



Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

020 7219 5777 - beiscom@parliament.uk - www.parliament.uk/beis - @CommonsBEIS

Rob Putland,
Vice President and Head of Global Legal and Commercial,
Fujitsu,
22 Baker Street,
London,
W1U 3BW.

2 June 2020

Dear Rob,

I hope this letter finds you well.

I am writing in my capacity as the new BEIS Committee Chair, having taken over from Rachel Reeves on 5 May. The Committee's evidence session on 24 March on the Post Office and Horizon was postponed due to the Covid-19 lockdown. However, the Committee is keen to hear from the witnesses who were scheduled to appear and I would therefore be grateful if you could answer the following questions:

- The Judge in *Bates v Post Office Ltd* said that in giving evidence Fujitsu gave "a very one-sided picture which was to omit any reference to important contemporaneous documents that criticise or demonstrate any deficiencies with Horizon".
 - How do you respond to this criticism?
 - Do you accept that there were some major issues with Horizon and, if so, when did you become aware of these issues and how were they dealt with?
- The Judge also drew attention to a letter from Ernst and Young in March 2011 which raised concerns about Horizon in terms of "privileges and other critical matters".
 - What were these privileges and other critical matters, how did you address them and how and when did you share this information with Post Office Ltd?
- The Judge established that there were errors and bugs within Horizon and that remote access to Horizon terminals was possible and transactions could be changed without a sub-postmaster knowing. He said that some of this only came to light because of the Group Litigation.
 - Do you accept that local Horizon terminals could be accessed and altered centrally?
 - Why did it take a highly expensive court case to establish these facts?

- What role did Fujitsu play in investigations and prosecutions of sub-postmasters and postal workers who found shortfalls in their Horizon accounts?
 - Did Fujitsu work with sub-postmasters and postal staff to establish the nature of these shortfalls when they first arose?
- How reliable is Horizon now and what steps are Fujitsu taking to ensure full disclosure of errors and bugs?
 - How many bugs, errors and discrepancies have been logged for each year since they began to be recorded?
 - Can you provide a breakdown by error type and its implications for the integrity of a local Horizon terminal and for the system as a whole?
- Do central Horizon terminals currently have access to local Horizon terminals in branches and, if so, how is this being used, logged and documented?
- The Judge in Bates v Post Office Ltd said that he had “grave concerns” about the evidence your employees gave and has referred it to the Director of Public Prosecutions.
 - How do you respond to this serious criticism of the evidence Fujitsu provided?
 - What lessons have you learnt from Horizon and how can you reassure my Committee that the type of issues detailed in Bates v Post Office Ltd will not happen again?
 - Have any Fujitsu staff been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the issues associated with Horizon and/or regarding the evidence they gave in Bates v Post Office Ltd?
- What has been the frequency and nature of the information and advice you provided regarding Horizon to :
 - Post Office Ltd
 - Government departments
 - UK Government Investments
- Did Fujitsu contribute to the Complaints Review and Mediation Scheme, and, if so, how?
- Is Fujitsu playing a role in the current new scheme to assess applications from sub-postmasters who believe they had experienced shortfalls related to previous versions of the Horizon system?
 - If so, what is the nature of that role?
- Do the issues surrounding Horizon raise questions about your ability to carry on providing IT to the Post Office but also to other public bodies?

I would be very grateful if you could provide answers to these questions by 16 June.

With best wishes,



Darren Jones MP
Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee