 13 the senior management team closest to the board clearly 14 and in writing? 15 A. Yes. 16 Q. They were being advised that the decision to go forward 17 with conditional acceptance in September 1999 was 18 a departure from the agreed processes for acceptance.

A. Strictly speaking, that would be correct.

A. I don't know if this goes on to talk about any more

activity on those exceptions but I think that those

exceptions still had rectification activities around

Q. Why was that recommended?

Q. It says that in 2, "The two incidents have rectification 60

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1 plans", but I don't think there's anything else about 2 those in the memorandum. 3 A. No, I'm only surmising here that it's taking a view from 4 the previous document about why some people, myself 5 included, felt that, perhaps, we should continue to move 6 forward. There were pressures. I think everyone felt 7 some pressure about continuing to move forward --8 Q. I'm so sorry, where was that pressure coming from? 9 A. Three sources, I think. One was the impetus behind 10 rollout. Now, that was something I was immediately 11 involved with. So by the stage the whole process, which 12 went back six or eight months of offices being visited, 13 offices being surveyed, offices being modified, offices 14 being made ready for implementation, there would be, by 15 this stage, some thousands of offices probably ready to 16 go to implementation and a build up of expectation, not 17 least amongst the subpostmasters, that this was going to 18 go ahead and they were going to be part of it. 19 From a personal perspective, I think it was 20 a pressure I've always believed that we should get this 21 done, otherwise, as I said at the outset, we would never 22 catch up again. I think I was aware of and probably 23 responded to external-to-my-own-team pressures about 24 commercial activities, political influences, the 25 Treasury review had given the go ahead and money was 61

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annex to the second supplemental agreement dated 24 September 1999 and we'll see that this document, which is very long indeed -- 218 pages in total -includes very significant detail on the proposed rectification plans. I want to look at Al218 and training in particular.

Can we go to page 65 internally, please. As this is part of the resolution plan for Al218 and, under the third bullet point, it records that:

"The joint workshop on 13 August [that's 13 August 1999] accepted that not all users within the large population will 'absorb' Horizon. This may eventually call for closure of the outlet, replacement of the subpostmaster or training of additional staff. It has been agreed between POCL and ICL Pathway that other steps taken within this resolution plan should minimise the risk of this and that any residual fallout will be handled by POCL. POCL have agreed to review and strengthen the relevant process. This is reflected in the timetable."

Then if we just go back to the previous page, please, and look at the foot of it, the paragraph right at the bottom:

"Further to the activities above, a workshop took place on 13 August which identified seven specific areas committed.

- Q. At a day-to-day level, how did that pressure manifest itself?
- A. I think it manifested itself in terms of our relationship to Pathway. It would be fair to say that we were under pressure from Pathway to move forward. I mean, it talks about workshops. I remember being involved in a number of meetings with ICL Pathway at senior level where they were trying to downgrade incidents to a level which the contract would allow to go ahead. We, myself and colleagues, were in essence trying to say "No, we're not going to do that, we won't allow it until we have more proof".

That level of impasse that translated into a series of workshops between the people most closely involved, working level workshops. They tried to disassemble all the reasons behind these problems not being resolved but they were then being translated into plans to resolve them rather than decisions about not going forward at all. So the impetus was on resolution as opposed to stopping and that's a pressure in itself, I think.

Q. Can we turn, please, to move forward in the chronology a little, to POL00090428. We can see, as the edge of the spine tells us, that we're about to look at the 62

for potential improvement ... Commercial consequences of the actions below are agreed in an exchange of letters between [you] and Liam Foley of ICL Pathway ...

"These are as follows."

Then they are set out, including the one that we looked at.

- A. Yes.
- Q. So what is recorded in that third bullet point seems to be the product of an agreement reached between you and Mr Foley in correspondence. Did POCL accept before acceptance that there would be some subpostmasters who would never absorb, in inverted commas, Horizon?
- A. I think we accepted it was possible. I mean, a number of subpostmasters resigned of their own volition, as they became aware of the implications of taking on an automated process in their office. So there was a fallout from that as well. So it was not surprising if there would be a fallout from the training process.

The training process was structured such that there was a competency test -- it wasn't called a competency test from the subpostmasters' or assistants' point of view, it was a certificate of competence -- but there were some who just would fail the test at the end of training because they were presented with some scenarios to which they had to give

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answers and, even with some help, there were some that failed.

We managed to then arrange for them to be retrained along the lines of the same module and to be retested. The agreement with ICL was that if people, subpostmasters or assistants, failed a third time then they would return to POCL as our responsibility rather than a Pathway training issue and I suspect from that there were discussions -- if it was a suboffice assistant, there was the opportunity for the subpostmaster to train them, to take them under their wing and try to help them a bit more.

If it was a subpostmaster, there was help given in terms of balancing. But there was fallout. There would have been and there was some fallout along the way from people who thought this is -- "I'm not going to do this, this is just not for me", in which case an outlet may have to be closed.

- Q. So the fall out would be closure of the Post Office or replacement of the subpostmaster within the Post Office and did you understand that the means by which subpostmasters, who could not or would not absorb Horizon, would be through their contractual liability for errors?
- A. No, I did not associate the training and the withdrawal 65

with contractual liability for errors.

- Q. How did you think that the non-absorbers would be, as part of a residual rump, removed?
- A. It was often by mutual agreement that the subpostmaster and the local manager said "This is not working", or the subpostmaster said, "I'm not going to continue with this". So it was a kind of a voluntary resignation.
- Q. What if it wasn't voluntary? What was the means by which subpostmasters, who couldn't absorb Horizon, would be removed?
- A. I'm not aware of any force majeure closures of offices because a subpostmaster had not passed through that phase successfully.
  - Q. So how were they going to be removed then? How did POCL intend to remove subpostmasters?
  - A. As I say, I think it was a mutual agreement, it was a conversation. But I don't think we're talking about a great number in the population here, by that stage, because I think the local management would have -- the local management would have a responsibility to the customers of a post office as well as the integrity of the Post Office finances that if -- and this is always the case -- that if they felt the individual subpostmaster was not performing to the requirements, there would have to be a conversation about what

happened next.

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- Q. Was any link drawn between the ability of subpostmasters to absorb Horizon with the adequacy or inadequacy of the training with which they were being provided, which I think was a day and a half, wasn't it?
- A. Yes, I think that goes back to all the support that was then put in place. I mean, I don't know the numbers and I suspect it would be quite small if we got to that point and I think along the way --
- Q. 20 per cent that failed the -- in inverted commas -- "competency" test initially; is that right?
- A. Initially, that may be right. You may well be correct. But that's of all people, assistants and subpostmasters, of course.

But I think I would expect that local managers the whole system, would go as far as they possibly could to help a subpostmaster. It was his business to help him run his business properly, even if that meant line resource, local managers going out there on successive visits to try and help them.

- Q. So the role of the local manager continued to be absolutely central; is that right?
- A. Yes, absolutely, and the field force that was sent out were converted from the normal jobs of managing numbers of outlets to specifically supporting the whole of that

- balancing/reconciliation help process. So some 350/400 people were put in for that purpose.
- Q. In your time, were you ever aware of the removal of the local manager from the decision-making process in relation to investigation, audit and prosecution?
- A. Can you just say that again so I understand it?
- Q. Yes. In your time, were you ever aware of the removal of the local manager from the decision-making process in relation to audit, investigation and prosecution?
- A. No, I wasn't.
- Q. Can we turn to the issue of balancing as a part of the training process and acceptance. Can we look, please, at NFSP0000120. It might have been easier if I said NFSP00000120, thank you, and look at page 2, please.

This is a letter addressed to Colin Baker and, if you just scroll down, please, and go over the page and scroll down, from Paul Rich?

- A. Right.
- Q. You are a copy at the foot of the page.
- A. Yes
- Q. You'll see, if we go back to the first page, please, that the -- sorry, the first page of the letter, the second letter of this clip of correspondence, thank you -- that the letter's dated 4 September 1996. You'll see in the third paragraph that you are referred to 68

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1 "Bruce McNiven, from the Programme Delivery Authority". 2 Is that right, in September 1996 you were performing the 3 role of the Deputy Director of the PDA? 4 A. That's correct. 5 Q. Then you'll see in that third numbered paragraph it says 6 that you will be in touch with Mr Baker of the NFSP: 7 "... separately to notify you of a structural 8 framework we intend for subpostmasters to be involved in both user acceptance testing, and in generating possible 9 10 solutions to operational problems that might arise. You 11 and Bruce will discuss the NFSP's part in that to help 12 smooth implementation." 13 So the part of the sentence that says "involved in 14 both user acceptance testing", just explain to the Chair 15 what "user acceptance testing" means? 16 A. I should imagine that would encompass two aspects of the 17 process: (1) model office testing where subpostmasters 18 and some directly managed counter staff would be brought 19 into the model office environment and run through the 20 scripts and the process using the equipment as it then 21 was to test how it was operating. And the other one 22 would be the live trial itself, which was, I suppose, 23 a key point within the process where subpostmasters 24 would be introduced to the system. 25 Q. So this is an early recognition --1 of the subpostmasters at that stage, at that stage of 2 development of the live trial, were unhappy about their 3 experience and they told us and, you know, we accepted 4 it. I should say that there was --5 Q. What were they unhappy about, I'm sorry? 6 A. Mostly about the balancing and about the length of time. 7 It was the length of time more than anything else, that 8 it seemed it was taking into them -- balancing was 9 usually about a two-and-a-half-hour process, even in 10 11 times 12 I think, ultimately, that was achieved for many 13 people but during live trial -- I mean, with hindsight, 14 in live trial we exposed a lot of those people to 15 enormous amount of difficulty. To some extent, that 16

A. Mostly about the balancing and about the length of time. It was the length of time more than anything else, that it seemed it was taking into them -- balancing was usually about a two-and-a-half-hour process, even in manual times, and that was the expectation in automated times.

I think, ultimately, that was achieved for many people but during live trial -- I mean, with hindsight, in live trial we exposed a lot of those people to enormous amount of difficulty. To some extent, that might have been expected because it was a live trial. We wanted to know what was happening, we wanted to know their experiences but some of them were unhappy about that experience and they told us.
Q. So they were struggling, in the language we've looked at, to "absorb"; would that be correct?
A. To absorb and I think it was mostly about the balancing. Their big issue was about balancing, the difficulty of achieving it and the length of time it was taking.
Q. Can we, in that connection, look, please, to

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A. Yes.

Q. -- of the importance of end user, ie SPM, involvement in the process?

A. Indeed, yes.

Q. What, if any, steps did you take in 1999 to involve subpostmasters in the acceptance process?

A. There was no formal process for their involvement. Their experiences in the live trial would inform a view that we were taking about adequacy of various aspects but there was no formal involvement in acceptance.

Q. Was there any involvement of SPMs or their representatives in the negotiations over acceptance in the autumn to winter period of 1999?

**A.** Not to my knowledge, no. I'm pretty sure the answer to that is no.

Q. Given the early recognition of the importance of the experience of end users, why is the answer no?

A. End users had been involved in those processes I talked about. We also -- I remember vividly we had open sessions with the people involved in live trial to get their feedback in an open meeting. There were two in Bristol with the south-west, which I attended. There were two in the north-east, one of which I attended and Dave Miller attended the second, and I think it's fair to say we had a hard time -- I did -- because a number 70

NFSP00000271. Moving on a little bit but still in your role as PDA, this is a letter from you, if you just look at the second page and scroll down. Thank you.

That's interesting. This is dated
22 September 1998 and you are referred to as the general
manager of Horizon implementation. Is that right, you
had transitioned to that role by then?

A. I had transitioned, yes.

Q. Going back to the first page then 22 September 1998 to Mr Baker, again, of the NFSP, and if we look at the third paragraph, please, you say to him:

"I know you would like a workshop to review in detail the Horizon summarisation and balancing and how this be approached in training. I hope to provide this soon but we are still in the early stages of detail on this part of training and it would be mid to late October before I would be able to set up suitable arrangements."

Is this in response to or does it appear to be in response to the NFSP flagging the importance of there being training on balancing as early as the autumn of 1998?

A. Yes, I think so. There may have been -- 1998. There may have been some exposure in model office testing by that stage and some subpostmasters may have been

1		involved.	1		answer questions such as 'do we use the same form?'
2	0	And balancing or the difficulties with balancing had	2		"There were a lot computer problems which were
3	Q.	been pointed up as a problem then?	3		blamed on the fact that computers had to be ferried in
4	Δ	I would think so.	4		and out of vans a lot."
5		Did the workshop there discussed take place?	5		Do you recall receiving feedback like this?
6		I honestly don't know. I cannot recall it I cannot,	6	۸	Yes, I do. This is 30 April is the early part of
7	Λ.	sorry, recall it taking place specifically for	7	Λ.	bringing offices up to spec for live trial and I suspect
8			8		
9	0	Federation representatives.	9		that these were offices that were going from Initial Go Live functionality up to the full release functionality.
	Q.	Can we look, please, at NFSP00000340 and look, please, at the second page. This is essentially a report on	10		It was a very early run of training, full training for
10					, ,
11 12		Horizon training as relayed by Pam Jervis on	11 12		that purpose, and I recognise this. I recognise these
13		30 April 1999, you can see from the heading at the top,	13	0	problems at that time.
		and she reported:		Q.	I skipped over it. This was a fax from Colin Baker, the
14		"The first day of training is OK, but the second	14 15		general secretary, to you, I think.
15 16		is bad because it is rushed. They are not finishing	15 16		Yes. What did you do with this information?
16		on time, but are rushing to finish before 3.30	16		What did you do with this information?
17		because otherwise they have to buy lunch. Why did they	17	A.	Well, I mean, this is April. All of this was going into
18		use the most expensive hotels?"	18		the perspective that we had about training being a high
19		Skipping a paragraph:	19		level incident, you know, a pass/fail incident. It was
20		"In every training session, nobody had done a main	20		not put right; it was part of acceptance. So it was
21		balance, snapshot balances only. Nobody had been	21		information that supported the perspective that we were
22		trained to do a full balance.	22	0	taking.
23		"The trainers are people who have only received	23		In what way?
24		the same training that they are giving out. It's too	24	A.	In the way that we had already expressed to ICL Pathway,
25		narrow a ['field', I think that is] and no-one can 73	25		that we were not happy with the training product and it 74
1		had to be modified and improved. Those debates were	1		in manually and, if it was as difficult as this, they
2		going on on a very regular basis with Pathway at that	2		would be probably transposing the work they were doing
3			3		
		time and from that time up to the revised training	4		into that balance manually at the same time as putting
4 5	0	package that they produced.  Just look over the page, please, and look at the foot of	5		it into the system.  So they were replicating what they did before.
6	Q.	the page, please. Four paragraphs from the bottom:	6	0	Was that running of a dual or shadow
7		"Everyone stressed that all subpostmasters must be	7	α.	· ·
8		•	8	Α.	That's correct, yes.
		told to complete a manual balance if there are problems,			system limited to this stage of the process?
9		or even do a double check. They are told that the	9	A.	I mean, this is quoting someone as saying that that's
10		balance goes down the line to Horizon, but once that	10	0	what they should do.
11		happens, if there is a query, then subpostmasters have	11		Yes.
12		no proof of any work that's been done."	12	A.	That was not official advice. That was people at the
13		Do you understand what that's referring to?	13		training session being told you should do this because
14	Α.	I think you asked earlier about the opportunity for	14		it's difficult to recover things otherwise. I don't
15		subpostmasters to interrogate the balance once it had	15 16		think we ever advised subpostmasters to do a double
16		been completed and whether or not they could influence	16	_	entry-type system.
17		that, and I'm sure, I understand, that they did not have	17	Q.	,
18		that facility. So, at this stage, they were being	18	Α.	Only in terms of this.
19	^	advised to perhaps do a manual backup.	19	Q.	Not more widely?
20	_	What does the manual backup involve?	20	<b>A</b> .	No.
21	Α.	A manual cash account, as they did before they actually	21	Q.	So there wasn't a period, for example, during live
22	^	transitioned on to the automated system.	22		testing when people were asked to do to what you
23	Q.	How would they do a manual cash account?	23		referred as double-entry bookkeeping?
24		The consolid still have a seek assessed in	0.4		Abaalutalu aat aa
24		They would still have a cash account process, a piece of	24		Absolutely not, no.
24 25		They would still have a cash account process, a piece of paper that was their cash account that they used to fill 75	24 25		Absolutely not, no.  So here, that "Everyone stressed that all subpostmasters 76

1		must be told to complete a manual balance", what do you	1		with weekly balancing?
2		understand and I appreciate this is a document that	2	Δ	I don't believe so.
3		was sent to you, and not written by you what do you	3		To your knowledge
4		understand the "everyone" to refer to?	4		To my knowledge.
5	٨	Everyone I think they mean I think the people,	5		was this picked up: whilst we are getting these
	Α.			Q.	
6		from the experience of that training episode, were	6		repeated complaints of an inability to balance,
7		saying, "From our experience, subpostmasters should be	7		subpostmasters (certainly in the live trials) should be
8	_	told to complete a manual balance".	8		advised to run a mirror on paper of the accounting
9		So we should read this as meaning that	9		system?
10	_	Subpostmaster to subpostmaster, I think.	10	Α.	I was never aware of or party to advice from that nature
11	Q.	•	11		from a formal perspective.
12	Α.		12	MR	BEER: Those are the only questions that I ask at the
13	Q.	And subpostmaster to subpostmaster are saying that it	13		moment. There may be some questions from others.
14		should be trained that subpostmasters should be told to	14		I think Mr Moloney was first on the list.
15		complete this second or shadow account?	15	SIR	R WYN WILLIAMS: He's nodding. Over to you, Mr Moloney.
16	Α.	I don't think it came through formally. I think it's	16		Questioned by MR MOLONEY
17		subpostmasters saying to the Federation to say to	17	MR	MOLONEY: Mr McNiven, I just want to ask you about one
18		subpostmasters, "Look, there may be problems and we	18		topic which is the essential nature of data integrity to
19		suggest that you might wish to do a manual balance at	19		the system and the extent to which that was part of the
20		the same time as you are doing the Horizon balance, from	20		audit process. You've mentioned that. You said that
21		the experience we have at that point in time".	21		you were aware that data integrity was essential to the
22		I don't believe it was ever formally adopted or	22		system, but you weren't specifically focused on the
23		transmitted.	23		requirement being part of the audit process.
24	Q.	Was it ever picked up by management as a sensible	24		Is that right?
25		precaution, given the consistent and repeated problems	25	A.	I think I was saying I wasn't specifically aware of
		77			78
1		audit auditors being engaged in the work that we were	1		these issues, training and all the rest, both through
2		doing in terms of data integrity.	2		myself to people like Liam Foley, et cetera, in ICL
3	Q.	I see. Could I take you to POL00029130. It's	3		Pathway but also through what shots being held people
4		a document you've already been taken to. Could I go to	4		closer to the issues, I would say, on both sides to try
5		the letter at page 7 of the PDF. You have already been	5		and come up with a resolution, to try and produce
6		taken to this letter.	6		a solution that meant that the training content was
7		This is a letter from you, Mr McNiven, dated	7		better than we started off with.
8		10 August 1999 to Mr Dicks at ICL Pathway.	8		It was ongoing, it was continuous, it was
9	A.	Yes.	9		sometimes difficult and there were often arguments.
10	Q.	We can see that you introduce the letter by speaking of	10	Q.	This document is essentially a summary of where we are
11		an analysis of the evaluation against the business	11		and where we'd like to get to.
12		impacts identified in the Acceptance Incidents, and	12	A.	Yes.
13		that's Acceptance Incident 218 that's attached. In the	13	Q.	But there were many discussions behind it.
14		letter, you raise a number of issues around this	14	A.	There were many, many discussions behind it. I think,
15		acceptance issue 218.	15		if I just may say, the outcome of that exchange of
16		If we could go to the document which is on the	16		letters between myself and Mr Dicks was probably such
17		next page, page 8, this is essentially what you have	17		that we, POCL, understood that the deployment of a large
18		described in the letter. Now, before the letter was	18		part of our field infrastructure was going to be
19		sent and before the attached document was sent, they	19		deployed to support subpostmasters during the rollout
20		deal with a number of issues. Would there have been	20		period.
21		discussions between POCL and ICL Pathway about these	21	Q.	Right.
22		issues, essentially talking them through, and then this	22	A.	And that we would give them all that support. There's
23		is a distillation of what's gone on in terms of your	23		a positioning behind this that says, "And we're not
		9			a poolaoning bonina and alaceayo, Tala world not
24		work on the process?	24		going to pay for it". There's a commercial aspect to

•	~.	carer mere year more and an area and an area	
2		document? And I'm not talking about the letter,	2
3		I mean	3
4	A.	The evaluation?	4
5	Q.	the attached document?	5
6	A.	I don't think I actually wrote any part of that. It	6
7		would pass through me.	7
8	Q.	You'd have to approve it?	8
9	A.	I'd have to approve it.	9
10	Q.	Was it approved above you in line management before it	10
11		was sent?	11
12	A.	I don't think so. I think Dave Miller would be well	12
13		aware of the position that had been talked at the	13
14		Horizon management meetings and I think he would be	14
15		I would have given him an indication of what was going	15
16		to happen and what I was going to say.	16
17	Q.	Yes, okay. So just to I only want to look at one	17
18		aspect of this document but if we just look at the	18
19		various columns, we can see "business impact" in the	19
20		first column, "summary of success criteria measure" in	20
21		the second, and "evaluation" in the third. Could we	21
22		please go down to I think it's the next page but it's	22
23		number 5. We've got 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 down this side. So	23
24		it's the next page again. That's it.	24
25		I'll read through it, if I can, to begin with and 81	25
4		Them avaluations	4
1		Then evaluation:	1
2		"Overall, the incidents of receipts not equal to	2
3 4		payments have reduced and the residual causes are under	3 4
5		investigation or have been resolved. Criteria met. The level of class errors between 26 May and 21 July has	5
6		reduced. Without full information, the indications are	6
7		that pivot errors have also reduced."	7
8		Now, it's back to the first column that I'd like	8
9		to take you, if I may, please, Mr McNiven, where it	9
10		reads at the end of that section:	10
11		"These errors will also raise liability issues	11
12		between the POCL and subpostmasters, and POCL and client	12
13		organisations", yes?	13
14	Α.	(The witness nodded)	14
15	Q.	Is it fair to say that there was an awareness that	15
16	α.	errors would produce liability issues?	16
17	Α.	Yes.	17
18	Q.	Yes?	18
19	Α.	Yes.	19
20	Q.	Was it obvious, really, that if there was a receipt and	20
21	٠.	payments mismatch, then if there was less money than was	21
22		expected, then it's potentially going to give rise to	22
23		liability issues?	23
24	Α.	Yes. There were always errors. There were always error	24
25	•	notices, as they were called, coming from transaction	25
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Q. Sure. Were you involved in the drafting of this

then come back to ask you questions about it. At number 5, under "business impact":

"There is also an impact on TP who are having to process a significant increase in errors on Class and Pivot (up to 3 times as many weekly errors). This is having a significant impact on resources in TP during the live trial. These errors will also raise liability issues between the POCL and subpostmasters, and POCL and client organisations."

Then we see under summary of success criteria measures, some definition, as it were, of the problems that TP are having to deal with. We return, I think, really here to the receipts and payments mismatches that were apparent throughout the process.

- A. Yes.
- Q. So we see "reduction". This is the summary of success criteria measure:

"Reduction in both the number of incidents where receipts do not equal payments and incidents where balance brought forward does not equal balance due to Post Office on previous cash account."

And then:

"Reduction in the number of errors reported by TP -- both class and pivot errors relative to the sample."

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processing, the Chesterfield accounting people, going back to subpostmasters. Previously in the old accounting system, because things came to light after the event, and subpostmasters often had to correct things and understand why it had happened.

What this is saying is there's more of them -there is more of them than there were previously and that's an issue, which is absolutely correct.

- Q. And there were issues of financial liability; that's what you're referring to?
- A. Ultimately, there was a conversation we had about financial liability in subpostmasters for losses. It was always a liability.
- Q. Yes.
- **A.** Obviously, if there were more issues there would be more questions of liability.
- Q. Well, precisely. So there could be a question of -debt recovery would be one thing but also, from the experience you had of prosecution decisions that you've told the Inquiry about today, you must have been aware of the potential for prosecution.
- A. I was always aware of the potential for prosecution in the event of mis-balances. Everything that was being done was to try and ensure that mis-balances were not a function of the system and that's what the work was

2. O. Now, this document went to ICL Pathway.  4. Q. This document is a distillation of the discussions, the many discussions, that you'll had with ICL Pathway around to the exceptance issues. So, so far as you were concerned, ICL Pathway was aware of the islability issues of the exceptance issues. So, so far as you were concerned, ICL Pathway was aware of the islability issues to the input airse from the payments and receipts that the payments and receipts mismatch.  A. I would expect that to be the case.  SIR YYM WILLAMS: Good alternoon, sir.  SIR WYW WILLAMS: Good alternoon, sir.  SIR WYW WILLAMS: Good alternoon, sir.  SIR WYW WILLAMS: We Boer, are you sware of any other the sir.  MR BEER: Other people have put in requests - 12 Examined by MR ELAKE:  MR BEER: Other people have put in requests - 15 A Keyn Includes; Yes.  MR BEER: Shaking of the head.  MR BEER: Shaking of the head the cause of the wall.  MR BEER: Shaking of the head the cause of the wall.  MR BEER: I loan't think Mf Beer can see that because of the wall.  MR RENY: Sir. I had questions but they've all been covered by coursel to the Inquiry. Nothing further.  MR SEER: Other people have put in requests of the wall.  MR RENY: Sir. I had questions but they've all been covered by coursel to the Inquiry. Nothing further.  MR SEER: Other people have put in the case that because of the wall.  MR RENY: Sir. I had questions but they've all been covered by coursel to the Inquiry. Nothing further.  MR SEER: Other people have put in the case that because of the wall.  MR BEER: Shaking of the head.  MR	1	intended to do.	1	MR BLAKE: 2.00 pm.
Q. This document is a distillation of the discussions, the many discussions, that you'd had with ICL Pathway around 5 (2.00 pm) (2.00 pm	2	Q. Now, this document went to ICL Pathway.	2	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So we have an extended lunch break, all
many discussions, that you'd had with ICL Pathway yaround the acceptance issues. So, so far as you were concerned, ICL Pathway was aware of the liability issues that might arise from the payments and receipts that might arise from the payments and receipts mismatch.  A. I would expect that to be the case.  10 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Good aftermoon, sir.  SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.  WEYN A BEAR: Cher people have put in requests—  11 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.  Would-bu questioners?  12 BAR BEER: Other people have put in requests—  13 MR BEER: Other people have put in requests—  15 A. Kevin Joseph Fletcher.  16 MR BEER: Shaking of the head.  16 O. Thank you to fat aftending remotely today, Mr Fletcher. Do you have in front of you a witness statement?  MR HENRY: Sir, I had questions but they've all been covered to you comeal to the Inquiry, Nothing further.  20 BYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much. Can you give your full name, please?  18 Wall  18 Wall  19 MR HENRY: Sir, I had questions but they've all been covered to you comeal to the Inquiry, Nothing further.  20 So I hink his altermoon's witness is remote; is  21 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much.  22 evidence to the Inquiry, Nothing further.  23 So I hink his altermoon's witness is remote; is  24 Thank you to look at that witness statement. Is it diddled in November 2022?  35 So I hink his altermoon's witness is remote; is  36 Thank you to look at the final page. That's page 17 of 17.  46 A. Yes.  47 Yes.  48 Yes, Id.  49 A. Yes.  40 Can I ask you to look at that witness statement is row to the best of your knowledge and belie?  40 A. I can also you to look at the final page. That's page 17 of 17.  41 A. Yes.  42 Q. Can you confirm that the statement is row in evidence of your knowledge and belie?  40 A. Yes, I lis.  41 A. Yes, I do.  41 A. Yes, I do.  42 A. Yes.  43 A. Yes.  44 A. Yes.  45 Wash I liss that your signature?  46 A. I was aftending in the Forces, they don'n't asy w	3	A. Yes.	3	right.
the acceptance issues. So, so far as you were commend. ICL Pathway was aware of the liability issuess that might arise from the payments and receipts that payment arise from the payments and receipts that payment arise from the payments are payment and receipts that payment arise from the payments are payment and receipts that payment arise from the payments are payment and receipts that payment arise from the payments are payment and receipts that payment arise from the payments are payment arise from the payment arise from t	4	Q. This document is a distillation of the discussions	, the 4	(12.37 pm)
the acceptance issues. So, so far as you were commend. ICL Pathway was aware of the liability issuess that might arise from the payments and receipts that significant arise from the payments and receipts that significant arise from the payments are payments. The payments are payments arise from the payments arise fro	5	many discussions, that you'd had with ICL Pathwa	y around 5	(Luncheon Adjournment)
that might arise from the payments and receipts 8 minaratch. 9 minaratch. 10 A. I would expect that to be the case. 10 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr. Sten sent me a secret code by saying 11 many or which equestioner? 12 would-be questioner? 12 mould-be questioner? 12 mould-be questioner? 12 mould-be questioner? 13 MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. Can you give your full name, please? 14 sir WYN WILLIAMS: Mr. Stein sent me a secret code by saying 14 name, please? 15 no - 15 A. Kevin Joseph Fletcher. 16 MR BEER: Other head. 16 O. Thank you for attending remotely today, Mr. Fletcher. 17 world with Mr. Beer can see that because of the wall. 18 A. Yes, I do. Q. Can I ask you to look at that witness statement. Is it dated 16 November 2022? 20 evidence to the Inquiry. Mothing further. 20 dated 16 November 2022? 21 Sir WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 23 So I think this aftermoon's witness is remote; is 23 of 17.    35 I think this aftermoon's witness is remote; is 23 of 17.    45 So I think this aftermoon's witness is remote; is 24 that correct, Mr. Blake? Have we got a likely time for 24 A. Yes. 16. Q. Thank you for the mould have the final page. That's page 17 of 17.    45 A. Yes, I dis. 20 Can you confirm that the statement is true to the best 20 Can you confirm that the statement is row in evidence and will be uploaded onto the Inquiry's websile. 6 WiTh you very much. That statement is now in evidence and will be uploaded onto the Inquiry's websile. 6 WiTh you very much. That statement is now in evidence and will be uploaded onto the Inquiry's websile. 6 I was finishing in the Forces, they advertised or people who trained on IT systems. I had done quite and will be uploaded onto the Inquiry's websile. 6 I was finishing in the Forces, they advertised or people who trained on IT systems. I had done quite a fining or a fair style and they advertised or your background. You were employed by Her Majedy's 11 your background. You were employed by Her Majedy's	6		-	(2.00 pm)
mismatch.  A I would expect that to be the case.  10 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Boer, are you aware of any other would-be questioners?  11 would-be questioners?  12 Examined by MR BLAKE.  13 MR BEER: Other people have put in requests —  13 MR BEER: Other people have put in requests —  13 MR BEER: Other people have put in requests —  13 MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. Can you give your full name, please?  14 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Stein sent me a secret code by saying and the manner, please?  16 MR BEER: Shaking of the head.  17 A Yes, 1 do.  18 A Yes, 1 do.  19 MR HENRY: Sir, I had questions but they've all been covered and by will be will	7	concerned, ICL Pathway was aware of the liabilit	y issues 7	MR BLAKE: Good afternoon, sir.
mismatch.  A I would expect that to be the case.  10 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Boer, are you aware of any other would-be questioners?  11 would-be questioners?  12 Examined by MR BLAKE.  13 MR BEER: Other people have put in requests —  13 MR BEER: Other people have put in requests —  13 MR BEER: Other people have put in requests —  13 MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. Can you give your full name, please?  14 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Stein sent me a secret code by saying and the manner, please?  16 MR BEER: Shaking of the head.  17 A Yes, 1 do.  18 A Yes, 1 do.  19 MR HENRY: Sir, I had questions but they've all been covered and by will be will	8	-	-	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Beer, are you aware of any other   11   KEVIN FLETCHER (aworn)	9		9	MR BLAKE: Can I call Mr Fletcher, please.
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Beer, are you aware of any other   11   KEVIN FLETCHER (swom)	10	A. I would expect that to be the case.	10	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes.
MR BEER: Other people have put in requests — 13 MR BLAKE: Thank you vary much. Can you give your full name, please? 15 A. Kevin Joseph Fletcher. 16 MR BEER: Shaking of the head. 16 Q. Thank you for attending remotely today, Mr Fletcher. Do you have in front of you a witness statement? 20 Was TEIN: I don't think Mr Beer can see that because of the will. 18 A. Yes, I do. Q. Thank you to not attending remotely today, Mr Fletcher. Do you have in front of you a witness statement? 20 Was TEIN: I don't think Mr Beer can see that because of the will. 18 A. Yes, I do. Q. Can lask you to look at that witness statement. Is it dated 16 November 2022? 21 SIR WTN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 38 WTN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 39 Williams: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 39 Williams: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 39 Williams: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 39 Williams: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 39 Williams: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 39 Williams: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 39 Williams: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A. Yes. 39 Williams: Thank you very much will be uploaded onto the linquiry of the weight of the your knowledge and belief? 30 Your knowledge and belief? 31 A. Yes. 30 Was it Peritas or KnowledgePool at that stage? 30 Your knowledge and belief? 31 A. Yes. 30 Was it Peritas or KnowledgePool at that stage? 31 WITNOS00100. The questions I'm going to ask you today 31 People who trained on I'm systems. I had done quite a dual bue uploaded onto the Inquiry's website. 31 Williams will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that 30 Williams will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that 30 Williams will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that 30 Williams will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that 40 Williams will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that 40 Williams williams will be probaded	11		other 11	KEVIN FLETCHER (sworn)
MR BEER: Other people have put in requests — 13   MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. Can you give your full 14   SiR WTN WILLIAMS: M: Sien sent me a secret code by saying 15   no — 15   A. Kevin Joseph Fletcher.	12			Examined by MR BLAKE
SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Stein sent me a secret code by saying no- 15 A Kevin Joseph Fletcher.  MR STEIN: I don't think Mr Beer can see that because of the 17 you have in front of you a witness statement?  Wall.  MR STEIN: I don't think Mr Beer can see that because of the 17 you have in front of you a witness statement?  Wall.  MR HENRY: Sir, I had questions but they've all been covered 19 Q. Can I ask you to look at that witness statement. Is it dated 16 November 2022?  SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A Yes.  SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A Yes.  SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming to give 21 A Yes.  Sol think this afternoon's witness is remote; is 23 of 17.  4 that correct, Mr Blake? Have we got a likely time for 24 A Yes.  Sol think this afternoon's witness is remote; is 23 of 17.  BS WYN WILLIAMS: A Yes, it is.  1 A. Yes, it is.  1 Q. Thank you, In 1994 after leaving the Armed Forces you joined Peritas?  A Yes.  A I can.  A Yes.  A I can.  A Yes.  A I can.  A I was Peritas at that stage and they advertisedas I was finishing in the Forces, they advertisedas I was finishing in the Forces, they advertised for people who trained on IT systems. I had done quite will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that 1994; is a late tight of the pulpose and will be uploaded onto the Inquiry's website.  Timp going to begin by asking a little bit about your background. You were employed by Her Majesty's 11 annoted and people unions and other pulpose and they advertised for people who trained on IT systems. I had done quite any your background. You were employed by Her Majesty's 11 annoted and people doctone along for an interview of the pulpose and they advertised for your background. You were employed by Her Majesty's 11 annoted and people doctone along for an interview in the forces for just over 20 years, between 1972 and 1994; is 12 and if successful in that, be offered the job.  That's correct, yes.  D Joil your role in the Armed Forces incl	13	·	13	
15 NR BEER: Shaking of the head. 16 Q. Thank you for attending remotely today, Mr Fletcher. Do you have in front of you a witness statement? 18 wall. 18 A. Yes, Ido. 20 dated 16 November 2022? 21 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming to give evidence to the Inquiry. Nothing further. 22 evidence to the Inquiry. Mr MoNiven. 23 So I think this afternoon's witness is remote; is 3 of 17. 24 that correct, Mr Blake? Have we got a likely time for 24 A. Yes. 25 start? 26 Q. Can I sak you to look at the final page. That's page 17 of 17. 26 that correct, Mr Blake? Have we got a likely time for 24 A. Yes. 27 So I think this afternoon's witness is remote; is 23 of 17. 28 A. Yes, it is. 29 Q. Can you confirm that the statement is true to the best 2 joined Peritas? 30 of your knowledge and belief? 41 A. I can. 42 Q. Was it Peritas or KnowledgePool at that stage? 43 A. Yes. 44 A. I can. 45 Q. Was it Peritas or KnowledgePool at that stage? 46 and will be uploaded onto the Inquiry's website. 47 WITNO6000100. The questions I'm going to ask you today 7 people who trained on IT systems. I had done quite will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that 8 a lot of IT systems for the juniors and other roles that 1 your background. You were employed by Her Majesty's 11 launched and people could come along for an interview and if successful then attend a course that would then, if you were successful in that, be affered the job. 4 D. Joy our role in the Armed Forces include training to 15 for people who trained on IT systems. I had done unite was new system to be launched and people could come along for an interview and if successful then attend a course that would then, if you were successful in that, be affered the job. 4 D. Joy our role in the Armed Forces include training to 15 for just over 20 years, between 1972 and 1994; is 12 on a riving there, I found out it was the implementation of the National Lottery system. I was now system. I was now expert? 4 A. That's correct, yes. 4 A. That's correct, yes. 5 A. I wes, It	14		oy saying 14	
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MR STEIN: I don't think Mr Beer can see that because of the wall.  MR HERRY: Sir, I had questions but they've all been covered by Quousel to the Inquiry. Nothing further.  Can I ask you to look at that witness statement. Is it dated 16 November 2022?  SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming to give evidence to the Inquiry. Mr Montynen.  So I think this afternoon's witness is remote; is  So I think this afternoon's witness is remote; is  4 A Yes, it is.  A Yes, it is.  A Yes, it is.  Can J ask you to look at the final page. That's page 17 of 17.  85  Late of 17.  86  Late of 18.  A Yes, it is.  A Yes, it is.  A Yes, it is.  Can you confirm that the statement is true to the best of your knowledge and belief?  A I can.  A Yes, it is.  Can you very much. That statement is now in evidence and will be uploaded onto the Inquiry's website.  Mr WiTho6600100. The questions Fina going to ask you today will be uploaded onto the Inquiry's website.  Mr WiTho6600100. The questions Fina going to ask you today will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that statement.  Mr Witho6600100. The questions Fina going to ask you today will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that statement.  Mr Witho6600100. The questions Fina going to ask you today your background. You were employed by Her Majesty's Indicated that fight?  Forces for just over 20 years, between 1972 and 1994; is that right?  A That's correct, yes.  A Yes, it was Can you continued training to to train the courses. I had quite an interview and fisuccessful then aftend a course that would then, if you were successful then aftend a course that would then, if you were successful then aftend a course that would then, if you were successful then aftend a course that would then, if you were successful then aftend a course that would then, if you were successful then aftend a course that would then, if you were successful then aftend a course that would then, if you were successful then aft	16	MR BEER: Shaking of the head.	16	
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21 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for coming to give evidence to the Inquiry, Mr McNiven. 22	20			•
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will be supplementary to the evidence that's in that  8	7		rou today 7	people who trained on IT systems. I had done quite
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25 weapons courses, basically. 25 <b>A.</b> I mean, KnowledgePool was an autonomous company within			· ·	-

