

Witness Name: Peter John Mitchell

Statement No.: WITN07500100

Dated: 31st March 2023

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST STATEMENT OF PETER JOHN MITCHELL

I, Peter John Mitchell, will say as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. As a Training Officer at Network Support at Dearne House I undertook the training of the Tier 2 Support Advisors (Postal Officers) who in turn answered the queries from the Postmasters.

BACKGROUND

2. I started work with the Post Office in October 1983 as a postman.
3. I moved to the counter as a Postal Officer in March 1986 until November 1995.
4. November 1995 – June 2000 at the Regional Helpline in St Albans.

5. June 2000 – June 2003 Training Officer at NBSC, Dearne House.
6. June 2003 – February 2004 Sick leave and restricted duties.
7. February 2004 – July 2006 Support Administration maintaining a Post Office database until redundancy GRO so therefore no connection with the Horizon System.
8. My time as a Postal Officer was at the Leighton Buzzard Crown Office where I gained experience of manual balancing and Horizon.
9. As the early adopters of Horizon (1993 I think) I do not recall any balancing problem that did not result from user error.
10. We had one week of training on the Horizon system.
11. My time at the St Albans Helpline dealt with non-Horizon queries.
12. At the NBSC I was involved training Tier 2 Advisors. This was a two week course covering counter transactions. We had dummy Horizon terminals to give the trainees an overview of balancing.
13. As the cash account was more specialized it was left to the on-site trainers who visited the sub-postmasters.
14. For the Tier 2 Advisors we held weekly half hour training sessions to look at new products and on going changes.

15. As far as I remember the calls from the sub-postmasters were dealt with professionally using the Knowledge Base which was continually updated by the Knowledge Base Team.
16. I have no knowledge of any specific request for support that would be relevant to this inquiry.
17. The most common calls from the sub-postmasters were some of the more complex transactions like Passport applications, Foreign Currency, Motor Vehicle Licenses (V10/V11) etc.
18. Wednesday evenings were mostly balancing queries.
19. As a Training Officer I did not deal with the calls directly. My comments are based on the feedback from colleagues in the training sessions. This enabled us to prepare remedial training where necessary.
20. The Knowledge Base was the Support Advisers main tool with support from their Team Leader.
21. I believe the relationship between NBSC and the Sub-postmasters was good. We trained them to be as helpful as possible and to call back with answers that needed further inquiry.
22. In my view we provided a high standard of support.
23. The Training Team for NBSC Tier 2 were not aware of bugs, errors or defects in the Horizon System.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed: **GRO**

Dated: 31/03/2023