

Witness Name: Russell Scott
Statement No: WITN07530100
Dated: 21st March 2023

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF RUSSELL SCOTT

I, **Russell Scott**, will say as follows:-

1. I am providing this statement following receipt of a Rule 9 Request dated 31 January 2023 from the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry asking me to provide a written statement regarding issues falling within Phase 3 of the Inquiry.
2. In recognition of the importance of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, I am happy to provide my full cooperation to the Inquiry. I was assisted in preparing this statement by my legal representatives, Ashfords LLP.
3. As a former Post Office Limited manager, it' s been nearly 20 years since I was involved with the organisation and it is over 20 years since I worked in roles relevant to the Inquiry. I have found it difficult to recall precise details

and any specific events pertaining to the rollout of the Horizon system and its operational support. This statement is therefore compiled with the best of my recollections and have answered the questions fully to the best of my knowledge.

4. The inquiry has asked me to set out my professional background including summaries of any roles I held with Post Office or ICL Pathway/Fujitsu. I joined the Post Office in 1989 and worked as a Post Office Counter Clerk for a few years mainly within the Branch Offices in the Leeds district.
5. I then was successful in seeking a promotion within the Post Office to work as Bullion Manager in their Cash and Stock Distribution center. There I was responsible for overseeing various aspects in managing cash and stock for all Post Office Counters across the North regional district.
6. It was around 1998/99 when I again was successful in another promotion which was to support the National Horizon IT Project, where I would be the Post Office Horizon IT Scheduling Manager for the North. This entailed working with several other Post Office Managers covering a large area, where we would look to schedule on-site visits for a team of surveyors to measure and design where the physical IT system would be installed. During the time in this role, I also worked alongside counterparts in ICL Pathway/Fujitsu in support of scheduling visits for the implementation of the Horizon systems across the Post Office network in the North.

7. Approximately during Aug 2001, I then moved to work for Network Business Support Centre (NBSC) based at Dearne Valley to take up a Team Leader role, whereby I was responsible for a small team of Service Support Advisors (circa 8) in supporting Post Offices with their transactions and weekly balancing in using the Horizon IT system. I was not a Service Support Advisor at NBSC. I did however have an opportunity to cover other posts such as Incident Analyst and Problem Analyst on an interim/short term measures to help with staff shortages.
8. Around July 2003 I then moved to work on the Post Office Network Reinvention Programme. There I was an Issue Manager, that later expanded to the Programme Management Office Manager that then also covered the Investment Grant funding allocated by DTi. These roles took me to working up around May 2005.
9. I then left the Post Office in 2006 having managed to become National Change Manager to work for the National Health Service on their Connecting for Health Programme. I remain with the NHS to date, working as Head of Strategic Planning and Programme Management Office for the National Centre for Sustainable Delivery at NHS Scotland.
10. I have been asked to describe any training and/or instruction received in relation to the Horizon IT project and/or working in NBSC. I vaguely remember whilst working at NBSC as a Team Leader, I was required to undertake some

general training on the Horizon IT system in terms of understanding how the system worked, whereby we would simulate entering transactions and then conducting a weekly balance. This training was conducted on-site in a classroom based environment with Post Office staff being responsible for carrying out the training. I recall there being different modules for transactions and balancing but beyond that I cannot clearly recall any specifics.

11. All staff who were on the Service Desk Operations were given Horizon training along with weekly protected time to have learning and development on the system. Again, this training was on-site and in person. This in turn would assist with receiving calls for support from Post Offices looking for help in operating the Horizon system with transactions and their weekly balancing.

12. The Inquiry has asked me to comment on my experiences working in NSBC including my responsibilities and any projects I was involved in. I do remember being a Team Leader, where I had a small team as part of the Service Desk operation. This was during the two year period mid-2001 to mid-2003. There were approximately 8 other Team Leaders with similarly sized teams. The teams provided support, dealing with incoming calls from Post Offices into NSBC. I was also used to cover short term posts due to staff shortages, these included working as Incident Analyst and Problem Analyst.

13. NSBC was based on Information Technology Infrastructure Library principles, with a national Service Desk being responsible for taking and dealing with incoming calls across the entire Post Office Network. It was further supported

by an Issue Management and Problem Management function. The Service Desk used a logging and queuing system so that teams and staff from NBSC could see who had contacted NBSC along with what the subject was.

14. As Team Leader at the NSBC I had a small team of Service Support Advisors who would support the Service Desk function whereby Post Offices would call looking for assistance with resolving an issue they may have encountered in using the system. This could vary from how to enter a certain transaction onto the system to providing support on exploring any misbalances. Typically, Wednesday was the day for Post Offices to balance their weekly transactions and from memory the team would typically work until 9-10pm to support postmasters who contacted NBSC needing assistance.

15. I have been asked if there were any specific requests for support or events that I consider to be important to the Inquiry' s terms of reference. I cannot recollect any specific requests from my time working as a Team Leader at NSBC.

16. There was on occasions notifications issued to alert users of the Horizon IT system of ' Known Problems' or ' Transaction Issues' , but I was not involved in these processes and procedures sat with other NBSC functions (Issue Management and Problem Management) and I was only briefly exposed to this part of NSBC' s work whilst covering on short term/interim measures.

17. I have been asked about the most common types of calls received and how they were resolved. Again, all I can recollect from what my team dealt with, was mainly helping postmasters in how to enter and record transactions within the Horizon System. It varied from day to day in terms of types of calls into NBSC with the Service Desk staff talking through each call with the postmaster until they resolved the situation and documenting the resolution in the Service Desk system.

18. I have been asked about what resources I had available to me to assist resolving calls for support and whether they were adequate. Horizon Training and Guidance Manuals were provided to NBSC Service Support staff along with weekly learning opportunities to assist with dealing with calls into the Service Desk. My role was to line manage the NBSC Service Support Advisors, and therefore not answering the calls from postmasters. In addition, from memory online education with FAQ's were developed to support staff that could be accessed with the call system.

19. I have been asked to explain how the team was managed and the attitude of members of the NBSC to sub-postmasters. My role as Team Leader was to provide oversight and management of the team that included personal development, training and learning in order to fulfil their role as Service Support Advisor. There were a number of Team Leaders who carried out the same role as myself with similar sized teams in supporting the incoming calls

to NBSC. Again, my recollections of the Service Support Advisors are positive, whereby they conducted themselves with professionalism and empathy when dealing and managing the calls from post offices. I am unaware of any incidents of NBSC staff whereby their attitude towards sub postmasters was nothing other than showing a caring nature and conducting themselves in a professional manner.

20. I have been asked whether in my view, did the NBSC provide adequate support to sub-postmasters who called for assistance. I can only comment on my own experiences and having worked as a counter clerk for Post Office myself and from that perspective having a central function such as NBSC to support you was a great asset to have for any organisation. From my time working with NBSC as a Team Leader I believe the service provided to those who contacted the centre was exceptional in supporting anyone who called. Each call was recorded so we could listen back to any conversation, and as part of my role I was able to listen in to calls with the aim of ensuring my team dealt with the customers satisfactory.

21. I have been asked whether I was I aware of any bugs, errors or defects within the Horizon IT System at the time I worked in the NBSC. This was an area of the NBSC that I was exposed to only briefly, but I can confirm that NBSC had both an Issue Management and Problem Management Team where they would be responsible for investigating issues and problems and exploring the root cause with the aim of implementing fixes. I do vaguely remember

‘ Bulletins’ being issued to alert NBSC Service Support Advisors of known issues that also would include steps and procedures to address if such related calls were raised and what guidance should be given. Other than that, I could not comment comprehensively further on the NBSC Issue Management and Problem Management Teams.

22. I have been asked whether there is anything else I think the Chair should be aware of relating to the Horizon IT Project. Having worked as a counter clerk I remember only too well those late Wednesday evenings where you had to manually balance all your outgoing and incoming transactions and the concept of an IT system to capture, record and audit all transactions to enable Post Offices to operate effectively and efficiently made complete sense to make life easier. I wish to conclude my statement by offering my sympathy to those families impacted by any Horizon related problems.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

GRO

Dated: 21st March 2023