

Witness Name: Mark Haldane

Statement No: WITN05740100

Dated: 27 March 2023

## **POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY**

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### **FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF MARK HALDANE**

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I, MARK HALDANE, will say as follows....

1. All responses have been made in good faith and as accurate as I can remember them, considering the time elapsed.
2. I was a Problem Manager for POL between 2004 and 2006. I managed the lifecycle of business problems with the primary pro-active objective being to prevent incidents from occurring and to minimise the impact of those that could not be prevented. I maintained information about known issues and cascaded workarounds to user community once established and tested. I analysed, took ownership, managed and ultimately solved problems that occurred both internally and externally in relation to POL's products and services.
3. My only relevant qualification was in ITIL Foundation.

4. I cannot recall any specific training that I received other than for the qualification mentioned above.
  
5. I started working for POL on a YTS Scheme in 1988 I believe, and my placement office was at New Lodge Post Office. I then gained a position of Postal Clerk within the Remittance Centre in Sheffield, before moving on to become a Postal Officer initially in Leeds Head Office, which soon moved to a new call centre at Dearne House, Barnsley. I then progressed to become Service Support Team Leader on the Helpdesk, before moving onto roles such as Incident Manager, Problem Manager and finally Business Systems Manager.
  
6. The only direct contact I had with subpostmasters or managers and assistants working in Post Offices was during my role as Service Support Advisor (Postal Clerk) on the POL Helpdesk, which is the Network Business Support Centre ('NBSC'). My responsibilities as a Service Support Advisor included taking Post Office products, services and technical enquires from PO Branches. We are taking about 20+ years ago so I have no recollection of any types of calls received, but there was a Knowledge Base to refer to for all advisors. I was in that position for around 6 months before moving on to be a Service Support Team Leader, which had indirect contact with the with subpostmasters or managers and assistants via my team of advisors. As a Service Support Team Leader I managed a team of 15 advisors (approx.) dealing with their training, development, performance etc. – again this was over 20 years ago. I worked on the POL helpdesk for maybe 3 years in total as an advisor and team leader.

7. I was responsible for providing advice and guidance to subpostmasters and Post Office Branches whilst a Service Support Advisor and Team Leader.
8. As a Service Support Advisor I escalated issues to my Team Leader and as a Team Leader either via an Incident Manager or the Service Support Helpdesk Manager. I cannot recall how we identified trends for errors, nor any workarounds that were used. I have no idea who would approve the workarounds, nor how they would be established, tested and approved.
9. I found the relationship between POL Helpdesk & Horizon to be a good one – I did not have much dealings with them on a day to day basis as I wasn't a Problem Manager for Fujitsu.
10. I cannot remember any specific difficulties involving the Horizon System, I recall it being a stable and robust platform.
11. I cannot remember any examples of where the concerns I raised were not acted on and steps not taken.
12. I have been asked if there was anyone who I felt could have done more to assist or make things better for subpostmasters. No, I cannot remember any individuals who could have done more to assist or make things better for subpostmasters.
13. I was not responsible managing the contracts of subpostmasters.
14. As a Service Support Advisor, if someone said that he or she did not feel wholly confident with using Horizon, I would do my best to help that person better

understand the system. I would offer advice and guidance and stay on the calls as long as it took, so that their knowledge and confidence were increased.

15. Training received by subpostmasters was not an area I was involved with at all so cannot comment on whether improvements could have been made.

16. I was aware of issues and problems with the Horizon system, but nothing that would be constituted as major. I was not aware of any specific issues or problems with the Horizon System so that's why I consider that nothing major was ever known, or that I can recall anyway. The issues and problems were raised to Fujitsu via the relevant Problem Manager if I remember correctly.

17. Problems or issues were usually identified by the Incident Managers as they were managing the Remedy incidents logged by the helpdesk staff. This was done by running real-time reports which they could analyse to identify all unplanned business interruptions, malfunctions, and quality reductions in relation to POL's products, services and technology. This process was widely known through the entire helpdesk, with solutions, workarounds etc. for these issues being fed back down the line from the Incident Managers to the Team Leaders, or to the Training Team to then deliver to the advisors. I have no idea what the processes or procedures were for how known errors would be escalated to Fujitsu, as I did not have a direct relationship with Fujitsu in any of my roles.

18. The knowledge of the above affected how I dealt with subpostmasters or Post Office managers or assistants working in Post Office branches in a positive manner. I knew that there was an established process looking at problems/issues, so I could relay that to the customer, either via solutions,

workarounds or by assuring them that the correct resolving teams we aware and currently investigating.

19. I have been asked to explain whether I was involved in or party to any disputes between the Post Office and subpostmasters regarding any alleged shortfalls of money. No, I was not involved in nor party to any disputes between the Post Office and subpostmasters regarding any alleged shortfalls of money.

20. I have been asked to describe the process by which any disputes were raised and resolved. This question is not applicable.

21. I have been asked to describe whether I was aware of any contact or input from Fujitsu in the resolution of any disputes. I was not aware of any contact or input from Fujitsu in the resolution of any disputes.

22. I have been asked to give my view on whether there could have been any improvement in this process. This question is not applicable.

23. I have been asked if there any other matters that I consider the Chair of the Inquiry should be aware of. My answer is no, the above statement is a summary of everything I remember whilst working for Post Office Limited.

**Statement of Truth**

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

**GRO**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: 27.03.23

**Index to First Witness Statement of Mark Haldane**

<b>No.</b>	<b>URN</b>	<b>Document Description</b>	<b>Control Number</b>
1	POL00038963	Operational Focus: The operational publication for PO branches - week 48	POL-0035445
2	POL00038991	Post Office Operational Focus Publication: Issue 10	POL-0035473