

Witness Name: Gill Payne

Statement No.: WITN05560100

Dated: 8/4/23

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF GILL PAYNE

I, GILL PAYNE, will say as follows...

1. My role with the Post Office was Client Take on Manager & Network Banking. It was my job to put our new automated payment (AP) clients onto the Horizon system each month. For example, the clients would have been BT, DVLA or various electric or gas clients. The customers' bills would have a bar-code on them, or the customer could have a magnetic card which the clerks at the counter would either scan the barcode or swipe the magnetic card on Horizon. I had a test Horizon system in my office which I used to test each bar-code or magnetic card to make sure they worked at the counter, before they went live on the counters each month. I used to attend meetings with some of our clients, especially Girobank as they were one of our biggest clients.
2. The Horizon test kit was in our office. It was a replica of the same kit that was installed in all Post Offices but was not online or live. As explained, my job was to add new clients who wanted a bar-code or magnetic cards added as a payment method for their customers in order for them to pay their bills or car

tax etc. It was a monthly task. I would add new clients throughout the month up until the cut-off date for accepting new clients. I think, I then gave a list to Fujitsu, who would then add them to our client list ready to go live. Before they went live, they would be downloaded to the test kit. I would then test each new bar-code and magnetic card, for example I would just create a made-up transaction to test the bar-codes and cards, I would then run various reports, which I can't remember what they were now, I would then run a dummy cash account to make sure the new products were showing up on the cash account. I didn't check the amounts or run a complete cash account as there was no need. I just needed to know they were live. Once the tests were complete, I would give Fujitsu the go ahead to release them to start on the 1st of each month. It was a monthly task which I had been carrying out since Horizon was first introduced. I found no difficulty in using it and may have received some training when first introduced to it, but can't remember what that was or by whom.

3. With regards to Network Banking (NB), I mainly added new mobile pay as you go clients as and when they requested it. There was little or no work to do with NB on a regular basis. Once they had been keyed into the system, they were tested and downloaded to our counters.

4. I have been asked to describe any qualifications you had. I had no official qualifications.

5. The training was on the job training, a colleague showed me what to do and I then took over the role of Client take on Manager and much later Network Banking Manager.
6. I joined the Post Office in 1994 as a Help Desk Manager grade CM1 (counter manager). I worked on the AP machine which was the machine before Horizon. If a Post Office had a problem with a magnetic card or the machine itself, I would talk to them on the phone and resolve their issues. I then moved to the Capture desk, which was mainly a manual system for sub postmasters, again before Horizon. In 1997 I applied for the role of Client Take on Manager, I got the promotion and was then grade CM2. I stayed in that role until I was made redundant in 2012.
7. I have been asked to provide an overview of what contact I had with sub-postmasters' managers and assistants working in Post Offices, if any. My contact with sub-postmasters ended in 1997 when I changed roles.
8. I have been asked to describe whether I was responsible for providing sub-postmasters at Post Office branches with advice or assistance. No, I dealt with clients and suppliers of bar-codes and magnetic cards and Fujitsu.
9. If there were issues with barcodes or magnetic cards I did not need to escalate, I dealt with them myself.
10. In my role, if there was a problem with an AP transaction it was generally because there was something wrong with the bar-code or magnetic card. If it

was a system issue, I would escalate to Fujitsu for them to resolve but I can't remember how often this was, I don't think for AP there were many issues as it was a tried and tested system.

11. I have been asked if there were any steps that I thought should have been taken in response to any concerns that I raised that were not. My response is no.

12. I have been asked if there was anyone who I felt could have done more to assist or make things better for sub-postmasters. My response is no.

13. I have been asked if I was responsible for managing the contracts of sub-postmasters, what steps I took to ensure that individuals felt confident with using Horizon. I had no contact with sub-postmasters.

14. I have been asked what steps I took to assist someone if they said that they did not feel wholly confident with using Horizon. I had no contact with sub-postmasters.

15. I had heard through office gossip that there were accounting problems with the Horizon system, but our team were not involved with this. We just carried on as normal, loading new clients onto Horizon. I have no idea as to how or where the gossip started and I'm guessing would have been chatted about in our office. At the time I heard the gossip, I did not believe there were problems with Horizon. Like Fujitsu, none of us believed there was a problem. But remember, we were not designers, we were in effect end users. It was never a

big deal, just gossip, hearsay, none of us knew if it was true or false, we were low level and if there had been a problem, no one would have discussed it with us, it would have been discussed at a much higher level, for example with our line manager Rabia Cody who was a very senior manager and above. I'm sorry but can't remember any more detail than that.

16. I have been asked to set out who I received this information from or how I came to be aware of these issues and how widely known I consider them to have been. As above but I have no idea how widely known the issue was, I believe it was being dealt with in our head office in London. We were based in Bracknell.

17. I have been asked how this knowledge impacted upon how I dealt with sub-postmasters or Post Office managers or assistants working in Post Office branches. Resolution of disputes I had no contact with the branches unless they rang me about a barcode or magnetic card not working on their kit.

18. I have been asked if I recall branches mentioning any problems with Horizon more generally when they rang me about bar codes or magnetic cards not working on their kit. No, at that time they would have been more concerned about the product not working, they did not discuss their cash accounts with me.

19. I have been asked to explain whether I was involved in or party to any disputes between the Post Office and sub-postmasters regarding any alleged shortfalls of money. I had no contact or involvement in any disputes.

20. I have been asked to describe the process by which any disputes were raised and resolved and to specify any individuals you know to have been involved. Like I said before, I believe this was all being dealt with in our head office. I have no idea who was involved.

21. I have been asked to describe whether I was aware of any contact or input from Fujitsu in the resolution of any disputes, and if so, to provide details including the names of relevant individuals from Fujitsu. I'm not aware of any of the above. The only thing I heard, again from office gossip was that Fujitsu were in complete denial that there was a problem and were adamant that it was not their software that was causing the accounting problems. That was all I heard through the office gossip, but they were always adamant that if anything went wrong, it was the postmasters doing something silly. They would never accept it could be a fault or a problem no matter what the issue might have been. I think it might have been David Wilcox who was our main contact and he just dismissed anything we took to him. I can't remember any examples but Susanne Robson who is much younger than me would or could give you examples or maybe Andy Corbett. Those 2 knew much more than me about the workings of the whole Horizon system as I only worked on a fraction of it. Please be aware that the last time I was in the office was 2010 as I was on gardening leave for 2 years and would not have heard any gossip since 2010.

22. I have been asked to give my view on whether there could have been any improvement in this process and to identify who would have been responsible

for implementing any improvement I suggest. If the gossip was true about Fujitsu denying any issues, then they need to accept they are not invincible and that anyone can make a mistake. Fujitsu was very arrogant. However, on that note, I have no idea what caused the problem or who caused it.

23. There are no other matters that I consider the Chair of the Inquiry should be aware of.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

GRO

Dated:

8 / 4 / 23