

Witness Name: Paul David Johnson

Statement No.: WITN07980100

Dated:

24 March 2023

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF PAUL DAVID JOHNSON

I, PAUL DAVID JOHNSON, will say as follows...

INTRODUCTION

1. I am a former employee of Post Office Ltd and held various positions.
2. This witness statement is made to assist the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry (the "**Inquiry**") with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 3rd February 2023 (the "**Request**").

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

3. I worked for Post Office Ltd at NBSC in Barnsley as a Postmaster operation business enquiries handler from March 2001 to November 2004.
4. I also worked for Post Office Ltd travelling nationwide visiting Postmaster premises as a Horizon Field Support Officer, undertaking operational training for transactions or undertaking financial audits of Postmaster accounts. I did this from November 2004 to December 2019.

TRAINING AND/OR INSTRUCTIONS

5. In both roles the training provided to me was from colleagues doing the same job. The training lasted for a few weeks until general competence was obtained.
6. Training provided to me was to advise postmasters and staff how to use Horizon. In effect an experienced user teaching a new user. It was fast paced and limited but usually effective. On site training generally lasted up to two weeks and telephone assistance was as required.
7. Postmasters frequently had similar questions to NSBC so a pool of general knowledge was available to advise Postmasters. On site training was similar as new Postmasters regularly had similar concerns with general learning of a new system.
8. The biggest issue Postmasters faced was a limit in time and input that could be given to any Postmaster. On site training is limited to days, phone calls were per issue.
9. Postmasters were frequently concerned that everything moved quickly. In short without having experience staff working for them, Postmasters would inevitably struggle in their roles.

TYPE OF CALLS

10. Most common calls were balancing enquires and procedures, i.e. Back Office functions. Similar on site but also Front Office (customer facing) activities.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

11. Call handling resources was a computer database which was updated daily.
Skill and experience being required to use it effectively which took time to acquire. On site it was experience and knowledge.

MANAGEMENT

12. There was a team manager at NBSC and an Area Manager for field work.
13. Both managers had up to ten staff and were generally there for admin purposes rather than assisting with the day-to-day job.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUBPOSTMASTERS

14. Most staff were not that bothered about Postmasters, they were interested in doing the job as quickly as reasonably possible. I would say 25% of staff were interested in Postmasters and their work and 25% were not. The remainder were in between.

ADEQUACY OF ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

15. The assistance provided by Post Office Ltd via NBSC or onsite was good at a basic level and a good effort but limited in the assistance it could provide. The product was complication and by this reason, training was limited.
Postmasters really had to rely on their experienced staff to be most successful.

KNOWLEDGE OF BUGS, ERRORS, OR DEFECTS

16. I was not aware of any bugs etc with the Horizon System.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed: **GRO**

Dated: 24 March 2023