

Witness Name: Mark Burley

Statement No: WITN03850100

Dated:

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF MARK BURLEY

I, Mark Burley, will say as follows;

1. I, Mark Richard Burley, can confirm that I was not the HNG-X Programme Manager at the Post Office for the period of the development and rollout of the system known as HNG-x to replace the original Horizon solution. I was the Programme Manager until July 2009 when I moved into a 'Head of Delivery' role. This subsequent role did have oversight of HNG-X.
2. I joined the Post Office in 1985 and held many roles - I believe the ones pertinent to this were a) HNGX Programme Manager from November 2005 to July 2009 and b) Head of Delivery from July 2009 to March 2011 when I left the Business.
3. I held various qualifications relevant to the above roles including Prince 2, MSP and many other Project Management related qualifications.
4. I had been trained in the use of the original Horizon system and had specific Programme management training.

5. I was competent in the use of legacy Horizon and was involved in an assurance role over its development.
6. I wasn't aware of any 'faults' with legacy Horizon but was aware it was essentially a modified EPOS solution and as such errors on data input could be made with consequential impacts on weekly accounts. As with any technology solution, bugs did occur but these were investigated and fixed - appropriately (to the best of my knowledge). On occasions, I was involved in agreeing how bugs should be fixed.
7. Subpostmasters received training on Horizon and HNG-x (question unclear to which system it refers). Additionally, there was access to a helpline with any queries handled through trained operatives. Subpostmasters also had access to their Retail Network Manager for any concerns and could gain help that way.
8. I cannot comment on the training for Horizon; for HNG-X the training included a test which had to be passed before official use of the system was approved. The test was developed across multiple parties included the National Federation of Subpostmasters representatives (a group were part of HNG-X assurance).
9. HNG-X was commissioned for a number of reasons - a) the costs of legacy Horizon were increasing and technology had moved on with cheaper alternatives available b) the technology was starting to approach end of life c) the business mix had changed with much more being on-line thus requiring a more tailored solution d) the Post Office wanted to modernise and present a more modern image.

10. The development of HNG-x followed a traditional waterfall approach and as such the initial focus was on functional and non functional requirements. This was primarily a Post Office business led activity but collaboration with Fujitsu took place to ensure requirements were a) prioritised b) clear and understandable (through for example the use of Acceptance criteria) c) open to challenge where Fujitsu had good reason to question e.g. due to complexity / cost. This was followed by Design and build and then an extended period of test. Finally this concluded with a pilot / trial which resulted in further improvements. Collaboration was always part of the approach.
11. My role in development of HNGx was Programme Manager for Post Office which was essentially accountable for delivery to time, cost and quality.
12. Post Office requirements were numerous and not possible to be recalled - requirements numbered in the 100's if not the 1000's.
13. Not clear what this question is getting at - the purpose of migrating to HNG-x surely is the same as the answer to q9?
14. The Acceptance of the HNG-x system was through extensive testing - system, integration, end to end, user and the trial / pilot. User Acceptance testing was against the specific Acceptance criteria. In addition, and I believe as a first, we invited Subpostmasters to take part in the testing to give their feedback. (We also had a panel of Subpostmasters to provide a level of assurance for the Programme as it proceeded)
15. The HNG-x system development was a challenge against the original timeline with many delays caused by design clarity as well as system bugs

that had to be fixed. However the focus was on quality first and foremost and therefore timelines were extended to ensure it was fit for purpose. Testing was extensive and whilst some 'bugs' made their way into pilot, the focus always remained on quality first and foremost.

16. As Programme Manager, the one person who would have been under pressure to migrate to HNG-x quickly would have been myself. Through demonstrating how we, as a team, were holding Fujitsu to account on quality, there was never any pressure to migrate before we had signed off readiness. Obviously there was always an interest in time as there was on cost but quality was always given to me as the most critical element as one of the 3 (time, cost or quality) always has to take precedence. Indeed even with the trial / pilot, there were a few 'issues' identified that we ensured were resolved and re-trialled before starting the full migration. It is worth noting, the decision to enter a pilot and extended pilot and full rollout was a collaborative decisions with all parties in agreement including the NFSP with appropriate pauses where any bugs / concerns did arise.

17. This question is again unclear - Horizon Online? is this original Horizon or HNG-x. As stated above the original pilot of HNG-x did not proceed to full migration immediately to facilitate the resolution of some defects / improvement opportunities. As mentioned above the start of any pilot / extended pilot / rollout was agreed with all parties including the NFSP and this equally applied to pauses in the event of concerns.

18. With any computer system, there is always likely to be bugs and this is the purpose of testing. With one as complex as HNG-x that can be used in unique situations, there was always a risk that additional bugs could be

identified despite completing many thousands of specific tests. The pilot aimed to identify this and succeeded. In terms of how it could have been avoided, this is a difficult question to give an accurate answer to. There is always an option of more testing but ultimately, it would never be realistic to believe all scenarios could be tested.

19. I had confidence in HNG-x throughout in terms of the development and testing process but we were deploying a system to over 10,000 branches and some bugs had been identified and whilst they were fixed, naturally there was some noise as we were very open and honest with the NFSP. Ultimately their support was a vital part of our roll out.

20. During roll out of HNG-x, inevitably additional bugs / defects were identified but as stated above, my view is these were down to specific circumstances in how it was being used. It would be impossible to test every possible scenario. However all bugs / defects were taken seriously and corrected during my tenure

21. I feel unable to answer this question as I have not been provided with the relevant documentation on the case. I can reiterate that every bug was taken seriously and if needed, a decision to pause any roll out was taken until it was fixed and retested.

22. HNG-x was rolled out within agreed parameters and bugs / defects identified were fixed and corrected. In addition, as mentioned above, the NFSP remained a key part of all decisions to start / pause pilots , rollouts, etc.

23. HNG-x was focussed on quality. The idea to include a Subpostmaster 'Advisor' group was mine and worked well. Arguably, I could have started this earlier.

24. I do not have all the information to comment on who is responsible for the Post Office Scandal.

25. Based on what I have seen and heard, maybe the Post Office could have had a dedicated team investigating larger scale discrepancies. However again, I do not have all the relevant information.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed: _____

Name: Mark Burley

Dated:

