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IT worker evidence reveals a toxic Post Office IT helpdesk that discriminated against subpostmasters

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By Karl Flinders

The Post Office Horizon helpdesk was a toxic, rudderless and resentful environment, where racism was a daily occurrence and subpostmasters were considered incompetent or corrupt, the public inquiry into the Post Office IT scandal has heard.

Speaking at the latest hearing in the ongoing Post Office Horizon inquiry, IT consultant Amandeep Singh, who worked at ICL on the Post Office's Horizon helpdesk in Wakefield, Yorkshire, from 2000 to 2001, revealed details about life on the other end of the telephone line that subpostmasters turned to for help with the IT system they used in branches.

Horizon was introduced in 1999 to replace mainly manual accounting practices. Originally from ICL, before its acquisition by Fujitsu, the IT system was rolled out across the Post Office branch network, but its introduction led to a sudden increase in subpostmasters reporting unexplained shortfalls in their accounts, for which they were blamed.

Hundreds were prosecuted and thousands lost huge sums of money, with many going bankrupt. Over 80 former subpostmasters have so far had wrongful convictions for fraud and theft overturned.

In 2009, Computer Weekly published an investigation into the problems experienced by seven subpostmasters who were using Horizon. The Post Office told each of them that nobody else was experiencing problems and covered up the computer errors. It is a common complaint of subpostmasters that the helpdesk did not help them investigate unexplained accounting shortfalls.

Lack of trust and training

Singh, who was on a 12-month work placement with ICL as part of his computer science degree at Huddersfield University, worked on the ICL Epson support desk initially, but this was integrated with Fujitsu's Horizon helpdesk support desk after the Japanese supplier acquired ICL.

Singh said the helpdesk operation he was part of – made up of about eight teams of 14 people, known as squads – was rudderless, resentful, racist and undertrained to help subpostmasters, who were themselves unprepared for the Horizon system. There was also a culture of not trusting the subpostmasters, he said.

"People were having genuine software problems," Singh told the inquiry, but spoke of "a pre-built prejudice that you can't trust the people and that they are incompetent".

Asked whether this prejudice contributed to the Horizon scandal, he said: "If you have already made a judgement call [that] the people you are supporting are incompetent or corrupt in some way, it would take a lot for people to think the software has a problem. We were much happier to push down on the subpostmasters and say 'it's your issue' than to push it upwards and ask whether there is an issue or question why we are having so many calls about this."

He said part of the problem was a lack of leadership, with the helpdesk teams left to sort everything out themselves and non-existent managerial support. There was a management team, but it did nothing, he said.

"They didn't know anything, they never touched the software. You would only go to them to ask for holidays," said Singh. "The managers were acutely aware that the helpdesk was struggling, so they picked out people in the teams that were most capable and made them like floor walkers, team leaders, or advocates, if you like, and you would go to them with a problem. It felt like a rudderless ship."

Toxic workplace environment

He also spoke of a toxic environment in the helpdesk team after the merger, because more senior second-line support engineers were put in the same team as the first-line support. Singh said there was resentment among engineers who had been moved.

"On top of this, they were no longer supporting customers like graphic design and media agencies, but supporting an old lady in Wales who doesn't even know what a personal computer is. A lot of [the team] felt the role was beneath them and that toxicity just grew and grew."

He said although the environment was toxic, he knew he was only there for a year as a student and just wanted to see it out.

Singh witnessed racism on a daily basis, with subpostmasters from Asian backgrounds being singled out for discrimination. "Many of these people we were supporting were Asian subpostmasters. Sometimes they would ring up and say they have a £2,000 or £5,000 discrepancy, or even a wild figure like £100,000, and people in the team would say, 'I've got another Patel'. You would hear it constantly." He said although he has an Asian background, nobody ever questioned the language that was being used.

Frantic and stressful

Singh was a first-line engineer between October 2000 and September 2001, in the early days of the Horizon system. He told the inquiry the teams were inundated with calls in those early days: "It was a constant stream and it used to peak on Wednesdays when subpostmasters would do their reconciliation and balance their books. The helpdesk was open longer that day because you knew it was going to be a really, really heavy day. You could be on the phone for a few hours with a subpostmaster trying to help them reconcile."

He described the huge challenge of moving from the Epson support desk, where the people he was supporting were tech-savvy, to the Post Office Horizon helpdesk, where he might be supporting an elderly subpostmaster with little or no IT knowledge: "This was 2000. A lot of subpostmasters had worked in their branches for decades and had not even been around a personal computer. Then you were asking them to use the [Horizon] software."

Singh said he received no training in how to deal with people with different levels of computer literacy, and some of the people he had to help did not even know what a computer mouse was. "The lack of IT knowledge brought anxiety to the subpostmasters, and to us, because we had to sometimes explain a complex transaction, knowing the subpostmaster would struggle orientating themselves around [the system]," he said.

"You had to physically build yourself up for these calls because you knew that somebody would call with a discrepancy. The subpostmasters were always quite frantic, so stressed, asking, 'How have I got this figure? How am I going to reconcile this account?'. We would work with them for hours, and if we couldn't resolve it, we would go to team leaders. If we couldn't [resolve it], it would have to be written off as a discrepancy. This almost became the norm."

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He said subpostmasters were constantly paying small amounts to cover unexplained shortfalls and only called the helpline when the figures were high.

According to Singh, in the early days of the helpdesk, people were calling in about how to do transactions, but this reduced as subpostmasters quickly got used to it. “Then, nearly everything was discrepancy, discrepancy, discrepancy. [That] was what all the calls were about – people just not being able to reconcile their accounts to zero.”

He said he only received a few days’ training to see the equipment, run some dummy transactions and learn about the software. He said, during training, they probably got to do a reconciliation once, and were mainly doing routine transactions.

Read all Computer Weekly articles about the scandal since 2009

- May 2009: Bankruptcy, prosecution and disrupted livelihoods – postmasters tell their story.
- September 2009: Postmasters form action group after accounts shortfall.
- November 2009: [Post Office theft case deferred over IT questions](#).
- May 2010: [A pilot of the new Horizon Online system at Royal Mail has been scaled back after connectivity problems and outages](#).
- February 2011: [Post Office faces legal action over alleged accounting system failures](#).
- October 2011: [85 subpostmasters seek legal support in claims against Post Office computer system](#).
- June 2012: [Post Office launches external review of system at centre of legal disputes](#).
- January 2013: [Post Office admits Horizon system needs more investigation](#).
- January 2013: [Post Office announces amnesty for Horizon evidence](#).
- January 2013: [Post Office wants to get to bottom of IT system allegations](#).
- June 2013: [Investigation into Post Office accounting system to drill down on strongest cases](#).
- July 2013: [Post Office Horizon system investigation reveals concerns](#).
- October 2013: [End in sight for subpostmaster claims against Post Office’s Horizon accounting system](#).
- October 2013: [Former Lord Justice of Appeal Hooper joins Post Office Horizon investigation](#).
- November 2013: [150 subpostmasters file claims over “faulty” Horizon accounting system](#).
- September 2014: [Fresh questions raised over Post Office IT system’s role in fraud cases](#).
- December 2014: [MPs blast Post Office over IT system investigation and remove backing](#).
- December 2014: [Why MPs lost faith in the Post Office’s IT investigation, but vowed to fight on](#).
- December 2014: [MPs to debate subpostmaster IT injustice claims](#).
- December 2014: [MP accuses Post Office of acting ‘duplicitously’ in IT investigation](#).
- January 2015: [MPs force inquiry into Post Office subpostmaster mediation scheme](#).
- January 2015: [Post Office faces grilling by MPs over Horizon accounting system](#).
- February 2015: [Post Office CIO will talk to any subpostmaster about IT problems, promises CEO](#).
- March 2015: [Post Office ends working group for IT system investigation day before potentially damaging report](#).
- March 2015: [MPs seek reassurance over Post Office mediation scheme](#).
- March 2015: [Retiring MP aims to uncover truth of alleged Post Office computer system problems](#).
- April 2015: [Post Office failed to investigate account shortfalls before legal action, report claims](#).
- April 2015: [Criminal Courts Review Commission set to review subpostmasters’ claims of wrongful prosecution](#).
- June 2015: [Post Office looking to replace controversial Horizon system with IBM, says MP](#).
- July 2015: [Campaigners call for independent inquiry into Post Office Horizon IT system dispute](#).
- October 2015: [James Arbuthnot takes Post Office IT fight to House of Lords](#).
- November 2015: [The union that represents Post Office subpostmasters has warned of a problem with the Horizon accounting system](#).
- November 2015: [An email from Post Office IT support reveals a problem with the Horizon system and supporting processes that could lead to accounting errors](#).
- November 2015: [Group litigation against Post Office being prepared in Horizon dispute](#).
- February 2016: [Post Office faces group litigation over Horizon IT as subpostmasters fund class action](#).
- June 2016: [Post Office chairman Tim Parker says there would be “considerable risk” associated with changing its Horizon computer system](#).
- November 2016: [The legal team hired by a group of subpostmasters will take their case to the next stage](#).
- January 2017: [The group action against the Post Office that alleges subpostmasters have been wrongly punished for accounting errors gets green light from the High Court of Justice](#).
- March 2017: [1,000 subpostmasters apply to join IT-related group litigation against Post Office](#).
- April 2017: [Investigation into claims of miscarriages of justice in relation to a Post Office accounting system has appointed a forensic accountant firm](#).
- May 2017: [Hundreds of subpostmasters have applied to join IT-related legal action since March](#).
- July 2017: [Post Office defence in computer system legal case due this week](#).
- August 2017: [Campaigners submit initial evidence in group litigation against Post Office over controversial Horizon IT system](#).
- October 2017: [Subpostmasters’ group action against the Post Office reaches an important milestone](#).
- November 2017: [An end is in sight for subpostmasters’ campaign against alleged wrongful prosecution, which they blame on a faulty computer system](#).
- November 2017: [The High Court judge managing the subpostmasters versus Post Office legal case over an allegedly faulty computer system tells legal teams to cooperate](#).
- January 2018: [Forensic investigation into Post Office IT system at centre of legal case nears completion](#).
- April 2018: [Criminal Cases Review Commission forensic examination of the IT system at the centre of a legal case against the Post Office has raised further questions](#).
- May 2018: [Post Office branches unable to connect to Horizon computer system for several hours after morning opening time](#).
- October 2018: [After over a decade of controversy, next week marks the beginning of a court battle between subpostmasters and the Post Office](#).
- November 2018: [Case against Post Office in relation to allegedly faulty computer system begins in High Court](#).
- November 2018: [High Court case in which subpostmasters are suing the Post Office has revealed a known problem with a computer system at the core of the dispute](#).
- November 2018: [A High Court trial, where subpostmasters are suing the Post Office for damages caused by an allegedly faulty IT system, ends second week](#).
- November 2018: [Post Office director admits to Horizon errors and not sharing details with subpostmaster network](#).
- November 2018: [The High Court trial in which subpostmasters are suing the Post Office has reached an important stage](#).
- December 2018: [CCRC may hold off subpostmaster decision until after Post Office Horizon trial](#).
- December 2018: [Court case where subpostmasters are suing the Post Office set to span at least four trials and extend into 2020](#).
- January 2019: [Subpostmasters’ campaign group attacks Post Office CEO Paula Vennells’ New Year honour amid ongoing court case](#).
- January 2019: [Thousands of known errors on controversial Post Office computer system to be revealed](#).
- March 2019: [Tech under spotlight at High Court in second subpostmasters versus Post Office trial](#).
- March 2019: [Post Office considered Horizon IT system “high-risk”, court told](#).
- March 2019: [CCRC watching Post Office Horizon trial closely](#).
- March 2019: [Judge rules that Post Office showed “oppressive behaviour” in response to claimants accused of accounting errors they blamed on Horizon IT system](#).
- March 2019: [Post Office “lacked humanity” in the treatment of subpostmasters, says peer](#).

