

Witness Name: Ian Humphries

Statement No. WITN05880100

Exhibits: None

Dated: 15 March 2023

**Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry**

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**FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF IAN HUMPHRIES**

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I, IAN HUMPHRIES, will say as follows...

1. This witness statement is in response to the Post Office IT Inquiry's request, dated 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022, to provide witness evidence pursuant to Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006.
2. The request was made as I have been identified as an IT Service Delivery Manager at Post Office Ltd between 2006 to 2010.
3. I can confirm that the above statement is correct and was employed as an IT Service Delivery Manager between the requested dates 2006 to 2010.
4. During my employment within the role between 2006-2010, I was not involved with the Horizon environment as my responsibility was the Post Office Back Office application services. These do not cover any Branch Horizon systems but limited to the End User Access which includes the computer devices, infrastructure (i.e., Post Office networks) provided to Post Office administrative office staff to undertake the daily duties which include Financial, HR and Management Information systems. Such devices are not located within Branches, and they do not have access to the Horizon application. Some of these internal systems will obtain data from

Horizon via file transfer delivery mechanisms for Post Office business management information and reporting. The role facilitated service level management and reporting; service improvement plans to maintain SLA (service level agreements); during major incident impacting service within my area of responsibility supporting incident managers; and input to change management. Up to 2014 (prior to joining Atos), I had no interaction with the Branches as none of my services were used by the Postmasters but were restricted to just administration locations. Other business areas had responsibility for the Horizon system.

5. I do not believe I can provide further factual information to the Inquiry falling within Phase 2 of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, as I had no responsibility, interaction or input to the Horizon project or service up to 2015.

**Advice and assistance**

Please set out an overview of your role(s) within the Post Office.

6. During the period 2006-2010 I was employed by Post Office Ltd as an IT Service Delivery Manager with responsibility for the Back Office services described in paragraph 4. These environments fit within the End User Compute service, providing access to and hosting of the operational services such as file servers, MI reporting, POL Finance and POL HR. The role provided management of the contracted IT service to ensure agreed levels and tasks were carried out by the incumbent provider. It would ensure the correct focus and support were assigned to an IT issue to maintain the availability for end users (POL admin colleagues). My role was not involved with the business data aspects of the

systems, it only focused on ensuring the availability IT services I was assigned to (as above).

Please describe any qualifications you had.

7. ITIL Service Management Managers Certificate - v2.0, ITIL Service Management v3.0.

Please set out any training you received.

8. None during the period, except for on the job learning of new processes and functionality changes. Knowledge and experience of IT environments gained from previous employment gave me the necessary knowledge to cover the expected understanding of the technical aspects to assist in the role.
9. Position maintained with Post Office as IT Service Delivery Manager until TUPE'd in 2014 to an external IT company, Atos, as part of the Post Office IT outsourcing arrangements. Post Office outsourced their IT function to an external company, as my role moved, I was TUPE'd to the external company. The only real change to my role at the time was a change of employer. All other daily duties, contacts and responsibilities for the Post Office account remained as before. That is as an IT Service Delivery Manager for the Back Office Systems.
10. Following my transfer to Atos the role continued as previously with the main difference of acting on behalf of Post Office, rather than being employed by Post Office. In the interest of continuity, the service management assignments continued as before the transfer i.e. as described in paragraph 4.

From 2015-2017 I started to assist in ensuring branches with IT connection issues were resolved within agreed timelines, i.e. responsible for the service management provided by BT for telephone/data lines. Where service levels were breached escalations would be made through BT.

As vacancies rose on the Post Office account, my responsibilities changed and around 2016, I was asked to fill the IT Service Management position for the provider, Fujitsu. The role was fulfilled for approximately 12 months before I moved away from the Post Office account to further my career with other Atos clients.

The relationship between Atos and POL in general remained at a working level, similar as before since many of the people on both sides facing each other did not change. Outside of this I have nothing to allow qualification of the relationship. Atos became the IT SIAM (System Integration and Management) provider, acting as the Post Office IT department, a conduit to all other IT providers.

My view of the relationship between Atos and Fujitsu was limited for the first 2 years from 2014 due to my area of responsibility. Any interaction would be to seek technical assistance to aid the resolution of an IT issue (non-transactional). Usually this was a conference call with other service providers but could also involve email or telephone communications for advice. I found them approachable and professional when called upon, which could frequently be at short notice, offering help in the resolution of an IT issue.

Having been assigned the Fujitsu Service my involvement increased to include service review and reporting of the IT elements Horizon. This



would entail conversations with Fujitsu Service Managers and Support Desk where the issue had been escalated (could be considered as a compliant). Usually this was due to the time frames to resolve an issue and were not always a result of a breached contractual target.

It is my understanding that the documented complaints procedure (ref FUJ00080327 "POA Customer Service End-to-End Customer Complaints Procedure") was the process used to log and manage such escalations that required investigation e.g. resolution of an issue as described above.

Document ref FUJ00003244 "POLSAP Hosting Service, Service Description" describes the service provided by Fujitsu for the POL SAP hosting. Initially I had responsibility for the front-end SAP portal service (the screens used by POL users) as this was hosted by one of my assigned service providers. These boundaries are contained the section 1.1.2 of the document. The hosting element where data is stored would be covered within the Fujitsu service, so I provided input to the Service Manager responsible for this service. After 2015 the hosting service also became my responsibility to manage. A monthly service review was scheduled with Fujitsu to analysis service performance against Service Levels, identify service improvements and review future requirements.

Please provide an overview of what contact you had with subpostmasters or managers and assistants working in Post Offices, if any.

11. I had no contact with Branches during the review period 2006-2010. All contact I had was ring fenced to the Post Office admin departments as I was not involved with the Branch/Front Office systems. Therefore, I had

no need to contact a branch directly. A separate branch department based in Barnsley had the responsibility for the Front Office (branch) systems/services. Service Management had very distinct boundaries between front-end (branch) and back-end (admin) service provision. I have no recollection of any interaction with the Barnsley team since there was no requirement.

12. From 2014 to 2017 contact with branches increased in assisting with telephony connection issues. These issues ranged from faulty/poor line quality to disconnections because of planned or unplanned actions. A good rapport was built with many branches as they saw how I could assist with their IT issues. Attendance at the NFSP conference in 2016 as an exhibitor for Atos Post Office IT service gave an opportunity for face-to-face discussions with Postmasters, an enabler to building a good business relationship.

Please describe whether you were responsible for providing subpostmasters or Post Office branches with advice or assistance.

13. During the Phase 2 dates 2006-2010 I had no responsibility - See item 11.

When issues were raised, how did you escalate these difficulties?

14. Escalation routes for the services I managed were defined within the SLA agreements between Post Office and its Service Provider. None of my managed services were supported by Fujitsu. If anything was asked of me in relation to a branch, I would refer to the POL Fujitsu Service Manager to take ownership.

Please specify, if you have not already done so, how often any difficulties

involved the Horizon system.

15. During the review timeline I had no responsibilities for Horizon so would not be involved in any management or reporting.

Were there any steps that you thought should have been taken in response to any concerns that you raised that were not?

16. I had no responsibility.

Was there anyone who you felt could have done more to assist or make things better for subpostmasters.

17. My daily work did not cover any Branch systems so unable to comment. I was not involved with the Front-End services.

### **Training**

If you were responsible for managing the contracts of subpostmasters, set out what steps you took to ensure that individuals felt confident with using Horizon.

18. I had no responsibility.

If someone said that he or she did not feel wholly confident with using Horizon, what steps did you take to assist them?

19. I had no responsibility as the service was not within my own portfolio.

Please explain whether you thought that any improvements could have been made to the training received by subpostmasters.

20. I had no responsibility for the Horizon service so I was not involved with any training.

### **Errors or issues with Horizon system**

Please explain whether you were aware of any issues or problems with the Horizon system.

21. Until the reports were raised by the media, I had no awareness of underlying issues since I had no direct involvement with Horizon. From within the Post Office environment my perception was Fujitsu was held as POL's main and trusted partner so confidence in their expertise was accepted.

If so, please set out who you received this information from or how you came to be aware of these issues and how widely known you consider them to have been.

22. Visibility of issues first derived from the Computer Weekly report. Until published I had no awareness of anyone knowing of such issues.

How did this knowledge impact upon how you dealt with subpostmasters or Post Office managers or assistants working in Post Office branches.

23. At the time I had no direct contact with Post Office Branches. Whether the report was right or wrong, my IT customer service experience has always and will continue to be respectful of customer. That is to listen, understand and find a way to help. This report would have made no difference to how I approached my work.

Please consider POL00028742 "Peak Incident Management System record – PCO247207", POL00029908 "Email: I7991774 | 2248433| Dalmellington Outreach Service – horizon | transaction discrepancies #1358666" and FUJ00085838 "Email: I7991774 | 2248433| Dalmellington Outreach Service – horizon | transaction discrepancies #1358666".

Please describe how responsibilities were divided between Fujitsu, Atos, POL and NBSC

24. The role of Atos was to act on behalf of Post Office to ensure IT service issues were resolved and proactively seek improvements to obtain the most efficient provision of service for Post Office. To aid resolution it is



best practice to bring together the resources from internal and external teams as necessary to cover all elements.

Fujitsu were the service provider and considered the experts for the Horizon hosting and application support so had in depth knowledge of the interactions within the system to be able to work through an issue. Post Office are the users/customers of Horizon so their business operational knowledge would provide an insight of the expected results. Based on the above articles they would understand the accounting tasks required.

I have limited understanding of the NBSC ways of working as there were no requirements to be involved with the Back Office Systems. Awareness of their role came about following my assignment to the Fujitsu Service Management. Their input into Branch issues was necessary to identify root causes and solutions. They were responsible for handling operational and procedural (non-technical) issues raised by a Branch. It is my understanding that the NBSC had the knowledge as to how a Postmaster should carry out their duties.

In your view, how was the working relationship between the different organisations?

25. Fujitsu were the experts on Horizon, so Post Office accepted their advice as trusted partner. With no similar level of expertise or access, it was very difficult to challenge this view. They had been in post for many years as the Post Office supplier for Horizon. Atos, as a similar external IT company had a respect for this position. However, based on general IT practices, questions would be raised where necessary to ensure the

ways of working for Post Office were appropriate.

It is difficult for me to express a view of NBSC as they sat as their own individual entity developing and maintaining ways of working. Questions were directed to them with an expectation a reply would be provided.

Please explain the Horizon issues described in these emails and the nature of your involvement with these matters. How were these issues resolved?

26. Based on the information within the articles, an outreach branch transferred money from the core to the outreach branch. The outreach when accepting the transfer accepted 4 amounts. Fujitsu discovered within their activity logs that an action to logout had occurred before the Postmaster had fully logged on. This was identified as the root cause. Reading the articles a preventative work around involving awareness to Postmasters of the scenario was provided while a code fix was developed, tested, and deployed.

My only involvement was to provide mentoring advice in relation to the Post Office organization to enable my colleague to talk to the correct people following the escalation. This was due to my many years of service with Post Office.

Not leading on this issue and the time when the event took place, I have no recollection of any further involvement.

Did you give instruction to NBSC to speak to Post Office Branches about this matter or any other Horizon related matters? If not, who at Atos or Fujitsu was responsible for giving NSBC such instruction?

27. As I was not the Service Delivery Manager responsible for the Fujitsu

service at the time, I can almost be certain no instructions would have been given by myself. From the articles Atos took advice from several sources to understand the course of actions. In line with process, Fujitsu would have passed the details through the to the Atos IT Service Desk who in turn would contact the NSBC lead. This same process would be adopted for any requirement like this. The IT Service Delivery Manager would be kept informed of status.

How effective did you think NBSC's advice to subpostmasters was?

28. Without any evidence of the call, it is impossible to answer. Based only the articles provided, a coordinated investigation had proceeded the event with involvement of appropriate parties, and my expectation would be that the information should have been used in contact with the branch. Fujitsu provided a root cause to Atos and NBSC. It is noted Fujitsu advised of the action for NBSC to follow. Without follow on information I can make no conclusion.

Please consider FUJ00120883 "Peak Incident Management System record – PCO241242" , FUJ00120884 "Email: PCO241242 / A7701255 – Meanwood Branch – Unable to Connect to the Data Center" and FUJ00120885 "Email: PCO241242 / A7701255 – Meanwood Branch – Unable to Connect to the Data Center .

Please explain the Horizon issue described in these emails and the nature of your involvement with this matter. How was the matter resolved?

29. Postmaster lost connection in branch with the Data Center (network issue) resulting in a failure to void Health Lottery transaction. This rendered counter device 4 unusable as it could not perform the recovery. Fujitsu asked, as there was no impact to the customer or branch, for the



failed lottery session to be removed to allow the recovery process to complete.

Within Atos I was assigned internal responsibility for monitoring and working with our IT Service Desk service. As they received the incident I was asked for assistance to resolve the issue. Due to my work experience within Post Office, my Line Manager requested my involvement to obtain the documented process for the authorization of a session deletion which had no branch or customer impact. Since no document was available, I had to find some awareness of the process to resolve the issue. My actions were to contact Anne Allaker and Rebecca Barker, POL, to seek the approval as the task required Post Office authorization and not IT or the branch. Following several re-directions, the approval was given, and Fujitsu asked to proceed.

Please explain the Horizon issue described in these emails and the nature of your involvement with this matter. How was the matter resolved? Consider POL00002492 Peak Incident Management System record – PCO241242 “

30. Please refer to answer provided in paragraph 29. This document relates to the same issue.

Please consider POL00002493 Peak Incident Management System record – PCO241528”.

Please explain the Horizon issue described in these emails.

31. Due to the elapse time since this occurred, I am unable to recollect whether I had any involvement other than advisory as I had been involved with the mentioned Meanwood Branch issue, outlined in



paragraph 29.

From the article text, there was no impact to the customer or branch, so a session deletion was authorized.

Please consider POL00002702 "IT Issues Conference Call Agenda".

Please describe the nature and purpose of the 'IT Issues Conference Calls'. How frequently would these calls take place? Who would usually attend?

32. The meeting detail is vague but I believe it to be a monthly meeting between POL - Ann Allaker, Kendra Dickinson and Atos – Sharon Brearley(?) and myself. The aim was to improve the working relationship with NBSC providing ATOS with complete visibility of Branch IT Service concerns and issues. Actions were taken to improve any identified issues raised during the meetings.

Please describe the nature of the balancing issues that were reported to you on this occasion.

33. I have no recollection of specific incident, my role facilitated investigations and improvements across several IT services provided daily to POL. The specific detail of a single incident that occurred 8 years ago is not something I can recall.

Who reported the issues to you?

34. Generally service issues were reported to the Atos IT Service Desk, and if they were considered high impacting, the detail would be flagged to a Service Delivery Manager to assist with further investigation. Several routes for reporting issues were in place. Agreed escalation processes via the Atos IT Service Desk were in place (as above), but this could be by-passed through

customer/service provider meetings or delegation from Atos management due to receipt of a request from Post Office management. In all cases, an incident record was created to maintain tracking.

Please explain why the issues were referred back to NBSC.

35. Branch procedural calls would be the responsibility of the NSBC to investigate. Dependant on available detail and number of tickets, NBSC would have been asked to review to provide clarification on the situation. Outcomes from investigations would then be used to assess the assignment of appropriate support teams (internal and external to POL). This would have followed standard IT incident management practice for investigating issues.

What is your view, and the views of others at ATOS, on the effectiveness of communications between PO, FJ and ATOS?

36. I cannot comment on the view of ATOS as I am no longer in their employment, clarification on this would require ATOS representation. In my opinion overall communication was good between all parties utilising a variety of mediums, conference calls, face to face meetings and email. Atos ways of working ensured we communicated in a timely and clear manner especially to POL as they were the customer. This frequently included messages and calls out of office hours weekdays and weekends.

Do you consider this could have been improved? If so, how?

37. Improvements at the time would have been identified and implemented if necessary. This was the aim of introducing such a meeting with NBSC to

provide a regular checkpoint to gather and improve/resolve issues impacting the delivery of the overall IT service.

How did the effectiveness of these communications improve after 2015?

38. My involvement with the Branch services started after 2015 so I cannot compare to previous years. However from the service improvements implemented after this period, there was emphasis on communications to service providers, Post Office teams and Postmasters. An increase in my direct contact with the Branches started to build a relationship and provided a foundation to widen discussions with Postmasters concerning the IT service (not accounting). The aim of contacts was to demonstrate that we cared and listened to them, while demonstrating we were working with them.

**Resolution of disputes**

Please explain whether you were involved in or party to any disputes between the Post Office and subpostmasters regarding any alleged shortfalls of money.

39. I had no involvement.

If so, please describe the process by which any disputes were raised and resolved. Please specify any individuals you know to have been involved.

40. N/A.

Please describe whether you are aware of any contact or input from Fujitsu in the resolution of any disputes. If so, please provide details including the names of relevant individuals from Fujitsu.

41. I had no involvement.

Please give your view on whether there could have been any improvement in this

process.

Please identify who would have been responsible for implementing any improvement you suggest.

42. I had no involvement in the service so no visibility of data or contacts.

Are there any other matters that you consider the Chair of the Inquiry should be aware of?

43. The Front and Back Office systems were separately supported and managed until the new service model was introduced with Atos. All issues relating to the Horizon system would be raised and managed through the Front Office Service Management team. In a similar manner Back Office service issues were contained within my area. Most of my work in Post Office was within the Back Office area.

**Statement of Truth**

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

**GRO**

Dated: 15/03/2023



Index to First Witness Statement of Ian Humphries

No.	URN	Document Description	Control Number
1	FUJ00080327	POA Customer Service End-to-End Customer Complaints Procedure	PO NQ0086498F
2	FUJ00003244	POLSAP Hosting Service, Service Description	PO NQ0009415F
3	FUJ00120883	Peak Incident Management System record – PCO241242	PO NQ0127075F
4	FUJ00120884	Email: PCO241242 / A7701255 – Meanwood Branch – Unable to Connect to the Data Center	PO NQ0127076F
5	FUJ00120885	Email: PCO241242 / A7701255 – Meanwood Branch – Unable to Connect to the Data Center	PO NQ0127077F
6	POL00002492	Peak Incident Management System record – PCO241242	V S00003506
7	POL00002493	Peak Incident Management System record – PCO241528	V S00003507
8	POL00002702	IT Issues Conference Call Agenda	V S00003716
9	FUJ00085838	Email: I7991774   2248433  Dalmellington Outreach Service – horizon   transaction discrepancies #1358666	PO NQ0092009F
10	POL00029908	Email: I7991774   2248433  Dalmellington Outreach Service – horizon   transaction discrepancies #1358666	POL-0026390
11	POL00028742	Peak Incident Management System record – PCO247207	POL-0025224