1		the group and it just changed the name, really, from	1
2		Peritas to KnowledgePool but, as far as I'm aware, the	2
3		position of the company stayed the same as that	3
4		autonomous company within the group, which meant they	4
5		could actually bid for other business outside ICL but	5
6		were also usually the first choice of training for ICL	6
7		projects, particularly IT rollout projects.	7
8	Q.	It was a subsidiary or linked to ICL, was it?	8
9	A.	It was linked to ICL, yes, but, as I say, it was what	9
10		they called an autonomous company within the group, as	10
11		far as I know.	11
12	Q.	In September 1998 you were given your first full-time	12
13		contract. I think you began your initial role not on	13
14		contract is that correct or not as a full-time	14
15		employee at least?	15
16	A.	The original role was as a contractor and it was some	16
17		time after that that we were in Liverpool and Stuart	17
18		Kearns, who was the director at the time, called me and	18
19		then offered me a full-time role within the company.	19
20	Q.	Can you describe very briefly the positions that you	20
21		held between 1998 and 2002?	21
22	A.	Very briefly, I was a contract trainer to begin with and	22
23		then I went into to be a trainer on the Lottery system.	23
24		It wasn't very long that I had been trainer that they	24
25		then promoted to a regional manager of training and then 89	25
1		and managers to actually operate the system within their	1
2	_	own premises.	2
3	Q.	Who was it that would provide that training?	3
4	Α.	It would be KnowledgePool who provided the training.	4
5		Can I just add, though, to that bit that, subsequent	5
6		until the training, there was also a number of other	6
7		elements of the training, such as an assistance within	7
8		that training. So it wasn't just the courses, it was	8
9		the documentation and the Helpdesk. There was a number	9
10		of other parts of the training or the support for the	10
11	•	training.	11
12	Q.	So you had a lecture-based user awareness course, you	12
13		had a classroom-based training, and then you had various	13
14		documents also, such workbooks, to assist with the	14
15		training. Is that a fair summary?	15
16	Α.	That's correct. Included in that was also was	16
17		a training mode within the actual system itself, so in	17
18		other words they could switch from a live system into	18
19	^	a training mode.	19
20	Q.	So there was a button on the Horizon system that you	20
21		could press that would assist you with training?	21
22	<b>A</b> .	Yes.	22
23	Q.	Thank you. I want to turn to your statement. I'm just	23
24		going to take you through a few passages within your	24
25		statement. Could I ask for it to be brought up on 91	25
		-	

I was -- after that, I'd finished, the company then wound right down then to just a few people and, all of a sudden, they won the Post Office project and, of course, it started to gear up again. That's why I was offered full-time work.

From then, I was a training manager and then went to -- on a region, I trained the other trainers and to end up, I ended up as director of what was then KnowledgePool.

- Q. Then in 2002, you left and you moved to Manchester City Council, retiring in 2012; is that right?
- A. Yes, that's true.
- Q. Thank you. I'm going to ask you about the training that was provided. We will come on in due course and look at various documents that describe them in detail but, by way of an introduction, can you briefly explain what the user awareness event was and what user training was and how they differed from each other?
- A. Well, the user awareness events, as far as I recall, were to actually give an idea to a larger number of postmasters when their region -- what was likely to happen in their regional and when they were likely to come online and what coming online entailed. The user training was actually a number of courses that were given to both counter staff and also to subpostmasters

screen. It's WITN06000100.

Can we look at paragraph 10, which is on page 6. If we could scroll down that page to the second half of the page. This is a section where you talk about classroom training and you say the classroom training -- it's at (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 [that's Post Office Counters Limited] they signed it off as fit for purpose."

I'm going to take you through a few similar paragraphs in the statement. Can we look at paragraph 16 on page 8, please. It's the final line in paragraph 16. This relates to issues identified during the pilot or post pilot events and you say:

"I do believe that any issues identified during or post pilot events would have been rectified in the programme which was final signed off by POCL as fit for purpose."

You'll get an idea of why I'm asking this question shortly because the phrase "fit for purpose" is regularly used. Let's look at paragraph 17 on page 9.

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3 page: 4 "At the time I did consider it appropriate to have 5 different columns on the feedback form as no questions 6 were raised about the form by POCL and it was approved 7 for use as was." 8 Can we look at paragraph 29, page 11. This is 9 about the user awareness event, and you say there: 10 "The training did not differ at all from the 11 design training programme. Once the training programme 12 was signed off by POCL as fit for purpose it was 13 delivered as is." 14 Can we look at page 50, in paragraph 42. This is 15 in reference to the course appraisal forms and you say, 16 halfway through that paragraph: 17 "At the time I did consider the course appraisal 18 form to be appropriate and this was based on the POCL 19 approval of the form and sign off by POCL as fit for 20 purpose." 21 I'm nearing the end of the statement. Let's look 22 at paragraph 50, page 17. It's the top of that page. 23 It says: 24 "The full programme was delivered approved and 25 signed off by POCL and within the allotted timescale." 93 1 A. Yes. I mean, once -- if there were no more -- if there 2 were no more changes to it and they agreed that it was 3 fit for purpose, in other words it fulfilled the task 4 that it was meant to do for that specific part of the 5 processes, whether it be EPOSS or balancing, et cetera. 6 Q. Was your measure of success whether or not the Post 7 Office refused or agreed to proceed with something, 8 rather than some sort of internal quality control? 9 A. We had our own internal quality control and sometimes 10 there was -- it was a case of we actually went to 11 different post offices, some of us that were involved in 12 the creation of the documentation, and actually watched 13 people doing in a live environment the actual processes. 14 From those processes, of course, we linked that 15 with what the Post Office was giving us about certain 16 things that it had to do on the system, certain actions 17 on the system. We then wrote up that as an action and 18 then, as I say, it went to the Post Office for sign off 19 and, as I say, it could come back two or three times 20 before it actually -- or several times -- before it was 21 actually approved. 22 But once it was approved then that was the process 23 we needed to follow. 24 Generally speaking, who was that contact within the Post 25 Office who would sign things off? 95

This is about the feedback form. You refer to the

feedback form and you say, it's about halfway down that

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Then finally I'm going to read the top of paragraph 52 on that same page, if we could scroll down, thank you. It says:

"In my view this is training programme fully enabled trainees to balance. If this had not been the case then POCL would not have approved and signed off the programme as fit for purpose."

It's fair to say that you rely quite heavily in your witness statement on the fact that the Post Office signed off various aspects of the training programme. Do you agree with that?

- A. Yes, I do. They were very insistent -- it could be after several reworks, so we may have submitted a solution or a process, which balanced the manual system against the electronic system and then that would go forward in various stages to POCL and they would then require reworks, and then those reworks would go back, and sometimes two or three times, before they actually were deemed fit for purpose.
- Q. So the Post Office was heave involved in developing the training programme; is that right?
- A. Absolutely.
- Q. You say "fit for purpose". I mean, they didn't sign a piece of paper that said "This is fit for purpose", is that your way of describing their agreeing to proceed?
- A. The one I remember mostly was a lady called Sue Smith, and she was to do with the training for POCL. I think she was part of the procurement team but I'm not 100 per cent on that.
- Q. Did you have any involvement with any senior management within the Post Office?
- A. Again, they came to one or two of the demonstrations that we actually gave. We actually had one session, I do remember, in Stockport where some of the union representatives came to look at the system and several managers -- I can't remember all the managers -- but it was widely demonstrated, sections of it were demonstrated to very senior members within POCL.
- Q. You've said unions. Is that the National Federation of SubPostmasters? Is it the Communication Workers Union?
- A. I'm pretty sure it was National Federation of SubPostmasters.
- Q. Thank you. I want to look at the objective of the training programme. Can we look at FUJ00001276, please. This is a very early document. This is dated 1997. There is a later version that we have -- I'm not going to bring it up but, just for the purpose of the transcript that's FUJ00001322 -- from July 1999 but it is the same, insofar as the section that I want to take you to, which is on page 5 of this document.

