1 Wednesday, 22 February 2023 2 (10.00 am) 3 MR BEER: Good morning, sir. 4 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Good morning. 5 MR BEER: May I call Susan Harding, please. 6 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, of course. 7 SUSAN HARDING (affirmed) 8 Questioned by MR BEER 9 MR BEER: Ms Harding, my name is Jason Beer and, as 10 you know, I'm Counsel to the Inquiry. Can you 11 give the Inquiry your full name, please. 12 A. Susan Mary Harding. 13 Q. Many thanks for the witness statement you have 14 provided to the Inquiry and for coming along 15 today to assist us with our investigation. Can 16 you look in the bundle in front of you. There 17 should be a copy of a witness statement dated 18 23 September of last year, which is 8 pages in 19 20 Yes, I have found that. 21 Q. Can you go to the eighth page, please. 22 Α. Yes. 23 Q. Is that your signature? 24 Α. It is. 25 Q. Are the contents of that witness statement true 1 20 years into my service but I can't remember 2 the date exactly. 3 Q. Was it before Horizon was born? 4 Δ 5 Q. When was your first involvement in the Horizon 6 project? 7 A. It would have been in the initial Horizon 8 project -- would that have been around 1998 --9 something like that. I was working in a back 10 office, transaction processing, which was the 11 place that received the cash accounts from the 12 offices and I was in the development team, so 13 I was responsible for interacting with any 14 projects that would affect that unit in the 15 business. 16 Q. What was your job title there? 17 A. Head of -- I was probably head of development or 18 something like that, yeah. 19 Q. Head of development? 20 A. Yes. 21 Whereabouts was that office?

A. It was in Chetwynd House in Chesterfield.

Q. Did you manage a team?

Q. How many were in the team?

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A. I did.

1 to the best of your knowledge and belief? 2 A. They are. 3 A copy of that witness statement will be 4 uploaded to the Inquiry's website and therefore 5 become public. I'm not going to ask you 6 questions about every part of it, you 7 understand. 8 Α. Okay. 9 Q. Can we start, please, with your background and 10 experience. I think you were employed by the 11 Post Office for 40 years or so, is that right, between 1976 and 2017? 12 13 **A**. I was. 14 Q. Do you have any professional qualifications that 15 are relevant to the issues that you know we're 16 going to discuss and are considering today? 17 Yes. I qualified through the Post Office as 18 an accountant so I'm a CIMA. 19 Q. For the benefit of those who don't know, what is a CIMA? 20 21 Chartered Institute of Management Accountant, so 22 it's more about management accounting than 23 financial accounting. 24 Q. When did you become chartered? A. Oh, heavens, I don't know. Probably about 25 1 A. I can't remember now but it wouldn't have been 2 a vast team. Maybe somewhere between 10 and 20. 3 It depended on what projects we'd got as to how 4 5 many people we'd have in the team. 6 **Q.** When you first became involved in the Horizon 7 project, what did you do? What was you role? 8 I was involved in looking at the impact of that 9 on the business unit that I was working in, and 10 signing off requirements and getting involved in 11 testing and acceptance. 12 You were involved in the testing of Horizon? Well, I was not actually doing the testing. 13 14 Some of my team might have been there testing 15 certain things but it was more about the outputs 16 into the back office and making sure that the 17 cash account, which was the output at the time, 18 was still valid and still would represent what 19 would have been normally produced through the 20 manual process or through the other systems that 21 were in place at the time. 22 Q. So was this in 1998, 1999? 23 It would be around that time, yes. 24 Q. In that period, when you were involved, in the

way that you've described, in the testing of

- 1 Horizon, were you aware -- were you told -- that
- 2 there were errors, bugs and defects with it that
- 3 affected the reliability of the data that it
- 4 produced?
- 5 A. No, I don't recall that. I mean, we were
- 6 obviously -- in the testing phase you're looking
- 7 at outputs and we did get involved in Acceptance
- 8 Incidents, particularly any that would have
 - affected the integrity of the accounts.
- 10 Q. So moving on to that phase, then, the acceptance
- 11 phase --
- 12 **A.** Yes.

- 13 Q. -- if you were involved in Acceptance Incidents,
- 14 Als, I think it does follow that you must have
- 15 been aware of errors, bugs and defects with
- 16 Horizon that affected the reliability of the
- 17 data that it produced?
- 18 A. Well, yes, yes. Obviously, if there's
- 19 an Acceptance Incident that's what tells you
- 20 that there is a problem.
- 21 Q. Who did you report to?
- 22 A. Um --
- 23 Q. Dealing with the acceptance phase.
- 24 A. Well, probably I was linked into Ruth Holleran,
- 25 but my direct report was Andy Radka at the time.
 - ţ
- 1 I was managing a team that was doing that. But
- 2 that's a normal acceptance process that you say
- 3 "What should the system produce and has it
- 4 produced that?" Yeah.
- 5 And that would be initially in the test
- 6 systems. It would not be in the live
 - environment but, obviously, later -- in later
- 8 phases there would be some acceptance due to
- 9 some live trials.

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- 10 Q. Looking at the matter at a high level of
- 11 generality, would you agree with the suggestion
- 12 that the acceptance process for Horizon was
- 13 extremely problematic?
- 14 A. I don't know. You'd need to say what you mean
- by "problematic". I think it was challenging.
- 16 It was a big system, it was complex. But
- 17 I don't think -- yes, there were Acceptance
- 18 Incidents but there were processes to make sure
- 19 that those Acceptance Incidents were closed down
- 20 to the Post Office's criteria.
- 21 **Q.** So by the end of acceptance, everything was fine
- 22 with Horizon, was it?
- 23 A. As far as I'm aware. I mean, I'm not, you know,
- I wasn't as high up in the chain. I wasn't --
- 25 I was only responsible for accepting certain --

- 1 **Q.** Why were you probably linked in to Ruth
- 2 Holleran?
- 3 A. Because she was sort of in charge of managing
- 4 the acceptance process and she worked for Dave
- 5 Smith at the time.
- 6 Q. What was your job title at this time, when you
- 7 were involved in the acceptance of Horizon?
- 8 $\,$ A. I was just the development team manager in
 - transaction processing.
- 10 Q. You mention a couple of job titles in your
- 11 statement: head of the operating process and
- 12 business process architect.
- 13 A. Yes.

- 14 Q. Did they come later?
- 15 A. They did.
- 16 Q. What did you do in order to perform your role,
- 17 accepting the system from an accounting
- 18 perspective, which is how you put it in your
- 19 statement?
- 20 A. Yeah, well, we would see the outputs of testing
- 21 and we would be -- we would -- if you're doing
- that sort of thing, you'd normally have expected
- 23 results and then you see what the actual results
- are for the system and you compare them.
- 25 Remember that I wasn't doing the detail here;
 - 6
- 1 or getting involved in certain Acceptance
- 2 Incidents. I wasn't in the sort of roles that
- 3 other people were in signing it off.
- 4 Q. So within that limitation that you've just
- 5 described, did you work on the basis that, by
- 6 the time that Horizon was rolled out, it was
- 7 producing accurate, reliable and robust data?
- 8 A. Yes, I would say that. I wouldn't have signed
- 9 it off if I didn't think that was the case.
- 10 **Q.** Data that could be used in order to investigate,
- 11 take proceedings against and criminally
- 12 prosecute an individual?
- 13 A. Yes, I would have said that, although I -- of
- 14 course, the Network would have been involved in
- having a say on that. So it wasn't our role in
- 16 transaction processing to do those prosecutions
- 17 or to do that investigation. So we would
- 18 simply -- I suppose my role was simply to say
- 19 "Are these statements that -- or -- that are
- 20 produced" -- because it produced a paper -- it
- 21 still produced a paper cash account at that time
- 22 -- "Are the expected results correct?"
- 23 Q. You worked on the basis that they were correct,
- 24 reliable and the system was robust and
- 25 infallible?

- 1 A. In terms of producing those outputs, our
- 2 evidence was that it was robust. We wouldn't
- 3 have signed -- I wouldn't have signed off
- 4 something that I had any evidence of that it was
- 5 producing numbers that were not correct.
- 6 Q. That's slightly self-fulfilling: "I wouldn't" --
- 7 "It must have been robust because otherwise
- 8 I wouldn't have signed it off, if it hadn't have
- 9 been robust".
- 10 A. Yeah.
- 11 Q. On what evidence were you working? Who was
- 12 telling you that the system was robust, that --
- 13 A. My team, who were --
- 14 Q. Hold on. If we take it in turns, it'll work
- 15 better.
- 16 A. Yeah.
- 17 Q. On the basis of what evidence did you come to
- 18 the conclusion that the system was robust and
- 19 was producing data that was accurate?
- 20 A. Because we would, on a testing basis, have
- 21 expected results based on the inputs that we'd
- 22 reviewed that were going to go in. So if we
- 23 knew what data was going to be put in the test
- 24 system we would have expected results for what
- 25 the output would be and our testing would have
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- 1 Q. You weren't told about one or two people calling
- 2 up helplines and saying, "We're having problems
- 3 balancing"?
- 4 **A.** No.
- 5 Q. No?
- 6 A. No, that wouldn't --
- 7 Q. Not even a single call?
- 8 A. That wasn't really my role that would have been
- 9 other people in the project team.
- 10 $\,$ Q. So you worked on the basis that, up until
- 11 rollout, the system had been got to a place
- 12 where it was working perfectly well and then you
- 13 didn't hear anything adverse about it
- 14 afterwards?
- 15 A. No.
- 16 $\,$ Q. When did you become involved in the IMPACT
- 17 Programme?
- 18 A. Right, so you've mentioned the other roles
- 19 I did. So after being in transaction
- 20 processing, at the head of development, I became
- 21 head of the operating process and business
- 22 process architect and, as business process
- 23 architect, I was asked to redesign other parts
- of the process. So we still had old, antiquated
- 25 back office systems. So Horizon was required to

- 1 told us that those outputs were as we expected.
- 2 And you have to remember, this would have been
- 3 test systems to start with and then there would
- 4 have been stuff during -- when it went into
- 5 pilot, et cetera, that we would have been
- 6 involved in, as well, before ultimately
- 7 accepting it.
- 8 Q. When did your role in acceptance end?
- 9 A. I would say when the system went live. When it
- 10 started to -- when it was -- well, probably when
- 11 we finished pilot. We wouldn't have got
- 12 involved in anything after that. So we would
- 13 have been involved in before the first office
- went live and then, as far as I recall, there
- was a pilot and we would be reviewing results
- through that pilot.
 - Acceptance would have been for it to go into
- pilot to start with but then there would have
- been another acceptance phase to actually then
- 20 roll it out.

- 21 Q. What did you learn about the operation of
- 22 Horizon in practice after it was rolled out?
- 23 A. Nothing that -- I was not aware of anything that
 - 24 I heard or was told about afterwards that would
- say it was any different from what we'd seen.
 - 10
- 1 produce a cash account and what we wanted to do
- was put a SAP system into the back end that
- 3 would take an automatic feed from the Horizon
- 4 System
- 5 And I'd come up with that all as part of my
- 6 role as business process architect, et cetera.
- 7 So as a result of that work that I was done,
- 8 I was then asked to lead the project to
- 9 implement that.
- 10 Q. So my question was when?
- 11 A. I don't know. Early 2000s. So it might have
 - been three or four years after Horizon had gone
- 13 live.

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- 14 Q. Were you doing anything in relation to Horizon
 - in the three or four years between Horizon going
- 16 live and picking up what I'm calling the IMPACT
- 17 Programme?
- 18 A. Well, not really in that way because, as I say,
- 19 I went into more future looking roles, which was
- where I ended up running IMPACT because that was
- 21 the future -- so I was looking into where do we
- go next because, basically, we'd left the back
- office as it was. We'd done the hard work on
- 24 automating the front office but we were left
- 25 with a back office which was a home developed

system that was not -- was very clunky, that
 required paper, you know.

So the whole concept that I developed was to -- was to put SAP systems in the back office, which would take a daily feed, ultimately, from Horizon. So we would have the data faster, less effort to do the keying and all those sorts of things.

- Q. Can I confirm that in that three or four-year
 period you weren't told of any problems about
 the reliability and accuracy of the data that
 Horizon was producing in practice?
- 13 A. I don't recall that at all --

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- 14 Q. Everything was perfect?
- A. -- no. I don't know as I thought everything was
 perfect, but I assumed that any -- that through
 the problem management processes that are
 implemented as part of Horizon going in, that
 they would be picked up and dealt with.
- Q. So when you picked up the IMPACT role, did
 anyone, when you were briefed on the IMPACT
 role -- what you were going to be doing -- say,
 "We're looking to extend, essentially, the
 functionality of the system in this way. There

have been problems in the operation on the

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A. Yes.

- Q. That would be for many years, would that be
 right, before Horizon came onstream, whilst it
 was being rolled out, and for many years whilst
 it was in operation?
- 6 A. Yes. So through my role as, initially -
 7 because I worked in transaction processing, so

 8 I knew the back end of it. I was given the role

 9 of head of development which meant that I needed

 10 to understand that and then, I say, as the

 11 process architect and head of the operating

 12 processes, I was considered an expert in the -
 13 I suppose more of the accounting side of it
- 13 I suppose more of the accounting side of it
 14 than -- I mean, I wasn't an expert in the
 15 day-to-day, you know, running of a branch office
 16 or a sub office, but I was an expert in the
 17 accounting process through the various systems.
- 18 Q. You tell us in paragraph 5 that you were
 19 promoted a number of times and held a number of
 20 key roles reflecting that expert knowledge?

21 A. Yes.

- Q. You've told us already that you're responsible
 for accepting the Horizon System from
 an accounting perspective?
- 25 A. Yes.

1 ground with Horizon"?

- 2 A. Not that I can recall, no.
- Q. When did your role with the IMPACT Programmecome to an end?
- 5 **A.** I don't know, maybe 2005, 2006. So when the programme was completed.
- 7 Q. What did you do after that?
- 8 A. I can't think, to be honest with you, where9 I went next.
- 10 Q. Did it have anything to do with Horizon?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. Until 2017, when you retired, did you have13 anything more to do with Horizon?
- 14 A. Not that I can recall.
- 15 Q. So the last involvement with Horizon was at theend of the IMPACT Programme in about 2005, 2006?
- 17 A. Yes, because next project was Horizon Online,
 18 which I wasn't involved in. It was -- that was
- 19 Mark Burley's project.
- 20 Q. You tell us in paragraph 4 of your witness
 21 statement -- no need to turn it up -- that you
 22 became an expert and that you were highly
- 22 became an expert and that you were nightly23 regarded in and for your knowledge of the
- 24 end-to-end business accounting processes
- 25 operated by the Post Office.

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- Q. So, at that stage, your involvement in the
 initial implementation of Horizon was like
 an expert customer; would you agree with that?
- 4 **A.** It was initially, definitely, yes. Because
- 5 I was an expert customer on behalf of
- 6 transaction processing.
- Q. Did you, in the light of those roles and in thelight of your long service with the Post Office,
- 9 become aware that the accounting data would be
- 10 used -- the accounting data from Horizon would
- be used not only for business purposes of
- 12 individual subpostmasters and the Post Office,
- but also for the purposes of the audit of them,
- the investigation of them and might result in
- 15 criminal or civil proceedings against them?
- 16 A. Yes, of course I was.
- 17 **Q.** You say "of course", just explain to us why "of course"?
- 19 A. Well, because -- because that's what -- well,
 20 I was in the Post Office for a long time, so
- 21 I understood all the processes of the post
- 22 offices and I understood that many people over
- 22 offices and i understood that many people over
- 23 many, many, many years had been prosecuted
- 24 because they had false -- they had, primarily,
- on the basis of signing a cash account saying it

- was accurate when it was paper, when it actually
 didn't reflect the cash and stock that was in
 the office.
- Q. So you can confirm that you were aware that
 Horizon and then Horizon plus IMPACT would be
 producing data that would form the basis of
 criminal and civil proceedings against
- 8 subpostmasters pursued by the Post Office 9 itself?
- 10 **A.** Yes.
- Q. You tell us in paragraph 31 of your witness
 statement -- perhaps if we can turn that up.
 That's WITN03980100 at page 7.
- 14 **A.** Is that meant to be on my screen?
- 15 **Q.** It will come up on the screen. It's16 paragraph 31.
- 17 A. Okay.

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18 Q. It reads:

"It was agreed during the design of IMPACT that the suspense account ..."

We're going to come back to the suspense account and its removal in a moment.

- 23 A. I understand that, yes.
- Q. "... would be removed, as historically it was
 used by Subpostmasters to 'hide' discrepancies
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- 1 A. Yes, I would say that. So if you look back at 2 the record of people who had been prosecuted 3 successful in the past, prior to this, it was normally that they would inflate their cash and 4 5 stock balances so that the account balanced or 6 they would be signing that that cash and stock 7 existed but it didn't balance or they would move 8 something into suspense, so the cash and stock 9 was right but there was something else that 10 wasn't -- basically, a suspense account is 11 saying there's an amount here I don't --12 I haven't accounted for.
- Q. You thought the solution for this was removal of
 the suspense account because it would prevent
 people from dishonestly hiding money within it?
- 16 A. Yeah, and I know you're going to ask me about
 17 the contract in a bit but the contract said that
 18 subpostmasters were required to, basically, make
 19 that loss good, not to put it in a suspense
 20 account and hide it.
- Q. Presumably, if the aim or one of the aims of the
 IMPACT Programme included the removal of the
 suspense account to prevent dishonest
 subpostmasters from hiding discrepancies in
- 25 their account, you carried out an analysis of

- 1 in their accounts, rather than resolve them."
- 2 A. Yes.
- Q. The suggestion that subpostmasters hid
 discrepancies in their account, on what basis
 was that suggestion made?
- 6 A. This was a historic evidence. So on the basis 7 that when a subpostmaster signed their cash 8 account or pressed the button on Horizon, they 9 were saying that the cash and stock, as well as 10 the other transactions, but primarily that the 11 cash and stock that was in that account was 12 actually physically in the branch, and that was 13 the whole concept of it, that -- and a way to 14 get rid of that was to put an amount in suspense 15 which said that "I only have this cash and stock 16 and there's something over here".

17 So it was decided, given that the Finance
18 Director was my -- was the sponsor of my project
19 at the time and that was something that he
20 wanted to do, because --

- 21 Q. Who was the Finance Director?
- A. Peter Corbett. So we wanted to get rid of whatwas basically a place to hide discrepancies.
- Q. Are you -- so "hide" in the sense of dishonestly
 place; is that what you're suggesting?
- 1 the amount of money that was in suspense
- 2 accounts before Horizon was rolled out and then
- 3 after Horizon was rolled out?
- A. No, I don't think so. This was a concept. We
 were not -- there'd been nothing to suggest that
 Horizon was creating discrepancies. I was never
- 7 informed of that.
 8 **Q.** No, that's a different issue, whether it was
- 9 creating discrepancies. I'm asking if the aim
 10 of the -- one of the aims of the removal of the
 11 suspense account was to prevent dishonest
 12 subpostmasters from hiding discrepancies, you
- would want to see whether Horizon had
- 14 contributed to that, wouldn't you?
- 15 A. Well, Horizon wouldn't contribute to the 16 suspense account. Horizon didn't post anything 17 to suspense. The subpostmaster posted amounts 18 to suspense when they balanced and I would have 19 assumed that, if there were issues, those issues 20 would be reported to the call centre. But I was 21 not aware, nobody said to me, you know, "There's 22 been an increase in calls saying the accounts 23 don't balance", or anything.

That's what -- and in my programme, youknow, we had representatives from the support

- centre in Dearne, NBSC. So we had subpostmasters involved in all of those. So this was not a decision of my own. It was taken in conjunction with stakeholders throughout the
- business, including subpostmasters and branchoffices. So ...
- Q. Presumably now, you have heard that there were
 extreme problems with balancing on Horizon right
 from its outset?
- 10 A. I've heard that through being involved in this
 11 Inquiry but there was nothing, absolutely
 12 nothing -- you know --
- 13 **Q.** What did you think when you heard that evidence?
- 14 A. Well, I did wonder why I was never advised of15 that or why I wasn't aware of that.
- 16 Q. What did your wonderment lead you to think?
- 17 A. Well, I suppose it leads me to think that maybe
 18 I would have taken different decisions or looked
 19 at different things. I would not deliberately
 20 have removed it you know if I thought the
- 20 have removed it, you know, if I thought the 21 system was causing misbalances.
- Q. You said that the decision to remove the
 suspense account was a concept and wasn't based
- on evidence that Horizon had or had not
- contributed to any problem in the inflation of 21
- Q. Did you think that "We need to conduct
 an analysis here to see whether Horizon is
 contributing to the problem", not because
- 4 Horizon puts the money in suspense accounts, but
- 5 it's creating discrepancies and balances --
- 6 **A**. I--
- Q. -- that has meant that subpostmasters areputting more money in suspense accounts?
- 9 A. I wasn't aware that Horizon had made any change
 10 in the suspense accounts and we did have -- you
- know, in the programme and stuff, we did havethe unions involved, we did have subpostmasters
- 13 involved, and I will -- you know, I've taken
- 14 an oath. I was not aware that the suspense
- 15 account had increased as a result of Horizon.
- 16 Q. Did you look, as opposed to waiting for somebody17 to tell you?
- 18 A. No, I don't think so because I don't -- you
- 19 know, somebody would have told me. The people,
- 20 you know, involved in this would have told me
- 21 about that. This was it was a design decision.
- 22 $\,$ **Q.** That data would have been available to you. How
- 23 much money is held in the suspense accounts at
- 24 any one time?
- 25 A. I assume I could have got that, yes.

- 1 the suspense account, yes?
- A. Yes, the suspense account could only be matters would only go to suspense if the
 postmaster put them there, so Horizon didn't
 contribute for amounts in suspense. Horizon
- contribute for amounts in suspense. Horizon
 might have contributed for differences between
- 7 the cash and stock that the system said they
- 8 should have had and the cash and stock that they9 had.
- 10 I wasn't aware that any -- anything had been
- raised, if you like, by the subpostmasters or even branches -- not just subpostmasters,
- 13 because if it was going to affect -- if the
- 14 system was faulty, it would have affected Crown
- 15 Offices as they were at the time, as well as sub
- offices, and there was nothing that I was awareof.
- 18 $\,$ Q. For example, the Inquiry has heard from John
- 19 Peberdy of the National Federation of
- 20 SubPostmasters that by March 2001 there was
- 21 £10 million held in suspense accounts, whereas
- 22 18 months before, before Horizon had been rolled
- out, there was only £2 million held in suspense
- 24 accounts.
- 25 A. I wasn't aware of that.

- 1 Q. So do I take it that neither you nor anyone that
- 2 you asked to looked at, over time, this is the
- 3 amount of money that has been held in suspense
- 4 accounts and, if Mr Peberdy is correct, it's
- 5 gone up, it's multiplied by five, before and
- 6 after Horizon was rolled out?
- 7 A. No, I was not aware of that and, as I say, we
- 8 did have -- we do have subpostmasters involved
- 9 in the design, et cetera. So -- but nothing was
- 10 ever raised with me, and I don't -- I'm assuming
- 11 there's no evidence that, you know, anybody
- 12 had -- that that was public knowledge, if you
- 13 like, or that -- I know you're saying I could
- 14 have found that but, you know, historically,
- that would have meant, you know, we looked at --
- 16 we would have had to look at suspense accounts
- 17 over time.
- But it was a principle and that principle
 was signed off by -- including representatives
 of subpostmasters.
- 21 Q. Sorry, which principle was signed off?
- A. The principle that we should remove the suspenseaccount.
- 24 Q. Where did they sign?
- 25 $\,$ **A.** Well, they would have signed off the design

a length of time.

Q. So the -- just explain: the National Federation and the CWU would sign a document, would they?A. Well, they would review it, they would be

reviewers. So they would have been engaged in the -- they were engaged in the programme.

Q. So we should look at the conceptual design and other similar documents for the names of people from the Federation and the CWU and, seeing those names, should take that as meaning that they had signed off what was being done in the name of their union; is that what you're

suggesting?

A. That's what I'm saying. Whether that's -- you know, it's a long time ago, whether they actually signed off the conceptual design in total, I don't know. But we did have a lot of representation throughout the design phase.

Q. That representation, do you mean presence at meetings?

A. Well, document reviews, yes, and stuff like that. Given that, you know, impact was primarily -- primarily -- about implementing new back office systems which would automate the back office systems. So it wasn't about

rstems which would automate the rstems. So it wasn't about

accounts."
Yes?

A. Yes.

Q. The suspense account had been designed, is this

right, to allow subpostmasters to balance, even

where there was an imbalance?

A. Yes, and that was -- that had been there for years and years when we were talking about paper cash accounts. So it was just a way for them to -- I suppose there were two things. It would be one for branches that just couldn't find what the problem was but it was also used for branches that had been removing money from the system, if you like, and it was to hide it for

So I mean we had a lot of the sort of people who investigated, POID investigations and a lot of investigations into previous cases where people had jailed before Horizon existed, so this was on a paper cash account, you know, that they used suspense to hide that. They would either leave their cash and stock as numbers that didn't exist in the office or they would simply move it to a suspense account.

25 Q. The language which you use in your witness

re-looking at Horizon, except that obviously there were a lot of Horizon changes because it had to produce the data feed that would go into the back office systems.

But really, we were -- IMPACT was what, a £25 million programme and there were lots of different streams in it, you know. But really the implementation of the back office systems was there, but -- and I -- if I'm honest, I can't remember where the idea of removing the suspense came out, but certainly, as I say, Peter Corbett, who was my sponsor, I know was very keen on it.

Q. Can we look at paragraph 24 of your witness statement, please. That's on page 5. It's at the foot of the page. You're speaking here about the removal of the suspense account, and you say:

"This decision was based on the core principle that branches (specifically agency branches) were accountable for the financial integrity of their accounts. The 'suspense account' had been historically used to 'balance' any discrepancies which covered up losses in their [I think you mean subpostmasters']

statement and today is of hiding and covering
up. Does that accurately reflect your core
belief that that's what was going on?

A. I have to say, you know, that, yes, multiple --

many, many, many subpostmasters, prior to Horizon, had been prosecuted for either -- for falsely accounting, basically. Either saying the cash and stock was there or hiding it in suspense, and I could tell you lots of cases, you know, of somebody where the auditors --because the auditors only used to audit sub post offices, I think, once every three or four years.

And I can remember there was one, I think it was, Harrow on the Hill was quite infamous, where the auditors turned up at the door, because that's what they did, and he said, "I want to fetch the keys out of my car", and then he went; and that was it. And the Finance Director -- so, you know, I ran this on behalf of my sponsor, the Finance Director, but it was clear that -- and I'm not disrespecting any of the people that have been jailed if Horizon was wrong, but there had been many people -- Sorry, you said "if Horizon was wrong".

- 1 A. Yes. Well, I -- I'm not doubting it was wrong.
- 2 I'm just saying I haven't --
- 3 Q. So can we remove "if" from that sentence?
- 4 A. Yes, okay. But people had been jailed for many,
- 5 many years for false accounting because that's
- 6 what they got jailed for.
- 7 Q. So is it fair to say that this mindset, might
- 8 I call it, that you operated under was that
- 9 suspense was all about crime, it's about
- 10 cover-ups by dishonest postmasters hiding
- 11 discrepancies, and that mindset continued in
- 12 your 40 years in the Post Office?
- 13 A. Well, I wasn't 40 years in the Post Office.
- 14 I was in Royal Mail and things before that.
- 15 So -- but once I was involved in that -- it
- 16 wasn't me, you know, I had a sponsor for this,
- 17 who was the Finance Director and we were trying
- 18 to achieve something that meant that accounts
- 19 were accurate and that the cash and stock that
- 20 was in the office or the accounts were accurate
- 21 and that the cash and stock that was in the
- 22 offices was in the offices.
- 23 Q. Would you mind kindly answering my question?
- 24 A. Could you repeat the question, please?
- $\,$ 25 $\,$ Q. Yes. Did you have a mindset in the entirety of
 - 29
- 1 to be fraudulent.
- 2 Q. It could be that their account imbalanced and
- 3 they didn't know why it imbalanced?
- 4 A. That's true, but that's what I said. That's --
- 5 so that there were discrepancies that they
- 6 couldn't explain.
- 7 Q. So the suspense account was there to allow
- 8 subpostmasters to balance where there was
- 9 an imbalance?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. If there was a shortfall, the relevant sum would
- 12 be put into, moved into, the suspense account,
- 13 returning the branch to balance, permitting the
- 14 subpostmaster to roll over and continue trading?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. The reason for the shortfall, would you agree
- 17 with this, there could be various reasons: it
- could be a loss within the branch for a range of
- 19 reasons?
- 20 A. It could be but then subpostmasters were
- 21 responsible for those losses.
- 22 Q. That's a different issue.
- 23 A. So they should have declared that a loss.
- 24 Q. Sorry, they should have?
- 25 A. Should have declared a loss rather than put

- 1 your time working for Post Office, that the
- 2 suspense account was used by dishonest
- 3 subpostmasters to hide and cover up money that
- 4 they were taking?
- 5 A. My mindset was that it was a place where they
- 6 could do that.
- 7 Q. And did do that?
- 8 A. Yes, and did do that, because --
- 9 Q. And that it wasn't used for any other purpose?
- 10 A. Well, it might have been used for any other
- 11 purpose. It might have been used for other
- 12 purposes as well, but there were other ways
- those things could have been dealt with.
- 14 **Q.** Did you think it was used for any other purpose,
- 15 like an innocent purpose?
- 16 A. I don't know. It could have been.
- 17 Q. Well, did you? Can you help?
- 18 A. I don't -- I can't remember. All -- I think it
- 19 could be used. I'll rephrase it then. It could
- 20 be used for any purpose but why would you, if
- 21 your account balanced? So it must have been to
- do with something that either they knew was
- 23 causing their account to misbalance or because
- their account misbalanced and they needed
- 25 somewhere to put the difference; it didn't have
 - 3
- 1 an amount in suspense.
- 2 Q. Well, they might not know, might they? You seem
- 3 to be operating on the basis that it must be
- 4 nefarious and, if that's the basis on which you
- 5 were operating, then you should say so.
- 6 A. It was -- yes. Their account should have
- 7 reflected what they saw -- what was in their
- 8 office. It should have reflected the receipts
- 9 and the payments they had made and the cash and
- 10 the stock that then -- so they'd have done the
- 11 previous opening cash and stock on their
- 12 previous cash account, they would have done
- 13 a number of transactions which would be recorded
- 14 and the difference should have given them
- an amount of cash and stock that was in the
- 16 office.
- 17 **Q**. The reasons could include theft by the
- 18 subpostmaster?
- 19 A. Yes
- 20 Q. They could include poor business practices by
- 21 the subpostmaster?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 **Q.** They could include a negligent mistake by the
- 24 subpostmaster?
- 25 A. Yes.

- **Q.** They could include an innocent mistake?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 $\,$ **Q.** They could include, after Horizon, a bug or
- 4 error in the system causing an imbalance?
- 5 A. They could.
- 6 Q. Then if the sum was placed in suspense, that
- 7 could be investigated before Horizon at
- 8 headquarters?
- 9 A. I think the thing was that they had the
- 10 Network -- the Network Support Business Unit was
- 11 set up within Horizon, was there, and that
- should have been the place -- you know, the
- 13 contract said they should make good their
- 14 losses. There was nothing that was a sort of
- grace period in them. But I would have thought
- 16 if somebody was having large losses, they would
- 17 have been raising hell with the support centre.
- 18 Q. On the phone?
- 19 A. Yes, or with their Retail Line.
- 20 Q. Just explain what you mean by their "Retail
- 21 Line"?
- 22 A. Well, every post office was linked to Post
- 23 Office's -- somebody in the Retail Line. So
- through -- and I'm not an expert in the Retail
- 25 Line structure but they would have people who
 - 33
- 1 it could be investigated by Chesterfield or by
- 2 the audit and security team, yes?
- 3 A. Yes.

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- 4 Q. Then after IMPACT that could still happen, there
- 5 could still be an investigation but, after
- 6 IMPACT, placing the item in suspense could no
 - longer happen, could it?
- 8 A. No, but you're saying, exactly the same
- 9 resolution of what somebody thought, because
- 10 clearly they would know if they hadn't --
- 11 couldn't put it in suspense that there was
- 12 a difference between the cash and stock on what
- 13 the cash account said and, you know, their
- 14 contract did they say had to make it good, they
 - could have been straight on the phone to Network
- 16 Business Support Unit saying, "This is saying",
- 17 -- I'm assuming, you know, we're not talking,
- 18 I expect, £10 or 10 pence here; we're talking
- 19 large amounts generally. If it's small amounts,
- 20 making it good was what they would do but if it
- 21 was a large amount, you would have thought they
- 22 would have been scouring their transaction logs
- and trying to understand what had happened
- 24 there
- 25 Q. Scouring their transaction logs. Can you tell

- 1 supported their office from the Network Business
- 2 Unit.

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- 3 Q. What would you expect them to do if they said,
 - "There's an imbalance here, I don't know why
- 5 there's an imbalance. I think it may be being
- 6 caused by the system but I don't know why"?
- 7 A. Well, I would have expected them to investigate8 that.
- 9 Q. How would they investigate it?
- 10 A. I don't know because I'm -- I've never worked in
- 11 the Network side so I don't know what the roles
- 12 and how they played those roles in that. But
- 13 somebody would be saying, you know, "You have to
- 14 go through your accounts", and a lot of the
- 15 lines on the cash account had supporting
- documents, so is it a loss in a supporting
- 17 document? But that was it.
- 18 I mean, clearly, you know, some offices did
- 19 more transactions than others. Was there
- 20 a transaction that they keyed wrong? But there
- 21 must have been a way of investigating that, but
- that wasn't, you know, my role. I wasn't
- 23 involved in Network support at all.
- 24 Q. The difference before and after IMPACT was,
- 25 before IMPACT, if a sum was placed in suspense,
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- 1 us how a subpostmaster in a branch scours
- 2 a transaction log?
- 3 A. Well, they would print it off and have a look
- 4 for what they thought might be an erroneous
- 5 transaction but a lot of the --
- 6 Q. Hold on. Just stop there. What would they
- 7 print off?
- 8 A. I can't remember. There must have been a report
- 9 that was a transaction log.
- 10 Q. Was there a report called a transaction log?
- 11 A. I don't know.
- 12 **Q**. Sorry?
- 13 A. I don't know. But, you know, every week
- 14 before -- and before any of the automation,
- people went through that on a weekly basis,
- 16 following automation that became a monthly
- basis, although I imagine that some offices
- 18 still did it weekly. A lot of lines on the cash
- 19 account had supporting documents and that
- 20 enabled them to check the accuracy of those
- 21 things. So nothing changed as a result of doing
- this in how you would try and identify
- 23 a discrepancy. It just said you can't place it
- in somewhere -- in a suspense account.
- 25 $\,$ Q. You've said a number of times this morning it

1		was their responsibility to make good any	1		principle was not changed by the IMPACT
2		losses.	2		Programme."
3	A.	Mm-hm.	3		Then in paragraph 25, if we scroll down, you
4	Q.	It was their responsibility under the contract,	4		say:
5		I think you said, a number of times.	5		"This decision was based on the core design
6	A.	Yes, there is a clause, I know, that's in the	6		principle that, contractually, agency branches
7		contract that's in some of my documents.	7		were accountable for the cash and transactions
8	Q.	Yes, if we just look, please, at paragraph 24 of	8		in their branch and liable to make good any and
9		your witness statement, that we were on, and see	9		all shortfalls."
10		what you say about the responsibility of	10		I just ask you to highlight, in your mind at
11		subpostmasters for shortfalls under the terms of	11		the moment, "any and all shortfalls". If we go
12		their contract. You say:	12		to paragraph 29, please. You say:
13		"This decision was based on the core	13		"In sub post office [sub post offices] the
14		principle that branches (specifically agency	14		owners were required under their contract to
15		branches) were accountable for the financial	15		make good any shortfall."
16		integrity of their accounts."	16		I just ask you again to highlight in your
17		Then reading on:	17		mind the words "any shortfall".
18		"The processes for raising a dispute	18		Then in paragraph 32, over the page:
19		regarding a discrepancy were not changed by the	19		"In contractual terms, they were liable,
20		Programme. Branches were supported by the	20		contractually, for any shortfalls which had to
21		helpdesk and/or the Network team and would raise	21		be made good."
22		any concerns through these channels."	22		Why did you believe that subpostmasters were
23		Then you say:	23		required, under their contracts, to make good
24		"As I have stated, agency branches were	24		any and all shortfalls.
25		responsible for making good losses. This	25	A.	Because I think I'd seen the contract and, on
		37			38
1		come of the decuments in my folder, there is	1	^	Voc. or compledly, we would have had people in
1		some of the documents in my folder, there is		Α.	Yes, or somebody we would have had people in
2	_	a copy of that paragraph.	2		the teams or stakeholders who were not in the
3	Q.	When you were working back in say, between	3		team that confirmed that. So, you know, I mean
4		'95 and 2005, was it your belief that	4		this was a you know, this was something
5		subpostmasters had to make good any and all	5		I didn't make these things up. I was you
6		shortfalls?	6		know, my stakeholder was the Finance Director,
7	Α.	Yes, although if you're going to ask me, if the	7		and this was something that we recognised and,
8		system didn't work right, they were responsible	8		certainly as far as I'm aware, we tracked all
9		for that, then no. But they were, unless, you	9		the contractual terms to say that was true.
10		know, they could there was a bug and it was	10	Q.	To summarise, it was based on actual possession
11		identified. I'm not suggesting that if the	11		of the contracts and conversations with other
12		Horizon System didn't work correctly, that they	12		experts who would be expected to know what the
13		were liable for that but the contract said, if	13		terms of the contract were?
14		you've done these transactions, you've reviewed	14	A.	Yes.
15		your account, when you press the button you're	15	Q.	Did it mean to you that a shortfall that was not
16		saying that account is a true and accurate	16		the fault of a subpostmaster was nonetheless
17		statement of the transactions.	17		their liability to make good?
18	Q.	Where did, between '95 and 2005, your	18	A.	No. Well, except that it could have been, you
19		information come from that subpostmasters were	19		know, a member of staff or something like that.
20		required under their contracts to make good any	20		If there was a shortfall because they'd had
21		and all shortfalls?	21		a robbery, then clearly that didn't apply and if
22	A.	Because we had because I had copies of the	22		I'd thought in any way that the system created
23		contract.	23		incorrect transactions that they wouldn't be
24	Q.	You had copies of the contract in your office or	24		able to question, then no, I wouldn't expect
25	 -	in folders?	25		them to be held liable.

(10) Pages 37 - 40

- 1 Q. In your statement, you say on four occasions 2 that they had a liability under their contract 3 to make good any or, in another place, any and 4 all shortfalls, without including exceptions. 5 You've just written in --
- 6 A. Yes, but I didn't -- I -- you know, anybody 7 would say, if you've got an account and you've 8 signed it off, yeah, you're signing it off to 9 say that that is a true and accurate reflection. 10 And, you know, I know from reading the stuff 11 here that there were issues maybe in Horizon 12 but, in many cases, you know, what I don't 13 understand and I don't know the detail of the 14 prosecutions, there's -- why they hadn't been 15 able to identify that the system had inflated, 16 you know, receipts or said they hadn't -- that 17 sort of thing.

Because, you know, the process of balancing required them to go through their accounts and to check things, as I say, in many cases with supporting documents, not always supporting documents.

- 23 Q. Sorry, just to stop there, you're saying that 24 the process of balancing --
- 25 Α. Yes.

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1 office systems in Chesterfield, we would have 2 a feed from the client which told us. So we 3 would identify errors but that -- those 4 subpostmasters should have been able to find 5 those errors. If they'd sent the supporting 6 documents off, they -- some of them may have 7 been sent off at the same time as the cash 8 account was completed and, therefore, they would 9 be saying, "I have -- my system says I've done 10 these transactions and these supporting 11 documents say I've done these transactions", and 12 if there was a difference they would look to 13 identify the difference.

> So it wasn't a case of just pressing a button. It was all related to supporting documents and other information, to sign a cash account off.

- 18 Q. Getting back to where we were, I think you've 19 said that you didn't work on the basis, between 20 1995 and 2005, that all shortfalls were the 21 responsibility of subpostmasters to make good. 22 There were exceptions to that rule?
- 23 A. Well, yes, there was a process for them to go 24 through to work out why they had got
- 25 a shortfall, so --

1 Q. -- required the subpostmaster to go through 2 a series of documents, this is after Horizon?

3 Yes, well, they'd go through a process that 4 they'd done with the cash account. They would 5 validate the lines that were on the cash account. So, for instance, if -- and obviously 6

things changed as technology changed but if they 8 were having Giro deposits, for instance, they

9 would have Giro deposit slips. So the process

10 of balancing would say, "I've got a line on my 11

system that says I've taken this much in cash 12 deposits", and you would expect that they would

13 go through the supporting documents, which often

14 had to be sent in when we used to have paper 15 cash accounts, because that's what Chesterfield

16 would do when they got it.

17 They would check the lines on the cash 18 account that the subpostmaster had submitted to 19 the supporting documents --

- 20 Just to stop you there, that's what IMPACT 21 removed, essentially?
- 22 A. It didn't remove supporting documents.
- 23 Q. They removed the checking by Chesterfield?
- 24 Well, no, because there would always -- there 25 was still some products where, in the back

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- 1 **Q.** What were the exceptions to the rule?
- A. Well, if they could -- if they could prove that 2
- 3 they got a set of supporting documents and that
- 4 total on Horizon wasn't there, they should have
- 5 been -- they would have been ringing the
- 6 helpdesk and saying, "Why is my system not
- 7 reflecting what I've keyed in?"
- 8 What if the helpdesk said, "But you've got
- 9 a responsibility under your contract to make
- 10 good any and all shortfalls. Make good the
- 11 shortfall, otherwise you can't continue
- 12 trading"?

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- 13 No, that contractual term "any shortfalls" is, 14 after all these processes have gone. If they
 - can't resolve that shortfall, that's what the
- 16 contract said.
- 17 What was your view of how onerous the 18 contractual provision on any and all shortfalls
- 19 was at the time?
- 20 **A.** Well, that provision was no more onerous under
- 21 IMPACT than it had been for all the years it had
- 22 been they're so that contract -- that was --
- 23 that had always been the case in subpostmasters
- 24 contracts, as far as I'm aware. Certainly in my
- 25 time of being involved, that was what was there.

Q. But a deliberate design aim was essentially to

1 Q. Can you recall a difference between sub offices 2 and Crown Offices in this regard? 3 A. Yes, because Crown Offices would report a loss. 4 So you don't hold a Crown branch -- were not 5 under the same contract. They were employed --6 they were employees, so you would deal with 7 an employee who -- a branch manager who reported 8 that they had got more money than they really had in their tills, you would treat them 9 10 differently. That would be a disciplinary 11 offence and may lead to them being prosecuted, 12 I suppose. But it's obviously a different 13 contractual situation. 14 Q. One of the desired outcomes of the IMPACT 15 Programme was to pursue losses with more vigour 16 in order to improve debt recovery, yes? 17 A. Yes. 18 Q. Did you ever think that subpostmasters were 19 therefore going to be pursued and pushed harder 20 for losses? 21 A. I think we were trying to make it easier for 22 those losses to be identified and, yes, I would 23 expect that the processes would be there -- the 24 process should have been there anyway, but it 25 was trying -- it was the visibility. 45 1 here to implement a project, there was 2 a programme -- project programme manager and 3 I had a number of sponsors, and they had numbers 4 of requirements. 5 Q. But you were aware, you were conscious of the 6 fact that one of the aims of the project was to 7 pursue these losses harder in order to improve 8 debt recovery --9 A. Yes. 10 Q. -- and therefore subpostmasters would be pushed harder? 11 12 Α. Yes. 13 Q. That was the very aim of the process? A. Of that part of the process, yes. 14 15 Q. Can we just look at a couple of versions of the 16 contract please. To start with, look at 17 POL00000747. This is the 1994 edition of the

subpostmaster contract and can we turn to

Yes, sorry, internal pagination. So I think

Yes, that's it, under the cross heading

"The Subpostmaster is responsible for all

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"Losses" at the top and if we can look at

page 49, please. Hmm.

four pages on.

paragraph 12:

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2 squeeze the subpostmasters more to get onto the 3 Post Office books the accounts that was 4 otherwise held in suspense accounts? That was 5 improving debt recovery? 6 A. Yes, I don't think that means squeezing them 7 more. That's a concept --8 Q. But --A. We were trying to make it that the Post Office 9 10 accounts and the sub office accounts reflected 11 reality and that we didn't have, if you like, 12 a black hole that was called suspense. 13 But a black hole that was filled by, in your 14 view, dishonest subpostmasters hiding and 15 concealing money that they had stolen? 16 It didn't mean they'd stolen it. It may have 17 been lost. They may have given out the wrong 18 change to somebody but the contractual liability 19 was that they should make good those losses, 20 even if they'd given out the wrong change. 21 I wasn't -- I'm not -- I wasn't in any way 22 reflect interesting on why I believe those 23 losses had occurred. 24 I was simply reflecting what was a desire of 25 the sponsors of my project, remembering I was 46 1 losses caused through his own negligence, 2 carelessness or error, and for all losses of all 3 kinds caused by his Assistants. Deficiencies 4 due to such losses must be made good without 5 delay." 6 A. Yeah. 7 Q. Can you keep that in mind and then if we can look at POL00003874. This is the "Post Office 8 9 Community Subpostmasters Contract" for 2006. 10 Can we look, please -- there's an error with my 11 referencing. 12 I'm going to have to ask to take the break 13 early because I can't locate the paragraph 14 within the 60 pages/70 pages of the document. 15 Apologies for that. 16 A. I think on --17 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: So we're just after 11.00, so 18 11.15? 19 MR BEER: Yes, that would be great. Thank you very 20 much, sir. 21 (11.05 am) 22 (A short break) 23 (11.16 am) 24 MR BEER: Sir, thank you for allowing me the time. 25 The fault was entirely mine.

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: It's always nice to have that admission.

MR BEER: So we were looking at POL00003874, please.

Can we turn to page 71 in the document, please,

and paragraph 12, please:

"The subpostmaster is responsible for all losses caused through his own negligence, carelessness or error, and also for losses of all kinds caused by his Assistants. Deficiencies due to such losses must be made

good without delay."

I've shown you the contract as it stood in 1994 and then as it stood in 2006, to sort of bookend the period that we're looking at. You'll see that they are materially the same.

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- 17 Q. Do you agree that a postmaster's losses due to 18 his own negligence, carelessness or error is not 19 the same thing as a postmaster being liable for 20 any and all shortfalls, irrespective of their 21 cause?
- 22 A. Yes, because it describes those that they are 23 liable for.
- 24 Q. Why did you say, in four places in your witness 25 statement, that subpostmasters were liable to 49

I just paraphrased the contract, which was the first bit, for all losses.

Clearly, we were not ever attempting to make, in my project, losses -- subpostmasters responsible for losses which were caused by a system bug.

Q. Isn't it the case that what you told us in four places in your witness statement accurately reflected the view that you held at the time, back in the day, namely subpostmasters are responsible for any and all losses, and that's the basis on which you were working, wasn't it?

13 No, I would have had access to this and we --14 you know, I wouldn't have --

15 Q. But did you read it?

16 A. I would never -- you're asking me to go back 17

20 years but I had people from the Network,

18 I had people from commercial involved and that

19 was where those decisions were made. It was

20 never intended to suggest that if there were

21 bugs in the Horizon System caused by Fujitsu,

22 that that wasn't there. I suppose what we would

have expected is -- maybe thought, is that those

24 would have been identified by the subpostmasters

25 because, I say, a lot of the lines on the cash 1 make good all or any and all shortfalls?

2 A. Because I was meaning that it was like that. 3

Clearly, if there was -- you know, it was a loss

4 that was a system error, that wouldn't have been 5 the same. Because you would have resolved the

6 system error. But, you know, this was not

7 something that I would have thought would have

8 happened but --

9 What wouldn't you had thought have happened?

10 I would have thought that somewhere somebody 11 would have reported things that were happening, 12 would have been able to identify maybe which of 13 the transactions there was a problem with, and 14 then that would have got resolved.

15 And that was a Network -- that would have 16 been an issue for the Network because you would 17 have imagined that if you were getting a lot of 18 losses caused in a lot of offices which they 19 simply couldn't explain, that through that 20 process they had to go, which was before they 21 signed off the cash account, that things would 22 have been clear, particularly if there were 23 large losses. You know, you would have expected 24 you could see something in the accounts, but 25 I wouldn't -- that contract has never -- and 50

1 account, as it was, had supporting documents, 2 which they would be able to say "Well, this is"

3 -- and I don't know what problems those bugs

4 caused, I know they existed now but I didn't

5 know at the time. But I would have thought you

6 would see a pattern of losses occurring because 7 this line of receipts is overstated versus some

8 supporting documents or evidence that I had to

9 support it.

10 Were the attitudes that you have displayed in 11 your witness statement, namely that suspense

12 accounts are used by dishonest subpostmasters to

13 hide and cover up losses for money that they

14 have taken and that, in any event, 15 subpostmasters are liable for any and all

16 losses, a common one in the teams in which you

17 worked?

18 No, it was not like that at all, not like that 19 at all. This was about trying to reflect that 20 part of the contract and this was a requirement

21 passed to me from my sponsor, the Finance

22 Director, and that's what we intended to try to 23 implement.

24 Can I turn to the reasons for the removal of the 25 suspense account. You tell us in paragraph 18 52

1 of your witness statement -- and can we look, 2 please. It's on page 5, WITN03980100. We 3 should probably just look at the foot of 17 4 first. It's slightly oddly formatted: 5 "The principle objectives-off IMPACT [says 6 17] were to ..." 7 Then 18: 8 "Deliver an integrated, automate solution 9 utilising industry standard packages where 10 possible." 11 I think the second thing is: 12 "Reduce IT operating costs." 13 Then the third thing is: 14 "Reduce losses and improve debt recovery." 15 Was the objective that you've described 16 there, reducing losses and improve debt 17 recovery, something of an underestimate? This 18 was seen as an issue critical to the survival of 19 the business, wasn't it? 20 A. No. No. This was -- I worked for the 21 Finance -- the Finance Director was my sponsor, 22 you know, we did have a lot -- we had a very 23 large network of offices which were not 24 supervised, which were not audited frequently 25 and we did have, prior to any of the automation, 53 1 A. Yes, I would have been a -- not just reviewed,

2 I would have been the final sign-off along with 3 Clive Read who was the -- he was the 4 technical -- so I was the programme manager but 5 he was technical design authority. 6 Q. We can see you described as "Programme Manager" 7 on the first page there. What did the role of 8 programme manager involve? 9 A. Right, so this was a significant programme so 10 originally I was -- because I said I was sort of 11 head of design, or whatever it was at the time, 12 so I was asked to design an improved process 13 that would meet these -- meet some of these 14 objectives. And then, having created that 15 design, which is not this conceptual design, this is later on, I was then asked to move to be 16 17 programme manager to implement it and, as I say, 18 my sponsor was Peter Corbett who was the Finance

> So those desires to reduce losses were passed to me as a requirement from the sponsor. We can see, I think, the date on page 5 of the document -- at the foot of the page, 3.4, which is what this version is -- is September 2003, and you can see the date above that in the box,

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Director.

1 numbers of postmasters who were prosecuted for 2 false accounting: not theft but false 3 accounting. 4 So these were agreed. This wasn't my, you 5 know, my programme. It was the Finance 6 Director's desire to do this and that was one of 7 things he placed on us to say, "Do that, that's 8 one of the things that we want you to achieve 9 out of this programme". Q. So it was actually more targeted to try to catch or remove the facility for those dishonest

10 11 12 subpostmasters to hide or cover up losses in 13 their suspense account.

14 A. Yes, absolutely. 15 That was an aim?

16 Absolutely.

17 Q. Can we look, please, at POL00038870. 18 This is version 3.4 of the conceptual design

19 of the accounting and cash management programme. 20 We'll see in a moment that I think it's dated 21 September 2003 and it details the design of the

22 whole accounting and cash management programme.

23 I think it was reviewed by you, is that right, 24 as the programme manager for the entirety of the 25 programme.

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1 yes? 2 A. Yes.

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3 Q. Then if we go forwards, please, to page 14. 4 Under paragraph 3.2.2, which is just under the 5 middle of the page, "Key priorities", the 6 document provides that:

> "2 fundamental changes have made Post Office Limited's funding position a critical business survival issue:

"[1] The business is trading at a loss

"[2] The migration of benefits to ACT will be accompanied by the loss of pre-funding by government departments of the necessary cash in the network.

"The business now has to borrow funds to fund its trading losses and to fund working capital needed in branches. Such borrowing is limited in its availability and its costs add to the trading loss. From April 2003 DTI will provide a loan and will require a robust statement of cash holding as security."

22 Does that neatly summarise the reasons for 23 the IMPACT Programme?

24 No, not in totality, because the IMPACT 25 Programme, a lot of it, which will come in the 56

business drivers, no doubt, was to -- we'd automated the front office through Horizon, and IMPACT -- a lot of that, was around automating the back office, so we replaced the old paper cash account and put in new systems. So the majority of IMPACT was all about the back office systems, really, and then doing some things in the front office to facilitate that.

But it wasn't -- so that was the reason for it, really.

11 Q. The purpose of it, or the reasons why it was12 being done, are set out there, aren't they?

13 A. Well, yes. So we were trying to reduce the
14 costs. So by replacing the old systems and
15 putting in new -- we'd put in a SAP system in
16 the back end, which was very vanilla. We tried
17 not to change SAP to work to the processes -- we
18 tried to change the Post Office processes to fit
19 with the package.

So yes, putting in package solutions in the back end meant significant savings and much better control, et cetera. So that was one of the reasons behind that.

Q. Were suspense accounts to be removed because the
 Post Office desperately needed money that was

account. So yes, this was, so there were a number of things that said "How do we reduce the cost or the loss of the business?" And I can't remember where that actual thing about the suspense account came up from, because we did number of workshops, you know, to develop obviously the programme and what it was going to look like but it was driven by -- and we had all key stakeholders involved.

So we would have had people from the counter who would have said, you know, ultimately, we have a lot of losses in the network.

- 13 Q. Do I take from that that it wasn't part of the
 14 initial plan to remove suspense accounts? That
 15 was something that was added as the programme
 16 developed?
- A. Yes, it might have been before we set off on the programme because, as I say, I was -- I had a business architecture some of the time, so I was involved in that role or targeted to look at ways to improve that end-to-end process, and particularly in an accounting sense because, I say, I did have -- this project was sponsored by Finance.
- 25 Q. Can I turn, then, to look at responsibility for

1 held in suspense accounts?

A. No, it wasn't because it was desperately needed, it was just while we were making changes to the front end, and I say, it was a -- I can't really remember the -- where it came from, but it would have been an idea that our losses were significant and were there ways to change those? And some of those would have been losses not -- nothing to do with the counter.

They would have been losses because we couldn't agree at the back end how much we owed our clients or they owed us, for example. So it was a very large programme and the removal of the suspense account in the counter was a very, very small part of it. It wasn't a big driver for it at all. We wouldn't have done this programme just to do that.

- 18 Q. Why was the suspense account removed?
- **A.** Because it was seen as a place where people20 would hide losses.
- Q. So it wasn't primarily aimed at getting the
 money that would otherwise be in the suspense
 account to reduce Post Office debt?
- A. No, losses ultimately -- it's not about debt.
 Losses ultimately appear in your profit and loss
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the designing out of the suspense account
facility and start by addressing what
Chesterfield did before the IMPACT Programme
designed out the local suspense account and
therefore how it was changed by IMPACT. Can we
start with paragraph 7 of your witness
statement. That's on page 2.

Thank you. At the foot of the page, you

Thank you. At the foot of the page, you say:

"When Horizon was initially implemented it was built to replicate the accounting processes that were historically in place. This meant that a 'cash account' was still produced by Horizon as this was needed to feed the 'back office' accounting systems and processes in place [at] Chesterfield."

Was there, essentially, a reconciliation and checking process undertaken at Chesterfield? A. Yes, so we had a -- there were probably at one time 150 people in what was called transaction processing. The cash accounts were produced by the system. Obviously, pre-Horizon we had paper cash accounts coming in to a keying unit in Chesterfield, so there was a big process to key those cash accounts, which by itself could have

created errors in the process, and then we had -- the remainder of that unit in transaction processing was a large number of teams of what were called error resolution teams.

So their job was to understand the difference between -- to resolve errors. And errors were created by -- often by either us getting a separate feed from the client because that's what the Post Office did, work on behalf of clients, it wasn't -- we weren't selling our own products or services. We were acting on behalf of clients.

So for many of the products, we would get a feed from Horizon of what the branches were saying on the cash account and then we would get a feed from the client and a whole mass of error notices would be produced and then that all had to be dealt with by the teams in Chesterfield.

- 19 Q. So this 100, 150 people at Chesterfield --
- 20 A. Yes.

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- Q. -- was essentially manual reconciliation but
 based on weekly production of the cash account
- 23 by Horizon?
- A. Absolutely. So this programme was intended tostop that. It was to put in a SAP system. So

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- errors, chase them down until they were corrected and resolved, either in the cash centre or in the cash accounting system of subpostmasters?
- 5 A. Yes, and that hadn't changed from pre-Horizon,
- 6 if you like. That's -- the systems and the
 - processes in the back end were exactly the same,
- 8 and so IMPACT was all about really addressing
- 9 that issue.

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- 10 Q. So the purpose or one of the purposes of the11 IMPACT programme was to introduce automation to
- 12 remove that manual reconciliation process to
- 13 investigate, amongst other things, errors and
- 14 discrepancies?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 $\,$ **Q**. If errors and discrepancies persisted, even
- 17 under the automated back-end functions, who was
- 18 to investigate those, under this new system?
- 19 A. Well, there was still a team in Chesterfield and
- 20 it was still their responsibility to do that.
- 21 Q. How many people were in the team in Chesterfield

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- 22 post-IMPACT?
- 23 A. I can't remember, sorry.
- 24 Q. Was it still at the 100, 150 level?
- 25 A. It would have been less than that but it

- 1 that's what I said. The changes at the branch
- were minimal, except where it was needed to be.
- 3 So it was all about the back office systems. So
- 4 we were putting in a standard SAP accounting
- 5 system, not a homemade built and a class system,
- 6 as it was called in the past. So we would put
- 7 in a standard SAP accounting system, which would
- 8 make reconciliation much simpler and, out of
- 9 that, somewhere in the requirements, came the
- 10 thing that was about the suspense account.
- But that -- this was really to get things quicker and more accurate, in --
- 13 Q. And to get rid of the 150 people?
- 14 A. Well, yes. I don't think we got rid of them all
- 15 because we would still have differences in the
- 16 client data to the feed from the counters. So
- we wouldn't get rid of them all but it removed
- 18 a lot of the resource requirement, and that's
- what you would expect for a business that's
- 20 making losses, to try to --
- 21 Q. Save money?
- 22 A. -- reduce its operating costs, yeah.
- 23 Q. So post-Horizon but pre-IMPACT, there was a team
- 24 of people at Chesterfield undertaking manual
- 25 reconciliation whose job it was to pick up

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- 1 wasn't -- remembering that, really, the
- 2 reduction in those teams was as much to do with
- 3 the client processes and what feeds of data we
- 4 got from them and whether they were automated as
- 5 well. But the SAP system would have done some
- 6 of that reconciliation but if it still produced
- 7 differences, then they still had to be
- T differences, their they still flad to be
- 8 investigated.
- 9 But I can't remember what size the teams
- 10 went down to. I wouldn't say -- we certainly
- 11 didn't get rid of everybody because it was
- 12 product design, really, that allowed the full
- 13 automation.
- 14 Q. In your witness statement -- no need to turn it
- 15 up -- at paragraph 13, you say Peter Corbett and
- 16 David Smith sponsored the IMPACT Programme. Who
- 17 took the decision to remove the suspense account
- 18 facility?
- 19 A. Well, all of the requirements would have been
- 20 signed off by stakeholders and but, ultimately,
- 21 it would have been the programme sponsors who
- 22 I was reporting into to say this will deliver
- 23 benefits.
- 24 $\,$ Q. $\,$ Can we translate that into some language that I,
- 25 at least, understand. You said ultimately it

- 1 would have been signed off by stakeholders?
- 2 A. Yes.

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- 3 Q. What does that mean?
- A. Well, when you're doing a project you produce
 documents which describe what you're going to
 do, yes? And those documents will have a set of
 reviewers and a set of approvers. So any
 document that affected the branches, would have
 to go through the Network -- would have Network

stakeholders as reviewers and signatories.

So documents always -- when you set up a document and some of the ones you pulled up say, you would have to -- right up front, you would have a product description, you would create a product description for that document you were going to produce, product descriptions for other things as well, system design, you know, other things, but you would produce a document, you would agree with the stakeholders, because we had, you know, stakeholder meetings, who wanted to see and sign off that document.

And you would have a whole -- and you would see it on the front of documents like you've shown before, that those reviewers would be set 65

technical architecture -- oh no, they're the two people there, yes. So yes, that's right.

So ultimately they were the signators, they weren't necessarily the reviewers. There would be separate reviewers in advance of that.

- 6 Q. Who signed off this document?
- 7 A. Myself and Clive Read.
- 8 **Q.** So you -- if I asked the question "Who agreed that the things described in this document are accurate and that proposals in it should be implemented?" the answer would be "Me and Clive"?
- A. Ultimately, yes, there would be somewhere a set
 of reviewers, and Clive and I would only sign
 the documents off if those reviewers were
 satisfied with the document. If they raised
 issues, we would either resolve them or do
 something but there is a whole process before.
 This is just the signatory bit at the end. So
- 20 ...
 21 **Q.** So if we look at page 7 of the document, where
 22 we see a list of reviewers in the top box, is
 23 that list of people people who have looked at
 24 the document before you have signed it off?
 25 They have not signed it off, you have?

- before the document was created.
- Q. So the presence of a name amongst somebody -a list of reviewers, you understand to mean
 signing off, ie approving?
- A. No. Reviewers were reviewers. They read the
 document and fed back comments. That was the
 initial stage, obviously, to get rid of any
 inaccuracies and errors and then, ultimately,
 there were signatories after that.

10 So each document would have a set of 11 reviewers and then the people who were 12 responsible for actually signing it off and they 13 would normally sign it off on the basis that the 14 reviewers, who were the people who worked for 15 them very often, were happy that the review 16 they'd done was adequate and that there were no 17 significant issues that hadn't been resolved.

- 18 **Q.** So if we get back up on the screen, please,
 19 POL00038870. If we look at the front page on
 20 that, does that tell us who signed off,
 21 ie approved, the contents of the conceptual
 22 design for the accounting and cash management
 23 programme?
- A. Yeah, what I probably can't understand on that
 is we've obviously got business architecture and
- 1 A. No, because they didn't have the authority to 2 sign it off. So they would be the minimum 3 people -- so at the beginning of the programme 4 you create a product description, and that 5 product description will tell you who are going 6 to be the mandatory reviewers who are going to 7 be the signatories, who are going to be the 8 people that create it. And that would all go 9 through -- those documents at the beginning that 10 tell you who those people are would go through 11 its own review process to make sure that 12 everybody that should be involved in that, in 13 the review, was involved in that.

But Clive and I basically would ultimately, in most documents -- not always -- be the final signatories, because we -- and we would do that not on the basis that we understood all the detail in that, but the people that we had agreed upfront in the product description should be involved in the review had been involved.

- Q. Who took the decision, ie signed off the
 decision, to remove the suspense account
 facility?
- 24 A. Well, if it's in this document --
- 25 **Q.** No, no, it's not.

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- 1 A. No. Well, you'd have to look at the -- whatever 2 document that was in.
- 3 Q. I can't see one. That's why. It seems to be in 4 a collection of email chains.
- 5 A. No, I can't remember that far back because,
- 6 obviously, it was a small part of the programme.
- 7 I'm not saying it wasn't an important part but
- 8 if you asked me who, we clearly would have
- 9 involved Network in that, as a primary owner,
- 10 because they were the primary owner of that, but
- 11 on the back end, Finance were, if you like, the
- 12 people who were responsible for the outcome of
- 13 that design, because it was about what losses
- 14 they saw in the account.
- 15 So there would have been -- there should
- 16 have been something that said that. But I don't
- 17 know, you know, talking 20 years ago here,
- 18 it's --
- 19 Q. On a decision like that, we wish to remove the
- 20 suspense account --
- 21 Α.
- 22 Q. -- because we believe that it is used by
- 23 subpostmasters to hide and cover up losses --
- 24 Α. Yes.
- 25 Q. -- and it will have the benefit of saving the 69
- 1 A. No, well at a high level, so the original
- 2 programme initiation document would have said
- 3 that that was one of the things we were going to
- do. So the project initiation document would 4
- 5 have been signed off across the business by key
- 6 stakeholders. This was just the implementation
 - of something, so this is the conceptual design
- 8 that talks about that, but that's not the
- 9 initial "This is what the programme is going to
- 10 deliver".

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- Q. I'll try and ask it more simply. Was the 11
- 12 decision to remove the suspense account
- 13 a decision, to your knowledge, that was taken by
- 14 the board?
- A. I think it was in the original business case, 15
- 16 because we would have had a figure for the
- 17 reduction of losses we felt was associated with
- 18 that.
- 19 Q. So the board would have had knowledge of it?
- 20 A. Absolutely.
- 21 Q. Can we look at some email threads, please.
- 22 Starting with FUJ00126036. Can we look, please,
- 23 at page 4. You'll see the last email in the
- 24 chain is from Clive Read. If we scroll up to
- 25 the bottom of page 2, you'll see that Mr Read

- 1 Post Office millions of pounds a year, would the
- 2 board be involved -- Post Office Board be
- 3 involved in such a decision?
- 4 No, they would have remitted that. So,
- 5 actually, if you look at the bottom, "Business
- 6 Review", Stephen Hirst was in Finance, quite
- 7 high up in Finance. Ruth Holleran, who I'm sure
- 8 you're aware of on this programme, was --
 - I can't remember exactly her role at the time
- 10 but she was high up in sort of the IT. Vicky
- 11 Noble was in Transaction -- was the head of
- 12 Transaction Processing at the time. Ann
- 13 Cruttenden was the business change manager for
- 14 the Network. Ann Clarke was in my team.
- 15 I can't -- Bob Lammin. I'm sure POID,
- 16 either Bob Lammin or Neil Salter -- Jack
- 17 MacKenzie, I don't remember Jack MacKenzie, so
- 18 it's a cross-representation --
- 19 Q. Sorry, just to stop there. You think that
- 20 Mr Lammin or Mr Salter were from the
- 21 Investigations Division?
- 22 They could have been.
- 23 Q. Okay. My question was about the board and you
- 24 said that you don't think the board would have
- 25 been involved in decision making on this.
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- send it to Ruth Holleran and Tony Marsh and it 1
- was copied to you; can you see that? 2
- 3 A.
- 4 What roles at this time, early 2004, did
- 5 Ms Holleran and Mr Marsh perform in relation to
- 6
- 7 A. Well, they would be my stakeholders on the
- 8 project. So they may or may not have been on
- 9 the board. I can't remember now who was the
- 10 constituents on the board. But Tony Marsh,
- 11 I think, was to do with Investigations? But I'm
- 12
- 13 Q. If you can't remember it's best to say, "I can't
- 14 remember"
- 15 A. I can't remember.
- 16 Q. Okay. Let's look at the email. This is from
- 17 Mr Read who was the Chief Systems Architect at
- 18 Post Office. So if we go down rather than up.
- 19 Thank you.
- 20 He says:
- 21 "As you know we are currently in the middle
- 22 of requirements workshops on the final phase of
- 23 the IMPACT Programme. Although we have
- 24 a scheduled Stakeholder meeting early in
- 25 February, given tight timescales there are some

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1 emerging concerns which I think I need to flag 2 up." 3

Number 1 is "Suspense Account Threshold":

"The current assumed position is that a single threshold of £250 will be applied by Horizon below which variances cannot be placed into Suspense Account ... This is a new system control which does not currently exist."

Can you remember anything about that? A. No, I can't. I mean, it was obviously some forerunner to us removing the suspense account.

