

Witness Name: David Patrick

Statement No.: WITN05450100

Dated: 14 September 2023

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF DAVID PATRICK

I, David Patrick will say as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. I am a former employee of Post Office Ltd (POL), having joined the organization in 1980, working with them for over 38 years before leaving in March 2018.

2. I held the following positions during these years of employment with them:
 - Counter Clerk / Assistant Branch Manager 1980 – 1992
 - Auditor 1992 – 1998
 - Survey Support Manager 1998 – 2002
 - AML Training & Compliance Manager 2002 – 2006
 - Field Team Leader (FTL) 2006 – 2012
 - Field Change Advisor (FCA) 2012 - 2018

3. 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 sent to me via email dated 22/08 2022 (the “**Request**”).
4. Documents provided to me by the Inquiry for the purpose of assisting in writing this statement are listed at the end of the statement. I will make specific reference to documents relevant in the course of this statement.

BACKGROUND

5. In terms as my role as a an FTL, I was appointed to this position in 2006, having 26 years’ experience working for POL, visiting branches and managing staff. The role involved manging a team of Field Support Advisors (FSAs) who delivered training to Subpostmasters and conducted audits as scheduled by the central scheduling team. The FSAs were previously auditors and trainers who were then merged into one team in 2006. As with most of these positions, they would likely previously have had years of experience of working and managing at PO branch offices before taking on this role. When taking on this role, they would have had classroom induction training and ongoing training sessions as & when procedures and working practices changed.
6. All audit process manuals and documents were held centrally, kept updated and fully accessible to all staff to ensure that they could follow all the required processes when undertaking their duties.

7. The planning & scheduling of audits was undertaken by a central scheduling team. The FCAs would simply carry out the works as supplied by the scheduling team.

8. Prior to undertaking their scheduled audit activity, the FCAs would ensure that all the necessary paperwork was put together for recording all cash and stock at the branch and for undertaking and compliance checks if required. They would also note the Contract Managers (CM) details in the event any issues arise that require escalation.

9. In the event of a problem i.e. large cash discrepancy / security issue, the FCA would contact the CM directly and any subsequent action would be on the instruction of the CM.

Audit of Astwood Bank Post Office:

10. On 11/09/2008 an audit led by myself and supported by colleagues Kevin Watkins and Faith Lavender was undertaken at Astwood Bank Post Office. This was a routine audit as scheduled by the Post Office central scheduling team. Shortly after arriving at the branch at 8:15, the Subpostmaster Mr Julian Wilson informed me that there would be a shortfall in monies of around £27k. and that this was as a result of accumulated shortages over the last 5 years or so. We undertook a full asset verification (cash & stock check) and found a shortage of £27,811.98. Mr Wilson was then advised that he should satisfy

himself that the figures of the audit team were correct. Therefore, we then confirmed the differences with Mr Wilson and he confirmed the audit shortage. As per standard procedure, we contacted the Contracts Manager (CM) for the branch, Glen Chester, and told him about the shortage. He then informed Mr Wilson that he would be suspended pending further investigation. I also notified Graham Brander (Fraud Team Manager) and subsequently Gary Thomas (Fraud Advisor) to relay these findings. Mr Wilson agreed to allow us to appoint a temporary Post Office manager to his branch in order to maintain service at the office. All assets were transferred to the interim manager Sue Wallace on day of audit and the audit was concluded at 16:45.

11. On the day of audit, there was also a request from Gary Thomas (Fraud Advisor) for us to obtain a signed statement from Mr Wilson, confirming the facts around the shortage. We were also asked to obtain an Event Log print out. Both of these would have been included in all the audit paperwork that was submitted to the CM on completion of the audit.

12. I completed an Audit report (POL00057304 & POL00119086) and Witness Statement (POL00064118) which are already with and have been provided to me by the Post Office Horizon Inquiry team. The request for the Witness Statement POL00064118 came from Fraud Team and the wording and construction of it would have been as instructed by the Fraud Team.

13. I had no further involvement with this case.

14. In terms of the integrity of the Horizon system, people of my grade were simply guided by official Post Office Communications at the time which continued to inform us that the system was robust and could not be challenged.

15. On seeing the subsequent Judgements of the Court of Appeal, it would seem that there were issues with the Horizon system and that Fujitsu were aware of this. Had this been made known years before this, then I'm sure a lot of innocent, law abiding subpostmasters would not have been prosecuted and all the subsequent hardships could have been avoided.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

GRO

Dated: 14 September 2023

Index to First Witness Statement of David Patrick

No.	URN	Control Number	Document Description
1	POL00032698	POL-0029633	Assurance Review - Recruitment (Vetting & Training)" (version 1.0, 27 October 2009)
2	POL00086765	POL-0083823	"Network auditing approach, methods and assurance" (2013)
3	POL00088453	POL-0085511	"Training & Audit Advisor" (undated)
4	POL00088557	POL-0085615	"Audit Advisor" (undated)
5	POL00084650	POL-0081708	"Audit Plan & Scheduling, Chapter 1 of the Audit Process Manual" (Version 8.0) (2010)
6	POL00083966	POL-0081024	"Audit Charter" (version 4.0, undated)
7	POL00084801	POL-0081859	"Performing a Branch Audit", Chapter 3 of the Audit Process Manual (version 5.1, May 2010)
8	POL00085534	POL-0082592	"Core & Outreach Audit Process", Chapter 3a of the Audit Process Manual (version 1.0, 27 May 2011)
9	POL00087627	POL-0084685	"Follow Up Audit Process", Chapter 3b of the Audit Process Manual (version 3.0, May 2015)
10	POL00088252	POL-0085310	"Performing a Cash Centre Audit", Chapter 7 of the Audit Process Manual (version 5.0, Aug 2016)
11	POL00087672	POL-0084730	"Quality Assurance", Chapter 11 of the Audit Process Manual (version 5.0, Apr 2015)
12	POL00084003	POL-0081061	"Post Incident Auditing without Horizon", Chapter 14 of the Audit Process Manual (version 1.0, Nov 2006)
13	POL00084813	POL-0081871	"Condensed Guide for Audit Attendance" (version 2, Oct 2008)
14	POL00085652	POL-0082710	"Requirement of Network Field Support Advisors at audit, following discovery of discrepancy" (version 1.0, Oct 2011)
15	POL00086765	POL-0083823	"Network auditing approach, methods and assurance" (2013)

16	POL00087688	POL-0084746	"Training Guide: Compliance Audit Tool" (Sep 2015)
17	POL00087716	POL-0084774	"Training-Aide for Branch Asset Checking" (version 1.7, Nov 2014)
18	POL00087614	POL-0084672	"Terms of Reference Audits" (version 1, April 2015)
19	FUJ00001894	POINQ0008065F	"Audit Trail Functional Specification" (version 8.0, 18 October 2004)
20	POL00002841	VIS00003855	Global User Account (September 2016)
21	POL00057304	POL-0053783	Audit report, dated 11 September 2008, sent to Mr Wilson
22	POL00119086	POL-0119005	Audit report, dated 11 September 2008, sent to Glenn Chester
23	POL00044692	POL-0041171	Investigation report
24	POL00064118	POL-0060597	Witness statement David Patrick 16 March 2009
25	UKGI00013548	UKGI024341-001	Judgment of the Court of Appeal in <i>Josephine Hamilton & Others v Post Office Limited</i> [2021] EWCA Crim 577