

Witness Name: Mrs Rebecca Richard

Statement No.: WITN07430100

Dated: 10 January 2023

## POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

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### FIRST STATEMENT OF MRS REBECCA RICHARD

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I, MRS REBECCA RICHARD, will say as follows:

#### INTRODUCTION

1. I am a former employee of the Post Office Limited and held the position of a tier 2 Service Support Advisor with Network Business Support Centre ('**NBSC**').
2. I have been contacted recently by the Post Office Horizon inquiry department to provide a witness statement relating to phase 3 which covers operation, training, assistance, resolution of disputes and rectification of errors.
3. This witness statement is made to assist the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry (the '**Inquiry**') with the matters set out in Rule 9 Request dated 3 January

2023 (the 'Request')

## **BACKGROUND**

4. I was employed by the Post Office from the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1999 to the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2005 and served the Post Office as a Service Support Advisor. My reason to leave the Post Office was voluntary resignation due to me marrying a Suisse man and consequently emigrated from England at the end of August 2005 and moved to Switzerland. I live in Switzerland since 2005

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5. At the beginning of my career as a Service Support advisor I received training in relation to the Horizon system, located in Leeds. I received training on how to use the database that would consequently be used at the NBSC to resolve Post Office counter transaction queries and provide assistance. I started as a Service Support advisor working within tier 1 and worked around 4 year's which involved answering queries and assisting subpostmasters. I also provided post codes to the general public. Around 2003 there was job vacancies to become a tier 2 Service Support Advisor, I consequently applied to become a tier 2 advisor and after a successful interview, I was accepted and continued answering queries and providing assistance.

6. During the time that I worked for the Post Office at the NBSC, I found it to be a very pleasant working experience. I also had very good working relationships with other colleagues and management.

7. Throughout my career as a Service Support Advisor I was responsible for providing and assisting with all queries related to Post Office counter transactions and queries related to the using of the Horizon system.
8. In order to resolve queries related to Post Office counter transactions or queries related to the Horizon system we used a database at the NBSC that provided relevant information that we could use to assist subpostmasters. To my knowledge this database was very efficient in delivering assistance in a prompt and professional manner.
9. Whilst working at the NBSC and to my personal knowledge that there was certain specific requests for support which was occasionally on Wednesday evenings as the helpline was open until 10pm and subpostmasters were expected to balance their stock and cash and sometimes required further assistance.
10. The most common type of calls that I dealt with was normally queries related to Post Office counter transactions, for example a purchase of a TV license and there was a specific question related to the date of issuing or for another example queries related to Post Office travel insurance and how to proceed with validation. In order to assist subpostmasters we used the database that was in place at the NSBC or Post Office counter manuals and in the event that there was a certain query that was complex then we were expected to consult with out Team Leader's until satisfactory call closure.

11. We used the database at the NBSC to assist subpostmasters daily as well as Post Office counter manuals. We were also given updated information during training sessions in order to assist and deliver satisfactory responses. In certain situations, that were quite complex, we were allowed to discuss with our Team Leaders or with other colleagues that worked previously as subpostmasters which enabled me to assist and resolve queries in a satisfactory manner.
  
12. Throughout my career whilst working as a Service Support Advisor, I was monitored and trained by a Team Leader. I also had regular meetings with my Team Leader to see my progress and to discuss my personal objectives.
  
13. During my working career as a Service Support Advisor for the NSBC was carried out in a professional and respectful manner towards subpostmasters. The protocol at the NBSC before call closure was to always ask if the call was satisfactory dealt with and if there was anything else that I could help with.
  
14. In my personal opinion I do believe that the NSBC did provide adequate support to subpostmasters who called for assistance. If there were any certain situations that certain subpostmasters felt that they weren't satisfied with the way they had been assisted, they always had the opportunity to file an official complaint that would be dealt with appropriately and professionally either by a Team Leader at the NSBC or the complaints department.

15. During the time that I worked as a Service Support Advisor at the NSBC I was never aware of any software bugs, errors or defects within the Horizon IT system and I wasn't aware that currently there's an Horizon inquiry taking place.

16. I believe that all the above information that I have provided in this statement is to the best of my knowledge during my career at the NSBC as a Service Support Advisor and to my personal knowledge of the Horizon IT project.

**Statement of Truth**

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

**GRO**

Signed:

Dated: 10 January 2023

