

Witness Name: Sean Lewis

Statement No: WITN05180100

Date: 16/03/2023

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF SEAN LEWIS

I Sean Lewis say as follows:

1. Having been made surplus in my previous HR role with Royal Mail, I took on the role as Performance Advisor with Post Office Ltd in the East of England, dates 2004 to 2006.
2. I had a long and happy time with Royal Mail, working with them in total for 21 years. Upon leaving secondary education, I gained various O level qualifications. Throughout my time at Royal Mail, I attended many internal courses and exams. Importantly I had years of on-the-job experience, including payroll, HR and training.
3. Training for the Performance Advisor role consisted of approximately a month of shadowing a Performance Advisor colleague.
4. My role as Performance Advisor meant I had ad-hoc contact with Sub Postmasters and their staff. I feel I maintained a good working relationship

with those Sub postmasters that were working in my area. I had over 200 rural post office branches under my watch. I done my level best to support all Sub Postmasters, support included security issues, trauma incidents, accounting issues, new product advice and raising sales.

5. I would become aware of performance issues as a result of bi-annual visits, via the POL helpline, via a call/email from my Area Manager, or from a phone call from my area office.

6. My role as Performance Advisor involved imparting advice and support. If I, or the Sub Postmaster felt it useful, I would visit the branch. If I couldn't resolve

the issue or concern, then I would escalate to my Area Manger or Contract Manager.

7. Horizon IT issues would regularly arise. Error notices would arise calling on the Sub Postmaster to make good any losses in their account – there were a wide range of reasons why an error notice could occur, out of date stock, rolling over accounts without clearing a loss.
8. I believe steps were taken to address any issues that I raised including, for example. extra training and support or I as a Performance Advisor keeping a close watch on how they were performing – especially if new to the job.
9. I don't believe I could have provided any more support than I was already doing. I had over 200 branches, many asking for advice and assistance. Our training resource was already stretched.
10. I believe the culture that I personally tried to maintain was one of trust and respect. I recall at evening sales events that my Sub Postmasters would come up to myself to chat and exchange dialogue of a personal manner. I believe there was distrust between some members of POL staff and some Sub Postmasters.
11. The Contract Manager was responsible for maintaining Sub Postmaster contracts. If I had any issues, I wouldn't hesitate to contact him for advice and support.

12. I had a good working relationship with the Contract Manager in my area.

13. If a Sub Postmaster wasn't confident in using Horizon, i.e., a new Sub Postmaster, I would often visit on a face-to-face basis to address any concerns/ help where I could. I recall arranging for extra training support on occasions.

14. I was never personally involved with classroom training. If I thought extra training was beneficial, I would ask my Area Office to arrange.

15. There were occasions whereby I couldn't identify why a Sub Postmaster managed to get their accounts into such difficulties. When this happened, I would liaise with my colleagues for best practice advice. My last port of call would be to speak to my Area Manager for advice.

16. Accounting issues were a regular part of my job. I would hear about issues via the POL helpdesk, Area Office and my Area Manager. Dealing with and resolving accounting issues was an important task for me.

17. Sub Postmasters having accounting issues made me feel that Sub Postmasters needed more support, and not less. I felt that the POL helpline wasn't always able to help and assist.
18. If there were shortfalls that a Sub Postmaster couldn't make good, I would contact them in order to discuss fully. Some we were able to resolve, those that couldn't, I would escalate to my Area Manager.
19. As I have said above, disputes were raised by various sources, Area Manager, POL helpdesk and my Area Office. How I went about resolving the dispute, I answered in paragraph 19.
20. I was not aware of any input from Fujitsu in resolving disputes.
21. If appropriate, I believe the Area Manager or Contract Manager would have been the one to liaise with Fujitsu should this have been the case. As I said, I never knew of Fujitsu becoming involved in the time I spent as Performance Advisor.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

Signed:

GRO

Dated:

16/03/2023