

Witness Name: Sarah Bull

Statement No.: WITN07230100

Dated: 20 March 2023

**POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY**

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**FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF SARAH BULL**

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I, *MS SARAH BULL*, will say as follows:

**INTRODUCTION**

1. I am a former employee of Fujitsu Services Limited ("**Fujitsu**") having left in 2011.
2. This witness statement is made to assist the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry (the "**Inquiry**") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request provided to me on 23 January 2023 (the "**Request**"), to the extent I have or had direct knowledge of such matters. I was assisted in preparing this statement by Morrison Foerster, who represent Fujitsu in the Inquiry.
3. I have tried to recall material relevant to the Request to assist the Inquiry as much as possible, however as the Request concerns events that occurred over 11 years ago, there are areas where my recollection is unclear or limited. I set out my best recollection of these events in this statement.
4. Where my recollection has been either supported by or prompted by documents, they are referred to using document URN numbers as listed in the index accompanying this statement.

## **BACKGROUND**

5. I am a technology professional with 30 years of experience, mostly in the service delivery profession managing support and consultancy environments.
6. I was first employed by ICL PLC (“**ICL**”) in September 1995 and left Fujitsu in November 2011. During that period, I worked on the Post Office Account (the “**POA**”) at two separate time periods, first from April 2002 to December 2002, and later from July 2007 to November 2011. I set out the various roles I held whilst working on the POA below. As a general point, I do not recall receiving any training when joining or whilst working on the POA.

### *Field Service Manager*

7. I was one of the several Field Service Managers between April 2002 and December 2002. Our role was to get first-hand experience of issues Subpostmasters were facing and support them getting a resolution. I worked directly with Subpostmasters in their location of business, regardless of the Post Office branch type they were in charge of. For the purpose of this statement, I refer to them as Subpostmasters collectively.
8. Each Field Service Manager was responsible for a different area of the country. The area I was responsible for was from Birmingham down to the south coast between Portsmouth and Southampton.
9. The role involved visits to Post Office branches based on the analysis of calls made by Subpostmasters to the Horizon Service Helpdesk or the Horizon Service Desk (which I will refer to as the “**Helpdesk**” in this statement). Issues ranged from supporting Post Office moves, reviewing user actions, repeat failures, and responding to requests from third line support to gather information

which could be used to replicate issues reported by Subpostmasters and to diagnose issues that had a broader impact across the network.

*HNG-X Service Transition Manager*

10. I was a HNG-X Service Transition Manager between July 2007 and April 2008. I was responsible for supporting the Fujitsu teams working on the POA to prepare for changes being made to the Horizon application and the infrastructure that Horizon used. The impact of these changes could range from raising awareness to Horizon end-users through to updates to processes, policies or application guidance provided to the Horizon end-users. For clarification, the infrastructure that Horizon used was separate and different to the Horizon application itself.
11. In this role, I worked with the project teams to understand the changes and provided appropriate feedback. This could range from requests for additional specificity, confirmation that the teams were ready for the change (as part of the project sign off), or requests for additional time needed to make the necessary changes.
12. For example, I provided awareness of these changes, such as a new feature on the Horizon counter screen which would support the first line agents in accurately diagnosing an issue when speaking to a Horizon end-user. In other cases, changes to procedures might have needed to be made, like changing the interactive voice response system to support Horizon end-users when piloting a new feature on Horizon. I am unable to recall any specific details in relation to these examples given.

*Customer Services Manager*

13. I then took the role of a Customer Services Manager between April 2008 and July 2010 where I was responsible for the service delivery of first and second line support functions, namely the Helpdesk and break fix engineering respectively. There were two or three service delivery managers, who reported to me, who managed the individual functions. To be clear, I and the service delivery managers did not functionally manage these services but were the customer facing team who liaised with the customer, in this case, Post Office Limited (“POL”) to get their feedback and provided reporting and feedback on the services Fujitsu provided.
14. My main responsibility was to review and validate regular reporting on contract compliance in relation to the first and second line support functions that reported to me. Having been shown an example of a Service Review Book that I would have seen whilst in this role (FUJ00094419), I recall that these were prepared by the service delivery managers in charge of first and second line support functions, and were sent on a monthly basis to POL. The Service Review Books were reviewed internally at Fujitsu before external circulation, although I do not remember by who.
15. I reviewed statistics and trends to understand the performance of the Helpdesk and any issues that may have occurred during the reporting period. Examples of the sorts of trends included the classification of issues, Helpdesk response time for picking up calls, the implementation of initiatives and monitoring their effects (such as the introduction of a new button on the Horizon counter screen). I recall that issues relating to hardware were a common issue. I also

detailed initiatives to improve the operation of the Helpdesk, although I do not recall any specific details.

16. I recall that Service Review Books were sent to POL ahead of monthly service review meetings which I attended with my POL counterparts, who were Gary Blackburn and Mark Weaver, at Chesterfield. The purpose of these meetings was to improve the operation of the Helpdesk including the reporting of the performance of the Helpdesk.
17. Having been shown a document titled 'Service Management Review October 2010' (FUJ00121051), I recall that the process of issuing Service Review Books changed to a forum called Service Management Review. This came about after discussions with POL, which I think I participated in, about certain challenges and issues in reviewing the content included in Service Review Books and ensuring relevant information was being considered. The switch to the Service Management Review helped consolidate information that was being reported in Service Review Books into areas that Fujitsu and POL were focused on. The Service Management Review took place monthly at Fujitsu's and POL's offices. Action points that came out were allocated by function.

*Head of Service Support*

18. I was Head of Service Support on the POA from June 2010 to November 2011. This meant I was the service owner responsible for the teams who provided release management, operational change, capacity management, and service introduction of the Horizon system.
19. To be clear, my understanding is that there is more than one type of release management; there is release management relating to the Horizon application

itself which is separate and different to releases affecting the operating system that Horizon used, which I think at the time was a Microsoft Windows NT operating system. I was only involved in the latter. The release management function set out the schedule for release windows in relation to the maintenance of the operating system on which Horizon operated. System maintenance is different to application fixes which had a separate schedule.

20. Operational change management were a team of service transition managers supporting change on the POA and working closely with the service introduction manager. The capacity management team was responsible for asset inventory and ensuring that the system and components could support business strategy. I do not remember the details of what service introduction involved.

### **HELPDESK**

21. In the Request, the Inquiry has asked me questions in relation to my experience working on the Helpdesk. I am unable to answer these questions as I did not work on the Helpdesk, and therefore cannot provide specific information about the Helpdesk, including what an average working day consisted of on the Helpdesk, specific details of calls received and resolutions of issues. As such, I did not receive any training or instruction for working on the Helpdesk.
22. I can, however, provide certain details on the service delivery and overall performance of the Helpdesk as this was within the remit of some of my roles, including as a Customer Services Manager as described above at paragraphs 13 to 17. I also visited Fujitsu's Stevenage office occasionally and met the Helpdesk team that worked there. Service Delivery, of which I was a part of, was a separate team to the Helpdesk.

23. I recall that I took part in a Lean review of the proposed improvements to the Helpdesk service which was led by front-line agents that worked on the Helpdesk. POL also participated in this review. I do not remember exactly when this review took place, however having been shown the Service Review Book for February 2010 that I would have seen and which appears to reference the Lean review (FUJ00094419), it would have occurred around February 2010.
24. From my recollection, the proposed improvements aimed to enhance the handling of cases in terms of efficiency and costs. Feedback from front-line agents was collated and reviewed by POL and the agents implemented changes to improve the Helpdesk service, although I do not recall what these changes were.
25. The Lean review was initiated by the Helpdesk, going above and beyond contract requirements. I recall that the Helpdesk had a good reputation and my memory of the attitude of the Helpdesk to Subpostmasters was positive.
26. The Helpdesk was one of Fujitsu's referenced services when speaking to other Fujitsu customers – it was used as a demonstration of the service provided and I believe therefore was of a high standard of service. This was based on feedback from POL, contractual compliance, as well as the quality of service delivery.

#### **BUGS, ERRORS AND DEFECTS**

27. The Inquiry has asked me a question on my awareness of bugs, errors and defects in the Horizon system. At a high level, I recall that known error logs were kept of bugs, errors and defects in the system. This is standard practice when running a system or application like Horizon so that those bugs, errors

and defects can be tracked from initial reporting through to resolution. The logs came from people involved in the Horizon system including the end-users but also the engineers who maintained the system. I am unable to recall specific issues in relation to the Horizon application.

28. In terms of problem management, I understand that certain problems, such as those that were recurring or had a more widespread impact on Post Office branches, would have a problem record created and were reviewed by Fujitsu (including third line support) and POL. These types of problems may not have been able to be fixed immediately and required further investigation to assess the severity and likelihood of recurrence of the problem. My limited involvement in problem management was to provide details to Fujitsu's third line support who would triage the problem.



**Statement of Truth**

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:           **GRO**          

Dated:           20 March 2023

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**INDEX TO THE FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
MS SARAH BULL**

<b>Exhibit No.</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>Document Description</b>	<b>Control No.</b>
1	FUJ00094419	Fujitsu Services Royal Mail Group Account Service Review Book – February 2010	POINQ0100590F
2	FUJ00121051	Service Management Review October 2010	POINQ0127243F