1 This sets out the "Objective of the Training 1 an automated post office'." 2 Programme". Perhaps we could highlight that 2.2 and 2 Then it gives appropriate competence levels. It 3 3 blow that up slightly, if possible. Thank you. says: 4 I'll read that to you. It says: 4 "The delivered programme is required to ensure 5 5 "ICL Pathway have contracted Peritas Limited to that 95 per cent of personnel have a minimum competence 6 provide the training programme in support of the BA/POCL 6 that they are capable of processing 90 per cent of all 7 7 Counter Automation project. The training programme is transactions undertaken by their base office correctly." 8 required by ICL Pathway to meet the following 8 Were those objectives that you were aware of? 9 objectives ..." 9 A. Maybe not in exactly the same words but, certainly, that 10 The first: 10 was an aim of the courseware and the training programme. 11 "Compatibility -- the programme must be managed 11 Q. We will look in more detail at the training but do you 12 and delivered in a manner consistent with the 12 think that those objectives were achieved? 13 implementation programme undertaken by ICL Pathway 13 A. I believe they were achieved, although the amount of 14 Limited and their other subcontractors. 14 people that were trained, it's very difficult to put 15 "Timeliness -- No individual is to be trained more 15 an actual percentage of it. As I said in my own witness 16 than five working days prior to the automation of their 16 statement, there was a wide range of both age groups and 17 normal counter position." 17 IT competency in the Post Office itself and people who 18 Then: 18 worked in the Post Office. I don't know if it was ever 19 "... the required scope, which is -- 'To ensure 19 measured to the fact that it was those 90 per cent of 20 that all staff who work within a post office are 20 all transactions and 90 -- 95 per cent of personnel of 21 competent in the use of the automated platform, are 21 a minimum competence. They certainly undertook the 22 22 aware of the impact on operational procedures caused by course as is and, yes, but putting a percentage on it, 23 the introduction of the platform and that specialist 23 I couldn't do that. 24 24 staff are provided with the appropriate additional Q. Can we look at FUJ00001280, please. This is a document 25 information to perform their job role within 25 that you wrote. It is the training and user awareness 97 98 1 style guide. I'll just wait a moment for that to be 1 were the quick reference guides, et cetera, that were 2 brought on to screen. I'm not going to take you to 2 produced to support the training. 3 3 Q. Did you produce the workbooks themselves? detail of this because I don't think it takes us 4 4 anywhere but, in terms of the document itself, if we A. Most of them, yes. 5 scroll down, we can see that you're the author of this 5 Q. So we'll come to look at them but some of them have, 6 document. This was -- it's a style guide that sets out, 6 I think, your name as an example, I think, as an example 7 essentially, how training materials should appear. Is 7 username in workbook 9. We can look at that in due 8 8 that a fair summary? course, if we need to. But the substance of those 9 Yes, from what I remember of it. As I say, it's 9 workbooks then that were produced for the training, that 10 23 years ago, so remembering exactly what's in it is 10 was something that you produced? 11 difficult. But yes for the main part it was but what 11 A. Yes. 12 12 would appear and how it should appear. The style guide, Q. I want to talk about the early training sessions, 13 13 starting with what was called the first 14, and was again, was -- it had to meet both KnowledgePool and POCL 14 standards; in other words, fit in what we normally would 14 February/March 1999. I'll bring the document up but can 15 produce. 15 you tell thus background to the first 14? A. These were a number of, if you like, trial courses where 16 Q. Can we just quickly scroll through that document just so 16 it was to give the trainers and delegates, without 17 we can get a flavour of what it contains. If we look at 17 18 page 18 or 19, for example, it gives examples of 18 overlooking -- in other words, there wouldn't a great 19 workbooks and what they might look like, that kind of 19 lot of the senior management at each of -- or there 20 thing. Was this the kind of thing that you produced? 20 wasn't supposed to be a great deal of senior management 21 A. Yes, it was. 21 that first 14 courses, one, really to give the trainers 22 Q. What other documents of this kind do you recall 22 a chance in not a live environment but an environment 23 producing? 23 with the real postmasters and, another, to give the 24 Well, actually, this was a style guide for most of the 24 postmasters a real chance on the system without being 25 things. You know, there was the actual workbook, there 25 overlooked by some of the very senior management and to

1		try to get as honest feedback as we could on the actual	1		courses for counter assistants and for counter managers;
2		course itself and how they felt about it and how the	2		is that correct?
3		trainers managed over the period of the course.	3	Α.	
4	0	Can we bring up on screen POL00039733 and perhaps if we	4	Q.	
5	Q.	could scroll over to the next page. So this is	5	α.	POCL."
6		a report, I think, that you wrote. If we look at the	6		They were volunteers. Were they subpostmasters,
7		page after that it has you down as the author. Do you	7		assistants or something else?
8		remember writing this report?	8	۸	They were both, I believe. There was postmasters and
9	۸	No, not outstanding to other reports that I wrote but	9	Α.	assistants.
10	Α.	I have a recollection of it but I wouldn't be able to	10	0	Do you know how they were selected?
11		tell you exactly what was in it, no.	11		No. That would have been Post Office who would have
12	0	Was it the first significant report that you wrote in	12	Λ.	gave us the names. We would have had nothing to do with
13	Q.	respect of the effectiveness or otherwise, of the	13		the actual selection of the delegates attending.
14		training for the Horizon system?	14	0	
15	۸	Yes, I would say so, particularly with the Post Office	15	Q.	Service perspective were as follows:
16	Α.	staff.	16		"1. To give experience to new trainers who had
17	0	It's dated 28 March 1999.	17		completed the ICL Training Services induction course in
18		Yes.	18		November/December 1998 and a recent Horizon update
		Can we look at page 5, please, and I'll read to you			·
19	Q.	section 1 which gives the introduction. It says:	19 20		weekend in delivering the Counter Assistant and Counter
20		•			Managers events."
21 22		"ICL training services were requested by	21 22		Who were those trainers? The new trainers, who
23		Pathway/POCL to provide trainers for a series of courses	23		were they? Were they people who were employed by
		for Counter Assistants and Counter Managers on the	23 24		Peritas, were they self-employed, were they contractors?
24		Horizon System."			Do you know their backgrounds?
25		So pausing there, there are separate training 101	25	Α.	They were mostly contractors but they'd worked on other 102
1		projects for Peritas and for KnowledgePool not all of	1		different types of room that we did manage to get, and
2		them but some of them.	2		setting up the equipment, getting it all ready to go,
3	O	Do you have an idea of how many trainers there were at	3		laying everything out, and making sure that as, you
4	Ψ.	all?	4		know, as near as we could to actually make it as though
5	Α.	It was certainly at its peak there were certainly in	5		they'd been out on the road, we'd set up a classroom,
6		the region of 250.	6		everything else, and the postmasters and counter
7	O.	Thank you.	7		assistants came to attend the course.
8		"2. To receive feed back from delegates on the	8	Q	Thank you. So it wasn't in a post office and it wasn't
9		course content.	9	Ψ.	dealing with real customers?
10		"3. To evaluate the Performance Standard	10	Α.	No.
11		Assessment results.	11	Q.	But it was trying to replicate that environment in
12		"4. To evaluate the equipment reliability when	12	Ψ.	a classroom?
13		used in a training environment.	13	Α.	
14		"Pathway/POCL had agreed to use the courses as	14		In terms of how the training went forward from, say,
15		an opportunity for new trainers to train in a real	15	α.	'99/2000 and onwards, was that still the format in terms
16		environment."	16		of it not being within a post office or on live
17		Now, real environment, what do you understand by	17		equipment?
18		that?	18	Δ	Yes, that's all we could do. We had to have
19	Α.	Well, a real environment, for us it wasn't a live	19		everything we did in that, because of the amount of
20	,	environment; there's a definite distinction between the	20		trainers involved, the amount of training in locations
21		two. The systems were stand alone and, therefore, you	21		the width and breath of the country, we had to have
22		couldn't actually link into any short of network.	22		a generic approach to the training. So once we actually
23		A real environment for us would have been going to	23		got it, you know, as per the course specifications then
			-5		3-1, Jan, as por the dealed specifications then
24		a room, whether it be in a hotel or whatever was chosen	24		it was delivered as that each time. But, as far as
24 25		a room, whether it be in a hotel or whatever was chosen for the actually training, and there were several	24 25		it was delivered as that each time. But, as far as I know, it was never delivered on a live system.
24 25		a room, whether it be in a hotel or whatever was chosen for the actually training, and there were several 103	24 25		it was delivered as that each time. But, as far as I know, it was never delivered on a live system.  104

1	Q.	This training in February and March 1999, that was very	1		development at Feltham".
2		early on. It was almost 12 months before the national	2	Q.	Can we look at page 6, please, in the bottom of page 6.
3		rollout began properly. Were you aware at this time	3		This looks at the feedback and it has totals there of
4		that work was still ongoing in relation to the Horizon	4		the feedback in the very final column at the bottom.
5		platform?	5		I've added those up. So it's 9 plus 66 plus 179 plus
6	Α.	Absolutely. I mean, I used to pay regular visits to	6		137. That makes a total of 391. So does that sound
7		Feltham where they were developing new things and	7		about right, that there were 391 attendees at this first
8		actually improving some aspects of the system. So it	8		14 training session?
9		was we could test the courseware out but, obviously,	9	Α.	Yes, it would be about.
10		it was ongoing, as you say, a year before, before the	10	Q.	
11		actual final system would have been signed up.	11	α.	we start on page 7, please. So if we look at page 7, it
12	0	So as a company that was linked to ICL, did you have	12		starts with the Bristol counter managers training and if
13	Q.	free access to ICL? I mean, you have said that you	13		we look at the remarks below. So some of the I'm
		•			
14		visited. Could you go when you wanted to, speak to who	14		going to give you just some examples of the remarks,
15		you want to?	15		I won't take you to every one and I should say that
16	A.	Yes, I mean, usually if we had if there was sum issue	16		there are some positive comments within this document
17		that I would go there and certainly one of the senior	17		but I'm not necessarily going to focus on those.
18		training team would have gone down and actually looked	18		I would like to talk to you about, for example,
19		and tried to find out how it was developing and what	19		number 1, "More time required (several comments). A bit
20		version we were up to because, of course, everything was	20		further down "Too much information compressed into
21		version controlled down at Feltham and just to see if it	21		course". A little further down "Although trainer was
22		was how far off it was so that, if we did have	22		excellent not enough time to cover all topics plus
23		a question from Post Office, why that wasn't actually	23		questions". "Good trainer not enough time allowed".
24		there yet or being used. In those early stages, we	24		The next one is the Bristol counter assistants and
25		could say "Well, this is that stage it was at at 105	25		if we go over the page thank you it says there: 106
1		"A lot of information to take in on one day no	1		"Not yet totally confident 1 day is not
		"A lot of information to take in on one day no doubt practice is the best way to learn."			"Not yet totally confident 1 day is not enough."
2		doubt practice is the best way to learn."	2		enough."
2		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we	2		enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one
2 3 4		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.	2 3 4	Α.	enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one day?
2 3 4 5		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate.	2 3 4 5	_	enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one day?  Yes.
2 3 4 5 6		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate. "I will need extra training.	2 3 4 5 6	<b>A</b> . Q.	enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one day?  Yes.  The final comment there it says:
2 3 4 5 6 7		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate.  "I will need extra training.  "More time on balancing error notices."	2 3 4 5 6 7	_	enough." So the counter assistants course, was that one day? Yes. The final comment there it says: "It would be useful for staff to try more
2 3 4 5 6 7 8		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate.  "I will need extra training.  "More time on balancing error notices."  Looking down a little bit more it says:	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	_	enough." So the counter assistants course, was that one day? Yes. The final comment there it says: "It would be useful for staff to try more transactions products not covered."
2 3 4 5 6 7 8		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate.  "I will need extra training.  "More time on balancing error notices."  Looking down a little bit more it says:  "Second day should be expanded to full day	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	_	enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one day? Yes. The final comment there it says:  "It would be useful for staff to try more transactions products not covered."  Moving on to the Glasgow counter assistants,
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate.  "I will need extra training.  "More time on balancing error notices."  Looking down a little bit more it says:  "Second day should be expanded to full day especially for delegates who have no experience of	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	_	enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one day? Yes. The final comment there it says:  "It would be useful for staff to try more transactions products not covered."  Moving on to the Glasgow counter assistants, 5 March, if we could scroll down to the next page:
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate.  "I will need extra training.  "More time on balancing error notices."  Looking down a little bit more it says:  "Second day should be expanded to full day especially for delegates who have no experience of automated systems."	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	_	enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one day? Yes. The final comment there it says:  "It would be useful for staff to try more transactions products not covered."  Moving on to the Glasgow counter assistants, 5 March, if we could scroll down to the next page:  "More time needed on Reports."
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate.  "I will need extra training.  "More time on balancing error notices."  Looking down a little bit more it says:  "Second day should be expanded to full day especially for delegates who have no experience of automated systems."  I think we said earlier it was one and a half days	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	_	enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one day? Yes. The final comment there it says:  "It would be useful for staff to try more transactions products not covered."  Moving on to the Glasgow counter assistants, 5 March, if we could scroll down to the next page:  "More time needed on Reports."  Third comment says:
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate.  "I will need extra training.  "More time on balancing error notices."  Looking down a little bit more it says:  "Second day should be expanded to full day especially for delegates who have no experience of automated systems."  I think we said earlier it was one and a half days for managers, wasn't it?  Yes, it was.  If we look at that final paragraph on that page, it	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14	_	enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one day? Yes. The final comment there it says:  "It would be useful for staff to try more transactions products not covered."  Moving on to the Glasgow counter assistants, 5 March, if we could scroll down to the next page:  "More time needed on Reports."  Third comment says:  "Not confident on end of day procedures practice will help."  A little further down it says:
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24		doubt practice is the best way to learn."  Scrolling down Bristol counter managers, and we have quite few comments there.  "Not confident not computer literate.  "I will need extra training.  "More time on balancing error notices."  Looking down a little bit more it says:  "Second day should be expanded to full day especially for delegates who have no experience of automated systems."  I think we said earlier it was one and a half days for managers, wasn't it?  Yes, it was.  If we look at that final paragraph on that page, it says:  "course definitely requires two full days second day is six hours with no lunch break. I feel the course is unsatisfactory because it is very intensive and coverage of important tasks ie balancing is rushed as a result. Bearing in mind a subpostmaster could be asked to do their first balance unsupervised."	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	_	enough."  So the counter assistants course, was that one day? Yes. The final comment there it says:  "It would be useful for staff to try more transactions products not covered."  Moving on to the Glasgow counter assistants, 5 March, if we could scroll down to the next page:  "More time needed on Reports."  Third comment says:  "Not confident on end of day procedures practice will help."  A little further down it says:  "More time needed on training."  Two persons have said that.  "Not confident at all."  If we look at the bottom there it says:  "Not very confident.  "Do not have enough information to balance my position at the end of my shift.
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1		scroll down on to the next page, some of the feedback	1		A little further down it says:
2		there is:	2		"A little longer needed on balancing procedures."
3		"Balance ran out of time more time required.	3		Near the end there it says:
4		"More time daily summaries/balance."	4		"Balancing section is a lot to take in within the
5		We move on to the Newcastle counter managers and	5		current format.
6		if we look down the second comment there:	6		"Confident in day 1 content, less confident on the
7		"More on transactions and how to balance.	7		•
					management/balancing section."
8 9		"How to put things right (more time)."	8 9		The balancing section, I think, was on the second
		A bit further down it says:		۸	day, wasn't it? Yes.
10		"More on balancing outputs/actual printouts."	10		
11		A little bit further down it says:	11	Q.	If we keep on scrolling, I think the next page is
12		"Balance/cash account procedure (more time)."	12		actually just a photocopy of the first page so we can go
13		On to the next page, please, Birmingham counter	13		over the page again. We are at Newcastle. If we keep
14		managers. Again, quite similar concerns being raised	14		on scrolling perhaps through to Birmingham counter
15		there. They say:	15		assistants and over the page "Remarks general":
16		"Concerned I feel if you're not careful in the	16		"I need at least 2-3 times more of this training
17		accounting aspects of Horizon you might find yourself in	17		before I can feel confident.
18		trouble. You need to know what you're doing.	18		"I need to be training again for the course, as
19		"More time needed on balancing procedure. Sped	19		I cannot remember everything that was taught.
20		through a lot of information and the course quite	20		"In general it felt a bit rushed. I did feel that
21		intense.	21		the course was a bit rushed. It may be better held over
22		"Balancing (more time).	22		two days."
23		"Pretty confident with day to day work &	23		Another comment near the bottom "Really needs two
24		procedures, still confused over the balance in relation	24		days". That counter assistants, so that's only the
25		to comparing it with what I do at present."  109	25		one-day course and they are saying there they need two 110
		100			110
1		days.	1		workbooks the quick reference quides and Helpdesk,
		days.  St Albans counter managers, if we have a little			workbooks the quick reference guides and Helpdesk, et cetera, and the chance to actually go on to remedial
2		St Albans counter managers, if we have a little	2		et cetera, and the chance to actually go on to remedial
		St Albans counter managers, if we have a little look below that table. Second entry there:			et cetera, and the chance to actually go on to remedial training then perhaps we should be looking at that, at
2		St Albans counter managers, if we have a little look below that table. Second entry there: "Balancing needed more time."	2 3		et cetera, and the chance to actually go on to remedial training then perhaps we should be looking at that, at some of the feedback with relation to that, as opposed
2 3 4		St Albans counter managers, if we have a little look below that table. Second entry there:  "Balancing needed more time."  About half way down:	2 3 4		et cetera, and the chance to actually go on to remedial training then perhaps we should be looking at that, at some of the feedback with relation to that, as opposed to just looking at the feedback of those very early
2 3 4 5		St Albans counter managers, if we have a little look below that table. Second entry there:  "Balancing needed more time."  About half way down:  "Having experience of ECCO and understanding	2 3 4 5 6		et cetera, and the chance to actually go on to remedial training then perhaps we should be looking at that, at some of the feedback with relation to that, as opposed to just looking at the feedback of those very early courses, you know, without actually factoring in the
2 3 4 5 6 7		St Albans counter managers, if we have a little look below that table. Second entry there:  "Balancing needed more time."  About half way down:  "Having experience of ECCO and understanding balance periods and CAP helped. Although I feel [half	2 3 4 5 6 7		et cetera, and the chance to actually go on to remedial training then perhaps we should be looking at that, at some of the feedback with relation to that, as opposed to just looking at the feedback of those very early courses, you know, without actually factoring in the other assistance that was available to subpostmasters
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2 sit very well. I'm not making that as an excuse but it 3 is a point of fact. 4 Q. Can we look at page 20 of this document, and that has 5 the conclusion. The conclusion, I'm going to read it 6 out for the record, it says: 7 "The trainer appraisals have been very favourable 8 for a first attempt. There's still room for improvement, particularly in the area of timings, 9 10 although the timings did improve where a trainer 11 delivered a subsequent event. It would appear from some 12 of the delegate appraisals that they expected balancing 13 on the counter assistants course. The appraisals 14 annotated unsatisfactory on overall level of 15 satisfaction was because of the amount of information to 16 be assimilated and the course content rather than any 17 problem with the trainer's delivery." 18 So the summary conclusion there is that the issue 19 was less with the way that the trainer was delivering 20 the course and more of an issue about the amount of 21 information that attendees needed to assimilate? 22 A. Can I also add from personal experience there that, if 23 you are delivering a training course particularly of 24 that length for the first time, it's a huge amount for 25 the trainer to remember and it's not the easiest thing 113 1 "Pretty confident [on the] day to day work & 2 procedures, still confused over the balance in relation 3 to comparing it with what I do at present." 4 So, I mean, there are a fair few comments there 5 quite a few remarks that address concerns about 6 balancing, rather than simply the amount of time that 7 has been allocated in the course. 8 A. Yes, I accept that but, you see, there I mean, that sort 9 of -- where it says there -- yes: 10 "... still confused over the balance in relation 11 to comparing it with what I do at present." 12 I mean, that just justifies what I've said that 13 there, that some the postmasters for many, many years 14 had taken a pride in balancing as they did manually and 15 it was perfect and they took a great pride in it. To 16 suddenly take that away and give them an electronic 17 system to do it with, which was, in a lot of respects, 18 very different it was quite a culture shock to them on 19 the actual balancing side. 20 But I'm not decrying the fact that, yes, we would 21 have liked more time, I would have thought -- or they 22 would have liked more time and the balancing, yes, was 23 what it was on the system. But there were other support 24 mechanisms available to them. 25 Q. If we pause in time there then, so February/March 1999