12 Q. He continued:

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"There is a requirement (from Operations [representatives]) to introduce a number of different thresholds depending on the Office type (eg Community offices to be at a much lower

"Although this could be accommodated I have concern it begins to add additional complexity both to the system build and subsequent operation ... is this [a must-have]?"

22 A. Mm-hm.

23 Q. Then under item 2 "Suspense Account 24 Authorisation":

> "The current assumed position is that 73

Can you see that?

- 2 A. Yeah.
- 3 Q. Top right, "Sue M Harding".
- 4 Α. Yeah.
- 5 Q. In his second paragraph, Mr Marsh says:

"On the suspense account issue, I'm afraid that I share the same beliefs as mine and other Ops reps, if there is no independent control and authorisation process for the use of suspense accounts then postings will rapidly increase to unacceptable levels. Irrespective of our aspirations for a simplified process to support commercially minded agents I believe that many of those of a more historic mindset will exploit the facility ..."

So that's again very similar to the views that you expressed earlier?

18 Α. Yes, as I say, this -- the decision to remove 19 suspense account wasn't mine and mine alone, you 20 know. This is business people saying, "We have 21 an issue here and we need it to be tackled".

22 Q. In the decision to remove the suspense account, 23 was there ever any discussion that "Horizon may 24 contain errors, bugs and defects that would 25 cause discrepancies when it comes to balancing, subject to threshold control above, the requirement to seek telephone authorisation for posting variances to Suspense would cease, on the understanding that improved timeliness and visibility of office liabilities ... would provide sufficient control ...

"The Operations and Security view was that removal of this control would declare 'open season' on the use of Suspense postings, leading to loss of financial control, spiralling non-conformity, etc ..."

Does that tie in with what you were suggesting as to the nefarious use of the suspense account earlier.

15 Yes, "open season". That's exactly what that 16 means. Yes.

17 Q. He continues:

"I think this is an important position to 19 take in our approach, to underline our objective to simplify and leverage new capability, but recognise the challenge is therefore to define 22 a 'fit for purpose' control framework which 23 tackles these fears head-on."

> Then if we go up the page, please, to the reply. You're copied in to Mr Marsh's reply.

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1 we need to take that into account"?

2 A. Not that I'm aware of but you can see from this, 3 I was copied in on this, the decisions were 4 around the people who worked for me and the key 5 stakeholders. So I don't know whether any of 6 those people were aware of that. I certainly 7 wasn't aware of that.

8 In the meetings that you attended, in the 9 documents that you exchanged, in any workshops

10 that you were present at, was it ever discussed

11 "Hold on, look, Horizon in its design, its

12 testing and its rollout, has been slightly

13 problematic in terms of balancing. We've had

14 hundreds and thousands of calls from

15 subpostmasters saying they can't balance and

16 they can't explain why they can't balance. We

17 need to take that into account in deciding to

18 remove the suspense account facility"?

19 No, I was never aware of that, I was never Α. 20 aware -- I know right at the beginning I was 21 involved in an Acceptance Incident, right at the 22 beginning, about balancing and stuff, but I was

23 never aware that in the live system there were

24 bugs, et cetera.

25 Was, instead, the focus on covering up, hiding

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1 and exploitation by subpostmasters and removing 2 the facility for them to do that? 3 A. Yes. I mean, there was absolutely no doubt that 4 previously and prior to Horizon even being 5 there, that subpostmasters -- remembering that, 6 you know, they were independent, they were 7 sometimes only audited once every three years, 8 that they did have losses and hid those losses. 9 And, you know, it was part of the principle of 10 not particularly IMPACT but it was one of our 11 things to try to keep those to the minimum. And 12 I can't remember -- the removal of the suspense 13 must have come up in the initial requirements 14 workshops and accepted by all of the 15 stakeholders.

Q. Mr Marsh continues:

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17 "Given that the overall project should 18 simplify reconciliation and settlement 19 significantly and should therefore mean that 20 errors will be identified more rapidly and will 21 be even more clearly the fault and 22 responsibility of the agent, is there any reason 23 to have a suspense facility at all? This might 24 mean that in extreme cases the agent would need 25 to contact the Retail Line or NBSC and negotiate

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everything, if you like. But I do -- I do remember that the decision was made, and it involved lots of stakeholders in that decision.

- Q. Was that decision informed by a view of the
 contract "We can get rid of suspense entirely
 because subpostmasters have to bear the
 responsibility for any and all discrepancies
 anyway"?
- 9 A. Yes, I think that's true, although I don't think
 10 anybody would have necessarily meant that that
 11 included bugs and errors in the system.
- 12 Q. Was there ever any consideration of what happens
 13 if there are errors, bugs and defects that are
 14 the fault of the system?
- 15 A. Well, if anybody should have done that, I think 16 that would have been Clive, who was the 17 technical architect, who would understand much 18 more about the technical architecture of the 19 system, et cetera. But one would expect, you 20 know, that the subpostmasters would be raising 21 calls with the helpdesk if they could see that 22 there were suspect transactions.

I don't know what happened with the bugs and defects and what the result was in the accounts that were produced in the branch. So -- but one

a 'loan' (at some level of interest?) to cover very high values of loss but in most cases the agent should be sufficiently capitalised to cover ordinary variations, particularly if the opportunity were offered to make losses good via credit card, thereby enabling them to tap into 56 days of interest free credit (a facility faced by the NFSP despite my early misgivings.)"

Were you aware at this time that there had apparently been a suggestion by the NFSP that if large losses were shown, their members could always make it up by credit cards, tapping in, therefore, to 56 days of interest free credit?

12 13 14 A. I may have been aware of it because I don't --15 obviously, my name has been copied in on some of 16 these things but you have to remember as 17 programme manager I was copied in a lot of 18 things and, you know, I trusted -- we had some 19 very competent people here. Clive was a very 20 competent technical architect. Tony, if 21 I remember, was head of security, was he? 22 Something like that. So my understanding of 23 things or my involvement in things was generally 24 at a high level. I wasn't -- I was copied in on 25 these things but I couldn't have dealt with 78

would have thought that if somebody was having
 a very significant loss, they would try and pin
 it down to something and then take some action,
 either through the Network Support Business Unit

on the helpdesk or through the hierarchy in the Network.

Q. What would you say if the helpdesk said to them
"But it's your responsibility to make good any
and all losses: make good the loss"?

A. Well, I don't think -- I think that's different
to somebody saying "I think there's a problem
with the system". If there's a problem with the
system I would have expected somebody would deal
with that or, you know, look into it.

15 Q. What if a subpostmaster was calling and saying,
16 "When I'm balancing, it's showing, week on week,
17 increased cash that I simply do not hold"?

18 A. I would have expected the Network Business19 Support Unit to do something about that.

Q. And not say "Under the contract you're liable
 for all and any losses, make good the loss or
 stop trading"?

A. No, you know, if branches were raising concerns
 that something was happening that they couldn't
 understand, then if this was across a number of

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- 1 people, even if it was one office that kept
- 2 saying, you know, it happens every week, I would
- 3 have expected there would have been some --
- 4 that's what the Network Business Support Unit
- 5 were there for
- 6 Q. The Inquiry has hearing a good deal of evidence
- 7 that there were numerous occasions when Horizon
- 8 would create imbalances, that the system would
- 9 fail to identify how that imbalance had been
- 10 created and, even after investigation, a root
- 11 cause of the creation of the imbalance could not
- 12 be found.
- 13 A. Mm-hm.
- 14 Q. Was it your view that the system was working
- 15 robustly and well and, therefore, there was no
- 16 need to make provision in the IMPACT Programme
- 17 for such events or was it your view that,
- 18 regardless of any bugs, errors or defects, the
- 19 responsibility for any losses was that of the
- 20 subpostmasters anyway?
- 21 A. I would absolutely never have said that
- 22 subpostmasters had to make good losses that were
- 23 caused by the Fujitsu -- the Horizon System.
- 24 No. That's not my way of working at all, and
- 25 I wasn't aware of any of that, so ...
 - 81
- 1 the paragraph at the bottom of the page, under
- 2 the heading "Suspense Account Manual
- 3 Authorisation process and universal parameter".
- 4 It says:

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- "The decision was reached yesterday by key
- senior stakeholders to remove the Suspense
- Account altogether. This would force Branches
- 8 to make good all losses immediately. This needs
- 9 to be considered in terms of how Branches can
- 10 adjust figures, hardship cases, how Branch
- accounts will be corrected with errors ..." 11
- 12 Α. Mm-hm.
- 13 Q. Can you recall, would you have been one of the
- 14 people described as "key senior stakeholders"
- 15 who took a decision to remove the suspense
- 16 account?
- 17 A. I honestly can't remember. If I was in
- 18 a meeting with those senior stakeholders, it
- 19 would not have been my decision. I was
- 20 a programme manager of a project that the
- 21 requirements came from the business, and so that
- 22 would have been -- I could have been at
- 23 a meeting. I can't remember. As I say,
- 24 a wouldn't see myself -- you might prove me
- 25 wrong in a minute by another document, I don't

- 1 Q. Were you present at any meetings at which the
- 2 NFSP offered a view similar to or the same as
- 3 set out in this email here?
- 4 A. A meeting with the NFSP, did you mean?
- 5 Sorry? Q.
- 6 Α. Did you mean was I at a meeting with the NFSP?
- 7 Q. Yes.
- 8 Α. No, I don't recall that.
- 9 Q. Did you attend meetings with the NFSP or was
- 10 that below your level?
- 11 Um ... I'm sure I did, because -- oh no, I'm
- 12 trying to think. No, it was probably -- I would
- 13 have had somebody in my team who had the
- relationship with the NFSP. I would only have 14
- 15 gone to a meeting if that member of my team had
- 16 said they thought I needed to attend.
- 17 Can we look, please, at FUJ00126038. Thank you.
- 18 This is an invitation to a meeting by email
- 19 dated 12 February 2004. The meeting was about
- 20 branch trading, the treatment of the suspense
- account to be held on the 18 February. You'll 21
- 22 see that you're not amongst the list of those
- 23 who were invited to it.
- 24 Mm-hm.
- 25 Q. But I just want to ask you about some text in
 - 82
- 1 know. But I would not have seen myself as
- 2 making that decision. I was a programme
- 3 manager, I wasn't a business -- I wasn't
- 4 somebody in the business.
- 5 So who, if you can help us, would be key senior
- 6 stakeholders who took a decision on 11 February
- 7 to remove the suspense account altogether?
- 8 Well, at the end of the day, they may have
- 9 been -- it may have been the programme board,
- 10 which would have been people like -- so my
- 11 programme was sponsored by the Finance Director,
- 12 Peter Corbett, and then there would be somebody,
- 13 absolutely, from Network, and that might have
- 14 included POID. So there would be those type of
- 15 people who were -- who would be making that sort
- 16 of decision. I say, I may have facilitated the
- decision being made but it would not have been 17
- 18 my responsibility to be one of the people who
- 19 voted on the decision, if you like. I was just
- 20 there to implement things if the business
- 21 decided that's what they wanted to do. But
- 22 I don't remember the meeting.
- 23 **Q.** I wouldn't expect you to remember the meeting;
- 24 I'm just trying to -- we haven't got a record of
- 25 it or any other documents, I think, that refer 84

1 to it.

- 2 A. No, no. But that's who would imagine. It would
- 3 be somebody -- it would certainly have been
- 4 Peter Corbett, I would have thought, and then it
- 5 would include people from Network, which would
- 6 include people like Security and people like
- 7 that.

17

- 8 Q. Would you agree with the view expressed there
- 9 that this, ie the removal of the suspense
- 10 account altogether, would force branches to make
- 11 good all losses immediately? That was the aim
- 12 after all, wasn't it?
- 13 A. Yes, after all, at the end of the day, that's
- 14 what contractually I think they were required to
- 15 do. I think that would have been -- not on the
- 16 basis of that -- those losses including errors
 - and bugs in the system. I can't imagine any of
- 18 the key stakeholders saying that that was -- but
- 19 I wasn't there, I don't think.
- 20 Q. Was that ever considered by anyone? You made
- 21 an exception today, "Ah, but not if it was
- 22 caused by an error, bug or defect by Horizon",
- 23 but in the documents we've got we see no
- 24 expression to that. In your witness statement
- 25 you refer to an obligation to make good any and
- 1 testing stage of Horizon.
- 2 A. Ah, right, okay.
- 3 Q. Did you hold that view?
- 4 Yes, I do remember, as I say, that I was
- 5 involved in an Acceptance Incident of the
- 6 original design and I remember going to Feltham,
- 7 and I think Tony Oppenheim was the -- was he the
- 8 main guy? And Tony had to -- I think -- and, oh
- 9 gosh, you know, it is going back a large number
- 10 of years -- that they did some changes or
- 11 created -- I can't remember but they did, on the
- 12 face of it, in the meeting that we had, resolved
- 13 what was -- what was the Acceptance Incident.
- 14 So -- and certainly would not have signed
- 15 off that Acceptance Incident if I thought there
- were any. But this was acceptance -- I can't 17 remember whether we did acceptance before it
- 18
- went in any offices or after there'd been
- 19 a trial. I mean, my recollection --
- 20 Q. It was the latter.
- 21 Was it, after the trial? So I was certainly not
- 22 aware that there was anything that would affect
- 23 the accuracy of the accounts. Otherwise
- 24 I wouldn't have signed off that Acceptance
- 25 Incident.

16

- 1 all losses and you said a number of times today
- 2 yes, ultimately it was the contract to make good
- 3 any and all losses.
- 4 Yes, and I had no visibility, you know. As
- 5 I say, I've taken an oath, I had no visibility
- that there were problems with the system. 6
- 7 I don't know whether people in POL knew there
- 8 were problems with the system. I'm not saying
- 9 they did or they didn't, but I wasn't aware of
- 10 that. And, certainly, you know, it would not
- 11 have been -- I would not, hand on my heart, have
- 12 ever expected a branch to make good a loss that
- 13 was system created.
- 14 Can we look at paragraph 38 of your witness 15
 - statement, please, which is on page 8.
 - You say in 38:

16

- 17 "The 'robustness' of Horizon was not
- 18 considered to be an issue and there was no
- 19 evidence to suggest there were any 'bugs'
- 20 affecting the efficacy of the system."
- 21 Did you hold that view when you were
- 22 involved as an expert customer?
- 23 Sorry, what do you mean by "expert customer"?
- 24 It's a phrase you use in your witness statement
- 25 when you were brought in to the design and
- 1 Q. It was therefore -- this, what we see in
- paragraph 38 -- your view at the time that 2
- Horizon was rolled out? 3
- 4 Α.
- 5 It was your --Q.
- 6 A. Well, and that I'd not heard anything since.
- 7
- 8 And that I was not aware of anything since then.
- 9 Q. When did you become aware that Horizon was
- 10 bedevilled with bugs, errors and defects?
- A. Well, I didn't know, I'm saying I didn't know --11
- well, until I'd got involved in this, actually. 12
- Q. So even up until 2017 when you left, you still 13 thought Horizon was working perfectly well? 14
- 15 A. Yes, I had not been advised of anything.
- 16 Obviously, I'd moved into different roles by
- 17 then anyway so I wouldn't have been involved in
- 18 that sort of thing. I mean, I was working on
- 19 totally different projects and nothing to do
- 20 with branches.
- 21 It follows that you held this view throughout
- 22 your involvement with the IMPACT Programme?
- 23 Α. Yes.
- 24 Q. Were you actively told that there were no
- 25 errors, bugs or defects in Horizon or no issues

1	with	ite	robustness?
	WILLI	ILS	robusiness?

- 2 A. No, but I would have expected, given that the
- 3 people who were on my board -- because remember,
- 4 you know, I was a programme manager and I had
- 5 a programme board of people high up that
- 6 somebody would have said, "Well, Sue, if you do
- 7 this, you know, what's the effect of these bugs,
- etc?" so I don't recall that I was ever advised 8
- 9 that there were any bugs.
- 10 MR BEER: Yes, thank you. They are all the
- 11 questions I am going to ask you. I suspect
- 12 there are other questions from others.
- SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Mr Stein? 13

Questioned by MR STEIN

- 15 MR STEIN: Ms Harding, I represent a large number of
- 16 subpostmasters and mistresses. One of those,
- 17 his name is Mark Kelly. You've used an example
- 18 today in your evidence which is that you
- 19 wouldn't have expected that someone who had
- 20 suffered a robbery at their Post Office would be
- then asked to pay up for those losses. Do you 21
- 22 remember saying that in your evidence today?
- 23 A. Yes.

14

- 24 Q. Mark Kelly was robbed, and the robber took
- 25 £47,000, was prosecuted as a result, and was 89
- 1 Programme was being discussed, it seems.
- 2 A. Possibly, yes.
- Q. I see. Now your statement, which you've been 3
- 4 asked a number of questions about by Mr Beer 5 here, who has gone through different aspects of
- 6 your statement, you make various references
- that -- I'll only quote one, paragraph 32:
- 7 8
- "In contractual terms, they were liable 9
 - [that's subpostmasters] contractually for any
- 10 shortfalls which had to be made good."
- 11 You make a number of references throughout 12 your statement in relation to that same topic,
- 13 this contractual liability. You repeat it,
- 14 I think, four times.
 - Help us understand a little bit more about
- 16 how your statement was created. Did you have
- 17 the support of lawyers, solicitors, in relation
- 18 to that?
- 19 Α.

15

- 20 Q. No. So it's a statement you wrote yourself; is
- 21 that correct?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. Right. Did you -- so we can just understand
- 24 exactly what happened, was this a statement that
- 25 you checked with your previous employers, the

- 1 given seven years for conducting that robbery.
- 2 Mr Kelly was pursued by the Post Office for the
- 3 £47,000. Are you aware of that?
- 4 A. Absolutely not.
- 5 Q. He gave evidence about that and what happened to
- 6 him, on 1 March 2022 last year. Did you by any
- 7 chance see his evidence?
- 8 A. No.
- 9 Q. Did you watch the evidence of any of those
- 10 people, the subpostmasters and mistresses that
- 11 gave evidence during that time?
- 12 Α. No.
- 13 Q. The date of his robbery was 14 November 2004.
- 14 Now 2004, help us please understand the
- 15 significance of that date: was that either just
- 16 at the beginning or just after the start of the
- 17 IMPACT Programme being born, essentially being
- 18 discussed?
- 19 Yeah, in -- I can't remember whether it was, but
- it was around that time when IMPACT was either 20
- 21 in -- it was certainly in progress or --
- 22 Q. So his robbery in November 2004 was just at the
- 23 starting point of discussions about the IMPACT
- 24 Programme and him being pursued, then, for the
- £47,000 by the Post Office was whilst the IMPACT 25
- Post Office, at any stage? 1
- 2 A. No.
- 3 Q. No. I'm grateful. Forgive me for asking those
- 4 questions in that way.
- 5 A. No, I'm --
- 6 Q. That's the way your statement reads. It reads
- 7 as a statement that's made by someone that has
- 8 done it themselves rather than going to someone
- like me, a lawyer; do you understand that? 9
- 10 **A**. Yes.
- 11 Right. Now your statement, in terms of the way
- 12 it refers to the use of the contractual terms
- 13 that SPMs, subpostmasters, were liable for any
- 14 shortfalls, at paragraph 31 of the statement it
- 15 says this:
- 16 "It was agreed during the design of IMPACT
- 17 that the suspense account would be removed as
- 18 historically it was used by subpostmasters to
- 19 hide discrepancies in their accounts rather than
- 20 resolve them."
- 21 Now, you then have the repeated references
- 22 to the contractual liability. Mr Beer has asked
- 23 you a good number of questions about the IMPACT
- 24 Programme itself and gone through some of the
- 25 documentation.

- 1 Just help us understand a little bit more.
- 2 This attitude, which is the contractual
- 3 liability attitude towards subpostmasters liable
- 4 for any shortfalls which had to be made good, we
- 5 don't actually see it phrased that way in the
- 6 IMPACT documents and points that have been
- 7 raised and have been discussed with you. It
- 8 doesn't appear that way to be referred to.
- 9 A. Well, I mean, I was actually on holiday when
- 10 I was writing my statement, so I wouldn't
- 11 necessarily have looked at all the
- 12 documentation. So it's just my words and my
- 13 recollection.
- 14 Q. Right. But you've had number of questions being
- 15 asked of you today about the IMPACT
- 16 documentation. The IMPACT programme itself took
- 17 in terms of development time about three years,
- 18 ves?
- 19 **A.** Yes, it was a very significant programme.
- 20 Q. Significant programme. It took a lot of
- 21 discussions.
- 22 A. It did but you have to remember the IMPACT
- 23 Programme was mainly about replacement of the
- 24 back offices, back office systems.
- 25 Q. Yes.

- 1 programme manager so I had a programme support
- 2 team that would have dealt with all those
- 3 documents.
- 4 Q. The programme support team that dealt with
- 5 documents in the repository, can you give us
- 6 an idea of, if you like, who was in charge of
 - that? Who had control of that documentation?
- 8 A. I can't remember that.
- 9 Q. The repository, any better idea about a way to
- 10 identify that?
- A. No. 11

7

- Q. Was it called anything? Would you say something 12
- 13 to a particular repository within the system?
- A. No, I would rely on my team, if I wanted 14
- 15 a document, to get that document for me.
- 16 Q. Right. Your team -- the person that you would
- 17 go to within your team would generally be who?
- A. The -- my programme support team. 18
- 19 Q. Name, please, if you have it? Who in the
- 20 programme support team would you routinely go to
- 21 to say --
- 22 A. I can't honestly --
- 23 Q. -- "Would you mind terribly, can you find me the
- 24 meeting minutes of a year and a half ago"?
- 25 A. I can't remember, sorry.

- 1 It wasn't -- there was not a massive focus on
- 2 the branch, because the -- that data was already
- 3 coming in to the incumbent systems that were
- 4 there.
- 5 Q. All right but, nevertheless, three years of
- development of the programme and then you get 6
- 7 the signing off of it. There must have been
- 8 a lot of meetings involved in the development of
- 9 the programme; is that correct?
- 10 Α. Yes.
- 11 Were they minuted, these meetings?
- 12 I'm absolutely certain they were, yes.
- 13 Yes. Then there must have been a number of
- 14 different iterations, number of different early
- 15 copies of the final documents that were then
- 16 signed off; yes?
- 17 Yes, so ultimately there it was a business case
- 18 that went right up to the group board, because
- 19 of the level of cost associated.
- Now, all of these discussions, and the ones that 20
- 21 were minuted, were they kept by you in
- 22 a particular file on a laptop or a desktop that
- 23 you had?
- 24 We would have had a depository of those
- 25 documents but I wasn't, you know, I was

- 1 Q. Who was in your team?
- 2 So I had Torstein was my technical design --
- 3 Torstein?
- Torstein Godeseth, who later moved to Fujitsu. 4
- 5 Torstein was involved with me. I had Ann
- 6 Clarke, who was -- used to work in Transaction
- 7 Processing, so -- which was really -- because
- 8 the whole of IMPACT primarily, the main of
- 9 IMPACT was to replace the back office systems. 10 You know, the changes that were made to the
- 11
- Horizon System were only to facilitate that.
- 12 So we were putting a SAP system in to the 13 back office. So that was primarily were
- 14 there -- Ann Cruttenden represented the Network.
- 15 Q. But in terms of people that can help us identify
- 16 the documents, these meetings that you claim
- 17 were minuted, that might be Ann Clarke and
- 18 Mr Godeseth?
- 19 They might be able to, yes, but neither of them
- 20 are at the Post Office anymore so if they
- 21 were -- if they were somewhere, you know, that
- 22 neither of them -- or -- are there any --
- 23 But we should be able to find, should we, within
- 24 the Post Office, a repository of documentation
- 25 that deals with the development over the three

- 1 years of the IMPACT Programme, basically, you 2 would expect?
- 3 A. I think you might do but I don't know where that 4 would be.
- 5 Q. Right. Now, help us a little bit more. I've 6 asked a number of questions about the 7 contractual liability side of things and then 8 you've been asked by Mr Beer questions about the

9 ability which was to use the suspense account 10 used by subpostmasters to hide discrepancies.

I've asked you about the shortfall side of things not being in the IMPACT documentation. Have you seen in the IMPACT documentation that you've gone through a reference to

15 subpostmasters hiding discrepancies in those

16 accounts in that documentation?

11

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- 17 No, I guess it's my -- the wording is my 18 recollection of what I was asked to do in the 19 programme. Remembering that, you know, I was 20 the programme manager. I wasn't the owner of 21 the requirements, although some of it -- because 22 I'd been business architect, the origins of the
- 23 programme came out of me being the business 24 architect because I was trying to design more 25 effective system relationships. So the main

97

1 That's what you understood?

- A. Yeah, well, yes. Yes. While we were --2
- 3 I wouldn't say they were two big drivers.
- 4 I would say they were things that were put into
- 5 the programme. Because we had to make changes
- 6 to the Horizon System in order to feed the new
- 7 back office systems we were putting in, we would
- 8 have had workshops and, at those workshops,
- 9 there would have been the idea that we should
- 10 clamp down, as I would say, on the suspense
- 11 account.
- 12 Q. Right and these things -- I'm using your
- 13 words -- these things that were put into the
- 14 programme, who explained that these things
- 15 needed to be put into the programme? Who was it
- 16 that gave you those instructions?
- 17 A. It would be the key stakeholders.
- 18 Q. Right. In particular, who? You mentioned
- 19 Ms Cruttenden.
- 20 A. Well, as I say, I would have suspected that
- 21 there was -- there were three areas -- well,
- 22 Network, which I would include, you know, the
- 23 Network line, but also -- and I can't remember
- 24 whether POID were part of that Network line at
- 25 the time or whether they were in a separate

- 1 focus of IMPACT was about putting a SAP system
- 2 in the back office.
- 3 Q. Yes, so the points that I've raised, which are
- 4 the -- the potential for subpostmasters to use
- 5 a suspense account to hide discrepancies,
- 6 paragraph 31, one of the examples, paragraph 32
- 7 the contractual liability for shortfalls which
- 8 had to be made good, those are in your
 - statement; these are all things that you
- 10 understood had to be dealt with by the IMPACT
- 11 Programme.

9

- 12 **A**. They would have been requirements that were
- 13 provided to me by the programme board or people
- 14 representing members on the programme board. So
- 15 I say Ann Cruttenden represented the Network.
- 16 We would have had people representing POID who
- 17 would be the main people who would have come up
- 18 with that as a requirement.
- 19 So twinning these two things together, basically
- 20 you understood that the IMPACT Programme was at
- 21 least partly going to be designed to stamp out
- 22 the use of subpostmasters hiding discrepancies
- 23 and that they were nevertheless liable to make
- 24 good any shortfalls. These were two big drivers
- 25 for that part of the programme; is that correct?

98

- 1 area -- and then it would have been from Finance
- 2 because, clearly, Finance -- and Peter Corbett
- 3 was the sponsor who was in Finance, who was
- 4 having to include those losses and, as we've
- 5 seen in the documents, we were talking earlier
- 6 about the scale of the losses that were in the
- 7 accounts, and that was a big driver for the
- 8 business at the time to reduce those.
- 9 So we would have -- but because Peter was my sponsor, in the initial requirements workshop
- 11 those sort of things would have -- I imagine it
- 12 would have come from key stakeholders. I can't
- 13 remember the exact --

10

- 14 Right, and the way you described this earlier,
- 15 you described Peter Corbett as being a Finance
- 16 Director and you also referred to the fact that
- 17 you were told to do certain things. The way
- 18 I've recorded it was that you were told go "do
- 19 that" and the "do that" includes these
- 20 particular points, which relate to
- 21 subpostmasters, "Get rid of these subpostmasters
- 22 hiding discrepancies in the suspense account and
- 23 make sure that they're liable for all
- 24 shortfalls"?
- 25 Yeah, and some of it, because, as I say, because

- 1 I'd been business process architect and a number 2 of other things, they would be things that 3 I would have -- so I don't know where the 4 original idea came from. It could have come 5 from me, the idea, and then the Finance Director 6 said, "Yes, that's a good idea", or it could 7 have come from the Finance Director. I can't 8 remember the order of how it came about. 9 Q. Now, just I've only got one point before I move 10 on. I won't take long on this. This question, 11 this idea of subpostmasters hiding discrepancies 12 in their accounts. Again, across the IMPACT 13 documentation we've seen, there is no evidence 14 that is set out saving that "We've got 30 15 postmasters and mistresses, these are the names, 16 these are the dates, these are what happened, 17 doing all of this?" There's no reference to 18 a whole bunch of evidence of subpostmasters 19 doing this. Was there a document that you were
- given that's part of your "go do that" programme
 that set out evidence that demonstrated that
 subpostmasters were doing this very thing?
 A. No, but I'm assuming because there was values of
 losses within there that those losses figures
 were given to me by people, and there would have

- evidence that lurks behind this idea that
 subpostmasters were going around hiding? Right.
 A. I can't recall seeing a document but I'm sure
 that I was provided with information from people
 who I would have trusted to provide me with the
- Q. So are you assuming, is this your evidence now
 before this Inquiry, that your programme
 directors, the people that told you to "go do
 that" had such evidence?

correct information.

- 11 **A.** I would assume that. Yes. They were all decent12 people.
- people.Q. Okay, so that's your programming in terms of the
- "get this done". I'll just briefly move on.You've spoken about your knowledge of the system
- and you've spoken about the system you believed
- 17 that was capable of rectification of any
- 18 problems within the system. Let's just take
- 19 that one step further. You've spoken about the
- 20 helpdesk, and you knew that the helpdesk was
- 21 there as a line of support for subpostmasters;
- 22 is that correct?
- 23 A. Yes.

6

Q. Were you aware that there were four lines ofsupport theoretically available to

103

- been -- because POID were involved, they would
- 2 have had cases, numbers of cases, and done. So
- 3 there would have been all that sort of thing.
- 4 And remembering that, ultimately, the
- 5 requirement is signed off by the programme
- 6 board, they might have been created by me and my
- 7 team but they were owned by the programme board
- 8 and those areas were all represented on the
- 9 programme board.
- 10 **Q.** Right, okay. So this seems to be the situation.
- 11 You did not see any actual evidence that
- 12 demonstrated that subpostmasters were carrying
- 13 out this very programme of hiding discrepancies
- in the suspense accounts? There was no document
- that said, "We've got 60, 50 of these people
- doing this"? Is that correct; is that correct?
- 17 A. I can't recall that. But I'm sure that people
- 18 gave me those -- well, it wasn't my decision to
- 19 do it anyway. As I say, I was programme
- 20 manager, so I was doing what the board, my
- 21 program board, wanted me to do --
- 22 Q. Right.

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- 23 A. -- which was documented in those requirements.
- 24 Q. So this is a two-step thing. First of all, you
- 25 did not see such a document setting out the

102

- 1 subpostmasters? First of all, the helpdesk,
- then beneath that, three other lines of support
- 3 as and when the technical problem got more and
 - more difficult? Were you aware of that?
- 5 A. Well, I'm assuming the helpdesk would reach out
- 6 to other people and experts. The helpdesk
- 7 themselves were not experts in the system or
- 8 anything like that. So the helpdesk would reach
- 9 out to whatever they --
- 10 **Q.** Can we avoid assumptions for the moment. In the
- 11 time whereby you're starting off the IMPACT
- 12 Programme, let's find out what you knew at that
- 13 stage. So you've got a first line support which
- the helpdesk answering the telephone call, yes?
- 15 **A.** Mm-hm.
- 16 Q. You're aware of that. Were you aware at that
- 17 time, during this early stage of the development
- of the IMPACT Programme, aware that there were
- 19 three other lines of technical support for
- 20 subpostmasters?
- 21 A. I can't remember if there had been three other
- 22 lines. I think there was a Horizon -- was there
- 23 a Horizon Helpdesk in Fujitsu? I'm not sure.
- No. So I'm not -- I can't recall but I would
- 25 have been aware at the time, I'm sure.

- Q. You've been asked a good number of questions by
 Mr Beer about your knowledge of bugs,
 difficulties with the system, software problems.
 So what I'm trying to establish with you is what
- 5 you knew about any system that was there to deal
- 6 with such problems. So you knew about
- 7 a helpdesk, in other words people taking
- 8 telephone calls?
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. Right. You weren't aware about three other11 lines of support to deal with more and more
- 12 difficult problems?
- 13 A. Well, if you could describe what they were --
- 14 Q. Yes, certainly I will.
- 15 A. -- I might say whether I can remember them ornot.
- 17 Q. By any chance you might have spoken to Gareth18 Jenkins about this?
- 19 A. I know Mr Jenkins very well.
- 20 Q. Yes, we see a reference to him on the
- 21 documentation. During the period of time
- 22 whereby the helpdesk was in operation, there
- 23 were about 20 to 100 software designers and
- 24 developers working in fourth line support at any
- one time. All of them were allocated bugs, 105
- 1 bugs, errors and defects, depending on their own
- 2 type of qualification, all going on at one time,
- 3 do you think that might have made you think
- 4 "Well, hang on perhaps we ought to just give
- 5 couple of thoughts to whether this system is
- 6 really robust or not"?
- 7 A. I wasn't aware of that, so I can't say what
- 8 I would have done --
- 9 Q. If you had been told.
- 10 A. I don't know how I would have reacted if I'd
- 11 been told because I need to understand more than
- 12 what you're telling me, you know. I mean, all
- 13 systems have support teams behind them. So
- 14 I don't know. I can't answer that and I was
- 15 a business -- you know, I was a business owner
- 16 of the programme. I wasn't responsible for the
- 17 support desks and et cetera.
- 18 Q. It's possible it might have put you on notice
- 19 that you may need to ask a few more questions
- about the nature of these bugs, defects,
- 21 software problems; do you agree?
- 22 A. Yes, if I'd been made aware of them I would
- 23 probably be -- particularly if they were ones
- 24 relating to accounting because that was really
- 25 what -- IMPACT was improved accounting, you

- 1 errors and defects, depending on their
- 2 experience and technical knowledge of the
- 3 component parts of the Horizon System
- 4 architecture. Did you know that?
- 5 $\,$ A. Yes, so I knew there was a Horizon Helpdesk.
- 6 I didn't know the constitution of it.
- 7 Q. Did you know, I repeat, that there were about 20
- 8 to 100 software designers and developers working
 - in the fourth line support at any one time, all
- 10 of them were allocated bugs, errors and defects,
- 11 depending on their own experience with and
- 12 technical knowledge of the component parts of
- 13 the Horizon System?
- 14 A. No, I didn't know what the Fujitsu helpdesk
- 15 looked like or how it was structured.
- 16 **Q**. Now I've read that from the statement of
- 17 Mr Gareth Jenkins.
- 18 A. Yes, because Gareth was in Fujitsu.
- 19 Q. Now if at the time of your development of the
- 20 IMPACT Programme you'd have been told that we've
- 21 got four lines of technical support for
- subpostmasters, including one of them, which is
- the really when it's got sort of difficult line,
- fourth line support, dealing with 20 to 100
- 25 software designers and developers, looking at 106
- 1 know, so if I thought that there were bugs,
- 2 et cetera, around accounting, I may have made
- 3 different decisions. But I wasn't aware of
- 4 that
- 5 Q. Lastly, just on this, Mr Jenkins didn't tell you
- 6 about that, he didn't tell you "We've got this
- 7 whole entire system, including a fourth line
- 8 support system, with loads of people working on
- 9 it, dealing with bugs and defects"; he didn't
- 10 tell you that?
- 11 A. No, because my -- I would have -- so Torstein,
- 12 who now works with Fujitsu, was my technical
- architect so he would be, if anybody, the person
- 14 talking to Gareth. But I can't say whether --
- 15 I'm sure if Torstein had been aware of it then
- 16 he would have told me. But I can't say. Maybe
- The would have told me. But I can't say. Maybe
- 17 he wouldn't.

19

18 **MR STEIN:** Thank you, Ms Harding.

Questioned by MS PAGE

- 20 **MS PAGE:** Thank you, I have some questions for you
- 21 as well. My name is Flora Page and I act for
- 22 some of the subpostmasters. In your witness
- 23 statement, you've told us that the processes for
- 24 raising a dispute regarding a discrepancy were
- 25 not changed by the programme, the IMPACT

108

4		was an arranged by the control of th	4	الأماريين المراكبة
1		programme and branches were supported by the	1	did you do?" So that's a guestion to Ms Skinner and she
2 3		helpdesk and/or the Network team, and they would raise any concerns through those channels. Yes?	2	responds:
4	Α.	That was my understanding, yes.	4	"Well, you'd have to go through everything
5	Q.		5	that you had on hand, like giro things and
6	Q.	a moment ago that you haven't watched any of the	6	making sure your rems had been done correctly,
7		testimony from the subpostmasters in Phase 1, is	7	but the only thing you really had was what you
8		that right, or read it?	8	had in front of you, and I think what the
9	A.		9	•
10	Q.	•	10	Horizon system installation did was it took away all of the paperwork that you had that you could
11	Q.	testimony that talks about how the support that	11	cheque. So the only thing information you
12		you were relying on actually operated. So I'm	12	actually had available was what the Horizon
13		going to ask, please, for INQ00001035 to be	13	system gave you.
14		brought up, please. This is the testimony of	14	"Question: To whom did you look for
15		subpostmistress Ms Janet Skinner. We'll just	15	assistance?
16		read through some of that evidence when it comes	16	"Answer: The helpline. I rung the helpline
17		-	17	on numerous occasions. To be honest, when you
18		up.	18	rang them, it was like they were reading from
19		Can we go, please, to page 24. We'll start on what's actually the sort of page 94 of the	19	a script. You could tell what they was reading.
		, ,	20	
20 21		testimony, so we can sort of zoom in, please, on the top half of the page. I'll just read it out	21	It was something it was a script written
22			22	because of the way it was said to you over the phone, and if they couldn't help you, they would
23		if that's all right, so that it's clear for	23	
24		everyone:	24	just say, 'Well, you just have to make it good yourself.
25		"When you experienced an apparent	25	•
25		discrepancy or shortfall shown by Horizon, what 109	25	"Question: According to the judgment of the 110
1		Court of Appeal (Criminal Division), you	1	they removed the keys from me and told me I had
2		contacted the helpline 116 times between 1	2	to meet them there the next morning at 9.00 with
3		January 2004 and 31 January 2005; is that right?	3	the auditors.
4		"Answer: Yes.	4	"Question: How did you feel when you were
5		"Question: What advice did you receive?	5	told to leave your branch?
6		"Answer: Basically the same: if the office	6	"Answer: Devastated, absolutely devastated,
7		was short, it was my responsibility to make	7	but I think I was more relieved, as well,
8		good, that I was wrong.	8	because I thought now, obviously, they're going
9		"Answer: You've explained in your statement	9	to get to the bottom of what's gone wrong.
10		that matters came to a head in 2006?	10	I think you, sort of, you put your trust in them
11		"Question: Yes.	11	because, as they keep portraying themselves, the
12		"Answer: What happened?	12	Post Office are a trusted brand and their trust
13		"Question: The loss my office was	13	wasn't to find a problem that, it was to find
14		running at a loss of £40,000. I had a visit	14	a solution, and I was the solution.
15		from two retail network managers. There's only	15	"Question: You have described employees of
16		one of them I can remember her name and it's	16	the Post Office coming to your branch to carry
17		Diane Oyles, and when they came I took them in	17	out an audit. What did they tell you about the
18		the back, explained to them that my offices was	18	outcome of that audit?
19		running at a loss. They asked if they could do	19	"Answer: They just said that it was
20		a cash check while they was there and they said,	20	actually running at a loss of 59,000 and I was
21		'Well, what we'll do is we'll keep the office	21	suspended without pay. I was searched before
22		open, we'll just do a cash check'.	22	I left and I was also informed that if I removed
23		"So I said, 'Well, to be honest, I'd rather	23	anything from the office, it would be classed as
24		close it, have an audit and sort it out', and so	24	theft. So all paperwork, nothing, I couldn't
25		they did the cash check, we closed the office,	25	move anything. It all became the property of
		111		112

111

1	the Post Office.	1	sentence because of the amount of money that was
2	"Question: How did you feel when you	2	involved, because I'd stolen from the Crown, and
3	returned home later that day?	3	I heard the gate lock and then he told me that
4	"Answer: I was devastated, absolutely.	4	it was a custodial sentence. I'll be honest, I
5	Everything just crushed. You just feel	5	though he was going to say 'suspended' but he
6	crushed."	6	didn't.
7	I'll pick it up, if I may, by going to	7	"Question: How did you feel when you were
8	page 26 on our system, and picking up on	8	escorted out of the courtroom?
9	page 101 of the page numbers that come up on the	9	"Answer: I was just an emotional wreck, I
10	screen:	10	don't actually remember. The only thing I
11	"Were you aware when you attended court on	11	remember is being in the holding cell and then
12	2 February that you might be sent to prison?	12	going to Wakefield Prison.
13	"Answer: No, I really didn't think I had,	13	"Question: How were you transported there?"
14	because to go to jail, you've got to have	14	We'll just go over the page for a few more
15	committed a crime and, if you can't prove that	15	lines:
16	you've committed a crime, because I couldn't,	16	"Answer: In well, they took me out in
	I hadn't and they couldn't proved I had, but yet	17	-
17	I still went to jail.	18	handcuffs, put me in one of those police
18	-	19	transport things.
19	"Question: Where in court were you standing		"Question: What happened upon your arrival
20	when the judge read out your sentence?	20	at prison?
21	"Answer: In the dock.	21	"Answer: I was photographed, fingerprinted,
22	"Question: What did the security guards do	22	told to remove my clothes so they could strip
23	when the judge sentenced you to prison?	23	search me. So they put made me stand behind
24	"Answer: You're stood in the dock, and he	24	the curtain and squat and then put a mirror
25	said that he was giving me a nine-month prison 113	25	underneath to make sure you're not taking 114
1	anything in with you.	1	Now, the processes you say for raising
1 2	anything in with you. "Question: Did you have an opportunity to	1 2	Now, the processes you say for raising disputes didn't change, but perhaps the point is
	"Question: Did you have an opportunity to		disputes didn't change, but perhaps the point is
2	"Question: Did you have an opportunity to speak to your children when you arrived into	2	disputes didn't change, but perhaps the point is that they should have changed. So what I want
2 3 4	"Question: Did you have an opportunity to speak to your children when you arrived into prison?	2 3 4	disputes didn't change, but perhaps the point is that they should have changed. So what I want to understand is, given that your programme
2 3 4 5	"Question: Did you have an opportunity to speak to your children when you arrived into prison? "Answer: I was given a phonecall there in	2 3 4 5	disputes didn't change, but perhaps the point is that they should have changed. So what I want to understand is, given that your programme board was putting in place a system that would
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2 3 4 5 6 7	"Question: Did you have an opportunity to speak to your children when you arrived into prison? "Answer: I was given a phonecall there in the evening and my daughter wouldn't actually speak to me because she was just she was an	2 3 4 5 6 7	disputes didn't change, but perhaps the point is that they should have changed. So what I want to understand is, given that your programme board was putting in place a system that would remove the suspense account facility so that subpostmasters had to rely on these helpdesk
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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	"Question: Did you have an opportunity to speak to your children when you arrived into prison? "Answer: I was given a phonecall there in the evening and my daughter wouldn't actually speak to me because she was just she was an emotional wreck and I didn't want to speak to her, to be honest. I felt so ashamed. I was supposed to be there to protect them and show them what you do the right thing but yet you do the right thing and I went to jail anyway. "Question: Were your children able to visit you in prison? "Answer: I didn't want them visiting me. That was the only thing I could control and it was hard enough for me to have that memory of me being in jail, they weren't having that memory of me being in jail. So I refused to see them." So what I've just read out there is the testimony that explains both the so-called support that was offered by the helpdesk and the	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 A 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 Q 22	disputes didn't change, but perhaps the point is that they should have changed. So what I want to understand is, given that your programme board was putting in place a system that would remove the suspense account facility so that subpostmasters had to rely on these helpdesk calls and these so-called Network support processes, did anyone on the programme board offer any kind of challenge to the people responsible for those systems, any kind of constructive challenge to find out whether those processes were working? No, I don't recall anybody. I mean, I got a set of requirements from the business, you know, through a series of Network series of, um, of workshops, and I don't recall, you know, anybody in fact, you know, the requirement would have come from the Network to remove the suspense account. Who was that, then? Who was responsible for the Network? I can't remember who was represented at the time.

1		the Network?
2	A.	I can't remember. I'd have to
3	Q.	Do you want to take a bit of time to think about
4		it because you're saying that this is where it
5		came from; this is who wanted it.
6	Α.	No, I can't I mean, Peter Corbett was my
7		sponsor and it may have come from Peter. He was
8		in Finance, obviously the impact of that. And
9		I know Ann Cruttenden was the representative at
10		the next level. But I I'm really, really
11		sorry. I mean, my memory is I have issues
12		with my memory and I just can't remember who was
13		the Network representative on the programme
14		board
15		But, you know, it would have been signed
16		off there was some documents right at the
17		beginning, the business case would certainly
18		have been signed off at well, it was signed
		, ,
19		off at the group board level. So it would have
20	_	gone through all of that process.
21	Q.	Did Peter Corbett offer any sort of challenge to
22		find out whether the Network support was as it
23		should have been?
24	Α.	Not I can't remember.
25	MS	PAGE: Well, thank you. Those are my questions. 117
1		reducing losses was only one part of what it was
2		all about
3	Α.	Absolutely, which you saw in the document.
4		WYN WILLIAMS: Right. I've got that. So give
5	0	me an idea of the equivalence of Peter Corbett
6		in other spheres, if you would, so I can
7		understand the make-up of this board? So you'd
8		have had someone of similar seniority to Peter
		•
9 10		Corbett from which other departments, if I can put it in that way?
11	Α.	I honestly can't I'm really sorry but
12		I can't we would have had somebody from
13		Network. Ann Cruttenden was the next level down
14		because she was the business change manager from
15		Network and
16	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: I'm sorry to stop you again, but
17		when you say next level down, so in Network
18		terms, there'd be are you saying there'd be
19		someone of Peter Corbett's seniority but she was
20		one below that? Is that what you're trying to
		•

the Network Director. What I'm saying is the

not had a director from Network because, as

programme board may or may not -- it may have

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1	A. Okay.
2	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: This programme board that you're
3	giving evidence about, I don't expect you to
4	remember precisely, but just help me a little.
5	Was this a body which was three, four, five
6	people or a larger body?
7	A. It would probably have been about five or six
8	people. So Peter Corbett was the sponsor so he
9	would have been on there but then the Network
10	would have been represented, and certainly
11	Peter
12	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Can I just stop you there. So
13	Peter Corbett and we've got something specific
14	about him, he's the Finance Director, so if
15	I imagine a Finance line so to speak, he would
16	be the senior person on the board in Finance?
17	A. Yeah, because remembering that the programme was
18	primarily about implementing new system in the
19	back office, a new SAP system, so the losses bit
20	was not a was a was a byproduct of the
21	fact that we had to alter the Horizon System.
22	So it wasn't particularly a big network impact
23	project.
24	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, in general terms, his main
25	concern would have been to reduce losses, but
	118
1	I say, the change in the Network was nothing
2	like the change in Finance so Peter Corbett ran
3	the programme board. There would have been
4	somebody from Network because there were
5	implications on Network. Ann Cruttenden was the
6	business change manager for the Network so she
7	was the main she was the person involved but
8	she wasn't a board member in that sense.
9	I'd have to find a document that had got the
10	names of the board and apologies for not
11	remembering.
12	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right. So if I wish to
13	enquire into this more closely, I'm looking for
14	the names of four or five other people apart
15	from Mr Corbett, by the sounds of it, roughly?
16	A. I'd have to find a document. I honestly can't
17	remember back that far.
18	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I'm sorry to take you back to it
19	again because you've been asked many questions
20	about paragraph 31, one way or another, about
21	but I'm still slightly bemused, I have to say,
22	about the use of the word "hide". You've put it

in inverted commas. What do you actually mean

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when you say that, historically, the suspense account was used to hide discrepancies? Explain

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1	_	it to me in your own words. What was happening?
2	Α.	So there's there's no doubt that in the past
3		there had been people who stole from post
4		offices, people who ran post offices
5	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Can I just stop you there.
6		I understand that to be, as a matter of fact,
7		correct. But from my perspective at least, the
8		last thing that anybody who had actually stolen
9		money from the Post Office would do was to
10		signal a loss by putting it in the suspense
11		account, which is what's bemusing me a little.
12	Α.	Okay, so they're either going to inflate their
13		cash and stock balances, but that would
14		trigger that would have triggered an earlier
15		investigation, because we had a big focus on
16		cash management. So nobody wanted a branch to
17		own significant cash. So if you've lost if
18		you've been taking something, at the end of the
19		day you've got the transactions. The system has
20		recorded, and then you have a declaration of
21		cash and stock.
22		So the only way to cover up the difference,
23		because clearly you won't have the cash and
24		stock in the system as you should have, and
25		you're meant to do a translation, then, of the 121
		121
1	Α.	It didn't mean that.
2		WYN WILLIAMS: Should I take that view or not?
3	Α.	No, you should take the view that that meant
4	Λ.	that the evidence would have been historical,
5		but then it was expected that that was still
6		what they would do.
7	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: But that's surprising me, if
8	Oiix	I can put it in that way. The fact that there
9		may have been illegal activity in the past isn't
10		a necessarily safe foundation for concluding
11		it's subsisting at the time, is it?
12	Α.	No, I wasn't saying it was subsisting; I was
13	Α.	saying historically that had happened and
14		therefore removing a way for that to continue to
15		happen was why we had that requirement.
16	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you very much for
17	U \	coming to give evidence, Ms Harding.
18	MR	BEER: Sir, thank you very much. Can we say
19		1.50, please, this afternoon?
20	SIR	WYN WILLIAMS: Always assuming Mr Burley is
21	J	ready. I had some information that he wasn't
22		ready until 2.00 but if you know better, then
23		we'll say 1.50.
		-

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MR BEER: I never know better. But if he is

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available can we say 1.50?

1	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes, so everybody should be
	122
25	ie 2003 to 2006.
24	wasn't necessarily happening at the time,
23	was something that had happened in the past, but
22	conveyed to me, when I first read it, that that
21	the word "historically" in that paragraph, which
20	SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Well, all right. You also used
19	Does that make sense?
18	generated from having done the transactions.
17	other transactions because they were system
16	could put it because you couldn't alter the
15	somewhere and the suspense was a place that you
14	either declare a loss or you try and put it
13	cash and stock, it's not what you expected, you
12	somehow. So if, when you actually count your
11	accounting system, so we have to make it balance
10	It's an accounting double entry
9	the difference in the suspense account.
8	would report the cash you really have, and put
7	"I've got more cash than I really have", or you
6	stock out, et cetera so you would either say
5	stock, because stock is all about stock in,
4	have been an easier one in the system than
3	stock figures, and cash is probably it would
2	a discrepancy is either to inflate your cash and
1	cash and stock, yeah? So the only way to hide

2 prepared to start at 1.50, to use those that famous phrase: not before 1.50. 4 MR BEER: Thank you very much. (12.55 pm) (The Short Adjournment) 6

7 (2.00 pm)

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MR BLAKE: Good afternoon, sir. 8

SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.

10 MR BLAKE: Can I call Mr Mark Burley, please.

MARK BURLEY (affirmed) 11

Questioned by MR BLAKE

13 MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. Can you give your 14 full name, please.

A. Yes, Mark Richard Burley. 15

16 Q. Mr Burley, I'm going to ask for your statement

to be brought up on screen and you should be 17

18 able to see it, it's WITN03850100. Is that your

19 statement?

20 A. It's very blurred at my end. That's better.

21 Page 1 definitely looks good, yeah.

22 Q. Do you have a copy of it in front of you?

23 A. I do, yes.

24 Q. On 4 January, is it right to say that you signed a statement of truth that was separate to that 25

- statement but it confirmed the truth of the content of that statement?
- 3 A. I couldn't confirm the exact date. Is it on my
- 4 signed copy? No. It's not on my copy either.
- 5 I can't confirm the exact date but it's around
- 6 about that time, yes.
- 7 Q. Yes. Is this statement true to the best of your
- 8 knowledge and belief?
- 9 A. It is, yes.
- 10 Q. Thank you. That statement will go into evidence
- 11 and the questions I will ask you today will be
- 12 supplementary to that.
- 13 Your statement is quite light on detail so
- 14 I'm going to start by asking you a little bit
- 15 about your background. When were you first
- 16 employed by the Post Office?
- 17 A. 1985. It could have been -- I started on
- 18 31 December, so I'm just thinking was it '85 or
- 19 '84? It might have been '84.
- 20 Q. Okay. Did you have another job before that, or
- 21 was that ...

- 22 A. I worked for Sainsbury's before that, just to --
- 23 as -- I mean, technically, it was a part-time
- role but I used to do full time hours for them.
- 25 **Q.** Can you give us an indication of the types of 125
- 1 A. Essentially, it was to look across the whole of
- 2 the technology delivery that Post Office were
- 3 doing at that time. So HNG-X was one of those
- 4 projects that came under that, but I was no
- 5 longer the programme manager for the programme.
- 6 Q. Thank you. You've said in your statement that
 - you had programme management qualifications.
- 8 Did you have any other qualifications that are
- 9 relevant, a computer science background, or
- 10 anything along those lines?
- 11 A. I didn't have computer science background, no.
- 12 I had lots of project manager qualifications,
- 13 PMO qualifications and, as you say, programme
- 14 manager, business analyst qualifications and --
- but not a computer science background, no.
- 16 Q. I'm going to go broadly chronologically this
- 17 afternoon. I want to start with Legacy Horizon.
- 18 In your witness statement, you say you weren't
- 19 aware of any faults with Legacy Horizon but
- 20 there were bugs that were investigated and
- 21 fixed, to the best of your knowledge. What do
- you see as the difference between a fault and
- a bug or a series of bugs?
- 24 A. Well, I'm not even sure I said that in my
- 25 statement. Could you tell me where I said that

127

- 1 roles you held at the Post Office before
- 2 becoming involved in HNG-X or what we know as
- 3 Horizon Online?
- 4 A. Yeah, I started off as a post office counter
- 5 clerk. That was my first role. I then moved on
- 6 to be an area manager support. I then moved on
- 7 to be a branch manager at three different
- 8 branches. I then moved on to an internal audit
 - role, auditing various processing systems across
- 10 the business. I then moved on to be a retail
- 11 network manager, essentially accountable for the
- 12 performance of around about 35 of the largest
- 13 sub post offices.

9

- 14 I then moved into project work, held
- a number of project manager positions and then
- 16 in 2003 I set up a PMO function, project
- 17 management office function, before becoming the
- 18 HNG-X programme manager in 2005, which I held
- until 2009 before becoming head of delivery, and
- 20 then I left on a voluntary redundancy term in
- 21 early 2011.
- 22 Q. Was your role as head of delivery until 2011?
- 23 A. It was, yes.
- 24 Q. Can you tell us what the role of head of
- 25 delivery involves, briefly?

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- 1 in my statement because I wasn't that close to
- 2 original Horizon. I was only on the periphery
- 3 of original Horizon.
- 4 Q. Your statement is quite brief on that. Let's
- 5 have a look at page 2. So it's WITN03850100.
- 6 It's the top 2 paragraphs that really address
- 7 Legacy Horizon.
- 8 A. Yeah, and point 6 that I wasn't aware of any --
- 9 **Q.** You say:

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- "I was competent in the use of Legacy Horizon and was involved in an assurance
- 12 rollover its development.
- "I wasn't aware of any 'faults' with LegacyHorizon but was aware it was essentially
- a modified EPOS solution and as such errors on
- 16 data input could be made with consequential
- 17 impacts on weekly accounts."
 - So that's a suggestion that human errors in input could have a consequential impact:
- 20 "As with any technology solution, bugs did 21 occur but these were investigated and fixed --22 appropriately (to the best of my knowledge)."
 - So you have distinguished there between faults and bugs.
- 25 $\,$ A. Yeah, I mean, what I'm trying to distinguish

1 there is when original Horizon went live, 2 I wasn't aware of any overarching faults with 3 the system that could cause a real problem. 4 A bug is something that may not be technically 5 perfect but doesn't cause a problem because 6 there's either a workaround or it's not actually 7 having a direct impact.

> So, for example, I would describe a bug in this sense to be something in Arial font rather than Times New Roman, for example. It doesn't really have any real impact on the user. Are you still there?

- 13 Q. Yes. So your evidence is that there were some 14 problems but they were ones that didn't really 15 have any real impact on the user?
- 16 Yeah, as I recall it, on the original Horizon 17 System, it went through quite an extensive 18 period of what they called acceptance, and that 19 was validating that what the Post Office had 20 asked for had indeed been delivered, and there 21 were numerous examples and I did support some of 22 these where there was a more serious error or 23 a more serious bug, whichever word you want to
- 24 use, that we would declare wasn't fit for 25 acceptance. In other words, we weren't prepared 129
- 1 system being developed operated according to the 2 required business controls.
- 3 Q. So when it came to testing, you were part of the 4 TIP project, and your role was in relation to 5 the business requirements for the TIP project;

6 is that fair?

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- 7 A. Yes, that's right.
- 8 Q. Then we'll look at another document POL00090073.
- This a document from June 1999. It's headed 9
- 10 "Horizon Project -- Acceptance Review Comment
- 11 Sheet", and it has your name there in the top
- 12 right-hand corner, as part of a panel in
- 13 relation to the acceptance review. Do you
- 14 remember your involvement in that panel?
- 15 A. Well, this panel, this acceptance sheet --
- 16 I don't recollect a panel as such -- but this
- 17 acceptance sheet would probably relate to one of
- 18 the acceptance items that I was asked to look
- 19
- 20 Q. We've heard a lot of evidence, including expert 21 evidence, of serious problems during acceptance 22 and the rollout of Horizon. Do you accept that 23 there were serious problems during the period of
- 24 your involvement in the acceptance process and 25
 - rollout of Horizon?

- 1 for the system to go live whilst that bug
- 2 persisted because it could have a more
- 3 significant impact on a user.
- 4 Q. Your evidence from a moment ago is that you had
- 5 quite a peripheral role in relation to what we
- 6 know as Legacy Horizon; is that right?
- 7 A. I'd have supported a few of the examples of 8 working through the acceptance criteria.
- 9 Q. We'll go through some of the documents, and your
- 10 name does appear on quite a few documents,
- 11 concerning Acceptance Incidents in relation to
- 12 Legacy Horizon. Let's look briefly at a couple
- 13 by way of early background. We can look at
- 14 FUJ00058445. This is a document from
- 15 March 1999. This is a model office testing
- 16 document. If we go over the page, it has you on
- 17 the circulation list and you're listed as being
- 18 part of the TIP project. We know TIP as
- 19 Transaction Information Processing?
- 20 That's right.
- 21 Q. Do you remember your role in relation to that project? 22
- 23 A. I don't remember the detail of the role but
- 24 I would have been supporting it from a business
- 25 assurance perspective, so making sure that the 130
- 1 A. All I can say on that is that the elements of
- 2 acceptance I was involved in, we did the right
- 3 degree of due diligence and made the
- 4 recommendation accordingly as to whether it
- 5 would either be accepted into -- you know, as
- 6 a minor bug that wouldn't cause an impact or
- 7 needed to be fixed and therefore would be fixed
- 8 before we proceeded.
- 9 **Q.** Let's look at the ones that you were involved in 10 or certainly that the documents show you were
- 11 involved in, let's look at POL00090478. This is
- 12 a document the Inquiry is familiar with. Can we
- 13 look at page 75 it's a list of various different
- 14 Acceptance Incidents. I'm not going to spend
- too long on Legacy Horizon, I'll just take you 15
- 16 through a few of these documents.
- 17 So it's page 75 and that addresses 18 Acceptance Incident 410. I'm just going to read 19 what it says about Acceptance Incident 410 and
- 20 it's got your name down as the owner there. It

21 says: 22

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"TIP have detected an instance where transactions received in the daily transaction file are not represented on the electronic cash account at the weekend.

1 "The transactions missing from the cash 2 account are associated with a product changing 3 from core to non-core." 4 Do you remember that Acceptance Incident at 5 all? 6 A. I don't remember the Incident, no but that would 7 have been, in my view, you know, a high priority

9 Q. Do you know why you're listed as the owner of 10 that particular Incident?

Incident that needed resolving.

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11 No, I can't tell you why I was listed as the Α. 12 owner. I may have been the one leading the 13 investigation into it but I can't recall what at 14 this time, and that's 24 years ago, nearly.

15 Q. Yes. I mean, you would accept that issues with 16 the cash account are quite fundamental to the 17 workings of the Horizon System?

18 A. Absolutely critical. I totally 100 per cent 19 agree and that's why, as I suggested, if I was 20 investigating this one, it would have a severity 21 of -- using the scale on the right, it would 22 have a severity of high. It would absolutely 23 have to be understood before it was, you know, 24 accepted to proceed, or indeed fixed.

> You know, until you get into the detail of 133

familiar with now and that relates to data and 1 2 integrity issues. It's described there as:

> "TIP derived cash account not equal to electronic cash account received by TIP."

As part of the TIP team, do you recall that particular Acceptance Incident at all?

7 A. No, I don't recall the specific Incident, no, 8 but clearly that would be a high severity issue 9 that we would not want to go live with.

10 Q. Having been -- we've seen part of that TIP team, 11 is that something you would likely have been 12 familiar with at the time?

13 A. Possibly. I can't remember the specifics of 14 which ones I was asked to get involved with and 15 which ones I wasn't. As I said, I was involved 16 in some of the Acceptance Incidents but only 17 a subset.

18 Q. If we turn over to page 5, we get to Acceptance 19 Incident 410, which is the one that you 20 mentioned you were listed down as the owner of, 21 and that's the second column. If that paragraph 22 there could be expanded, please. It says:

23 "410

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"This incident was previously recorded under AI376."

1 these things you don't know the ins and outs of 2 what's truly happened. It could be that it was 3 represented on a different line than the one it 4 was expected to be on just from, you know, 5 a typo in the coding. But, obviously, that's 6 part of the investigation that would need to 7 take place on all these types of incident.

Q. Can we look at POL00030393, please. This is now 8 9 moving from July 1999 to August 1999. This is 10 an electronic memorandum from Ruth Holleran; do you remember Ruth Holleran? 11

12 **A**. Yes.

13 Q. What was her role?

14 A. As I recall at this time. I think Ruth led the 15 acceptance process, I believe. I couldn't be 16 100 per cent certain on that, so it would need 17 checking factually, please.

18 Q. Thank you. You're listed there. Can you see 19 you're copied into that memo, your name --

20 Yeah.

21 Q. -- appears? This is a list of high impact, high 22 severity Acceptance Incidents. If we can turn 23 to page 3, please, in the second column there's 24 reference to 376, that's Acceptance Incident 25 376, that's something the Inquiry is quite 134

1 So it appears they were linked:

2 "However as the effect is different, this 3 now stands alone. It refers to a scenario 4 resulting in the TIP derived cash account, 5 calculated from Pathway's daily transaction 6 files, exceeding the transaction totals in the 7 Pathway cash account. (Refer to description of 8 Al376 for more detail on this process). It is 9 this latter cash account stream that feeds the

11 12 this particular Acceptance Incident? 13 It doesn't assist me in recalling the incident, 14 no. All I can say is I repeat what I said, that 15 anything that impacted the cash account and data 16 potentially being missing would have to be fully 17 explained before I would recommend proceeding. 18 Now, you know, as I say, I can't remember this 19 specific one, but we'd have made investigations 20 of both the Pathway solution and also the TIP 21 solution.

22 Because that kind of an Incident, that's not 23 just a change from Times Roman Numeral to 24 another font?

25 Α. Oh. no --

10 POCL accounting process via CBDB."

Does this assist you at all in recalling

- Q. That's quite a significant A. This is something that, you know -- you know, as
 I said, I did not manage or lead the acceptance
 process but my recommendation would have been
 not to proceed with an Incident like this being
 open.
- 7 Q. You say "would have been". Was it or is that8 something you don't remember?
- 9 A. I can't recall. I mean, I can almost certainly 10 say that -- well, I can certainly say my 11 recommendation would have been not to proceed 12 with this being open without a satisfactory 13 explanation. I can certainly say that, you 14 know, as I'm on oath. I can't say anything 15 about the specific, because I don't recall it. 16 But, you know, looking at the detail, I'm, you
- know, trying to be absolutely honest with you.
 Thank you. Can we turn to page 6, please.
 Thank you. If we look at the fourth column
 there, it summarises the current position and
 a concern of Post Office Counters limited. It

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says:

"POCL also require evidence that integrity checks in support of R818/08 are sufficient for all business data. In the absence of this 137

line, it says "POCL advised", if we could look at that or highlight those two lines, please. It says:

"POCL advised that they rate 410 and 411 as Low conditional on resolution of the controls proposed on 376. RH would provide further detail on this."

So it seems as though 410 becomes a low issue because it was going to be in some way tied up with resolution of the controls proposed for Acceptance Incident 376.

A. Could you just zoom back out to the full page
 because I thought there was something on the
 page that might explain that. Yeah, if you look
 lower down the page, under point 3, it says:

"JD reported as follows:

"Pathway recognise that not all transactions had been harvested and sent to TIP.

A provisional fix went in on 2nd August and this has worked satisfactorily so far with the effect that all records had been sent."

So my assumption would be at this stage -as I say, I'm trying to remember back over 23 years -- but my assumption would be at this stage so they'd put a fix in, we'd done some evidence, the integrity of the data that drives
the central accounting process is in question.
This incident is therefore adjudged high in line
with Al376 and Al411."

Is that consistent with what you've just
 told us about the significance of this kind of
 an Acceptance Incident?

- A. That's absolutely exactly what I'm referring to.
 It would be adjudged high and we would not
 proceed.
- 11 Q. Looking at this type of a document, it seems as
 12 though from early 1999 you were aware of the
 13 importance of accounting data and that issues
 14 were being experienced in this regard with the
 15 new system; is that fair?
- 16 A. During its development, yes.
- 17 Q. Can we look at POL00043681, and can we look at
 18 the second page of that, please. This was
 19 a management resolution meeting of 12 August
 20 1999. You weren't at that -- sorry, if we could
 21 zoom out. Thank you very much.

You weren't at this particular meeting, but it does address the Acceptance Incident you were listed as the owner of, 410. Can we look at page 3, please. It's the first substantive

provisional early testing of that fix and all
 looked good but naturally, on something so

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significant, we wouldn't want to close it until
 we'd done sufficient testing to be confident
 that it's truly fixed. I'm sure you probably

6 appreciate that there's lots of different

scenarios that contribute to a cash account. So
 we'd want to make sure all those scenarios are
 suitably tested.

10 Q. Absolutely. If we look at that paragraph, it11 then goes on to say:

"Pathway cannot guarantee however that all problems have been trapped. They will need to see evidence from the fix of 8 known problems and will continue to monitor the problem for 3 months to be confident of its resolution."

So at that stage they can't guarantee that all problems have been trapped; does that mean fixed or resolved?

- A. No, as I say, we would want to do sufficient
 testing to have a degree of confidence that they
 have been and then, as you say, keep it under
 monitor. You know, that's standard practice.
- Q. Do you recall that there was a second
 supplementary agreement in September 1999 which
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1, we

1 permitted errors of up to 0.6 per cent of all 2 cash accounts? 3 A. I don't. I'm not aware of that at all, no. 4 Q. Perhaps if we go to POL00090428, and it's 5 page 21. This is the Second Supplemental 6 Agreement between the Post Office and ICL. You 7 may not have seen this because this is 8 a contractual document. I don't know if this 9 jogs your memory at all? 10 A. I think it's one of the documents I have been 11 sent but I wasn't party to this and I don't 12 recall it -- I'm just looking --13 Q. If we look at (i), there is a period in which: 14 "... the percentage of Cash Accounts 15 received by POCL across the TIP Interface 16 containing Cash Account Discrepancies shall not 17 exceed 0.6 per cent of all such Cash Accounts." 18 Is that something --19 A. It's not something I'm aware of and, you know, 20 I can interpret what it may mean but I may be 21 22 to the fact that we wouldn't pay Fujitsu -- or 23

taking it out of consequence. This could refer sorry, Pathway, as they were called then, unless 24 it was in that parameter but that's not saying 25 that 0.6 per cent was acceptable because I can't 141 1 a couple of months after the last document you

2 showed me. 3 Q. Would you have been expected to be consulted 4 about a contractual agreement of this kind, 5 given your involvement in TIP and being 6 responsible for business aspect of TIP? 7 A. I think the answer will be, yes, if it referred 8 to an ongoing allowance but no if it refers to 9 an allowance, you know, over the period of time, 10 such that we would pay Pathway as long as they 11 met this criteria but wouldn't accept it as an 12 incident. I personally believed that's what it 13 would be. It would be a contractual payment 14 term, not a business acceptance term. 15 Otherwise, I would expect to be consulted, yes.

