

Witness Name: Dawn Russell

Statement No.: WITN07070100

Dated: [5] March 2023

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST STATEMENT OF DAWN RUSSELL

I, Dawn Russell, will say as follows...

INTRODUCTION

1. I was employed by Fujitsu (formerly ICL) from 1996 to 2003. The only IT support role that I held was on the 1st line desk supporting Fujitsu staff themselves. This was before my employment on the HSH / HSD desk. I then transferred in around 1999 to the Horizon help desk in a secretarial / admin capacity. My job title was never amended to reflect this change in role and was left to reflect that I had worked in 1st line support. From memory, this was on the understanding that I may be called to provide backup support. This was never the case and I from this point onwards I was employed in a secretarial / administration role only.

2. Training provided was in house and of a good standard in relation to my specific role. There were dedicated team members for training whom I remember receiving training from regarding my role and software relevant to my role. I never saw or used the Horizon software at any time. I never received training on the software.
3. On a day-to-day basis, I was responsible for recording and reporting staff attendance and absence. I supported some of the senior management with diary management. I oversaw sundry items, staff equipment and office supplies. I also produced documentation and hierarchical structures. I was also part of the team providing security clearances and at one point was a fire marshal.
4. Part of my role was to assist with the management of the document library regarding the processes followed on the helpdesk. I do remember that this became a priority at one point and a focus for one of the managers to whom I reported. This would have been circa 2002 / 2003. It is possible that this was a result of operational issues. I have no memory of the details of this other than it becoming important.
5. I would have taken occasional messages from managers within the post office at times though have no recollection of any details of day to day running of any part of support or operational activity. I was a liaison between helpdesk staff and management.

6. On one occasion I do remember that there was a comment from one of the helpdesk staff about "postmasters being caught with their hands in the till". Whether this was in relation to a specific person or whether it was about the system, again, I cannot say other than I recall an offhand comment.
7. I do have a recollection of there being an us and them attitude with regards to the helpdesk environment and the branch staff. I don't remember meeting any of the postmasters or there being any team building between post masters or helpdesk staff. I believe there may have been training provided for them at the offices on occasion though its possible they attended other offices for example Bracknell.
8. I do recall frustration at times from helpdesk staff with communication or the handling of certain issues though I cannot unfortunately remember specific examples of this. There was an air of pressure at times on the helpdesk, as there would be in any office environment. I do remember that there were times when glitches or bugs with the system caused challenges for helpdesk staff which led to friction at times. These would have been system issues which were passed up to 3rd line support or the team developing the software I believe.
9. I remember there being a change in management and a move within the building for the helpdesk in around 1999 / 2000. Prior to this I believe that different parts of the helpdesk were on separate floors. Following this there was a change in senior management and first line support and 2nd line support were then on one floor I believe. At one point during 2003, I remember there being close communication with Fujitsu senior management overseas though

I honestly couldn't say why this was, possibly on a financial or operational level or due to a visit from Fujitsu staff overseas.

BACKGROUND

10. I have a BTEC in Business and finance with secretarial options. Due to personal issues taking place for myself for the 18 months prior to my leaving 2003, my memory of specific events is fairly vague.

11. It is also worth stating that a blood relation of mine has since married a member of Fujitsu management who also worked on the Horizon project. They met after I left Fujitsu. I state this only for transparency and not necessarily because of any conflict of interest.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed: **GRO**

Dated: 5-4-23