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they did to something that was new and it didn't always

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to do. So you usually find, on the first few courses you do, you haven't got as much judgement of when to actually slow down a little bit or make sure that's been assimilated. That comes with maybe one or two courses and then you actually feel more confident with the material. So there's always a little bit of that as well.

So while I accept that more time was a definite thread running through it and the balancing also, there are some other contributory factors as to why it might not have been the slick as it could have been in the first few events.

Q. Absolutely. But let's go back to page 12 of this document which looks at a manager's course, the Birmingham manager's course in March.

So this is a fair way through this first 14.

We're looking now at 8 and 9 March. Can we just look at some of those comments again. The first is:

"Concerned I feel if you are not careful with accounting aspects of Horizon you might find yourself in trouble. You need to know what you're doing.

"More time needed on the balancing [process]. Sped through a lot of information and the course is quite intense.

"Balancing (more time).

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do you think that the training course was sufficient, insofar as it addressed balancing?

A. It addressed balancing within the time restraints that we had to do the course and it certainly went through the balancing process but, again, the trainers and, well, everybody really, encouraged the attendees to actually use the other things that were available to them to actually confirm the knowledge that we'd picked up on course, and certainly the Helpdesk.

From my own personal experience of working in the Post Office during the actual whole event, and that was one in Slough that I worked in, if they needed to resolve anything, the first thing that most postmasters did, in a few offices that I went in, if something was wrong, not with the Horizon System or anything, they picked up the phone and phoned the Helpdesk, and they didn't seem to -- they very rarely seemed to use the documentation, supporting documentation. The Helpdesk was their key. They rang the Helpdesk, the Helpdesk solved the problem and they got on with the end of the day.

- Q. The Helpdesk assists once you are on the system but, presumably, the training before you get on the system is pretty important, isn't it?
- **A.** Oh, absolutely, absolutely. But to get every single bit

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of what was a fairly complex course into that time and you'd be perfect on it as you finished the courses then I think that was a tall order, to say the least, considering some of the delegates which were attending the courts. And, as I said, the age range was fantastic really and the actual IT knowledge was excellent to none at all

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So it wasn't just about the actual training itself, it was that sometimes it was the people who actually attended and no disrespect to them but they tried their best but it's bound to be something new, if you'd never done it before, always seems more complex.

- Q. So let's say you were a manager and you have a day and a half allocated for training. Your evidence is that there was sufficient training, insofar as balancing was concerned, for a day and a half's course but do you think a day and a half was sufficient?
- A. Again, it depended -- I come back to it's depending on the delegates. For some, obviously, it wasn't because that's expression they gave and for many it was. You know, so it was striking that balance the two and certainly the courseware and the delivery of the course showed you how to balance. For most -- I can't put a percentage on it, but for a large number of people that was enough and for some people it wasn't enough. 117

for whatever the percentage was of delegates. But you always want more time on training courses.

- Q. Following this exercise, which the intention of this exercise was to get a snapshot in time in the early stages to try and improve the programme going forward, what concrete steps did you take to improve the training with regards to balancing?
- A. We went through the balancing and tried to make it as --I can't say simple because, obviously, there was a system to be followed -- sorry, there was a procedure to be followed on the system but the trainers were very aware that this was a very important part of the course.

In fact, the whole course was important but they tried to actually explain it as well as this could explain it and, actually, look out for people who are really struggling on the course, particularly with that element, to actually make sure they got some remedial training.

- Q. So once you received the product of this study, how did you communicate that to the trainers?
- A. Well, depending if the trainers had actually been on the courses and had finished the courses, although there weren't that many at that time who had gone through, but it was part of then their induction and when they were doing the three-week induction, we actually made sure

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But when you say you're a postmaster and you come on a course on balancing, what's your background to actually doing that, you know, you would have to look at how -- you know how au fait were you with IT equipment and using IT equipment to do the sort of functions that were asked on the system.

- Q. Did you take away from this exercise -- I mean, looking at those kinds of comments that are on the screen now, did you take away to any extent that more might be needed to be done, insofar as training for balancing was concerned?
- A. Absolutely. It was trying to make it so that the trainers were as clear as possible on how to -- you know, from the actual courseware to actually -- to make sure the balancing was right, particularly on the subpostmasters course. And it was a case of you went through it as slowly as you could with some of the people, and I know many of the trainers who didn't have to finish at that time stayed behind with some of the delegates who were really, you know, who were struggling, some of the older delegates who were struggling to actually run through a bit of it again. I know that happened quite often.

So yes, it would have been nicer to have more time for some delegates but I think it was sufficient time 118

that on the last week, where they were delivering elements on the system, a lot of that was on the actual balancing and we had -- you know, we were trying to make them aware there that this had to be explained as well as they could and also that they -- if they saw somebody struggling then they would actually make note of that and, you know, carry out remedial action where necessary, in other words report it back or point the actual delegate into an area where they could get additional support on balancing.

- Q. Can we go back to the first page of this, which is the fax header. This is sent from Alan Bourne to Kathryn Cook. Are you able to assist us with who they are?
- A. I will be honest with you, I haven't got a clue. I've not got a clue.
- Q. Do you remember this report being escalated in any way within ICL Pathway, even to the Post Office?
- A. I can't remember it being escalated. I do remember actually that the -- we were very aware of the timings on the course. I mean, all trainers were made aware that they had to -- you know, that there were some things that were generic which were fairly straightforward, such as the EPOS, the Electronic Point of Sale element was fairly generic. But actually the accounting bit, the balancing bit, would be difficult

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for some delegates, as I say, and we tried to rectify it from a training level.

As far as it being escalated to hierarchy in the Post Office, certainly Stuart Kearns, who was the director at the time, was very aware of it.

Q. I am going to take you to another document, NFSP00000340. This is a document from one month later. In fact, on the first page, it says 1996 but, actually, if we turn over the page it's a 1999 document and it's one that we looked at this morning. It's comments made by subpostmasters to Pam Jervis from -- the cover letter is sent from Colin Baker.

Let's have a look at those. These are comments that were made to the NFSP:

"Training.

"The first day of training is OK but the second day is bad because it is rushed. They are not finishing on time, but are rushing to finish before 3.30 pm, because otherwise they have to buy lunch. Why [do you] use the most expensive hotels?

A couple down it says:

"In every training session, nobody had done a main balance, snapshot balances only. Nobody had been trained to do a full balance."

So this is one month after 30 April 1999. Were 121

documentation and what the Post Office required. I don't recognise that number 3 at all.

- Q. You don't recognise it in as much as you didn't receive it and didn't see it at the time or you don't recognise it in that you didn't receive any complaints about training failing to assist sufficiently with balancing?
- A. No. I mean, there is always issues on training. There is issues with the courseware and obviously -- not so much the courseware but actually what is taught on the course, and you will always get feedback: it's not long enough, it's too long, the room was too hot, it was too cold, the tea wasn't on time. You know, you get lots and lots of feedback.

I've already conceded that we would have liked more time on the second day but that wasn't my decision and it was a case or the two hierarchical elements of the actual training rollout, which was Peritas and also POCL, agreed that's what we had to do on that day and the trainers and myself and other people involved at that level tried to do the best we could in relation to what we'd been told to do.

Q. I appreciate it's some years after now but were they themes that you recall at the time, in the early days at least of training, so February, March, April, themes about there not being enough time, ie that first

you aware of those kinds of comments, even if not those particular comments?

- A. Certainly, the first one, I don't understand that at all. I don't know of any trainers who did that and they were checked regularly. Why they'd use the most expensive hotels, that again was down to a location -- you know, to a location thing and to make, obviously, the delegates as comfortable as possible. So, no, I don't see that top one at all. I've never seen this document before, as far as I know, and a lot of it I -- you know, certainly on the training there, I don't recognise.
- Q. But I mean the first comment that it's rushed, the third comment that nobody had done a main balance and nobody had been trained to do a full balance, those themes were similar to the themes that were picked up in the February/March report, aren't they?
- A. Yes, it would appear so. As I say, I don't actually -- I can't relate to that. I can't remember the whole balance procedure. I mean, it's 23 years ago. As far as I know -- I mean, as I say, the actual balancing process was signed off by Post Office and from their hierarchy. So I would imagine that it -- you know, it was fit for purpose. We carried out the training as it should have been done according to the training

paragraph, it being a bit rushed, and problems with the balancing, that third paragraph?

- A. I certainly remember the not enough time but it wasn't by everybody. I mean, some people would say "Yes, it was spot on" and some people would say "It wasn't enough time". I do recognise that certainly and I've already conceded that point. We would have liked, certainly as a trainer and trainers are part of the training team, we would have liked more time but we had to go with what we were given and what was agreed at a higher level than ours. So with the time we had, we tried to do the best we could.
- Q. Do you think issues such as timing were raised within ICL? You said you did what you did with the time available. Did you raise it at all with anybody?
- A. Yeah, I mean, it's always a concern about the time but, again, as I say, it was known within ICL and coming back again, repeating myself, is the fact that one of the fallbacks to that particular comment was that there was other help and support available. So when it was raised, even if they hadn't picked up 100 per cent on the course itself, there was other supporting things that could be done to help them with balancing, such as the Helpdesk, the workbook, et cetera, et cetera.

So, although it was a concern, it was felt that it 124

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2 Q. You said it was raised within ICL. With anyone, in 3 particular? 4 A. Well, certainly Stuart Kearns, by boss, would have known 5 about it and he would be dealing at that level but, as 6 far as me being a part of those meetings or have any say 7 in that, apart from feeding it in to Stuart Kearns, 8 I wouldn't have been able to do anything else about it. 9 Q. Thank you. Can we look at POL00028357. This is 10 a document we looked at this morning. Can we look at 11 page 4, please. This may well not be something that you 12 at the time. This is relating to Acceptance Incident 13 218. Do you remember anything reference to Acceptance 14 Incidents and Acceptance Incident 218? 15 A. No. Sorry, I have no recollection of that. 16 Q. This was a contractual incident that was raised by the 17 Post Office and if we can just have a look at what is 18 says there, it says: 19 "The Managers Training Course is not acceptable 20 due to deficiencies in the accounting modules. In the 21 live environment the training given did not equip the 22 users to perform the completion of office cash accounts. 23 This is a [I think it means 'basic'] POCL function that 24 is central to running and accounting for the POCL 25 network." 125 1 then -- you can't change that process because that's the 2 process needed to balance. So, as far as concrete 3 changes to the system or the way the process was 4 delivered, I don't remember and don't recall any what 5 you would call concrete changes. 6 There was issues about it and obviously these were 7 passed up to the hierarchy, in my particular case 8 anyway. But we have to follow that process and I don't 9 remember -- I don't remember the system changing, 10 I don't remember any of the training changing to address 11 those issues. In fact, it wasn't actually my line of 12 process, it was the timing of the process that may have 13 been an -- well, it was an issue, obviously. 14 Q. Can we look at FUJ00001356, please. This is the 15 "Counter Managers Course Specification". It is dated 16 October 1999. You are listed as being on the distribution list. Is this something you remember at 17 18 all -- not word for word but do you remember it as 19 a document? 20 A. No, not particularly, not as a document, no. 21 Q. Could we --22 A. Am I on the distribution for it -- I can't --23 Q. Yes, if we look down -- sorry. Your name's listed in 24 those final few --25 A. If I was on the distribution I certainly would have seen

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would be addressed by additions to the actual training.

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That Acceptance Incident was observed, it says, on 19 May 1999. Was anything along those lines ever raised with you at all?

A. No, I mean, if anything, the time which it was raised more backwards that when we looked that appraisals that we got from the postmasters and counter assistants actually attending the course, there was quite obviously a lot, as you already pointed out, a lot of comments about the timings, you know, that they weren't enough time. That was passed up.

But, as far as this particular document and input into this document then, no, it was passed up through Stuart Kearns and the hierarchy of Peritas, and I believe then to ICL but I wouldn't know, and certainly POCL attended nearly -- well, all the development of the training course.

- Q. If we think back to that time period, so we're talking May -- summer of 1999 into the autumn, towards September and during September 1999, do you remember any concrete steps that were taken to improve the training course, particularly in respect of balancing issues?
- A. Not concrete steps, no. I mean, I don't believe the course was changed. The course couldn't really be changed because there was an actual process to balancing. So you can't -- it's very difficult to 126

it. The actual document I don't particularly remember but, yes, maybe so.

Q. Can we look over the page, please. So this is the specification for the counter managers' course and it seems as though, in October 1999, there were amendments made following the evaluation exercise. So that's, I think, that there was an exercise in July 1999 and then it says:

"Document is based on the courses presented as dry runs to Post Office Counters Limited and signed off by Trevor Rollason in September 1999."

If we look at page 3, this is the contents of the course. It still seems to be a two-day course or a one and a half day course that's spread over two days. Is that right, in terms of the time period? That didn't change?

- A. No. It is right, sorry. No, it didn't change.
- Q. If we scroll over to page 5, on page 4 we're looking that Day 1 training course, and we're now on page 5, which is still the Day 1 and there is quite a lot of content dealing with the EPOSS system: EPOSS intro, EPOSS continued, EPOSS scales, and then scrolling down it says EPOSS Rems and reversals.

Were you aware, during this period, so October 1999, of any issues with the EPOSS system, any technical

A. No, I can't actually say I was. I mean, I think it was all okay. I mean, as I said to you, almost all the way through the initial parts of the project, they were working on different parts of the EPOSS system and it was a fairly generic -- the EPOSS sales on the system, if I remember, were very generic. I don't remember a lot, if any, of the changes on what you've shown me there on EPOSS.
Q. Through your conversations with people at ICL, you have already said how you're able to visit their premises and

- already said how you're able to visit their premises and talk to people, talk to developers. Did you talk to developers at all during your period of training?

  A. Yes, I did. One of them, one that I wanted to learn,
- was barcodes on benefit books, so I worked quite closely with a guy who was actually developing that at Feltham, and he showed me how all that worked and that way then I could answer more in-depth questions if any of the trainers we were training had issues about the barcoding, et cetera, on the benefit books.

So it was thing like that, I went down so I could get a more in-depth knowledge on some things that I could then explain to the trainers, as they were either doing the training or going through the training.

Q. In any of those conversations that you had, did anybody

there will be problems being experienced in the EPOSS system at that time?

A. Not really not on the training systems, no. I mean, it seemed fine. I mean, most of the EPOSS was -- it was fairly straightforward. Some people some of the delegates said never seen touch screen technology before and things like that, and that was something that, again, we had to go through with some of the delegates but, as far as the actual sales, et cetera, on EPOSS, they seemed to work fine.

I don't remember there being a problem with those, apart from the fact it depends what version you are looking at. I mean, it was a case of, as a version became released, then it was fine, it had been tested and it was great. It was only the version on from that which might have affected the previous version and that wasn't released then until it was made right.

- Q. You weren't working on a live system.
- A. No.
- Q. So did anybody say "Hang on a minute, although you are working in this environment, when the postmasters get out to the real world, their system might operate slightly different"?
- **A.** No. I mean, there's no reason why it should. I mean, that's a bit like saying when you put Windows on

point out any issues they were having with EPOSS software or any other bugs, errors or defects at that time?

A. Well, it's very difficult really because you actually get the -- it depends which version and the version control at Feltham was incredibly tight. There was a lady who ran the version control and she was well renowned for being very tight on which version. So, in other words, as they added a particular function, it could affect another function, so it was -- because obviously they were interlinked.

So you could revert back to the previous version and then develop -- and it kept going like that. So sometimes a new thing that was added affected some other parts of the system but they wouldn't actually release that. I think they would actually go back to the drawing board until it didn't affect the version and then, as the next version was cleared, it would then become, say, version 1, and then it would be version 2 and version 3.

So it was always stable in the last version if that makes sense.

Q. As somebody who was designing the courses and the materials, we have a day here almost a day dedicated to there EPOSS system. Did anybody point out to you that 

- a computer if you try it stand alone it's fine but if you try it on a network it won't work. It should have worked. I have no reason to believe it didn't work. I don't remember anybody telling me the EPOSS didn't work and didn't work well.
- Q. You have said at the beginning of your evidence today about how much you relied on the Post Office signing off the various training materials. What did you see as the role of ICL in relation to identifying technical issues with Horizon and informing you about those?
- A. Well, as I say, it was a case of coming back to the Stuart again, as a director of the company. He actually went down several times and talked to high level meetings about any issues that we had. But we were informed if anything was affecting the training or may affect the training through Stuart at the meetings and, as I said, because I sometimes -- and others too -- wanted more in-depth knowledge about a certain process on the system, that would allow us to maybe train it better. We would actually go down to Feltham and speak to the guys who were developing it -- and women, obviously.
- Q. In all of your conversations with people in Feltham, did nobody mention any concerns they had with the Horizon System?

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1 A. Thousands but, you know, that's part of development. 2 They were developing a system. So, you know, there was 3 always some concerns. You know you don't develop 4 a system like Horizon and not have some concerns. It's 5 just the way it is. But those concerns would all have 6 to be sorted before that the next version or the stable 7 version was released. So yes, of course there were lots 8 of concerns by various people about various parts of the 9 system until they were rectified and were included in 10 the next version for release. 11 Q. Can we look at FUJ00001357, please. This is a document 12 that -- the "Training and User Awareness Baseline 13 Document". Now, you're not listed on the distribution 14 list of this but is this a document that you recall or 15 you would have seen at the time? 16 A. Again, it's very difficult to recognise individual 17 documents, even ones I wrote myself after 23 years but 18 if it was to do -- if I could have got my hands on it 19 and it was to do with anything training, I would have 20 read it. 21 Q. Let's go through and I see where we get to. The date 22 for this is 29 November 1999, so it's eight months after 23 the first 14 training that we talked about earlier this 24 afternoon. So we're eight months down the line now and 25 this is what's called the baseline document. Can we 133 1 know, really hot on the system, basically. 2 Q. So here we are in November 1999, so eight months after 3 that first report that you wrote and the length of the 4 courses are still the same, aren't they: the counter 5 course one day; manager course one and a half days. So 6 nothing has changed as far as that's concerned; is that 7 right? 8 A. That's true. 9

Q. Can we look at page 16, please. Halfway down -- thank you -- at 5, it describes the User Awareness course. Just so that we can learn a little bit more about what these different courses are, I will just read that second paragraph. It says: "The User Awareness event is aimed ALL users working within, or providing support to, post offices. The purpose of the event is to provide an understanding of the impact the impending installation and automation programme will have on them as individuals and their outlet as a whole. The overall aim is to elevate concern users may have of the Horizon System and encourage participation during training and installation." Was the user awareness course, I think it was a voluntary course; is that correct? A. Yes, it was. They were obviously encouraged by Post 135

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look at page 9, please. There's a diagram on page 9and is wonder if we can just blow up the diagram, please. This shows the training solution.

Are you able to tell us what this shows at all? I mean, if we start with, for example "User Awareness" is that that the user awareness course was the first interaction somebody would have with training, that lasting two and a half hours.

- A. Yes.
- Q. Then you have a specific course depending on who you are: so you have a counter course, which is a day; a manager course, if you are a manager, two and a half days; and then you have specialist training, for example, for auditors, for trainers and for HFSOs. Are those Field Support Officers?
- A. Yes
- Q. Their training would be longer. That would be two to five days; is that right? Is that how you remember it?
- A. Yes, it is. I don't remember the specifics of that course. I almost certainly did one for the auditors because I actually went down and attended at least one of those courses with the auditors to actually make sure it was you know we were training it right and they were getting all the information they needed because, obviously, to be able to audit, they needed to be, you 134

Office to attend. As far as I can recollect, it was voluntary but they were usually -- the ones that I actually saw were always very well attended because obviously it was going to have a big impact on the business they were in.

- Q. Was that essentially an introduction, a brief introduction, into the system?
- A. Yes, it was a brief introduction about what the system did. It was where they fitted in in the rollout process and, basically, what it says in that paragraph and they could ask some questions at the end, et cetera, and if that's all fine, and if not we took them away and fed them back to Post Office and to Peritas to actually get in touch and answer the question.

But mostly it was fairly straightforward. The UAE was a fairly straightforward event.

Q. Could we look at page 18, please, if we scroll down just a little bit, it has there "Managers" and this describes the managers' course, so that's one and a half day contiguous training event delivered over two days to include venue setup and clear down:

"This course will be targeted at staff who are required to understand the full functionality of the automated platform.

"It is understood that all management grades will 136

need this training. It is also understood that other staff may perform these tasks, in some cases as backup, and they will also need the Managers training event."

So the managers' training, the one and a half day event, that was for, for example, subpostmasters and also for assistants who would sometimes carry out those subpostmaster tasks?

- A. Yes.
- Q. Then you had a separate one-day course that we see there for the counter staff. It's recognised that some of these staff who perform some management functions would attend, as I said, the managers' course.

Scrolling down, you then have those other courses that were a little longer. You have the "Back Office Audit", the "POCL Train the Trainer". So "Train the Trainer" is a five-day course for, I think it's fair to say, training those who trained?

- A. Yes.
  - Q. Can we look at page 31, please. Scrolling down this again, this goes into a little bit more detail about the managers' one and a half day course and it mentions balancing there. It says -- it's the fourth bullet down:

"This course would be targeted at staff who are required to understand the full functionality of the 137

- Q. So there was a very short space of time to carry out quite a considerable amount of training?
- A. It was a huge undertaking. I mean, we were -- I realise that there are some things that -- we had a very good rapport for the most part with the trainers and postmasters and the staff. The trainers have a very good rapport, from what I remember, and what I'm sure I've had to with the postmasters, and both understood it was difficult to train that many people in that time.

So the course had to be very generic and it had to run exactly the same on every event and that is quite a difficult ask when you've got so many events running concurrently.

Q. Can we look at page 41, please, at the bottom of that page.

This is under the heading "Horizon Field Support and Migration Visit" and it says at the bottom:

"It is ICL Pathway's experience that users require further support after training to help remember topics covered by their training event and build confidence [over the page] in daily use. Therefore the Horizon Field Support visit is part of this document for recommendation purposes only."

Can you tell us a little bit about the role of the field support officers?

automated platform including balancing activities."

Then scrolling down you have a section on counter assistants. Can we go to page 36, please. This talks about the actual format of the courses. So all courses will start at or before 10 am. There will be a maximum of six staff on each event. Then the final bullet there says:

"The training audience will be a maximum of 72,000 post office staff, subpostmasters and assistants as defined in figure 8.1 overleaf."

If we scroll down, it has there the numbers. Do you remember those kinds of figures, so managers events you were expecting --

- A. Sorry.
- Q. Sorry.
- A. I believe it was the biggest IT training event ever undertaken in the United Kingdom and I think we ran more events on one day than any other training event in the United Kingdom ever. It was a huge undertaking to deliver so many events across the whole of UK, you know, to counter managers and also counter assistants.
- Q. Because you have there 7,004 managers and I think we saw somewhere that you don't begin the training until, is it, five days before Horizon is provided to them?
- A. That was true.

- A. I can't actually. It's not something I remember at all.

  I mean, my -- as it was at this time, when we were delivering so many events, it was a case of -- we did all those events and, to the best of my -- to the best of my memory -- "recollection", that's word I was looking for -- recollection, I don't think we missed one event in all those events. So a big part of it for me was making sure the trainers were up to speed and the Horizon field support was it was really not something I had a great deal to do with.
- Q. If we scroll down on that page there's also reference to additional training. I think this is what you were mentioning earlier, that the additional training function becomes operable when any member of staff fails the competency test. So there was possibility of additional training?
- A. Well, I lived in a small village in the Fylde actually, and it was a very small village and I knew our local postmaster and postmistress and the postmistress actually passed the course and her husband had to go back to remedial, which she delighted in telling everybody who went into the Post Office. But it just went to show that, you know, there was that additional training there. He was quite a bit older than she was and he undertook the remedial training and, after that

afterwards, they had no problem at all with the system. Q. Can we look at page 46, paragraph 11. There's reference there to "New Product and Update Training". It says: "ICL Pathway are not currently contracted to provide this service however ICL Pathway will be pleased to deliver this service subject to change control." Do you recall was the training for new products? We was that something that was ultimately agreed? A. Not on the rollout, no. Not as far as I can remember. I don't remember any new products coming online at all during that time. We went with the same version all the way through the training. Q. So we're here. November 1999 is this document. Did vou carry out any analysis after the March 1999 report to see if the two complaints that we spoke about earlier, the issues with the length of the course, which remained at one and a half days, and issues with balancing, did you carry out any analysis as to whether the situation had improved insofar as those were concerned? A. I think -- you know, coming back to what I said before and I think if you go right up to the end of it, obviously the trainer has got more au fait with it and they probably weren't as much there because the trainers then would slow down or they'd see people who were really going to struggle. You know, you do when you're training, you can see people there. As I say, the trainers that we used, and I can speak for all of them I think, had a great rapport with the postmasters and they wanted to deliver a good session, and if they saw anybody struggling, and I know many that did they would actually, if they could, stay and help that person a bit more if they could. But they would also, again, go through the supporting documentation where they could get further help, just so that when they did leave they felt a bit more confident. Q. As things progressed towards national rollout in January 2000, do you think that those problems, in particular those two -- length and issues with balancing -- do you think that those had been resolved? A. No, no. Not with everybody. I would say certainly on the course, no they wouldn't have been resolved. I think the training stayed as was, because it had to be that generic training. I think the Helpdesk got better. from what I remember, and I think the people who were supporting in POCL got better. So I would say the issue on the course was that it was probably felt it was too

short but the support with the handbook and the quick

reference guides and, as I said, the Helpdesk, they got

-- I mean, as far as I can recall again, for a good time

struggling with it, they were a lot easier to spot when you are more *au fait* with the course and they would have to then go up and, as I said to you before, I know trainers that actually stayed behind in their own time and helped a few people who had one particular bit -- they would say "Stay behind at the end and I'll give you a bit more on it". So probably it did improve.

But on any course you went on there, because of the vast spread of knowledge and age to be -- without being ageist -- and age, quite a number of them had had no IT experience at all, some of them were quite *au fait* with IT. So it was -- there was no -- how can I put it? There was no level playing field between who actually attended the course. So it could be a massive difference. I think there was somebody who well into their 80s was still running the Post Office and not been out of the village for years and never had anything to do at all with IT.

So somebody like that coming on the course, it was a massive -- it was a massive culture shock to them.

- Q. So the message to the trainers was "Spend some more time with those who are having some difficulties", but there was no actual analysis or further report into the broader picture?
- **A.** No, they knew that there were some people who were 142

better.

The Helpdesk was an interesting one, purely because, as I said to you, the culture -- and I've been to several post offices -- anything that went wrong or something they didn't understand, they immediately phoned the Helpdesk. They had manuals there from Post Office to actually go through procedures but they very rarely used them. It was a case of pick the phone up somebody on the Helpdesk can talk them through it and that was it.

Of course, with Horizon because there was a lot of new material, there were many times where they phoned the Helpdesk, you know, continuously, rather than looking up a simple process in either the quick reference guides or in the handbook, because it was their nature, that's what they did.

- Q. You said the course had to stay at one and a half days.
  Why did it have to stay at one and a half days?
- A. I don't know why it had to stay at one and a half days; that wasn't my decision. If they'd have upped it to two days or three days then we would have adapted accordingly. I think it was because of the amount of courses that needed to be carried out. I think it was deemed by both the hierarchy in POCL and KnowledgePool/Peritas that that was enough time to give

an understanding of the actual hardware and the processes, and should people not be quite as *au fait* with it and wanted more time, there was either additional training or there was actually other support available to them.

Whose call would it have been? You said at ICL and

- Q. Whose call would it have been? You said at ICL and POCL, whose call would it have been that one and a half days was sufficient?
- A. I think we would have looked that courseware and thought "We could do it in that time". I think the call would have been mainly POCL and even though -- even if somebody like Stuart Kearns had raised it as an issue, there obviously would have been other implications, possibly, I don't know. I wasn't privy to those conversations. We were told that was the time we had, we had to cover that courseware in that time. Several times it was expressed it was difficult with some delegates to get them confident in that time but, again, I keep coming back to it but there was other support available to them.

So we did what we were told basically within that timescale. I did not have anything to do with the actual timescale itself.

Q. I'm going to take you to one more document before we take a short break. That document is POL00028441. Can 

"There wasn't enough training. On the course we were booked to go together and didn't get the appointment. We needed much more training and more time. Balancing needs looking at. It was completely inadequate. Day and a half was not enough, especially training for balancing was concerned. I am used to computers but some of the training was horrendous. Good but not long enough. I only got one and a half days' training. We needed more training. It was too rushed. There wasn't enough training. Not enough training. There wasn't enough training. It was good but not enough. We need a bit more training. There was not enough. Not enough. We didn't cover enough. We needed to be taught more on the Horizon System, maybe spread over a week we really needed more training", et cetera, et cetera.

That's the first entry, so that's not enough training. Over the page there's another section on not enough training on balancing. It says there:

"Training for accounting was very bad. Balancing took hours to sort out, and was kept up until midnight sometimes. Tried to call Helpdesk but it was almost always engaged. But needed more time on balancing. The first day was all right but the quality of the training was not good on the second day because we concentrated

we look at page 3, please.

Now, this is a Post Office document. Is it a document that you are familiar with at all?

- A. No.
- Q. It's dated January 2000 and it's called the "Christmas Horizon Research Report". If we turn over the page to page 4 it says:

"This document accompanies the report entitled Christmas Horizon Research, January 2000 by Lorna Green. The report discusses the results of a telephone questionnaire carried in December 1999 with a sample of 335 national rollout post offices and asks questions about various aspects of the Horizon programme. This document contains the actual comments made by each respondent."

So we're now looking at December 1999. Can we look please at page 4 -- sorry, the next page, page 5. There's a table of contents and one of the areas that respondents were asked about is training, that's number 3. Can we look at page 14, which is where we will see those comments. I'm not the going to go through every comment but let's have a look at that first section.

So there were complaints about not enough training:

on serving customers which was very easy but needed training on balancing in back office. I think it was useless, inadequate, particularly for balancing. They didn't inform us very much on cash accounts. But not enough time, especially on the balancing side. The training was very inadequate on the accounting side. Did not allow enough time, especially on the balancing side of it. Just inadequate -- we were trained to do the counter procedures but not on the office administration side. Balancing training was poor, I taught myself", et cetera.

Over the page there's another section on "Not enough time allowed", and it says there:

"It was trying to cram too much in, in not enough time. Inadequate. Day and a half was not long enough. No time to practise anything. It could ideally have been longer training session. We ended up being left totally confused. There was not enough time."

So looking at December 1999, just before the national rollout in January 2000, you see those same themes as you saw in the original report, the not enough time theme and the not enough help with balancing theme. Were those concerns raised with you at the time, or anybody in your team, by the Post Office?

A. Not by the Post Office. I mean, obviously we knew from 148

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delegates on the appraisal feedback form. I would say, looking at those comments there, we never had that many comments of that nature on the feedback forms that we got, you know, from each course. Instead of -- it's how you phrase the question as well. I mean, one of the things I noticed sometimes with Post Office -- and I'm not saying there was enough time, I agree that there's a thread going through that -- but it's a case of if you ask somebody what they didn't like about something, they tend to actually come up with a particular answer. And I've noticed on feedback myself where they actually put up "What did you like about something", on the board, and then say what didn't you like, and the people see things they did like and think they have to counter balance it with things they didn't like. I agree about the no time, or not enough time,

I should say, but it's a difficult one, really. We did what we could within the time that we had and none of them there have said, "even after, you know, I sought further assistance". None of them have actually said, as far as I've seen so far, none of them sought any further assistance, none of them have talked about the Helpdesk, none of them have talked about supporting documentation. You know, so it's all about the training.

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they've been doing, some of them for years and taking a great pride in, to actually doing something completely different and they wanted more time.

MR BLAKE: Thank you, sir. That might be an appropriate time to take a mid-afternoon break.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: How are we doing generally with this witness, Mr Blake?

MR BLAKE: I am aiming to finish for 4.30, so if we take a ten-minute break now that should be possible.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine.

(3.30 pm)

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## (A short break)

(3.41 pm)

MR BLAKE: Mr Fletcher, can you hear and see me?

- A. Yes, I can hear you.
- Q. Thank you. Can we look at FUJ00119801, please. This is the counter managers' training pack. Is this a document that's familiar to you at all?
- A. Yes, I believe -- yes, that one is familiar.
- Q. It says at the bottom it's version 1. Do you remember at all would this have been consistent in 1999/2000? Were there significant changes to this at all?
- A. I can't remember specific changes. What would have happened was there may have been increments to it but the version numbers would have changed. It might have 151

Yes, the training would have benefited from more time but, actually, nobody's even mentioned the other support elements that there were to the course, so -having seen the course in just isolation and having seen the course with the other things that were available to them.

- Q. What was it just a coincidence that those same two themes seemed to crop up again in December '99, as we saw in March 1999?
- A. No. I don't think -- I think is no coincidence at all. I think it's very true, in the fact that some people would see or think or believe, or were actually right, that there probably wasn't enough time on the balancing stood in isolation, or actually saw it in the system. But what I would say is you have to look at that with regards to the other help that was available and you have to look at balancing that with some of the people that thought it was fine. I mean, all we've seen so far is documents mainly that said there wasn't enough time, and I accept that. I'm not disputing that and I think of any training you will get -- particularly when it's a little bit complex, which it was on the balancing, that it is difficult.

The other thing, as I said earlier, the fact that we were -- the actual system took them away from what 150

been that changes were made. It would have to go backwards and forwards for approval with POCL and if they did approve any changes that were made then it would have been version 2 or 2.0. So it would be a whole -- if it was a whole number at the front, it meant that was the actual document we were using at the

- Q. Thank you. Can we look at page 5, please. 5 is the agenda for the first day and then if we turn over the page it's day 2. Is this agenda familiar to you? Is that the kind of time periods that you dedicated to certain events throughout the training? Let's look at balancing, for example. We have there 10.00 am to 11.00 am, 11.15 to 12.30, and then there's "followed by a role play and performance standard assessment", but it looks as though there were 2 hours 15 minutes on balancing in the second day; is that right?
- A. I can't -- it must be if it's on there. That's what the trainers would have done, yes.
- Q. So the aim -- we've said a day and a half, so the aim is to finish at 1.30 on day 2?
- A. Yes.

Q. Can we look at page 63, please. Thank you. So this is training insofar as balancing is concerned, and can we just scroll on to the next page and over the page again.

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time.

on balancing. Thank you. Perhaps we could scroll again and again. Thank you. It seems as though that's quite a lot of information to fit into that 2 hours 15 minutes; would you agree with that? Quite a lot of different topics to be discussed there? A. Yes, I agree. Q. I mean, reflecting on this and reflecting on what we discussed before the break, do you think that a day and a half's training was adequate? A. For some people, yes. For -- some people, obviously, would have benefited from more time. All I can say to you is that, you know, as far as the actual timings went, then that wasn't an issue for me. I couldn't affect that at all. Obviously, what it came down to, I don't know, whether it was the amount of people to be trained, whether it was the cost involved, et cetera, et cetera. But, you know, we were given a day and a half, that was approved by POCL, and we had to get in those topics within that timescale. Q. I think it was your evidence before the break that you have to look at things in the round and it's not just the training itself, it's also things like the workbooks; is that right? Q. Can we look at POL00090452, please, because I want to ask you about the training workbooks. What were workbooks? A. Training workbooks were something they could actually use. Remember, I said that the actual system had a training mode as part of the system and they could have used the workbooks to explain certain functions to other members of staff or to new members of staff and this could also be used as a reference to an operation on the system. Q. Am I right in saying that there were ten separate workbooks? A. Yes, I believe it was 10. Q. Would it surprise you to hear that they are, in total, over 480 pages in length? A. No. Q. When were subpostmasters and their assistants and others expected to have read this? Was this before the training event, after the training event? A. It would be after the training event but what I would say to you there is that it wasn't a reading document, it was a reference document for particular functions on the system. So it wasn't something you sat down at night and read, it was something that, if you needed to train somebody else or you wanted to refresh a process

These are the topics that were covered in that section

- A. Yes. I mean, there were other support available to postmasters and to counter assistants. What I would say to you, from personal experience, I did go round a number of post offices to watch the manual processes, was that they actually very rarely used written documentation when they had an issue. It was nearly always the Helpdesk and this is one thing I did pass back up to both my boss, Stuart Kearns, and to POCL, was that I thought, because the time was reasonably short, that they may get a lot more enquiries to the Helpdesk.
- Q. You said you fed that back to the Post Office. Can you remember a particular name of anybody?
- A. Well, it would have been -- Sue Smith would certainly have been part of it because she was my main contact, really, within the Post Office and she tended to get together any people that would be involved in what we were discussing. So I knew for a fact that the Helpdesk would be under some pressure because, as I say, it was a short amount of time, it was given out to the post offices -- sorry, to the postmasters and counter assistants that the Helpdesk would have been trained and quite a lot of them, from what I remember, were quite pleased about that because, of course, we had issues with other things within the Post Office and, of course, that was their first port of call, was to Helpdesk.

in your mind, you could pick up one of the workbooks or the workbooks and refresh yourself on that process.

- Q. So you had the day and a half's training, let's say, if you're a manager and then you have this 480-page workbook to go through if you had a problem. Were the significant documents like this to read before the training?
- A. Not as I recall. The other thing, although there's a lot of pages, as you say, quite a lot of them are diagrammatical because, obviously, there were a lot of screenshots included in the workbooks, as I recall, because, obviously, a picture tells a thousand words, and it was a case of it was a way of showing what would appear on the screen to assist the Post Office staff to actually complete the process.
- Q. Can we look at page 7, please, and near the bottom of page 7. Thank you.

It's the penultimate paragraph on page 7. It says:

"The workbooks do not cover every possible transaction which you can perform on the Horizon System. If you need further help or if a specific example is not covered, you should consult the Horizon System User Guide."

Can you tell us briefly what the Horizon System 156

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2 A. They were short guides, as I recall, to actually cover 3 some of the processes and I think some of the processes 4 were fairly generic, as I've said before and, certainly, 5 the EPOSS -- quite a lot of the EPOSS ones, if you sold 6 one thing on the system, it was the same process for 7 selling something else. It wasn't a completely 8 different process for everything that you did on EPOSS. 9 But the workbook -- sorry, the Horizon System User 10 Guide, they were also a supplement to this where you 11 could actually -- they were more like quick reference 12 auides. 13 Q. We have the user guide. I'm not going to take you to it 14 but, for the purpose of the transcript, it's 15 POL00090227. Would it surprise you to hear that the 16 Horizon System User Guide was 819 pages in length? 17 A. Yes, it would, actually. Perhaps I've mixed up there 18 with the quick reference guides. I think maybe I have. 19 I'm not aware of the User Guide but the quick reference 20 guides were a one-page guick reference -- as the name 21 would suggest, a quick reference guide to a specific 22 process. I'm not quite sure about the User Guide. 23 I can't recall exactly what that contained and what it 24 was for SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I can't help it, Mr Blake. In the old 25 157 1 a document that's 819 pages -- do you think that that is 2 helpful to those kinds of postmasters? 3 A. That's a difficult one. I can't really comment on that. 4 I mean, they were done for a specific purpose and, in my 5 own view, they matched that purpose. I agree with you 6 if somebody had to sit down and read them all, then no 7 they're not -- they would too hefty to actually to do 8 that. What I would say to you is that, from the post 9 offices that I went to on the manual process, there were 10 several large user guides and other guides within the 11 Post Office for the manual system. 12 So whether you -- as I say, as a reference they 13 were fine but as a bedtime reading, no, they weren't. 14 Q. Can we look at page 367, please. This is Workbook 10, 15 which is entitled Balancing Using the Horizon System. 16 This is the section of the workbook that addresses 17 balancing. Could we scroll over the page onto page 369. 18 This Workbook 10 was 115 pages long. Does that sound 19 right to you? 20 A. If you say so. I mean, I can't recall exactly. 21 Q. If we look down, these are all the topics that are 22 covered in the balancing workbook. Can we scroll down 23 a little bit more? Over the page, over to the next 24 page. This is section 2 continued and it goes down

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User Guide was?

days you could have waved the 819 pages around!

MR BLAKE: I'm not sure the Inquiry can pay for that much printing!

We have here a 480-page workbook -- ten workbooks that comprised 480 pages. They themselves refer to 819-page Horizon System User Guide. Did the length of all these documents -- I accept that there were these quick reference guides -- but do the length of this workbook and the document that's referred to there give any indication as to the complexity of the overall system?

- A. To a point, yes, but I also think that they were there, as the name would suggest, as a reference to a particular action. If it had been you had to read through it all and then actually do things then, fine, I agree with you, it would be far too hefty to do. But if you were looking to complete an individual process, then I would say they were fit for purpose. The other thing, of course, is that POCL would have gone through these and they wouldn't have got anywhere near the offices unless POCL agreed them and signed them off.
- Q. You gave evidence earlier the a postmaster who may be in their 80s, whose first experience with a computer is having Horizon put into their post office. Do you think that workbooks that are 480 pages in length and refer to 158

Does number of topics that are covered in that workbook indicate to you that cramming the issue of balancing into that second day, the second half-day of the training, was not sufficient?

A. What I would actually say back on that -- and I think I've already conceded that we would have liked more time -- is the fact that, although these may seem foreign to somebody who isn't a post office person they actually mean, you know, straight away they know what shared stock unit declarations are, they know what declared stock is. You know, so they are not all brand new topics to them. It's just they are carrying out what they normally did on the paper-based system onto an electronic system.

So it may seem quite daunting if you just read through it and said "Well, that's a lot to take in" but actually it wasn't completely foreign to the POCL workers, in my view.

Q. Can we turn back to page 287. This is training Workbook 8. Training Workbook 8 dealt with Help and Basic Maintenance of the Horizon System. Can we look at page 296 which is within Workbook 8. It says at the top there, section 1, "Horizon System Contingencies":

"If you have a failure of the complete system or one of its components these are the procedures to 160

there to page 115.

1		adopt."	1		Horizon System Helpdesk".
2		Now, when it says "failure of the complete system	2		If we scroll down keyboard failure, "Call the
3		or one of its components", am I right in saying that's	3		Horizon System Helpdesk".
4		something like a power failure or a screen failure; it's	4		6, barcode reader failure, "Call the Horizon
5		not addressing errors in transactions, software errors	5		System Helpdesk".
6		in transactions, for example?	6		Scales failure isn't dealt with by the Helpdesk
7	Α.	Can you just repeat that. I didn't quite catch the	7		but moving onto 8, counter, again "Call the Horizon
8		Absolutely. So this section addresses what's called	8		System Helpdesk"; and 9 multiple equipment failure,
9		"a failure of the complete system or one of its	9		"Call the Horizon System Helpdesk".
10		components", and then it goes on to list nine topics:	10		Am I right in saying that there isn't a section in
11		(1) power failure; (2) monitor touch screen failure; (3)	11		training Workbook 8 on software errors?
12		magnetic swipe card reader these sound very much like	12	Δ	I honestly don't know. Looking at this now, I think
13		hardware issues and not software issues.	13	7	I can't recall any of this book, I really can't recall
14	Δ	Yes.	14		it at all. I thought I did when you first put the thing
15		For each of those, apart from scales, the advice seems	15		up. I don't remember ever seeing this failure part of
16	Q.	to be to telephone the Helpdesk. So if we look at	16		any book. I think this is a POCL document.
17		"Power Failure":	17	0	So I thought you had said that the workbooks you had
18		"The most likely cause of a complete system	18	Q.	
					contributed to. Had you not contributed to those?
19		failure is a loss power for one reason or another.	19	Α.	I had contributed to a workbook but I certainly none of
20		Telephone the Horizon System Helpdesk as soon as	20		these things here I wrote. I can't recall writing any
21		possible."	21		of those. I can't recall being involved in any of those
22		The next one "Monitor Touch Screen Failure", it	22		at all because surely there would have been an easier
23		again says "Call the Horizon System Helpdesk".	23		way to write that than actually do every single one; do
24		Magnetic swipe card reader failure, again "Call	24		you know what I mean? I certainly didn't I may have
25		the system Helpdesk". Smartcard reader, "Call the 161	25		known about the document. I don't think I did because 162
1		I've never I can't recall seeing this at all.	1		part at all. Whether I did or not, maybe I did I just
2	Q.	It's called a training workbook. Is this not the	2		don't remember that and it doesn't sound like I would
3		document that you recall being provided to those who	3		have been involved in it, looking at it.
4		were trained by yourselves?	4	Q.	In terms of the documentation that you were involved in
5	A.	No, no, it isn't.	5		or you do recall from training, do you remember there
6	Q.	Do you recall any document, in particular, being	6		being any documents addressing software errors or what
7		provided to those who you trained?	7		to do in the case of a software error?
8	A.	Yes, there was a workbook. There was a system workbook	8	A.	No.
9		but, as far as I'm aware and, you know, some things	9	Q.	We've heard evidence of, for example, workarounds and
10		I just think can't remember but I'm pretty sure that	10		a Known Error Log that was held by ICL. Were those
11		these elements were not in that book.	11		things that you were aware of at all, that there were
12	Q.	I mean, this is if we look at the top right-hand	12		certain procedures that you could use in order to get
13		corner, it's dated July 1999 so that was a period that	13		around a problem, a work around?
14		you were involved in the training?	14	A.	No, not something I did.
15	A.	Absolutely.	15	Q.	Do you recall things like workarounds being addressed in
16	Q.	The reference is that a reference that you recognise at	16		any way in the training that was provided to
17		all?	17		postmasters?
18	A.	No, not at all. It's a Pathway reference and it's	18	A.	No, I don't recall at all.
19		I just honestly don't recall. I don't recall those	19	Q.	Can we stay on this document at page 297. You may in
20		failures. If I'd have been involved in it, I certainly	20		light of the evidence you have given you may not be able
20		·	21		to assist with this at all but let's see where we get to
20 21		wouldn't have put each one as separate. I would have			<b>5</b>
		·	22		on this. Can we bring up on the same screen another
21		actually listed the potential failures and put "Call"			on this. Can we bring up on the same screen another document, and it's FUJ00117722, page 15. These are two
21 22		actually listed the potential failures and put "Call" it's a bit monotonous to list every single one and put	22		document, and it's FUJ00117722, page 15. These are two
21 22 23		actually listed the potential failures and put "Call" it's a bit monotonous to list every single one and put "Ring the Helpdesk". It's just not something I feel	22 23		
21 22 23 24		actually listed the potential failures and put "Call" it's a bit monotonous to list every single one and put	22 23 24		document, and it's FUJ00117722, page 15. These are two different versions of training Workbook 8. The first

