

Witness Name: Mike Croshaw

Statement No.: WITN08110100

Dated: 18/03/2023

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST STATEMENT OF MIKE CROSHAW

I, Mike Croshaw, will say as follows...

INTRODUCTION

1. I am a former employee of Fujitsu.
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 17 January 2023 (the "**Request**").

BACKGROUND

3. My professional background is an IT Support Engineer of 20 years experience.
4. My role in relation to the Horizon Project was as a third line support engineer working in the SSC at Fujitsu. My job title was Product Specialist.

KEL system

5. The KEL database was simply a knowledge database for use of the SSC in diagnosing issues. Every time we found an issue or some useful information on how something within the system worked we would document it.
6. The KEL system worked very well for its intended purpose. It was a very useful knowledge repository.
7. To search the KEL system the person just had to go to a search page in input their search terms (i.e. an error message). This would bring up a list of possible KELs in order of relevance.

PinICL and PEAK systems

8. I don't remember PinICL, I either didn't use it much, or it was phased out when I joined. PEAK was our in-house call logging system, it was designed for use by the SSC but over the years was used by other teams. I always found it very good compared to other systems I used before and have used since.
9. Service tickets were assigned by whomever was on triage duty (called Pre-Scan in the SSC). They were assigned on the basis of skillset and workload.
10. A service ticket would be closed when the issue was considered resolved.

SSC

11. I was a member of the SSC for two periods of time: (i) August 1998 until August 2000; and (ii) January 2004 – April 2020. My recollections are very positive. It was a group of very competent technical people, well managed, just doing their job resolving issues to the best of their ability. There was empathy and sympathy towards postmasters when they had problems with the system and most of the people in the SSC went out of their way to help the postmasters. Quite a few would work late on a Wednesday for example because that was the day postmasters had to do their weekly reports. This often caused them to overrun and people in the SSC would stay on until 7 or 8pm to help them.
12. The SSC provided 3rd line support to the Horizon system. This meant it was the last and most technical line of support before issues would need to go to the development team. Before tickets came to the SSC they would go through 1st and 2nd line support which were the main customer facing helpdesks.
13. There were around 30 people on average in the SSC when I was there.
14. Within the SSC there was the manager, and then three or four senior technicians. These did some management duties but also were the most experienced technical people. Many years later these positions became formalised as team leader positions.
15. To get a job in the SSC you had to take a technical test and pass an interview. There were no formal qualifications required as such but you had

to prove you had technical experience and ability. As this was a 3rd line support role this had to be fairly considerable.

16. There was a generous training budget for training courses and many people went on these. We also had regular knowledge transfer sessions from development whenever there was a new release. Senior technicians within the SSC would train the more junior people. New joiners were not allowed on the live system for some months until they had been trained.
17. We were assigned tickets in PEAK. If we didn't know what to do we would seek out one of the senior technicians for guidance. For anything that could impact the live system a second person was required to observe your work.
18. The relationship between development and the SSC was very good. Between the other lines of support it was less good due to the fact they were located elsewhere, and had a high turnover rate. But it was still a good relationship and members of the SSC went up to Stevenage (where 2nd line was based) to do training and improve the relationship. Some members of 2nd line support came to work in the SSC for periods of time to gain experience.
19. The call filtration rate from the SMC varied over the years, depending on who was in the SMC. Generally it was ok and the SSC could cope very well with the call volume we had.

Identification and rectification of bugs, errors or defects

20. I have been asked to set out my recollection of the identification and rectification of the bugs identified in Appendix 2 of *Bates and others v. Post Office Limited (NO. 6)*. I have no recollection of any of those bugs. It's been 20 years since I worked on that part of the system and even then it was not

my main area of support and I did not work much on counter issues. After the first year in the SSC I don't think I worked on any counter/reconciliation issues (but I can't remember).

21. I don't remember the specifics of any of the above issues.

22. I have been asked a number of questions about the process Fujitsu would follow when a bug, errors or defect was identified:

- a. I have been asked who was told of the identification of the bug. That would depend on the severity of the bug and who was likely to be impacted. Any serious issues were always communicated to POA, to the best of my knowledge.
- b. I have been asked which teams would be involved in developing the fix. Again that would depend on where the bug was. But normally one of the development teams would be involved.
- c. I have been asked if the fix required changes to Horizon IT System's code, how this would be implemented. Any fixes would go through a full QA process, go through the test environments and then be signed off by POA before going live.

23. I have been asked about in which circumstances a work around would be offered to an identified bug. I was not involved in those sorts of decisions.

24. I have been asked if there were any practice, policies or procedures in place regarding what information could be passed to SPMs in relation to bugs within the Horizon IT system. I had no involvement at that level. I would update the PEAK and escalate any serious issues to the SSC manager or one of the technical leads.

25. I have been asked if any pressure was applied on me or colleagues not to pass information to SPMS in relation to potential bugs. Not that I can remember.
26. I have been asked if there were any practice, policies or procedures regarding what information could be passed to Post Office in relation to potential bugs within the Horizon IT System. Presumably. However, my updates simply got put into PEAK, I did not communicate directly with Post Office.
27. I have been asked if I had sufficient time and resources to identify potential problems within the Horizon IT System. Yes.
28. I have been asked how the SSC investigated problems that were suspected to be related to third party software. We looked at whatever information we had available in the error logs. If we suspected a code level issue that we didn't have access to then we would raise a ticket with the vendor in question.
29. I have been asked if I ever felt under pressure to avoid finding bugs in the Horizon IT software. No, not at all, quite the opposite.
30. I have been asked to set out whether any pressure was placed on me or my colleagues to pass information about bugs to Post Office. Not that I recall.

Remote Access

31. I have been asked several questions about remote access as a member of the SSC.
- a. I have been asked when remote access would be used for what purpose. Normally this would be used to access counter logs. It was heavily regulated and logged. Also to get onto servers on the live estate if they were having issues, or to retrieve log files. The live

estate was remote from us, so we had to use remote access for most call investigations.

- b. I have been asked which workstreams or servers we would remotely access. Any of the host systems on the live estate, correspondence servers quite commonly in the Riposte era. We would access post office counters to retrieve logs and look at registry settings.
- c. I haven't asked whether we accessed the correspondence servers and/or counter workstations. Yes.
- d. I have been asked which tools I would use to access those workstations/servers remotely. I can't remember.
- e. I have been asked what security measures were in place to prevent unauthorised access. I can't remember the details, but tokenised security was in place, it was not easy to access the live estate.
- f. I have been asked what audit data was captured and maintained regarding the use of remote access. I can't remember the details, but the system was heavily audited.
- g. I have been asked what data could be added, edited, deleted or otherwise changed remotely. I can't recall any real details, but we could change records in the back end databases. These sorts of changes were heavily regulated and signed off by POA.

General

32. I have been asked if SPMS had access to adequate training and assistance on using the Horizon IT System. I think the training they were given could have been much better, so no.

33. I have been asked what I think the cause of the problems experienced in using the Horizon IT System. Inadequate training was probably the biggest problem.

34. I have been asked what changes to the support services would have improved the advice and assistance received by SPMs. I can't think of anything in particular. The SSC was a very well run support unit.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

GRO

Dated: 18/03/2023