16 Q. Do you remember a Third Supplemental Agreement 17 or were you aware of a Third Supplemental 18 Agreement on 19 January 2000?

19 A. I wasn't aware of a second so no, I wasn't. 20 Q. Let's look at that. FUJ00118186. I'll only 21 take you to that document very briefly. It's 22 page 4 of that Third Supplemental Agreement. It 23 addresses enhanced integrity control, which was 24 something that was implemented to address the

25 concerns relating to the cash account that we've 1 believe we'd have agreed to anything being

2 acceptable, is my personal view.

3 Q. Was there, do you recall, an acceptance that 4 there would still be some degree of cash account 5 discrepancies moving forward?

6 A. No. No. There definitely was no acceptance of 7 that. There may have been an acceptance that we 8 believed the fix had resolved the issue, but 9 there is inevitably a risk that something else

10 does arise because you cannot test the system to

11 a degree where you can 100 per cent hand on 12 heart say it will never occur again, and that's

13 what this may relate to, that it is, you know,

14 such a rare transaction or rare sequence of

15 events that causes it that it would be 0.6 per

16 cent. But I can't believe we accepted or

17 anybody would have signed up to accepting that

18 there could be discrepancies on a cash account,

19 if that was the fundamental accounting document

20 to which all branches were held.

21 Q. Were you still part of the TIP team at this 22 stage? So this is 24 September 1999.

23 A. I honestly can't recall if I was on TIP or on 24 a project at this stage. I'm guessing I would 25

have still been on TIP because it's only

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1 already gone through. Do you remember something called the Enhanced Integrity Control at all? 2 3 No, nothing that I would have dealt with would

have been called Enhanced Integrity Control. It might have been called a fix, it might have been, you know, the process they were coding to ensure that the cash account was robust but I don't remember it being called an Enhanced Integrity Control.

10 Q. If we go over the page, it's paragraph 5.3 of 11 the next page that the Inquiry has gone over 12 some time over previously in Phase 2. This 13 seems to be an agreement, I'll read it to you.

14 It says:

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"The Contractor shall, from the date of this Agreement until the end of the TIP Integrity Checking Period make available to POCL promptly upon request appropriate experts to explain to POCL the Contractor's analysis of all root causes of Cash Account Discrepancies and the measures which the Contractor shall have implemented in order to prevent the recurrence of any Cash Account Discrepancies which would not have been detected by the Accounting Integrity Control Release."

Do you recall at all there being a likelihood that there would be cash accounting discrepancies which couldn't be detected by a control that was put in place?

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- 4 5 A. I don't recall anything, no, because the TIP system was designed to ensure that what was sent 6 7 in reconciled with the -- you know, the two 8 sides fully reconciled so, no, I don't recall 9 that at all. Not that -- in other words, 10 I don't recall that it wouldn't have been 11 detected so I'm unclear what that refers to.
- 12 Q. Do you recall an acceptance that, because of the 13 nature of the system, there would always be 14 a degree of unreliability with the cash account?
- 15 A. Sorry, just phrase that question again? 16 Sure. Were you aware or do you recall, that 17 because of the nature of the system, there was 18 an acceptance that there would always be 19 a degree of unreliability in the cash account,
- 20 however small?
- 21 A. No, I don't agree that, I don't accept that. 22 The cash account is only formulated from all the 23 inputs to it and there's no reason that it would 24 ever have to accept or be prone to errors. 25 There's no reason. Effectively, every

1 know, you accidentally give out, you know, a 20p

145

straight away and there were --If I recall at the time, there were examples where it genuinely happened because -- and I think it was books of stamps. If they bought ten stamps they got a slight discount as a customer but it went in effectively at the price -- so the subpostmaster would make, I don't know, 10 pence, 15 -- I can't remember what the product was, so don't quote me on stamps, please, but there was a product that was sold where, if you bought in bulk, you got a bit of a discount. But it worked in favour that you

instead of 10p, so you've got a 10p discrepancy

So, you know, that fundamental part of the cash account, the two columns are totalled, and any difference is your loss or gain on the week. It becomes a balancing entry.

19 20 Q. We've gone through quite a few of those 21 Acceptance Incidents. Am I right to say that your evidence, certainly your oral evidence 22 23 today, is that, despite those, as far as you 24 were aware, the cash account was flawless upon 25 acceptance and rollout?

made actually, a slight profit on those.

1 transaction that is done over a post office 2 counter has double entry on the cash account.

3 Can we look at POL00028507, please. We've now 4

reached January 2000 and this is an email, the 5 bottom email, that is sent by you to Min

6 Burdett, regarding something called "Receipts

7 Not Equal to Payments". That's what we know as

8 Acceptance Incident 211, where the receipts and

9 payments didn't equal on the cash account.

10 Yes. A.

11 Q. Again, do you remember being involved in that 12

13 A. I vaguely remember this one, yes.

14 Because that's obviously quite a significant 15 thing if the receipts and payments don't match.

16 What's your recollection of that? 17 Well, as it says on the subject, the receipts 18 weren't equal to payments and the fundamental 19 thing about the cash account is your receipts 20

payment and your payments total have to match, 21 and any then balancing entry between the two is

22 the amount of loss or gain for the week in 23 question. And, typically, every branch would

24 make, you know, a few pence, a few pounds

25 potentially, difference on a weekly basis. You 146

1 A. I believe the cash -- you know, my 2 recommendation would be that all cash account 3 errors, as part of the development, have to be

4 either 100 per cent explained, and therefore 5 understandable and wouldn't cause an issue to

6 any integrity, or, ideally, completely fixed 7 ahead of any rollout.

8 In the passage I took you to earlier from your 9 witness statement, you said that the system was 10 essentially a modified EPOS solution. Were you 11 aware of any concerns about the EPOS system and 12 the coding of the EPOS system, for example?

13 Um, it depends what you mean by was I aware of 14 any concerns. During the development there 15 were, you know, numerous defects identified, you 16 know, that would have been identified through

17 testing. Some of it identified through

18 Pathway's own testing, some through Post Office

19 testing and they would all go in this part of --

20 you know, ultimately to try to get fixed and, 21 ultimately, against the acceptance criteria, if

22 they remain open.

23 Q. What point in time did this all get resolved, do 24

25 To the best of my knowledge and from my part in 148

- 1 it, I believe it was all resolved before, 2 certainly, any extended trial was done. It may 3 have been -- there may have been a few small 4 issues outstanding at the onset of the first 5 trial. I can't 100 per cent confirm they 6 weren't, but sometimes that does happen. But 7 before it went out to any extended number of 8 sites, I would believe they would all be 9 resolved, such that integrity-wise, it was 10 robust. 11 Q. If we've heard evidence to the contrary, would 12 that surprise you? 13 A. It would surprise me as far as my involvement would go. I would just say one thing. Of
- 14 15 course the system, once the system is live, it's 16 not completely left alone because we do -- you 17 know, like most systems, you develop new 18 products, so you do make changes to it. So 19 it's -- you know, could something have happened 20 after that? I can't comment for certain, but 21 possibly. 22 But if you're saying to me original

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integrity issues were allowed to be rolled out, were allowed to be included in the rollout, I'd be 100 per cent surprised and shocked.

149

- 1 numbers but a medium volume pilot might be 2 extending from an initial pilot of ten sites up 3 to, let's say, 150, 200 sites, and the high 4 volume would be where we're migrating from that 5 and perhaps doing 100 sites a night to roll out 6 the entire estate.
- 7 Q. You weren't a technician. You weren't -- as you 8 have explained, you didn't have a computer 9 science background or anything of that sort. 10 What was your role in relation to the pilots? 11 Was it driving things forward?
- 12 Α. So my role as HNG-X programme manager was to 13 ensure we delivered a quality system.
- Q. Let's start in January 2010. Can we look at 14 15 FUJ00092754. This a document from 28 January 16 2010. It's the "Notes of the Horizon Next 17 Generation Joint Progress/Release Board 18 Meeting", and you are listed there as chair of 19 this meeting. Can you tell us what was this 20 board? What was its purpose?
- 21 A. The purpose of this board, it was a weekly 22 meeting to discuss the progress of the 23
- development, you know, and obviously development 24 leading into testing, leading into deployment,
- 25 on the new Horizon next generation system. So

- Q. At the beginning of your evidence today you said
- 2 you had quite a peripheral role in Legacy
- 3 Horizon. Having looked at those documents and
- 4 your name on various documents including
- 5 ownership of an Acceptance Incident, do you
- 6 think that was underplaying things somewhat?
- 7 No, because I wasn't looking at the development
- 8 to the Horizon System as a full-time role. You
- 9 know, I was involved with acceptance but
- 10 I wasn't leading acceptance. I was potentially,
- 11 you might describe it as leading a few of the
- 12 items under acceptance.
- 13 Q. Once you had finished your work on the
- 14 acceptance of Legacy Horizon, did you go on to
- 15 a different role before getting involved in what
- 16 we know as Horizon Online?
- 17 **A**. Yes, yes.
- 18 Q. I'm going to move on now to the development of
- 19 HNG-X. We'll see, in documents we're going to
- 20 come to, references to a medium volume pilot and
- 21 a high volume pilot. Can you tell us briefly
- 22 what that means, what the difference is between
- 23 the two?
- 24 It's just the scale of which we would roll out
- 25 to the number of sites. So I can't remember the 150
- 1 it's a weekly meeting we held jointly with
- 2 Fujitsu to discuss anything to do with ongoing
- 3 development activities.
- 4 Can we look at page 3, please. Thank you, it's
- 5 the first shaded entries. We have there "AD",
- 6 that's Alan D'Alvarez. Do you remember Alan
- 7 D'Alvarez?
- 8 A. I remember Alan, yes.
- 9 Q. He worked at Fujitsu; is that right?
- He did, yes. 10
- 11 Q. He's listed there as programme director, HNG-X,
- 12 Fujitsu. I'm going to read that third column.
- 13 It says:

14 "The delay in the commencement of volume 15 testing means that we will not be able to 16 perform a significant amount of testing before commencing the Medium Volume Pilot. Hence we 17 18 will need a significant amount of data to be 19 collected from the live branches and Data Centre. The data will also require careful and

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21 thorough analysis.

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"AD to confirm how this will be achieved."

23 Do you recall there being less testing than 24 originally planned before going to pilot?

25 No, there wasn't less testing. We may have

varied how we did the testing but there wasn't less testing. One thing that was very, very clear on Horizon Next Generation was that quality was of the utmost importance. With any project that is delivered, you generally have three criteria: you have the time it takes to deliver it; the cost to deliver it; and the quality criteria that it must meet. I can honestly say, as programme manager, that quality criteria was the utmost of those three.

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Inevitably there's always a little focus on all three and the amount of forecast varies from project to project, but quality was the most important. And, you know, I know several times throughout the development and testing of the solution, we paused, we took a step back, and because of testing, because of -- we couldn't get the right data or whatever, to absolutely make 100 per cent sure we'd got the right answer before proceeding.

21 Q. Thank you. That's what you've said in your 22 statement but if we look at this particular 23 entry:

> "The delay in the commencement of Volume testing means that we will not be able to 153

this detail here, and has satisfied himself that what we needed to be assured, through the testing, has actually been done. Now, whether that's through a test or through the data that's effectively been through the system, it's given us the same result, is what that's telling me in the fourth column.

8 Q. Forgive me for -- I don't quite understand what 9 you're saying there because, I mean, certainly 10 a plain reading of that is there won't be 11 a significant amount of testing and instead 12 there's going to be provision of data. Am 13 I wrong to think that there is a difference 14 between getting hold of data and actual testing

15 or are you saying they're the same thing? 16 A. They're clearly different things but the data 17 can give you the proof that what you'd have done 18 in the testing is actually sufficient. So the

19 data can give you the same proof, is what I'm 20

saying.

21 Q. So is data, collection of data, an adequate and 22 an equivalent to a significant amount of 23 testing, or is it less than a significant amount

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24 of testing?

25 A. In this particular scenario it was clearly 1 perform a significant amount of testing before 2 commencing the Medium Volume Pilot."

3 What do you understand that to mean?

4 A. I took that to mean that we've got a different 5 way of doing it because we've actually got -- if 6 you're looking on the right, Dave John's was

7 leading on it and LF is Lee Farman. Lee Farman

8 was my test lead at the time and, you know,

9 I would have taken, you know, his advice on

10 this, that if he said, you know, he was

11 comfortable that the slight change to the

12 approach on testing gave him sufficient

13 confidence, then that was acceptable, and that's

14 why it would have been closed. Because you'll

15 see data has been pass to Lee Farman, Lee Farman

16 believed this is adequate for now.

17 **Q**. Tell me if I'm wrong on this but it doesn't seem

18 to suggest that there's a different type of

19 testing. What it seems to suggest is that there

20 won't be a significant amount of testing, and 21 instead there's going to be a collection of

22 data. Am I wrong on that?

23 A. It depends how you want to read it. Lee has

24 looked at the data that has been collected from

25 the existing sites, you know, from looking at

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1 considered to be an equivalent to the test.

2 Q. What gives you that impression?

3 **A.** Because Lee Farman who was a robust external

tester, so he wasn't Post Office, he wasn't

5 Pathway, he was actually bought in from

6 external, gave me that confidence and would have

7 explained it to me at the time.

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8 It says there "adequate", it doesn't say

9 "equivalent". Adequate seems to be less than

10 significant testing, doesn't it?

A. Well, I think the testing at any point it's 11

12 adequate for now. You'd want to do more testing

13 before you went into a high volume pilot is what

14 that says. Adequate to get into the medium

15 volume pilot. That's what it's saying. It

16 based on my interpretation of the word

17 "adequate". The way I read that is it's

18 adequate for now. In other words, Lee is happy

19 that it gives us what we need for the medium

20 volume pilot.

21 If somebody were to say that you were, at this 22 stage, desperate to get on with the medium

23 volume pilot; would that be right?

24 That would definitely be wrong because nobody 25

ever put me under pressure to get on with

2		timescales but we wanted to progress to
3		timescales in the right way.
4	Q.	Was the impression that you got from Post
5		Office more broadly rather than just
6		yourself one that you were desperate, as
7		a company, as an organisation, to get on with
8		the medium volume pilot?
9	A.	That's what I I totally refute that
10		suggestion. That is 100 per cent factually not
11		correct. At times, you know, there were times
12		definitely when, you know, people would say to
13		me, you know, "Why are we not ready?" And
14		I would explain why we're not ready. And at no
15		point under my time as HNG programme manager was
16		I under pressure, or as delivery manager, was
17		I under pressure to hit a timescale at the
18		expense of quality. I would be expected to
19		explain it in certain situations, but never
20		under pressure.
21	Q.	In your statement, you say at paragraph 18 "With
22		any computer system there's always likely to be
23		bugs and this is the purpose of testing."
24		Less testing might mean more bugs, mightn't
25		it?
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1		has affirmed that what he saw in the data gave
2		us the same result as he would have expected
3		from testing to move into that medium volume
4		pilot. That was the key of that bit: it was to
5		move into that medium volume of pilot and it was
6		to look at the performance of the system and
7		performance in that sense would be is it holding
8		up speed-wise to be able to process
9	_	transactions? You know. It's not functional.
10	Q.	, ,
11		Does Lee there say that it gives the same
12		result?
13	Α.	Is that a question for me?
14	Q.	Yes. Your evidence was that Lee has said to you
15		that the collection of data, rather than
16		significant testing, gives the same result. But
17		I was just wondering if that's your recollection
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		or if that's something that's stated there?
19	A.	Well, yeah, in my opinion. I mean obviously
19 20	A.	Well, yeah, in my opinion. I mean obviously this is written by a PMO who takes the notes and
20 21	A.	Well, yeah, in my opinion. I mean obviously this is written by a PMO who takes the notes and their choice of wording. Now, can I edit the
20	A.	Well, yeah, in my opinion. I mean obviously this is written by a PMO who takes the notes and their choice of wording. Now, can I edit the choice of wording? Of course I can. As program
20 21	A.	Well, yeah, in my opinion. I mean obviously this is written by a PMO who takes the notes and their choice of wording. Now, can I edit the

saying this is adequate for now, for what we

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anything. We were always wanting to progress to

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1 A. In theory, yes, but not necessarily in practice. 2 With testing what you do, you agree an approach 3 to testing of a strategy and an approach for 4 specific phase of testing, if you like, that 5 gives you sufficient confidence. Now, with any 6 system I would suggest it's almost impossible to 7 be 100 per cent guaranteed that no further bugs remain, but you do sufficient testing, depending 8 9 what it is you are developing, rolling out, 10 deploying, that gives you the confidence it will 11 work satisfactorily against what it's intended 12 13 So, obviously, something like, you know, 14 I don't know, a space rocket, you would do much 15 more testing on. So you'd vary the testing 16 according to what it is you're developing. It's 17 a standard approach called a risk based approach 18 to testing but you cover off the things that are 19 absolutely going to cause the -- any risk. 20 If you intended to carry out significant testing, and that was replaced with a lesser 21 22 form of testing or a different or a collection 23 of data, might that mean that there may be more 24 bugs? 25 **A**. No, because in that scenario, as I've said, Lee 158 would have tested, to get into the medium volume 1 pilot. That's what I am recalling on this one. 2 3 We wouldn't have gone into that medium volume 4 pilot without a sufficient confidence. 5 Q. Can we look at POL00000874, please. This is the 6 Fujitsu's own testing and integration strategy. 7 If we have a look at this document it's 8 a Fujitsu document but if we look at the bottom 9 it has external distribution and it's something 10 that has been sent to the Post Office library 11 and Andrew Thompson -- do you know Andrew 12 Thompson? Do you recall who he was? 13 **A**. Andrew was one of the test leads with Lee. 14 Q. I'm going to --15 A. I dealt with Andrew primarily -- if I recall 16 correctly, Andrew primarily looked after 17 functional and Lee looked after non-functional 18 performance. 19 Q. Can we look at page 12 of this strategy and it's

paragraph 1.25 on page 12 that I'd like to look

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at.

1	completely error-free. It is not possible to
2	prove it. Tests can prove that an error exists.
3	They can prove that a previous error has been
4	corrected. They cannot prove that no further
5	errors remain. However, by concentrating on the
6	important characteristics of the system
7	operation, tests can be used to demonstrate the
8	progressive removal of errors to the point where
9	these characteristics are seen to conform to
10	expectation. So, testing can be seen as
11	a method (the primary method) of reducing the
12	risk of serious defects remaining in important
13	areas of the system."

Is that something you agree with?

- 15 Yeah, that's the risk-based approach to testing 16 that I referenced a couple of minutes ago.
- 17 Q. Yes. So it says testing there is either the 18 primary method of reducing the risk of serious 19 defect, it doesn't say there that data, 20 gathering data is an adequate replacement for 21 tested, does it?
- 22 A. Well, it doesn't say it, no.

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23 Q. If Fujitsu had the impression, rightly or 24 wrongly, that POL were desperate to get on with 25 the pilot and, as a consequence, reduced the 161

1 acceptance on original Horizon. This is the 2 board that looks after are we ready to authorise 3 the release of Horizon into the branches.

- 4 Q. Can you tell us what AG, Acceptance Gateway, 3 5 was?
- 6 A. I can't remember what AG3 was. I'm assuming it 7 was, looking at the date, probably entry into 8 pilot but I can't be 100 per cent certain.
- 9 Q. Can we turn over the page and it has there "New 10 Actions and points to note from combined meeting 11 of [21 January 2010] -- ACCEPTANCE". It's that 12 first shaded section I'd like to look at first. 13 It says there:

"DC [that's, I think, Dave Cooke the Fujitsu acceptance manager] confirmed that there were no outstanding High Severity Acceptance Incidents and that all other thresholds are within tolerance for Acceptance Gateway 3."

I just want to look at the third paragraph. It savs:

"However it was agreed that the high priority fixes in 'Reset 4' -- to be delivered as part of Maintenance Release 01.08 -- could constitute a High Severity AI if not delivered in time for the High Volume Pilot (over 272

1 testing, what kinds of problems would you 2 envisage?

3 Well, Fujitsu couldn't reduce our testing. They 4 could reduce their testing but not our testing.

5 Q. If testing, any testing, was reduced, because of 6 an impression, rightly or wrongly, that was 7 given, that you needed to get on with the pilot, 8 what was the risk in that?

9 Well, but it wasn't. Testing wasn't reduced 10 because we were under pressure to get on with 11 the pilot.

12 I'll ask once more. If it was, what would the 13 risk be? Reading that, what is the risk of 14 reducing testing?

15 A. Well, the risk is you're risking more bugs going 16

17 Q. Thank you. Can we look at FUJ00097159, please. 18 We're still on 28 January and this seems to be 19 a different board meeting. This is called the 20 "Horizon Next Generation Release authorisation 21 AG3 -- Joint Board". How is this board 22 different? Do you remember this board?

23 A. This will have been the board -- I vaguely 24 remember it -- this will be the board that 25 looked at, you know -- very similar to the 162

1 branches)."

2 Then if we scroll down to the next entry, it 3 seems clear from that that there weren't any 4 outstanding high severity Acceptance Incidents, 5 but, as we've heard, there's the potential for 6 there to be one --

7 A. Yes, it strikes me from that that there was high 8 severity Acceptance Incidents that had been 9 fixed but the fix hadn't actually been deployed 10 yet, reading those words and therefore was 11 subject to fully being signed off, if you like.

12 Then we have look at that final entry. It says, 13 "Non-High priority items in Reset 04":

"MB [I think that's yourself] offered an option to remove items from Reset 04 which are not regarded as High priority -- if they are risk of missing the High Volume Pilot deadline or affecting the delivery of items which are High priority. AD will consider if any items are at risk [that's Alan D'Alvarez], and liaise with Post Office ..."

22 Is this something you remember at all?

- 23 I don't recall it, not as such.
- 24 25 remove some items from what's called Reset 4 164

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It seems as though you're offering there to

- 1 which weren't regard as high priority.
- 2 A. Yeah, and that's quite possible, if there were
- 3 things on there that weren't high priority and
- 4 therefore weren't considered material risk, then
- 5 to proceed through this gateway -- and don't
- 6 forget I think it's important to recall that
- 7 when we're in a pilot you're getting more
- when we re in a pilot you're getting more
- 8 evidence from the pilot of any potential
- 9 problems. So, you know, we would have, you
- 10 know, looked at anything that wasn't classed as
- 11 high priority and said "Is that material to
- 12 proceeding to the next phase?" It's not saying
- we're actually going to remove them; it's saying
- 14 we'll look at removing them.
- 15 Q. Was that because the priority at that stage was
- 16 to get the high volume pilot going and get on
- 17 with acceptance, given previous historic delays?
- 18 A. No. The priority was to deliver a quality
- 19 system, but with any system you would look at
- 20 the lower priority items and say "Is this
- 21 important for moving forward at this stage?"
- Yes, no. And you'll see there that it is being
- 23 progressed by the POL and Fujitsu testing and
- 24 requirement teams. So we wouldn't have put
- anything, given exception to anything that we
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error messages had occurred at both offices which meant that their Branch Trading Statements could not be completed.

"The root cause position at Coton House was understood, but the Warwick office had additional complexities.

"It was confirmed however that in both cases the underlying data integrity and external feeds to POL-MI and POL-MS were not affected."

Next entry.

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"Double settlement at Derby. In addition to the above, there have been 2 instances of a transaction appearing to be settled twice. This was picked up by the standard reconciliation process and corrected via BAU processes. However, the root cause is yet to be identified and investigation is under way".

The third entry "Decision -- Postponement of the next 10 branches. Based on the lack of a known root cause for AG3.70 [so AG3.70 is the branch trading statements issue] and AG3.71 [that's the double settlement issue], it was agreed that the next 10 branches should be postponed until the impact and way forward is fully understood."

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- 1 didn't get approval from.
- 2 Q. Absolutely, but were you making it easier there
- 3 for Fujitsu so that they could meet the high
- 4 volume pilot deadline by removing non-essential
- 5 items?
- 6 A. Not easier, no. It's a standard approach to
- 7 saying we need to look at the items on the list
- 8 that are outstanding.
- 9 Q. So again, at this stage, still at 28 January,
- 10 would it be unfair, I think you've said yes
- 11 before, to say that you were desperate to get on
- 12 with the pilots?
- 13 A. Would it be unfair? Yes, it would be unfair.
- 14 I think the word you're using there is
- 15 "desperate to get on with". Keen to get on
- 16 with, I'd say, is fair. But "desperate",
- 17 definitely not.

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- 18 Q. Can we look at page 9 of this document. It's
- 19 the bottom of page 9 I'd like to look at. "New
 - Actions and points to note from the combined
- 21 meeting of [28 January]".
- 22 I'm going to read to you the first three
- 23 entries. So the first one:
- 24 "Branch Trading Statements at Coton House
- and Warwick. It was confirmed that onscreen
 - 166
- 1 Do you recall those issues at this time?
- 2 A. No, I recall the Warwick and Coton issue.
- 3 I vaguely recall -- I don't recall the Derby
- 4 specifically but I recall a double settlement,
- 5 yes, and I think the decision in 372 absolutely
- 6 reaffirms, you know, this was not a time
- 7 pressure; this was, you know, getting it right.
- 8 And I can explain to you the 371 and 370, if you
- 9 like, if it helps.
- 10 Q. We can get on to them but your evidence is that,
- 11 28 January, the postponement of the next ten
- 12 branches shows that you weren't in a rush to get
- on with things, is that --
- 14 **A.** It shows we weren't pressured into getting on
- with things, yes.
- 16 $\,$ Q. Can we look at FUJ00092875. It's page 3 of that
- 17 document. Thank you. This is an email from
- 18 Alan D'Alvarez of Fujitsu, of 3 February. So
- very shortly after that, just a few days later.
- 20 This is, I believe it's an internal Fujitsu
- 21 email but do correct me information I'm wrong on
- that. Do you recognise the names there? You're
- 23 not copied into that?
- 24 A. I think they're all Fujitsu resources, yes.
- 25 **Q.** Thank you. Let's look at point 1. It says:

. 168 "The decision has been taken to deploy HNG-X to a further 10 branches with the migration button being pressed tomorrow for migration to complete Friday."

So the decision to postpone due to, for example, the branch trading statement issue that we just saw and the double settlement issue that we just saw seems just a few days later to have been reversed. Do you remember that?

10 A. Yes, I do remember that.

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11 Q. Then we look at point 2:

"There are two issues that require fixing prior to being able to enter into a medium volume pilot:

"Branch Trading Statement: This is where the in day migration process that happens once a branch hits the migration button is not correctly migrating across the summary data. This data is used to produce the branch trading statement. The base data is being migrated correctly and therefore the central accounting is unaffected. However, should a post office manager do a trading statement in branch there is a high chance that the statement produced, which uses the summary data, will not reconcile.

Horizon System so that can be remigrated ontoHorizon Next Generation.

Q. So would the entry that's created by Fujitsu
 technicians show up on the branch trading
 statement as a different figure?

- A. I can't actually remember how it worked in terms
 of the correction, I'm sorry.
- 8 Q. Turning to the second one:

"Counter Pauses In Live: Yesterday and today a number of branches reported 'screen freezes' while operating HNG-X."

So you have two uses there that require fixing before entering into the medium volume pilot. Then paragraph 3 it says:

"Currently the team are still investigating both issues above and, as yet, have not determined the root cause for either."

Do you remember that at that stage?

- 19 A. I remember that, yes.
- Q. Then it's paragraph 4 that I want to spend a bitof time on, and it says:

"We had a meeting with Post Office this evening which Mark Burley led from the Post Office side. Post Office are desperate for a date to start planning/rescheduling medium

We are manually 'fixing' the summary data prior
 to the BTS being run for those branches already
 migrated."

Just pausing there, what do you understandby "manually fixing" the summary data.

- 6 A. So basically when the branches were migrated on 7 to HNG, it was an automated system that migrated 8 the data from their existing solution on to Horizon Next Generation, and this was an error 9 10 that occurred in certain circumstances. So what 11 happened, we identified the root cause of the 12 error, and what happened was Fujitsu knew where 13 it was, but we decided to continue with the ten 14 because this migration process -- obviously it 15 only happens when you migrate a branch. So, you 16 know, the best test for this is when you migrate 17 a test but you just need to make sure you've 18 absolutely got a control total, which you can 19 then manually fix should any other data not migrate successfully. That's what that manually 20
- 22 Q. How would it be manually fixed?

fixing meant.

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A. Well, by the migration team comparing what
 should be there with what's actually there and
 then making the appropriate entry onto the
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volume pilot. They accepted our position that we were not able to give this today. I expect that Mark will be keeping Dave Smith briefed and my reading is that if we are not in a position to give a target date by close of play tomorrow it is likely to result in an escalation to Mike Young."

So that's where we get the phrase "desperate" from. Was Alan D'Alvarez wrong when he said you were "desperate"?

- 11 A. I don't know why he used that word, so I think12 that's a question for Alan.
- Q. Was there pressure being put on Fujitsu by the
 Post Office and by yourself to get on with
 things?
- 16 A. Not to the extent that it would be desperate.

17 Clearly, for the migration, we have to plan and 18 schedule the migrations. You know. So we have 19 to give the officers that are due to migrate due 20 notice because, you know, we would do that out

21 of hours, typically. They may need resources in

place. They have to, you know, preparethemselves for that migration. So, you know, in

24 terms of, you know, we would want a date that we

25 are targeting. Now whether that date was 172

tomorrow or next week or next month, we want a date because we want to start the planning process, not desperate to get it going, necessarily.

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readiness."

I think it's -- the -- not a term I would have used. You know, we need a date, such that we can continue with our planning rescheduling exercise.

- Q. Can we keep that on screen but just put
 alongside it your witness statement,
 WITN03850100. It's page 4 of your witness
 statement, paragraph 16.
 - Thank you. Paragraph 16. You say there:

 "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

Do you see the contrast there between what you've said in your witness statement and what Mr D'Alvarez was saying at the time?

- A. No, I don't. I'm sorry, but you're reading that
 different to how I'm reading it. "Post Office
 173
- 1 A. As I said, what is said and how things are interpreted can be two different things. Would 2 3 I have said, "Alan, come on, I need a date, we need to start, you know, and get these 4 5 replanned, rescheduled", yes, I probably would 6 say something like that. But, you know, there's 7 a difference between saying that and saying, 8 "Come on, Alan, I need to get these started 9 again tomorrow, we're already behind plan". 10 That is definitely not something I would have 11 said.

And you'll notice there they accepted our position that we're not able to give this today and, yes, I would want to keep them, you know, under a little bit attention that we're wanting a date because, as I said, scheduling and planning the branches, it wasn't a dead straightforward task. It takes time. You have to accommodate, you know, things that the office might have planned, you know, and, you know, we have to share appropriate evidence with other parties who were, you know, who, you know, for example with the National Federation of SubPostmasters, who I brought in to also give assurance before we deployed.

1 are desperate for a date to start

2 planning/rescheduling". It doesn't say we're

3 desperate for a date that has to be imminent.

4 At no point -- I repeat, at no point was I put

5 under pressure from a timescale perspective.

6 I think it's just how you've chosen to read the

7 two statements are different.

8 Q. By that stage, how long had HNG-X been planning for?

been running, if this was February, the best

10 **A.** It depends what you mean by "planning". It had

12 part of three and a half years.

13 Q. Was one of the reasons that you were brought into the project to drive things forward?

15 A. Sorry, was it what, sorry?

16 Q. Was one of the reasons you were brought into the17 project to drive things forward?

18 A. In the sense that a programme manager drives19 anything forward, yes.

20 Q. Yes. Do you not think that Fujitsu might have21 felt some time pressure by this stage?

22 A. I think that they felt time pressure for

themselves, yes.

Q. But your evidence is that that pressure wasn'tcoming from the Post Office?

174

1 MR BLAKE: Thank you, sir. That might be

2 an appropriate moment to take our 15-minute

3 break.

4 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: All right, 15 minutes. So

5 3.20-ish, I suppose to be imprecise.

6 MR BLAKE: Thank you.

7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Have a short break, Mr Burley,

8 all right. We have a break in the afternoon and

9 the morning because the person transcribing the

10 evidence needs a break, all right?

11 A. Okay, do I dial off?

12 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: No, mute yourself and go off

13 screen and go for a walk but don't break the

14 connection, all right?

15 THE WITNESS: Okay.

16 (3.10 pm)

17

(A short break)

18 (3.22 pm)

19 MR BLAKE: Thank you very much, Mr Burley. We're

20 back. I'm going to return to the issue of the

21 BTS, the branch trading statement and can we

look at FUJ00094268, please. We're still in

23 February 2010. This is an email chain. It's

24 an email chain that's not ideal from

25 a formatting perspective, so it may take us

- 1 a little bit of time to go through. This is
- 2 page 10 and you'll see there is an email from
- 3 Geoff Butts, and if you look down it is to Will
- 4 Russell, yourself and Barry Evans. Who are the
- 5 other two?
- 6 A. Will and Barry led the migration activity.
- 7 Q. Thank you. If we scroll down and over the page,
- 8 there's the email from Geoff Butts. He says:
- 9 "Both,
- This is to confirm the position on a fix for
- 11 the BTS [the branch trading statement] issue
- 12 whereby printing the Trial Balance Report for
- 13 BTS results in incorrect data being displayed in
- 14 the Final Balance Report. A fix can be
- 15 delivered and tested for inclusion within the
- 16 01.08 Maintenance Release as a counter fix. In
- the meantime, branches need to use the BTS Trial
- 18 Balance Report, which is correct, and discard
- 19 the BTS Final Balance Report, which is
- 20 incorrect."
- 21 Do you remember this issue?
- 22 A. Vaguely, yes. I think it's linked to the one we
- 23 talked about before.
- 24 $\,$ Q. So we saw the one related to Coton House and
- 25 Warwick.

- 1 to the cash account. It's basically, you know,
- 2 it's their accounts.
- 3 Q. Can you tell us what you're saying there?
- 4 A. Well, basically, I'm saying that why do you rely
- 5 on the trial balance and not the final balance
- 6 because the final balance, ultimately, is the
- 7 one that's important. Now, I don't know what
- 8 his response was on this but it might be it was
- 9 just on the printout that it was causing the
- 10 problem and not on the actual system stored
- 11 data, you know, but you'd still expect there to
- be a Known Error Log, even if it is just on the
- 13 printout.
- 14 Q. That's so that the message can be communicated
- to subpostmasters that there is a problem with
- 16 quite a significant document that, as you've
- 17 said there, is a legal document or used in legal
- 18 proceedings?
- 19 A. Well, I'm -- 100 per cent. And don't forget,
- 20 I think it's worth pointing out at this stage
- 21 that we had a subpostmaster group as part of our
- 22 release authorisation process. You know,
- 23 I bought in the part of the NFSP to support and
- 24 be comfortable with what we were doing. So they

179

25 would also -- you know, I'd expect them to sign

- 1 A. No, this is the one relating to the migration
- 2 and the incorrect, when they migrate, this will
- 3 be the -- because they used to run a BTS, branch
 - trading statement, when they'd migrated the
- 5 data, to prove that it had migrated correctly.
- 6 $\,$ **Q.** Here the suggestion is that a work around is
- 7 possible until it can be fixed.

"Geoff

8 A. Yeah.

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- 9 **Q.** You respond, page 9 is your response. You say
- 10 there:
- 12 "Thanks but can I ask who you have agreed
- this workaround with? This is a legal document
- 14 and there is a difference between a trial
- 15 balance and a Final Balance? I would also
- 16 expect CS ..."
 - Is that Customer Service or?
- 18 A. I can't -- I'm guessing so.
- 19 Q. "... to have a KEL [Known Error Log] for this --
- 20 if agreed -- to be able to explain the position
- 21 to any subpostmaster who calls in.
 - "Graham to confirm please."
- 23 Do you remember this response?
- 24 A. Well, vaguely, yes. I mean, it is a long time
- 25 ago but vaguely I remember it, yeah. It's back

178

- 1 it off as well.
- 2 Q. So are you saying they would have known about
- 3 this specific issue?
- 4 A. Yes, because, you know, absolutely. I brought
- 5 the NFSP in because I wanted them to be
- 6 comfortable with what we were doing and what we
- 7 were deploying.
- 8 **Q.** How would you share this kind of information?
- 9 A. Well, we had tripartite meetings with them, and,
- 10 you know, I would just share it open and
- 11 honestly because, you know, they need to be
- 12 clear, you know. What I'd typically do with
- 13 something like this is ask for some sort of
- demonstration of what's happening and for them
- 15 to sign up to that it's either okay or,
- 16 actually, if I didn't think it was okay, I might
- 17 not even share it because there's no point
- sharing something that I've said no -- you know,
- 19 if we agree it's not fit for purpose with
- 20 Fujitsu and they have to put a full fix in with
- the final balance, and that's why I'm asking the
- 22 question I'm asking, you know, who they've
- 23 agreed it with.
- 24 Q. So you do recall or don't recall this specific
- 25 issue being mentioned to the NFSP?

1	A.	I don't recall whether this specific issue was	1		but there's another report earlier on in the
2		mentioned to the NFSP or not.	2		consequences that is right and that they want to
3	Q.	Can we look at page 7. It's been escalated to	3		place reliance on that earlier report rather
4		Alan D'Alvarez within Fujitsu or sent to Alan	4		than the final report?
5		D'Alvarez. It says there sorry, it's the	5	A.	Yes. But what it doesn't tell us here is, if
6		page before. Thank you.	6		that's the system report or just the printed
7		It says:	7		version.
8		"Alan	8	Q.	Yes. Can we look at page 4, please, which is
9		"Just rang Geoff but he is on leave would	9		an email from Gareth Jenkins of 19 February to
10		you be able to help with this one please.	10		Phil Norton, copied to Alan D'Alvarez.
11		"Would you please send any history regards	11		As I said, they're laid out slightly
12		this issue specifically what the differences	12		strangely, but if we go over the page, that's
13		in the Final report are, and can you advise how	13		the substance of that email. It says:
14		Fujitsu have established that the trial report	14		"Alan D'Alvarez has asked me to respond to
15		is correct and that there is no corruption of	15		your concerns below. I'll try to explain the
16		the data.	16		issue and what has caused it.
17		"A speedy response would be appreciated as	17		"I assume you've seen the attached write-up
18		I need to explain this issue to our Finance	18		of the issue which was sent to Barry Evans
19		colleagues in more detail."	19		"To expand on this a bit further:
20		That's from Phil Norton, who is at the Post	20		"When the BTS is being produced, it is done
21		Office, that's a colleague of yours?	21		based on data written to the Branch Database
22	A.	Yes, who used to work for me on Horizon Next	22		whenever a Stock Unit Rolls Over.
23		Generation, yes.	23		"BTS Production retrieves this data from
24	Q.	So what's happening with these branch trading	24		BRDB to the counter.
25		statements is it's the final report that's wrong	25		"The counter then uses it to generate the
		181			182
1		Trial BTS.	1		"None of the incorrect data is stored to
2		"There is a bug in the way that the report	2		BRDB so there is no possibility of ongoing
3		is produced such that some of the in-memory copy	3		corruption of stock levels.
4		of the data is overwritten when the Trial BTS is	4		"Does this clarify the situation for you?"
5		produced.	5		So what do you understand the position to be
6		"A consequence of this is that when the	6		in simple terms?
7		final BTS is produced it is using incorrect	7	A.	I understand it to be some sort of corruption
8		data.	8		between the trial balance and final balance that
9		"The problem has been fixed by ensuring that	9		isn't actually corrupting the data but it is
10		the final BTS uses the original data retrieved	10		corrupting the way the data is being reported,
11		by the counter at step 2 rather than the data	11		such that the final balance hasn't got the
12		left over after step 4.	12		correct data on it any more. But it's not
13		"The problem was first reported by Warwick	13		actually impacting the balance as carried
14		"	14		forward and, if that's the case and it's been
15		So that's the issue we saw earlier that	15		validated as the case and that it doesn't
16		originally paused the rollout to further	16		invalidate the data going forward, then I guess
17		branches but that was quickly resumed:	17		that may have been acceptable. But, as I say,
18		" and they point out that the trial	18		I don't remember the detail of the, you know,
19		Balance figures were correct and the Final	19		I'm assuming that well, that would have been
20		Balance figures were incorrect.	20		tested and proven to be correct before we'd have
21		"comparing the Trial and Final balance	21		made the decision to accept this.
22		figures with the corresponding Stock Unit	22		Phil would also have checked with his
23		Balance Reports shows easily that the Trial	23		Finance colleagues in what was known as P&BA,
24		Balance is correct and the final Balance is	24		pension and branch accounting, I think,
25		incorrect.	25		something and branch accounting. To validate

1		that they were comfortable there was no risk of	1	need a bit of explaining from me. The indented
2	_	corruption.	2	parts of this are Phil Norton's email that
3	Q.	We'll see what happens. We can look at	3	Gareth Jenkins is responding to. So where he
4		an email, another response from Gareth Jenkins.	4	says, "Phil" and then it goes indented, actually
5		That's page 2. Just pausing therefore briefly,	5	the bit that is indented seems to be Phil
6		what was your relationship like with Gareth	6	Norton's comments and Gareth Jenkins is
7		Jenkins?	7	commenting below.
8	Α.	'	8	So Gareth Jenkins's words seem to be and
9	_	to be honest.	9	if we look at the penultimate paragraph and
10	Q.	,	10	final paragraph on that page, the bottom of that
11	A.		11	page, if we could highlight those entries, thank
12		time. I am guessing he was some sort to analyst	12	you he says:
13		within the Fujitsu team. That's why he's	13	"It is not practical to explain exactly
14		responding to Phil.	14	which figures are wrong and which are correct on
15	Q.	You raised earlier in the email chain the issue	15	the Final Report. However it is restricted
16		of this being a legal document. Did you have	16	entirely to the Stock levels of Volume Stock
17		any discussions at any time with him about legal	17	(ie the second part of the BTS). From the
18		proceedings?	18	examples we have seen it is likely to be many of
19	A.		19	the Stock levels are wrong) and the figures will
20	Q.	Were you aware of his involvement in legal	20	be too high, so indicating that the Branch's
21		proceedings at all relating to the Horizon	21	Stock levels should be higher than they really
22		System?	22	ought to be)."
23	A.	No.	23	Do you remember being satisfied by that kind
24	Q.	So this is the response from him. Now, this one	24	of an explanation, that it's not practical to
25		is slightly difficult to understand and it may	25	explain exactly which figures are wrong?
		185		186
4		March must contact the edicate by the continue that for their	4	manifes from discrizing devices at managers.
1	A.	•	1	monies from dismissed subpostmasters) and the
2		one?	2	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be
2		one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so	2 3	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of
2 3 4	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain.	2 3 4	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu
2 3 4 5	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at	2 3 4 5	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the
2 3 4 5 6	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at by Phil and by Will's team, so Will or Barry, to	2 3 4 5 6	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the problem and prove the system has integrity
2 3 4 5 6 7	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at by Phil and by Will's team, so Will or Barry, to ascertain exactly what's going on and whether	2 3 4 5 6 7	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the problem and prove the system has integrity should we be challenged."
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at by Phil and by Will's team, so Will or Barry, to ascertain exactly what's going on and whether that's acceptable and they would determine its	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the problem and prove the system has integrity should we be challenged." Gareth Jenkins' response on that is:
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at by Phil and by Will's team, so Will or Barry, to ascertain exactly what's going on and whether that's acceptable and they would determine its acceptability or not by consulting others, as	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the problem and prove the system has integrity should we be challenged." Gareth Jenkins' response on that is: "I understand this, though I would have
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at by Phil and by Will's team, so Will or Barry, to ascertain exactly what's going on and whether that's acceptable and they would determine its acceptability or not by consulting others, as I said, the head of P&BA, for example, to make	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the problem and prove the system has integrity should we be challenged." Gareth Jenkins' response on that is: "I understand this, though I would have [I think that must have been 'thought'] most
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at by Phil and by Will's team, so Will or Barry, to ascertain exactly what's going on and whether that's acceptable and they would determine its acceptability or not by consulting others, as I said, the head of P&BA, for example, to make sure there is no financial risk.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the problem and prove the system has integrity should we be challenged." Gareth Jenkins' response on that is: "I understand this, though I would have [I think that must have been 'thought'] most legal proceedings would be based on the first
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at by Phil and by Will's team, so Will or Barry, to ascertain exactly what's going on and whether that's acceptable and they would determine its acceptability or not by consulting others, as I said, the head of P&BA, for example, to make sure there is no financial risk. Can we just zoom out. You are in fact on this	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the problem and prove the system has integrity should we be challenged." Gareth Jenkins' response on that is: "I understand this, though I would have [I think that must have been 'thought'] most legal proceedings would be based on the first part of the report (which covers cash levels)
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at by Phil and by Will's team, so Will or Barry, to ascertain exactly what's going on and whether that's acceptable and they would determine its acceptability or not by consulting others, as I said, the head of P&BA, for example, to make sure there is no financial risk. Can we just zoom out. You are in fact on this particular email. You're there, you're one of	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the problem and prove the system has integrity should we be challenged." Gareth Jenkins' response on that is: "I understand this, though I would have [I think that must have been 'thought'] most legal proceedings would be based on the first part of the report (which covers cash levels) rather than the second part."
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	Q.	one? Well, you do appear in the chain later on, so you certainly did receive this within the chain. I mean, my view is that this would be looked at by Phil and by Will's team, so Will or Barry, to ascertain exactly what's going on and whether that's acceptable and they would determine its acceptability or not by consulting others, as I said, the head of P&BA, for example, to make sure there is no financial risk. Can we just zoom out. You are in fact on this particular email. You're there, you're one of the copy recipients.	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	potential 'integrity' challenges that could be levelled against the HNG system as a result of any differences; POL need assurance from Fujitsu that they could/will explain the cause of the problem and prove the system has integrity should we be challenged." Gareth Jenkins' response on that is: "I understand this, though I would have [I think that must have been 'thought'] most legal proceedings would be based on the first part of the report (which covers cash levels) rather than the second part." Then we have, again, Phil Norton's email:
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1 There's another point that he's responding 1 monies from the Subpostmasters. Given the Trial 2 to, from Phil Norton, which said: 2 report can be planted several times -- usually 3 3 "Would you please advise who within FS following stock adjustments made during the 4 [that's Fujitsu] would be in a position to 4 balancing process, this has no standing from 5 5 provide the assurances/agree to any such a legal perspective. 6 request." 6 "Based on this, and the understanding of the 7 7 Gareth Jenkins again says that he would defect, how it arose, and the proposed 8 leave that to others. 8 rectification (as provided by Gareth); our Finance team require certain specific 9 Can we look at page 1 of that email chain, 9 10 please. This is followed up by an email from 10 deliverables from Fujitsu in order for them to 11 Phil Norton to Alan D'Alvarez -- thank you very 11 be able to manage the risk this poses and to 12 12 give them the confidence to support the 13 You're copied in to that, and he says: 13 continued rollout of HNG. 14 14 "The deliverables required [include]" 15 "Further to the correspondence detailed 15 They want a list of all products where the 16 below -- I have now met with our finance team to 16 volumes on the final balance differ and they 17 discuss this issue and to establish their 17 want a definitive statement explaining how it 18 position regards any requirements that they have 18 has happened, et cetera. 19 to ensure POL does not incur additional expose 19 They also want a commitment to support POL 20 [I think that must mean 'exposure'] as a result 20 improving the integrity of the system, that's 21 of this defect. 21 number 5. Over the page: 22 22 "As previously stated the Final Balance "POL Legal to 'sign off' the Fujitsu 23 Report is a legal document and as such POL rely 23 Definitive Statement as fit for purpose. 24 24 "There are several internal processes that on the accuracy and integrity of the report 25 during any legal action we undertake to recover 25 will be implemented to ensure any impact is 189 190 1 minimised, however I do need Fujitsu's agreement 1 But, certainly in my discussions with Alan, he to the above to gain the support of our Finance 2 2 would always, you know, absolutely support what we were trying to do to make sure this was 3 teams." 3 Was the fact that the final balance that was 4 4 really of good quality. 5 produced by Horizon Online at this stage, that 5 Q. It's quite significant, of course, that 6 it was inaccurate, was that a serious issue for 6 a document that might be used in legal 7 the Post Office? 7 proceedings is inaccurate in showing the final 8 A. Absolutely. I think, as you can see, you know, 8 balance. How far up within the Post Office do 9 from the investigation that was done of it. 9 you think this issue was raised? Q. The workaround that had been suggested that the I honestly can't -- cannot tell you. It doesn't 10 10 11 final balance was simply discarded, was that 11 have to be raised anywhere, unless we were put 12 appropriate? Was that considered appropriate by 12 under pressure from Fujitsu to accept their 13 the Post Office? 13 workaround. You know, from everything I've read A. Well, based on the above comments, no, and 14 14 so far, we did absolutely the right thing. 15 that's why I asked with Phil to check with P&BA 15 Asked Phil to look into it with P&BA, as I say, 16 because they're the owners of the financial 16 who owned the financial integrity. They've 17 17 given us a very clear statement that they need integrity. 18 Q. Do you think that Fujitsu were taking the legal 18 to understand and to be able to have absolutely 19 implications of this seriously enough? 19 definitive proof that the integrity of the data 20 A. I'd like to think so. I mean, you know, in my 20 is not compromised in any way and also ensure 21 discussions with them, I never had any reason to 21 our legal team to sign off to that effect. 22 doubt that, you know. So I'd like to think they 22 You know, so really important to us and 23 were taking that seriously. But without seeing 23 them, you know, that this is, you know, 24 how they responded to this, you know, it would 24 absolutely integrity is at the heart of it. 25 be interesting to see what their response was. 25 The workaround is not relying on the final 191 192

- report and having some sort of side assurance that everything is okay. Given that people were prosecuted by the Post Office, do you think that that was sufficient?
- 5 **A.** Well, sorry, I don't believe we went live with6 this workaround.
- Q. But do you think that attitude of reliance on
 a side statement, rather than fixing the problem
 then and there, was sufficient?
- 10 A. I think that's an unfair question, to be 11 brutally honest. I think Fujitsu were proposing 12 a potential workaround. At no point are they 13 saying this workaround has to be accepted. They 14 were proposing what they deemed a potential 15 workaround. Clearly, it set alarm bells in my 16 head when I saw it, hence I asked who'd agreed 17 to it, and asked Phil to look into it.

And, you know, I don't see anything on here that's, you know -- there's a little bit where, you know, he's trying to explain why he thinks it's okay but, clearly, doesn't have the full understanding of the significance of the final balance statement in any potential legal proceedings.

So I don't see any pressure from them, you 193

message somehow would be linked?

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- A. No, no, my -- can you put my words back on thescreen, please?
- 4 Q. Yes, it's the same document, and it is page 9.
- A. My words don't say that. My words say, first of
 all, who has it been agreed with? This is
 a legal document so instantly registering my
 concern about it and there's a difference
 between a trial and a final, you know, if we
 were to go ahead with anything like this, you
 know, we would expect -- if CS is customer
- service, I don't know -- but certainly a Known
- 13 Error Log, if it was agreed. And, as I said,
- 14 I don't know -- my first question is: who has
- 15 agreed to it? And then, as you see, I asked
- 16 Phil to determine if it's acceptable and that's
- 17 what leads to all the investigation that says
- 18 it's not acceptable.

So you wouldn't have a Known Error Log for something that we're not accepting because, actually, we'd be asking Fujitsu to fix it.

22 Q. It's the attitude that I'd like to drill down
23 on, really, because we're talking about very
24 early days of Horizon Online here, and there is
25 a problem with the balance, the final balance,

1 know. Clearly, in hindsight, it wasn't a good

2 proposal and, as such, I believe it was rejected

3 on this basis.

Q. Given the significance of Post Office's ability
 to prosecute people, based on information

to prosecute people, based on informationprovided to a court in arising from a printout

7 from the Horizon System, do you think that

8 an approach that looks for workarounds is the

9 right approach or do you think, for example,

10 that should have caused the Post Office to take

11 a deep look at the system?

12 A. As I said to you, it set alarm bells in my head.

13 A deep look at the system, this is one issue

that arose that absolutely we were trying to do

15 the right thing to make sure it was resolved.

16 Q. How would this information be cascaded down to17 individual branches?

18 **A.** Well, it wouldn't be because, as I said, unless

19 you're going to tell me we went live with it,

which I don't believe we did, and I'll be

21 surprised if we did, you know, why would we

22 cascade it, because we'd expect it to be fixed.

23 $\,$ Q. Your suggestion, though, was to make sure it was

24 on the Known Error Log, so that any

25 subpostmasters who phoned in would -- the 194

1 and what you're saying there is that you would

2 expect there to be a Known Error Log, if it was

3 agreed, so that subpostmasters -- any

4 subpostmaster who calls in would -- the two

5 would be linked. But what about all those

6 subpostmasters who don't call in?

7 A. Sorry, you know, it's not about being able to

explain it; it's about being absolutely 100 percent certain it's got integrity and that's what

10 I said at the beginning. It's absolutely

11 critical that the system had integrity and we

12 could support that integrity. And, hence,

13 I asked Phil to look at that. And there's no

14 way we would have proceeded without the system

15 having integrity.

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16 Q. But where there were problems in the system,

17 known problems, was the attitude to have a Known

18 Error Log for the problem to be able to explain

19 the position to any subpostmaster who calls in?

Was that a common response to problems that, put

21 it on the error log and all will be okay?

22 A. No, I think that is really not a fair reflection

at all. A Known Error Log is more for things

24 that are genuine workarounds that have no real

25 impact. It's almost back to my font example.

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You know, it's things that do not impact the subpostmaster, do not impact a counter clerk, do not impact, you know, any of our clients at the

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They're just things that, you know, are, shall we say not quite, you know, as we expect them to be, but aren't causing any financial or other material impact or questioning of integrity, and we wouldn't proceed with it. We wouldn't have something on the Known Error Log for something that is an integrity question.

- 11 12 Q. So if the Known Error Log did have things that 13 were more significant than just the font issue, 14 that affected the real lives of subpostmasters, 15 would that have been poor practice and 16 unexpected by yourself?
- 17 A. I mean -- sorry, font example is a very, very 18 simplistic example. A Known Error Log will 19 contain certain scenarios, you know, and they're 20 generally what are classed as low-level issues 21 that will be fixed over time. But they 22 shouldn't have any impact on the integrity of 23 the system. If they have impact on the 24 integrity of the system, I will be surprised, if 25 they're on the Known Error Log. 197

to the Acceptance Board Recommendation 3: 'Proceed at risk through Acceptance Gateway'.

"These associated conditions were discussed at the corresponding release authorisation board and recorded in the minutes of that meeting."

Do you recall in terms of the acceptance of Horizon Online that it was effectively "proceed at risk", as in there still were some concerns but the agreement was to proceed despite some concerns?

- A. But the concerns are not to do with anything that is high severity and therefore not an integrity question. It is clearly called out there but yet a number could combine to form a high severity, if whatever the fix was, didn't actually complete successfully, and therefore we would end up pausing again if that was the situation.
- 19 Q. Can we look at page 9 of this document. It may 20 be at the bottom of page 8. The bottom of this 21 page says:

"It should be noted that there are also defects that are not linked to POL Requirements and which are not the subject of an Acceptance Incidents. A separate assessment of the status

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Q. Can we look at POL00032999, please. This is the same period, so we're looking here at 23 February 2010. This is the acceptance report for HNG-X. Can we look at page 12 -- just to look, the external distribution, you're on the list there as having received this document.

Can we look at page 12 and it's paragraph 1.3 that I'd like to look at.

9 It may be slightly earlier than that. It 10 may be the page before. Thank you very much. 11 "Acceptance Decision", could we highlight the 12 "Acceptance Decision"? I'm just going to read 13 that. It says:

"The AG3 Acceptance Board ... was held on 21/01/10 and approval to proceed through AG3 was granted. The decision stated that '... it was agreed that the high priority figures in "Reset 4" -- to be delivered as part of the Maintenance Release 01.08 -- could constitute High Severity AI if not delivered in time for High Volume Pilot ... 'As such, 'Qualified Acceptance' at AG3 was agreed, subject to the successful delivery of the high priority items in Reset 04.

> "Whilst not an exact match, this the closest 198

1 and significance of these has been undertaken 2 and this will be available for consideration at 3 the Release Authorisation Board."

4 Are you able to assist us with that at all, 5 that there were defects that weren't linked to 6 POL requirements?

- 7 A. Not specifically. I cannot think what would be 8 a defect that wouldn't be specifically covered, 9 you know, other than going to back to my font 10 example, which probably wasn't a specific 11 requirement. But other than things like that, 12 you know, I'd have to see some examples to 13 recall that.
- 14 Q. Can we look at FUJ00094265. This document, when 15 it comes up, goes back to the issue we were 16 talking about a moment ago. This is an internal 17 Fujitsu document and it has the recipient there 18 was the general council at Fujitsu, and it says 19 that the issue has been flagged as critical to 20 fix before the start of rollout. This is the 21 branch trading statement issue that we talked 22 about a moment ago.

There's a draft email there from Geoff Butts, it's a draft response to the Post Office, so it's essentially responding to that request 200

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2 could scroll down. 3 It's drafted to Phil, and it says -- for 4 example the problem description, it says: 5 "On the final report, the stockholding 6 figures in the second section of the report are 7 incorrect on the final balance." 8 So that's the problem we've already talked, 9 about and it provides the reassurance that is 10 asked for. If we look over the page, it has 11 "Key questions" and answers: 12 "Can Fujitsu provide a complete and 13 comprehensive list of all products where the 14 volumes on the final balance report differ from 15 those on the trial balance report? All figures 16 relating to the volume stock holdings can be 17 corrupted by the bug but not necessarily all the 18 figures will be incorrect." 19 If we go down: 20 "How has the defect arisen?" 21 It's a software issue. 22 "What is Fujitsu doing to resolve the 23 defect? 24 "Fujitsu has developed a software fix that 25 resolves the issue by ensuring that the final 201 1 made to Fujitsu. Is your evidence that it 2 wasn't agreed or that you don't recall it was 3 agreed, or something else? 4 A. Well, all I know is the previous email from Phil 5 said it wouldn't be agreed without all these 6 caveats being put in place. I've yet to see all 7 those caveats being answered in this draft 8 email. 9 Q. Well, let's look at the final entry. It says: 10 "Can Fujitsu provide a commitment to support 11 POL in proving the integrity of the system in 12 any subsequent legal action (specifically where 13 the difference in the two reports is used as 14 a means to challenge the integrity of the 15 system? 16 "Yes, Fujitsu is willing to provide 17 commitment to prove the integrity of the system 18 in any subsequent legal action." 19 Is that something that you recall ever 20 happening? 21 A. I don't recall it ever happening. I think the 22 one above as well is interesting as well and 23 important. Please don't lose that one. 24 Q. Absolutely. So it says: 25 "Can Fujitsu provide a statement proving in 203

for assurance, and it's a draft of that. If we

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1 report uses the original data retrieved by the 2 counter at step 2 described above rather than 3 using the data left after step 4. This is 4 a counter fix that is currently scheduled to be 5 delivered within the next maintenance release 6 for HNG-X -- 01.08. In the short-term, before the fix is deployed into live, Fujitsu has 7 8 written a KEL which includes instructions to the 9 HSD to give advice to Postmasters. The advice 10 is to use the Trial Report, which is correct, 11 and to discard the Final Report." 12 This is something again, we were talking 13 about earlier and it was your suggestion in your 14 email that it certainly needed, if accepted, to 15 go on to the Known Error Log, and the workaround 16 there seems to be to rely on that earlier 17 statement and not the final report. So you rely

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20 Q. So it certainly seems from this that that was 21 the position and that was agreed at that time.

on the trial report not the final report.

22 **A**. Where is it saying it was agreed? I think 23 this --

24 Well, this is -- certainly, the intention here 25 seems to be to respond to the request that was 202

1 the integrity of the data is not compromised in 2 any way and the only impact is incorrectly 3 reported data?

"Fujitsu confirms that this defect relates specifically to the printing of report data and is not related in any way to the underlying branch data held in the operational HNG-X system."

9 If you recall at the start of this section 10 I talked about is it just the printout that's 11 reporting it incorrectly or is it the system.

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. By that, it sounds like it's just the printout not the actual system. But, as I said, we still need to go on but I still haven't seen, you know -- yes, they've said they're willing to provide a legal assurance to the -- to the integrity and, you know, there's still more missing for me, you know, because this would go to Phil, Phil would, you know, take it to the Finance team and also to the -- our internal lawyers for advice.

23 Q. If this had been accepted as the means to get 24 around the issue, do you think it would be a bit 25 shoddy or would it be satisfactory to provide 204

2		a trial report not a final report and then you
3		have Fujitsu provide a statement in criminal or
4		civil proceedings saying that everything is
5		fine?
6	A.	I think, if it is just the printout that is
7		correct and Fujitsu have proven and demonstrated
8		that, and the integrity of the system has been
9		absolutely proven to be 100 per cent, then
10		I think it is reasonable. It's not ideal, but
11		it is reasonable. But, as I said, it's proving
12		that it is only the printout. It's proving
13		that, you know, the system does maintain a full
14		integrity.
15	Q.	Would the attitude of the Post Office be that
16		they had to rely on Fujitsu in those
17		circumstances to guarantee those kinds of
18		assurances that you've just talked about?
19	A.	No, I think you'll recall on Phil's email he
20		wanted assurance from our Finance team and from
21		our lawyers.
22	Q.	Yes, but who would be able to prove the
23		integrity of the system? Were you reliant on
24		Fujitsu or would that be a joint effort?
25	A.	We would run various tests to prove, you know,
		205
1		a week, maybe once a fortnight. A "hot fix" is
1		a week, maybe once a fortnight. A "hot fix" is where they'd put a fix in between that because
		• •
2	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because
2	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent. "GB will also prepare a statement that confirms
2 3 4	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent.
2 3 4 5	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent. "GB will also prepare a statement that confirms the legality/integrity of the trial balance
2 3 4 5 6	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent. "GB will also prepare a statement that confirms the legality/integrity of the trial balance report if that needs to be used." So that's the draft of which we saw earlier
2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent. "GB will also prepare a statement that confirms the legality/integrity of the trial balance report if that needs to be used." So that's the draft of which we saw earlier or document relating to that we saw earlier.
2 3 4 5 6 7	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent. "GB will also prepare a statement that confirms the legality/integrity of the trial balance report if that needs to be used." So that's the draft of which we saw earlier or document relating to that we saw earlier. Can we scroll up again, so we can look at the
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent. "GB will also prepare a statement that confirms the legality/integrity of the trial balance report if that needs to be used." So that's the draft of which we saw earlier or document relating to that we saw earlier. Can we scroll up again, so we can look at the next entry, it says: "25 February. POL have requested that this be a hot fix as it is required before we migrate any further branches. Fujitsu to ensure
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2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent. "GB will also prepare a statement that confirms the legality/integrity of the trial balance report if that needs to be used." So that's the draft of which we saw earlier or document relating to that we saw earlier. Can we scroll up again, so we can look at the next entry, it says: "25 February. POL have requested that this be a hot fix as it is required before we migrate any further branches. Fujitsu to ensure deliverables listed in PN email dated 24 February for current five branches are included. "4 March. GB has received feedback on integrity statement from Fujitsu legal. Info
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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		where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent. "GB will also prepare a statement that confirms the legality/integrity of the trial balance report if that needs to be used." So that's the draft of which we saw earlier or document relating to that we saw earlier. Can we scroll up again, so we can look at the next entry, it says: "25 February. POL have requested that this be a hot fix as it is required before we migrate any further branches. Fujitsu to ensure deliverables listed in PN email dated 24 February for current five branches are included. "4 March. GB has received feedback on integrity statement from Fujitsu legal. Info will be forwarded to PN. "11 March, PN has passed statement to P&BA" You were talking to about P&BA earlier, weren't you. Can you remind us what they were?
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	Q.	where they'd put a fix in between that because we'd deemed it urgent. "GB will also prepare a statement that confirms the legality/integrity of the trial balance report if that needs to be used." So that's the draft of which we saw earlier or document relating to that we saw earlier. Can we scroll up again, so we can look at the next entry, it says: "25 February. POL have requested that this be a hot fix as it is required before we migrate any further branches. Fujitsu to ensure deliverables listed in PN email dated 24 February for current five branches are included. "4 March. GB has received feedback on integrity statement from Fujitsu legal. Info will be forwarded to PN. "11 March, PN has passed statement to P&BA" You were talking to about P&BA earlier,

this kind of workaround where you rely on

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1		and produce examples whereby the report was
2		incorrect but we'd proved the data underlying
3		system data was still had the integrity.
4	Q.	We've seen certainly at the Fujitsu end that
5		this has gone to the General Counsel. Do you
6		recall how high up this particular issue went
7		within the Post Office?
8	A.	I don't recall, no.
9	Q.	Can we go to FUJ00094472. This is the "Notes
10		from the Horizon Next Generation Joint Progress
11		Meeting" of 11 March 2010. Can we look at the
12		bottom of page 3 into page 4, please. Thank
13		you, the bottom of that page. "PN" is Phil
14		Norton?
15	A.	Yes.
16	Q.	It says there:
17		"Trial report final balance issue
18		"PN to check if the proposed workaround is
19		acceptable to the business. Permanent fix
20		targeted for R1.08. However, this is dependent
21		on the acceptability of the workaround. It may
22		need to be a hot fix."
23		What was a "hot fix"?
24	A.	So Fujitsu would do releases, I can't remember
25		how often they would do a release, maybe once
		206
1		or I can't remember what the "P" stands for.
2		It's basically the central Finance team who look
3		after the cash accounting data and reconciling
4	_	with the clients, et cetera.
5	Q.	" who are reviewing with POL legal team. PN
6		will feed back to GB."
7		Do you recall at all how this issue ended?
8	A.	I don't recall how the issue ended, no, and if
9	_	you note, I wasn't at this particular meeting.
10	Q.	Had you moved into a different position by then
11		or were you just no longer involved in that
12		particular issue?
13	Α.	No, at the top I've given my apologies. I was
14	_	actually on holiday at this point.
15	Q.	Thank you. Can we look at FUJ00094471. This is
16		a Post Office highlight report, 17 March 2010.
17		It has your name at the top there. It's the
18		third paragraph down, it says:
19		"Fujitsu are now providing evidence to POL
20		which indicates an improvement in stability and
21		therefore the pilot has been scheduled to
22		restart this week, as agreed by the POL internal
23		Release Authorisation Board on 17 March."

Then it goes on to talk about high volume of

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calls to the helpdesk. It says:

1		"The average number of calls per Horizon	1		around at this time because I know by the dates
2		Online branch remains significantly higher than	2		I was away.
3		that of the Horizon branches and the concern	3	Q.	Looking back at all the things we've been
4		remains that the HSD will fail to cope with	4		looking at, do you think that HNG-X, Horizon
5		a significant increase in migrated branches."	5		Online, was rolled out too soon?
6		If we look down, an entry that relates to	6	A.	No. I regard we did the appropriate testing.
7		quality. This is all six days later, and it	7		We did validate the integrity fully before we
8		seems as though the pilot is restarting and	8		migrated. We stopped in the event of any
9		these are the issues that are still occurring.	9		suggestion there was any issue that impacted the
10		Screen freezes and it says the rate of screen	10		integrity or anything else that couldn't be
11		freezes and recoveries has been greater than	11		explained, you know. As I said, I personally
12		expected. "User opinion", it then says, "The	12		brought in the NFSP, National Federation of
13		number of calls", as I just explained, to the	13		SubPostmasters, to form part of our (a) we
14		HSD:	14		bought them in to the testing so they could
15		" the rate of calls from Horizon Online	15		actual get directly involved in the testing but
16		branches is significantly higher from Horizon	16		also part of our release authorisation process,
17		branches."	17		and they were party to every decision to
18		You're not aware whether the branch report	18		proceed.
19		issue had been resolved by this stage?	19	Q.	Can we look at POL00022842, please. This is
20	A.	I'd have thought it would have been, if it isn't	20	Ψ.	appendix 2 to the judgment of Mr Justice Fraser
21		mentioned explicitly.	21		and it lists or summarises bugs, errors and
22	Q.	But there were still at that stage other issues,	22		defects in Horizon. Can we go to the second
23	Œ.	despite the pilot having resumed?	23		page of that and there's the summary of bugs,
24	Α.	Well, and that's what makes me infer that it was	24		errors and defects. I'm just going to take you
25		resolved. But, again, I wouldn't have been 209	25		through the bugs, errors or defects that relate 210
1		to Horizon Online.	1		Number 8:
2		We have there number 1:	2		"Recovery issues. These are bugs, errors
3		"Receipts and payments mismatch bug	3		and defects present in Horizon Online with years
4		"This is a bug present in Horizon Online.	4		of effect from 2010 to 2018."
5		The bug occurred in 2010. The majority of	5		Over the page, number 13:
6		incidents are recorded as occurring between	6		"Withdrawn stock discrepancies. This is
7		August and October 2010."	7		a bug present in Horizon Online mentioned in
8		Number 3:	8		2010 and 2011."
9		"Suspense account bug	9		Number 14:
10		"This is a bug present in Horizon Online.	10		"Bureau discrepancies. This is a bug
11		Its identified years of effect are 2010 to 2013.	11		present in Horizon Online. It arose in 2017."
12		Number 4:	12		Down to number 19:
13		"Dan Wellington(?) ** Bug/branch outreach	13		"Post & Go/TA discrepancies in POL SAP.
14		issue. This is a bug present in Horizon Online.	14		This is a bug present in Horizon Online.
15		It's effects were experienced between 2010 and	15		Occurred in 2012.
16		2015.	16		"Recovery failures. This arises in Horizon
17		Number 5:	17		Online. This is referable to Horizon issue 4
18		"Remming in bug. This is a bug present in	18		and not Horizon issue 1. Two of the PEAKs show
19		Horizon Online. It was present for about five	19		errors and defects, they do not show bugs.
20		months in 2010 between March and August."	20		Mentioned in 2010, 2012 and 2015.
21		Number 7:	21		Over the page to number 23, please:
22		"Local suspense account issue. Not the same	22		"Bureau de Change. This is a bug present in
23		as 3, suspense account bug. This is a bug	23		both Legacy Horizon and Horizon Online. Arose
24		present in Horizon Online. This was reported in	24		in 2005, 2006 and 2010 onwards."
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2010 and recorded as fixed in September 2010."

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"Lyca top-up bug. This is bug present in Horizon Online. Occurred in August 2010." Number 28:

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"Drop and go. This is a bug present in Horizon Online, occurred in July 2017. The date of the KEL suggests HNG-A but the KEL is expressly headed HNG-X."

You were asked to specifically address a list of bugs in you statement but you didn't address these bugs. Is there a reason why you didn't address these bugs in your statement? Α. I didn't know I was expected to address these bugs in my statement but all I would say is there's far too little information on these for me to make a comment on them. It doesn't tell me what the actual bug is, it just says there's a bug present. For example, Lyca top-up, it just says there's a bug present in Horizon Online. It doesn't tell me what the nature of that bug is, and, you know, whether it was, you know, if you recall back, one of the things I said to you was, you know, you don't develop a system, deploy it and that's it. You're constantly making improvements to that system, be that new products, be that changes in how we 213

NFSP. Ultimately their support was a vital part of our rollout."

I mean, it was a bit more than some noise, wasn't there, in terms of the number of bugs that I've just taken you to, the implications of it all? Do you think, again, you've minimised the issues in your statement?

A. Sorry, let me explain to you how I've answered this question. The documents I received were several thousand pages, and as I said to you, you know, none of those -- some of those bugs were well after Horizon HNG-X was rolled out. Some of those, you know -- and therefore presumably introduced by a subsequent release. None of those bugs have enough detail for me to comment on, and I'd be commenting from, you know, a guesswork, and that's totally the wrong thing to do, you know.

I've never said there weren't bugs in the system. As I said, of course there was noise. We managed it very closely with the -- as I said, we involved the Federation of subpostmasters in all our decisions. We worked with them. You know, they were very much part of the team that agreed, you know, in terms of

1 operate products, et cetera.

And, therefore, there's always a risk that
bugs do creep in and that's why you have to, you
know, keep testing it and, you know, keep on top
of it. But on none of these have I got
sufficient information to be able to comment on
them, I'm afraid.

- Q. Do I take it from that that you didn't follow
 any of the court proceedings relating to
 Horizon?
- 11 A. Well, I followed bits of it but, you know,
 12 I didn't follow in detail, you know. I looked
 13 on from afar and --
- Q. You were given a specific list in your Rule 9
 Request that identified bugs and asked to
 comment on them, and can we take you to your
 response. It's WITN03850100, that's your
 statement, and take you to paragraph 19, page 5.
 You said there:

"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

- any known errors, would we go live with them?Absolutely. They were part and parcel.
- 3 **Q.** Are you still there?
- 4 A. Yes, I'm still here.

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- 5 **Q.** Thank you. Is your evidence that after rollout there weren't significant bugs that were drawn to your attention that addressed issues that affected the cash account and affected the lives of subpostmasters?
- A. No, I can truthfully say that from the point we
 rolled out HNG-X/Horizon Online, that I wasn't
 aware of any bugs that impacted the integrity of
 the system. I wasn't aware of them. I'm being
 very specific.
- 15 **Q.** They weren't drawn to your attention by anybody?
- 16 A. Well, no, and in part probably because I'd left17 the Post Office by then.
- 18 Q. Well, let's say the rollout of Horizon Online
 19 was 2010. After 2010 did anybody draw to your
 20 attention significant errors or bugs with
- 21 Horizon Online that affected the cash accounts 22 of subpostmasters?
- A. Not to my knowledge, no. I'm not saying itdidn't happen, but not to my knowledge, no.
- 25~ **Q.** Can we look at POL00029618, please. It's

1		page 2.	1		"POL has recently disclosed to Second Sight
2		This is an email from Ron Warmington of	2		that in 2011 and 2012 it had discovered defects
3		Second Sight to Simon Baker. Do you know who	3		in Horizon Online that impacted 77 sub post
4		either Ron Warmington or Simon Baker are?	4		offices. The first defect, referred to as the
5	A.	I've no idea who Ron is. I think Simon I	5		'Receipts and Payments Mismatch Problem',
6		don't know what his role was. He joined the	6		impacted 63 branches. It was discovered in
7		Post Office before I left, but I don't know what	7		September 2010 as a result of Fujitsu's
8		his role was at this time.	8		monitoring of the system events (although there
9	Q.	Were you aware of an investigation being carried	9		were subsequent calls from branches). The
10		out by Second Sight into issues with Horizon?	10		aggregate of the discrepancies arising from this
11	A.	I broadly recall it, but I thought it was, you	11		system defect was £9,029, the largest shortfall
12		know, with Legacy Horizon.	12		being £777 and the largest surplus £7,044. It
13	Q.	We have here an email from Ron Warmington that	13		is not yet clear whether subpostmasters with the
14	٠.	says:	14		surpluses profited from them, or whether those
15		"Simon, this is a draft section of the	15		showing shortages had to make them good.
16		report dealing with two defects."	16		"The second defect, referred to as the
17		And he asked two questions. He wants to	17		'Local Suspense Account Problem', affected 14
18		know how there were shortages, or how the	18		branches and generated discrepancies aggregating
19		shortages or surpluses that arose from certain	19		to £4,486, including a shortfall of 9,800 at one
20		problems were impacting on subpostmasters, and	20		branch and a surplus of 3,200 at another. POL
		he also wants to know when and how and who knew	21		
21 22		about those problems. I'll take you to the	22		was unaware of this defect until a year after its first occurrence in 2011."
			23		So it's referring to issues in 2011 and 2012
23		extract from the interim report. If you scroll			· ·
24 25		down, he has sent Simon Baker an extract from	24		that affect the cash account of subpostmasters.
25		his report to assist him. It says: 217	25		If we go on to the page before, page 1., 218
1		Simon Baker says he's sending this on, and he	1		Now is Lesley Sewell wrong to say that you
2		says:	2		were involved?
3		"Just got this from Ron."	3	A.	Involved in what?
4		Sorry, it's further down. It's the bottom.	4	Q.	Well, he is asking who in Post Office knew about
5		"Just got this from Ron.	5		these problems.
6		"I can get back to him on most of the	6	A.	So I think the one on receipts not equal
7		questions but need your help on who in Post	7		payments we've discussed and, you know, I didn't
8		Office knew about it. I know from the email	8		believe that was found when we were actually
9		that Rod sent that Mike Young knew, but don't	9		live. I thought that was found before we were
10		know if it went any higher."	10		live. But from the below, it might have been
11		This is to Lesley Sewell. Do you know who	11		when we were live. But, you know, the suspense
12		Lesley Sewell was?	12		one doesn't ring any bells with me at all, and
13	A.	Lesley Sewell was the new head of IT that was	13		certainly I wasn't informed of the 2011 one.
14		brought in shortly before I left.	14	Q.	Did Lesley Sewell ever raise, following receipt
15	Q.	Can we go to the top, email from Lesley Sewell.	15		of this email with you, any questions that
16		She responds, 25 June 2013:	16		Second Sight had raised, or
17		"Simon, I don't know if it went any higher	17	A.	No.
18		than Mike. Andy Mc"	18	Q.	or any issues concerning Second Sight's
19		Who is "Andy Mc"?	19		report?
20	A.	Andy Mc it was the Head of Service	20	A.	Nobody from the Post Office contacted me with
21		Management. I can't remember his surname.	21		anything to do with the system after I left.
22	Q.	"I don't know if this went any higher than Mike.	22	Q.	So you think the extent of your involvement was
23		Andy Mc also managed the service at the time,	23		the involvement in the local was it the
24		and if I remember correctly, Mark Burley was	24		receipts and payments mismatch, or the suspense
25		also involved."	25		account issue?

(55) Pages 217 - 220

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		Th
1	Α.	Sorry, say the question again?
2	Q.	The extent of your involvement in the underlying
3		bugs, errors or defects, you're saying that it
4		was the first, which is the receipts and
5		payments mismatch, or the second, which is the
6		local suspense account problem?
7	A.	No, I'm saying I remember the receipts not equal
8		payments issue. And we did discuss that
9		earlier. I don't
10	Q.	I think we looked at that earlier in relation to
11		Legacy Horizon rather than Horizon Online,
12		although I may be wrong on that.
13	A.	Yeah, and that's what I think I'm getting
14		confused now, because I don't recall it.
15		I definitely recall it on original Horizon, but
16		all I can say is, you know, obviously there were
17		defects during the development of HNG-X. If we
18		found defects that had any chance of impacting
19		the integrity, we would make absolutely certain
20		they would be fixed. And if that involved
21		pausing, if that involved delay, that's what we
22		would do.
23	Q.	Why do you think Lesley Sewell has mentioned you
24		in connection with these particular defects,
25		what are described at that time as "defects"? 221

1 was issued, et cetera?" Simon Baker emails Lesley Sewell to say: 2 3 "I can get back to him on most of the 4 questions but need your help on who in Post 5 Office knew about it." 6 Then Lesley Sewell's response is: 7 "I don't know if it went higher than Mike. 8 Andy Mc also managed the service at the time and if I remember correctly, Mark Burley was also 9 10 involved." 11 Is that recollection of Lesley Sewell wrong? Well, I think one, it's saying Lesley clearly Α. knew about it, reading this. And just saying

11 Is that recollection of Lesley Sewell wrong?
12 A. Well, I think one, it's saying Lesley clearly
13 knew about it, reading this. And just saying
14 "If I remember correctly." All I'm saying is my
15 recollection is I wasn't aware of those two
16 specifics. But as I've said, it's my
17 recollection, you know, at this stage, which is
18 12 years since I left.
19 Q. Would you not have remembered such significant

Q. Would you not have remembered such significant impact on the cash account, given how significant you have said, in your evidence today, that it was to the very system that you were managing?

A. I don't remember a specific instance, not
 necessarily. Would I remember if anything was
 223

1 A. I don't think she's saying that in connection 2 with the defects. I think she's saying because 3 I was programme manager when she first joined. 4 Q. And what would that mean? The question that's 5 been asked here by Second Sight is ... I can 6 tell you, but it's asking who knew what when, 7 effectively. And you're being -- it seems to be 8 that you're being suggested as somebody who was 9 involved. 10 A. Yeah, but as I'm saying to you, I don't recall 11 being involved. As I say, the receipts and 12 payments is an interesting one because I was

13 clearly getting confused with the original 14 Horizon. But, you know, as I say, during my 15 time as programme manager, during my time as 16 Head of Delivery, if any defects had come to my 17 attention that would remotely put at risk the 18 integrity of the system, I would have raised it 19 and insist it was fixed. There was absolutely 20 no question in my head whatsoever about that. 21 The question in Ron Warmington's email is:

The question in Ron Warmington's email is: "Can you please let me know whether, when, and who at board level was informed of the defect, and also the later local suspense account defect, and whether any press release 222

raised regarding the risk to the integrity of
the cash account, then one hundred per cent
I would have insisted it was dealt with. But if
you ask me do I remember every single incident
that was raised that was connected to the cash
account? No, I don't.

Q. And do you think that Lesley Sewell was wrong in naming you there?
A. I think that's a question you have to ask

A. I think that's a question you have to ask
 Lesley, why she named me. I don't know why she
 named me.

12 Q. But do you think it was wrong for her to name
13 you, given your level of involvement, or might
14 it actually have been right?

A. She's saying "If remember correctly." My view is she wasn't remembering correctly, because
I don't recall those two specifics, especially, as I said, at that date. But I can't be a hundred per cent certain, as I'm saying.

Q. I'm going to move on very briefly, before we
 finish, to a couple of other matters. Can we
 look at POL00055100. This question relates to
 your involvement in matters relating to criminal
 proceedings.

This is an email exchange of July 2010, so

we're going back in time now. And rollout of
Horizon Online hadn't been completed by this
stage, I don't think.

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It concerns a disclosure request that was made by solicitors for somebody who was being prosecuted, Seema Misra. She was a defendant in criminal proceedings that related to an incident in 2008.

- 9 A. I vaguely remember her name, yes. I do. From10 the news. Not from this.
- 11 Q. So Merlin Benjamin, on behalf of Jarnail
 12 Singh -- do you remember Jarnail Singh at all?
 13 A. No.
- 14 Q. That's the bottom email. In fact it's Jarnail
 15 Singh who is sending the email. You can see
 16 over the next page. But if we highlight that
 17 bottom entry, it says:

"I enclose a copy of an email received from Issy Hogg, the defence solicitors, on 22 July 2010, the content of which is self-explanatory. Could you please be kind enough to let me have your urgent instructions as to the access and information she is requesting in respect of the system in the Midlands and the operation at Chesterfield and

225

1 "I'm awaiting comments from Penny/Gareth at
2 Fujitsu but the general consensus of opinion is
3 that these points are too vague and more
4 information is required exactly from the defence
5 as to exactly what they require. Our guidance
6 is required as per the email from Andrew Winn
7 below in relation to ..."

Ah, sorry. If we scroll down, sorry, there's a key passage I missed off there which is the email from Andrew Winn to Jon Longman which says:

"I think Mark Burley would be the route into IT to identify who might be best placed to deal with this aspect."

- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. Why is your name being suggested in relation to17 this disclosure request?
- 18 A. Probably because at that time I was the head ofdelivery for IT in the Post Office.
- 20 **Q.** And was it usual for you to have a role in
- relation to criminal proceedings?A. I never had a role in relation to criminal
- 23 proceedings. I don't even believe I was
- 24 contacted in respect of this.
- 25 **Q.** So why is your name being mentioned in respect 227

the error logs. I will contact Gareth Jenkins
 to find out what transpired at the meeting with
 Charles McLachlan."

4 So this was essentially a disclosure request 5 made in criminal proceedings. If we scroll up 6 we have Andrew Winn; do you know Andrew Winn?

7 A. No.

9

8 Q. Andrew Winn says there:

"John, Rod Ismay, the head of P&BA ..."

10 Do you remember Rod Ismay?

11 A. I remember Rod, yes.

12 Q. "... is not happy at the prospect of an
13 open-ended invite. He has asked the question of
14 what are the legal parameters we are working
15 with. Simplistically, if we refuse or impose
16 conditions do we lose the case? I think we need
17 more guidance on how something like this might
18 reasonably operate."

19 If we go up, who is Jon Longman?

- 20 A. I don't know who Jon Longman is.
- Q. Jon Longman is responding to Jarnail Singh, andhe's saying:

"Jarnail, I've spoken to a few people
regarding the three points raised by Izzy Hogg."
That's the solicitors for Seema Misra.

226

- 1 of this?
- 2 A. I'm afraid you'll have to ask Andrew Winn that.
- ${f 3}$ ${f Q}$. Did you ever recall being involved or asked to
- assist in any way with evidence or mattersrelating to criminal or civil proceedings?
- 6 **A.** I don't believe I was ever asked to deal with
- that unless it was, you know, without me knowing it was a criminal thing.
- 9 **Q.** Would you be asked to produce statements, or to produce -- to carry out investigations, or to --
- 11 **A.** No, I mean the only thing I can recall in anything connected -- and I don't know if this
- is connected to this, or something completely
- 14 different, was Rod did do a piece of work to
- 15 investigate the integrity of Horizon -- I don't
- 16 know if it was original Horizon or
- 17 Horizon Online, because the two blend, but Rod
- 18 did an investigation into the integrity of the
- 19 system at the time, whichever one it was. And
- 20 I'm sure there are records of that, because I'm
- 21 sure it's in one of the packs that I've seen,
- 22 where he confirmed that, you know, in his view
- and the view of people he had looking at it, it
- was operating with integrity.
- Now I'd been told that was before this time,

		The Post Office
1		and as I said, it could even be original
2		Horizon. As I said, I don't ever recall being
3		consulted on anything with a legal connection
4		like this.
5	Q.	So you don't recall being consulted about the
6		Second Sight the matters raised by
7		Second Sight, and in relation to these criminal
8		proceedings, you don't recall being
9	A.	No.
10	Q.	And in both times, people have proposed your
11		name?
12	A.	Yeah.
13	Q.	Thank you.
14		Sir, I don't have many questions left. I
15		have about ten minutes left. I see it's 4.30.
16		I'm hoping that there will not be any or many
17		further questions. There may be something from
18		Mr Whittam. I may address it very briefly.
19	SIR	NYN WILLIAMS: I'm reluctant, for a number of
20		reasons, to go much beyond, say, quarter to
21		five. And we have got the witness remote, not
22		in being, so to speak, so that if necessary we
23		could have ten minutes, quarter of an hour, in
24		the morning. Subject to his availability
25		I should add, Mr Burley.
		229
1	Q.	"Post Office Limited has, over the years, had to
2		dismiss and prosecute a number of subpostmasters
3		and Crown staff following financial losses in
4		branches. A small number of those have made
5		counterclaims that they were not guilty of the
6		charges made but that Horizon System was
7		faulty."
8		So he was asked to produce a report that
9		effectively defended the position, or?
10	Α.	No. So the first paragraph talks about, you
11		know, a small number of claims were not guilty
12		of the charges but the Horizon System so
13		that's the original Horizon System. But it's
14		actually then just validating that the new
15		system has got integrity. Obviously you can't
16		validate that the old system had got integrity
17	_	because we'd replaced it by then.
18	Q.	• ,
19		please. It says there:

THE WITNESS: I have no availability tomorrow. I 2 wasn't informed it was going to risk carrying 3 4 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: I appreciate -- anyway, don't 5 let's debate it for the moment. 6 MR BLAKE: Can we see how we get on? 7 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Let's see where we get with 8 Mr Blake. 9 MR BLAKE: Thank you. 10 You've just mentioned the Ismay report. Can 11 we go to POL00088991, please. That report is 2 August 2010, so it's actually very shortly 12 after this email about the Seema Misra case. So 13 Seema Misra was 27 July 2010, the top email. 14 15 And this report is 2 August 2010. Was this the 16 report you were talking about? The Rod Ismay 17 report? 18 It looks like it, yes. 19 Q. And you're copied there? 20 21 Q. And this is called Horizon Response to 22 Challenges Regarding System Integrity. Do you 23 remember why this report was produced? I think, you know, because of the reasons in the 24 25 first paragraph. 230 1 the significant issue. "Horizon Online builds on this and brings 2 3 benefit to running costs and change management. 4 It is not being done because of any doubt about 5 the Horizon of integrity." 6 It then says: 7 "The integrity of Horizon is founded on its 8 tamper-proof logs, it's real time back-ups and the evidence of 'backdoors' so that all data 9 10 entry or acceptance is at branch level and is 11 tagged against the log-on ID of the user. This 12 means the ownership of the accounting is truly 13 at branch level." 14 Now that wasn't correct, was it, about the 15 absence of backdoors and everything being at 16 branch level? A. How do you mean? 17 18 Q. Well, was that correct? Did you agree with that 19 proposition? 20 A. To a degree. I might have worded it slightly different. And the absence of unauthorised 21 22 23 Q. So there were backdoors, but they were --

A. Well, any system has to be maintained, yes. So

you do need, you know, a control system such

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So it seems there to be suggesting that the

"POL has extensive control spanning systems,

processes, training and support. Horizon is

robust but like any system depends on the

quality of the entry of users is the issue, or

quality of entries by the users."

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that you can go in and make appropriate, you know, new coding, for example, et cetera, that needs to be done on any system. But it's that authorised backdoors that I'm emphasising.

So on Horizon Online, it was certainly always built and tested as a two-person entry. So there had to be two persons involved to make sure it had that authorisation.

- 9 Q. When you read this for the first time, did you 10 say, "That bit's not right"?
- 11 A. I didn't say it's not right; I just questioned 12 the wording.
- 13 Q. Who with?

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- 14 A. Myself. I read it -- you said when I read it 15 for the first time, so when I --
- 16 Q. You received it 2 August 2010, you're copied in. 17 On reading this, did you say, "Hang on a minute,
- 18 what it's saying about backdoors is wrong"?
- 19 A. I don't recall, to be honest, at that point, who 20 I raised it with. I was more interested in what 21 were the important lessons that we had to learn
- 22 from it.

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23 Q. The final paragraph on that page:

24 "There are several improvement opportunities 25 for POL, and these are set out in Appendix 1. 233

They do not undermine POL's assertion regarding the integrity of Horizon but they would tackle some of the other noise which complainants feed on."

That phrase, "noise", that was something that you -- that was a phrase that came up in your witness statement, as well, that I took you to earlier. Was that a common word that was used at the Post Office to describe the complaints about the Horizon System?

Yeah, but only in the sense of, you know, noise can be good or bad. So, you know, don't interpret it as being necessarily negative. It's negative in this context, and obviously we had to take note of the noise and make sure we acted upon it. And that's one of the reasons, as I said, we had the Federation in with us -so they could help us with that noise and help us either (a) understand it, or (b) you know, they would help promote the right communications that would help alleviate the noise.

One of the biggest bits of noise that we had was in the early days of deployment, because we made a conscious decision to substantially change the user interface, and because of that,

234

- 1 we had quite a bit of what I'm going to use the 2 term "noise", because people were not used to
- 3 it. But actually, very quickly that noise died
- 4 down from the users, but it almost kept a
- 5 balance because as new users came on, you got
- 6 the same noise because they just weren't used to
 - that new user interface. And it was
- 8 specifically done that way because, had we kept
- 9 the user interface as it was, that was part of
- 10 the problem with original Horizon and why some
- 11 transactions were taking longer than they needed
 - to: because they had to navigate several
- 13 screens, whereas we made it much quicker and
- 14 easier to navigate to transactions.
- Q. Thank you. That's not quite the point I'm 15
- 16 making, but I'm going to have to move on because
- 17 of time. But I just ask, are you really saying
- 18 that the phrase "noise" there is used in
- 19 a neutral term, as a neutral term, or is it
- 20 being critical?
- 21 A. I think on this one it's critical. It's
- 22 a negative in this one.
- 23 Q. Can we look at POL00091384, please. This is
- 24 document from November 2010. It's an email.
- 25 It's an email from Lynn to Mike and Rod, so

- 1 including it to Rod Ismay. It's the second --
- 2 Lynn Hobbs. If we look over the page, sorry. 3 Who was Lynn Hobbs?
- 4 A. At the time, Lynn would have been probably 5 a regional manager, I think, at the time.
- 6 Q. This is November 2010. She says:

"I found out this week that Fujitsu can actually put an entry into a branch account remotely. It came up when we were exploring solutions around a problem generated by the system following migration to HNG-X. This issue was quickly identified and a fix put in place, but it impacted around 60 branches and meant a loss/gain incurred in a particular week in effect disappeared from the system. One solution quickly discounted because of implications around integrity was for Fujitsu to remotely enter a value into a branch account to reintroduce of the missing loss/gain. So POL can't do this, but Fujitsu can."

Was this the point you qualified earlier, that actually, it is possible for Fujitsu to --

23 Yes. That should have been two people doing 24 that. I don't know, obviously, in this 25 particular case whether it was, but it should

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1 have been. 2 Q. If we look at page 1, we have, at the bottom of 3 page 1, an email from Lynn Hobbs. She says 4 there in the third sentence: 5 "I haven't seen anything further, but I did 6 have a conversation with Mike and the whole 7 remote access to Horizon issue. This was being 8 looked into by Andy McLean and Mark Burley."

9 Do you remember being asked to look into it 10 at all?

- 11 A. I don't remember being specifically asked to 12 look into this one. no.
- 13 Q. Do you think that's likely, or again, was your 14 name being misused?
- 15 A. I honestly don't recall. At 3 December 2010 it 16 could have been I was asked to, and I would have
- 17 then passed that on to the then Horizon
- 18 programme manager, which was Will Russell,
- 19 because I would have been in a head of projects
- 20 role at this stage. And, you know, I'd have
- 21 actually given an honest answer that Fujitsu can
- 22 access it, as long as there's two people doing
- 23 the piece to give that control.
- 24 Q. If we look up to the top of this chain, from
- 25 John Breeden. Do you know who John Breeden was? 237
- 1 anyone, "Hang on a minute, the Ismay report,
- 2 once again this has reminded me, that bit about
- 3 remote access, that's wrong"?
- 4 A. I'm not sure why I would, because I'm not on
- 5 this, am I?

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- 6 Q. Well, no, but you've been mentioned about
 - looking into the problem, looking into the
- 8 remote access. So you were in 2010, it seems,
- 9 according to the email from Lynn Hobbs at the
- 10 bottom of this page, charged with looking into
- 11 the remote access with Horizon issue. Having
- 12 looked into it, did you consider raising any
- 13 flags?
- 14 A. As I said to you, I was only asked to look into
- 15 it in December 2010.
- 16 Q. You can't recall looking into it, did you say?
- 17 A. I don't recall being asked to look into it. I'm
- 18 not definitively saying I was or I wasn't, but
- 19 I don't recall.
- 20 Q. Thank you. One final, very small issue -- and
- 21 I will only take five minutes on this -- it's
- 22 the issue of training. Can we look at
- 23 FUJ00000559. In your witness statement,
- 24 paragraph 8, you say you can't comment on
- 25 training for Legacy Horizon. There is 239

- 1 A. No.
- 2 Q. He was the national contract manager, North Post
- 3 Office. He's emailing Angela van den Bogerd.
- 4 Do you remember Angela van den Bogerd?
- 5 A. Yes, to a degree, yes.
- 6 Q. And who was she?
- 7 She was something in the network, but I don't
- 8 remember what her exact role was.
- 9 Q. Okay. Do you recall how high up within the Post
- 10 Office this issue of remote access, and the
- 11 ability of Fujitsu to remotely access the
- 12 account, was known?
- 13 A. No, I don't know.
- 14 Q. Do you think it would be higher than Angela van 15 den Bogerd?
- 16 I don't know what level Angela van den Bogerd 17 was, but yes, I'd like to think so.
- 18 Having read the Ismay report in the summer --
- 19 A. -- to be unauthorised access. That's the key
 - thing here. If it's just a misunderstanding and
- it turns out that Fujitsu have legitimately 21
- 22 accessed the system, then I wouldn't expect it
- 23 to go higher.

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- 24 Having read the Ismay report in the summer, and
- 25 we're now in December of 2010, did you tell

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- 1 a document that I've been asked to bring to your
- attention. It's 12 May 2000. It's the final --2
- 3 at the bottom of it -- it's a Change Control
 - Note and it refers to you in that bottom
- 5 paragraph:

"A number of discussions have been held to identify a suitable mechanism for delivering the results requested, and Mark Burley confirmed to John Pope by email on 12th May 2000 that the only change Pathway was now being asked to make

11 was the one detailed below." 12 And we go over the page, the Change Control

13 Note in itself isn't important. The passage

14 that I'm going to draw to your attention is

15 this, it's the second paragraph:

> "This Change Control Note is based on the assumption that to minimise costs, the training systems will not be updated."

19 Do you recall, during your involvement with 20 Horizon -- Legacy Horizon/Horizon Online -training systems not being updated because of costs issues?

- 23 I don't recall it, no, and I'm surprised that it
- 24 wasn't. But looking at the actual detail of the
- 25 change, this was a change to a non sort of

1 financial value cash account entry. It's not 1 putting together the testing, which my Business 2 a financial entry. My guess is it's not that it 2 Change Team would have led. And probably --3 3 won't be updated; it will not be updated at this I can't recall exactly, but probably --4 time. I can't believe it wasn't updated, full 4 undertook that testing to assure it was fit for 5 5 purpose, would be my guess, that they had got stop. 6 Q. Thank you. 6 involved with. 7 7 And the final question also relates to Q. Put very simply, what was the difference between 8 8 the NFSP and the CWU, in very simple terms, to training. You have said in your statement --9 you refer to the NFSP in the context of the 9 the best of your recollection? 10 training and assurance with HNG-X. You say that 10 A. Well, the difference is a priority of things, 11 there was a test before official use of the 11 because it depends on how their members get 12 system was approved, and that this was developed 12 paid. So the NFSP might want to prioritise 13 across multiple parties including the NFSP. Can 13 a transaction of, you know, to a higher screen 14 you tell us who else was involved, briefly, and than the CWU because their members get a higher 14 15 your recollections of what the NFSP involvement 15 payment for it, whereas for the CWU, you do more 16 in developing that was, vis à vis any others? 16 of transaction X which wasn't as important to be 17 A. Yes. So one of the things that I put in place 17 higher up on the Federation because they didn't 18 was -- we called it a tripartite way of working, 18 get paid as much for it. 19 and it involved the NFSP, who represented all of 19 It was always resolved amicably. We had 20 the subpostmasters; the CWU, and some members of 20 discussions, we had -- it was just, you know, one of the examples that I recall where there 21 my programme team. Now, on occasions that 21 22 22 created conflict in itself because sometimes the was a conflict. 23 CWU, who represented the directly owned 23 MR BLAKE: Thank you very much. Mr Whittam has 24 branches, and the NFSP would have different 24 a brief comment or question. 25 priorities. But they were all involved in 25 MR WHITTAM: Sir, given the hour, a document has 241 242 been referred to. We can address the issues we 1 1 the following day) 2 want to address at a later stage. I don't need 2 3 3 to ask any questions. 4 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Yes. I think that we've now run 4 5 our course, Mr Blake. And if anybody did have 5 6 any further questions, I was going to say that 6 7 they would have to submit them to me first so 7 8 I could decide whether it was necessary to ask 8 9 them. And if I so decided, we'd have to arrange 9 10 with Mr Burley when he could be asked them. 10 11 There's a limit for both him and the transcriber 11 12 12 and, I have to say, me, as I get older. After 13 4.30 it's quite difficult. 13 14 Mr Burley, that's it. Thank you for coming 14 15 to give evidence. And I suspect that we won't 15 16 trouble you further, but that's not an absolute 16 17 guarantee, all right, because I have cornered 17 18 people into being quiet for the moment. 18 19 THE WITNESS: Well, any help I can give. 19 20 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Right, fine. 20 21 10.00 tomorrow, Mr Blake? 21 22 MR BLAKE: Thank you. 22 23 SIR WYN WILLIAMS: Fine. 23 24 (4.47 pm) 24

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(The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am

243

INDEX

SUSAN HARDING (affirmed)	
Questioned by MR BEER	1
Questioned by MR STEIN	89
Questioned by MS PAGE	108
MARK BURLEY (affirmed)	124
Questioned by MR BLAKE	124

		15-minute [1] 176/2	212/20 212/24 213/2	3,200 [1] 218/20
MD DEED 1401 4/0	1543 400/04	150 [5] 60/20 61/19	216/19 216/19 218/7	
MR BEER: [10] 1/3	' [1] 198/21	62/13 63/24 151/3	224/25 225/20 230/12	
1/5 1/9 48/19 48/24	0	16 [2] 173/12 173/13	230/14 230/15 233/16	
49/3 89/10 123/18 123/24 124/4	0.6 [2] 141/1 141/17	17 [2] 53/3 53/6	235/24 236/6 237/15	3.22 [1] 176/18
MR BLAKE: [10]	0.6 per [1] 142/15	17 March [2] 208/16	238/25 239/8 239/15	3.4 [2] 54/18 55/23
124/8 124/10 124/13	0.6 per cent [1]	208/23	2011 [7] 126/21	30 [1] 101/14
176/1 176/6 176/19	141/25	18 [3] 52/25 53/7	126/22 212/8 218/2	31 [6] 17/11 17/16
230/6 230/9 242/23	01.08 [4] 163/23	157/21	218/22 218/23 220/13	
243/22	177/16 198/19 202/6	18 February [1]	2012 [4] 212/15	120/20
MR STEIN: [2] 89/15	04 [3] 164/13 164/15	82/21	212/20 218/2 218/23	31 December [1]
108/18	198/24	18 months [1] 22/22	2013 [2] 211/11	125/18
MR WHITTAM: [1]	08 [1] 137/24	19 [2] 212/12 214/18	219/16	32 [3] 38/18 91/7
242/25	4	19 February [1]	2015 [2] 211/16	98/6
MS PAGE: [2]	1	182/9	212/20	35 [1] 126/12
108/20 117/25	1 March [1] 90/6	19 January 2000 [1]	2017 [5] 2/12 14/12	370 [1] 168/8
SIR WYN WILLIAMS:	1.25 [1] 160/20	143/18	88/13 212/11 213/5	371 [1] 168/8
[29] 1/4 1/6 48/17	1.3 [1] 198/8	1976 [1] 2/12	2018 [1] 212/4	372 [1] 168/5 376 [4] 134/24
49/1 89/13 118/2	1.50 [5] 123/19	1985 [1] 125/17 1994 [2] 47/17 49/13	2022 [1] 90/6 2023 [1] 1/1	134/25 139/6 139/11
118/12 118/24 119/4	123/23 123/25 124/2	1994 [2] 47/17 49/13 1995 [1] 43/20	20p [1] 147/1	38 [3] 86/14 86/16
119/16 120/12 120/18	124/3	1998 [2] 3/8 4/22	21 [2] 141/5 163/11	88/2
121/5 122/20 123/2	10 [9] 4/2 35/18	1999 [9] 4/22 130/15	21/01/10 [1] 198/15	00/2
123/7 123/16 123/20	35/18 147/10 167/19	131/9 134/9 134/9	211 [1] 146/8	4
124/1 124/9 176/4	167/23 169/2 177/2		22 February 2023 [1]	4 January [1] 124/24
176/7 176/12 229/19	198/15	142/22	1/1	4 March [1] 207/17
230/4 230/7 243/4	10 million [1] 22/21 10,000 [1] 214/22		22 July 2010 [1]	4' [1] 163/22
243/20 243/23	10.00 [3] 1/2 243/21	2	225/20	4,486 [1] 218/19
THE WITNESS: [3]	243/25	2 August 2010 [3]	23 [1] 212/21	4.30 [2] 229/15
176/15 230/1 243/19	100 [9] 61/19 63/24	230/12 230/15 233/16	23 February [1]	243/13
•	105/23 106/8 106/24	2 February [1]	198/3	4.47 [1] 243/24
'84 [2] 125/19 125/19	142/11 151/5 153/19	113/12	23 September [1]	40 years [3] 2/11
'85 [1] 125/18	179/19	2 million [1] 22/23	1/18	29/12 29/13
'95 [2] 39/4 39/18	100 per [1] 196/8	2 paragraphs [1]	23 years [1] 139/24	40,000 [1] 111/14
' 95 and [1] 39/18	100 per cent [9]	128/6	24 [3] 26/14 37/8	410 [7] 132/18
'back [1] 60/14	133/18 134/16 148/4	2.00 [2] 123/22 124/7	109/18	132/19 135/19 135/23
'backdoors' [1] 232/9	149/5 149/25 157/10	20 [4] 4/2 105/23	24 February [1]	138/24 139/4 139/8
'balance' [1] 26/23	158/7 163/8 205/9	106/7 106/24	207/15	411 [1] 139/4 47,000 [3] 89/25 90/3
'bugs' [1] 86/19	101 [1] 113/9	20 years [3] 3/1 51/17 69/17	24 September 1999	90/25
'cash [1] 60/13	10p [2] 147/2 147/2	200 [1] 151/3	[1] 142/22	49 [1] 47/19
'exposure' [1] 189/20	11 February [1] 84/6	2000 [4] 143/18	24 years [1] 133/14 25 [2] 38/3 212/25	
'faults' [1] 128/13	11 March [1] 207/20	146/4 240/2 240/9	25 February [1]	5
'fit [1] 74/22	11 March 2010 [1]	2000s [1] 12/11	207/11	5.3 [1] 144/10
'fixing' [1] 170/1	206/11	2001 [1] 22/20	25 June 2013 [1]	50 [1] 102/15
'hide' [1] 17/25	11.00 [1] 48/17 11.05 [1] 48/21	2003 [5] 54/21 55/24	219/16	56 [1] 78/7
'integrity' [1] 188/2	11.15 [1] 48/18	56/19 122/25 126/16	25 million [1] 26/6	56 days [1] 78/13
'loan' [1] 78/1	11.16 [1] 48/23	2004 [6] 72/4 82/19	250 [1] 73/5	59,000 [1] 112/20
'Local [1] 218/17 'open [1] 74/8	116 [1] 111/2	90/13 90/14 90/22	26 [1] 113/8	6
'Proceed [1] 199/2	12 [8] 47/24 49/5	111/3	27 July 2010 [1]	
'Qualified [1] 198/21	82/19 160/19 160/20	2005 [8] 14/5 14/16	230/14	60 [2] 102/15 236/13
'Receipts [1] 218/5	198/4 198/7 240/2	39/4 39/18 43/20	272 [1] 163/25	60 pages/70 pages
'Reset [1] 163/22	12 August [1] 138/19	111/3 126/18 212/24	28 [1] 213/3	[1] 48/14
'robustness' [1]	12 years [1] 223/18	2006 [7] 14/5 14/16	28 January [5]	63 [1] 218/6
86/17	12.55 [1] 124/5	48/9 49/13 111/10	151/15 162/18 166/9	7
'screen [1] 171/10	12th [1] 240/9	122/25 212/24	166/21 168/11	7,044 [1] 218/12
'sign [1] 190/22	13 [2] 64/15 212/5	2008 [1] 225/8	29 [1] 38/12	71 [1] 49/4
'suspended' [1]	14 [3] 56/3 212/9	2009 [1] 126/19	2nd August [1]	75 [2] 132/13 132/17
114/5	218/17	2010 [34] 151/14	139/19	77 [1] 218/3
'suspense [1] 26/22	14 November 2004	151/16 163/11 176/23	3	777 [1] 218/12
'thought' [1] 188/10	[1] 90/13	198/3 206/11 208/16		
'Well [3] 110/23	15 [1] 147/10	211/5 211/7 211/11 211/15 211/20 211/25	3 February [1] 168/18	8
111/21 111/23	15 minutes [1] 176/4	211/15 211/20 211/25 211/25 212/4 212/8	3 months [1] 140/16	8 pages [1] 1/18
		211/20 212/7 212/0	o mondia [1] 140/10	

(63) MR BEER: - 8 pages

9 164/9 165/13 170/24 84/13 90/4 94/12 16/10 28/7 29/5 54/2 accommodate [1] **9,029 [1]** 218/11 112/6 113/4 119/3 175/19 54/3 54/19 54/22 171/6 180/16 184/9 **9,800 [1]** 218/19 133/18 133/22 137/17 accommodated [1] 59/22 60/11 60/15 184/13 186/4 195/21 9.00 [1] 112/2 138/8 140/10 153/18 62/4 62/7 63/3 66/22 73/18 199/16 208/14 220/8 **94 [1]** 109/19 107/24 107/25 108/2 158/19 166/2 168/5 224/14 230/12 231/14 accompanied [1] 170/18 180/4 191/8 122/10 122/11 136/10 235/3 236/8 236/22 56/12 192/2 192/14 192/18 138/2 138/13 142/19 237/21 according [4] 110/25 ability [3] 97/9 194/4 192/24 194/14 196/8 144/24 145/2 169/21 131/1 158/16 239/9 **AD [3]** 152/5 152/22 238/11 184/24 184/25 207/25 196/10 203/24 205/9 accordingly [1] 164/19 able [24] 40/24 41/15 216/2 221/19 222/19 132/4 208/3 232/12 add [3] 56/18 73/19 43/4 50/12 52/2 96/19 accept [8] 131/22 account [138] 4/17 accounts [49] 3/11 229/25 96/23 115/13 124/18 133/15 143/11 145/21 8/21 12/1 16/25 17/20 5/9 18/1 20/2 20/22 added [1] 59/15 152/15 153/25 159/8 145/24 160/25 184/21 17/22 18/4 18/8 18/11 22/21 22/24 23/4 23/8 addition [1] 167/11 169/13 172/2 175/13 192/12 19/5 19/10 19/14 23/10 23/23 24/4 **additional** [3] 73/19 178/20 181/10 190/11 acceptability [2] 19/20 19/23 19/25 24/16 26/22 27/1 27/9 167/6 189/19 192/18 196/7 196/18 20/11 20/16 21/23 29/18 29/20 34/14 187/9 206/21 address [10] 128/6 200/4 205/22 214/6 138/23 143/24 213/8 acceptable [8] 22/1 22/2 23/15 24/23 37/16 41/19 42/15 about [117] 2/6 2/22 26/17 27/4 27/20 46/3 46/4 46/10 46/10 213/10 213/11 213/12 141/25 142/2 154/13 2/25 4/15 10/21 10/24 184/17 187/8 195/16 27/24 30/2 30/21 50/24 52/12 57/24 229/18 243/1 243/2 11/1 11/13 13/10 30/23 30/24 31/2 31/7 58/1 59/14 60/21 195/18 206/19 addressed [1] 216/7 14/16 19/16 23/21 acceptance [85] 4/11 31/12 32/6 32/12 60/23 60/25 75/10 addresses [2] 132/17 25/23 25/25 26/17 5/7 5/10 5/13 5/19 34/15 35/13 36/19 79/24 83/11 87/23 143/23 27/8 29/9 29/9 37/10 5/23 6/4 6/7 7/2 7/8 36/24 39/15 39/16 92/19 97/16 100/7 addressing [2] 60/2 52/19 57/6 58/24 59/4 7/12 7/17 7/19 7/21 41/7 42/4 42/6 42/18 101/12 102/14 128/17 63/8 62/3 62/10 63/8 69/13 8/1 10/8 10/17 10/19 43/8 43/17 50/21 52/1 141/2 141/14 141/17 adequate [11] 66/16 70/23 71/8 73/9 76/22 76/21 87/5 87/13 52/25 54/13 57/5 179/2 216/21 154/16 155/21 156/8 79/18 80/19 82/19 87/15 87/16 87/17 58/14 58/18 58/23 accuracy [4] 13/11 156/9 156/12 156/14 82/25 90/5 90/23 91/4 87/24 129/18 129/25 59/1 59/5 60/1 60/4 36/20 87/23 189/24 156/17 156/18 159/25 91/15 92/23 93/15 130/8 130/11 131/10 accurate [9] 8/7 9/19 61/15 61/22 62/10 161/20 93/17 93/23 95/9 97/6 131/13 131/15 131/17 64/17 68/22 69/14 17/1 29/19 29/20 adjourned [1] 243/25 97/8 97/11 98/1 100/6 131/18 131/21 131/24 69/20 71/12 73/3 73/7 39/16 41/9 62/12 Adjournment [1] 101/8 103/15 103/16 132/2 132/14 132/18 73/11 73/23 74/14 67/10 124/6 103/19 105/2 105/5 accurately [2] 28/2 132/19 133/4 134/15 75/6 75/19 75/22 76/1 adjudged [2] 138/3 105/6 105/10 105/18 134/22 134/24 135/6 76/17 76/18 82/21 138/9 51/8 105/23 106/7 107/20 135/16 135/18 136/12 83/2 83/7 83/16 84/7 achieve [2] 29/18 adjust [1] 83/10 108/6 109/11 112/17 137/3 138/7 138/23 85/10 92/17 97/9 98/5 54/8 adjustments [1] 117/3 118/3 118/7 139/11 142/3 142/6 99/11 100/22 116/6 achieved [1] 152/22 190/3 118/14 118/18 119/2 142/7 143/14 145/12 116/20 120/25 121/11 across [8] 71/5 80/25 admission [1] 49/2 120/20 120/20 120/22 145/18 146/8 147/21 122/9 132/25 133/2 101/12 126/9 127/1 advance [1] 67/5 122/5 125/6 125/15 147/25 148/21 150/5 133/16 135/3 135/4 141/15 169/18 241/13 adverse [1] 11/13 126/12 132/19 137/15 150/9 150/10 150/12 136/4 136/7 136/9 act [2] 56/11 108/21 advice [5] 111/5 138/6 143/4 146/19 150/14 163/1 163/4 136/15 140/7 141/16 154/9 202/9 202/9 acted [1] 234/16 148/11 177/23 180/2 163/11 163/15 163/16 142/4 142/18 143/25 acting [1] 61/11 204/22 185/17 195/8 195/23 163/18 164/4 164/8 144/7 144/20 144/23 action [4] 80/3 advise [2] 181/13 196/5 196/7 196/8 165/17 198/3 198/11 145/14 145/19 145/22 189/25 203/12 203/18 189/3 200/16 200/22 201/9 198/12 198/14 199/1 146/2 146/9 146/19 **Actions [2]** 163/10 advised [5] 21/14 202/13 204/10 205/18 199/2 199/6 199/24 147/17 147/24 148/2 166/20 88/15 89/8 139/1 207/22 208/24 211/19 232/10 173/18 179/1 211/9 actively [1] 88/24 139/4 217/22 219/8 220/4 211/22 211/23 216/8 activities [1] 152/3 **afar [1]** 214/13 Acceptance' [1] 222/20 223/5 223/13 198/22 218/17 218/24 220/25 affect [4] 3/14 22/13 activity [2] 123/9 229/5 229/15 230/13 accepted [9] 77/14 221/6 222/25 223/20 177/6 87/22 218/24 230/16 231/10 232/4 232/14 233/18 234/10 132/5 133/24 142/16 224/2 224/6 236/8 actual [10] 6/23 affected [11] 5/3 5/9 172/1 175/12 193/13 236/18 238/12 241/1 40/10 59/4 102/11 5/16 22/14 65/8 167/9 239/2 239/6 202/14 204/23 155/14 179/10 204/14 197/14 216/8 216/8 account' [2] 26/23 above [8] 55/25 74/1 210/15 213/16 240/24 216/21 218/17 accepting [6] 6/17 60/13 167/12 171/16 191/2 7/25 10/7 15/23 actually [45] 4/13 affecting [2] 86/20 accountable [4] 191/14 202/2 203/22 142/17 195/20 26/21 37/15 38/7 10/19 17/1 18/12 164/18 **absence [3]** 137/25 25/16 54/10 66/12 access [10] 51/13 126/11 affirmed [5] 1/7 232/15 232/21 70/5 88/12 93/5 93/9 225/23 237/7 237/22 accountant [2] 2/18 124/11 159/1 245/2 absolute [2] 159/24 238/10 238/11 238/19 109/12 109/19 110/12 2/21 245/6 243/16 239/3 239/8 239/11 112/20 114/10 115/6 afraid [3] 75/6 214/7 accounted [1] 19/12 absolutely [37] 21/11 120/23 121/8 122/12 accessed [1] 238/22 accounting [39] 2/22 228/2 54/14 54/16 61/24 2/23 6/17 14/24 15/13 129/6 147/15 154/5 accidentally [1] after [37] 10/12 10/22

71/20 77/3 81/21

147/1

15/17 15/24 16/9

155/3 155/18 156/5

Α	140/2
	143/16
after [35] 11/19	144/13
12/12 14/7 20/3 24/6	199/9
33/3 34/24 35/4 35/5	1
42/2 44/14 48/17 66/9	Ah [3]
81/10 85/12 85/13	227/8
87/18 87/21 90/16	ahead
143/1 149/20 160/16	195/10
160/17 163/2 168/19	AI [2]
183/12 202/3 208/3	AI376
	136/8
215/12 216/5 216/19	A1444
218/21 220/21 230/13	aim [6]
243/12	16/1 1
afternoon [5] 123/19	
124/8 124/9 127/17	03/11
176/8	aimed
afterwards [2] 10/24	aims [
	47/6
11/14	Als [1]
AG [1] 163/4	Alan E
AG3 [5] 162/21 163/6	152/0
198/14 198/15 198/22	172/9
AG3.70 [2] 167/20	1
167/20	175/8
AG3 71 [1] 167/21	181/8
AG3.71 [1] 167/21 again [21] 38/16	189/1
75/16 101/12 119/16	alarm
	101/11
120/19 142/12 145/15	all [148
146/11 166/9 175/9	13/13
187/16 188/14 189/7	30/18
199/17 202/12 207/9	
209/25 215/6 221/1	38/11
237/13 239/2	39/21
against [7] 8/11	43/20
16/15 17/7 148/21	44/18
	48/2 4
158/11 188/3 232/11	49/20
agency [4] 26/20	51/11
37/14 37/24 38/6	52/19
agent [3] 77/22 77/24	61/17
78/3	
agents [1] 75/13	62/17
aggregate [1] 218/10	68/17
aggregating [1]	′ 79/7 8
218/18	83/8 8
	85/13
ago [10] 25/15 69/17	93/11
95/24 109/6 130/4	00/0 4
133/14 161/16 178/25	102/3
200/16 200/22	103/1
agree [15] 7/11 16/3	
31/16 49/17 58/11	106/9
65/19 85/8 107/21	109/22
133/19 145/21 158/2	112/2
161/14 180/19 189/5	120/12
232/18	132/1
	135/6
agreed [25] 17/19	137/2
54/4 67/8 68/19 92/16	140/1
142/1 163/21 167/23	140/49
178/12 178/20 180/23	K I
193/16 195/6 195/13	141/9
195/15 196/3 198/17	144/2
198/22 202/21 202/22	145/9
203/2 203/3 203/5	148/19
	149/8
208/22 215/25	164/22
agreement [10]	176/8
	., 5, 5

```
140/25 141/6 143/4
143/16 143/18 143/22
144/13 144/16 191/1
Ah [3] 85/21 87/2
ahead [2] 148/7
AI [2] 163/24 198/20
AI376 [3] 135/25
136/8 138/4
AI411 [1] 138/4
aim [6] 19/21 20/9
46/1 47/13 54/15
aimed [1] 58/21
aims [3] 19/21 20/10
Als [1] 5/14
Alan [17] 152/6 152/6 almost [4] 137/9
152/8 164/20 168/18
172/9 172/12 175/3
175/8 181/4 181/4
181/8 182/10 182/14
189/11 189/14 192/1
alarm [2] 193/15
all [148] 12/5 13/7
13/13 16/21 21/2 29/9
30/18 34/23 38/9
38/11 38/24 39/5
39/21 40/8 41/4 43/15
43/20 44/10 44/14
44/18 44/21 47/25
48/2 48/2 49/6 49/9
49/20 50/1 50/1 51/2
51/11 52/15 52/18
52/19 57/6 58/16 59/8
61/17 62/3 62/14
62/17 63/8 64/19 68/8 alter [2] 118/21
68/17 77/14 77/23
83/8 85/11 85/12
85/13 86/1 86/3 89/10 73/18 79/9 97/21
93/11 94/5 94/20 95/2 218/8 221/12
98/9 100/23 101/17
102/3 102/8 102/24
103/11 104/1 105/25
106/9 107/2 107/12
109/22 110/10 112/24
112/25 117/20 119/2
120/12 122/5 122/20
132/1 133/5 134/7
135/6 136/11 136/14
137/25 139/17 139/21
140/1 140/8 140/12
140/18 141/1 141/3
141/9 141/17 142/20
144/2 144/19 145/1
145/9 145/22 148/2
148/19 148/23 149/1
149/8 153/12 163/17
164/22 168/24 176/4
176/8 176/10 176/14
```

195/10

194/12

```
185/21 190/15 195/6
                      195/17 196/5 196/21
                      196/23 200/4 201/13
                      201/15 201/17 203/4
                      203/5 203/6 208/7
                      209/7 210/3 213/13
                      215/6 215/23 220/12
                      221/16 223/14 225/12
                      232/9 237/10 241/19
                                           185/12
                      241/25 243/17
                     alleviate [1] 234/21
                     allocated [2] 105/25
                      106/10
                     allow [2] 27/5 31/7
                                            228/2
                     allowance [2] 143/8
                      143/9
                     allowed [3] 64/12
                      149/23 149/24
                     allowing [1] 48/24
                     158/6 196/25 235/4
                     alone [3] 75/19 136/3
                      149/16
                                            120/5
                     along [3] 1/14 55/2
                     127/10
                     alongside [1] 173/10
                     already [6] 15/22
                      94/2 144/1 170/2
                                            218/20
                     175/9 201/8
                     also [27] 16/13 27/12
                      49/8 99/23 100/16
                                            237/21
                     112/22 122/20 136/20 answered [2] 203/7
                      137/23 152/20 175/24 215/8
                      178/15 179/25 184/22 answering [2] 29/23
                      190/19 192/20 199/22
                                           104/14
                      204/21 207/4 210/16
                      217/21 219/23 219/25
                                           201/11
                     222/24 223/8 223/9
                      241/7
                      122/16
79/7 80/9 80/21 81/24 although [9] 8/13
                      36/17 39/7 72/23
                     altogether [3] 83/7
                      84/7 85/10
                     always [17] 41/21
                      42/24 44/23 49/1
                     65/11 68/15 78/12
                      123/20 145/13 145/18
                      153/11 157/1 157/22
                      192/2 214/2 233/6
                      242/19
                     am [11] 1/2 48/21
                      48/23 89/11 147/21
                      154/22 155/12 160/2
                      185/12 239/5 243/25
                     amicably [1] 242/19
                     amongst [3] 63/13
                      66/2 82/22
                     amount [17] 18/14
                      19/11 20/1 24/3 32/1
                      32/15 35/21 114/1
```

146/22 152/16 152/18 153/12 154/1 154/20 155/11 155/22 155/23 amounts [4] 20/17 22/5 35/19 35/19 analysis [4] 19/25 23/2 144/19 152/21 analyst [2] 127/14 Andrew [11] 160/11 160/11 160/13 160/15 160/16 226/6 226/6 226/8 227/6 227/10 Andy [7] 5/25 219/18 219/19 219/20 219/23 223/8 237/8 Angela [4] 238/3 238/4 238/14 238/16 **Ann [9]** 70/12 70/14 96/5 96/14 96/17 98/15 117/9 119/13 another [11] 10/19 41/3 83/25 120/20 125/20 131/8 136/24 182/1 185/4 189/1 answer [5] 67/11 107/14 143/7 153/19 **answers [2]** 109/5 antiquated [1] 11/24 any [162] 2/14 3/13 5/8 9/4 10/25 13/10 13/16 21/25 22/10 23/9 23/24 26/24 28/22 30/9 30/10 30/14 30/20 36/14 37/1 37/22 38/8 38/11 38/15 38/17 38/20 38/24 39/5 39/20 40/22 41/3 41/3 44/10 44/13 44/18 46/21 49/20 50/1 51/11 52/14 52/15 53/25 65/7 66/7 75/23 76/5 76/9 77/22 79/7 79/12 80/8 80/21 81/18 81/19 81/25 82/1 84/25 85/17 85/25 86/3 86/19 87/16 87/18 89/9 90/6 90/9 91/9 92/1 92/13 93/4 95/9 96/22 98/24 102/11 103/17 105/5 105/17 105/24 106/9 109/3 109/6 116/10 116/11 117/21 127/8

127/19 128/8 128/13 128/20 129/2 129/11 129/15 144/23 146/21 147/18 148/6 148/7 148/11 148/14 149/2 149/7 153/4 156/11 157/22 158/5 158/19 162/5 164/3 164/19 165/8 165/19 170/19 173/19 178/21 181/11 184/12 185/17 185/17 188/4 189/5 189/18 189/25 190/25 191/21 192/20 193/23 193/25 194/24 196/3 196/19 197/3 197/7 197/22 203/12 203/18 204/2 204/6 207/13 210/8 210/9 214/9 216/1 216/12 219/10 219/17 219/22 220/12 220/15 220/18 221/18 222/16 222/25 228/4 229/16 231/22 232/4 232/24 233/3 239/12 241/16 243/3 243/6 243/19 anybody [13] 24/11 41/6 79/10 79/15 108/13 116/14 116/18 121/8 142/17 159/23 216/15 216/19 243/5 anymore [1] 96/20 anyone [5] 13/21 24/1 85/20 116/9 239/1 anything [40] 10/12 10/23 11/13 12/14 14/10 14/13 20/16 20/23 22/10 73/9 87/22 88/6 88/8 88/15 95/12 104/8 112/23 112/25 115/1 127/10 136/15 137/14 142/1 145/5 151/9 152/2 157/1 165/10 165/25 165/25 174/19 193/18 195/10 199/11 210/10 220/21 223/25 228/12 229/3 237/5 anyway [7] 45/24 79/8 81/20 88/17 102/19 115/12 230/4 anywhere [1] 192/11 apart [1] 120/14 apologies [3] 48/15 120/10 208/13 apparent [1] 109/24 **apparently [1]** 78/10 Appeal [1] 111/1 appear [4] 58/25 93/8 130/10 187/3 appearing [1] 167/13 appears [2] 134/21 136/1

187/24 187/25 190/24 aspect [2] 143/6 138/19 139/19 211/7 193/12 196/24 197/5 211/20 213/2 230/12 227/14 appendix [2] 210/20 197/20 199/11 199/22 aspects [1] 91/5 230/15 233/16 233/25 199/23 199/24 200/4 aspirations [1] 75/12 August 1999 [1] appendix 2 [1] 201/6 207/15 208/5 assertion [1] 234/1 134/9 210/20 208/19 209/9 209/9 assessment [1] authorisation [11] applied [1] 73/5 211/6 211/11 212/2 73/24 74/2 75/9 83/3 199/25 apply [1] 40/21 216/3 217/4 221/25 162/20 179/22 199/4 **assist [6]** 1/15 appreciate [2] 140/6 226/14 226/14 227/3 136/11 136/13 200/4 200/3 208/23 210/16 230/4 228/20 233/24 233/25 217/25 228/4 233/8 appreciated [1] 235/17 assistance [1] authorise [1] 163/2 181/17 area [3] 100/1 126/6 110/15 authorised [1] 233/4 approach [10] 74/19 188/15 **Assistants** [2] 48/3 **authority [2]** 55/5 154/12 158/2 158/3 158/17 158/17 161/15 areas [3] 99/21 102/8 49/9 68/1 automate [2] 25/24 161/13 associated [4] 71/17 166/6 194/8 194/9 aren't [2] 57/12 197/7 94/19 133/2 199/3 53/8 appropriate [8] assume [3] 23/25 **Arial [1]** 129/9 **automated [4]** 57/2 144/18 170/25 175/21 arise [1] 142/10 103/11 182/17 63/17 64/4 170/7 176/2 191/12 191/12 assumed [4] 13/16 arisen [1] 201/20 **automatic** [1] 12/3 210/6 233/1 arises [1] 212/16 20/19 73/4 73/25 **automating [2]** 12/24 appropriately [1] arising [2] 194/6 assuming [8] 24/10 57/3 128/22 218/10 35/17 101/23 103/7 **automation [5]** 36/14 approval [2] 166/1 104/5 123/20 163/6 36/16 53/25 63/11 arose [5] 190/7 198/15 194/14 212/11 212/23 184/19 64/13 approved [2] 66/21 217/19 availability [3] 56/18 assumption [3] 241/12 around [15] 3/8 4/23 139/22 139/24 240/17 229/24 230/1 approvers [1] 65/7 57/3 76/4 90/20 103/2 assumptions [1] available [6] 23/22 approving [1] 66/4 108/2 125/5 126/12 104/10 103/25 110/12 123/25 **April [1]** 56/19 178/6 204/24 210/1 assurance [10] 144/17 200/2 April 2003 [1] 56/19 236/10 236/13 236/17 128/11 130/25 175/25 average [1] 209/1 architect [12] 6/12 arrange [1] 243/9 188/4 188/18 193/1 avoid [1] 104/10 11/22 11/23 12/6 201/1 204/17 205/20 arrival [1] 114/19 awaiting [1] 227/1 15/11 72/17 78/20 arrived [1] 115/3 241/10 aware [64] 5/1 5/15 79/17 97/22 97/24 7/23 10/23 16/9 17/4 as [255] assurances [3] 101/1 108/13 188/23 189/5 205/18 20/21 21/15 22/10 ascertain [1] 187/7 architecture [5] ashamed [1] 115/9 assurances/agree [1] 22/16 22/25 23/9 59/19 66/25 67/1 23/14 24/7 40/8 44/24 ask [23] 2/5 19/16 189/5 79/18 106/4 38/10 38/16 39/7 47/5 70/8 76/2 76/6 assure [1] 242/4 are [112] 1/25 2/2 48/12 71/11 82/25 assured [1] 155/2 76/7 76/19 76/20 2/15 2/16 6/24 8/19 89/11 107/19 109/13 76/23 78/9 78/14 at [331] 8/19 8/22 13/17 18/24 124/16 125/11 162/12|at page 3 [1] 152/4 81/25 86/9 87/22 88/8 235/5 23/7 49/15 49/22 178/12 180/13 187/22 at page 7 [2] 17/13 88/9 90/3 103/24 51/10 52/12 52/15 104/4 104/16 104/16 224/4 224/9 228/2 181/3 57/12 67/9 68/5 68/6 104/18 104/25 105/10 balances [3] 19/5 235/17 243/3 243/8 attached [1] 182/17 68/7 68/10 72/21 asked [47] 11/23 107/7 107/22 108/3 attempting [1] 51/3 72/25 79/13 79/13 108/15 113/11 127/19 12/8 24/2 55/12 55/16 attend [2] 82/9 82/16 89/10 89/12 90/3 67/8 69/8 89/21 91/4 128/8 128/13 128/14 **attended [2]** 76/8 96/20 96/22 98/3 98/8 92/22 93/15 97/6 97/8 113/11 129/2 138/12 141/3 98/9 101/15 101/16 97/11 97/18 105/1 **attention [7]** 175/15 141/19 143/17 143/19 101/16 103/7 112/12 111/19 120/19 129/20 216/7 216/15 216/20 145/16 147/24 148/11 117/25 119/18 127/8 131/18 135/14 182/14 222/17 240/2 240/14 148/13 185/20 209/18 Barry [4] 177/4 177/6 129/11 132/24 133/2 188/18 191/15 192/15 attitude [6] 93/2 93/3 216/12 216/13 217/9 133/16 137/24 140/8 193/16 193/17 195/15 193/7 195/22 196/17 223/15 147/17 151/18 155/15 196/13 201/10 213/8 205/15 away [3] 110/9 147/3 157/13 158/9 158/18 214/15 217/17 222/5 attitudes [1] 52/10 210/2 161/9 163/2 163/17 226/13 228/3 228/6 audit [7] 16/13 28/11 164/16 164/16 164/18 228/9 231/8 237/9 35/2 111/24 112/17 164/20 166/8 169/12 **BA** [7] 184/23 187/10 237/11 237/16 239/14 112/18 126/8 170/1 171/15 171/24 239/17 240/1 240/10 191/15 192/15 207/20 audited [2] 53/24 172/4 172/19 172/25 207/22 226/9 243/10 77/7 174/1 174/7 175/1 back [59] 3/9 4/16 asking [9] 20/9 51/16 auditing [1] 126/9 177/4 180/2 181/13 11/25 12/2 12/22 92/3 125/14 180/21 auditors [4] 28/10 186/2 186/14 186/14 12/25 13/4 15/8 17/21 180/22 195/21 220/4 28/11 28/16 112/3 186/19 186/25 187/12 19/1 25/24 25/25 26/4 222/6 **August [9]** 134/9

26/8 39/3 42/25 43/18 51/10 51/16 57/4 57/6 57/16 57/21 58/11 62/3 63/7 63/17 66/6 66/18 69/5 69/11 87/9 93/24 93/24 96/9 96/13 98/2 99/7 111/18 118/19 120/17 120/18 139/12 139/23 153/16 159/10 176/20 178/25 195/2 196/25 200/9 200/15 208/6 210/3 213/21 219/6 223/3 225/1 232/8 back-end [1] 63/17 back-ups [1] 232/8 backdoors [5] 232/15 232/22 232/23 233/4 233/18 background [7] 2/9 125/15 127/9 127/11 127/15 130/13 151/9 bad [1] 234/12 Baker [5] 217/3 217/4 217/24 219/1 223/2 balance [42] 19/7 20/23 27/5 31/8 31/13 76/15 76/16 122/11 177/12 177/14 177/18 177/19 178/15 178/15 179/5 179/5 179/6 180/21 183/19 183/20 183/21 183/23 183/24 183/24 184/8 184/8 184/11 184/13 189/22 190/16 191/4 191/11 192/8 193/23 195/25 195/25 201/7 201/14 201/15 206/17 207/5 balanced [3] 19/5 20/18 30/21 23/5 121/13 balancing [12] 11/3 21/8 41/18 41/24 42/10 75/25 76/13 76/22 80/16 146/21 147/19 190/4 182/18 187/6 base [1] 169/20 based [17] 9/21 21/23 26/19 37/13 38/5 40/10 61/22 156/16 158/17 161/15 167/19 182/21 188/11 190/6 191/14 194/5 240/16 basically [13] 12/22 18/23 19/10 19/18 28/7 68/14 97/1 98/19 111/6 170/6 179/1

В basically... [2] 179/4 208/2 basis [20] 8/5 8/23 9/17 9/20 11/10 16/25 17/6 18/4 18/6 32/3 32/4 36/15 36/17 43/19 51/12 66/13 68/17 85/16 146/25 194/3 **BAU [1]** 167/15 be [332] bear [1] 79/6 became [5] 4/6 11/20 14/22 36/16 112/25 because [176] 6/3 8/20 9/7 9/20 12/18 12/20 12/22 14/17 15/7 16/4 16/19 16/19 16/24 18/20 19/14 22/13 23/3 23/18 26/2 28/11 28/17 29/5 30/8 30/23 34/10 35/9 38/25 39/22 39/22 40/20 41/18 42/15 42/24 45/3 48/13 49/22 50/2 50/5 50/16 51/25 52/6 55/10 56/24 57/24 58/2 58/10 58/19 59/5 59/18 59/22 61/8 62/15 64/11 65/20 68/1 68/16 69/5 69/10 69/13 69/22 71/16 78/14 79/6 82/11 89/3 94/2 94/18 96/7 97/21 97/24 99/5 100/2 100/9 100/25 100/25 101/23 102/1 106/18 107/11 107/24 108/11 110/21 112/8 112/11 113/14 113/16 114/1 114/2 115/7 117/4 118/17 119/14 119/25 120/4 120/19 121/15 121/23 122/5 122/16 122/17 128/1 129/5 130/2 136/22 137/15 139/9 139/13 141/7 141/25 142/10 142/25 145/5 145/12 145/17 146/14 147/5 149/16 150/7 153/17 153/17 154/5 154/14 155/9 156/3 156/24 158/25 162/5 162/10 165/15 170/14 172/20 173/2 175/16 176/9 178/3 179/6 180/4 180/5 180/11 180/17 191/16 194/18 194/22 195/20 195/23 204/19 207/2 210/1 216/16 221/14

222/2 222/12 224/16 227/18 228/17 228/20 230/24 231/17 232/4 234/23 234/25 235/2 235/5 235/6 235/8 235/12 235/16 236/16 237/19 239/4 240/21 241/22 242/11 242/14 242/17 243/17 become [5] 2/5 2/24 11/16 16/9 88/9 becomes [2] 139/8 147/19 becoming [3] 126/2 126/17 126/19 **bedevilled** [1] 88/10 been [218] 3/7 3/8 4/1 4/14 4/19 5/15 8/14 9/7 9/9 10/2 10/4 10/5 10/13 10/17 10/19 11/8 11/11 12/12 13/25 16/23 19/2 20/5 20/22 22/10 91/4 92/22 97/8 105/2 22/22 23/22 24/3 25/5 26/23 27/4 27/7 27/13 before [62] 3/3 10/6 28/6 28/23 28/24 29/4 30/10 30/11 30/13 30/16 30/21 33/12 33/17 34/21 35/15 35/22 36/8 40/18 41/14 43/4 43/7 44/5 44/5 44/21 44/22 44/23 45/24 46/17 50/4 50/12 50/16 50/22 51/24 55/1 55/2 58/6 58/8 58/10 59/17 63/25 64/19 64/21 65/1 66/17 68/20 69/15 69/16 70/22 70/25 71/5 72/8 76/12 78/10 78/14 78/15 79/16 81/3 81/9 83/13 83/19 83/22 83/22 84/9 84/9 84/10 84/17 85/3 85/15 86/11 87/18 88/15 88/17 91/3 93/6 93/7 94/7 94/13 97/8 97/22 98/12 99/9 100/1 101/1 102/1 102/3 102/6 104/21 104/25 105/1 106/20 107/9 107/11 107/22 108/15 behind [5] 57/23 110/6 117/15 117/18 117/23 118/7 118/9 118/10 118/25 120/3 120/19 121/3 121/18 122/4 123/4 123/9 125/17 125/19 129/20 130/24 133/7 133/12 135/10 135/11 137/4 137/7 137/11 139/18 139/21 140/13 140/18 140/22 141/10 142/7

142/25 143/3 144/4 144/5 144/6 144/24 145/10 148/16 149/3 149/3 154/14 154/15 154/24 155/3 155/5 160/10 161/3 162/23 164/8 164/9 167/12 169/1 169/9 173/15 173/16 174/8 174/11 181/3 183/9 184/14 184/17 184/19 188/10 191/10 195/6 197/15 200/1 200/19 204/23 205/8 208/21 209/11 209/19 209/20 209/25 210/3 214/23 220/10 222/5 224/14 225/2 228/25 236/4 236/23 237/1 237/16 237/19 239/6 240/1 240/6 243/1 **BEER [7]** 1/8 1/9 245/3 10/13 15/3 20/2 22/22 22/22 24/5 27/19 29/14 33/7 34/24 34/25 36/14 36/14 50/20 59/17 60/3 65/25 66/1 67/18 67/24 87/17 101/9 103/8 112/21 124/3 125/20 125/22 126/1 126/17 126/19 132/8 133/23 136/17 149/1 149/7 150/15 152/16 152/24 153/20 154/1 156/13 166/11 171/13 benefit [3] 2/19 69/25 173/19 175/25 177/23 181/6 184/20 198/10 200/20 202/6 207/12 210/7 217/7 218/25 219/14 220/9 224/20 228/25 241/11 **beginning [8]** 68/3 68/9 76/20 76/22 90/16 117/17 150/1 196/10 **begins [1]** 73/19 behalf [5] 16/5 28/20 61/9 61/12 225/11 103/1 107/13 114/23 175/9 being [77] 11/19 15/4 21/10 25/11 34/5 44/25 45/11 49/19 57/12 77/4 84/17 90/17 90/17 90/24 91/1 93/14 97/12 97/23 100/15 114/11 115/18 115/19 130/17 131/1 136/16 137/5

137/12 138/14 142/1 143/5 144/8 145/1 146/11 152/23 164/11 165/22 169/3 169/13 169/20 170/2 172/13 177/13 180/25 182/20 184/10 185/16 186/23 196/7 196/8 203/6 203/7 216/13 217/9 218/12 222/7 222/8 222/11 225/5 227/16 227/25 228/3 229/2 229/5 229/8 229/22 232/4 232/15 234/13 235/20 237/7 237/9 237/11 237/14 239/17 240/10 240/21 243/18 belief [4] 2/1 28/3 39/4 125/8 beliefs [1] 75/7 believe [18] 38/22 46/22 69/22 75/13 134/15 142/1 142/16 148/1 149/1 149/8 168/20 193/5 194/2 194/20 220/8 227/23 228/6 241/4 believed [4] 103/16 142/8 143/12 154/16 bells [3] 193/15 194/12 220/12 below [10] 73/6 82/10 119/20 119/22 182/15 186/7 189/16 220/10 227/7 240/11 bemused [1] 120/21 bemusing [1] 121/11 beneath [1] 104/2 232/3 benefits [2] 56/11 64/23 **Benjamin** [1] 225/11 best [10] 2/1 72/13 125/7 127/21 128/22 148/25 170/16 174/11 227/13 242/9 **better [6]** 9/15 57/22 95/9 123/22 123/24 124/20 between [27] 2/12 4/2 12/15 22/6 35/12 39/3 39/18 43/19 45/1 61/6 111/2 127/22 128/23 141/6 146/21 150/22 155/14 173/21 175/7 178/14 184/8 195/9 207/2 211/6 211/15 211/20 242/7 beyond [1] 229/20 **big [8]** 7/16 58/15 60/24 98/24 99/3 100/7 118/22 121/15 biggest [1] 234/22

bit [22] 19/17 51/2 67/19 91/15 93/1 97/5 117/3 118/19 125/14 147/13 159/4 171/20 175/15 177/1 182/19 186/1 186/5 193/19 204/24 215/3 235/1 239/2 **bit's [1]** 233/10 bits [2] 214/11 234/22 black [2] 46/12 46/13 **BLAKE [5]** 124/12 230/8 243/5 243/21 245/7 blend [1] 228/17 **blurred [1]** 124/20 board [47] 70/2 70/2 70/23 70/24 71/14 71/19 72/9 72/10 84/9 89/3 89/5 94/18 98/13 98/14 102/6 102/7 102/9 102/20 102/21 116/5 116/9 116/25 117/14 117/19 118/2 118/16 119/7 119/24 120/3 120/8 120/10 151/17 151/20 151/21 162/19 162/21 162/21 162/22 162/23 162/24 163/2 198/14 199/1 199/4 200/3 208/23 222/23 **Bob [2]** 70/15 70/16 body [2] 118/5 118/6 Bogerd [4] 238/3 238/4 238/15 238/16 bookend [1] 49/14 books [2] 46/3 147/6 born [2] 3/3 90/17 **borrow [1]** 56/15 **borrowing [1]** 56/17 **both [10]** 73/20 115/21 136/20 167/1 167/7 171/16 177/9 212/23 229/10 243/11 **bottom [20]** 70/5 71/25 83/1 112/9 146/5 160/8 166/19 186/10 187/16 199/20 199/20 206/12 206/13 219/4 225/14 225/17 237/2 239/10 240/3 240/4 **bought [5]** 147/6 147/13 156/5 179/23 210/14 **box [2]** 55/25 67/22 **branch [48]** 15/15 18/12 21/5 31/13 31/18 36/1 38/8 45/4 45/7 62/1 79/25 82/20 83/10 86/12 94/2 112/5 112/16 121/16

В	130/1 132/6 183/2
branch [30] 126/7	201/17 211/3 211/4
146/23 166/24 167/2	211/5 211/9 211/10
167/21 169/6 169/15	211/13 211/14 211/18 211/18 211/23 211/23
169/17 169/19 169/23	212/7 212/10 212/14
170/15 171/4 176/21	212/7 212/10 212/14
177/11 178/3 181/24	213/4 213/16 213/17
182/21 184/24 184/25	213/18 213/20
200/21 204/7 209/2	Bug/branch [1]
209/18 211/13 218/20	211/13
232/10 232/13 232/16 236/8 236/18	bugs [51] 5/2 5/15
Branch's [1] 186/20	51/21 52/3 75/24
pranches [48] 22/12	76/24 79/11 79/13
26/20 26/21 27/11	79/23 81/18 85/17
27/13 37/14 37/15	88/10 88/25 89/7 89/9
37/20 37/24 38/6	105/2 105/25 106/10
56/17 61/14 65/8	107/1 107/20 108/1
80/23 83/7 83/9 85/10	108/9 127/20 127/23 128/20 128/24 157/23
88/20 109/1 126/8	157/24 158/7 158/24
142/20 152/19 163/3	162/15 210/21 210/23
164/1 167/19 167/23	210/25 212/2 212/19
168/12 169/2 170/2	213/9 213/10 213/11
170/6 171/10 175/17	213/13 214/3 214/15
177/17 183/17 194/17	214/23 215/4 215/11
207/13 207/15 209/3 209/5 209/16 209/17	215/15 215/19 216/6
214/23 218/6 218/9	216/12 216/20 221/3
218/18 231/4 236/13	build [1] 73/20
241/24	builds [1] 232/2
orand [1] 112/12	built [3] 60/11 62/5
BRDB [2] 182/24	233/6
184/2	bulk [1] 147/13
oreak [8] 48/12 48/22	bunch [1] 101/18
176/3 176/7 176/8	bundle [1] 1/16 Burdett [1] 146/6
176/10 176/13 176/17	Bureau [2] 212/10
Sreeden [2] 237/25	212/22
237/25	Durley [47] 122/20
rief [2] 128/4 242/24	124/10 124/11 124/15
oriefed [2] 13/21 172/3	124/16 171/23 176/7
oriefly [9] 103/14	176/19 219/24 223/9
126/25 130/12 143/21	227/12 229/25 237/8
150/21 185/5 224/20	240/8 243/10 243/14
229/18 241/14	245/6
oring [1] 240/1	Burley's [1] 14/19
orings [1] 232/2	business [56] 3/15
roadly [3] 127/16	4/9 6/12 11/21 11/22 12/6 14/24 16/11 21/5
157/5 217/11	32/20 33/10 34/1
prought [9] 86/25	35/16 53/19 56/8
109/14 124/17 174/13	56/10 56/15 57/1 59/3
174/16 175/24 180/4	59/19 62/19 66/25
210/12 219/14	70/5 70/13 71/5 71/15
orutally [1] 193/11	75/20 80/4 80/18 81/4
B TS [14] 170/2	83/21 84/3 84/4 84/20
176/21 177/11 177/13 177/17 177/19 178/3	94/17 97/22 97/23
182/20 182/23 183/1	100/8 101/1 107/15
183/4 183/7 183/10	107/15 116/15 117/17
186/17	119/14 120/6 126/10
bug [34] 33/3 39/10	127/14 130/24 131/2
51/6 85/22 127/23	131/5 137/25 143/6
- :,	143/14 206/19 207/25
129/4 129/8 129/23	242/1

211/18 **Butts [3]** 177/3 177/8 211/23 200/24 byproduct [1] 118/20 C **calculated** [1] 136/5 call [7] 1/5 11/7 20/20 29/8 104/14 124/10 196/6 called [22] 36/10 46/12 60/20 61/4 62/6 95/12 115/21 115/24 116/8 129/18 141/23 9/7 89/9 144/2 144/4 144/5 144/8 146/6 158/17 162/19 164/25 199/13 230/21 241/18 157/23 calling [3] 11/1 12/16 210/23 80/15 calls [13] 20/22 76/14 79/21 105/8 116/8 178/21 196/4 196/19 208/25 209/1 209/13 209/15 218/9 came [17] 15/3 26/11 58/5 59/5 62/9 83/21 97/23 101/4 101/8 111/10 111/17 117/5 127/4 131/3 234/6 235/5 236/9 can [167] 1/10 1/15 1/21 2/9 13/9 14/2 14/14 17/4 17/12 26/14 28/14 29/3 30/17 35/25 45/1 47/15 47/18 47/23 48/7 48/7 48/10 49/4 124/15 52/24 53/1 54/17 55/6 55/22 55/25 59/25 60/5 64/24 71/21 71/22 72/2 73/9 75/1 76/2 79/5 82/17 83/9 83/13 84/5 86/14 91/23 95/5 95/23 96/15 104/10 105/15 109/18 109/20 111/16 11 21/5 118/12 119/6 119/9 121/5 123/8 123/18 123/25 124/10 124/13 7/1 59/3 125/25 126/24 130/13 /5 71/15| 132/1 132/12 134/8 134/18 134/22 136/14 18 81/4 137/9 137/10 137/13 /4 84/20 137/18 138/17 138/17 138/24 141/20 142/11 117/17 146/3 150/21 151/14 151/19 152/4 153/8 155/17 155/19 159/10 159/21 159/22 159/23 160/5 160/19 160/25 207/25 161/2 161/3 161/7

but [316]

button [5] 18/8 39/15

43/15 169/3 169/17

163/9 166/18 168/8 171/1 173/7 173/9 175/2 176/21 177/14 178/7 178/12 179/3 179/14 181/3 181/13 182/8 185/3 187/12 189/9 190/2 191/8 195/2 198/1 198/4 198/7 199/19 200/14 201/12 201/16 203/10 203/25 206/9 206/11 207/9 207/9 207/23 208/15 210/19 210/22 214/16 216/10 216/25 219/6 219/15 221/16 222/5 222/22 223/3 224/21 225/15 228/11 230/6 230/10 231/18 233/1 234/12 235/23 236/7 236/20 237/21 239/22 241/13 243/1 243/19 can't [88] 3/1 4/1 14/8 26/10 30/18 36/8 36/23 44/11 44/15 48/13 58/4 59/4 63/23 64/9 66/24 69/3 69/5 70/9 70/15 72/9 72/13 72/13 72/15 73/10 76/15 76/16 76/16 77/12 83/17 83/23 85/17 87/11 87/16 90/19 95/8 95/22 95/25 99/23 100/12 101/7 102/17 103/3 104/21 104/24 107/7 107/14 108/14 108/16 113/15 116/23 117/2 117/6 117/12 117/24 119/11 119/12 120/16 125/5 133/11 133/13 135/13 136/18 137/9 137/14 140/17 141/25 142/16 142/23 147/10 149/5 149/20 150/25 163/6 163/8 171/6 178/18 192/10 206/24 207/24 208/1 219/21 224/18 231/15 236/20 239/16 239/24 241/4 242/3 cannot [6] 73/6 140/12 142/10 161/4 192/10 200/7 **capability [1]** 74/20 capable [1] 103/17 capital [1] 56/17 capitalised [1] 78/3 car [1] 28/18 card [1] 78/6 cards [1] 78/12 careful [1] 152/20

161/10 162/17 163/4 carelessness [3] 48/2 49/8 49/18 168/10 168/16 170/18 carried [3] 19/25 184/13 217/9 carry [3] 112/16 158/20 228/10 carrying [2] 102/12 230/2 cascade [1] 194/22 cascaded [1] 194/16 case [12] 8/9 43/14 44/23 51/7 71/15 94/17 117/17 184/14 184/15 226/16 230/13 236/25 cases [10] 27/18 28/9 41/12 41/20 77/24 78/2 83/10 102/2 102/2 167/7 cash [108] 3/11 4/17 8/21 12/1 16/25 17/2 18/7 18/9 18/11 18/15 19/4 19/6 19/8 22/7 22/8 27/9 27/20 27/22 28/8 29/19 29/21 32/9 32/11 32/12 32/15 34/15 35/12 35/13 36/18 38/7 42/4 42/5 42/11 42/15 42/17 43/7 43/16 50/21 51/25 54/19 54/22 56/13 56/21 57/5 60/21 60/23 60/25 61/15 61/22 63/2 63/3 66/22 80/17 111/20 111/22 111/25 121/13 121/16 121/17 121/21 121/23 122/1 122/2 122/3 122/7 122/8 122/13 132/24 133/1 133/16 135/3 135/4 136/4 136/7 136/9 136/15 140/7 141/2 141/14 141/16 141/17 142/4 142/18 143/25 144/7 144/20 144/23 145/2 145/14 145/19 145/22 146/2 146/9 146/19 147/17 147/24 148/1 148/2 179/1 188/12 208/3 216/8 216/21 218/24 223/20 224/2 224/5 241/1 catch [1] 54/10 cause [14] 49/21 75/25 81/11 129/3 129/5 132/6 148/5 158/19 167/4 167/16 167/20 170/11 171/17 188/5 caused [13] 34/6 48/1 48/3 49/7 49/9 50/18 51/5 51/21 52/4 81/23 85/22 182/16

C 120/2 120/6 136/23 96/17 123/17 174/25 243/14 18/13 20/4 21/23 46/7 154/11 212/22 232/3 class [1] 62/5 **commas [1]** 120/23 conceptual [6] 25/7 caused... [1] 194/10 234/25 240/3 240/10 **classed [3]** 112/23 commencement [2] 25/16 54/18 55/15 causes [2] 142/15 240/12 240/16 240/25 165/10 197/20 152/14 153/24 66/21 71/7 144/20 240/25 242/2 clause [1] 37/6 commencing [2] concern [5] 73/19 causing [5] 21/21 changed [9] 36/21 clear [8] 28/22 50/22 152/17 154/2 118/25 137/21 195/8 30/23 33/4 179/9 37/19 38/1 42/7 42/7 109/22 153/3 164/3 **comment [8]** 131/10 209/3 197/7 60/5 63/5 108/25 180/12 192/17 218/13 149/20 213/15 214/6 concerning [2] caveats [2] 203/6 clearly [19] 34/18 214/16 215/16 239/24 116/3 130/11 220/18 203/7 35/10 40/21 50/3 51/3 242/24 changes [9] 26/2 concerns [12] 37/22 **CBDB [1]** 136/10 69/8 77/21 100/2 73/1 80/23 109/3 56/7 58/3 62/1 87/10 commenting [2] cease [1] 74/3 96/10 99/5 149/18 121/23 135/8 155/16 186/7 215/16 143/25 148/11 148/14 cell [1] 114/11 213/25 155/25 172/17 193/15 comments [4] 66/6 182/15 199/8 199/10 cent [19] 133/18 193/21 194/1 199/13 186/6 191/14 227/1 199/11 225/4 changing [1] 133/2 134/16 141/1 141/17 channels [2] 37/22 concluding [1] 222/13 223/12 commercial [1] 141/25 142/11 142/16 clerk [2] 126/5 197/2 109/3 123/10 51/18 148/4 149/5 149/25 client [5] 43/2 61/8 characteristics [2] commercially [1] conclusion [1] 9/18 153/19 157/10 158/7 161/6 161/9 61/16 62/16 64/3 75/13 concurrence [1] 163/8 179/19 196/9 charge [2] 6/3 95/6 clients [5] 58/12 commitment [4] 188/16 205/9 224/2 224/19 188/17 190/19 203/10 conditional [1] 139/5 charged [1] 239/10 61/10 61/12 197/3 central [3] 138/2 charges [2] 231/6 208/4 203/17 **conditions [2]** 199/3 169/21 208/2 231/12 Clive [8] 55/3 67/7 committed [2] 226/16 centre [5] 20/20 21/1 **Charles [1]** 226/3 67/12 67/14 68/14 113/15 113/16 conduct [1] 23/1 33/17 63/3 152/20 certain [16] 4/15 7/25 chartered [2] 2/21 71/24 78/19 79/16 common [3] 52/16 conducting [1] 90/1 close [4] 111/24 196/20 234/8 confidence [8] 8/1 94/12 100/17 128/1 140/3 172/5 140/21 154/13 156/6 **chase [1]** 63/1 communicated [1] 134/16 149/20 157/19 check [7] 36/20 **closed [3]** 7/19 179/14 158/5 158/10 160/4 163/8 170/10 190/9 41/20 42/17 111/20 111/25 154/14 190/12 214/20 communications [1] 196/9 197/19 217/19 111/25 191/15 206/18 closely [2] 120/13 confident [2] 140/4 234/20 221/19 224/19 check' [1] 111/22 215/21 **Community [2]** 48/9 140/16 certainly [29] 26/11 40/8 44/24 64/10 76/6 checked [2] 91/25 **closest [1]** 198/25 73/16 confirm [8] 13/9 17/4 125/3 125/5 149/5 184/22 clothes [1] 114/22 company [1] 157/7 85/3 86/10 87/14 checking [4] 42/23 152/22 177/10 178/22 **clunky [1]** 13/1 compare [1] 6/24 87/21 90/21 105/14 60/18 134/17 144/17 **coding [4]** 134/5 comparing [2] **confirmed [8]** 40/3 117/17 118/10 132/10 checks [1] 137/24 144/6 148/12 233/2 170/23 183/21 125/1 160/25 163/15 137/9 137/10 137/13 cheque [1] 110/11 colleague [1] 181/21 **competent [3]** 78/19 166/25 167/7 228/22 147/22 149/2 155/9 Chesterfield [15] colleagues [2] 78/20 128/10 240/8 187/4 192/1 195/12 3/22 35/1 42/15 42/23 181/19 184/23 complainants [1] confirms [2] 204/4 202/14 202/20 202/24 43/1 60/3 60/16 60/18 collected [2] 152/19 234/3 207/4 206/4 220/13 233/5 60/24 61/18 61/19 154/24 complaints [1] conflict [2] 241/22 cetera [14] 10/5 12/6 62/24 63/19 63/21 collection [5] 69/4 234/10 242/22 24/9 57/22 76/24 225/25 154/21 155/21 158/22 complete [3] 169/4 conform [1] 161/9 79/19 107/17 108/2 Chetwynd [1] 3/22 199/16 201/12 159/15 **conformity** [1] 74/11 122/6 190/18 208/4 column [5] 134/23 Chief [1] 72/17 completed [4] 14/6 confused [2] 221/14 214/1 223/1 233/2 135/21 137/19 152/12 43/8 167/3 225/2 **children [2]** 115/3 222/13 chain [9] 7/24 71/24 115/13 completely [4] 148/6 conjunction [1] 21/4 176/23 176/24 185/15 columns [1] 147/17 149/16 161/1 228/13 choice [2] 159/21 **connected [3]** 224/5 187/3 187/4 189/9 159/22 combine [1] 199/14 **complex** [1] 7/16 228/12 228/13 237/24 **chosen [1]** 174/6 **combined [2]** 163/10 complexities [1] connection [4] chains [1] 69/4 176/14 221/24 222/1 **Chris [1]** 188/18 166/20 167/6 **chair [1]** 151/18 come [20] 6/14 9/17 **complexity** [1] 73/19 229/3 chronologically [1] challenge [6] 74/21 12/5 14/4 17/15 17/21 **component** [2] 106/3 conscious [2] 47/5 127/16 116/10 116/12 117/21 CIMA [2] 2/18 2/20 39/19 56/25 77/13 106/12 234/24 159/23 203/14 circulation [1] 98/17 100/12 101/4 comprehensive [1] consensus [1] 227/2 challenged [1] 188/7 101/7 113/9 116/19 130/17 201/13 consequence [3] challenges [2] 188/2 117/7 150/20 175/3 circumstances [2] compromised [2] 141/21 161/25 183/6 230/22 175/8 222/16 170/10 205/17 192/20 204/1 consequences [2] challenging [1] 7/15 civil [4] 16/15 17/7 comes [3] 75/25 **computer [5]** 127/9 115/23 182/2 chance [4] 90/7 205/4 228/5 109/16 200/15 127/11 127/15 151/8 consequential [2] 105/17 169/24 221/18 157/22 **claim [1]** 96/16 comfortable [4] 128/16 128/19 **change [24]** 23/9 claims [1] 231/11 154/11 179/24 180/6 **concealing [1]** 46/15 consider [2] 164/19 46/18 46/20 57/17 239/12 **clamp [1]** 99/10 185/1 concentrating [1] 57/18 58/7 70/13 **clarify [1]** 184/4 coming [7] 1/14 161/5 consideration [2] 116/2 119/14 120/1 Clarke [3] 70/14 96/6 79/12 200/2 60/23 94/3 112/16 concept [5] 13/3

C 224/16 73/8 171/15 202/4 contrary [1] 149/11 counters [2] 62/16 contrast [1] 173/21 correspondence [1] 137/21 curtain [1] 114/24 considered [7] 15/12 **contribute [3]** 20/15 189/15 couple [7] 6/10 47/15 **custodial** [1] 114/4 83/9 85/20 86/18 22/5 140/7 corresponding [2] 107/5 130/12 143/1 **customer [7]** 16/3 156/1 165/4 191/12 contributed [3] 20/14 183/22 199/4 161/16 224/21 16/5 86/22 86/23 considering [1] 2/16 147/8 178/17 195/11 21/25 22/6 corrupted [1] 201/17 course [10] 1/6 8/14 **consistent** [1] 138/5 constantly [1] 213/24 contributing [1] 23/3 16/16 16/17 16/18 CWU [7] 25/3 25/9 **corrupting [2]** 184/9 control [23] 57/22 184/10 149/15 159/22 192/5 241/20 241/23 242/8 constituents [1] 73/8 74/1 74/6 74/8 242/14 242/15 **corruption [4]** 181/15 215/20 243/5 72/10 74/10 74/22 75/8 95/7 184/3 184/7 185/2 court [6] 111/1 constitute [2] 163/24 113/11 113/19 187/25 115/16 143/23 144/2 cost [3] 59/3 94/19 198/19 **D'Alvarez [11]** 152/6 144/4 144/9 144/25 153/7 194/6 214/9 constitution [1] costs [7] 53/12 56/18 152/7 164/20 168/18 145/4 170/18 231/20 **courtroom** [1] 114/8 106/6 172/9 173/23 181/4 232/25 237/23 240/3 57/14 62/22 232/3 cover [9] 29/10 30/3 constructive [1] 181/5 182/10 182/14 240/12 240/16 240/17 240/22 52/13 54/12 69/23 116/12 189/11 controls [3] 131/2 Coton [4] 166/24 78/1 78/4 121/22 consulted [4] 143/3 daily [3] 13/5 132/23 167/4 168/2 177/24 139/5 139/10 158/18 143/15 229/3 229/5 136/5 could [83] 8/10 22/2 cover-ups [1] 29/10 conversation [1] consulting [1] 187/9 **Dan [1]** 211/13 237/6 23/25 24/13 28/9 covered [2] 26/24 contact [2] 77/25 data [76] 5/3 5/17 8/7 conversations [1] 29/24 30/6 30/13 200/8 226/1 30/16 30/19 30/19 8/10 9/19 9/23 13/6 40/11 covering [2] 28/1 contacted [3] 111/2 13/11 16/9 16/10 17/6 convey [1] 119/21 31/2 31/17 31/18 76/25 220/20 227/24 23/22 26/3 62/16 64/3 conveyed [1] 122/22 31/20 32/17 32/20 covers [1] 188/12 contain [2] 75/24 94/2 128/16 135/1 32/23 33/1 33/3 33/5 create [4] 65/15 68/4 Cooke [1] 163/14 197/19 136/15 137/25 138/1 33/7 35/1 35/4 35/5 cope [1] 209/4 68/8 81/8 containing [1] 138/13 152/18 152/19 35/6 35/7 35/15 39/10 copied [12] 72/2 created [12] 40/22 141/16 152/20 153/18 154/15 74/25 76/3 78/15 40/18 44/2 44/2 50/24 55/14 61/1 61/7 66/1 content [2] 125/2 154/22 154/24 155/4 78/17 78/24 134/19 60/25 70/22 73/18 81/10 86/13 87/11 225/20 155/12 155/14 155/16 168/23 182/10 189/13 78/11 79/21 81/11 91/16 102/6 171/3 contents [2] 1/25 83/22 101/4 101/6 155/19 155/21 155/21 230/19 233/16 241/22 66/21 158/23 159/1 159/15 105/13 110/10 110/19 creating [3] 20/6 copies [3] 39/22 context [2] 234/14 161/19 161/20 167/8 39/24 94/15 111/19 114/22 115/16 20/9 23/5 241/9 122/16 125/17 127/25 creation [1] 81/11 169/18 169/19 169/20 **copy [9]** 1/17 2/3 continue [6] 31/14 169/25 170/1 170/5 39/2 124/22 125/4 128/16 128/19 129/3 credit [4] 78/6 78/7 44/11 123/14 140/15 170/8 170/19 177/13 78/12 78/13 125/4 183/3 187/14 130/2 134/2 135/22 170/13 173/7 178/5 179/11 181/16 225/18 138/20 139/1 139/12 **creep [1]** 214/3 continued [3] 29/11 182/21 182/23 183/4 141/21 142/18 149/19 crime [3] 29/9 113/15 Corbett [16] 18/22 73/12 190/13 183/8 183/10 183/11 26/12 55/18 64/15 162/4 163/23 166/3 113/16 continues [2] 74/17 184/1 184/9 184/10 84/12 85/4 100/2 167/3 186/11 188/2 criminal [12] 16/15 77/16 184/12 184/16 192/19 100/15 117/6 117/21 188/5 196/12 198/11 17/7 111/1 205/3 contract [29] 19/17 202/1 202/3 204/1 118/8 118/13 119/5 198/19 199/14 201/2 224/23 225/7 226/5 19/17 33/13 35/14 204/3 204/5 204/7 119/9 120/2 120/15 210/14 225/21 229/1 227/21 227/22 228/5 37/4 37/7 37/12 38/14 206/2 206/3 208/3 229/23 234/18 237/16 Corbett's [1] 119/19 228/8 229/7 38/25 39/13 39/23 232/9 243/8 243/10 core [6] 26/19 28/2 criminally [1] 8/11 39/24 40/13 41/2 44/9 Database [1] 182/21 37/13 38/5 133/3 could be [1] 134/2 criteria [7] 7/20 44/16 44/22 45/5 date [21] 3/2 55/22 133/3 could/will [1] 188/5 130/8 143/11 148/21 47/16 47/18 48/9 55/25 90/13 90/15 corner [1] 131/12 153/6 153/8 153/10 couldn't [19] 27/11 49/12 50/25 51/1 125/3 125/5 144/15 cornered [1] 243/17 31/6 35/11 50/19 critical [7] 53/18 56/8 52/20 79/5 80/20 86/2 163/7 171/25 172/5 correct [25] 8/22 58/11 78/25 80/24 133/18 196/11 200/19 238/2 172/24 172/25 173/2 8/23 9/5 24/4 91/21 110/22 112/24 113/16 235/20 235/21 Contractor [2] 173/6 174/1 174/3 cross [2] 47/22 70/18 94/9 98/25 102/16 113/17 122/16 125/3 144/15 144/21 175/3 175/16 213/5 102/16 103/6 103/22 cross-representation 134/15 145/3 153/17 Contractor's [1] 224/18 121/7 157/11 168/21 162/3 185/11 210/10 **[1]** 70/18 144/19 177/18 181/15 183/19 council [1] 200/18 Crown [6] 22/14 45/2 dated [4] 1/17 54/20 contracts [4] 38/23 183/24 184/12 184/20 Counsel [2] 1/10 82/19 207/14 45/3 45/4 114/2 231/3 39/20 40/11 44/24 186/14 202/10 205/7 dates [2] 101/16 206/5 crushed [2] 113/5 contractual [16] 232/14 232/18 210/1 count [1] 122/12 113/6 38/19 40/9 44/13 daughter [1] 115/6 **corrected [4]** 63/2 counter [13] 58/9 Cruttenden [7] 70/13 44/18 45/13 46/18 83/11 161/4 167/15 58/14 59/10 126/4 96/14 98/15 99/19 Dave [4] 6/4 154/6 91/8 91/13 92/12 117/9 119/13 120/5 163/14 172/3 146/2 171/9 177/16 **correction** [1] 171/7 92/22 93/2 97/7 98/7 **David [1]** 64/16 182/24 182/25 183/11 correctly [11] 39/12 **CS [2]** 178/16 195/11 141/8 143/4 143/13 day [9] 15/15 15/15 110/6 160/16 169/18 197/2 202/2 202/4 current [4] 73/4 contractually [4] 51/10 84/8 85/13 169/21 178/5 219/24 73/25 137/20 207/15 counterclaims [1] 38/6 38/20 85/14 91/9 113/3 121/19 169/16 223/9 223/14 224/15 231/5 currently [4] 72/21 (70) considered - day

desperately [2] 57/25 93/22 102/11 102/25 204/4 218/4 218/11 D depended [1] 4/4 218/16 218/21 222/24 dependent [2] 106/4 106/7 110/1 58/2 day... [1] 244/1 222/25 188/21 206/20 despite [4] 78/8 110/9 110/14 111/5 days [7] 78/7 78/13 defects [31] 5/2 5/15 **depending [5]** 73/15 147/23 199/9 209/23 111/25 112/4 112/17 168/19 169/8 195/24 75/24 79/13 79/24 106/1 106/11 107/1 113/2 113/22 114/7 detail [15] 6/25 41/13 209/7 234/23 81/18 88/10 88/25 115/2 116/9 117/21 158/8 68/18 125/13 130/23 **DC [1]** 163/14 106/1 106/10 107/1 depends [5] 148/13 133/25 136/8 137/16 125/20 127/8 128/20 de [1] 212/22 107/20 108/9 148/15 154/23 174/10 231/22 139/7 155/1 181/19 129/21 132/2 137/3 dead [1] 175/17 161/12 199/23 200/5 184/18 214/12 215/15 148/23 150/14 152/10 242/11 deadline [2] 164/17 210/22 210/24 210/25 240/24 153/1 185/10 185/16 deploy [2] 169/1 166/4 187/4 192/14 194/20 212/3 212/19 217/16 213/23 detailed [2] 189/15 deal [7] 45/6 80/13 218/2 221/3 221/17 deployed [3] 164/9 240/11 194/21 197/12 210/6 81/6 105/5 105/11 221/18 221/24 221/25 175/25 202/7 details [1] 54/21 210/7 216/19 220/14 227/13 228/6 detected [4] 132/22 221/8 228/3 228/14 222/2 222/16 deploying [3] 158/10 dealing [4] 5/23 defence [2] 225/19 180/7 214/22 144/24 145/3 145/11 228/18 232/18 233/9 106/24 108/9 217/16 233/17 237/5 238/25 227/4 deployment [2] **determine** [2] 187/8 deals [1] 96/25 151/24 234/23 239/12 239/16 243/5 defendant [1] 225/6 195/16 dealt [10] 13/19 **defended [1]** 231/9 deposit [1] 42/9 determined [1] didn't [52] 8/9 11/13 30/13 61/18 78/25 Deficiencies [2] 48/3 **depository** [1] 94/24 17/2 19/7 20/16 22/4 171/17 95/2 95/4 98/10 144/3 27/23 30/25 31/3 39/8 49/10 **deposits [2]** 42/8 devastated [3] 112/6 160/15 224/3 112/6 113/4 39/12 40/5 40/21 41/6 define [1] 74/21 42/12 Dearne [1] 21/1 definitely [8] 16/4 **Derby [2]** 167/11 devastating [1] 42/22 43/19 46/11 debate [1] 230/5 124/21 142/6 156/24 168/3 46/16 52/4 64/11 68/1 115/23 debt [7] 45/16 46/5 157/12 166/17 175/10 derived [2] 135/3 86/9 88/11 88/11 develop [3] 59/6 47/8 53/14 53/16 149/17 213/22 106/6 106/14 108/5 221/15 136/4 58/23 58/24 developed [6] 12/25 108/6 108/9 113/13 **definitive [3]** 190/17 **describe** [5] 65/5 **December [4]** 125/18 190/23 192/19 105/13 129/8 150/11 13/3 59/16 131/1 114/6 115/8 115/15 237/15 238/25 239/15 234/9 201/24 241/12 116/2 123/1 127/11 definitively [1] December 2010 [2] described [12] 4/25 129/14 146/9 151/8 239/18 developers [3] 237/15 239/15 166/1 180/16 185/8 degree [8] 132/3 8/5 53/15 55/6 67/9 105/24 106/8 106/25 decent [1] 103/11 199/15 213/9 213/11 140/21 142/4 142/11 83/14 100/14 100/15 developing [3] 158/9 decide [1] 243/8 145/14 145/19 232/20 112/15 135/2 202/2 158/16 241/16 213/12 214/8 214/12 decided [4] 18/17 216/24 220/7 233/11 238/5 221/25 development [24] 84/21 170/13 243/9 delay [5] 48/5 49/11 **describes** [1] 49/22 3/12 3/17 3/19 6/8 242/17 deciding [1] 76/17 152/14 153/24 221/21 description [7] 65/14 11/20 15/9 93/17 94/6 died [1] 235/3 decision [38] 21/3 differ [2] 190/16 delays [1] 165/17 65/15 68/4 68/5 68/19 94/8 96/25 104/17 21/22 23/21 26/19 deliberate [1] 46/1 136/7 201/4 106/19 128/12 138/16 201/14 37/13 38/5 64/17 148/3 148/14 150/7 difference [21] 30/25 deliberately [1] 21/19 descriptions [1] 68/21 68/22 69/19 deliver [6] 53/8 64/22 65/16 150/18 151/23 151/23 32/14 34/24 35/12 70/3 70/25 71/12 71/10 153/7 153/7 design [27] 17/19 152/3 153/15 214/21 43/12 43/13 45/1 61/6 71/13 75/18 75/22 23/21 24/9 24/25 25/7 221/17 121/22 122/9 127/22 165/18 79/2 79/3 79/4 83/5 25/16 25/18 38/5 46/1 dial [1] 176/11 146/25 147/18 150/22 deliverables [3] 83/15 83/19 84/2 84/6 **Diane [1]** 111/17 190/10 190/14 207/14 54/18 54/21 55/5 155/13 175/7 178/14 84/16 84/17 84/19 **delivered [9]** 129/20 55/11 55/12 55/15 did [122] 2/24 3/23 195/8 203/13 242/7 102/18 167/18 168/5 151/13 153/5 163/22 55/15 64/12 65/17 3/24 4/7 5/7 5/21 6/14 242/10 169/1 169/5 184/21 163/24 177/15 198/18 66/22 69/13 71/7 6/15 6/16 8/5 9/17 differences [5] 22/6 198/11 198/12 198/16 198/20 202/5 76/11 86/25 87/6 10/8 10/21 11/16 62/15 64/7 181/12 210/17 234/24 delivering [1] 240/7 92/16 96/2 97/24 11/19 13/20 14/3 14/7 188/4 decisions [5] 21/18 **delivery [9]** 126/19 designed [4] 27/4 14/10 14/12 16/7 different [35] 10/25 51/19 76/3 108/3 126/22 126/25 127/2 21/13 21/14 21/16 20/8 21/18 21/19 26/7 60/4 98/21 145/6 215/23 157/16 164/18 198/23 designers [3] 105/23 23/1 23/10 23/11 31/22 45/12 73/15 declaration [1] 23/12 23/16 24/8 222/16 227/19 106/8 106/25 80/10 88/16 88/19 121/20 demonstrate [1] designing [1] 60/1 24/24 25/17 28/17 91/5 94/14 94/14 declare [3] 74/8 desire [2] 46/24 54/6 29/25 30/7 30/8 30/14 108/3 126/7 132/13 161/7 122/14 129/24 desired [1] 45/14 30/17 34/18 35/14 134/3 136/2 140/6 demonstrated [3] declared [2] 31/23 101/21 102/12 205/7 36/18 38/22 39/18 150/15 154/4 154/18 desires [1] 55/20 31/25 155/16 158/22 162/19 demonstrating [1] desks [1] 107/17 40/15 45/18 49/24 deemed [2] 193/14 173/17 desktop [1] 94/22 51/15 53/22 53/25 162/22 171/5 173/25 207/3 55/7 59/6 59/23 60/3 174/7 175/2 208/10 demonstration [1] desperate [13] deep [2] 194/11 156/22 157/6 161/24 61/9 72/4 77/8 82/4 228/14 232/21 241/24 180/14 194/13 82/6 82/9 82/11 86/9 166/11 166/15 166/16 den [4] 238/3 238/4 differently [1] 45/10 defect [14] 85/22 171/24 172/9 172/10 238/15 238/16 86/21 87/3 87/10 difficult [5] 104/4 161/19 189/21 190/7 172/16 173/3 174/1 87/11 87/17 88/9 90/6 105/12 106/23 185/25 departments [2] 200/8 201/20 201/23 90/9 91/16 91/23 56/13 119/9 174/3 243/13

D difficulties [1] 105/3 diligence [1] 132/3 direct [2] 5/25 129/7 directly [2] 210/15 241/23 director [17] 18/18 18/21 28/20 28/21 29/17 40/6 52/22 53/21 55/19 84/11 100/16 101/5 101/7 118/14 119/23 119/25 152/11 Director's [1] 54/6 directors [1] 103/9 disappeared [1] 236/15 discard [2] 177/18 202/11 discarded [1] 191/11 disciplinary [1] 45/10 disclosed [1] 218/1 disclosure [3] 225/4 226/4 227/17 discount [2] 147/7 147/14 discounted [1] 236/16 discovered [2] 218/2 218/6 discrepancies [35] 17/25 18/4 18/23 19/24 20/6 20/9 20/12 23/5 26/24 29/11 31/5 63/14 63/16 75/25 79/7 92/19 97/10 97/15 98/5 98/22 100/22 101/11 102/13 120/25 141/16 142/5 142/18 144/20 144/23 145/3 212/6 212/10 212/13 218/10 218/18 discrepancy [6] 36/23 37/19 108/24 109/25 122/2 147/2 discuss [5] 2/16 151/22 152/2 189/17 221/8 discussed [6] 76/10 90/18 91/1 93/7 199/3 220/7 **discussion [1]** 75/23 discussions [8] 90/23 93/21 94/20 185/17 191/21 192/1 240/6 242/20 dishonest [7] 19/23 20/11 29/10 30/2 46/14 52/12 54/11 dishonestly [2] 18/24 19/15 dismiss [1] 231/2 dismissed [1] 188/1

displayed [2] 52/10 177/13 dispute [2] 37/18 108/24 disputes [1] 116/2 disrespecting [1] 28/22 distinguish [1] 128/25 distinguished [1] 128/23 distribution [3] 160/9 document [66] 25/1 187/1 198/5 **Division [2]** 70/21 111/1 do [182] 2/14 4/7 6/16 8/16 8/17 12/1 12/21 13/7 14/7 14/10 14/13 18/20 24/1 24/8 25/19 30/6 30/7 30/8 30/22 34/3 35/20 42/16 49/17 54/6 54/7 58/9 58/17 59/2 59/13 63/20 64/2 65/6 67/17 68/16 71/4 72/11 77/2 79/1 79/1 80/17 80/19 84/21 85/15 86/23 87/4 88/19 89/6 89/21 92/9 97/3 97/18 100/17 100/18 100/19 101/20 102/19 102/21 103/9 107/3 107/21 109/10 110/1 111/19 111/21 111/22 113/22 documentation [10] 115/11 115/12 117/3 120/23 121/9 121/25 123/6 124/22 124/23 125/24 127/21 130/21 131/13 131/22 133/4 133/9 134/10 135/5 140/20 140/24 142/3 143/16 144/1 145/1 145/12 145/16 146/11 148/23 149/16 149/18 42/13 42/19 42/22 150/5 152/2 152/6 152/23 154/3 156/12 158/2 158/8 158/12 158/14 160/11 160/12 162/22 168/1 168/21 168/22 169/9 169/10 169/23 170/4 171/18 172/20 173/21 174/20 176/11 177/21 178/23 179/4 180/12 180/24 184/5 186/23 187/3 188/17 191/1 191/18 192/3 192/8 193/3 193/7 194/7 194/9 194/14 197/1 197/2 197/2 199/6 199/11 204/24 206/5 206/24 206/25 208/7 210/4 212/19 214/3 214/8 215/6 215/18 217/3

221/23 224/4 224/7 224/12 225/9 225/12 226/6 226/10 226/16 228/14 230/22 232/17 232/25 234/1 236/20 237/9 237/13 237/25 238/4 238/9 238/14 240/19 242/15 dock [2] 113/21 113/24 25/3 25/21 34/17 48/14 49/4 55/23 56/6 65/8 65/12 65/15 65/19 65/22 66/1 66/6 66/10 67/6 67/9 67/16 67/21 67/24 68/24 69/2 71/2 71/4 83/25 95/15 95/15 101/19 102/14 102/25 103/3 119/3 120/9 120/16 130/14 130/16 131/8 131/9 132/12 138/11 141/8 142/19 143/1 143/21 151/15 160/7 160/8 166/18 168/17 178/13 179/16 179/17 185/16 189/23 192/6 195/4 195/7 198/6 199/19 200/14 200/17 207/8 235/24 240/1 242/25 92/25 93/12 93/16 95/7 96/24 97/12 97/13 97/16 101/13 105/21 documented [1] 102/23 documents [44] 25/8 34/16 36/19 37/7 39/1 41/21 41/22 42/2 43/6 43/11 43/16 44/3 52/1 52/8 65/5 65/6 65/11 65/24 67/15 68/9 68/15 76/9 84/25 85/23 93/6 94/15 94/25 95/3 95/5 96/16 100/5 117/16 130/9 130/10 132/10 132/16 141/10 150/3 150/4 150/19 215/9 does [19] 5/14 28/2 56/22 65/3 66/20 73/8 74/12 122/19 130/10 136/11 138/23 140/18 142/10 149/6 159/11 161/21 184/4 189/19 205/13 doesn't [17] 93/8 129/5 129/10 136/13 154/17 156/8 156/10

219/11 220/21 221/22

193/21 213/15 213/19 220/12 doing [22] 4/13 6/21 6/25 7/1 12/14 13/22 36/21 57/7 65/4 101/17 101/19 101/22 102/16 102/20 127/3 151/5 154/5 179/24 180/6 201/22 236/23 237/22 don't [137] 2/19 2/25 5/5 7/14 7/17 12/11 13/13 13/15 14/5 19/11 20/4 20/23 23/18 23/18 24/10 25/17 30/16 30/18 34/4 34/6 34/10 34/11 36/11 36/13 41/12 41/13 45/4 46/6 52/3 62/14 69/16 70/17 70/24 76/5 78/14 79/9 79/23 80/10 82/8 83/25 84/22 85/19 86/7 89/8 93/5 97/3 101/3 107/10 107/14 114/10 116/14 116/17 118/3 130/23 131/16 133/6 134/1 135/7 137/8 137/15 141/3 141/8 141/11 144/8 145/5 145/8 145/10 145/21 145/21 146/15 147/10 147/11 155/8 158/14 164/23 165/5 168/3 172/11 173/24 176/13 179/7 179/19 180/24 181/1 184/18 188/20 193/5 193/18 193/25 194/20 195/5 195/12 195/14 196/6 203/2 203/21 203/23 206/8 208/8 213/22 217/6 217/7 219/9 219/17 219/22 221/9 221/14 222/1 222/10 223/7 223/24 224/6 224/10 224/17 225/3 226/20 227/23 228/6 228/12 228/15 229/2 229/5 229/8 229/14 230/4 233/19 234/12 236/24 237/11 237/15 238/7 238/13 238/16 239/17 239/19 240/23 243/2 done [31] 12/7 12/23 25/11 32/10 32/12 39/14 42/4 43/9 43/11 57/12 58/16 64/5 66/16 79/15 92/8 102/2 103/14 107/8 110/6 122/18 139/25

161/19 161/22 174/2

182/5 184/15 192/10

140/4 146/1 149/2 155/3 155/17 182/20 191/9 232/4 233/3 235/8 door [1] 28/16 double [6] 122/10 146/2 167/11 167/22 168/4 169/7 doubt [5] 57/1 77/3 121/2 191/22 232/4 doubting [1] 29/1 down [27] 7/19 38/3 63/1 64/10 72/18 80/3 99/10 119/13 119/17 132/20 135/20 139/15 164/2 177/3 177/7 194/16 195/22 201/2 201/19 208/18 209/6 212/12 217/24 219/4 227/8 231/18 235/4 draft [6] 200/23 200/24 201/1 203/7 207/7 217/15 drafted [1] 201/3 draw [2] 216/19 240/14 drawn [2] 216/6 216/15 drill [1] 195/22 drive [2] 174/14 174/17 driven [1] 59/8 driver [2] 58/15 100/7 drivers [3] 57/1 98/24 99/3 drives [2] 138/1 174/18 driving [1] 151/11 **Drop [1]** 213/4 **DTI [1]** 56/19 due [8] 7/8 48/4 49/10 49/17 132/3 169/5 172/19 172/19 during [16] 10/4 17/19 90/11 92/16 104/17 105/21 131/21 131/23 138/16 148/14 189/25 190/3 221/17 222/14 222/15 240/19 Ε each [1] 66/10

earlier [20] 74/14 75/17 100/5 100/14 121/14 148/8 182/1 182/3 183/15 185/15 198/9 202/13 202/16 207/7 207/8 207/22 221/9 221/10 234/8 236/21 early [13] 12/11 48/13 72/4 72/24 78/8 94/14 104/17 126/21

161/3 167/1 170/9 220/14 228/3 228/6 Ε **employee** [1] 45/7 **existing [2]** 154/25 170/12 178/19 179/12 **employees [2]** 45/6 229/2 170/8 early... [5] 130/13 194/24 195/13 195/19 every [10] 2/6 28/12 112/15 **exists [1]** 161/2 138/12 140/1 195/24 **employers [1]** 91/25 196/2 196/18 196/21 33/22 36/13 77/7 81/2 expand [1] 182/19 234/23 196/23 197/10 197/12 enabled [1] 36/20 145/25 146/23 210/17 expanded [1] 135/22 easier [5] 45/21 197/18 197/25 202/15 enabling [1] 78/6 224/4 **expect [20]** 34/3 122/4 166/2 166/6 226/1 everybody [3] 64/11 35/18 40/24 42/12 enclose [1] 225/18 235/14 end [25] 7/21 10/8 error-free [1] 161/1 68/12 124/1 45/23 62/19 79/19 easily [1] 183/23 12/2 14/4 14/16 14/24 everyone [1] 109/23 84/23 97/2 118/3 errors [38] 5/2 5/15 edit [1] 159/21 143/15 172/2 178/16 14/24 15/8 57/16 43/3 43/5 61/1 61/6 **everything [10]** 7/21 edition [1] 47/17 57/21 58/4 58/11 179/11 179/25 194/22 61/7 63/1 63/13 63/16 13/14 13/15 79/1 effect [7] 89/7 136/2 59/21 59/21 63/7 66/8 75/24 77/20 110/4 113/5 192/13 195/11 196/2 197/6 139/20 192/21 211/11 63/17 67/19 69/11 79/11 79/13 81/18 193/2 205/4 232/15 238/22 212/4 236/15 84/8 85/13 121/18 83/11 85/16 88/10 evidence [53] 9/2 9/4 expectation [1] effective [1] 97/25 124/20 144/16 199/17 88/25 106/1 106/10 9/11 9/17 18/6 21/13 161/10 effectively [6] 145/25 107/1 128/15 128/18 21/24 24/11 52/8 81/6 206/4 **expected [23]** 6/22 147/8 155/5 199/7 141/1 145/24 148/3 86/19 89/18 89/22 ended [4] 12/20 8/22 9/21 9/24 10/1 222/7 231/9 208/7 208/8 226/13 161/5 161/8 210/21 90/5 90/7 90/9 90/11 34/7 40/12 50/23 effects [1] 211/15 210/24 210/25 212/2 101/13 101/18 101/21 51/23 80/13 80/18 engaged [2] 25/5 efficacy [1] 86/20 102/11 103/1 103/7 25/6 212/19 216/1 216/20 81/3 86/12 89/2 89/19 effort [2] 13/7 205/24 enhanced [4] 143/23 221/3 103/10 109/16 118/3 122/13 123/5 134/4 **eg [1]** 73/16 144/2 144/4 144/8 **escalated** [1] 181/3 123/4 123/17 125/10 143/3 157/18 159/2 eg Community [1] enough [4] 115/17 escalation [1] 172/6 129/13 130/4 131/20 209/12 213/12 73/16 191/19 215/15 225/22 131/21 137/23 138/1 escorted [1] 114/8 **expense** [1] 157/18 eighth [1] 1/21 140/14 147/22 147/22 enquire [1] 120/13 especially [1] 224/17 experience [3] 2/10 either [24] 27/22 28/6 **essential** [1] 166/4 149/11 150/1 159/14 106/2 106/11 ensure [7] 144/7 28/7 30/22 61/7 63/2 145/6 151/13 189/19 essentially [12] 165/8 168/10 174/24 experienced [3] 67/17 70/16 80/4 190/25 192/20 207/13 13/23 42/21 46/1 175/21 176/10 203/1 109/24 138/14 211/15 90/15 90/20 121/12 60/17 61/21 90/17 208/19 216/5 223/21 ensuring [2] 183/9 expert [11] 14/22 122/2 122/6 122/14 126/11 127/1 128/14 228/4 232/9 243/15 15/12 15/14 15/16 201/25 125/4 129/6 132/5 148/10 200/25 226/4 exact [5] 100/13 enter [2] 169/13 15/20 16/3 16/5 33/24 148/4 161/17 171/17 236/18 establish [2] 105/4 125/3 125/5 198/25 86/22 86/23 131/20 180/15 217/4 234/19 entering [1] 171/13 189/17 238/8 experts [4] 40/12 **electronic [3]** 132/24 entire [2] 108/7 151/6 established [1] exactly [14] 3/2 35/8 104/6 104/7 144/18 134/10 135/4 entirely [3] 48/25 63/7 70/9 74/15 91/24 **explain [22]** 16/17 181/14 elements [1] 132/1 79/5 186/16 estate [1] 151/6 138/8 186/13 186/25 25/2 31/6 33/20 50/19 else [5] 19/9 142/9 et [14] 10/5 12/6 24/9 entirety [2] 29/25 187/7 187/23 227/4 76/16 120/25 139/14 203/3 210/10 241/14 227/5 242/3 144/18 157/14 157/19 54/24 57/22 76/24 79/19 email [49] 69/4 71/21 entries [4] 152/5 107/17 108/2 122/6 example [17] 22/18 168/8 178/20 181/18 71/23 72/16 82/3 166/23 186/11 231/23 190/18 208/4 214/1 58/12 89/17 129/8 182/15 186/13 186/25 82/18 146/4 146/5 entry [22] 122/10 223/1 233/2 129/10 148/12 169/6 188/5 193/20 196/8 168/17 168/21 176/23 146/2 146/21 147/19 et cetera [12] 10/5 175/23 187/10 194/9 196/18 215/8 176/24 177/2 177/8 153/23 163/7 164/2 196/25 197/17 197/18 12/6 24/9 57/22 76/24 **explained** [9] 99/14 182/9 182/13 185/4 164/12 167/10 167/18 79/19 107/17 108/2 200/10 201/4 213/17 111/9 111/18 136/17 185/15 186/2 187/13 170/25 171/3 203/9 122/6 190/18 223/1 233/2 148/4 151/8 156/7 187/17 188/14 189/9 207/10 209/6 225/17 233/2 **examples** [8] 98/6 209/13 210/11 189/10 200/23 202/14 231/25 232/10 233/6 etc [2] 74/11 89/8 129/21 130/7 147/4 **explaining** [2] 186/1 203/4 203/8 205/19 236/8 241/1 241/2 Evans [2] 177/4 186/18 200/12 206/1 190/17 207/14 217/2 217/13 environment [1] 7/7 182/18 242/21 **explains** [1] 115/21 219/8 219/15 220/15 222/21 224/25 225/14 envisage [1] 162/2 even [15] 11/7 22/12 **exceed [1]** 141/17 explanation [2] 27/5 46/20 63/16 77/4 137/13 186/24 **EPOS [4]** 128/15 **exceeding [1]** 136/6 225/15 225/18 227/6 except [3] 26/1 40/18 148/10 148/11 148/12 77/21 81/1 81/10 explanatory [1] 227/10 230/13 230/14 equal [6] 135/3 146/7 88/13 127/24 179/12 62/2 225/21 235/24 235/25 237/3 146/9 146/18 220/6 180/17 227/23 229/1 exception [2] 85/21 **explicitly [1]** 209/21 239/9 240/9 221/7 evening [2] 115/6 165/25 **exploit** [1] 75/14 emailing [1] 238/3 equivalence [1] 171/23 exceptions [3] 41/4 exploitation [1] 77/1 emails [1] 223/2 119/5 event [2] 52/14 210/8 43/22 44/1 **exploring** [1] 236/9 **emerging** [1] 73/1 equivalent [3] 155/22 events [3] 81/17 **exchange** [1] 224/25 **expose [1]** 189/19 **emotional** [2] 114/9 142/15 218/8 exchanged [1] 76/9 156/1 156/9 **expressed [2]** 75/17 115/8 ever [18] 24/10 45/18 **erroneous** [1] 36/4 **executive [1]** 231/18 85/8 emphasising [1] error [32] 33/4 48/2 expression [1] 85/24 51/3 75/23 76/10 **exercise [1]** 173/8 233/4 48/10 49/8 49/18 50/4 79/12 85/20 86/12 exist [2] 27/23 73/8 **expressly** [1] 213/7 employed [3] 2/10 50/6 61/4 61/16 85/22 89/8 145/24 156/25 **existed [3]** 19/7 **extend [1]** 13/23 45/5 125/16 129/22 161/1 161/2 160/25 203/19 203/21 27/19 52/4 **extended** [2] 149/2

E	February 2004 [1]	financial [11] 2/23	follow [3] 5/14 214/8	124/22
extended [1] 149/7	82/19	26/21 37/15 74/10	214/12	FS [1] 189/3
extending [1] 151/2	fed [1] 66/6	187/11 191/16 192/16		FUJ00000559 [1]
extensive [2] 129/17	Federation [8] 22/19 25/2 25/9 175/23	197/7 231/3 241/1 241/2	214/11 following [6] 36/16	239/23 FUJ00058445 [1]
231/20	210/12 215/22 234/17		190/3 220/14 231/3	130/14
extent [3] 172/16 220/22 221/2	242/17	95/23 96/23 104/12	236/11 244/1	FUJ00092754 [2]
external [5] 156/3	feed [12] 12/3 13/5	112/13 112/13 116/12		151/15 159/10
156/6 160/9 167/8	26/3 43/2 60/14 61/8 61/14 61/16 62/16	117/22 120/9 120/16 226/2	139/16	FUJ00092875 [1] 168/16
198/5	99/6 208/6 234/3	fine [4] 7/21 205/5	font [6] 129/9 136/24 196/25 197/13 197/17	
extract [2] 217/23 217/24	feedback [1] 207/17	243/20 243/23	200/9	200/14
extreme [2] 21/8	feeds [3] 64/3 136/9	fingerprinted [1]	foot [4] 26/16 53/3	FUJ00094268 [1]
77/24	167/8	114/21	55/23 60/8	176/22
extremely [1] 7/13	feel [4] 112/4 113/2 113/5 114/7	finish [1] 224/21 finished [2] 10/11	force [2] 83/7 85/10 forecast [1] 153/12	FUJ00094471 [1] 208/15
F	felt [4] 71/17 115/9	150/13	forerunner [1] 73/11	FUJ00094472 [1]
face [1] 87/12	174/21 174/22	first [32] 3/5 4/6	forget [2] 165/6	206/9
faced [1] 78/8	Feltham [1] 87/6	10/13 51/2 53/4 55/7	179/19	FUJ00097159 [1]
facilitate [2] 57/8	fetch [1] 28/18	102/24 104/1 104/13 122/22 125/15 126/5	Forgive [2] 92/3 155/8	162/17 FUJ00118186 [1]
96/11	few [13] 107/19 114/14 130/7 130/10	138/25 149/4 152/5	form [4] 17/6 158/22	143/20
facilitated [1] 84/16 facility [10] 54/11	132/16 146/24 146/24			FUJ00126036 [1]
60/2 64/18 68/23	147/20 149/3 150/11	166/23 183/13 188/11	formatted [1] 53/4	71/22
75/15 76/18 77/2	168/19 169/8 226/23	195/5 195/14 218/4	formatting [1] 176/25	
77/23 78/7 116/6	figure [2] 71/16 171/5	218/22 221/4 222/3 230/25 231/10 233/9	formulated [1] 145/22	82/17 Fujitsu [65] 51/21
fact [10] 47/6 100/16	figures [13] 83/10	233/15 243/7	fortnight [1] 207/1	81/23 96/4 104/23
116/18 118/21 121/6 123/8 141/22 187/12	101/24 122/3 183/19	fit [5] 57/18 129/24	forward [10] 142/5	106/14 106/18 108/12
191/4 225/14	183/20 183/22 186/14		151/11 162/16 165/21	
factually [2] 134/17	186/19 186/25 198/17		167/24 174/14 174/17	
157/10	201/6 201/15 201/18 file [2] 94/22 132/24	118/7 120/14 207/15 211/19 229/21 239/21	174/19 184/14 184/16 forwarded [1] 207/19	
fail [2] 81/9 209/4 failures [1] 212/16	files [1] 136/6	fix [25] 139/19	forwards [1] 56/3	168/24 170/12 171/3
foir [E1 20/7 121/6	filled [11 46/13		found [7] 1/20 24/14	172/13 173/18 174/20
138/15 166/16 196/22	final [47] 55/2 68/15	142/8 144/5 164/9	81/12 220/8 220/9	180/20 181/4 181/14
false [4] 16/24 29/5	12/22 94/13 104/12	170/19 177/10 177/14 177/16 180/20 195/21		185/13 188/4 189/4 190/10 190/22 191/18
54/2 54/2	179/5 179/6 180/21	199/15 200/20 201/24		192/12 193/11 195/21
falsely [1] 28/7 familiar [3] 132/12	181/13 181/25 182/4	202/4 202/7 206/19	founded [1] 232/7	200/17 200/18 201/12
135/1 135/12	183/7 183/10 183/19	206/22 206/23 207/1	four [13] 12/12 12/15	201/22 201/24 202/7
famous [1] 124/3	183/21 183/24 184/8 184/11 186/10 186/15	207/2 207/12 236/12	13/9 28/13 41/1 47/21 49/24 51/7 91/14	203/1 203/10 203/16 203/25 204/4 205/3
far [12] 7/23 10/14	187/24 189/22 190/16		103/24 106/21 118/5	205/7 205/16 205/24
40/8 44/24 69/5 120/17 139/20 147/23	404/4 404/44 400/7	133/24 140/5 140/19	120/14	206/4 206/24 207/13
149/13 192/8 192/14	192/25 193/22 195/9	148/6 148/20 164/9	four years [3] 12/12	207/18 208/19 227/2
213/14	195/25 201/5 201/7 201/14 201/25 202/11	170/22 178/7 183/9 194/22 197/21 211/25	12/15 28/13	236/7 236/17 236/20 236/22 237/21 238/11
Farman [5] 154/7	201/14 201/25 202/11 202/17 202/18 203/9	214/24 221/20 222/19	fourth [6] 105/24	238/22 237/21 238/11 238/21
154/7 154/15 154/15 156/3	205/2 206/17 233/23	fixes [1] 163/22	106/9 106/24 108/7	Fujitsu to [1] 236/22
faster [1] 13/6	239/20 240/2 241/7	fixing [5] 169/12	137/19 155/7	Fujitsu's [4] 160/6
fault [5] 40/16 48/25	finance [37] 18/17	170/5 170/21 171/13	framework [1] 74/22	160/22 191/1 218/7
77/21 79/14 127/22	18/21 28/19 28/21 29/17 40/6 52/21	193/8 flag [1] 73/1	Fraser [1] 210/20 fraudulent [1] 31/1	fulfilling [1] 9/6 full [10] 1/11 64/12
faults [3] 127/19	53/21 53/21 54/5	flagged [1] 200/19	free [3] 78/7 78/13	124/14 125/24 139/12
128/24 129/2 faulty [2] 22/14 231/7	EE/40 E0/04 C0/44	flags [1] 239/13	161/1	150/8 180/20 193/21
favour [1] 147/14	70/6 70/7 84/11 100/1	flawless [1] 147/24	freezes [2] 209/10	205/13 241/4
fears [1] 74/23	100/2 100/3 100/15	Flora [1] 108/21	209/11 171/10	fully [5] 136/16 145/8
February [13] 1/1	101/5 101/7 117/8 118/14 118/15 118/16	Flora Page [1] 108/21	freezes' [1] 171/10 frequently [1] 53/24	164/11 167/25 210/7 function [2] 126/16
72/25 82/19 82/21 84/6 113/12 168/18	120/2 181/18 184/23	focus [5] 76/25 94/1	Friday [1] 169/4	126/17
174/11 176/23 182/9	188/17 188/22 189/16	98/1 121/15 153/11	front [10] 1/16 12/24	functional [3] 159/9
198/3 207/11 207/15	190/9 191/2 204/21	folder [1] 39/1	57/2 57/8 58/4 65/13	160/17 160/17
	205/20 208/2	folders [1] 39/25	65/24 66/19 110/8	functionality [1]
			(7A)	extended functionality

F 66/18 79/5 94/6 95/15 229/20 230/11 233/1 154/5 157/4 170/18 96/2 96/5 98/8 98/10 238/23 240/12 100/21 103/14 112/9 184/11 196/9 214/5 98/16 99/5 99/8 102/2 functionality... [1] 133/25 135/14 135/18 Go/TA [1] 212/13 219/3 219/5 229/21 103/10 104/21 107/9 13/24 148/20 148/23 153/18 Godeseth [2] 96/4 231/15 231/16 235/5 108/15 110/5 110/6 functions [1] 63/17 156/14 156/22 156/25 96/18 242/5 110/7 110/8 110/10 fund [2] 56/16 56/16 157/7 160/1 161/24 goes [4] 140/11 110/12 111/14 112/1 government [1] fundamental [5] 56/7 162/7 162/10 165/16 186/4 200/15 208/24 113/13 113/17 116/7 56/13 133/16 142/19 146/18 165/16 166/1 166/11 going [68] 2/5 2/16 grace [1] 33/15 118/21 119/8 119/12 147/16 166/15 166/15 168/10 9/22 9/23 12/15 13/18 Graham [1] 178/22 119/25 120/9 121/3 funding [2] 56/8 168/12 172/8 172/14 13/22 17/21 19/16 granted [1] 198/16 121/8 121/15 122/23 56/12 173/3 175/4 175/8 22/13 28/3 39/7 45/19 grateful [1] 92/3 123/13 123/15 123/21 funds [1] 56/15 127/7 127/12 129/19 188/16 204/23 210/15 48/12 59/7 65/5 65/16 great [1] 48/19 further [14] 103/19 219/6 223/3 230/6 68/5 68/6 68/7 71/3 greater [1] 209/11 129/20 130/4 139/18 139/6 158/7 161/4 230/7 242/11 242/14 71/9 87/6 87/9 89/11 139/21 142/8 150/2 ground [1] 14/1 169/2 182/19 183/16 242/18 243/12 92/8 98/21 103/2 group [3] 94/18 150/13 161/23 164/8 189/15 207/13 219/4 getting [13] 4/10 8/1 107/2 109/13 112/8 117/19 179/21 167/1 167/5 171/22 229/17 237/5 243/6 113/7 114/5 114/12 43/18 50/17 58/21 173/19 174/8 174/10 guarantee [4] 140/12 243/16 121/12 124/16 125/14 140/17 205/17 243/17 61/8 150/15 155/14 178/5 179/21 180/9 future [2] 12/19 127/16 132/14 132/18 guaranteed [1] 158/7 165/7 168/7 168/14 187/20 191/10 191/21 12/21 221/13 222/13 139/9 150/18 150/19 guards [1] 113/22 196/11 204/23 205/16 giro [3] 42/8 42/9 152/12 152/24 154/21 guess [4] 97/17 206/3 208/10 209/19 G 110/5 155/12 158/19 160/14 184/16 241/2 242/5 214/20 214/23 218/2 gain [5] 146/22 give [20] 1/11 95/5 162/15 165/13 165/16 guessing [3] 142/24 218/15 220/16 221/18 147/18 191/2 236/14 107/4 119/4 123/17 166/22 173/3 176/20 222/16 227/22 228/23 178/18 185/12 236/19 124/13 125/25 147/1 184/16 187/7 194/19 231/1 231/16 233/7 guesswork [1] Gareth [17] 105/17 198/12 200/9 210/24 233/8 233/21 234/15 155/17 155/19 172/2 215/17 106/17 106/18 108/14 172/5 172/19 175/13 224/20 225/1 230/2 234/17 234/22 235/1 guidance [2] 226/17 182/9 185/4 185/6 175/24 190/12 202/9 235/1 235/16 240/14 227/5 235/8 235/12 242/5 185/8 186/3 186/6 237/23 243/15 243/19 243/6 guilty [2] 231/5 242/19 242/20 186/8 188/8 188/24 given [30] 15/8 18/17 gone [14] 12/12 24/5 231/11 hadn't [9] 9/8 35/10 189/7 190/8 226/1 25/22 32/14 46/17 44/14 82/15 91/5 41/14 41/16 63/5 guy [1] 87/8 227/1 46/20 72/25 77/17 92/24 97/14 112/9 66/17 113/17 164/9 gate [1] 114/3 117/20 144/1 144/11 89/2 90/1 101/20 225/2 gateway [3] 163/4 had [191] 9/4 11/11 101/25 115/5 116/4 147/20 160/3 206/5 half [3] 95/24 109/21 163/18 165/5 11/24 12/12 16/23 143/5 155/5 162/7 good [51] 1/3 1/4 174/12 Gateway' [1] 199/2 16/24 16/24 19/2 165/17 165/25 187/18 19/19 33/13 35/14 hand [4] 86/11 110/5 gathering [1] 161/20 20/13 20/25 21/1 190/1 192/17 193/2 35/20 37/1 37/25 38/8 131/12 142/11 gave [8] 90/5 90/11 21/24 21/24 22/8 22/9 194/4 208/13 214/14 38/15 38/21 38/23 handcuffs [1] 114/17 99/16 102/18 110/13 22/10 22/22 23/9 223/20 224/13 237/21 39/5 39/20 40/17 41/3 hang [3] 107/4 154/12 156/6 159/1 23/15 24/12 24/16 242/25 43/21 44/10 44/10 233/17 239/1 **GB [3]** 207/4 207/17 25/11 26/3 26/23 27/4 46/19 48/4 49/11 50/1 gives [6] 156/2 happen [5] 35/4 35/7 208/6 27/7 27/13 27/16 156/19 158/5 158/10 78/5 80/8 80/9 80/21 123/15 149/6 216/24 general [5] 118/24 27/19 28/6 28/24 29/4 81/6 81/22 83/8 85/11 happened [17] 35/23 159/11 159/16 160/24 200/18 206/5 29/16 32/9 33/9 34/15 85/25 86/2 86/12 50/8 50/9 79/23 90/5 giving [2] 113/25 227/2 35/14 35/23 36/19 91/10 92/23 93/4 98/8 91/24 101/16 111/12 118/3 generality [1] 7/11 38/20 39/5 39/22 go [64] 1/21 9/22 98/24 101/6 105/1 114/19 122/23 123/13 generally [5] 35/19 39/22 39/24 40/1 10/17 12/22 22/3 26/3 110/23 111/8 124/8 134/2 147/5 149/19 78/23 95/17 153/5 40/20 41/2 41/15 34/14 38/11 41/19 124/9 124/21 140/2 170/11 170/12 190/18 197/20 42/14 42/18 43/24 42/1 42/3 42/13 43/23 192/4 194/1 218/15 happening [8] 50/11 generate [1] 182/25 44/21 44/21 44/23 50/20 51/16 56/3 65/9 234/12 80/24 121/1 122/24 generated [3] 122/18 45/8 45/9 46/15 46/23 gosh [1] 87/9 68/8 68/10 72/18 180/14 181/24 203/20 218/18 236/10 74/24 95/17 95/20 47/3 47/3 50/9 50/20 got [53] 4/4 10/11 203/21 generation [8] 51/13 51/17 51/18 100/18 101/20 103/9 11/11 23/25 29/6 41/7 happens [5] 79/12 151/17 151/25 153/3 52/1 52/8 53/22 59/8 109/18 110/4 113/14 42/10 42/16 43/24 81/2 169/16 170/15 162/20 170/9 171/2 59/10 59/18 60/19 114/14 125/10 127/16 44/3 44/8 45/8 50/14 185/3 181/23 206/10 60/22 61/2 61/17 64/7 130/1 130/9 130/16 62/14 64/4 66/25 happy [3] 66/15 genuine [1] 196/24 65/20 68/18 68/20 84/24 85/23 88/12 135/9 141/4 144/10 156/18 226/12 genuinely [1] 147/5 71/16 71/19 76/13 148/19 149/14 150/14 101/9 101/14 102/15 hard [2] 12/23 115/17 Geoff [5] 177/3 177/8 159/10 176/12 176/13 104/3 104/13 106/21 78/9 78/18 81/9 81/22 harder [3] 45/19 47/7 178/11 181/9 200/23 82/13 82/13 82/15 177/1 182/12 195/10 106/23 108/6 113/14 47/11 get [56] 5/7 18/14 86/4 86/5 87/8 87/12 116/14 118/13 119/4 201/19 202/15 204/15 **Harding [9]** 1/5 1/7 18/22 46/2 61/13 88/15 89/4 89/19 204/19 206/9 210/22 120/9 121/19 122/7 1/9 1/12 75/3 89/15 61/15 62/11 62/13 91/10 93/4 93/14 212/13 213/4 216/1 132/20 147/2 147/7 108/18 123/17 245/2 62/17 64/11 66/7 94/23 94/24 95/1 95/7

218/25 219/15 226/19

147/13 153/19 154/4

hardship [1] 83/10

Н	3/19
Harrow [1] 28/15	15/9
harvested [1] 139/18	70/11
has [66] 7/3 22/18	111/1 126/2
23/7 24/3 50/25 56/15	194/1
76/12 78/15 81/6 91/5	222/1
92/7 92/22 121/19 130/16 131/11 139/20	227/1
144/11 146/2 154/15	head-
154/23 154/24 155/1	heade
155/3 159/1 159/14	213/7
160/9 160/10 161/3	headi
163/9 169/1 174/3	83/2 head
182/14 182/16 183/9	33/8
188/6 188/18 190/4	hear
190/18 193/13 195/6 195/14 200/1 200/17	heard
200/19 201/10 201/20	21/10
201/24 202/7 205/8	88/6
206/5 207/17 207/20	149/1
208/17 208/21 209/11	heari i 243/2
217/24 218/1 221/23	heart
226/13 231/1 231/15 231/20 232/24 239/2	142/1
242/23 242/25	heave
hasn't [1] 184/11	held [
have [464]	22/23
haven't [7] 19/12	40/25 82/21
29/2 84/24 109/6	126/1
109/9 204/15 237/5	152/1
having [19] 8/15 11/2 33/16 42/8 55/14 80/1	240/6
100/4 115/18 122/18	hell [1
129/7 135/10 150/3	help [
193/1 196/15 198/6	90/14 96/15
209/23 238/18 238/24	118/4
239/11	219/7
he [62] 18/19 28/17 28/19 54/7 55/3 55/5	234/1
72/20 73/12 74/17	243/1
78/21 87/7 90/5 108/6	helpd
108/9 108/13 108/16	44/6
108/17 113/24 113/25	80/7 104/1
114/3 114/5 114/5	104/8
117/7 118/8 118/15 123/21 123/24 152/9	105/7
152/10 154/10 154/10	106/1
156/4 156/4 156/5	116/7
159/1 159/2 160/12	helpli
172/10 172/11 177/8	110/1 helpli
181/9 185/12 186/3	helps
186/12 189/7 189/13	hence
192/1 193/20 205/19 217/6 217/17 217/17	193/1
217/21 217/17 217/17	her [7
220/4 226/13 228/22	115/9
228/23 231/8 238/2	225/9
243/10	here 19/11
he's [8] 118/14	35/18
152/11 185/13 189/1 193/20 219/1 226/22	69/17
238/3	82/3
head [26] 3/17 3/17	182/5
	198/2

6/11 11/20 11/21 217/13 222/5 238/20 15/11 55/11 1 74/23 78/21 10 126/19 126/22 24 187/10 193/16| 30/3 52/13 54/12 12 219/13 219/20 16 222/20 226/9 18 237/19 **-on [1]** 74/23 **ed [2]** 131/9 ing [2] 47/22 quarters [1] **[1]** 11/13 **d [10]** 10/24 21/7 0 21/13 22/18 114/3 131/20 11 164/5 **ng [2]** 81/6 25 **[3]** 86/11 12 192/24 ens [1] 2/25 [**19**] 15/19 22/21 3 23/23 24/3 5 46/4 51/9 58/1 1 88/21 126/1 14 126/18 142/20 higher [12] 186/21 1 198/14 204/7 **1]** 33/17 [**18]** 30/17 84/5 4 91/15 93/1 5 97/5 110/22 4 181/10 188/16 7 223/4 234/18 18 234/20 234/21|**Hill [1]** 28/15 19 desk [22] 37/21 44/8 79/21 80/5 103/20 103/20 1 104/5 104/6 8 104/14 104/23 7 105/22 106/5 14 109/2 115/22 7 208/25 i**ne [3]** 110/16 16 111/2 ines [1] 11/2 **[1]** 168/9 e [3] 152/17 16 196/12 7] 70/9 111/16 9 134/13 224/12 9 238/8 **[25]** 6/25 18/16 1 23/2 26/16 34/4 historically [8] 17/24 8 41/11 47/1 7 75/21 78/19 91/5 155/1 178/6 123/13 5 193/18 195/24 198/2 202/24 216/4

hid [2] 18/3 77/8 hide [16] 18/23 18/24 19/20 27/14 27/21 58/20 69/23 92/19 97/10 98/5 120/22 120/25 122/1 hiding [14] 19/15 19/24 20/12 28/1 28/8 29/10 46/14 76/25 97/15 98/22 100/22 101/11 102/13 103/2 hierarchy [1] 80/5 high [44] 7/10 7/24 70/7 70/10 71/1 78/2 78/24 89/5 133/7 133/22 134/21 134/21 135/8 138/3 138/9 150/21 151/3 156/13 163/16 163/21 163/24 163/25 164/4 164/7 164/13 164/16 164/17 164/19 165/1 165/3 165/11 165/16 166/3 169/24 186/20 198/17 198/20 198/21 198/23 199/12 199/15 206/6 208/24 238/9 209/2 209/16 219/10 219/17 219/22 223/7 238/14 238/23 242/13 242/14 242/17 highlight [7] 38/10 38/16 139/2 186/11 198/11 208/16 225/16 highly [1] 14/22 him [11] 90/6 90/24 105/20 118/14 154/12 185/17 185/24 217/25 219/6 223/3 243/11 himself [1] 155/1 hindsight [2] 159/24 194/1 Hirst [1] 70/6 his [23] 48/1 48/3 49/7 49/9 49/18 75/5 89/17 90/7 90/13 90/22 118/24 154/9 179/8 184/22 185/10 185/11 185/20 217/6 217/8 217/25 219/21 228/22 229/24 **historic** [3] 18/6 75/14 165/17 **historical** [1] 123/4 24/14 26/23 60/12 92/18 120/24 122/21 **history** [1] 181/11 hit [1] 157/17

hits [1] 169/17 **hm [6]** 37/3 73/22 81/13 82/24 83/12 104/15 **Hmm [1]** 47/19 **HNG [26]** 126/2 126/18 127/3 150/19 151/12 152/11 157/15 169/1 170/7 171/11 173/16 174/8 188/3 190/13 198/4 202/6 204/7 210/4 213/6 213/7 214/20 215/12 216/11 221/17 236/11 241/10 **HNG-A [1]** 213/6 **HNG-X [20]** 126/2 126/18 127/3 150/19 151/12 152/11 169/1 171/11 173/16 174/8 198/4 202/6 204/7 210/4 213/7 214/20 215/12 221/17 236/11 241/10 **HNG-X/Horizon Online [1]** 216/11 Hobbs [4] 236/2 236/3 237/3 239/9 Hogg [2] 225/19 226/24 hold [8] 9/14 36/6 45/4 76/11 80/17 86/21 87/3 155/14 holding [4] 56/21 114/11 159/7 173/17 holdings [1] 201/16 hole [2] 46/12 46/13 holiday [2] 93/9 208/14 Holleran [7] 5/24 6/2 70/7 72/1 72/5 134/10 134/11 home [2] 12/25 113/3 **homemade** [1] 62/5 honest [12] 14/8 26/9 110/17 111/23 114/4 115/9 137/17 185/9 193/11 214/25 233/19 237/21 honestly [9] 83/17 95/22 119/11 120/16 142/23 153/9 180/11 192/10 237/15 hoping [1] 229/16 Horizon [191] 3/3 3/5 3/7 4/6 4/12 5/1 5/16 6/7 7/12 7/22 8/6 10/22 11/25 12/3 12/12 12/14 12/15 13/6 13/12 13/18 14/1 14/10 14/13 14/15 14/17 15/3 15/23 16/2 172/21 16/10 17/5 17/5 18/8 20/2 20/3 20/6 20/13

20/15 20/16 21/8 21/24 22/4 22/5 22/22 23/2 23/4 23/9 23/15 24/6 26/1 26/2 27/19 28/6 28/23 28/25 33/3 33/7 33/11 39/12 41/11 42/2 44/4 51/21 57/2 60/10 60/14 60/22 61/14 61/23 62/23 63/5 73/6 75/23 76/11 77/4 81/7 81/23 85/22 86/17 87/1 88/3 88/9 88/14 88/25 96/11 99/6 104/22 104/23 106/3 106/5 106/13 109/25 110/9 110/12 118/21 126/3 127/17 127/19 128/2 128/3 128/7 128/11 128/14 129/1 129/16 130/6 130/12 131/10 131/22 131/25 132/15 133/17 150/3 150/8 150/14 150/16 151/16 151/25 153/3 162/20 163/1 163/3 170/9 171/1 171/2 181/22 185/21 191/5 194/7 195/24 199/7 206/10 209/1 209/3 209/15 209/16 210/4 210/22 211/1 211/4 211/10 211/14 211/19 211/24 212/3 212/7 212/11 212/14 212/16 212/17 212/18 212/23 212/23 213/2 213/5 213/18 214/10 215/12 216/11 216/18 216/21 217/10 217/12 218/3 221/11 221/11 221/15 222/14 225/2 228/15 228/16 228/17 229/2 230/21 231/6 231/12 231/13 231/21 232/2 232/5 232/7 233/5 234/2 234/10 235/10 237/7 237/17 239/11 239/25 240/20 240/20 240/20 Horizon Online [10] 150/16 191/5 211/4 216/18 218/3 221/11 225/2 228/17 232/2 233/5 Horizon/Horizon Online [1] 240/20 hot [4] 206/22 206/23 207/1 207/12 hour [2] 229/23 242/25 hours [2] 125/24 House [4] 3/22 166/24 167/4 177/24

Н	153/8 168/8 216/10	I edit [1] 159/21	180/16 232/20	I suppose [7] 8/18
how [59] 3/25 4/4	219/6 221/16 222/5		I missed [1] 227/9	15/13 21/17 27/10
6/18 23/22 34/9 34/12		I ended [1] 12/20	I move [1] 101/9	45/12 51/22 176/5
36/1 36/22 44/17	I can't [47] 3/1 14/8	l expect [2] 35/18	I need [5] 73/1	I suspect [2] 89/11
58/11 59/2 60/5 63/21	26/10 30/18 48/13	172/2	107/11 175/3 175/8	243/15
81/9 83/9 83/10 91/16	58/4 59/4 69/3 69/5 70/9 73/10 77/12	I first [1] 122/22	181/18 I needed [1] 82/16	I take [4] 24/1 59/13 123/2 214/8
101/8 106/15 107/10	87/11 87/16 95/8	I followed [1] 214/11 I found [1] 236/7	I never [3] 123/24	I talked [1] 204/10
109/11 112/4 113/2	95/22 102/17 103/3	l get [1] 243/12	191/21 227/22	I then [5] 126/5 126/6
114/7 114/13 152/22		I got [2] 116/14 214/5		126/8 126/10 126/14
153/1 154/23 162/21	108/14 108/16 116/23		I personally [2]	I think [80] 2/10 5/14
170/22 171/6 173/17	117/6 117/24 119/12	184/16	143/12 210/11	7/15 26/25 28/12
173/25 174/6 174/8 175/1 180/8 181/13	125/5 133/11 133/13	I had [20] 9/4 29/16	I probably [2] 66/24	30/18 33/9 34/5 37/5
190/7 190/17 191/24	135/13 137/9 137/14	39/22 47/3 51/17	175/5	38/25 43/18 45/21
192/8 194/16 201/20	141/25 142/16 147/10			47/20 48/16 53/11
206/6 206/25 208/7	149/20 150/25 163/6	86/5 88/15 89/4 95/1	I qualified [1] 2/17	54/20 54/23 55/22
208/8 213/25 215/8	163/8 171/6 178/18	96/2 96/5 111/14	I raised [1] 233/20	71/15 72/11 73/1
217/18 217/18 217/21	207/24 208/1 219/21	113/13 123/21 127/12		74/18 79/9 79/15
223/20 226/17 230/6	224/18 242/3 I cannot [1] 200/7	214/20 I hadn't [1] 113/17	I read [3] 156/17 233/14 233/14	80/10 80/11 84/25 85/14 85/15 87/7 87/8
232/17 238/9 242/11	I certainly [1] 76/6	I have [12] 1/20 28/4	I recall [7] 10/14	91/14 97/3 104/22
however [13] 136/2	I confirm [1] 13/9	37/24 43/9 108/20	129/16 134/14 147/4	109/5 110/8 112/10
140/12 145/20 161/5	I could [5] 23/25	117/11 120/21 141/10		134/14 141/10 143/7
163/21 167/7 167/16	24/13 28/9 83/22	175/3 189/16 230/1	I received [1] 215/9	147/6 156/11 163/14
169/22 186/15 188/15 188/21 191/1 206/20	243/8	243/17	I regard [1] 210/6	164/14 165/6 166/10
HSD [3] 202/9 209/4	I couldn't [4] 78/25	I haven't [4] 19/12	I remember [11]	166/14 168/5 172/11
209/14	125/3 134/15 185/11	29/2 109/9 237/5	78/21 87/6 152/8	173/5 174/6 174/22
human [1] 128/18	I definitely [1] 221/15		171/19 178/25 219/24	177/22 179/20 184/24
hundred [2] 224/2	I developed [1] 13/3	I held [1] 126/18	221/7 223/9 223/14	188/10 189/20 191/8
224/19	I dial [1] 176/11	I honestly [6] 83/17	224/4 226/11	193/10 193/11 196/22 202/22 203/21 205/6
hundreds [1] 76/14	I did [7] 3/24 11/19 21/14 59/23 82/11	119/11 120/16 142/23 192/10 237/15	1 repeat [2] 100/7	202/22 203/21 205/6 205/10 205/19 207/25
<u> </u>	129/21 237/5	I imagine [3] 36/17	I represent [1] 89/15	217/5 220/6 221/10
L = 4 [4] 400/04	I didn't [15] 8/9 40/5	100/11 118/15	I right [1] 147/21	221/13 222/2 223/12
l act [1] 108/21 l am [3] 89/11 160/2	41/6 52/4 88/11 88/11		I said [26] 31/4 55/10	224/9 226/16 227/12
185/12	106/6 106/14 127/11	38/16 51/1 82/25	62/1 127/24 127/25	230/24 235/21 236/5
I appreciate [1]	180/16 185/8 213/12	117/12 118/12 121/5	135/15 137/3 175/1	243/4
230/4	214/12 220/7 233/11		175/16 182/11 187/10	
l ask [2] 178/12	I do [7] 79/1 79/1	I knew [2] 15/8 106/5	194/12 194/18 195/13	l .
187/22	87/4 124/23 169/10	I know [14] 19/16	196/10 204/14 205/11	l .
l asked [5] 67/8	191/1 225/9	24/13 26/12 37/6 41/10 52/4 76/20	210/11 213/22 215/10 215/20 215/22 224/18	
191/15 193/16 195/15	I don't [68] 7/17 13/13 19/11 23/18	105/19 117/9 153/14	229/1 229/2 234/17	I totally [2] 133/18
196/13	23/18 24/10 30/18	188/15 188/17 203/4	I saw [1] 193/16	157/9
l assume [2] 23/25 182/17	41/12 52/3 62/14	210/1	I say [27] 12/18 15/10	l .
l assumed [1] 13/16	70/17 76/5 78/14 79/9	I know from [1]	24/7 26/11 41/20	I under [2] 157/16
lat [1] 82/6	82/8 83/25 84/22 86/7	219/8	51/25 55/17 58/4	157/17
l aware [1] 148/13	89/8 97/3 107/14	I left [6] 112/22	59/18 59/23 75/18	I understand [4]
I basically [1] 68/14	116/14 116/17 118/3	126/20 217/7 219/14	83/23 84/16 86/5 87/4	l .
I became [1] 11/20	130/23 131/16 135/7	220/21 223/18	98/15 99/20 100/25	188/9
I believe [7] 46/22	137/15 141/3 141/8	I looked [1] 214/12	102/19 120/1 136/18	I understood [3] 16/21 16/22 109/5
75/13 134/15 148/1	144/8 145/5 145/10 145/21 145/21 147/10	I may [8] 78/14 84/16	139/23 140/20 184/17 192/15 222/11 222/14	
149/1 168/20 194/2	155/8 158/14 164/23	141/20 221/12 229/18		I vaguely [4] 146/13
I bought [1] 179/23	168/3 173/24 179/7		I set [1] 126/16	162/23 168/3 225/9
I broadly [1] 217/11 I brought [2] 175/24	181/1 184/18 193/5		I share [1] 75/7	I want [4] 28/18
180/4		40/3 73/10 77/3 87/19		116/3 127/17 171/20
I call [2] 1/5 29/8	195/14 203/21 206/8	93/9 107/12 117/6	I simply [1] 80/17	I wanted [2] 95/14
I can [23] 14/2 14/14	208/8 221/9 221/14	117/11 125/23 128/25		180/5
28/14 105/15 111/16	222/10 224/6 224/17	133/15 137/9 155/9	I started [2] 125/17	I was [90] 2/13 3/9
119/6 119/9 123/8	227/23 228/6 229/2	159/19 178/24 187/5	126/4	3/12 3/13 3/17 4/8 4/9
132/1 136/14 137/9	229/14 233/19 237/11	191/20 197/17 215/3 228/11	I still [1] 204/15	4/13 5/24 6/8 7/1 7/25 10/22 11/22 12/9
137/10 137/13 141/20	238/7 238/13 239/17 239/19 243/2	I might [3] 105/15	I suggested [1] 133/19	10/23 11/23 12/8 12/21 15/8 15/12
	200/10 270/2		130/10	12/21 10/0 10/12
				(77) how I was

I	213/13 222/18 224/3	240/14 240/23	90/17 90/20 90/23	132/19 133/4 133/6
l was [72] 15/16		I've [32] 21/10 23/13	90/25 92/16 92/23	133/8 133/10 134/7
16/5 16/16 16/20 20/6	I wouldn't [12] 9/3	34/10 42/10 42/11	93/6 93/15 93/16	134/24 135/6 135/7
20/20 21/14 23/14	9/8 50/25 51/14 64/10	43/9 43/11 44/7 49/12	93/22 96/8 96/9 97/1	135/19 135/24 136/12
24/7 29/14 29/15 40/5	84/23 87/24 88/17	86/5 97/5 97/11 98/3	97/12 97/13 98/1	136/13 136/22 137/5
46/24 46/25 50/2 55/4	93/10 99/3 209/25	100/18 101/9 106/16	98/10 98/20 101/12	138/3 138/7 138/23
55/10 55/10 55/12	238/22	115/20 119/4 122/7	104/11 104/18 106/20	139/11 143/12 146/8
55/16 59/18 59/20	I wrong [2] 154/22	158/25 180/18 192/13	107/25 108/25 117/8	150/5 224/4 225/7
64/22 76/3 76/19	155/13	203/6 208/13 215/5	118/22 128/19 129/7	incidents [15] 5/8
76/20 76/22 78/17	l'd [35] 12/5 38/25	215/8 215/19 217/5	129/11 129/15 130/3	5/13 7/18 7/19 8/2
78/24 83/17 83/19	40/22 88/6 88/12	223/16 226/23 228/21	132/6 134/21 167/24	130/11 132/14 134/22
	88/16 97/22 101/1	240/1	190/25 196/25 197/1	135/16 147/21 163/16
84/2 84/19 87/21	107/10 107/22 109/10	ICL [1] 141/6	197/2 197/3 197/8	164/4 164/8 199/25
88/18 89/4 93/9 93/10		ID [1] 232/11	197/22 197/23 204/2	211/6
94/25 97/18 97/19		idea [12] 26/10 58/6	223/20	include [10] 32/17
97/24 102/19 102/20	149/24 160/20 163/12	95/6 95/9 99/9 101/4	impacted [6] 136/15	32/20 32/23 33/1 33/3
107/14 107/15 114/21	166/16 166/19 179/25		210/9 216/12 218/3	85/5 85/6 99/22 100/4
119/22 123/12 127/4	180/12 191/20 191/22	103/1 119/5 217/5	218/6 236/13	190/14
128/2 128/10 132/2		ideal [2] 176/24		included [5] 19/22
133/11 133/19 135/14	209/20 215/16 216/16		217/20 221/18	79/11 84/14 149/24
142/23 150/9 150/10		ideally [1] 148/6	impacts [1] 128/17	207/16
159/17 208/13 210/2	I'II [15] 30/19 71/11	identified [13] 39/11	implement [5] 12/9	includes [2] 100/19
213/12 222/3 222/12	91/7 103/14 109/21	45/22 51/24 77/20	47/1 52/23 55/17	202/8
227/18 227/23 228/6	113/7 114/4 132/15	148/15 148/16 148/17		including [11] 21/5
233/20 237/16 239/18	143/20 144/13 162/12			24/19 41/4 85/16
243/6	182/15 188/25 194/20			106/22 108/7 131/20
I wasn't [37] 6/25	217/22	identify [10] 36/22	implemented [6]	150/4 218/19 236/1
7/24 7/24 14/18 15/14	I'm [118] 1/10 2/5	41/15 43/3 43/13	13/18 60/10 67/11	241/13
21/15 22/25 23/9	2/18 7/23 7/23 12/16	50/12 81/9 95/10	143/24 144/22 190/25	
29/13 34/22 46/21	20/9 24/10 25/14 26/9		implementing [2]	incorrect [11] 40/23
46/21 81/25 84/3 84/3	28/22 29/1 29/2 33/24		25/23 118/18	177/13 177/20 178/2
85/19 86/9 94/25	34/10 35/17 39/11	68/21 85/9 122/25	implications [4]	183/7 183/20 183/25
97/20 107/7 107/16	40/8 44/24 46/21	186/17	120/5 191/19 215/5	184/1 201/7 201/18
108/3 128/1 128/8	48/12 69/7 70/7 70/15		236/17	206/2
128/13 129/2 135/15	72/11 75/6 76/2 80/16		importance [2]	incorrectly [2] 204/2
141/11 143/19 143/19	82/11 82/11 84/24	66/21	138/13 153/4	204/11
150/7 150/10 208/9		ie signed [1] 68/21	important [14] 69/7	increase [3] 20/22
216/13 220/13 223/15		ie the [2] 85/9 186/17		75/10 209/5
239/18		if [249]	161/6 161/12 165/6	increased [2] 23/15
I went [2] 12/19 14/9	104/23 104/24 104/25		165/21 179/7 192/22	80/17
I will [6] 23/13 105/14		imagine [5] 36/17	203/23 233/21 240/13	
125/11 197/24 226/1	117/10 119/11 119/16		242/16	incur [1] 189/19
239/21	119/22 119/23 120/13		impose [1] 226/15	incurred [1] 236/14
I wish [1] 120/12	120/18 120/21 124/16			indeed [2] 129/20
I won't [1] 101/10	125/14 125/18 127/16		imprecise [1] 176/5	133/24
I worked [3] 15/7	127/24 128/25 132/14			
53/20 125/22	132/18 137/14 137/16		157/4 161/23 162/6	186/4 186/5
I would [60] 8/8 8/13		imbalanced [2] 31/2	improve [5] 45/16	independent [2] 75/8
10/9 19/1 20/18 21/18	141/3 141/12 141/19	31/3	47/7 53/14 53/16	77/6
33/15 34/7 45/22 50/7	142/24 145/11 150/18		59/21	indicates [1] 208/20
50/10 51/13 51/16		immediately [2] 83/8		indicating [1] 186/20
52/5 55/2 67/14 80/13	160/14 163/6 166/22	85/11	74/4 107/25	indication [1] 125/25
80/18 81/2 81/21		imminent [1] 174/3	improvement [2]	individual [3] 8/12
82/12 84/1 85/4 86/11		impact [81] 4/8 11/16		16/12 194/17
89/2 95/14 99/4 99/10	179/4 179/19 180/21	12/16 12/20 13/20	improvements [1]	industry [1] 53/9
99/20 99/22 101/3	180/22 184/19 198/12			inevitably [2] 142/9
103/5 103/11 104/24	210/24 214/7 216/4	17/19 19/22 25/22	improving [2] 46/5	153/11
107/8 107/10 107/22	216/13 216/23 221/7	26/5 34/24 34/25 35/4		infallible [1] 8/25
108/11 129/8 130/24	221/13 222/10 223/14		inaccuracies [1] 66/8	
136/17 142/24 143/15	224/19 224/20 227/1	45/14 53/5 56/23	inaccurate [2] 191/6	infer [1] 209/24
144/3 149/8 149/14	228/2 228/20 228/20	56/24 57/3 57/6 60/3	192/7	inflate [3] 19/4
154/9 157/14 157/18	229/16 229/19 233/4	60/5 62/23 63/8 63/11		121/12 122/2
158/6 173/5 175/10	235/1 235/15 235/16	63/22 64/16 72/23	76/21 87/5 87/13	inflated [1] 41/15
175/14 180/10 188/9	239/4 239/4 239/17	77/10 81/16 88/22	87/15 87/25 132/18	inflation [1] 21/25

Info [1] 207/18 information [15] 39/19 43/16 103/4 103/6 110/11 123/21 130/19 168/21 180/8 194/5 194/16 213/14 214/6 225/23 227/4 informed [6] 20/7 79/4 112/22 220/13 222/23 230/2 initial [8] 3/7 16/2 59/14 66/7 71/9 77/13 100/10 151/2 initially [4] 7/5 15/6 16/4 60/10 initiation [**2**] 71/2 71/4 innocent [2] 30/15 33/1 input [2] 128/16 128/19 inputs [2] 9/21 145/23 INQ00001035 [1] 109/13 Inquiry [10] 1/10 1/11 interpretation [1] 1/14 21/11 22/18 81/6 103/8 132/12 134/25 144/11 Inquiry's [1] 2/4 ins [1] 134/1 insist [1] 222/19 insisted [1] 224/3 installation [1] 110/9 instance [4] 42/6 42/8 132/22 223/24 instances [1] 167/12 instantly [1] 195/7 instead [4] 76/25 147/2 154/21 155/11 Institute [1] 2/21 instructions [3] 99/16 202/8 225/22 integrated [1] 53/8 integration [1] 160/6 integrity [**59**] 5/9 26/22 37/16 135/2 137/23 138/1 143/23 144/2 144/4 144/9 144/16 144/25 148/6 149/9 149/23 167/8 188/6 189/24 190/20 191/17 192/16 192/19 introduced [1] 192/24 196/9 196/11 196/12 196/15 197/9 197/11 197/22 197/24 199/13 203/11 203/14 203/17 204/1 204/18 205/8 205/14 205/23 206/3 207/5 207/18 210/7 210/10 216/12 221/19 222/18 224/1

228/15 228/18 228/24 230/22 231/15 231/16 investigation [13] 232/5 232/7 234/2 236/17 integrity-wise [1] 149/9 intended [5] 51/20 52/22 61/24 158/11 158/20 intention [1] 202/24 interacting [1] 3/13 interest [3] 78/1 78/7 78/13 interested [1] 233/20 interested in [1] 233/20 interesting [4] 46/22 191/25 203/22 222/12 interface [4] 141/15 234/25 235/7 235/9 interim [1] 217/23 internal [7] 47/20 126/8 168/20 190/24 200/16 204/21 208/22 interpret [2] 141/20 234/13 156/16 interpreted [1] 175/2 into [68] 3/1 4/16 5/24 10/4 10/17 12/2 12/19 12/21 19/8 26/3 27/18 31/12 31/12 64/22 64/24 73/7 76/1 76/17 78/6 80/14 88/16 99/4 99/13 99/15 115/3 120/13 125/10 126/14 132/5 133/13 133/25 134/19 151/24 151/24 156/13 156/14 159/3 159/5 160/1 160/3 163/3 163/7 168/14 168/23 169/13 171/13 174/16 involves [1] 126/25 192/15 193/17 202/7 206/12 208/10 217/10 227/12 228/18 236/8 236/18 237/8 237/9 237/12 239/7 239/7 239/10 239/12 239/14 Ismay [8] 226/9 239/16 239/17 243/18 introduce [2] 63/11 73/14 215/14 invalidate [1] 184/16 inverted [1] 120/23 investigate [6] 8/10 34/7 34/9 63/13 63/18 135/8 139/9 142/8 228/15 investigated [6] 27/17 33/7 35/1 64/8 127/20 128/21 investigating [3]

34/21 133/20 171/15 182/16 182/18 183/15 185/15 187/20 189/17 1/15 8/17 16/14 35/5 191/6 192/9 194/13 81/10 121/15 133/13 197/13 200/15 200/19 134/6 167/17 191/9 195/17 217/9 228/18 investigations [6] 27/17 27/18 70/21 72/11 136/19 228/10 **invitation** [1] 82/18 invite [1] 226/13 invited [1] 82/23 involve [1] 55/8 involved [73] 4/6 4/8 4/10 4/12 4/24 5/7 5/13 6/7 8/1 8/14 10/6 10/12 10/13 11/16 14/18 21/2 21/10 23/12 23/13 23/20 24/8 29/15 34/23 44/25 51/18 59/9 59/20 68/12 68/13 68/20 68/20 69/9 70/2 70/3 70/25 76/21 79/3 86/22 87/5 88/12 88/17 94/8 96/5 102/1 114/2 120/7 126/2 128/11 132/2 132/9 132/11 135/14 135/15 it's [153] 2/22 17/15 146/11 150/9 150/15 208/11 210/15 215/22 219/25 220/2 220/3 221/20 221/21 222/9 222/11 223/10 228/3 233/7 241/14 241/19 241/25 242/6 involvement [17] 3/5 14/15 16/1 78/23 88/22 131/14 131/24 143/5 149/13 185/20 220/22 220/23 221/2 224/13 224/23 240/19 241/15 irrespective [2] 49/20 75/11 is [424] is now [1] 134/8 ish [1] 176/5 226/10 230/10 230/16 236/1 238/18 238/24 239/1 isn't [5] 51/7 123/9 184/9 209/20 240/13 issue [64] 20/8 31/22 50/16 53/18 56/9 63/9 75/6 75/21 86/18 146/12 148/5 167/21 167/22 168/2 169/6 169/7 176/20 177/11 177/21 180/3 180/25 181/1 181/12 181/18

200/21 201/21 201/25 204/24 206/6 206/17 208/7 208/8 208/12 209/19 210/9 211/14 211/22 212/17 212/18 220/25 221/8 231/25 232/1 236/11 237/7 238/10 239/11 239/20 239/22 issue 4 [1] 212/17 issued [1] 223/1 issues [27] 2/15 20/19 20/19 41/11 66/17 67/17 88/25 117/11 133/15 135/2 138/13 149/4 149/23 168/1 169/12 171/16 197/20 209/9 209/22 212/2 215/7 216/7 217/10 218/23 220/18 240/22 243/1 **Issy [1]** 225/19 it [762] it'll [1] 9/14 23/5 24/4 24/5 25/15 26/15 29/9 35/19 45/12 49/1 53/2 53/4 54/20 58/24 68/24 68/25 69/18 70/18 72/13 80/8 80/16 86/24 91/20 93/12 97/17 106/23 107/18 124/20 125/4 125/5 128/5 128/6 129/6 131/9 132/13 132/17 132/20 135/2 138/25 140/5 141/4 141/10 141/19 142/25 143/21 144/10 149/15 149/19 150/24 151/16 152/1 152/4 155/5 156/11 156/15 156/17 158/6 158/11 158/16 159/9 160/7 160/9 160/19 163/11 165/6 165/12 165/13 166/6 166/18 168/16 168/20 171/20 173/5 173/11 174/6 176/23 177/22 178/25 179/1 179/2 179/20 180/15 180/19 181/3 181/5 181/25 184/12 184/14 186/24 192/5 193/21 195/4 195/16 195/18 195/22 196/7 196/8 196/9 196/10 196/25 197/1 198/7

200/24 200/25 201/1 201/3 201/21 204/13 205/10 205/11 205/12 208/2 208/17 211/15 214/17 216/25 218/23 219/4 219/4 222/6 223/12 223/16 225/14 228/21 229/15 230/12 231/13 232/8 233/3 233/11 233/18 234/14 235/21 235/21 235/24 235/25 236/1 238/20 239/21 240/2 240/2 240/3 240/15 241/1 241/2 243/13 item [2] 35/6 73/23 item 2 [1] 73/23 items [11] 131/18 150/12 164/13 164/15 164/18 164/19 164/25 165/20 166/5 166/7 198/23 iterations [1] 94/14 its [19] 17/22 21/9 56/16 56/18 56/18 62/22 68/11 76/11 76/11 76/12 89/1 128/12 138/16 140/16 151/20 187/8 211/11 218/22 232/7 itself [6] 17/9 60/25 92/24 93/16 240/13 241/22 **Izzy [1]** 226/24

Jack [2] 70/16 70/17 109/22 111/16 122/10|jail [5] 113/14 113/18 122/13 123/11 124/18 115/12 115/18 115/19 jailed [4] 27/19 28/23 29/4 29/6 Janet [1] 109/15 **January [12]** 111/3 111/3 124/24 143/18 146/4 151/14 151/15 162/18 163/11 166/9 166/21 168/11 January 2010 [2] 151/14 163/11 Jarnail [5] 225/11 225/12 225/14 226/21 226/23 **Jason [1]** 1/9 J**D [1]** 139/16 Jenkins [11] 105/18 105/19 106/17 108/5 182/9 185/4 185/7 186/3 186/6 189/7 226/1 Jenkins' [2] 188/8 188/24 Jenkins's [1] 186/8 job [6] 3/16 6/6 6/10 61/5 62/25 125/20

J	242/20	large [10] 33/16	238/21	238/17
	Justice [1] 210/20	35/19 35/21 50/23		likelihood [1] 145/2
jogs [1] 141/9		53/23 58/13 61/3	Lesley [13] 219/11	likely [5] 135/11
John [5] 22/18 226/9 237/25 237/25 240/9	K	78/11 87/9 89/15	219/12 219/13 219/15	157/22 172/6 186/18
John's [1] 154/6	keen [2] 26/13	larger [1] 118/6	220/1 220/14 221/23	237/13
joined [2] 217/6	166/15	largest [3] 126/12	223/2 223/6 223/11	limit [1] 243/11
222/3	keep [9] 48/7 77/11	218/11 218/12	223/12 224/7 224/10	limitation [1] 8/4
joint [4] 151/17	111/21 112/11 140/22 173/9 175/14 214/4	71/23 90/6 121/8	less [8] 13/6 63/25 152/23 152/25 153/2	limited [3] 56/18 137/21 231/1
162/21 205/24 206/10	214/4	143/1	155/23 156/9 157/24	Limited's [1] 56/8
jointly [1] 152/1	keeping [1] 172/3	Lastly [1] 108/5	lesser [1] 158/21	line [20] 33/19 33/21
Jon [4] 226/19		later [12] 6/14 7/7 7/7		33/23 33/25 42/10
226/20 226/21 227/10	213/6 213/6	55/16 96/4 113/3	let [3] 215/8 222/22	52/7 77/25 99/23
Jon Longman [3] 226/20 226/21 227/10	Kelly [3] 89/17 89/24	168/19 169/8 187/3	225/22	99/24 103/21 104/13
judge [2] 113/20	90/2	209/7 222/24 243/2	let's [15] 72/16	105/24 106/9 106/23
113/23	kept [4] 81/1 94/21	latter [2] 87/20 136/9		106/24 108/7 118/15
judgment [2] 110/25	235/4 235/8 key [16] 15/20 56/5	lawyer [1] 92/9	130/12 132/9 132/11	134/3 138/3 139/1
210/20	59/9 60/24 71/5 76/4	lawyers [3] 91/17 204/22 205/21	143/20 151/3 151/14 168/25 203/9 216/18	lines [14] 34/15 36/18 42/5 42/17
July [5] 134/9 213/5	83/5 83/14 84/5 85/18		230/5 230/7	51/25 103/24 104/2
224/25 225/20 230/14	99/17 100/12 159/4	45/11 137/3 154/8	level [19] 7/10 63/24	104/19 104/22 105/11
July 1999 [1] 134/9	201/11 227/9 238/19	leading [7] 74/9	71/1 73/17 78/1 78/24	
July 2010 [1] 224/25 July 2017 [1] 213/5	keyed [2] 34/20 44/7	133/12 150/10 150/11	82/10 94/19 117/10	139/2
June [2] 131/9	keying [2] 13/7 60/23	151/24 151/24 154/7		
219/16	keys [2] 28/18 112/1	leads [3] 21/17	197/20 222/23 224/13	
June 1999 [1] 131/9	kind [9] 116/10	160/13 195/17	232/10 232/13 232/16	
just [115] 6/8 8/4	116/11 136/22 138/6 143/4 180/8 186/23	learn [2] 10/21 233/21	238/16	200/5 list [14] 66/3 67/22
16/17 22/12 25/2 27/9	205/1 225/21		levelled [1] 188/3 levels [6] 75/11	67/23 82/22 130/17
27/11 29/2 33/20 36/6	kindly [1] 29/23	121/7	184/3 186/16 186/19	132/13 134/21 166/7
36/23 37/8 38/10	kinds [4] 48/3 49/9	leave [5] 27/22 112/5		187/1 190/15 198/6
38/16 41/5 41/23 42/20 43/14 47/15	162/1 205/17	181/9 188/25 189/8	leverage [1] 74/20	201/13 213/9 214/14
48/17 51/1 53/3 55/1	knew [17] 9/23 15/8	led [4] 134/14 171/23		listed [9] 130/17
56/4 58/3 58/17 67/19	30/22 86/7 103/20		liabilities [1] 74/5	133/9 133/11 134/18
70/19 71/6 82/25	104/12 105/5 105/6 106/5 170/12 217/21	Lee [13] 154/7 154/7		135/20 138/24 151/18
84/19 84/24 90/15	219/8 219/9 220/4	154/15 154/15 154/23 156/3 156/18 158/25	92/22 93/3 97/7 98/7	152/11 207/14 lists [1] 210/21
90/16 90/22 91/23	222/6 223/5 223/13		liable [14] 38/8 38/19	
93/1 93/12 101/9	know [301]	160/13 160/17	39/13 40/25 49/19	97/5 118/4 121/11
103/14 103/18 107/4	knowing [1] 228/7	left [15] 12/22 12/24	49/23 49/25 52/15	125/14 153/11 175/15
108/5 109/5 109/15 109/21 110/23 110/23	knowledge [16] 2/1	88/13 112/22 126/20	80/20 91/8 92/13 93/3	177/1 193/19 213/14
111/22 112/19 113/5	14/23 13/20 24/12	149/16 183/12 202/3	98/23 100/23	live [20] 7/6 7/9 10/9
113/5 114/9 114/14	71/13 71/19 103/15		liaise [1] 164/20	10/14 12/13 12/16
115/7 115/20 117/12	105/2 106/2 106/12 125/8 127/21 128/22	220/21 223/18 229/14		76/23 129/1 130/1
118/4 118/12 121/5		229/15	light [3] 16/7 16/8	135/9 149/15 152/19 171/9 193/5 194/19
125/18 125/22 132/15	148/25 216/23 216/24 known [20] 140/14		125/13 like [56] 3/9 3/18	202/7 216/1 220/9
132/18 134/4 136/23	167/20 178/19 179/12	128/13 130/6 130/12	16/2 22/11 24/13	220/10 220/11
138/5 139/12 141/12	180/2 184/23 194/24	132/15 150/2 150/14	25/21 27/14 30/15	lives [2] 197/14
145/15 149/14 150/24 157/5 159/10 159/17	195/12 195/19 196/2	212/23 217/12 221/11		216/8
163/19 168/19 169/7	196/17 196/17 196/23		52/18 52/18 59/8 63/6	
169/8 169/8 170/4	197/10 197/12 197/18		65/24 69/11 69/19	loan [1] 56/20
170/17 173/9 174/6	197/25 202/15 216/1	179/17 179/17 185/16		local [5] 60/4 211/22
179/9 179/12 180/10	238/12	185/17 185/20 187/18		220/23 221/6 222/24
181/9 182/6 185/5	L	188/11 189/23 189/25 190/5 190/22 191/18	95/6 104/8 106/15 109/10 110/5 110/18	locate [1] 48/13 lock [1] 114/3
187/12 197/5 197/13	lack [2] 115/24	192/6 192/21 193/23	120/2 137/5 149/17	log [18] 36/2 36/9
198/4 198/12 204/10	167/19	195/7 203/12 203/18	158/4 158/13 160/20	36/10 178/19 179/12
204/13 205/6 205/18	laid [1] 182/11	204/17 207/18 208/5	163/12 164/11 166/19	
208/11 209/13 210/24 213/16 213/18 215/5	Lammin [3] 70/15	226/14 229/3	168/9 175/6 180/13	196/2 196/18 196/21
219/3 219/5 223/13	70/16 70/20	legality [1] 207/5	185/6 191/20 191/22	196/23 197/10 197/12
230/10 231/14 233/11	language [2] 27/25 64/24	legality/integrity [1]	195/10 195/22 198/8	197/18 197/25 202/15
235/6 235/17 238/20	laptop [1] 94/22	207/5 legitimately [1]	200/11 204/13 226/17 229/4 230/18 231/22	232/11 log-on [1] 232/11
		iogitimatory [1]		log on [1] 202/11
				(80) ioas - loa-on

239/10 239/16 240/24 85/20 91/10 92/7 93/4 126/7 126/11 126/15 184/17 185/25 188/23 126/18 127/5 127/12 96/10 98/8 107/3 198/9 198/10 199/19 looks [4] 124/21 logs [4] 35/22 35/25 163/2 194/8 230/18 107/22 108/2 114/23 127/14 151/12 153/9 206/21 221/12 229/17 226/1 232/8 lose [2] 203/23 128/16 132/3 136/19 157/15 157/16 159/23 229/18 240/2 240/9 long [9] 16/8 16/20 147/15 184/21 190/3 226/16 163/15 169/23 173/14 May 2000 [2] 240/2 25/15 101/10 132/15 loss [28] 19/19 31/18 203/1 225/5 226/5 174/18 222/3 222/15 240/9 143/10 174/8 178/24 231/4 231/6 234/24 31/23 31/25 34/16 236/5 237/18 238/2 maybe [9] 4/2 14/5 237/22 45/3 50/3 56/10 56/12 235/13 managers [1] 111/15 21/17 41/11 50/12 longer [4] 35/7 127/5 56/19 58/25 59/3 Mail [1] 29/14 51/23 108/16 206/25 managing [3] 6/3 7/1 208/11 235/11 74/10 78/2 80/2 80/9 main [6] 87/8 96/8 223/23 207/1 Longman [4] 226/19 mandatory [1] 68/6 80/21 86/12 111/13 97/25 98/17 118/24 **MB** [1] 164/14 226/20 226/21 227/10 111/14 111/19 112/20 120/7 manual [5] 4/20 Mc [5] 219/18 219/19 look [111] 1/16 19/1 121/10 122/14 146/22 mainly [1] 93/23 61/21 62/24 63/12 219/20 219/23 223/8 23/16 24/16 25/7 147/18 236/14 236/19 maintain [1] 205/13 McLachlan [1] 226/3 83/2 26/14 36/3 37/8 43/12 loss/gain [1] 236/19 manually [5] 170/1 McLean [1] 237/8 maintained [1] 47/15 47/16 47/23 losses [67] 26/24 170/5 170/19 170/20 me [88] 19/16 20/21 232/24 48/8 48/10 53/1 53/3 31/21 33/14 33/16 170/22 21/17 23/19 23/20 maintenance [4] 54/17 59/8 59/20 many [24] 1/13 3/25 24/10 29/16 39/7 37/2 37/25 45/15 163/23 177/16 198/19 59/25 66/19 67/21 48/24 51/16 52/21 45/20 45/22 46/19 202/5 4/5 15/2 15/4 16/22 69/1 70/5 71/21 71/22 55/21 67/11 69/8 76/4 46/23 47/7 47/23 48/1 **majority [2]** 57/6 16/23 16/23 16/23 72/16 76/11 80/14 48/2 48/4 49/7 49/8 28/5 28/5 28/5 28/24 83/24 92/3 92/9 95/15 211/5 82/17 86/14 110/14 make [64] 7/18 19/18 49/10 49/17 50/18 29/4 29/5 41/12 41/20 95/23 96/5 97/23 127/1 128/5 130/12 50/23 51/2 51/4 51/5 33/13 35/14 37/1 38/8 61/13 63/21 75/13 98/13 101/5 101/25 130/13 131/8 131/18 51/11 52/6 52/13 38/15 38/23 39/5 120/19 186/18 229/14 102/6 102/18 102/21 132/9 132/11 132/13 52/16 53/14 53/16 39/20 40/5 40/17 41/3 103/5 107/12 108/16 229/16 134/8 137/19 138/17 43/21 44/9 44/10 112/1 112/1 113/25 54/12 55/20 56/16 March [9] 22/20 90/6 138/17 138/24 139/1 58/6 58/8 58/10 58/20 45/21 46/9 46/19 50/1 130/15 206/11 207/17 114/3 114/16 114/17 139/14 140/10 141/13 58/24 58/25 59/12 51/4 62/8 68/11 78/5 207/20 208/16 208/23 114/23 114/23 115/7 143/20 146/3 151/14 62/20 69/13 69/23 78/12 80/8 80/9 80/21 211/20 115/15 115/17 115/17 152/4 153/22 159/6 71/17 77/8 77/8 78/5 81/16 81/22 83/8 March 1999 [1] 115/19 118/4 119/5 160/5 160/7 160/8 78/11 80/9 80/21 85/10 85/25 86/2 130/15 121/1 121/11 122/22 160/19 160/20 162/17 81/19 81/22 83/8 86/12 91/6 91/11 123/7 127/25 136/13 March 2001 [1] 22/20 163/12 163/19 164/12 85/11 85/16 86/1 86/3 98/23 99/5 100/23 143/2 147/11 149/13 **Mark [16]** 14/19 165/14 165/19 166/7 89/21 100/4 100/6 110/23 111/7 114/25 89/17 89/24 124/10 149/22 154/17 155/6 166/18 166/19 168/16 101/24 101/24 118/19 119/7 122/11 122/19 124/11 124/15 171/23 155/8 156/6 156/7 168/25 169/11 176/22 140/8 144/17 146/24 118/25 119/1 231/3 172/3 188/18 188/19 156/25 157/13 159/13 177/3 181/3 182/8 147/9 149/18 153/19 lost [2] 46/17 121/17 219/24 223/9 227/12 164/7 168/21 181/22 185/3 186/9 189/9 170/17 187/10 192/3 237/8 240/8 245/6 182/14 186/1 194/19 lot [19] 25/17 26/2 192/15 193/17 194/11 27/16 27/17 34/14 194/15 194/23 213/15 Marsh [5] 72/1 72/5 204/19 209/24 213/15 194/13 196/13 198/1 36/5 36/18 50/17 218/15 221/19 233/1 72/10 75/5 77/16 213/16 213/19 215/8 198/4 198/5 198/7 50/18 51/25 53/22 233/7 234/15 240/10 215/15 220/12 220/20 Marsh's [1] 74/25 198/8 199/19 200/14 56/25 57/3 59/12 make-up [1] 119/7 222/22 224/4 224/10 **Mary [1]** 1/12 201/10 203/9 206/11 makes [1] 209/24 62/18 78/17 93/20 224/11 225/22 228/7 mass [1] 61/16 207/9 208/2 208/15 94/8 131/20 239/2 243/7 243/12 making [14] 4/16 massive [1] 94/1 209/6 210/19 216/25 lots [5] 26/6 28/9 35/20 37/25 58/3 match [3] 146/15 mean [53] 5/5 7/14 224/22 235/23 236/2 79/3 127/12 140/6 62/20 70/25 84/2 146/20 198/25 7/23 15/14 25/19 237/2 237/9 237/12 low [3] 139/5 139/8 84/15 110/6 130/25 26/25 27/16 33/20 material [3] 165/4 237/24 239/14 239/17 197/20 166/2 170/25 213/24 165/11 197/8 34/18 40/3 40/15 239/22 low-level [1] 197/20 235/16 materially [1] 49/15 46/16 65/3 66/3 73/10 looked [18] 21/18 77/3 77/19 77/24 82/4 **lower [3]** 73/16 manage [3] 3/23 matter [2] 7/10 121/6 24/2 24/15 67/23 139/15 165/20 137/3 190/11 82/6 86/23 87/19 matters [6] 22/3 93/11 106/15 140/2 111/10 224/21 224/23 lurks [1] 103/1 managed [3] 215/21 88/18 93/9 107/12 150/3 154/24 160/16 160/17 162/25 165/10 **Lyca [2]** 213/1 219/23 223/8 228/4 229/6 116/14 117/6 117/11 may [46] 1/5 34/5 120/23 123/1 125/23 213/17 management [12] 187/5 214/12 221/10 128/25 133/15 137/9 Lynn [6] 235/25 2/21 2/22 13/17 54/19 43/6 45/11 46/16 237/8 239/12 236/2 236/3 236/4 54/22 66/22 121/16 46/17 72/8 72/8 75/23 140/18 141/20 148/13 looking [27] 4/8 5/6 237/3 239/9 154/3 154/4 155/9 78/14 84/8 84/9 84/16 126/17 127/7 138/19 7/10 12/19 12/21 219/21 232/3 107/19 108/2 113/7 157/24 158/23 159/19 13/23 26/1 49/3 49/14 M 117/7 119/24 119/24 174/10 178/24 187/5 manager [40] 6/8 106/25 120/13 137/16 **MacKenzie** [2] 70/17 119/24 123/9 129/4 45/7 47/2 54/24 55/4 189/20 191/20 197/17 138/11 141/12 150/7 70/17 133/12 141/7 141/20 55/6 55/8 55/17 70/13 215/3 222/4 228/11 154/6 154/25 163/7 made [33] 18/5 23/9 78/17 83/20 84/3 89/4 141/20 142/7 142/13 232/17 198/2 210/3 210/4 32/9 38/21 48/4 49/10 95/1 97/20 102/20 149/2 149/3 152/25 meaning [2] 25/10 228/23 239/7 239/7 51/19 56/7 79/2 84/17 119/14 120/6 126/6 158/23 172/21 176/25 50/2

M means [8] 46/6 74/16 150/22 152/15 153/25 203/14 204/23 232/12 meant [13] 15/9 17/14 23/7 24/15 29/18 57/21 60/12 79/10 121/25 123/3 167/2 170/21 236/13 meantime [1] 177/17 measures [1] 144/21 mechanism [1] 240/7 medium [15] 150/20 151/1 152/17 154/2 156/14 156/19 156/22 157/8 159/3 159/5 160/1 160/3 169/13 171/13 171/25 meet [5] 55/13 55/13 112/2 153/8 166/3 meeting [27] 72/24 82/4 82/6 82/15 82/18 82/19 83/18 83/23 84/22 84/23 87/12 95/24 138/19 138/22 151/18 151/19 151/22 152/1 162/19 163/10 166/21 171/22 188/22 199/5 206/11 208/9 226/2 meetings [9] 25/20 65/21 76/8 82/1 82/9 94/8 94/11 96/16 180/9 member [3] 40/19 82/15 120/8 members [5] 78/11 98/14 241/20 242/11 242/14 memo [1] 134/19 memorandum [1] 134/10 memory [6] 115/17 115/18 117/11 117/12 141/9 183/3 mention [1] 6/10 mentioned [12] 11/18 99/18 135/20 180/25 181/2 209/21 212/7 212/20 221/23 227/25 230/10 239/6 Merlin [1] 225/11 message [2] 179/14 195/1 messages [1] 167/1 met [2] 143/11 189/16 method [3] 161/11 161/11 161/18 **MI [1]** 167/9 middle [2] 56/5 72/21 Midlands [1] 225/25 might [43] 4/14 12/11

16/14 22/6 29/7 30/10 misbalances [1] 30/11 32/2 32/2 36/4 59/17 77/23 83/24 84/13 96/17 96/19 97/3 102/6 105/15 105/17 107/3 107/18 113/12 125/19 139/14 144/5 144/5 150/11 151/1 157/24 158/23 174/20 175/20 176/1 179/8 180/16 192/6 220/10 224/13 226/17 mistake [2] 32/23 227/13 232/20 242/12 mightn't [1] 157/24 migrate [8] 170/15 170/16 170/20 172/19 misunderstanding 173/15 173/19 178/2 207/12 migrated [8] 169/20 170/3 170/6 170/7 178/4 178/5 209/5 210/8 migrating [2] 151/4 169/18 migration [12] 56/11 169/2 169/3 169/16 169/17 170/14 170/23 172/17 172/23 177/6 178/1 236/11 migrations [1] 172/18 Mike [7] 172/6 219/9 219/18 219/22 223/7 235/25 237/6 million [3] 22/21 22/23 26/6 millions [1] 70/1 Min [1] 146/5 mind [5] 29/23 38/10 38/17 48/7 95/23 minded [1] 75/13 mindset [5] 29/7 29/11 29/25 30/5 75/14 mine [4] 48/25 75/7 75/19 75/19 minimal [1] 62/2 minimise [1] 240/17 minimised [2] 191/1 215/6 minimum [2] 68/2 77/11 minor [1] 132/6 minute [4] 83/25 176/2 233/17 239/1 minuted [3] 94/11 94/21 96/17 minutes [7] 95/24 161/16 176/4 199/5 229/15 229/23 239/21 mirror [1] 114/24 misbalance [1] 30/23 misbalanced [1] 30/24

21/21 misgivings [1] 78/8 mismatch [4] 211/3 218/5 220/24 221/5 Misra [4] 225/6 226/25 230/13 230/14 missed [1] 227/9 missing [5] 133/1 136/16 164/17 204/19 236/19 33/1 **mistresses** [3] 89/16 90/10 101/15 **[1]** 238/20 misused [1] 237/14 **Mm [6]** 37/3 73/22 81/13 82/24 83/12 104/15 **Mm-hm [6]** 37/3 73/22 81/13 82/24 83/12 104/15 **model [1]** 130/15 modified [2] 128/15 148/10 moment [11] 17/22 38/11 54/20 104/10 109/6 130/4 176/2 200/16 200/22 230/5 243/18 **Monday [1]** 188/22 money [16] 19/15 20/1 23/4 23/8 23/23 24/3 27/13 30/3 45/8 46/15 52/13 57/25 58/22 62/21 114/1 121/9 monies [2] 188/1 190/1 monitor [2] 140/15 140/23 **monitoring** [1] 218/8 **month [2]** 113/25 173/1 monthly [1] 36/16 months [4] 22/22 140/16 143/1 211/20 more [56] 2/22 4/15 12/19 14/13 15/13 23/8 34/19 44/20 45/8 45/15 46/2 46/7 54/10 62/12 71/11 75/14 77/20 77/21 79/18 91/15 93/1 97/5 97/24 104/3 104/4 105/11 105/11 107/11 107/19 112/7 114/14 120/13 122/7 129/22 129/23 130/2 136/8 156/12 157/5 157/24 158/15 158/23 162/12 162/15 165/7 181/19 184/12

188/23 196/23 197/13 Mr Whittam [2] 204/18 215/3 226/17 227/3 233/20 242/15 morning [6] 1/3 1/4 36/25 112/2 176/9 229/24 most [7] 68/15 78/2 149/17 153/13 188/10 219/6 223/3 move [12] 19/7 27/24 55/16 101/9 103/14 112/25 150/18 159/3 159/5 187/16 224/20 235/16 moved [9] 31/12 88/16 96/4 126/5 126/6 126/8 126/10 126/14 208/10 moving [4] 5/10 134/9 142/5 165/21 MR [41] 1/8 24/4 70/20 70/20 71/25 72/5 72/17 74/25 75/5 77/16 89/13 89/14 90/2 91/4 92/22 96/18 97/8 105/2 105/19 106/17 108/5 120/15 123/20 124/10 124/12 124/16 173/23 176/7 176/19 210/20 229/18 mute [1] 176/12 229/25 230/8 242/23 243/5 243/10 243/14 243/21 245/3 245/4 245/7 **MR BEER [6]** 1/8 91/4 92/22 97/8 105/2 245/3 MR BLAKE [5] 124/12 230/8 243/5 243/21 245/7 Mr Burley [7] 123/20 124/16 176/7 176/19 229/25 243/10 243/14 Mr Corbett [1] 120/15 Mr D'Alvarez [1] 173/23 Mr Gareth [1] 106/17 Mr Godeseth [1] 96/18 Mr Jenkins [2] 105/19 108/5 Mr Justice [1] 210/20 Mr Kelly [1] 90/2 Mr Lammin [1] 70/20 Mr Mark [1] 124/10 Mr Marsh [3] 72/5 75/5 77/16 Mr Marsh's [1] 74/25 Mr Peberdy [1] 24/4 Mr Read [2] 71/25 72/17 Mr Salter [1] 70/20 Mr Stein [1] 89/13

229/18 242/23 Ms [11] 1/9 72/5 89/15 99/19 108/18 108/19 109/15 110/2 123/17 167/9 245/5 Ms Cruttenden [1] 99/19 **Ms Harding [3]** 1/9 108/18 123/17 **Ms Holleran [1]** 72/5 Ms Janet [1] 109/15 **Ms Skinner [1]** 110/2 much [23] 23/23 42/11 48/20 57/21 58/11 62/8 64/2 73/16 79/17 123/16 123/18 124/4 124/13 138/21 158/14 176/19 189/12 198/10 215/24 229/20 235/13 242/18 242/23 multiple [2] 28/4 241/13 multiplied [1] 24/5 **must [15]** 5/14 9/7 30/21 32/3 34/21 36/8 48/4 49/10 73/21 77/13 94/7 94/13 153/8 188/10 189/20 my [131] 1/9 3/1 4/14 5/25 8/18 9/13 11/8 12/5 12/10 15/6 17/14 18/18 18/18 20/24 21/3 26/12 28/18 28/21 29/23 30/5 34/22 37/7 39/1 40/6 42/10 43/9 44/6 44/24 46/25 48/10 51/4 52/21 53/21 54/4 54/5 55/18 70/14 70/23 72/7 78/8 78/15 78/22 78/23 81/24 82/13 82/15 83/19 84/10 84/18 86/11 87/19 89/3 93/10 93/12 93/12 95/14 95/18 96/2 97/17 97/17 100/9 102/6 102/18 102/20 108/11 108/12 108/21 109/4 111/7 111/13 111/18 114/22 115/6 117/6 117/11 117/12 117/25 121/7 124/20 125/3 125/4 126/5 127/24 128/1 128/22 133/7 137/4 137/10 139/22 139/24 142/2 148/1 148/25 148/25 149/13 151/12 154/8 156/16 157/15 159/19 159/24 172/4 187/5 187/22 191/20 192/1 193/15 194/12

30/24 56/17 57/25 **NFSP [20]** 78/8 78/10 239/6 240/23 119/25 120/10 122/13 M 58/2 60/14 62/2 82/16 82/2 82/4 82/6 82/9 123/2 124/3 125/4 **Noble [1]** 70/11 **my... [23]** 195/2 99/15 132/7 133/8 82/14 179/23 180/5 nobody [4] 20/21 127/15 127/24 129/4 195/2 195/5 195/5 155/2 162/7 202/14 180/25 181/2 210/12 121/16 156/24 220/20 129/6 132/14 132/24 195/7 195/14 196/25 135/3 135/9 136/22 235/11 215/1 241/9 241/13 noise [14] 214/25 200/9 208/13 213/13 137/3 137/5 137/11 needs [4] 83/8 241/15 241/19 241/24 215/3 215/20 234/3 216/23 216/24 222/14 234/5 234/11 234/15 138/9 139/17 141/3 176/10 207/6 233/3 242/8 242/12 222/15 222/16 222/20 nice [1] 49/1 234/18 234/21 234/22 141/7 141/16 141/19 nefarious [2] 32/4 223/14 223/16 224/15 235/2 235/3 235/6 141/24 143/14 144/24 74/13 **night** [1] 151/5 241/2 241/21 242/1 145/9 146/7 149/16 negative [3] 234/13 **nine [1]** 113/25 235/18 242/5 234/14 235/22 nine-month [1] non [6] 74/11 133/3 152/15 153/25 157/10 myself [5] 67/7 83/24 negligence [3] 48/1 113/25 160/17 164/13 166/4 157/13 157/14 158/1 84/1 173/16 233/14 49/7 49/18 no [169] 5/5 11/4 240/25 159/9 161/1 162/4 11/5 11/6 11/15 13/15 non-conformity [1] 163/24 164/16 164/23 negligent [1] 32/23 **negotiate** [1] 77/25 14/2 14/11 14/21 20/4 74/11 165/12 166/6 166/17 name [22] 1/9 1/11 20/8 23/18 24/7 24/11 167/3 167/9 168/6 **Neil [1]** 70/16 non-core [1] 133/3 25/12 66/2 78/15 168/23 169/17 169/25 35/6 35/8 39/9 40/18 neither [3] 24/1 non-essential [1] 89/17 95/19 108/21 170/19 171/16 172/2 96/19 96/22 40/24 42/24 44/13 166/4 111/16 124/14 130/10 131/11 132/20 134/19 network [52] 8/14 44/20 51/13 52/18 172/4 172/16 173/3 non-functional [1] 160/17 33/10 33/10 34/1 53/20 53/20 56/24 173/5 174/20 175/10 150/4 208/17 224/12 34/11 34/23 35/15 57/1 58/2 58/24 64/14 Non-High [1] 164/13 175/13 176/24 179/5 225/9 227/16 227/25 37/21 50/15 50/16 66/5 66/16 67/1 68/1 none [4] 184/1 214/5 179/10 180/17 180/19 229/11 237/14 51/17 53/23 56/14 68/25 68/25 69/1 69/5 181/2 184/12 186/13 215/11 215/15 named [2] 224/10 59/12 65/9 65/9 69/9 70/4 71/1 73/10 75/8 186/24 187/9 188/15 nonetheless [1] 224/11 70/14 80/4 80/6 80/18 76/19 77/3 80/23 189/19 192/20 192/25 40/16 namely [2] 51/10 81/4 84/13 85/5 96/14 81/15 81/24 82/8 195/18 195/20 196/7 **nor [1]** 24/1 52/11 normal [1] 7/2 196/22 197/1 197/2 98/15 99/22 99/23 82/11 82/12 85/2 85/2 names [6] 25/8 25/10 85/23 86/4 86/5 86/18 normally [4] 4/19 99/24 109/2 111/15 197/3 197/6 198/20 101/15 120/10 120/14 88/24 88/25 89/2 90/8 198/25 199/11 199/12 115/23 116/8 116/16 6/22 19/4 66/13 168/22 90/12 91/19 91/20 199/23 199/24 200/7 116/19 116/22 117/1 North [1] 238/2 naming [1] 224/8 117/13 117/22 118/9 92/2 92/3 92/5 95/11 Norton [5] 181/20 201/17 202/17 202/18 national [5] 22/19 118/22 119/13 119/15 95/14 97/17 101/13 182/10 189/2 189/11 204/1 204/6 204/14 25/2 175/23 210/12 101/17 101/23 102/14 205/2 205/10 209/18 119/17 119/23 119/25 206/14 238/2 120/1 120/4 120/5 104/24 106/14 108/11 **Norton's [4]** 186/2 211/22 212/18 212/19 naturally [2] 140/2 120/6 126/11 238/7 109/9 113/13 116/14 186/6 187/17 188/14 216/23 216/23 216/24 214/24 117/6 118/24 119/22 218/13 220/6 221/7 neutral [2] 235/19 not [228] 2/5 4/13 7/6 nature [4] 107/20 235/19 121/2 123/3 123/12 7/23 9/5 10/23 11/7 223/19 223/24 225/10 145/13 145/17 213/19 never [17] 20/6 21/14 125/4 127/4 127/11 12/18 13/1 14/2 14/14 226/12 229/16 229/21 navigate [2] 235/12 34/10 50/25 51/16 127/15 133/6 133/11 16/11 19/19 20/5 231/5 231/11 232/4 235/14 51/20 76/19 76/19 135/7 135/7 136/14 20/21 21/3 21/19 233/10 233/11 234/1 NBSC [2] 21/1 77/25 76/23 81/21 123/24 136/25 140/20 141/3 21/24 22/12 23/3 235/2 235/15 239/4 nearly [1] 133/14 142/12 157/19 173/18 142/6 142/6 142/6 23/14 24/7 28/22 29/1 239/4 239/18 240/18 neatly [1] 56/22 191/21 215/19 227/22 143/8 143/19 144/3 32/2 33/24 35/17 240/21 241/1 241/2 necessarily [10] 67/4 145/5 145/8 145/21 37/19 38/1 39/11 40/2 241/3 243/16 nevertheless [2] 79/10 93/11 122/24 40/15 41/21 44/6 45/4 note [7] 163/10 145/23 145/25 150/7 94/5 98/23 123/10 158/1 173/4 201/17 223/25 234/13 new [21] 25/23 57/5 166/20 208/9 234/15 152/25 157/14 158/7 46/21 49/18 50/6 51/3 57/15 63/18 73/7 158/25 160/25 161/4 52/18 52/18 53/23 240/4 240/13 240/16 necessary [3] 56/13 74/20 99/6 118/18 161/22 163/15 165/18 53/24 54/2 55/1 55/15 noted [1] 199/22 229/22 243/8 118/19 129/10 138/15 165/22 166/6 168/2 56/24 57/17 58/8 notes [3] 151/16 need [40] 7/14 14/21 149/17 151/25 163/9 173/24 174/4 174/4 58/24 62/5 67/25 159/20 206/9 23/1 64/14 73/1 75/21 nothing [13] 10/23 166/19 213/25 219/13 176/12 178/1 180/17 68/15 68/17 68/25 76/1 76/17 77/24 69/7 71/8 72/8 72/12 231/14 233/2 235/5 180/18 181/15 184/2 20/5 21/11 21/12 81/16 107/11 107/19 235/7 185/1 185/19 185/23 73/8 76/2 77/10 80/17 22/16 24/9 33/14 134/6 134/16 140/13 news [1] 225/10 187/11 190/4 191/14 80/20 81/11 81/24 36/21 58/9 88/19 152/18 156/19 166/7 193/12 195/2 195/2 82/22 83/19 84/1 next [27] 12/22 14/9 112/24 120/1 144/3 170/17 172/21 173/6 14/17 112/2 117/10 196/13 196/22 196/24 84/17 85/15 85/21 **notice [3]** 107/18 175/3 175/4 175/8 119/13 119/17 144/11 205/19 206/8 208/8 86/8 86/10 86/11 172/20 175/12 177/17 180/11 181/18 151/16 151/25 153/3 208/11 208/13 210/6 86/17 87/14 87/21 notices [1] 61/17 186/1 188/4 188/17 162/20 164/2 165/12 216/10 216/16 216/23 88/6 88/8 88/15 90/4 **November [4]** 90/13 188/23 191/1 192/17 94/1 97/12 102/11 167/10 167/19 167/23 216/24 217/5 220/17 90/22 235/24 236/6 204/15 206/22 219/7 221/7 222/20 224/6 102/25 104/7 104/23 168/11 170/9 171/2 November 2004 [1] 223/4 226/16 232/25 104/24 105/16 107/6 173/1 173/1 181/22 225/13 226/7 228/11 90/22 243/2 108/25 114/25 117/24 November 2010 [2] 202/5 206/10 207/10 229/9 230/1 231/10 needed [15] 15/9 225/16 237/12 238/1 238/13 118/20 119/22 119/24 235/24 236/6

N	obviously [26] 5/6
	5/18 7/7 26/1 42/6
now [45] 4/1 21/7	45/12 59/7 60/22 66/7
52/4 56/15 72/9 90/14	66/25 69/6 73/10
91/3 92/11 92/21	78/15 88/16 112/8
94/20 97/5 101/9	117/8 134/5 146/14
103/7 106/16 106/19	151/23 158/13 159/19
108/12 112/8 116/1	170/14 221/16 231/15
134/8 135/1 136/3	234/14 236/24
136/18 146/3 150/18	occasions [4] 41/1
154/16 155/3 156/12	81/7 110/17 241/21
156/18 158/5 159/21	
159/25 172/25 179/7	occur [2] 128/21
185/24 189/16 208/19	142/12
220/1 221/14 225/1	occurred [7] 46/23
228/25 232/14 238/25	167/1 170/10 211/5
240/10 241/21 243/4	212/15 213/2 213/5
number [49] 15/19	occurrence [1]
15/19 32/13 36/25	218/22
37/5 47/3 59/2 59/6	occurring [3] 52/6
61/3 73/3 73/14 80/25	209/9 211/6
86/1 87/9 89/15 91/4	October [1] 211/7
91/11 92/23 93/14	October 2010 [1]
94/13 94/14 97/6	211/7
101/1 105/1 126/15	oddly [1] 53/4
149/7 150/25 171/10	off [53] 4/10 8/3 8/9
I	9/3 9/8 24/19 24/21
190/21 199/14 209/1	24/25 25/11 25/16
209/13 211/2 211/8	36/3 36/7 41/8 41/8
211/12 211/17 211/21	43/6 43/7 43/17 50/21
212/1 212/5 212/9	53/5 55/2 59/17 64/20
212/12 212/21 213/3	65/1 65/22 66/4 66/12
215/4 229/19 231/2	66/13 66/20 67/6
231/4 231/11 240/6	67/15 67/24 67/25
number 1 [2] 73/3	68/2 68/21 71/5 87/15
211/2	87/24 94/7 94/16
number 13 [1] 212/5	102/5 104/11 117/16
Number 14 [1] 212/9	117/18 117/19 126/4
number 19 [1]	158/18 164/11 173/19
212/12	176/11 176/12 180/1
number 23 [1]	
212/21	192/21 227/9
Number 28 [1] 213/3	off' [1] 190/22
Number 3 [1] 211/8	offence [1] 45/11
Number 4 [1] 211/12	offer [2] 116/10
number 5 [2] 190/21	117/21
211/17	offered [4] 78/5 82/2
Number 8 [1] 212/1	115/22 164/14
numbers [7] 9/5	offering [1] 164/24
27/22 47/3 54/1 102/2	office [121] 2/11 2/17
113/9 151/1	3/10 3/21 4/16 10/13
Numeral [1] 136/23	11/25 12/23 12/24
numerous [4] 81/7	12/25 13/4 14/25
110/17 129/21 148/15	15/15 15/16 16/8
	16/12 16/20 17/3 17/8
0	25/24 25/25 26/4 26/8
oath [3] 23/14 86/5	27/23 29/12 29/13
137/14	29/20 30/1 32/8 32/16
objective [2] 53/15	33/22 34/1 38/13
74/19	39/24 43/1 46/3 46/9
	46/10 48/8 56/7 57/2
objectives [2] 53/5 55/14	57/4 57/6 57/8 57/18
	57/25 58/23 61/9 62/3
objectives-off [1]	70/1 70/2 72/18 73/15
53/5	74/5 81/1 89/20 90/2

7 110/17 241/21 ur [2] 128/21 2/12 urred [7] 46/23 7/1 170/10 211/5 2/15 213/2 213/5 urrence [1] 3/22 urring [3] 52/6 /9 211/6 ober [1] 211/7 ober 2010 [1] **ly [1]** 53/4 **531** 4/10 8/3 8/9 9/8 24/19 24/21 25 25/11 25/16 3 36/7 41/8 41/8 6 43/7 43/17 50/21 5 55/2 59/17 64/20 1 65/22 66/4 66/12 13 66/20 67/6 15 67/24 67/25 24 94/7 94/16 2/5 104/11 117/16 7/18 117/19 126/4 8/18 164/11 173/19 5/11 176/12 180/1 2/21 227/9 [1] 190/22 nce [1] 45/11 **r [2]** 116/10 '/21 red [4] 78/5 82/2 5/22 164/14 ring [1] 164/24 ce [121] 2/11 2/17 0 3/21 4/16 10/13 25 12/23 12/24 25 13/4 14/25 15 15/16 16/8 23 29/12 29/13 20 30/1 32/8 32/16 22 34/1 38/13 24 43/1 46/3 46/9 10 48/8 56/7 57/2 4 57/6 57/8 57/18 25 58/23 61/9 62/3| 0/1 70/2 72/18 73/15| 74/5 81/1 89/20 90/2 obligation [1] 85/25 90/25 92/1 93/24 96/9

96/13 96/20 96/24 98/2 99/7 111/6 111/13 111/21 111/25 112/12 112/16 112/23 113/1 118/19 121/9 125/16 126/1 126/4 126/17 127/2 129/19 130/15 137/21 141/6 146/1 148/18 156/4 157/5 160/10 164/21 167/5 169/22 171/22 171/24 171/24 172/14 173/25 174/25 175/19 181/21 191/7 191/13 192/8 193/3 194/10 200/24 205/15 206/7 208/16 216/17 217/7 219/8 220/4 220/20 223/5 227/19 231/1 234/9 238/3 238/10 office' [1] 60/15 Office's [3] 7/20 33/23 194/4 officers [1] 172/19 offices [25] 3/12 16/22 21/6 22/15 22/16 28/12 29/22 29/22 34/18 36/17 38/13 45/1 45/2 45/3 50/18 53/23 73/16 87/18 93/24 111/18 121/4 121/4 126/13 167/1 218/4 2 68/21 71/5 87/15 official [1] 241/11 often [5] 42/13 61/7 66/15 187/24 206/25 oh [5] 2/25 67/1 82/11 87/8 136/25 okay [20] 2/8 17/17 29/4 70/23 72/16 87/2 102/10 103/13 118/1 121/12 123/16 125/20 176/11 176/15 180/15 180/16 193/2 193/21 196/21 238/9 old [4] 11/24 57/4 57/14 231/16 older [1] 243/12 on [348] once [10] 28/12 29/15 77/7 149/15 150/13 162/12 169/16 12 16/20 17/3 17/8 206/25 207/1 239/2 24 25/25 26/4 26/8 one [89] 11/1 19/21 20/10 23/24 27/11 28/14 45/14 47/6 52/16 54/6 54/8 57/22 60/19 63/10 69/3 71/3 77/10 79/19 79/25 81/1 83/13 84/18 89/16 91/7 98/6 101/9 103/19 105/25 106/9 106/22 107/2 111/16

114/17 119/1 119/20

119/22 120/20 122/4 127/3 131/17 133/12 133/20 134/3 135/19 136/19 141/10 146/13 149/14 153/2 157/6 160/2 160/13 164/6 166/23 171/8 173/14 174/13 174/16 177/22 177/24 178/1 179/7 181/10 185/24 187/2 187/13 194/13 203/22 203/23 213/21 218/19 220/6 220/12 220/13 222/12 223/12 224/2 234/22 235/21 235/22 opportunities [1] 236/15 237/12 239/20 onerous [2] 44/17 44/20 ones [7] 65/12 94/20 107/23 129/14 132/9 135/14 135/15 ongoing [3] 143/8 152/2 184/2 Online [34] 14/17 126/3 150/16 191/5 195/24 199/7 209/2 209/15 210/5 211/1 211/4 211/10 211/14 211/19 211/24 212/3 212/7 212/11 212/14 212/17 212/23 213/2 213/5 213/19 216/11 216/18 216/21 218/3 221/11 225/2 228/17 232/2 233/5 240/20 only [34] 7/25 16/11 18/15 22/2 22/3 22/23 28/11 67/14 77/7 82/14 91/7 96/11 101/9 110/7 110/11 111/15 114/10 115/16 119/1 121/22 122/1 128/2 135/16 142/25 143/20 145/22 170/15 204/2 205/12 228/11 234/11 239/14 239/21 240/10 onscreen [1] 166/25 onset [1] 149/4 onstream [1] 15/3 onto [4] 46/2 170/25 171/1 187/1 onwards [1] 212/24 open [8] 74/15 111/22 137/6 137/12 148/22 180/10 214/25 226/13 open-ended [1] 226/13

opening [1] 32/11

operate [2] 214/1

226/18

operated [4] 14/25 29/8 109/12 131/1 **operating** [9] 6/11 11/21 15/11 32/3 32/5 53/12 62/22 171/11 228/24 operation [7] 10/21 13/25 15/5 73/21 105/22 161/7 225/25 operational [1] 204/7 **Operations** [2] 73/13 74/7 **opinion [3]** 159/19 209/12 227/2 228/19 228/21 234/16 Oppenheim [1] 87/7 233/24 240/11 241/17 242/21 opportunity [2] 78/5 115/2 opposed [1] 23/16 **Ops [1]** 75/8 **option [1]** 164/15 or [189] 2/11 3/17 4/20 8/1 8/17 8/19 10/24 11/1 12/12 12/15 13/9 15/16 16/15 18/8 19/5 19/7 19/21 20/23 21/15 21/18 21/24 22/11 24/13 27/23 28/8 28/12 29/20 30/23 33/3 33/19 35/1 35/18 37/21 39/24 40/1 40/2 40/19 41/3 41/16 48/2 49/8 49/18 50/1 52/8 54/11 54/12 55/11 57/11 58/12 59/3 59/20 61/11 63/3 63/10 67/17 70/16 70/20 72/8 77/25 78/23 80/5 80/14 80/21 81/17 81/18 82/2 82/9 84/25 85/22 86/9 87/10 87/18 88/25 88/25 90/16 90/21 94/22 96/22 98/13 99/25 101/6 104/7 105/15 106/15 107/6 109/2 109/8 109/25 115/24 118/6 118/7 119/24 120/14 120/20 122/7 122/14 123/2 125/18 125/20 126/2 127/9 127/23 129/6 129/22 132/6 132/10 133/24 137/3 137/7 139/2 140/19 141/22 142/14 142/16 142/23 143/17 145/16 145/24 146/22 147/18 148/6 151/9 153/18 155/4 155/15 155/23 157/16 158/22 158/22 159/18 161/23 162/6

74/19 74/19 75/11 68/11 106/11 107/1 138/25 159/10 168/16 26/14 37/8 0 77/10 113/8 162/3 121/1 121/17 148/18 206/12 paragraph 25 [1] or... [57] 164/18 page 4 [5] 71/23 162/4 172/1 173/7 160/6 38/3 173/1 173/1 178/17 175/12 176/2 179/21 owned [3] 102/7 143/22 173/11 182/8 paragraph 29 [1] 179/17 180/15 180/24 181/18 188/16 189/16 192/16 241/23 206/12 38/12 181/2 181/4 182/6 190/8 191/2 192/21 owner [9] 69/9 69/10 page 49 [1] 47/19 paragraph 3 [1] 185/10 187/6 187/9 197/3 204/21 205/20 97/20 107/15 132/20 page 5 [5] 26/15 53/2 171/14 194/9 197/7 197/8 205/21 210/13 210/16 133/9 133/12 135/20 55/22 135/18 214/18 paragraph 3.2.2 [1] 203/2 203/3 204/11 215/2 215/23 227/5 138/24 page 6 [1] 137/18 56/4 204/25 205/3 205/24 paragraph 31 [5] 243/5 owners [2] 38/14 page 7 [1] 67/21 207/8 208/1 208/11 out [64] 8/6 10/20 191/16 page 71 [1] 49/4 17/11 17/16 92/14 210/10 210/21 210/25 page 75 [2] 132/13 10/22 15/4 19/25 20/2 ownership [2] 150/5 98/6 120/20 216/20 217/4 217/18 20/3 22/23 24/6 26/11 232/12 132/17 paragraph 32 [3] 217/19 218/14 220/16 28/18 43/24 46/17 38/18 91/7 98/6 Oyles [1] 111/17 page 8 [2] 86/15 220/18 220/24 221/3 46/20 54/9 57/12 60/1 199/20 paragraph 38 [2] 221/5 224/13 226/15 60/4 62/8 82/3 88/3 86/14 88/2 page 9 [5] 166/18 228/3 228/4 228/5 package [2] 57/19 97/23 98/21 101/14 166/19 178/9 195/4 paragraph 4 [2] 228/9 228/10 228/13 101/21 102/13 102/25 57/20 199/19 14/20 171/20 228/16 229/16 231/9 packages [1] 53/9 104/5 104/9 104/12 page **94** [1] 109/19 paragraph 5 [1] 231/25 232/10 234/12 109/21 112/17 113/20 packs [1] 228/21 page numbers [1] 15/18 234/19 235/19 237/13 114/8 114/16 115/20 page [95] 1/21 17/13 113/9 paragraph 5.3 [1] 239/18 242/24 116/12 117/22 122/6 26/15 26/16 38/18 pages [5] 1/18 47/21 144/10 oral [1] 147/22 47/19 49/4 53/2 55/7 138/21 139/12 141/21 48/14 48/14 215/10 paragraph 7 [1] 60/6 order [9] 6/16 8/10 55/22 55/23 56/3 56/5 147/1 149/7 149/23 pagination [1] 47/20 paragraph 8 [1] 45/16 47/7 99/6 101/8 60/7 60/8 66/19 67/21 150/24 151/5 158/9 paid [2] 242/12 239/24 144/22 188/16 190/10 71/23 71/25 74/24 158/20 172/20 179/20 paragraphs [1] 128/6 242/18 ordinary [1] 78/4 83/1 86/15 108/19 182/11 183/18 187/12 panel [4] 131/12 **parameter [2]** 83/3 organisation [1] 108/21 109/18 109/19 131/14 131/15 131/16 199/13 210/5 215/12 141/24 157/7 109/21 113/8 113/9 216/11 217/10 226/2 paper [9] 8/20 8/21 parameters [1] original [19] 71/1 113/9 114/14 124/21 228/10 233/25 236/7 13/2 17/1 27/8 27/20 226/14 71/15 87/6 101/4 128/5 130/16 132/13 42/14 57/4 60/22 238/21 paraphrased [1] 51/1 128/2 128/3 129/1 132/17 134/23 135/18 out' [1] 111/24 paperwork [2] parcel [1] 216/2 129/16 149/22 163/1 137/18 138/18 138/25 outcome [3] 69/12 110/10 112/24 part [41] 2/6 12/5 183/10 187/22 202/1 139/12 139/14 139/15 112/18 188/21 paragraph [48] 14/20 13/18 47/14 52/20 221/15 222/13 228/16 141/5 143/22 144/10 15/18 17/11 17/16 58/15 59/13 69/6 69/7 outcomes [1] 45/14 229/1 231/13 235/10 144/11 152/4 159/10 output [2] 4/17 9/25 77/9 98/25 99/24 26/14 37/8 38/3 38/12 originally [3] 55/10 160/19 160/20 163/9 38/18 39/2 47/24 101/20 119/1 125/23 outputs [5] 4/15 5/7 152/24 183/16 166/18 166/19 168/16 6/20 9/1 10/1 48/13 49/5 52/25 56/4 130/18 131/3 131/12 origins [1] 97/22 173/11 177/2 177/7 outreach [1] 211/13 60/6 64/15 75/5 83/1 134/6 135/5 135/10 other [45] 4/20 8/3 178/9 181/3 181/6 outs [1] 134/1 86/14 88/2 91/7 92/14 142/21 147/16 148/3 11/9 11/18 11/23 182/8 182/12 185/5 98/6 98/6 120/20 148/19 148/25 163/23 outset [1] 21/9 18/10 25/8 30/9 30/10 186/10 186/11 189/9 122/21 135/21 140/10 174/12 179/21 179/23 outstanding [4] 30/11 30/12 30/14 190/21 195/4 198/4 144/10 157/21 160/20 186/17 188/12 188/13 149/4 163/16 164/4 40/11 43/16 63/13 198/7 198/10 199/19 166/8 163/19 171/14 171/20 198/18 210/13 210/16 65/17 65/18 75/7 199/20 199/21 201/10 over [33] 16/22 18/16 173/12 173/13 186/9 215/1 215/24 216/2 84/25 89/12 101/2 206/12 206/12 206/13 186/10 198/8 208/18 216/16 235/9 24/2 24/17 31/14 104/2 104/6 104/19 210/23 212/5 212/21 38/18 96/25 110/21 214/18 230/25 231/10 particular [17] 94/22 104/21 105/7 105/10 214/18 217/1 218/25 114/14 130/16 135/18 233/23 239/24 240/5 95/13 99/18 100/20 119/6 119/9 120/14 218/25 225/16 233/23 139/23 143/9 144/10 240/15 133/10 135/6 136/12 122/17 127/8 129/25 236/2 237/2 237/3 144/11 144/12 146/1 138/22 153/22 155/25 paragraph 1.25 [1] 145/9 156/18 163/17 239/10 240/12 245/5 163/9 163/25 177/7 187/13 206/6 208/9 160/20 170/19 175/21 177/5 182/12 182/22 183/12 page 1 [4] 124/21 208/12 221/24 236/14 paragraph 1.3 [1] 197/8 200/9 200/11 190/21 197/21 201/10 189/9 218/25 237/2 198/8 236/25 209/22 224/21 234/3 page 10 [1] 177/2 212/5 212/21 214/22 particularly [7] 5/8 paragraph 12 [2] others [6] 34/19 page 101 [1] 113/9 225/16 231/1 236/2 50/22 59/22 77/10 47/24 49/5 89/12 187/9 188/25 page 12 [4] 160/19 240/12 78/4 107/23 118/22 paragraph 13 [1] 189/8 241/16 160/20 198/4 198/7 overall [1] 77/17 64/15 parties [2] 175/22 otherwise [6] 9/7 page 14 [1] 56/3 overarching [1] 241/13 paragraph 16 [2] 44/11 46/4 58/22 page 2 [5] 60/7 71/25 173/12 173/13 129/2 partly [1] 98/21 87/23 143/15 128/5 185/5 217/1 paragraph 18 [2] overstated [1] 52/7 parts [4] 11/23 106/3 ought [2] 107/4 page 21 [1] 141/5 106/12 186/2 overwritten [1] 183/4 52/25 157/21 186/22 page 24 [1] 109/18 owed [2] 58/11 58/12 paragraph 19 [1] party [2] 141/11 our [35] 1/15 8/15 9/1 9/25 58/6 58/12 61/10 own [12] 21/3 48/1 page 26 [1] 113/8 214/18 210/17 page 3 [5] 134/23 49/7 49/18 61/11 paragraph 24 [2] pass [1] 154/15

P 194/5 226/23 228/23 182/10 184/22 185/14 planted [1] 190/2 POL00000874 [1] 229/10 235/2 236/23 186/2 186/4 186/5 **play [1]** 172/5 160/5 passage [3] 148/8 237/22 243/18 187/6 187/16 188/14 played [1] 34/12 POL00003874 [2] 227/9 240/13 per [21] 133/18 189/2 189/11 191/15 please [64] 1/5 1/11 48/8 49/3 passed [4] 52/21 134/16 141/1 141/17 192/15 193/17 195/16 1/21 2/9 26/15 29/24 POL00022842 [1] 55/21 207/20 237/17 141/25 142/11 142/15 196/13 201/3 203/4 37/8 38/12 47/16 210/19 past [5] 19/3 62/6 148/4 149/5 149/25 204/20 204/20 206/13 47/19 48/10 49/3 49/4 POL00028507 [1] 121/2 122/23 123/9 153/19 157/10 158/7 **Phil's [1]** 205/19 49/5 53/2 54/17 56/3 146/3 Pathway [8] 136/7 163/8 179/19 196/8 66/18 71/21 71/22 POL00029618 [1] philosophy [1] 136/20 139/17 140/12 205/9 209/1 224/2 74/24 82/17 86/15 160/24 216/25 141/23 143/10 156/5 90/14 95/19 109/13 224/19 227/6 **phone [3]** 33/18 POL00030393 [1] 240/10 109/14 109/18 109/20 134/8 percentage [1] 35/15 110/22 Pathway's [2] 136/5 141/14 phonecall [1] 115/5 123/19 124/10 124/14 POL00032999 [1] 148/18 134/8 134/17 134/23 198/1 perfect [3] 13/14 **phoned [1]** 194/25 pattern [1] 52/6 13/16 129/5 photographed [1] 135/22 137/18 138/18 POL00038870 [2] paused [2] 153/16 138/25 139/2 146/3 54/17 66/19 perfectly [2] 11/12 114/21 183/16 147/12 152/4 160/5 phrase [7] 86/24 88/14 POL00043681 [1] Pauses [1] 171/9 perform [4] 6/16 72/5 124/3 145/15 172/8 162/17 176/22 178/22 138/17 pausing [4] 170/4 234/5 234/6 235/18 181/10 181/11 182/8 152/16 154/1 POL00055100 [1] 185/5 199/17 221/21 performance [4] phrased [1] 93/5 189/3 189/10 195/3 224/22 pay [4] 89/21 112/21 126/12 159/6 159/7 physically [1] 18/12 198/1 203/23 206/12 POL00088991 [1] 141/22 143/10 160/18 pick [2] 62/25 113/7 210/19 212/21 216/25 230/11 payment [3] 143/13 perhaps [5] 17/12 222/22 225/21 230/11 POL00090073 [1] picked [3] 13/19 146/20 242/15 107/4 116/2 141/4 231/19 235/23 13/20 167/14 131/8 payments [13] 32/9 151/5 picking [2] 12/16 **plus [1]** 17/5 POL00090428 [1] 146/7 146/9 146/15 pm [5] 124/5 124/7 period [11] 4/24 113/8 141/4 146/18 146/20 211/3 13/10 33/15 49/14 piece [2] 228/14 176/16 176/18 243/24 POL00090478 [1] 218/5 220/7 220/24 105/21 129/18 131/23 237/23 **PMO [3]** 126/16 132/11 221/5 221/8 222/12 141/13 143/9 144/17 pilot [38] 10/5 10/11 127/13 159/20 POL00091384 [1] PEAKs [1] 212/18 10/15 10/16 10/18 PN [6] 206/13 206/18 198/2 235/23 Peberdy [2] 22/19 207/14 207/19 207/20 **police [1]** 114/17 peripheral [2] 130/5 150/20 150/21 151/1 24/4 151/2 152/17 152/24 150/2 208/5 poor [2] 32/20 pence [3] 35/18 154/2 156/13 156/15 **POCL [7]** 136/10 197/15 periphery [1] 128/2 146/24 147/10 Permanent [1] 156/20 156/23 157/8 137/23 139/1 139/4 **Pope [1]** 240/9 Penny [1] 227/1 206/19 159/4 159/5 160/2 141/15 144/17 144/19 portraying [1] 112/11 Penny/Gareth [1] 160/4 161/25 162/7 permitted [1] 141/1 **POID [6]** 27/17 70/15 poses [1] 190/11 227/1 **permitting** [1] 31/13 162/11 163/8 163/25 84/14 98/16 99/24 position [18] 56/8 pension [1] 184/24 164/17 165/7 165/8 73/4 73/25 74/18 **persisted** [2] 63/16 102/1 pensions [1] 207/25 130/2 165/16 166/4 169/14 point [22] 90/23 137/20 167/4 172/1 penultimate [1] 171/14 172/1 198/21 person [7] 95/16 101/9 116/2 128/8 172/4 175/13 177/10 186/9 208/21 209/8 209/23 139/15 148/23 156/11 178/20 184/5 189/4 108/13 118/16 120/7 people [81] 4/5 8/3 173/14 176/9 233/6 pilots [2] 151/10 157/15 161/8 168/25 189/18 196/19 202/21 11/1 11/9 16/22 19/2 166/12 169/11 174/4 174/4 208/10 231/9 personal [1] 142/2 19/15 23/19 25/8 180/17 183/18 189/1 personally [2] 143/12 pin [1] 80/2 **positions** [1] 126/15 27/16 27/19 28/23 193/12 208/14 216/10 possession [1] 40/10 place [21] 3/11 4/21 210/11 28/24 29/4 33/25 persons [1] 233/7 11/11 18/23 18/25 233/19 235/15 236/21 possibility [1] 184/2 36/15 40/1 51/17 30/5 33/12 36/23 41/3 pointing [1] 179/20 possible [6] 53/10 perspective [7] 6/18 51/18 58/19 59/10 15/24 121/7 130/25 58/19 60/12 60/16 points [7] 93/6 98/3 107/18 161/1 165/2 60/20 61/19 62/13 174/5 176/25 190/5 116/5 122/15 134/7 100/20 163/10 166/20 178/7 236/22 62/24 63/21 66/11 Peter [19] 18/22 145/4 172/22 182/3 226/24 227/3 possibly [3] 91/2 66/14 67/2 67/23 26/12 55/18 64/15 203/6 236/12 241/17 **POL [24]** 86/7 161/24 135/13 149/21 67/23 68/3 68/8 68/10 165/23 167/9 167/9 84/12 85/4 100/2 placed [5] 33/6 34/25 post [88] 2/11 2/17 68/18 69/12 75/20 188/4 188/22 189/19 100/9 100/15 117/6 54/7 73/6 227/13 7/20 14/25 16/8 16/12 76/4 76/6 78/19 81/1 117/7 117/21 118/8 places [2] 49/24 51/8 189/23 190/19 190/22 16/20 16/21 17/8 83/14 84/10 84/15 placing [1] 35/6 118/11 118/13 119/5 199/23 200/6 203/11 20/16 28/11 29/12 84/18 85/5 85/6 85/6 119/8 119/19 120/2 207/11 208/5 208/19 29/13 30/1 33/22 plain [1] 155/10 86/7 89/3 89/5 90/10 plan [3] 59/14 172/17 33/22 38/13 38/13 phase [11] 5/6 5/10 208/22 212/13 218/1 96/15 98/13 98/16 5/11 5/23 10/19 25/18 175/9 218/20 231/20 233/25 46/3 46/9 48/8 56/7 98/17 101/25 102/15 72/22 109/7 144/12 236/19 57/18 57/25 58/23 planned [2] 152/24 102/17 103/4 103/9 158/4 165/12 61/9 62/23 63/22 70/1 175/20 **POL's [1]** 234/1 103/12 104/6 105/7 **Phase 1 [1]** 109/7 **planning [7]** 171/25 **POL-MI [1]** 167/9 70/2 72/18 89/20 90/2 108/8 116/10 118/6 90/25 92/1 96/20 Phase 2 [1] 144/12 173/2 173/7 174/2 **POL-MS [1]** 167/9 118/8 120/14 121/3 174/8 174/10 175/17 POL00000747 [1] 96/24 112/12 112/16 phases [1] 7/8 121/4 157/12 193/2 Phil [22] 181/20 planning/reschedulin 47/17 113/1 121/3 121/4 **g [2]** 171/25 174/2

P 66/2 3/17 5/24 6/1 10/10 13/17 14/24 15/12 102/5 102/7 102/9 present [17] 76/10 53/3 60/19 66/24 16/21 37/18 44/14 102/13 102/19 103/8 post... [46] 121/9 82/12 107/23 118/7 104/12 104/18 106/20 82/1 211/4 211/10 45/23 57/17 57/18 125/16 126/1 126/4 211/14 211/18 211/19 122/3 131/17 140/5 60/11 60/15 63/7 64/3 107/16 108/25 109/1 126/13 127/2 129/19 211/24 212/3 212/7 163/7 175/5 188/20 108/23 116/1 116/9 116/4 116/9 116/25 137/21 141/6 146/1 212/11 212/14 212/22 200/10 216/16 227/18 116/13 167/16 190/24 117/13 118/2 118/17 148/18 156/4 157/4 213/1 213/4 213/17 236/4 242/2 242/3 231/21 119/24 120/3 126/18 160/10 164/21 169/22 213/18 problem [27] 5/20 processing [12] 3/10 127/5 127/5 127/7 171/22 171/23 171/24 press [2] 39/15 13/17 21/25 23/3 6/9 8/16 11/20 15/7 127/13 151/12 152/11 172/14 173/25 174/25 153/9 157/15 173/14 222/25 27/12 50/13 80/11 16/6 60/21 61/3 70/12 181/20 191/7 191/13 80/12 104/3 112/13 174/18 222/3 222/15 pressed [2] 18/8 96/7 126/9 130/19 192/8 193/3 194/4 169/3 129/3 129/5 140/15 produce [11] 7/3 237/18 241/21 194/10 200/24 205/15 pressing [1] 43/14 179/10 179/15 183/9 12/1 26/3 65/4 65/16 programming [1] 206/7 208/16 212/13 pressure [15] 156/25 183/13 188/6 193/8 65/18 169/19 206/1 103/13 216/17 217/7 218/3 157/16 157/17 157/20 195/25 196/18 201/4 228/9 228/10 231/8 progress [6] 90/21 219/7 220/4 220/20 162/10 168/7 172/13 201/8 221/6 235/10 produced [19] 4/19 151/17 151/22 157/1 223/4 227/19 231/1 173/15 173/19 174/5 5/4 5/17 7/4 8/20 8/20 236/10 239/7 157/2 206/10 234/9 238/2 238/9 174/21 174/22 174/24 Problem' [2] 218/5 8/21 60/13 60/21 Progress/Release [1] post-Horizon [1] 192/12 193/25 61/17 64/6 79/25 218/17 151/17 62/23 pressured [1] 168/14 problematic [3] 7/13 169/24 182/20 183/3 progressed [1] post-IMPACT [1] 7/15 76/13 183/5 183/7 191/5 165/23 presumably [3] 63/22 19/21 21/7 215/14 problems [26] 11/2 230/23 progressive [1] posted [1] 20/17 prevent [4] 19/14 13/10 13/25 21/8 52/3 producing [6] 8/7 9/1 161/8 posting [1] 74/3 19/23 20/11 144/22 86/6 86/8 103/18 9/5 9/19 13/12 17/6 project [35] 3/6 3/8 postings [2] 74/9 105/3 105/6 105/12 previous [7] 27/18 product [10] 64/12 4/7 11/9 12/8 14/17 75/10 107/21 129/14 131/21 32/11 32/12 91/25 14/19 18/18 46/25 65/14 65/15 65/16 postmaster [2] 22/4 161/3 165/17 203/4 131/23 140/13 140/14 68/4 68/5 68/19 133/2 47/1 47/2 47/6 51/4 49/19 previously [5] 77/4 140/18 162/1 165/9 147/11 147/12 59/23 65/4 71/4 72/8 postmaster's [1] 135/24 144/12 187/20 196/16 196/17 196/20 77/17 83/20 118/23 **production [2]** 61/22 49/17 217/20 217/22 220/5 126/14 126/15 126/16 189/22 182/23 postmasters [4] price [1] 147/9 proceed [10] 133/24 products [8] 42/25 127/12 130/18 130/22 29/10 54/1 101/15 primarily [10] 16/24 137/5 137/11 138/10 61/11 61/13 149/18 131/4 131/5 131/10 202/9 190/15 201/13 213/25 142/24 153/5 153/13 18/10 25/23 25/23 165/5 197/9 198/15 postpone [1] 169/5 58/21 96/8 96/13 199/7 199/9 210/18 153/13 174/14 174/17 postponed [1] 118/18 160/15 160/16 proceeded [2] 132/8 professional [1] 2/14 projects [5] 3/14 4/4 167/24 primary [4] 69/9 196/14 profit [2] 58/25 88/19 127/4 237/19 postponement [2] 69/10 161/11 161/18 proceeding [3] 147/15 promote [1] 234/20 167/18 168/11 136/17 153/20 165/12 principle [10] 24/18 profited [1] 218/14 **promoted [1]** 15/19 potential [7] 98/4 promptly [1] 144/17 24/18 24/21 24/22 proceedings [19] program [2] 102/21 164/5 165/8 188/2 26/20 37/14 38/1 38/6 8/11 16/15 17/7 159/22 prone [1] 145/24 193/12 193/14 193/23 53/5 77/9 179/18 185/18 185/21 programme [117] proof [4] 155/17 potentially [3] 136/16 **print [2]** 36/3 36/7 187/25 188/11 192/7 11/17 12/17 14/3 14/6 155/19 192/19 232/8 146/25 150/10 printed [1] 182/6 193/24 205/4 214/9 14/16 19/22 20/24 **property [1]** 112/25 **pounds [2]** 70/1 224/24 225/7 226/5 23/11 25/6 26/6 37/20 printing [2] 177/12 proposal [1] 194/2 146/24 227/21 227/23 228/5 38/2 45/15 47/2 47/2 proposals [1] 67/10 204/5 practical [2] 186/13 229/8 printout [7] 179/9 54/5 54/9 54/19 54/22 proposed [5] 139/6 186/24 179/13 194/6 204/10 process [51] 4/20 6/4 54/24 54/25 55/4 55/6 139/10 190/7 206/18 practice [5] 10/22 55/8 55/9 55/17 56/23 229/10 204/13 205/6 205/12 6/11 6/12 7/2 7/12 13/12 140/23 158/1 **prior [6]** 19/3 28/5 11/21 11/22 11/22 56/25 58/13 58/17 proposing [2] 193/11 197/15 53/25 77/4 169/13 11/24 12/6 15/11 59/7 59/15 59/18 60/3 193/14 practices [1] 32/20 170/1 15/17 41/18 41/24 61/24 63/11 64/16 proposition [1] pre [4] 56/12 60/22 42/3 42/9 43/23 45/24 64/21 66/23 68/3 69/6 priorities [2] 56/5 232/19 62/23 63/5 241/25 47/13 47/14 50/20 70/8 71/2 71/9 72/23 **prosecute** [3] 8/12 pre-funding [1] 56/12 **prioritise** [1] 242/12 55/12 59/21 60/18 78/17 81/16 83/20 194/5 231/2 pre-Horizon [2] 60/24 61/1 63/12 84/2 84/9 84/11 88/22 priority [14] 133/7 **prosecuted** [8] 16/23 60/22 63/5 163/22 164/13 164/16 67/18 68/11 75/9 89/4 89/5 90/17 90/24 19/2 28/6 45/11 54/1 pre-IMPACT [1] 91/1 92/24 93/16 164/19 165/1 165/3 75/12 83/3 101/1 89/25 193/3 225/6 62/23 165/11 165/15 165/18 117/20 131/24 134/15 93/19 93/20 93/23 prosecutions [2] precisely [1] 118/4 165/20 198/17 198/23 136/8 136/10 137/4 94/6 94/9 95/1 95/1 8/16 41/14 prepare [2] 172/22 prospect [1] 226/12 242/10 138/2 144/6 159/8 95/4 95/18 95/20 97/1 207/4 **prison [7]** 113/12 167/15 169/16 170/14 97/19 97/20 97/23 **protect [1]** 115/10 prepared [2] 124/2 113/23 113/25 114/12 173/3 179/22 190/4 98/11 98/13 98/14 prove [12] 44/2 83/24 129/25 114/20 115/4 115/14 210/16 214/21 98/20 98/25 99/5 113/15 161/2 161/2 presence [2] 25/19 99/14 99/15 101/20 161/3 161/4 178/5 probably [23] 2/25 **processes** [21] 7/18

Р	Q	raised [16] 22/11	122/8 128/6 129/11	recognised [1] 40/7
prove [4] 188/6	qualification [1]	24/10 67/16 93/7 98/3 185/15 187/21 192/9	129/14 186/21 192/4 192/22 195/23 196/22	recollect [1] 131/16 recollection [10]
203/17 205/22 205/25		192/11 220/16 222/18		87/19 93/13 97/18
proved [2] 113/17 206/2	qualifications [6] 2/14 127/7 127/8	224/1 224/5 226/24	reason [7] 31/16 57/9	146/16 159/17 159/24
proven [3] 184/20	127/12 127/13 127/14	229/6 233/20	77/22 145/23 145/25	223/11 223/15 223/17
205/7 205/9	qualified [2] 2/17	raising [7] 33/17	191/21 213/10	242/9
provide [12] 56/20	236/21	37/18 79/20 80/23 108/24 116/1 239/12	reasonable [2] 205/10 205/11	recollections [1] 241/15
74/6 103/5 139/6	quality [12] 151/13	ran [3] 28/20 120/2	reasonably [1]	recommend [1]
189/5 201/12 203/10 203/16 203/25 204/17	153/4 153/8 153/9 153/13 157/18 165/18	121/4	226/18	136/17
204/25 205/3	173/18 192/4 209/7	rang [2] 110/18 181/9		recommendation [5]
provided [5] 1/14	231/23 231/25	range [1] 31/18	31/19 32/17 52/24	132/4 137/4 137/11
98/13 103/4 190/8	quarter [2] 229/20	rapidly [2] 75/10	56/22 57/11 57/23	148/2 199/1
194/6	229/23	77/20 rare [2] 142/14	174/13 174/16 229/20 230/24 234/16	reconciled [1] 169/25
provides [2] 56/6	question [29] 12/10	142/14	reassurance [1]	145/8
201/9	29/23 29/24 40/24 67/8 70/23 101/10	rate [3] 139/4 209/10	201/9	reconciliation [8]
providing [1] 208/19 proving [4] 203/11	110/2 138/2 145/15	209/15	recall [78] 5/5 10/14	60/17 61/21 62/8
203/25 205/11 205/12		rather [15] 18/1	13/13 14/2 14/14 45/1	62/25 63/12 64/6
provision [4] 44/18	180/22 187/22 193/10	31/25 72/18 92/8	82/8 83/13 89/8	77/18 167/15
44/20 81/16 155/12	195/14 197/11 199/13	92/19 111/23 129/9 157/5 159/15 182/3	102/17 103/3 104/24 116/14 116/17 129/16	reconciling [1] 208/3 record [2] 19/2 84/24
provisional [2]	215/9 221/1 222/4	183/11 188/13 193/8	133/13 134/14 135/5	record [2] 19/2 64/24 recorded [7] 32/13
139/19 140/1	222/20 222/21 224/9	202/2 221/11	135/7 137/9 137/15	100/18 121/20 135/24
public [2] 2/5 24/12 pulled [1] 65/12	224/22 226/13 241/7 242/24	re [1] 26/1	140/24 141/12 142/3	199/5 211/6 211/25
purpose [13] 30/9	questioned [9] 1/8	re-looking [1] 26/1	142/23 145/1 145/5	records [2] 139/21
30/11 30/14 30/15	89/14 108/19 124/12	reach [2] 104/5 104/8		228/20
30/20 57/11 63/10	233/11 245/3 245/4	reached [2] 83/5 146/4	145/16 147/4 152/23 160/12 160/15 164/23	recover [2] 187/25 189/25
151/20 151/21 157/23		reacted [1] 107/10	165/6 168/1 168/2	recoveries [1]
180/19 190/23 242/5	questioning [1]	read [28] 51/15 55/3	168/3 168/3 168/4	209/11
purpose' [1] 74/22 purposes [4] 16/11	197/8 questions [24] 2/6	66/5 67/7 71/24 71/25		recovery [7] 45/16
16/13 30/12 63/10	89/11 89/12 91/4 92/4	72/17 106/16 109/8	185/11 199/6 200/13	46/5 47/8 53/14 53/17
pursue [2] 45/15	92/23 93/14 97/6 97/8	109/16 109/21 113/20		212/2 212/16
47/7	105/1 107/19 108/20	115/20 122/22 132/18		rectification [2]
pursued [4] 17/8	117/25 120/19 125/11	144/13 152/12 154/23 156/17 166/22 174/6	206/8 208/7 208/8 213/21 217/11 221/14	103/17 190/8
45/19 90/2 90/24	201/11 217/17 219/7	192/13 198/12 233/9	221/15 222/10 224/17	
pushed [2] 45/19 47/10	220/15 223/4 229/14 229/17 243/3 243/6	233/14 233/14 238/18		redesign [1] 11/23
put [48] 6/18 9/23	quicker [2] 62/12	238/24	229/5 229/8 233/19	reduce [11] 53/12
12/2 13/4 18/14 19/19		readiness [1] 173/20		53/14 55/20 57/13
22/4 30/25 31/12	quickly [5] 173/16	reading [12] 37/17	239/17 239/19 240/19	
31/25 35/11 57/5	183/17 235/3 236/12	41/10 110/18 110/19 155/10 162/13 164/10	240/23 242/3 242/21	100/8 118/25 162/3 162/4
57/15 61/25 62/6 99/4		172/4 173/24 173/25	136/13 160/2	reduced [3] 161/25
99/13 99/15 107/18 112/10 114/17 114/23	quiet [1] 243/18	223/13 233/17	receipt [1] 220/14	162/5 162/9
114/24 119/10 120/22		reads [3] 17/18 92/6	receipts [14] 32/8	reducing [5] 53/16
122/8 122/14 122/16	130/5 130/10 133/16	92/6	41/16 52/7 146/6	119/1 161/11 161/18
123/8 139/25 145/4	134/25 137/1 146/14	ready [5] 123/21	146/8 146/15 146/17	162/14
156/25 165/24 172/13		123/22 157/13 157/14 163/2	146/19 211/3 220/6 220/24 221/4 221/7	reduction [2] 64/2 71/17
173/9 174/4 180/20	165/2 179/16 192/5	reaffirms [1] 168/6	222/11	redundancy [1]
187/1 192/11 195/2 196/20 203/6 207/2	197/6 235/1 235/15 243/13	real [7] 129/3 129/11	receive [2] 111/5	126/20
222/17 236/8 236/12	quote [2] 91/7 147/11	129/15 185/8 196/24	187/4	refer [5] 84/25 85/25
241/17 242/7	<u> </u>	197/14 232/8	received [9] 3/11	136/7 141/21 241/9
puts [1] 23/4	R	reality [1] 46/11	132/23 135/4 141/15 198/6 207/17 215/9	referable [1] 212/17
putting [10] 23/8	R1.08 [1] 206/20	really [32] 11/8 12/18 26/5 26/7 45/8 57/7	225/18 233/16	reference [4] 97/14 101/17 105/20 134/24
57/15 57/20 62/4	R818 [1] 137/24	57/10 58/4 62/11 63/8		referenced [1]
96/12 98/1 99/7 116/5 121/10 242/1	R818/08 [1] 137/24 Radka [1] 5/25	64/1 64/12 96/7	recipient [1] 200/17	161/16
12 1/ 10 242/ 1	raise [3] 37/21 109/3	106/23 107/6 107/24	recipients [1] 187/14	references [4] 91/6
	220/14	110/7 113/13 117/10	recognise [3] 74/21	91/11 92/21 150/20
		117/10 119/11 122/7	139/17 168/22	referencing [1] 48/11
				(88) prove referencing

R	relevant [3] 2/15
referred [6] 93/8	31/11 127/9
100/16 143/7 218/4	reliability [3] 5/3 5
218/16 243/1	13/11 reliable [2] 9/7 9/2
referring [2] 138/8	reliable [2] 8/7 8/2
218/23	reliance [2] 182/3 193/7
refers [5] 92/12	reliant [1] 205/23
136/3 143/8 145/11	relieved [1] 112/7
240/4	reluctant [1] 229/1
reflect [4] 17/2 28/2	rely [8] 95/14 116/
46/22 52/19	179/4 189/23 202/1
reflected [4] 32/7	202/17 205/1 205/1
32/8 46/10 51/9	relying [2] 109/12
reflecting [3] 15/20	192/25
44/7 46/24	remain [3] 148/22
reflection [2] 41/9	158/8 161/5
196/22	remainder [1] 61/2
refuse [1] 226/15	remaining [1] 161/
refused [1] 115/19	remains [2] 209/2
refute [1] 157/9	209/4
regard [4] 45/2	remember [106] 3
138/14 165/1 210/6	4/1 6/25 10/2 26/10
regarded [2] 14/23	28/14 30/18 36/8 5
164/16	59/4 63/23 64/9 69
regarding [7] 37/19	70/9 70/17 72/9 72
108/24 146/6 224/1	72/14 72/15 73/9
226/24 230/22 234/1	77/12 78/16 78/21
regardless [1] 81/18	79/2 83/17 83/23
regards [2] 181/11	84/22 84/23 87/4 8
189/18	87/11 87/17 89/3
regional [1] 236/5	89/22 90/19 93/22
registering [1] 195/7 reintroduce [1]	95/8 95/25 99/23
236/19	100/13 101/8 104/2
ejected [1] 194/2	105/15 111/16 114
elate [4] 100/20	114/11 116/23 117
131/17 142/13 210/25	117/12 117/24 118
related [4] 43/15	120/17 130/21 130
177/24 204/6 225/7	131/14 133/4 133/6
relates [5] 135/1	134/11 135/13 136
204/4 209/6 224/22	137/8 139/23 143/1
241/7	144/1 144/8 146/11
relating [9] 107/24	146/13 147/10 150
143/25 178/1 185/21	152/6 152/8 162/22
201/16 207/8 214/9	162/24 163/6 164/2
224/23 228/5	169/9 169/10 171/6
relation [16] 12/14	171/18 171/19 177 178/23 178/25 184
72/5 91/12 91/17	178/23 178/25 184 186/23 206/24 207
130/5 130/11 130/21	208/1 219/21 219/2
131/4 131/13 151/10	221/7 223/9 223/14
221/10 227/7 227/16	223/24 223/25 224
227/21 227/22 229/7	224/15 225/9 225/
relationship [3]	226/10 226/11 230
82/14 185/6 185/8	237/9 237/11 238/4
relationships [1]	238/8
97/25	remembered [1]
release [16] 144/25	223/19
151/17 162/20 163/3	remembering [8]
163/23 177/16 179/22	46/25 64/1 77/5 97
198/19 199/4 200/3 202/5 206/25 208/23	102/4 118/17 120/1
202/5 206/25 208/23 210/16 215/14 222/25	224/16
releases [1] 206/24	remigrated [1] 171
1616 0363 [1] 200/24	remind [1] 207/23

```
elevant [3] 2/15
                     reminded [1] 239/2
                     remitted [1] 70/4
eliability [3] 5/3 5/16 Remming [1] 211/18
                     remote [6] 229/21
eliable [2] 8/7 8/24
eliance [2] 182/3
                     239/8 239/11
                     remote access [1]
eliant [1] 205/23
                     239/8
elieved [1] 112/7
eluctant [1] 229/19
ely [8] 95/14 116/7
79/4 189/23 202/16
                     19/13 19/22 20/10
202/17 205/1 205/16
                     26/17 52/24 58/13
elying [2] 109/12
                     remove [23] 21/22
                     24/22 29/3 42/22
emain [3] 148/22
                     54/11 59/14 63/12
                     64/17 68/22 69/19
emainder [1] 61/2
emaining [1] 161/12
                     71/12 75/18 75/22
emains [2] 209/2
emember [106] 3/1
1/1 6/25 10/2 26/10
28/14 30/18 36/8 58/5 21/20 42/21 42/23
59/4 63/23 64/9 69/5
                     57/24 58/18 62/17
70/9 70/17 72/9 72/13
72/14 72/15 73/9
77/12 78/16 78/21
                     27/13 73/11 77/1
79/2 83/17 83/23
34/22 84/23 87/4 87/6 rems [1] 110/6
87/11 87/17 89/3
                     repeat [5] 29/24
39/22 90/19 93/22
95/8 95/25 99/23
                     174/4
00/13 101/8 104/21
                     repeated [1] 92/21
05/15 111/16 114/10 rephrase [1] 30/19
14/11 116/23 117/2
                     replace [1] 96/9
17/12 117/24 118/4
                     replaced [3] 57/4
20/17 130/21 130/23 158/21 231/17
31/14 133/4 133/6
                     replacement [2]
34/11 135/13 136/18 93/23 161/20
37/8 139/23 143/16
44/1 144/8 146/11
46/13 147/10 150/25 replicate [1] 60/11
52/6 152/8 162/22
62/24 163/6 164/22
69/9 169/10 171/6
71/18 171/19 177/21
78/23 178/25 184/18 177/19 181/13 181/14
86/23 206/24 207/24
208/1 219/21 219/24
                     182/4 182/6 183/2
221/7 223/9 223/14
223/24 223/25 224/4
224/15 225/9 225/12
                     198/3 201/5 201/6
226/10 226/11 230/23
237/9 237/11 238/4
emembered [1]
                     205/2 205/2 206/1
emembering [8]
16/25 64/1 77/5 97/19
02/4 118/17 120/11
emigrated [1] 171/1
```

```
237/7 238/10 239/3
remotely [4] 222/17
236/9 236/18 238/11
removal [11] 17/22
74/8 77/12 85/9 161/8
76/18 83/6 83/15 84/7
114/22 116/6 116/19
164/15 164/25 165/13
removed [10] 17/24
92/17 112/1 112/22
removing [7] 26/10
123/14 165/14 166/4
91/13 106/7 136/14
replacing [1] 57/14
replanned [1] 175/5
reply [2] 74/25 74/25
report [57] 5/21 5/25
36/8 36/10 45/3 122/8
177/12 177/14 177/18
181/25 182/1 182/3
186/15 188/12 189/23
189/24 190/2 193/1
201/14 201/15 202/1
202/10 202/11 202/17
202/18 202/18 204/5
206/17 207/6 208/16
209/18 217/16 217/23
230/17 230/23 231/8
238/18 238/24 239/1
reported [9] 20/20
```

```
45/7 50/11 139/16
                      171/10 183/13 184/10
                      204/3 211/24
                     reporting [2] 64/22
                      204/11
                     reports [3] 183/23
                      187/18 203/13
                      repository [4] 95/5
                      95/9 95/13 96/24
                     represent [2] 4/18
                      89/15
                     representation [3]
                      25/18 25/19 70/18
                     representative [2]
                      117/9 117/13
                     representatives [3]
                      20/25 24/19 73/14
                     represented [9]
                      96/14 98/15 102/8
                      116/23 118/10 132/24
                      134/3 241/19 241/23
                     representing [2]
                      98/14 98/16
                     reps [1] 75/8
                     request [9] 144/18
                      188/23 189/6 200/25
                      202/25 214/15 225/4
                      226/4 227/17
                     requested [2] 207/11
                      240/8
                     requesting [1]
                      225/24
                     require [7] 56/20
                      137/23 152/20 169/12
                      171/12 190/9 227/5
                     required [14] 11/25
                      13/2 19/18 38/14
                      38/23 39/20 41/19
                      42/1 85/14 131/2
                      190/14 207/12 227/4
                      227/6
                     requirement [11]
                      52/20 55/21 62/18
                      73/13 74/2 98/18
                      102/5 116/18 123/15
                      165/24 200/11
                     requirements [16]
                      4/10 47/4 62/9 64/19
                      72/22 77/13 83/21
                      97/21 98/12 100/10
                      102/23 116/15 131/5
                      189/18 199/23 200/6
                     rescheduled [1]
                      175/5
                     rescheduling [3]
                      171/25 173/7 174/2
                     Reset [5] 164/13
                      198/24
217/25 220/19 230/10 Reset 04 [1] 164/15
230/11 230/15 230/16 Reset 4 [1] 198/18
                     resolution [6] 35/9
                      61/4 138/19 139/5
                      139/10 140/16
```

resolve [6] 18/1 44/15 61/6 67/17 92/20 201/22 resolved [14] 50/5 50/14 63/2 66/17 87/12 140/19 142/8 148/23 149/1 149/9 194/15 209/19 209/25 242/19 resolves [1] 201/25 resolving [1] 133/8 resource [1] 62/18 resources [2] 168/24 172/21 respect [3] 225/24 227/24 227/25 respond [4] 178/9 182/14 188/25 202/25 responded [1] 191/24 responding [5] 185/14 186/3 189/1 200/25 226/21 responds [2] 110/3 219/16 response [14] 178/9 178/23 179/8 181/17 185/4 185/24 188/8 188/24 191/25 196/20 200/24 214/17 223/6 230/21 responsibility [13] 37/1 37/4 37/10 43/21 44/9 59/25 63/20 77/22 79/7 80/8 81/19 84/18 111/7 responsible [17] 3/13 7/25 15/22 31/21 37/25 39/8 47/25 49/6 51/5 51/11 66/12 69/12 107/16 116/11 116/21 116/25 143/6 restart [1] 208/22 restarting [1] 209/8 restricted [1] 186/15 result [14] 12/7 16/14 23/15 36/21 79/24 89/25 155/6 159/2 159/12 159/16 172/6 188/3 189/20 218/7 resulting [1] 136/4 results [8] 6/23 6/23 8/22 9/21 9/24 10/15 177/13 240/8 resumed [2] 183/17 209/23 retail [7] 33/19 33/20 164/15 164/25 198/18 33/23 33/24 77/25 111/15 126/10 retired [1] 14/12 retrieved [2] 183/10 202/1 retrieves [1] 182/23 return [1] 176/20

173/23 175/7 175/7 R robbery [5] 40/21 rung [1] 110/16 saving [1] 69/25 89/20 90/1 90/13 savings [1] 57/21 179/3 179/4 180/2 running [7] 12/20 returned [1] 113/3 90/22 15/15 111/14 111/19 **saw [11]** 32/7 69/14 193/13 196/1 202/22 returning [1] 31/13 robust [13] 8/7 8/24 112/20 174/11 232/3 119/3 159/1 169/7 205/4 216/23 221/3 reversed [1] 169/9 9/2 9/7 9/9 9/12 9/18 169/8 177/24 183/15 221/7 222/1 222/2 rush [1] 168/12 review [8] 25/4 66/15 56/20 107/6 144/7 193/16 207/7 207/8 222/10 223/12 223/13 Russell [2] 177/4 68/11 68/13 68/20 149/10 156/3 231/22 **say [136]** 7/2 7/14 8/8 223/14 224/15 224/19 237/18 70/6 131/10 131/13 Ruth [7] 5/24 6/1 robustly [1] 81/15 8/15 8/18 10/9 10/25 226/22 233/18 235/17 reviewed [4] 9/22 70/7 72/1 134/10 12/18 13/22 15/10 239/18 robustness [1] 89/1 39/14 54/23 55/1 16/17 19/1 24/7 26/11 rocket [1] 158/14 134/11 134/14 savs [63] 42/11 43/9 reviewers [15] 25/5 26/18 28/4 29/7 32/5 53/5 72/20 75/5 83/4 **Rod [9]** 219/9 226/9 65/7 65/10 65/25 66/3 S 226/10 226/11 228/14 35/14 37/10 37/12 92/15 132/19 132/21 66/5 66/5 66/11 66/14 228/17 230/16 235/25 safe [1] 123/10 37/23 38/4 38/12 39/3 135/22 137/22 139/1 67/4 67/5 67/14 67/15 said [90] 8/13 18/15 236/1 40/9 41/1 41/7 41/9 139/3 139/15 144/14 67/22 68/6 19/17 20/21 21/22 role [39] 4/7 6/16 41/20 42/10 43/11 146/17 152/13 156/8 reviewing [2] 10/15 22/7 28/17 28/25 31/4 8/15 8/18 10/8 11/8 49/24 51/25 52/2 54/7 156/14 160/23 161/17 208/5 12/6 13/20 13/22 14/3 33/13 34/3 35/13 55/17 58/4 59/18 163/13 163/20 164/12 reviews [1] 25/21 36/23 36/25 37/5 15/6 15/8 34/22 55/7 59/23 60/9 64/10 168/25 171/14 171/21 **RH [1]** 139/6 39/13 41/16 43/19 59/20 70/9 125/24 64/15 64/22 65/13 177/8 181/5 181/7 Richard [1] 124/15 44/8 44/16 55/10 59/2 126/5 126/9 126/22 72/13 75/18 80/7 182/13 186/4 186/12 rid [9] 18/14 18/22 126/24 130/5 130/21 59/11 62/1 64/25 80/20 83/23 84/16 187/17 189/7 189/13 62/13 62/14 62/17 69/16 70/24 71/2 80/7 195/17 198/13 199/21 130/23 131/4 134/13 86/5 86/16 87/4 95/12 64/11 66/7 79/5 81/21 82/16 86/1 89/6 150/2 150/8 150/15 95/21 98/15 99/3 99/4 200/18 201/3 201/4 100/21 101/6 102/15 110/21 151/10 151/12 185/10 99/10 99/20 100/25 203/9 203/24 206/16 right [67] 2/11 11/18 111/20 111/23 112/19 185/11 217/6 217/8 102/19 105/15 107/7 207/10 208/18 208/25 15/3 19/9 21/8 27/5 113/25 127/6 127/24 227/20 227/22 237/20 108/14 108/16 110/23 209/10 209/12 213/16 39/8 54/23 55/9 65/13 127/25 135/15 136/14 238/8 114/5 116/1 119/17 213/18 217/14 217/25 67/2 75/3 76/20 76/21 137/3 148/9 150/1 roles [10] 8/2 11/18 120/1 120/21 120/24 219/1 219/2 225/17 87/2 91/23 92/11 153/21 154/10 158/25 122/6 123/18 123/23 226/8 227/11 231/19 12/19 15/20 16/7 93/14 94/5 94/18 34/11 34/12 72/4 159/14 165/11 166/10 123/25 124/24 127/13 232/6 236/6 237/3 95/16 97/5 99/12 172/10 173/22 175/1 88/16 126/1 127/18 128/9 132/1 scale [3] 100/6 99/18 100/14 102/10 175/1 175/3 175/11 roll [4] 10/20 31/14 136/14 136/18 137/7 133/21 150/24 102/22 103/2 105/10 175/16 179/17 180/18 137/10 137/10 137/13 scenario [3] 136/3 150/24 151/5 109/8 109/22 111/3 115/11 115/12 117/16 rolled [12] 8/6 10/22 182/11 187/10 189/2 137/14 139/23 140/11 155/25 158/25 194/12 194/18 195/13 140/20 140/22 142/12 scenarios [3] 140/7 15/4 20/2 20/3 22/22 119/4 120/12 122/20 196/10 203/5 204/14 147/21 149/14 151/3 24/6 88/3 149/23 140/8 197/19 124/24 130/6 130/20 204/16 205/11 210/11 210/5 215/12 216/11 153/9 156/8 156/21 schedule [2] 172/18 131/7 131/12 132/2 213/22 214/19 215/10 rolling [1] 158/9 157/12 157/21 159/11 188/22 133/21 147/21 152/9 215/19 215/20 215/22 rollout [14] 11/11 161/19 161/22 165/20 scheduled [3] 72/24 153/18 153/19 154/6 223/16 223/21 224/18 76/12 131/22 131/25 166/11 166/16 173/13 202/4 208/21 156/23 157/3 168/7 229/1 229/2 233/14 147/25 148/7 149/24 174/2 175/6 178/9 scheduling [1] 176/4 176/8 176/10 234/17 239/14 241/8 183/16 190/13 200/20 184/17 192/15 195/5 175/16 176/14 182/2 192/14 Sainsbury's [1] 215/2 216/5 216/18 195/5 197/6 213/13 science [4] 127/9 194/9 194/15 224/14 125/22 225/1 216/10 216/18 220/1 127/11 127/15 151/9 233/10 233/11 234/20 rollover [1] 128/12 **Salter [2]** 70/16 221/1 221/16 222/11 scouring [2] 35/22 243/17 243/20 70/20 **Rolls [1]** 182/22 222/14 223/2 229/20 35/25 right-hand [1] 131/12 same [21] 35/8 43/7 233/10 233/11 233/17 **Roman [2]** 129/10 scours [1] 36/1 rightly [2] 161/23 45/5 49/15 49/19 50/5 239/16 239/24 241/10 136/23 screen [11] 17/14 162/6 Ron [7] 217/2 217/4 63/7 75/7 82/2 91/12 243/6 243/12 17/15 66/18 113/10 ring [1] 220/12 111/6 155/6 155/15 217/5 217/13 219/3 124/17 173/9 176/13 saying [70] 11/2 ringing [1] 44/5 155/19 159/2 159/11 219/5 222/21 16/25 18/9 19/11 195/3 209/10 209/10 risk [**22**] 142/9 159/16 195/4 198/2 root [7] 81/10 144/19 20/22 24/13 25/14 242/13 158/17 158/19 161/12 211/22 235/6 167/4 167/16 167/20 28/7 29/2 34/13 35/8 screens [1] 235/13 161/15 161/18 162/8 170/11 171/17 **SAP [12]** 12/2 13/4 35/16 35/16 39/16 script [2] 110/19 162/13 162/13 162/15 57/15 57/17 61/25 41/23 43/9 44/6 61/15 roughly [1] 120/15 110/20 164/17 164/20 165/4 62/4 62/7 64/5 96/12 route [1] 227/12 69/7 75/20 76/15 scroll [10] 38/3 71/24 185/1 187/11 190/11 98/1 118/19 212/13 routinely [1] 95/20 80/11 80/15 81/2 164/2 177/7 201/2 199/2 199/8 214/2 **Royal [1]** 29/14 satisfactorily [2] 85/18 86/8 88/11 207/9 217/23 226/5 222/17 224/1 230/2 Royal Mail [1] 29/14 139/20 158/11 89/22 101/14 117/4 227/8 231/18 risk-based [1] rule [3] 43/22 44/1 satisfactory [2] 119/18 119/22 119/23 search [1] 114/23 161/15 137/12 204/25 214/14 123/12 123/13 141/24 searched [1] 112/21 risking [1] 162/15 **satisfied [3]** 67/16 149/22 155/9 155/15 Rule 9 [1] 214/14 **season [1]** 74/15 robbed [1] 89/24 run [4] 170/2 178/3 155/1 186/23 155/20 156/15 159/25 season' [1] 74/9 robber [1] 89/24 205/25 243/4 Save [1] 62/21 165/12 165/13 166/7 second [25] 53/11

164/8 198/20 199/12 217/24 219/1 219/17 S selling [1] 61/10 **shouldn't [1]** 197/22 send [2] 72/1 181/11 **show [5]** 115/10 199/15 223/2 second... [24] 75/5 sending [2] 219/1 Sewell [10] 219/11 132/10 171/4 212/18 simple [2] 184/6 134/23 135/21 138/18 225/15 219/12 219/13 219/15 212/19 242/8 140/24 141/5 143/19 senior [5] 83/6 83/14 220/1 220/14 221/23 **showed [1]** 143/2 simpler [1] 62/8 171/8 186/17 188/13 83/18 84/5 118/16 223/2 223/11 224/7 **showing [3]** 80/16 **simplified** [1] 75/12 201/6 210/22 217/3 seniority [2] 119/8 Sewell's [1] 223/6 192/7 218/15 simplify [2] 74/20 217/10 218/1 218/16 119/19 **shaded [2]** 152/5 77/18 **shown [4]** 49/12 220/16 220/18 221/5 sense [8] 18/24 65/25 78/11 109/25 **simplistic** [1] 197/18 163/12 222/5 229/6 229/7 59/22 120/8 122/19 **shall [4]** 141/16 **shows [3]** 168/12 Simplistically [1] 236/1 240/15 129/9 159/7 174/18 144/15 144/21 197/6 168/14 183/23 226/15 Second Sight [7] share [5] 75/7 175/21 234/11 side [7] 15/13 34/11 simply [9] 8/18 8/18 217/3 217/10 218/1 sent [14] 42/14 43/5 180/8 180/10 180/17 97/7 97/11 171/24 27/24 46/24 50/19 220/16 222/5 229/6 43/7 113/12 139/18 71/11 80/17 191/11 **sharing [1]** 180/18 193/1 193/8 229/7 139/21 141/11 145/6 she [23] 6/3 6/4 sides [1] 145/8 242/7 Second Sight's [1] since [3] 88/6 88/8 146/5 160/10 181/4 70/10 110/2 115/7 **Sight [7]** 217/3 220/18 182/18 217/24 219/9 115/7 119/14 119/19 217/10 218/1 220/16 223/18 section [4] 163/12 119/22 120/6 120/7 **sentence** [5] 29/3 222/5 229/6 229/7 **Singh [4]** 225/12 201/6 204/9 217/15 120/8 219/16 222/3 225/12 225/15 226/21 113/20 114/1 114/4 **Sight's [1]** 220/18 security [6] 35/2 224/10 224/10 224/16 sign [11] 24/24 25/3 single [3] 11/7 73/5 56/21 74/7 78/21 85/6 sentenced [1] 113/23 225/6 225/23 236/6 43/16 55/2 65/21 224/4 113/22 **separate [5]** 61/8 237/3 238/6 238/7 66/13 67/14 68/2 sir [8] 1/3 48/20 see [54] 6/20 6/23 67/5 99/25 124/25 she's [3] 222/1 222/2 179/25 180/15 192/21 48/24 123/18 124/8 20/13 23/2 37/9 49/15 224/15 176/1 229/14 242/25 199/25 **sign-off** [1] 55/2 50/24 52/6 54/20 55/6 **September [7]** 1/18 **sheet [3]** 131/11 **signal [1]** 121/10 sites [6] 149/8 55/22 55/25 65/21 signatories [4] 65/10 150/25 151/2 151/3 54/21 55/24 140/25 131/15 131/17 65/24 67/22 69/3 142/22 211/25 218/7 shocked [1] 149/25 66/9 68/7 68/16 151/5 154/25 71/23 71/25 72/2 75/1 **September 1999 [1] shoddy [1]** 204/25 **signators** [1] 67/3 **situation [4]** 45/13 76/2 79/21 82/22 140/25 short [6] 48/22 111/7 **signatory** [1] 67/19 102/10 184/4 199/18 83/24 85/23 88/1 90/7 situations [1] 157/19 September 2003 [2] 124/6 176/7 176/17 **signature** [1] 1/23 91/3 93/5 102/11 54/21 55/24 202/6 signed [32] 8/8 9/3 six [2] 118/7 209/7 102/25 105/20 115/19 9/3 9/8 18/7 24/19 **September 2010 [2] short-term [1]** 202/6 size [1] 64/9 124/18 127/22 134/18 **shortages [3]** 217/18 24/21 24/25 25/11 **Skinner [2]** 109/15 211/25 218/7 140/14 150/19 154/15 sequence [1] 142/14 217/19 218/15 25/16 41/8 50/21 110/2 165/22 173/21 177/2 64/20 65/1 66/20 67/6 slight [3] 147/7 series [4] 42/2 shortfall [13] 31/11 185/3 191/8 191/25 116/16 116/16 127/23 31/16 38/15 38/17 67/24 67/25 68/21 147/15 154/11 193/18 193/25 195/15 serious [7] 129/22 40/15 40/20 43/25 71/5 87/14 87/24 slightly [8] 9/6 53/4 200/12 203/6 225/15 129/23 131/21 131/23 44/11 44/15 97/11 94/16 102/5 117/15 76/12 120/21 182/11 229/15 230/6 230/7 161/12 161/18 191/6 109/25 218/11 218/19 117/18 117/18 124/24 185/25 198/9 232/20 seeing [3] 25/9 103/3 **seriously [2]** 191/19 shortfalls [20] 37/11 125/4 142/17 164/11 slips [1] 42/9 191/23 small [8] 35/19 58/15 191/23 38/9 38/11 38/20 173/19 seek [1] 74/2 **service [7]** 3/1 16/8 38/24 39/6 39/21 41/4 69/6 145/20 149/3 significance [5] seem [3] 32/2 154/17 178/17 195/12 219/20 231/4 231/11 239/20 43/20 44/10 44/13 90/15 138/6 193/22 186/8 219/23 223/8 44/18 49/20 50/1 194/4 200/1 **Smith [3]** 6/5 64/16 Seema [4] 225/6 91/10 92/14 93/4 98/7 significant [31] 55/9 **services** [1] 61/11 172/3 226/25 230/13 230/14 set [18] 33/11 44/3 98/24 100/24 57/21 58/7 66/17 80/2 so [356] seems [20] 69/3 91/1 57/12 59/17 65/6 65/7 93/19 93/20 121/17 **shortly [3]** 168/19 so-called [3] 115/21 102/10 138/11 139/8 65/11 65/25 66/10 219/14 230/12 130/3 137/1 140/3 115/24 116/8 144/13 154/19 156/9 146/14 152/16 152/18 software [7] 105/3 67/13 82/3 101/14 **should [49]** 1/17 7/3 162/18 164/3 164/24 101/21 116/14 126/16 22/8 24/22 25/7 25/10 154/1 154/20 155/11 105/23 106/8 106/25 169/8 186/5 202/16 193/15 194/12 233/25 31/23 31/24 31/25 155/22 155/23 156/10 107/21 201/21 201/24 202/20 202/25 209/8 setting [1] 102/25 32/5 32/6 32/8 32/14 158/20 159/16 179/16 sold [1] 147/13 222/7 231/24 239/8 **settled [1]** 167/13 33/12 33/13 43/4 44/4 192/5 197/13 209/5 **solicitors [4]** 91/17 seen [18] 10/25 **settlement [5]** 77/18 45/24 46/19 53/3 216/6 216/20 223/19 225/5 225/19 226/25 38/25 53/18 58/19 167/11 167/22 168/4 67/10 68/12 68/19 223/21 232/1 solution [12] 19/13 84/1 97/13 100/5 53/8 112/14 112/14 69/15 77/17 77/19 significantly [3] 169/7 101/13 135/10 141/7 seven [1] 90/1 78/3 79/15 96/23 77/19 209/2 209/16 128/15 128/20 136/20 161/9 161/10 182/17 seven years [1] 90/1 96/23 99/9 116/3 signing [8] 4/10 8/3 136/21 148/10 153/16 186/18 204/15 206/4 several [6] 153/14 117/23 121/24 123/2 16/25 19/6 41/8 66/4 170/8 236/16 228/21 237/5 190/2 190/24 215/10 123/3 124/1 124/17 66/12 94/7 solutions [2] 57/20 **self [2]** 9/6 225/21 167/23 169/22 170/19 **similar [5]** 25/8 75/16 233/24 235/12 236/10 self-explanatory [1] severity [11] 133/20 170/24 186/21 188/7 82/2 119/8 162/25 some [64] 4/14 7/8 225/21 194/10 199/22 229/25 7/9 34/18 36/17 37/7 133/22 134/22 135/8 **Simon [8]** 217/3 self-fulfilling [1] 9/6 236/23 236/25 163/16 163/24 164/4 217/4 217/5 217/15 39/1 42/25 43/6 52/7

193/23 200/21 202/17 strikes [1] 164/7 41/23 47/20 63/23 S stability [1] 208/20 70/19 82/5 86/23 88/7 staff [2] 40/19 231/3 203/25 205/3 207/4 **strip [1]** 114/22 some... [54] 55/13 95/25 117/11 119/11 stage [26] 16/1 66/7 207/18 207/20 213/9 **structure** [1] 33/25 57/7 58/8 59/19 64/5 119/16 120/18 138/20 87/1 92/1 104/13 213/11 213/13 214/18 structured [1] 106/15 64/24 65/12 71/21 141/23 145/15 171/7 104/17 139/22 139/25 215/7 234/7 239/23 stuff [5] 10/4 23/11 72/25 73/10 78/1 173/24 174/15 174/15 140/17 142/22 142/24 25/21 41/10 76/22 241/8 78/15 78/18 80/3 81/3 181/5 193/5 196/7 156/22 165/15 165/21 statements [7] 8/19 sub [9] 15/16 22/15 82/25 87/10 92/24 197/17 215/8 219/4 166/9 171/18 174/8 166/24 167/2 167/21 28/11 38/13 38/13 97/21 100/25 108/20 221/1 227/8 227/8 174/21 179/20 191/5 174/7 181/25 228/9 45/1 46/10 126/13 108/22 109/10 109/16 209/19 209/22 223/17 236/2 **status [2]** 187/18 218/3 117/16 123/21 129/13 sort [25] 6/3 6/22 8/2 225/3 237/20 243/2 199/25 subject [6] 74/1 129/21 130/9 135/16 146/17 164/11 198/22 27/16 33/14 41/17 stakeholder [3] 40/6 Stein [3] 89/13 89/14 139/9 139/25 142/4 49/13 55/10 70/10 65/21 72/24 245/4 199/24 229/24 144/12 148/17 148/18 84/15 88/18 100/11 stakeholders [19] submit [1] 243/7 step [7] 102/24 164/25 174/21 180/13 102/3 106/23 109/19 21/4 40/2 59/9 64/20 103/19 153/16 183/11 **submitted [1]** 42/18 183/3 184/7 185/12 109/20 111/24 112/10 65/1 65/10 65/20 71/6 183/12 202/2 202/3 subpostmaster [20] 193/1 199/8 199/9 117/21 151/9 180/13 72/7 76/5 77/15 79/3 18/7 20/17 31/14 **Stephen [1]** 70/6 200/12 214/23 214/24 184/7 185/12 193/1 83/6 83/14 83/18 84/6 still [37] 4/18 4/18 32/18 32/21 32/24 215/3 215/11 215/13 85/18 99/17 100/12 8/21 11/24 35/4 35/5 36/1 40/16 42/1 42/18 240/25 234/3 235/10 241/20 47/18 47/25 49/6 **sorts [1]** 13/7 stamp [1] 98/21 36/18 42/25 60/13 somebody [24] 23/16 stamps [3] 147/6 62/15 63/19 63/20 80/15 147/9 178/21 **sounds [2]** 120/15 23/19 28/10 33/16 147/7 147/12 204/13 63/24 64/6 64/7 88/13 179/21 196/4 196/19 33/23 34/13 35/9 40/1 stand [1] 114/23 113/18 120/21 123/5 197/2 **space [1]** 158/14 46/18 50/10 66/2 80/1 **spanning [1]** 231/20 standard [7] 53/9 129/12 142/4 142/21 subpostmasters [91] 80/11 80/13 82/13 62/4 62/7 140/23 142/25 162/18 166/9 16/12 17/8 17/25 18/3 **speak [5]** 115/3 84/4 84/12 85/3 89/6 115/7 115/8 118/15 158/17 166/6 167/14 171/15 176/22 179/11 19/18 19/24 20/12 119/12 120/4 156/21 229/22 **standing [2]** 113/19 199/8 204/14 204/15 21/2 21/5 22/11 22/12 222/8 225/5 speaking [1] 26/16 190/4 204/18 206/3 209/9 22/20 23/7 23/12 24/8 somehow [2] 122/12 209/22 216/3 216/4 24/20 27/5 28/5 30/3 **specific [14]** 118/13 **stands [3]** 136/3 195/1 stock [37] 17/2 18/9 135/7 136/19 137/15 31/8 31/20 37/11 207/24 208/1 someone [5] 89/19 158/4 180/3 180/24 **start [18]** 2/9 10/3 18/11 18/15 19/5 19/6 38/22 39/5 39/19 43/4 92/7 92/8 119/8 181/1 188/23 190/9 10/18 47/16 60/2 60/6 19/8 22/7 22/8 27/22 43/21 44/23 45/18 119/19 200/10 214/14 216/14 46/2 46/14 47/10 48/9 90/16 109/18 124/2 28/8 29/19 29/21 something [64] 3/9 223/24 125/14 127/17 151/14 32/10 32/11 32/15 49/25 51/4 51/10 3/18 9/4 18/16 18/19 171/25 173/2 174/1 35/12 121/13 121/21 51/24 52/12 52/15 specifically [11] 19/8 19/9 29/18 30/22 121/24 122/1 122/3 54/12 63/4 69/23 26/20 37/14 168/4 175/4 200/20 204/9 40/4 40/7 40/19 50/7 181/12 200/7 200/8 started [4] 10/10 122/5 122/5 122/5 76/15 77/1 77/5 79/6 50/24 53/17 59/15 203/12 204/5 213/8 125/17 126/4 175/8 122/6 122/13 182/22 79/20 81/20 81/22 67/18 69/16 71/7 235/8 237/11 starting [3] 71/22 183/22 184/3 186/16 89/16 90/10 91/9 78/22 80/3 80/19 **specifics [3]** 135/13 90/23 104/11 186/16 186/19 186/21 92/13 92/18 93/3 80/24 95/12 110/20 190/3 201/16 212/6 97/10 97/15 98/4 223/16 224/17 stated [4] 37/24 118/13 121/18 122/23 speed [1] 159/8 159/18 189/22 198/16 stockholding [1] 98/22 100/21 100/21 129/4 129/9 134/25 **speed-wise [1]** 159/8 statement [86] 1/13 201/5 101/11 101/18 101/22 135/11 137/2 137/8 1/17 1/25 2/3 6/11 102/12 103/2 103/21 **speedy [1]** 181/17 **stole [1]** 121/3 139/13 140/2 141/18 spend [2] 132/14 6/19 14/21 17/12 104/1 104/20 106/22 **stolen [4]** 46/15 141/19 142/9 143/24 108/22 109/7 115/25 171/20 26/15 28/1 37/9 39/17 46/16 114/2 121/8 144/1 146/6 149/19 41/1 49/25 51/8 52/11 stood [3] 49/12 49/13 116/7 175/24 179/15 **spheres** [1] 119/6 158/13 159/18 160/9 **spiralling [1]** 74/10 53/1 56/21 60/7 64/14 113/24 188/1 190/1 194/25 161/14 164/22 175/6 **SPMs [1]** 92/13 85/24 86/15 86/24 stop [10] 36/6 41/23 196/3 196/6 197/14 175/10 180/13 180/18 184/25 195/20 197/10 **spoken [5]** 103/15 91/3 91/6 91/12 91/16 42/20 61/25 70/19 210/13 215/23 216/9 103/16 103/19 105/17 91/20 91/24 92/6 92/7 80/22 118/12 119/16 216/22 217/20 218/13 197/11 202/12 203/3 92/11 92/14 93/10 226/23 121/5 241/5 218/24 231/2 241/20 203/19 226/17 228/13 98/9 106/16 108/23 **sponsor [12]** 18/18 stopped [1] 210/8 subpostmasters' [1] 229/17 234/5 238/7 26/12 28/21 29/16 111/9 124/16 124/19 stored [2] 179/10 26/25 sometimes [3] 77/7 124/25 125/1 125/2 52/21 53/21 55/18 184/1 subpostmistress [1] 149/6 241/22 55/21 100/3 100/10 125/7 125/10 125/13 **straight [2]** 35/15 109/15 somewhat [1] 150/6 127/6 127/18 127/25 117/7 118/8 147/3 subsequent [5] somewhere [8] 4/2 **sponsored** [3] 59/23 128/1 128/4 148/9 straightforward [1] 73/20 203/12 203/18 30/25 36/24 50/10 153/22 157/21 169/6 175/18 215/14 218/9 64/16 84/11 62/9 67/13 96/21 169/15 169/20 169/23 **sponsors** [3] 46/25 **strangely [1]** 182/12 subset [1] 135/17 122/15 47/3 64/21 subsisting [2] 123/11 169/24 171/5 173/10 **strategy [4]** 158/3 soon [1] 210/5 173/12 173/22 176/21 160/6 160/19 160/22 123/12 squat [1] 114/24 sorry [33] 24/21 177/11 178/4 190/17 **squeeze** [1] 46/2 **stream [1]** 136/9 substance [1] 182/13 28/25 31/24 36/12 190/23 192/17 193/8 squeezing [1] 46/6 streams [1] 26/7 substantially [1]

S substantially... [1] 234/24 substantive [1] 138/25 **successful [2]** 19/3 198/23 successfully [2] 170/20 199/16 **such [24]** 48/4 49/10 56/17 70/3 81/17 102/25 103/10 105/6 128/15 131/16 141/17 142/14 143/10 149/9 164/23 173/6 183/3 184/11 189/5 189/23 194/2 198/21 223/19 232/25 **Sue [2]** 75/3 89/6 suffered [1] 89/20 sufficient [12] 74/6 137/24 140/4 140/20 154/12 155/18 158/5 158/8 160/4 193/4 193/9 214/6 sufficiently [1] 78/3 suggest [6] 20/5 51/20 86/19 154/18 154/19 158/6 suggested [4] 133/19 191/10 222/8 227/16 **suggesting [5]** 18/25 25/13 39/11 74/13 231/24 suggestion [10] 7/11 18/3 18/5 78/10 128/18 157/10 178/6 194/23 202/13 210/9 suggests [1] 213/6 suitable [1] 240/7 suitably [1] 140/9 **sum [3]** 31/11 33/6 34/25 summarise [2] 40/10 56/22 summarises [2] 137/20 210/21 summary [6] 169/18 169/25 170/1 170/5 210/23 231/18 summer [2] 238/18 238/24 **supervised** [1] 53/24 Supplemental [4] 141/5 143/16 143/17 143/22 supplementary [2] 125/12 140/25 support [**45**] 20/25 33/10 33/17 34/23 35/16 52/9 75/12 80/4 80/19 81/4 91/17 95/1

95/4 95/18 95/20 29/9 30/2 31/7 31/12 103/21 103/25 104/2 32/1 33/6 34/25 35/6 104/13 104/19 105/11 35/11 36/24 46/4 105/24 106/9 106/21 106/24 107/13 107/17 108/8 109/11 115/22 115/24 116/8 117/22 126/6 129/21 137/24 179/23 190/12 190/19 191/2 192/2 196/12 203/10 215/1 231/21 supported [4] 34/1 37/20 109/1 130/7 supporting [15] 34/15 34/16 36/19 41/21 41/21 42/13 42/19 42/22 43/5 43/10 43/15 44/3 52/1 52/8 130/24 suppose [7] 8/18 15/13 21/17 27/10 45/12 51/22 176/5 **supposed [1]** 115/10 sure [31] 4/16 7/18 68/11 70/7 70/15 82/11 100/23 102/17 103/3 104/23 104/25 108/15 110/6 114/25 127/24 130/25 140/5 140/8 145/16 153/19 170/17 187/11 188/20 192/3 194/15 194/23 228/20 228/21 233/8 234/15 239/4 surname [1] 219/21 **surplus [2]** 218/12 218/20 surpluses [2] 217/19 218/14 surprise [2] 149/12 149/13 surprised [4] 149/25 194/21 197/24 240/23 **surprising [1]** 123/7 **survival [2]** 53/18 56/9 Susan [4] 1/5 1/7 1/12 245/2 suspect [3] 79/22 89/11 243/15 suspected [1] 99/20 suspended [1] 112/21 suspense [104] 17/20 17/21 18/14 19/8 19/10 19/14 19/19 19/23 20/1 20/11 20/16 20/17 20/18 21/23 22/1 22/2 22/3 22/5 22/21 22/23 23/4 23/8 23/10 23/14 23/23 24/3 24/16 24/22 26/11 26/17 27/4 27/21 27/24 28/9

46/12 52/11 52/25 54/13 57/24 58/1 58/14 58/18 58/22 59/5 59/14 60/1 60/4 62/10 64/17 68/22 69/20 71/12 73/3 73/7 73/11 73/23 74/3 74/9 74/14 75/6 75/9 75/19 systems [29] 4/20 75/22 76/18 77/12 77/23 79/5 82/20 83/2 83/6 83/15 84/7 85/9 92/17 97/9 98/5 99/10 100/22 102/14 116/6 116/20 120/24 121/10 122/9 122/15 211/9 211/22 211/23 218/17 220/11 220/24 221/6 222/24 system [167] 6/17 6/24 7/3 7/16 8/24 9/12 9/18 9/24 10/9 11/11 12/2 12/4 13/1 13/24 15/23 21/21 22/7 22/14 27/14 33/4 take [33] 8/11 9/14 34/6 39/8 39/12 40/22 41/15 42/11 43/9 44/6 50/4 50/6 51/6 51/21 57/15 60/22 61/25 62/5 62/5 62/7 63/3 63/18 64/5 65/17 73/7 73/20 76/23 79/11 79/14 79/19 80/12 80/13 81/8 81/14 81/23 85/17 86/6 86/8 86/13 86/20 95/13 96/11 96/12 97/25 98/1 99/6 103/15 103/16 103/18 104/7 105/3 105/5 106/3 106/13 107/5 108/7 108/8 110/9 110/13 113/8 116/5 118/18 118/19 118/21 121/19 121/24 122/4 122/11 122/17 129/3 129/17 130/1 131/1 133/17 138/15 142/10 145/6 145/13 145/17 148/9 148/11 148/12 149/15 149/15 150/8 151/13 151/25 155/5 157/22 158/6 159/6 160/25 161/6 161/13 165/19 165/19 170/7 171/1 179/10 182/6 185/22 188/3 188/6 190/20 194/7 194/11 194/13 196/11 196/14 196/16 tap [1] 78/6 197/23 197/24 203/11 203/15 203/17 204/8 204/11 204/14 205/8

205/13 205/23 206/3 215/20 216/13 218/8 223/22 225/24 228/19 230/22 231/6 231/12 231/13 231/15 231/16 231/22 232/24 232/25 233/3 234/10 236/11 236/15 238/22 241/12 7/6 10/3 11/25 13/4 15/17 25/24 25/25 26/4 26/8 43/1 57/5 57/7 57/14 60/15 62/3 63/6 72/17 93/24 94/3 96/9 99/7 107/13 116/11 126/9 149/17 **TA [1]** 212/13 tackle [1] 234/2

231/20 240/18 240/21 tackled [1] 75/21 tackles [1] 74/23 tagged [1] 232/11 12/3 13/5 24/1 25/10 48/12 59/13 74/19 76/1 76/17 80/3 117/3 120/18 123/2 123/3 132/15 134/7 143/21 176/2 176/25 194/10 204/20 210/24 214/8 214/16 214/18 217/22 234/15 239/21 taken [10] 21/3 21/18 23/13 42/11 52/14 71/13 86/5 154/9 169/1 215/5 takes [3] 153/6 159/20 175/18 taking [8] 30/4 105/7 114/25 121/18 141/21 191/18 191/23 235/11 talk [1] 208/24 talked [5] 177/23 200/21 201/8 204/10 205/18 talking [11] 27/8 35/17 35/18 69/17 100/5 108/14 195/23 200/16 202/12 207/22 230/16 talks [3] 71/8 109/11 231/10 tamper [1] 232/8 tamper-proof [1]

232/8

tapping [1] 78/12

targeted [3] 54/10

target [1] 172/5

59/20 206/20 213/23 213/24 214/22 targeting [1] 172/25 task [1] 175/18 218/11 220/21 222/18 team [49] 3/12 3/23 3/25 4/2 4/5 4/14 6/8 7/1 9/13 11/9 35/2 37/21 40/3 62/23 63/19 63/21 70/14 82/13 82/15 95/2 95/4 95/14 95/16 95/17 95/18 95/20 96/1 102/7 109/2 115/23 135/5 135/10 142/21 170/23 171/15 173/17 185/13 187/6 188/17 189/16 190/9 192/21 204/21 205/20 208/2 208/5 215/25 241/21 242/2 teams [10] 40/2 52/16 61/3 61/4 61/18 64/2 64/9 107/13 165/24 191/3 technical [13] 55/4 55/5 67/1 78/20 79/17 79/18 96/2 104/3 104/19 106/2 106/12 106/21 108/12 technically [2] 125/23 129/4 101/10 103/18 109/10 technician [1] 151/7 technicians [1] 171/4 technology [3] 42/7 127/2 128/20 telephone [3] 74/2 104/14 105/8 tell [31] 14/20 15/18 17/11 23/17 28/9 35/25 52/25 66/20 68/5 68/10 108/5 108/6 108/10 110/19 112/17 126/24 127/25 133/11 150/21 151/19 154/17 163/4 179/3 182/5 192/10 194/19 213/15 213/19 222/6 238/25 241/14 telling [3] 9/12 107/12 155/6 **tells [1]** 5/19 ten [6] 147/7 151/2 168/11 170/13 229/15 229/23 term [9] 44/13 126/20 143/14 143/14 173/5 202/6 235/2 235/19 235/19 terms [23] 9/1 37/11 38/19 40/9 40/13

76/13 83/9 91/8 92/11

103/13 118/24 119/18

92/12 93/17 96/15

171/6 172/24 184/6

199/6 214/21 215/4

137/18 137/19 138/21 112/24 100/1 101/5 104/2 212/2 213/10 213/11 Т their [58] 18/1 18/4 108/15 114/3 114/11 152/4 153/21 162/17 213/12 213/14 214/5 terms... [2] 215/25 168/17 168/25 173/13 18/7 19/4 19/25 25/12 114/24 116/21 118/9 220/5 221/24 227/3 242/8 176/1 176/6 176/19 26/22 26/25 27/22 121/20 121/25 123/5 229/7 233/25 terribly [1] 95/23 30/23 30/24 31/2 32/6 177/7 181/6 186/11 123/22 126/5 126/6 they [263] test [11] 7/5 9/23 189/11 198/10 206/12 32/7 32/11 33/13 126/8 126/10 126/14 they'd [11] 32/10 10/3 142/10 154/8 40/20 42/3 42/4 43/5 208/15 216/5 229/13 33/19 33/20 34/1 126/15 126/20 131/8 155/4 156/1 160/13 230/9 235/15 239/20 35/13 35/22 35/25 140/11 140/22 141/23 46/16 46/20 66/16 170/16 170/17 241/11 241/6 242/23 243/14 37/1 37/4 37/12 37/16 146/21 154/13 164/2 139/25 178/4 207/2 tested [6] 140/9 164/12 165/4 169/11 243/22 38/8 38/14 38/23 they're [14] 44/22 160/1 161/21 177/15 thanks [2] 1/13 39/20 40/17 41/2 170/19 170/25 171/14 67/1 100/23 112/8 184/20 233/6 178/12 41/19 45/9 49/20 171/20 182/25 184/16 121/12 155/15 155/16 tester [1] 156/4 that [1350] 54/13 61/5 63/20 186/4 188/14 193/9 168/24 182/11 191/16 testimony [5] 109/7 78/11 89/20 92/19 195/15 205/2 205/9 197/5 197/19 197/25 |that fair [1] 131/6 109/11 109/14 109/20 that I [9] 12/7 15/9 101/12 106/1 106/11 208/10 208/24 209/12 204/16 22/16 87/4 89/8 107/1 112/12 121/12 216/17 223/6 224/2 they've [3] 180/22 testing [76] 4/11 4/12 131/18 234/7 241/17 159/21 162/4 167/2 231/14 231/17 232/6 192/16 204/16 4/13 4/14 4/25 5/6 170/8 179/2 189/17 237/17 237/17 238/22 242/21 thing [30] 6/22 33/9 6/20 9/20 9/25 76/12 that is [1] 153/5 191/25 192/12 215/1 theoretically [1] 41/17 49/19 53/11 87/1 130/15 131/3 that's [140] 5/19 7/2 242/11 242/14 103/25 53/13 59/4 62/10 140/1 140/4 140/21 9/6 16/19 17/13 20/8 88/18 101/22 102/3 them [74] 6/24 16/13 theory [1] 158/1 148/17 148/18 148/19 20/24 25/14 25/14 16/14 16/15 18/1 22/4 there [296] 102/24 110/7 110/11 151/24 152/15 152/16 26/15 28/3 28/17 29/5 27/9 32/14 33/15 34/3 there'd [4] 20/5 87/18 114/10 115/11 115/12 152/23 152/25 153/1 31/4 31/4 31/4 31/22 34/7 36/20 40/25 115/16 121/8 146/15 119/18 119/18 153/2 153/15 153/17 41/19 43/6 43/23 45/9 there's [44] 5/18 32/4 37/6 37/7 42/15 146/19 149/14 153/2 153/25 154/1 154/12 42/20 44/15 46/7 45/11 46/6 62/14 18/16 19/11 20/21 155/15 192/14 194/15 154/19 154/20 155/3 47/22 51/11 52/22 62/17 63/1 64/4 66/15 24/11 34/4 34/5 41/14 215/18 228/8 228/11 155/11 155/14 155/18 54/7 60/7 61/9 62/1 67/17 77/2 78/6 80/7 48/10 80/11 80/12 238/20 155/23 155/24 156/10 62/18 62/19 63/6 67/2 92/20 96/19 96/22 101/17 111/15 121/2 things [66] 4/15 13/8 156/11 156/12 157/23 69/3 71/8 74/15 75/16 105/15 105/25 106/10 121/2 129/6 134/23 21/19 27/10 29/14 157/24 158/2 158/3 79/9 80/10 81/4 81/24 106/22 107/13 107/22 140/6 145/23 145/25 30/13 36/21 40/5 158/4 158/8 158/15 84/21 85/2 85/13 91/9 110/18 111/16 111/17 153/11 154/18 154/21 41/20 42/7 50/11 158/15 158/18 158/21 92/6 92/7 99/1 101/6 111/18 112/2 112/10 155/12 157/22 164/5 50/21 54/7 54/8 57/7 158/22 159/3 159/16 101/20 103/13 109/22 115/10 115/11 115/15 175/6 177/8 180/17 59/2 62/11 63/13 160/6 160/22 161/10 110/2 123/7 124/20 115/19 125/24 165/13 182/1 189/1 193/19 65/17 65/18 67/9 71/3 161/15 161/17 162/1 128/18 130/20 131/7 165/14 168/10 175/14 195/8 196/13 200/23 77/11 78/16 78/18 162/3 162/4 162/4 133/14 133/19 134/5 179/25 180/5 180/9 204/18 210/23 213/14 78/23 78/23 78/25 162/5 162/5 162/9 134/24 134/25 135/21 180/14 190/10 190/12 213/16 213/18 214/2 84/20 97/7 97/12 98/9 162/14 165/23 210/6 136/22 137/1 138/8 191/21 192/23 193/25 227/9 237/22 243/11 98/19 99/4 99/12 210/14 210/15 214/4 140/23 141/24 142/12 197/7 210/14 213/15 thereby [1] 78/6 99/13 99/14 100/11 214/21 242/1 242/4 143/12 146/7 146/14 214/7 214/16 215/24 100/17 101/2 101/2 therefore [23] 2/4 tests [3] 161/2 161/7 152/6 153/21 154/13 216/1 216/13 218/14 43/8 45/19 47/10 60/5 110/5 114/18 134/1 205/25 155/4 155/4 155/6 218/15 243/7 243/9 74/21 77/19 78/13 150/6 151/11 155/16 text [1] 82/25 156/15 157/9 159/17 243/10 81/15 88/1 123/14 158/18 165/3 168/13 **than [41]** 2/22 15/14 159/18 159/18 160/2 themselves [5] 92/8 132/7 138/3 148/4 168/15 172/15 174/14 18/1 31/25 34/19 104/7 112/11 172/23 174/17 175/1 175/2 161/15 163/14 164/14 164/10 165/4 169/21 44/21 45/8 63/25 164/20 165/2 167/22 174/23 185/5 199/12 199/16 175/19 196/23 197/1 72/18 92/8 92/19 170/20 171/3 172/8 then [111] 5/10 6/23 208/21 214/2 215/13 197/5 197/12 200/11 107/11 122/4 122/7 172/12 176/24 179/7 10/3 10/14 10/18 these [59] 8/19 37/22 210/3 213/21 241/17 129/10 134/3 152/23 179/14 180/21 181/20 242/10 10/19 11/12 12/8 39/14 40/5 43/10 155/23 156/9 157/5 181/21 181/25 182/6 15/10 17/5 20/2 28/19 43/10 43/11 44/14 think [132] 2/10 5/14 159/15 182/4 183/11 182/12 183/15 184/14 30/19 31/20 32/5 47/7 54/4 55/13 55/13 7/15 7/17 8/9 14/8 186/21 188/13 193/8 185/5 185/13 187/8 32/10 33/6 35/4 37/17 74/23 78/16 78/25 20/4 21/13 21/16 197/13 198/9 200/9 189/4 190/20 191/15 37/23 38/3 38/18 39/9 89/7 94/11 94/20 21/17 23/1 23/18 200/11 202/2 209/2 26/25 28/12 28/14 193/10 193/19 195/16 40/21 40/24 48/7 96/16 98/9 98/19 209/11 215/3 219/18 196/9 201/8 204/10 49/13 50/14 53/7 98/24 99/12 99/13 30/14 30/18 33/9 34/5 219/22 221/11 223/7 207/7 209/24 213/23 53/13 55/14 55/16 99/14 100/19 100/21 37/5 38/25 43/18 235/11 238/14 242/14 214/3 214/17 215/17 56/3 57/7 59/25 61/1 101/15 101/16 101/16 45/18 45/21 46/6 thank [44] 48/19 221/13 221/21 222/4 61/15 61/17 64/7 66/8 102/15 107/20 116/7 47/20 48/16 53/11 48/24 60/8 72/19 54/20 54/23 55/22 224/9 225/14 226/25 66/11 73/23 74/24 116/8 128/21 129/22 82/17 89/10 108/18 231/13 234/16 235/15 75/10 80/3 80/25 132/16 134/1 134/7 62/14 70/19 70/24 108/20 117/25 123/16 237/13 238/19 239/3 84/12 85/4 88/8 88/17 161/9 175/4 175/8 71/15 72/11 73/1 123/18 124/4 124/13 243/14 243/16 89/21 90/24 92/21 181/24 187/18 199/3 74/18 79/9 79/9 79/15 125/10 127/6 134/18 200/1 203/5 209/9 theft [3] 32/17 54/2 94/6 94/13 94/15 97/7 80/10 80/10 80/11

150/3 153/10 164/10 24/17 25/15 27/15 176/9 Т tolerance [1] 163/18 168/1 170/2 186/11 30/1 43/7 44/19 44/25 tomorrow [6] 169/3 translate [1] 64/24 think... [88] 82/12 196/5 201/15 203/7 48/24 51/9 52/5 55/11 172/5 173/1 175/9 translation [1] 84/25 85/14 85/15 205/16 205/17 215/11 59/19 60/20 70/9 230/1 243/21 121/25 85/19 87/7 87/8 91/14 215/11 215/13 215/15 70/12 72/4 78/9 88/2 **Tony [5]** 72/1 72/10 transpired [1] 226/2 97/3 104/22 107/3 217/22 218/14 223/15 90/11 90/20 93/17 78/20 87/7 87/8 transport [1] 114/18 107/3 109/5 110/8 224/17 231/4 99/25 100/8 104/11 too [5] 132/15 186/20 transported [1] 112/7 112/10 113/13 though [7] 114/5 104/17 104/25 105/21 210/5 213/14 227/3 114/13 117/3 134/14 141/10 138/12 139/8 164/24 105/25 106/9 106/19 took [14] 64/17 68/21 trapped [2] 140/13 143/7 147/6 148/24 188/9 194/23 209/8 107/2 116/24 117/3 83/15 84/6 89/24 140/18 150/6 155/13 156/11 thought [24] 13/15 122/24 123/11 125/6 93/16 93/20 110/9 treat [1] 45/9 163/14 164/14 165/6 19/13 21/20 33/15 111/17 114/16 148/8 125/23 125/24 127/3 treatment [1] 82/20 166/10 166/14 168/5 35/9 35/21 36/4 40/22 133/14 134/14 135/12 153/16 154/4 234/7 trial [23] 87/19 87/21 168/24 172/11 173/5 50/7 50/9 50/10 51/23 143/9 144/12 147/4 top [14] 47/23 67/22 149/2 149/5 177/12 174/6 174/20 174/22 52/5 80/1 82/16 85/4 148/23 150/8 153/6 75/3 109/21 128/6 177/17 178/14 179/5 177/22 179/20 180/16 87/15 88/14 108/1 154/8 156/7 157/15 131/11 208/13 208/17 181/14 183/1 183/4 184/24 188/10 189/20 112/8 139/13 209/20 163/25 168/1 168/6 213/1 213/17 214/4 183/18 183/21 183/23 191/8 191/18 191/20 184/8 190/1 195/9 171/21 173/23 174/21 219/15 230/14 237/24 217/11 220/9 191/22 192/9 193/3 174/22 175/18 177/1 201/15 202/10 202/18 thoughts [1] 107/5 top-up [2] 213/1 193/7 193/10 193/11 thousand [1] 215/10 178/24 185/12 185/17 213/17 205/2 206/17 207/5 194/7 194/9 196/22 thousands [1] 76/14 197/4 197/21 198/20 topic [1] 91/12 trials [1] 7/9 200/7 202/22 203/21 threads [1] 71/21 202/21 210/1 217/8 Torstein [6] 96/2 tried [2] 57/16 57/18 204/24 205/6 205/10 three [21] 12/12 219/23 221/25 222/15 96/3 96/4 96/5 108/11 trigger [1] 121/14 205/19 207/25 210/4 12/15 13/9 28/12 77/7 222/15 223/8 225/1 108/15 triggered [1] 121/14 215/6 217/5 220/6 total [4] 25/17 44/4 93/17 94/5 96/25 227/18 228/19 228/25 tripartite [2] 180/9 220/22 221/10 221/13 99/21 104/2 104/19 232/8 233/9 233/15 146/20 170/18 241/18 221/23 222/1 222/2 104/21 105/10 118/5 235/17 236/4 236/5 trouble [1] 243/16 totality [1] 56/24 223/12 224/7 224/9 126/7 153/6 153/10 241/4 totalled [1] 147/17 true [7] 1/25 31/4 224/12 225/3 226/16 153/12 166/22 174/12|timeliness [1] 74/4 39/16 40/9 41/9 79/9 **totally [4]** 88/19 227/12 230/24 235/21 226/24 times [13] 15/19 133/18 157/9 215/17 125/7 236/5 237/13 238/14 three years [3] 77/7 36/25 37/5 86/1 91/14 totals [1] 136/6 truly [3] 134/2 140/5 238/17 243/4 111/2 129/10 136/23 93/17 94/5 towards [1] 93/3 232/12 thinking [1] 125/18 trust [2] 112/10 threshold [3] 73/3 153/14 157/11 157/11 tracked [1] 40/8 thinks [1] 193/20 73/5 74/1 190/2 229/10 trading [20] 31/14 112/12 third [9] 53/13 44/12 56/10 56/16 trusted [3] 78/18 thresholds [2] 73/15 timescale [2] 157/17 143/16 143/17 143/22 163/17 174/5 56/19 80/22 82/20 103/5 112/12 152/12 163/19 167/18 through [54] 2/17 timescales [3] 72/25 166/24 167/2 167/21 truth [2] 124/25 208/18 237/4 4/19 4/20 10/16 13/16 157/2 157/3 169/6 169/15 169/19 125/1 this [396] 15/6 15/17 21/10 TIP [20] 130/18 169/23 171/4 176/21 truthfully [1] 216/10 Thompson [2] 33/24 34/14 36/15 130/18 131/4 131/5 177/11 178/4 181/24 try [10] 36/22 52/22 160/11 160/12 37/22 41/19 42/1 42/3 132/22 135/3 135/4 200/21 54/10 62/20 71/11 thorough [1] 152/21 42/13 43/24 48/1 49/7 135/5 135/10 136/4 77/11 80/2 122/14 training [7] 231/21 those [93] 2/19 7/19 239/22 239/25 240/17 50/19 57/2 65/9 68/9 136/20 139/18 141/15 148/20 182/15 8/16 9/1 10/1 13/7 68/10 80/4 80/5 91/5 142/21 142/23 142/25 240/21 241/8 241/10 trying [19] 29/17 16/7 20/19 21/2 25/10 92/24 97/14 109/3 143/5 143/6 144/16 transaction [27] 3/10 35/23 45/21 45/25 30/13 31/21 34/12 109/10 109/16 110/4 145/5 6/9 8/16 11/19 15/7 46/9 52/19 57/13 36/20 43/3 43/5 45/22 116/16 117/20 129/17 title [2] 3/16 6/6 16/6 34/20 35/22 82/12 84/24 97/24 46/19 46/22 49/22 130/8 130/9 132/16 titles [1] 6/10 35/25 36/2 36/5 36/9 105/4 119/20 128/25 51/19 51/23 52/3 144/1 147/20 148/16 today [15] 1/15 2/16 36/10 60/20 61/2 137/17 139/23 187/25 54/11 55/20 58/7 58/8 148/17 148/18 155/2 28/1 85/21 86/1 89/18 70/11 70/12 96/6 192/3 193/20 194/14 60/25 63/18 64/2 65/6 155/4 155/4 155/5 89/22 93/15 125/11 130/19 132/23 136/5 turn [11] 14/21 17/12 65/25 67/15 68/9 136/6 142/14 146/1 47/18 49/4 52/24 165/5 173/16 177/1 147/23 150/1 171/9 68/10 75/14 76/6 77/8 198/15 199/2 210/25 172/2 175/13 223/22 167/13 242/13 242/16 59/25 64/14 134/22 77/11 82/22 83/18 throughout [6] 21/4 together [2] 98/19 135/18 137/18 163/9 transactions [20] 84/14 85/16 89/16 25/18 88/21 91/11 18/10 32/13 34/19 turned [1] 28/16 242/1 89/21 90/9 92/3 94/24 told [25] 5/1 10/1 153/15 214/20 38/7 39/14 39/17 **Turning [1]** 171/8 95/2 97/15 98/8 99/8 tie [1] 74/12 10/24 11/1 13/10 40/23 43/10 43/11 turns [2] 9/14 238/21 99/16 100/4 100/8 tied [1] 139/10 15/22 23/19 23/20 50/13 79/22 121/19 twice [1] 167/13 100/11 101/24 102/8 tight [1] 72/25 43/2 51/7 88/24 122/17 122/18 132/23 twinning [1] 98/19 102/18 102/23 109/3 114/17 116/11 116/12 tills [1] 45/9 100/17 100/18 103/9 133/1 139/17 159/9 two [30] 11/1 27/10 time [98] 4/17 4/21 106/20 107/9 107/11 235/11 235/14 67/1 98/19 98/24 99/3 117/25 124/2 127/3 4/23 5/25 6/5 6/6 8/6 108/16 108/23 112/1 transcriber [1] 102/24 111/15 139/2 127/10 139/2 140/8 8/21 16/20 18/19 112/5 114/3 114/22 145/7 146/21 147/17 243/11 147/15 147/20 147/23 22/15 23/24 24/2 138/6 228/25 150/23 169/12 171/12 transcribing [1]

vis [2] 241/16 241/16 184/5 184/7 185/10 234/6 236/9 237/24 Т 185/25 188/9 192/18 238/9 242/17 vis à vis [1] 241/16 two... [**15**] 174/7 vague [1] 227/3 234/19 updated [5] 240/18 visibility [4] 45/25 vaguely [7] 146/13 175/2 177/5 196/4 understandable [1] 240/21 241/3 241/3 74/5 86/4 86/5 203/13 212/18 217/16 162/23 168/3 177/22 148/5 241/4 visit [2] 111/14 178/24 178/25 225/9 217/17 223/15 224/17 upfront [1] 68/19 115/13 understanding [5] 228/17 233/6 233/7 valid [1] 4/18 74/4 78/22 109/4 uploaded [1] 2/4 visiting [1] 115/15 236/23 237/22 validate [4] 42/5 190/6 193/22 **upon [5]** 114/19 **vital [1]** 215/1 type [5] 73/16 84/14 184/25 210/7 231/16 144/18 147/24 188/21 understood [10] volume [28] 150/20 107/2 138/11 154/18 validated [1] 184/15 16/21 16/22 68/17 234/16 150/21 151/1 151/4 types [2] 125/25 validating [2] 129/19 ups [2] 29/10 232/8 98/10 98/20 99/1 152/14 152/17 153/24 134/7 231/14 109/5 133/23 167/5 urgent [2] 207/3 154/2 156/13 156/15 typically [3] 146/23 value [2] 236/18 167/25 225/22 156/20 156/23 157/8 172/21 180/12 241/1 undertake [1] 189/25 159/3 159/5 160/1 us [45] 1/15 10/1 **typo [1]** 134/5 values [2] 78/2 undertaken [2] 60/18 14/20 15/18 15/22 160/3 163/25 164/17 101/23 16/17 17/11 36/1 43/2 165/16 166/4 169/14 200/1 van [4] 238/3 238/4 51/7 52/25 54/7 58/12 171/13 172/1 186/16 undertaking [1] ultimately [18] 10/6 238/14 238/16 61/7 66/20 73/11 84/5 198/21 201/16 208/24 62/24 13/5 58/24 58/25 van den Bogerd [1] 90/14 91/15 93/1 95/5 undertook [1] 242/4 volumes [2] 190/16 59/11 64/20 64/25 238/16 66/8 67/3 67/13 68/14 unexpected [1] 96/15 97/5 108/23 201/14 vanilla [1] 57/16 voluntary [1] 126/20 125/25 126/24 138/6 197/16 86/2 94/17 102/4 variances [2] 73/6 unfair [4] 166/10 150/21 151/19 155/6 voted [1] 84/19 148/20 148/21 179/6 74/3 166/13 166/13 193/10 156/19 159/2 163/4 215/1 variations [1] 78/4 W 176/25 179/3 182/5 union [1] 25/12 um [4] 5/22 82/11 varied [1] 153/1 waiting [1] 23/16 188/16 192/17 192/22 unions [1] 23/12 116/16 148/13 varies [1] 153/12 Wakefield [1] 114/12 unit [12] 3/14 4/9 200/4 207/23 234/17 unacceptable [1] various [7] 15/17 walk [1] 176/13 33/10 34/2 35/16 234/18 234/19 241/14 75/11 31/17 91/6 126/9 want [28] 20/13 60/23 61/2 80/4 80/19 use [17] 27/25 74/9 unaffected [1] 132/13 150/4 205/25 28/18 54/8 82/25 81/4 182/22 183/22 74/13 75/9 86/24 169/22 vary [1] 158/15 115/8 115/15 116/3 92/12 97/9 98/4 98/22 universal [1] 83/3 unauthorised [2] vast [1] 4/2 117/3 127/17 129/23 unless [5] 39/9 120/22 124/2 128/10 232/21 238/19 version [3] 54/18 135/9 140/3 140/8 141/23 192/11 194/18 129/24 177/17 202/10 unaware [1] 218/21 55/24 182/7 140/20 154/23 156/12 228/7 235/1 241/11 unclear [2] 145/11 versions [1] 47/15 unreliability [2] 163/19 171/20 172/24 used [40] 8/10 16/10 187/22 versus [1] 52/7 173/1 173/2 175/14 145/14 145/19 16/11 17/25 26/23 under [34] 29/8 37/4 very [50] 13/1 26/13 182/2 190/15 190/17 until [15] 11/10 14/12 27/12 27/21 28/11 37/11 38/14 38/23 47/13 48/19 53/22 190/19 242/12 243/2 63/1 88/12 88/13 30/2 30/9 30/10 30/11 39/20 41/2 44/9 44/20 57/16 58/13 58/14 wanted [12] 12/1 123/22 126/19 126/22 30/14 30/19 30/20 45/5 47/22 56/4 56/4 58/15 66/15 75/16 18/20 18/22 65/21 133/25 140/3 144/16 42/14 52/12 69/22 63/17 63/18 73/23 78/2 78/19 78/19 80/2 84/21 95/14 102/21 167/24 178/7 218/21 89/17 92/18 96/6 80/20 83/1 127/4 93/19 101/22 102/13 117/5 121/16 157/2 97/10 120/25 122/20 243/25 135/24 139/15 140/22 105/19 123/16 123/18 150/12 156/25 157/15 up [**75**] 7/24 11/2 180/5 205/20 125/24 161/7 169/19 124/4 124/13 124/20 wanting [2] 157/1 11/10 12/5 12/16 172/11 173/6 178/3 157/16 157/17 157/20 138/21 143/21 153/2 175/15 12/20 13/19 13/20 179/17 181/22 187/24 162/10 167/17 173/15 153/2 162/25 168/19 192/6 203/13 207/6 14/21 17/12 17/15 wants [2] 217/17 174/5 175/15 192/12 176/19 189/11 192/17 24/5 26/24 28/2 28/16 234/9 235/2 235/6 217/21 underestimate [1] 195/23 197/17 197/17 Warmington [3] 30/3 33/11 40/5 52/13 235/18 53/17 198/10 214/25 215/21 217/2 217/4 217/13 54/12 59/5 62/25 user [8] 129/11 underline [1] 74/19 215/24 216/14 223/22 64/15 65/11 65/12 129/15 130/3 209/12 Warmington's [1] underlying [4] 167/8 224/20 229/18 230/12 65/13 66/18 69/23 232/11 234/25 235/7 222/21 204/6 206/2 221/2 235/3 239/20 242/7 Warwick [5] 166/25 70/7 70/10 71/24 235/9 undermine [1] 234/1 242/8 242/23 167/5 168/2 177/25 72/18 73/2 74/24 users [4] 231/23 underneath [1] via [3] 78/5 136/10 183/13 76/25 77/13 78/12 231/25 235/4 235/5 114/25 167/15 88/13 89/5 89/21 uses [5] 169/25 was [866] underplaying [1] Vicky [1] 70/10 wasn't [94] 6/25 7/24 94/18 98/17 109/14 171/12 182/25 183/10 150/6 view [21] 44/17 46/14 7/24 8/2 8/15 11/8 109/17 113/7 113/8 202/1 understand [30] 2/7 51/9 74/7 79/4 81/14 14/18 15/14 19/10 using [5] 99/12 113/9 119/7 121/22 15/10 17/23 35/23 81/17 82/2 85/8 86/21 21/15 21/23 22/10 124/17 126/16 139/10 133/21 166/14 183/7 41/13 61/5 64/25 66/3 87/3 88/2 88/21 123/2 141/1 142/17 151/2 22/25 23/9 25/25 202/3 66/24 79/17 80/25 123/3 133/7 142/2 usual [1] 227/20 29/13 29/16 30/9 159/8 167/14 171/4 90/14 91/15 91/23 187/5 224/15 228/22 180/15 182/17 189/10 usually [1] 190/2 34/22 34/22 43/14 92/9 93/1 107/11 228/23 44/4 46/21 46/21 192/8 199/17 200/15 utilising [1] 53/9 116/4 119/7 121/6 views [1] 75/16 206/6 207/9 213/1 utmost [2] 153/4 154/3 155/8 170/4 vigour [1] 45/15 213/17 226/5 226/19 153/10

51/12 51/22 53/19 54/4 57/9 58/2 58/15

(96) two... - wasn't

W **wasn't... [63]** 58/21 59/13 61/10 64/1 69/7 75/19 76/7 78/24 81/25 84/3 84/3 85/12 85/19 86/9 94/1 94/25 97/20 102/18 107/7 107/16 108/3 112/13 118/22 120/8 122/24 123/12 123/21 128/1 128/8 128/13 129/2 129/24 135/15 141/11 143/19 143/19 150/7 150/10 152/25 153/1 156/4 156/4 162/9 162/9 165/10 174/24 175/17 194/1 200/10 203/2 208/9 215/4 216/11 216/13 220/13 223/15 224/16 230/2 232/14 239/18 240/24 241/4 242/16 watch [1] 90/9 watched [1] 109/6 way [40] 4/25 12/18 13/24 18/13 27/9 34/21 40/22 46/21 81/24 92/4 92/6 92/11 93/5 93/8 95/9 100/14 100/17 110/21 119/10 120/20 121/22 122/1 123/8 123/14 130/13 139/9 154/5 156/17 157/3 167/17 167/24 183/2 184/10 192/20 196/14 204/2 204/6 228/4 235/8 241/18 ways [3] 30/12 58/7 59/21 we [416] **we'd [21]** 4/4 4/5 9/21| 10/25 12/22 12/23 57/1 57/15 136/19 139/25 140/4 140/8 142/1 153/19 184/20 194/22 195/21 206/2 207/3 231/17 243/9 we'll [13] 54/20 109/15 109/18 111/21 111/21 111/22 114/14 123/23 130/9 131/8 150/19 165/14 185/3 we're [25] 2/15 11/2 13/23 17/21 35/17 35/18 48/17 49/14 150/19 151/4 157/14 162/18 165/7 165/13 174/2 175/9 175/13 175/15 176/19 176/22 195/20 195/23 198/2 225/1 238/25 we've [24] 66/25 76/13 85/23 100/4 were [337]

101/13 101/14 102/15 weren't [26] 11/1 106/20 108/6 118/13 131/20 135/10 143/25 146/3 147/20 149/11 154/4 154/5 164/5 201/8 206/4 210/3 220/7 243/4 website [1] 2/4 Wednesday [1] 1/1 week [11] 36/13 80/16 80/16 81/2 146/22 147/18 173/1 207/1 208/22 236/7 236/14 weekend [1] 132/25 weekly [7] 36/15 36/18 61/22 128/17 146/25 151/21 152/1 well [109] 4/13 5/18 5/24 6/20 10/6 10/10 11/12 12/18 16/19 16/19 18/9 20/15 21/14 21/17 22/15 24/25 25/4 25/21 29/1 29/13 30/10 30/12 30/17 32/2 33/22 34/7 36/3 40/18 42/3 42/24 43/23 44/2 44/20 52/2 57/13 62/14 63/19 64/5 64/19 65/4 65/17 68/24 69/1 71/1 72/7 79/15 80/10 81/15 84/8 88/6 88/11 88/12 88/14 89/6 93/9 99/2 99/20 99/21 102/18 104/5 105/13 105/19 107/4 108/21 110/4 112/7 114/16 117/18 117/25 122/20 127/24 131/15 137/10 146/17 156/11 159/19 161/22 162/3 162/9 162/15 170/23 178/24 179/4 179/19 180/1 180/9 184/19 187/3 191/14 193/5 194/18 202/24 203/4 203/9 203/22 203/22 209/24 214/11 220/4 223/12 232/18 232/24 234/7 239/6 242/10 243/19 Wellington [1] 211/13 went [25] 10/4 10/9 10/14 12/19 14/9 28/19 36/15 64/10 87/18 94/18 113/18 115/12 129/1 129/17 139/19 147/8 149/7 156/13 193/5 194/19 206/6 219/10 219/17 219/22 223/7

13/10 61/10 67/4 105/10 115/18 127/18 Whereabouts [1] 129/25 138/20 138/22 146/18 149/6 151/7 151/7 164/3 165/1 165/3 165/4 168/12 168/14 200/5 207/23 215/19 216/6 216/15 235/6 what [248] what's [11] 89/7 109/19 112/9 121/11 134/2 146/16 164/25 170/24 180/14 181/24 187/7 whatever [5] 55/11 69/1 104/9 153/18 199/15 whatsoever [1] 222/20 when [85] 2/24 3/5 4/6 4/24 6/6 10/4 10/8 10/9 10/9 10/10 10/10 11/16 12/10 13/20 13/21 14/3 14/5 14/12 17/1 17/1 18/7 20/18 21/13 27/8 39/3 39/15 42/14 42/16 60/10 65/4 65/11 75/25 80/16 81/7 86/21 86/25 88/9 88/13 90/20 93/9 104/3 106/23 109/16 109/24 110/17 111/17 112/4 113/2 113/11 113/20 113/23 114/7 115/3 119/17 120/24 122/12 122/22 125/15 129/1 131/3 157/12 165/7 170/6 170/15 170/16 172/9 178/2 178/4 182/20 183/4 183/6 187/25 193/16 200/14 217/21 220/8 220/11 222/3 222/6 222/22 233/9 233/14 233/15 236/9 243/10 215/12 216/16 216/18 whenever [1] 182/22 where [50] 11/12 12/20 12/21 14/8 24/24 26/10 27/6 27/18 28/10 28/16 30/5 31/8 39/18 42/25 43/18 51/19 53/9 58/5 58/19 59/4 62/2 67/21 97/3 101/3 113/19 117/4 127/25 129/22 132/22 142/11 146/8 147/5 147/13 151/4 161/8 169/15 170/12 172/8 186/3 190/15 193/19 196/16 201/13 202/22 203/12 205/1

207/2 228/22 230/7 242/21 3/21 whereas [3] 22/21 235/13 242/15 whereby [4] 104/11 105/22 177/12 206/1 whether [30] 20/8 20/13 23/2 25/14 25/15 64/4 76/5 86/7 87/17 90/19 99/24 99/25 105/15 107/5 108/14 116/12 117/22 132/4 155/3 172/25 181/1 187/7 209/18 213/20 218/13 218/14 222/22 222/25 236/25 243/8 which [110] 1/18 3/10 4/17 6/18 12/19 12/25 13/5 14/18 15/9 18/15 24/21 25/24 26/24 27/25 32/4 32/13 38/20 42/13 43/2 50/12 50/18 50/20 51/1 51/5 51/12 52/2 52/16 53/23 53/24 55/15 55/23 56/4 56/25 57/16 60/25 62/7 65/5 73/1 73/6 73/8 74/22 82/1 84/10 85/5 86/15 89/18 91/3 91/10 93/2 93/4 96/7 97/9 98/3 98/7 99/22 100/20 102/23 104/13 106/22 118/5 119/3 119/9 121/11 122/21 126/18 135/14 135/15 135/19|who'd [1] 193/16 140/25 141/13 142/20 whole [11] 13/3 143/23 144/21 144/23 145/3 150/24 164/15 164/18 165/1 167/2 169/25 170/18 171/23 177/18 177/19 182/8 182/18 186/14 186/14 whose [1] 62/25 186/25 187/17 188/12 189/2 194/20 199/24 200/10 202/8 202/10 207/7 208/20 221/4 221/5 223/17 225/20 227/9 227/11 234/3 237/18 242/1 242/16 whichever [2] 129/23 228/19 while [4] 58/3 99/2 111/20 171/11 whilst [6] 15/3 15/4 90/25 130/1 198/25 214/24 Whittam [2] 229/18 242/23 who [127] 2/19 5/21

9/11 9/13 18/21 19/2 26/12 27/17 29/17 33/25 40/2 40/12 45/7 45/7 54/1 55/3 55/18 59/11 63/17 64/16 64/21 65/21 66/11 66/14 66/14 66/20 67/6 67/8 67/23 68/5 68/6 68/7 68/10 68/21 69/8 69/12 70/7 72/9 72/17 76/4 79/16 79/17 82/13 82/23 83/15 84/5 84/6 84/15 84/15 84/18 85/2 89/3 89/19 91/5 95/6 95/7 95/17 95/19 96/1 96/4 96/6 98/16 98/17 99/14 99/15 99/18 100/3 100/3 103/5 108/12 116/21 116/21 116/23 116/25 117/5 117/12 121/3 121/4 121/8 156/3 159/20 160/12 173/14 175/22 175/22 175/24 177/4 178/12 178/21 180/22 181/20 181/22 189/3 192/16 194/25 195/6 195/14 196/4 196/6 196/19 205/22 208/2 208/5 217/3 217/5 217/21 219/7 219/11 219/19 220/4 222/6 222/8 222/23 223/4 225/5 225/15 226/19 226/20 227/13 233/13 233/19 236/3 237/25 238/6 241/14 241/19 241/23 18/13 54/22 61/16 65/23 67/18 96/8 101/18 108/7 127/1 237/6 whom [1] 110/14 why [42] 6/1 16/17 21/14 21/15 30/20 31/3 34/4 34/6 38/22 41/14 43/24 44/6 46/22 49/24 57/11 58/18 69/3 76/16 123/15 133/9 133/11 133/19 154/14 157/13 157/14 172/11 179/4 180/21 185/13 191/15 193/20 194/21 213/10 214/3 221/23 224/10 224/10 227/16 227/25 230/23 235/10 239/4 will [**59**] 2/3 17/15 23/13 56/11 56/19 56/20 56/25 64/22

W will... **[51]** 65/6 68/5 69/25 73/5 75/10 75/14 77/20 77/20 83/11 105/14 125/10 125/11 125/11 140/13 140/15 142/12 143/7 152/15 152/18 152/20 152/22 153/25 158/10 162/23 162/24 164/19 169/25 172/3 177/3 177/6 178/2 186/19 187/6 188/5 190/25 196/21 197/18 197/21 197/24 200/2 201/18 207/4 207/19 208/6 209/4 226/1 229/16 237/18 239/21 240/18 241/3 **Will's [1]** 187/6 willing [2] 203/16 204/16 Winn [6] 226/6 226/6 226/8 227/6 227/10 228/2 wise [2] 149/9 159/8 wish [2] 69/19 120/12 Withdrawn [1] 212/6 within [20] 8/4 19/15 31/18 33/11 48/14 95/13 95/17 96/23 101/24 103/18 163/17 177/15 181/4 185/13 187/4 189/3 192/8 202/5 206/7 238/9 without [10] 41/4 48/4 49/11 112/21 137/12 160/4 191/23 196/14 203/5 228/7 WITN03850100 [4] 124/18 128/5 173/11 214/17 WITN03980100 [2] 17/13 53/2 witness [27] 1/13 1/17 1/25 2/3 14/20 17/11 26/14 27/25 37/9 49/24 51/8 52/11 53/1 60/6 64/14 85/24 86/14 86/24 108/22 127/18 148/9 173/10 173/11 173/22 229/21 234/7 239/23 won't [6] 101/10 121/23 154/20 155/10 241/3 243/15 wonder [1] 21/14 wondering [1] 159/17 wonderment [1]

21/16

word [7] 120/22

122/21 129/23 156/16 writing [1] 93/10 166/14 172/11 234/8 worded [1] 232/20 wording [5] 97/17 159/21 159/22 159/23 233/12 words [13] 38/17 93/12 99/13 105/7 121/1 129/25 145/9 156/18 164/10 186/8 195/2 195/5 195/5 work [17] 8/5 9/14 12/7 12/23 39/8 39/12 43/19 43/24 57/17 61/9 96/6 126/14 150/13 158/11 178/6 181/22 228/14 workaround [13] 129/6 178/13 191/10 192/13 192/25 193/6 193/12 193/13 193/15 202/15 205/1 206/18 206/21 workarounds [2] 194/8 196/24 worked [15] 6/4 8/23 11/10 15/7 34/10 52/17 53/20 66/14 76/4 125/22 139/20 147/14 152/9 171/6 215/23 working [19] 3/9 4/9 9/11 11/12 30/1 39/3 51/12 56/16 81/14 81/24 88/14 88/18 105/24 106/8 108/8 116/13 130/8 226/14 241/18 workings [1] 133/17 works [1] 108/12 workshop [1] 100/10 workshops [7] 59/6 72/22 76/9 77/14 99/8 yes [198] 1/6 1/20 99/8 116/17 worth [1] 179/20 would [460] wouldn't [44] 4/1 8/8 9/2 9/3 9/6 9/8 10/11 11/6 20/14 20/15 40/23 40/24 50/4 50/9 50/25 51/14 58/16 62/17 64/10 83/24 84/23 87/24 88/17 89/19 93/10 99/3 108/17 115/6 132/6 140/3 141/22 143/11 145/10 148/5 160/3 165/24 194/18 195/19 197/9 197/10 200/8 203/5 209/25 238/22 wreck [2] 114/9 115/8 write [1] 182/17 write-up [1] 182/17

written [5] 41/5 110/20 159/20 182/21 202/8 wrong [27] 28/24 28/25 29/1 34/20 46/17 46/20 83/25 111/8 112/9 154/17 154/22 155/13 156/24 168/21 172/9 181/25 186/14 186/19 186/25 215/17 220/1 221/12 223/11 224/7 224/12 233/18 239/3 wrongly [2] 161/24 162/6 wrote [1] 91/20 yeah [34] 3/18 6/20 7/4 9/10 9/16 19/16 41/8 48/6 62/22 66/24 75/2 75/4 90/19 99/2 100/25 118/17 122/1 124/21 126/4 128/8 128/25 129/16 134/20 139/14 159/19 161/15 165/2 178/8 178/25 187/15 221/13 222/10 229/12 234/11 year [6] 1/18 13/9 70/1 90/6 95/24 218/21 years [29] 2/11 3/1 12/12 12/15 15/2 15/4 16/23 27/8 27/8 28/13 29/5 29/12 29/13 44/21 51/17 69/17 77/7 87/10 90/1 93/17 94/5 97/1 133/14 139/24 174/12 211/11 212/3 223/18 231/1 1/22 2/17 3/4 3/20 4/23 5/12 5/18 5/18 6/13 7/17 8/8 8/13 14/17 15/1 15/6 15/21 15/25 16/4 16/16 17/10 17/23 18/2 19/1 22/1 22/2 23/25 25/21 27/2 27/3 27/7 28/4 29/1 29/4 29/25 30/8 31/10 31/15 32/6 32/19 32/22 32/25 33/2 33/19 35/2 35/3 37/6 37/8 39/7 40/1 40/14 41/6 41/25 42/3 43/23 45/3 45/16 45/17 45/22 46/6 47/9 47/12 47/14 47/20 47/22 48/19 49/16 49/22 54/14 55/1 56/1 56/2 57/13 57/20 59/1 59/17 60/19 61/20

65/6 67/2 67/2 67/13 69/21 69/24 72/3 74/15 74/16 75/18 77/3 79/9 82/7 85/13 86/2 86/4 87/4 88/4 88/15 88/23 89/10 89/23 91/2 91/22 92/10 93/18 93/19 93/25 94/10 94/12 94/13 94/16 94/17 96/19 98/3 99/2 99/2 101/6 103/11 103/23 104/14 105/9 105/14 105/20 106/5 106/18 107/22 109/3 109/4 111/4 111/11 124/1 124/15 124/23 125/6 125/7 125/9 126/23 129/13 131/7 133/15 134/12 138/16 143/7 143/15 146/10 146/13 150/17 150/17 152/8 152/10 158/1 159/14 161/17 164/7 165/22 166/10 166/13 168/5 168/15 168/24 169/10 171/19 174/19 174/20 174/23 175/5 175/14 177/22 178/24 180/4 181/22 181/23 182/5 182/8 195/4 202/19 203/16 204/12 204/16 205/22 206/15 216/4 225/9 226/11 227/15 230/18 230/20 232/24 236/23 238/5 238/5 238/17 241/17 243/4 yesterday [2] 83/5 171/9 yet [8] 113/17 115/11 164/10 167/16 171/16 199/14 203/6 218/13 you [939] you'd [10] 6/22 7/14 69/1 106/20 110/4 119/7 155/17 156/12 158/15 179/11 you'll [10] 49/15 71/23 71/25 82/21 154/14 165/22 175/12 177/2 205/19 228/2 vou're [57] 5/6 6/21 15/22 18/25 19/16 24/13 25/12 26/16 35/8 39/7 39/15 41/8 41/23 51/16 65/4 65/5 70/8 74/25 80/20 82/22 104/11 104/16 107/12 113/24 114/25 117/4 118/2 119/20 121/25 130/17 133/9 134/18 134/19 149/22 154/6 155/9 158/16

62/14 63/5 63/15 65/2 162/15 164/24 165/7 166/14 168/22 173/24 179/3 187/13 187/13 189/13 194/19 196/1 198/5 209/18 213/23 221/3 222/7 222/8 230/19 233/16 vou've [47] 4/25 8/4 11/18 15/22 36/25 39/14 39/14 41/5 41/7 41/7 43/18 44/8 53/15 65/24 89/17 91/3 93/14 97/8 97/14 103/15 103/16 103/19 104/13 105/1 108/23 111/9 113/14 113/16 120/19 120/22 121/17 121/18 121/19 127/6 138/5 147/2 153/21 166/10 170/17 173/22 174/6 179/16 182/17 205/18 215/6 230/10 239/6 Young [2] 172/7 219/9 your [172] 1/11 1/23 2/1 2/9 3/5 3/16 6/6 6/10 6/16 6/18 10/8 14/3 14/20 14/23 16/1 16/8 17/11 21/16 26/14 27/25 28/2 29/12 30/1 30/21 34/14 37/9 38/10 38/16 39/4 39/15 39/18 39/24 41/1 44/9 44/17 46/13 49/24 51/8 52/11 53/1 58/25 60/6 64/14 71/13 80/8 81/14 81/17 82/10 85/24 86/14 86/24 88/2 88/5 88/22 89/18 89/22 91/3 91/6 91/12 91/16 91/25 92/6 92/11 95/16 95/17 96/1 98/8 99/12 101/20 103/7 103/8 103/13 103/15 105/2 106/19 108/22 109/5 110/6 111/9 112/5 112/10 112/16 113/20 114/19 115/3 115/13 116/4 116/25 121/1 122/2 122/12 124/13 124/16 124/18 125/7 125/13 125/15 126/22 127/6 127/18 127/21 128/4 129/13 130/4 130/9 130/21 131/4 131/11 131/14 131/24 132/20 134/19 141/9 143/5 146/16 146/19 146/20 147/18 147/22 147/22 148/8 150/1 150/4 150/13 151/10

Υ				
your [47] 153/21				
157/21 159/14 159/17				
168/10 173/10 173/11				
173/22 174/24 178/9				
182/15 185/6 188/15				
194/23 202/13 202/13				
203/1 208/17 213/11				
214/14 214/16 214/17				
215/7 216/5 216/7				
216/15 216/19 219/7				
220/22 221/2 223/4				
223/21 224/13 224/23				
225/22 227/16 227/25				
229/10 234/7 237/13				
239/23 240/1 240/14				
240/19 241/8 241/15				
242/9				
yours [1] 181/21				
yourself [8] 91/20				
157/6 164/14 172/14				
176/12 177/4 188/19				
197/16				
yourself' [1] 110/24				
<u>Z</u>				
zoom [4] 109/20				
138/21 139/12 187/12				
	1	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	(00) 110111