24 July -- in fact, it says 24 July 2000 but it's called Issue 1 and then, on the right-hand side you have 29 July 1999, which is referred to as Issue 2. It's not clear which of those two is earlier. But what I want to take you to is that note there, the wording in bold. One of them says: "Should Post Office counter staff have difficulty in using the Horizon System or the training documentation, they should contact the Horizon System Helpdesk. For problems with the Horizon System User Guide or the balancing with Horizon document, you should contact the Network Business Support Centre." A. That's just confirmed it for me. I had nothing to do with that because I would have remembered that. This document is not one that I was involved in. Q. Thank you. We'll stay with the document because I do want to ask you about the Helpdesk and the Network Business Support Centre and your recollection of those. The one on the right simply says: "Should Post Office Counter staff have difficulty in using the system or the documentation, they should contact the Horizon System Helpdesk. The service hours of the Horizon System Helpdesk are as follows ..." What I wanted to ask you -- and you don't need to refer to this document at all, just to your System Helpdesk? A. It would have been the Helpdesk. I honestly can't recall, and I would be surprised because it would have been something that would have stuck in my mind. I can't recall them ever being told to contact the Business Support Centre. Q. Thank you very much. I will skip the next question because it asks about the same document. Do you recall discussing with those who you trained what to do in the case of a software error and a software error, in particular, that had affected balancing? A. The only thing I think that we actually mentioned was, if there was an issue with balancing whether it was something to do with the software, or they were just having trouble with the actual process, was to first of all look at the supporting materials and then actually, if it couldn't be resolved that way, then obviously to contact the Helpdesk. If they couldn't balance using the system, they would normally balance manually and that would have been, as far as I'm aware, acceptable to the Post Office because of a system failure. Q. Thank you very much. Those documents can be taken down. I have a few further discrete topics to ask you about. The first is field offices but I think you've said

recollection -- is: who were subpostmasters, assistants, et cetera, told to contact if they were having difficulty with the system in a way that affected balancing but that wasn't, for example, caused by hardware? So who would I call if I had a software issue that was affecting balancing?

- A. The Helpdesk. As I said to you before, the culture -forget the Horizon System. The culture in every post
  office I visited is if there was an issue of any sort,
  whether it be with a customer or whether it be with
  benefits or anything else, was straight on to the
  Helpdesk. They very -- in fact, I never saw one refer
  to any of the current Post Office documentation that was
  in the offices. They had a really good Helpdesk and
  they were very reliant on it is my opinion and my view
  of it when I actually went round the offices.
  - Q. What is your recollection of the Network Business Support Centre?
  - A. I didn't know anything about that. I probably heard about it but I didn't know -- I thought it was maybe a subsidiary of the Helpdesk. I had nothing -- again, nothing at all to do with the support centre.
  - Q. Do you recall postmasters ever being advised to contact the Network Business Support Centre? Was the advice that was given in training always contact the Horizon

that you don't really recall very much at all about field offices --

- A. No.
- Q. -- is that right?

I do want to show you FUJ00001520. This relates to field offices but it's actually relevant also to those who you trained in general. It's FUJ00001520. This is a Horizon Field Support Officer Counter Managers' Field Specification from the summer of 1999. So July 1999 there seems to have been a proposal to amend the course for counter manager, the support officers. Can we look at page 4, please. Is this a document you remember seeing or a topic that you remember being discussed?

- **A.** I would have seen it. Because of the author, I would definitely have seen it.
- Q. So this seems to be a request by the Post Office for an amendment to the two-day counter managers' course but I don't believe it's the counter managers' course broadly. It seems to be for the Horizon Field Support Officers. Do you remember this at all?
- **A.** Not really but I can -- the general gist of it maybe, but not in any detail.
- Q. So some of the reasons given for amending that course are given here: increased length of course; two days'

training not enough; no practice time; more training and practice on balancing procedures. A little further down: one-day balancing cash accounting.

And if we turn over the page for a proposed timetable, it seems as though the proposal was to extend the course that was given to the Horizon Field Support Officers and we see there there's a day 3. So whereas day 2 you have an overview of balancing at 2.15 -- can we zoom out slightly. So you have the overview -- perhaps zoom in a little bit more, if that's possible. Thank you very much.

So day 2 you have overview of balancing, overview of balancing processing reports, SU balance, but then moving on to day 3, which is the next column, you have quite a lot more: office balancing and cash account, suspense account.

Is this something you remember at all, this structure of training?

A. No, I don't remember this three-day proposal at all. I probably would have seen it but I can't -- maybe I didn't see it. It might be something that the author was doing with Stuart or the Post Office.

I mean, I think I agree with what you've said earlier on. Everybody would have liked more time. The problem is that you have to work sometimes, even though 169

decide for it to be extended. I had no sort of control of that at all. They said this had to be covered in a certain amount of time and, to the best of our ability, that's what we did.

- Q. If we look on the right-hand column, about half-way down, it says "introduce dodgy balance comp". That might be competition or composition?
- A. I think what that would have been is that they would have actually had a balance that was -- that had mistakes in it and with common mistakes that we can possibly make and the delegates then probably would have had to look and say, "Well, that's a mistake, that's a mistake" and look at it in that way. But, again, I'm quessing that because I had no input into this document.
- Q. Is that kind of thing, that kind of balancing common mistakes training, is that the kind of thing that did or didn't appear in the managers' training?
- A. No, it didn't appear in the managers' training. It was all the processes to complete balancing, you know, as would normally be done in an actual office. The process is to use on the system to balance the Post Office. The problem with that is of course is that, you know, even on the manual balancing there are discrepancies sometimes or mistakes which doesn't produce a balance. I mean, I talked to many postmasters that said they'd

you raise it as an issue, and it was raised as issues, that you have to work with what the client is proposing and also your own company.

So it's very easy to say there should be more time and et cetera, et cetera but there's a number of issues about more time and it's certainly the time it would take overall, the cost, there's a lot more than just, "Oh, we'd like an extra day so we'll put an extra day on." It wasn't at my level to make that decision.

- Q. I mean, this particular proposal for the Field Support Offices, it seems to address some of those concerns that we saw earlier this afternoon and throughout this afternoon about not enough time and more on balancing, because it provides an extra day that addresses balancing. Do you think that's the kind of thing that should have been adopted for all of the managers?
- A. To be honest with you, it would have -- yes, I mean I can't say, you know, I wouldn't have liked that. It would have made the course better. It wouldn't have made it appear to be so rushed. But the problem with it was, was that the fact that it wasn't our decision. We could make all the suggestions and pass feedback back, and feedback was regular available to both POCL and to KnowledgePool at the time and ICL, and if the course had to be extended they were the ones that would have to

spent hours and hours on balancing day trying to balance the Post Office where a very simple mistake had been made.

So problems occurred with manual balancing as well as balancing on the system, it would appear, and were there were quite regular issues with the daily balance -- sorry, the Post Office balance and the manual system. It wasn't all just on the automated system.

Not every Post Office balanced correctly, that I do know for a fact, and quite a -- well, quite a number of them didn't balance correctly or didn't balance correctly until we'd done quite a number of hours after they should have balanced trying to find the problem.

- Q. I'm going to move on to training the trainers. I think you've told us how many trainers you think there were. Can you tell us their background at all. How were they recruited --
- A. They came from a various background. There were a few that were ex-military, there were some that were ex-Post Office, there were some that had trained on other systems like the National Lottery. And what we did, at first there was an initial -- well, obviously a CV and then an initial interview and, from that initial interview, they were called forward. There was three weeks of training for that particular trainer and it was

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1 subsequent to that, if they passed those -- at the end 2 of each week, there would be an assessment and if they 3 passed the assessments after every week, so passed the 4 three assessments, then they would be employed as 5 a trainer on the system. 6 The actual first week was about general training, 7 use of training equipment such as overhead projectors 8 and other things that you would use as a trainer. The second week was doing specific parts of training and 9 10 obviously dealing with sometimes problems, et cetera. 11 And the third week was all on the system. So they would 12 do elements on the system. 13 For obvious reasons they couldn't do every single 14 bit of the training as a test -- it would have taken too 15 long -- but by that stage you could tell who could 16 actually deliver it on the system and there was 17 assessment there. They had to pass all three 18 assessments before they were employed. 19 Q. Did they have any experience in working in a live post 20 office system? 21 A. Yes, quite a few did and I can't remember exactly but on 22 that many trainers, some of them were ex-POCL -- not 23 many. A lot of them had worked on IT systems before. 24 Quite a number were lottery. Like I said, there was 25 a few military. 173 1 oversee the activities on the ground and provide a focus for management reporting and work with OSD to determine 2 3 staffing requirements for Thursday morning." 4 Is that anything you are able to assist us with at 5 all? 6 A. No, I'm sorry. The D Fletcher, I probably did meet him 7 but I don't know him. 8 Q. Can we look at FUJ00016958. Can I just say in relation 9 to that previous document, there's clearly a -- it's 10 been brought to our attention via a request from a Core 11 Participant, but it seems as though that document it's 12 "D Fletcher" rather than "Kevin Fletcher", so in fact 13 you may have had nothing to do with that topic 14 whatsoever. Is that right? It's a different Fletcher. 15 A. It is a different Fletcher but it actually says on the 16 comments, it gave the example of a simple report taking 17 three minutes to print: 18 "The performance is unacceptably slow and is 19 getting worse with successive" --20 Q. Sorry, sorry, I was talking about the previous document 21 that I just took you to? 22 A. Oh no, no. 23 Q. The Cash Account Expert Team. That document --24 It was a different Fletcher --25 Q. -- was written by a D Fletcher, so it must be a

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It was a very arduous role as well. It sounds easy to go to an hotel and set up and everything else but, to be honest with you, they were travelling great distances in between some of the events, and it was quite a physical role as well because you were having to break down the classroom quite often, you know, after one evening -- sorry, one day and then travelling during the evening, set up the next day for the next event.

- Q. But in terms of their actual real-life experience in using Horizon, being a new system, had any of them actually used Horizon within a live post office?
- A. No. no.
- Q. Moving on, can we look at FUJ00078743, please. This is a document from yourself. Is it a document that you recall at all?
- A. Not in detail again, but I'm sure ...
- Q. It's 12 May 1999 and it relates to the live trial operation plan. If we look over the page, it refers to something called the Cash Account Expert Team. Do you remember that? It seems as though there was an expert team that was put in place on a Wednesday to assist with issues relating to cash accounts.
- A. No, I'm sorry, I don't recall that.
- Q. If we look at the bottom of that page, it says:

"D Fletcher will attend the ICL Stevenage site to 174

different Fletcher. This particular document I've been asked to ask you about, and it's an error log which we know is a PinICL, and it has your name there having discussed an issue. It relates, if we look on the top right-hand corner, to a training counter and an error or a difficulty -- I think it's a complaint that it's unacceptably slow. Is this something you recall at all?

- A. Yes, very well. It actually was switching over to the training part of the system. It was -- I think that contractually it was that there would be a training mode on the system. What in reality at first there was an issue with how long it took to change over from live to -- or to change it from what would have been the live system to the training system. So that was in live. It wasn't on the actual stand-alone system. It was on the actual system itself.
- Q. Were there issues that you experienced with training counters at all?
- A. No, because of course all our systems were -- they were training anyway. They were always in training. What I'm saying to you is in the actual offices when the system was installed, there was a training mode that they could switch to. One of the issues that they had was that to switch from live to training took too long really. It was a long time and it became an issue.

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1	O.	Was that issue resolved?	1	we can get to. We can take a break. It depends on how
2		I believe so but I'm not sure. I think it's still	2	important that document is, Mr Stein.
3		probably today takes a while to there's that much	3	MR STEIN: Well, sir, the position in relation to the
4		information, particularly with benefits and that, that	4	document I've identified is that the witness,
5		the system is linked to that to actually run in a mode	5	Mr Fletcher, referred to workbook 8 as being a possible
6		that wouldn't affect any of that, it takes a long time	6	Post Office document. There is a version of it which
7		to change over. I know they improved it quite a lot but	7	has an FUJ, so a Fujitsu reference, which appears to be
8		how much in the end I couldn't honestly say.	8	a Pathway version of workbook 8 and that would deal with
9		It didn't really bother the training, apart from	9	the point raised by Mr Fletcher.
10		the fact it was an assistance to the training that we	10	Now, in a way, I have made the point by putting
11		gave that we could operate in training mode in the live	11	forward the difference. I'm happy to leave it at that.
12		environment, if that makes sense. But we had to come	12	I would suggest, sir, that you and the panel peruse
13		out of the live system to go into the training system.	13	workbook 8 in the version from Fujitsu which, for
14		They do it on a lot of EPOSS systems as well where in	14	completeness, is FUJ00117722 and it contains the same
15		supermarkets they can actually quite often, or they can,	15	points which relate to basically "go to the Helpdesk".
16		change over from a live till, if you like, to a training	16	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Is this ultimately the sort of factual
17		till. This was very much the same which they could	17	point that can be dealt with by a simple written request
18		change over from a live Horizon system to a training	18	to the representative of, say, POL and Fujitsu who would
19		Horizon System in the office.	19	provide the answer, or what do you think?
20	MR	BLAKE: Thank you very much, Mr Fletcher. Those are all	20	MR STEIN: Well, I think on the face of the document it
21	WIIX	of my questions.	21	answers that particular question.
22		Mr Stein has identified another version of	22	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: It actually answers it.
23		a workbook. Unfortunately, we've implemented a new	23	MR STEIN: Because it pretty clearly says at the very top of
24		process which means there's going to be a difficulty in	24	the document where it's from: ICL Horizon.
25		getting that document onto screen. So we can see where	25	MR BLAKE: We can in fact bring up precisely a document that
20		177	20	178
1		makes that point, sir. It's the second page of this	1	A. I was never aware it was part of a series. The one
2		document. If we look over the page	2	I did was really to support what was done in training.
3	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: So do you actually have a question for	3	In other words, it was a follow through book; in other
4		the witness?	4	words, if you press this, this screen comes up, if you
5	MR	STEIN: With the explanation I provided, I don't think	5	want to do this, you press here, and it had all the
6		SO.	6	icons from the system which made for it easy to follow.
7	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: You've given the evidence.	7	It was a real I don't know yes, simple book to
8		STEIN: Exactly.	8	follow. It wasn't I don't remember it being part of
9		BLAKE: Perhaps I could ask Mr Fletcher: Mr Fletcher, if	9	a set of any workbooks.
10		you look on the document that is being brought onto	10	MR BLAKE: Thank you, Mr Fletcher. It's perhaps an issue
11		screen, this is training workbook 8 and it says there	11	that we can explore with other witnesses in this phase.
12		"Copyright KnowledgePool Limited 1999/2000." Is this	12	I don't believe there are any other questions.
13		really a document that you wouldn't have seen or don't	13	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. Well, thank you very much,
14		recall seeing? Perhaps we can look at the page before.	14	Mr Fletcher, for giving your evidence to the Inquiry.
15	A.	I'd have to look at the pages. It might be that it	15	I'm very grateful to you.
16		wasn't written, you know, by me or I had input to.	16	A. Thank you.
17		I did a workbook but the workbook or my team did	17	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: It's just one witness tomorrow, is it,
18		a workbook that was the operation of the system. In	18	Mr Blake, or have I got that wrong?
19		other words, it showed screenshots that were, you know,	19	MR BLAKE: We have just one witness.
20		if you press this, this came up. It was a very basic	20	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, fine.
21		one and I don't recognise it being training workbook 8	21	MR BLAKE: Mr Bansal.
22		at all.	22	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: That's it. I'm on track. Thank you very
23	Q.	Might it have been that you produced one of the ten or	23	much. So 10.00 tomorrow morning.
24	-	one or more of the ten workbooks but not these	24	MR BLAKE: Thank you very much.
25		particular ones, Workbook 8 to Workbook 10?	25	(4.24 pm)
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