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- March 2019: [A High Court judge heard that the Post Office did not investigate a computer system error that could cause losses, despite being offered evidence.](#)
- March 2019: [The Post Office legal team in the case brought by more than 500 subpostmasters has called for the judge to be recused after questioning his impartiality.](#)
- March 2019: [A senior civil servant asked the Post Office to repay public money it had wrongly allocated to paying legal costs.](#)
- April 2019: [Subpostmaster claimants' legal team makes application for the Post Office to pay millions of pounds of costs associated with trial.](#)
- April 2019: [Post Office to appeal judgment from first Horizon trial.](#)
- April 2019: [The Post Office's claim that the judge overseeing the case concerning its controversial Horizon IT system was biased has been dismissed.](#)
- April 2019: [MP questions government over Post Office Horizon case.](#)
- April 2019: [Government says no conflict of interest in trial despite Post Office chairman's dual role.](#)
- May 2019: [The Court of Appeal has refused the Post Office's application to appeal a major decision in the Horizon IT trial.](#)
- May 2019: [The Post Office has applied for permission to appeal judgments from the first trial in its IT-related legal battle with subpostmasters.](#)
- May 2019: [The judge in the Post Office Horizon trial has ordered the organisation to pay the legal costs of its courtroom adversaries, and refused to give permission to appeal a major judgment.](#)
- June 2019: [Post Office asks Court of Appeal for permission to appeal judgment in first Horizon trial.](#)
- July 2019: [The Post Office has admitted that some subpostmasters are at risk of accounts not balancing due to an error it does not understand.](#)
- July 2019: [Problem revealed during High Court trial left subpostmaster with £18,000 surplus after IT system failed to register full amount of cash scanned in.](#)
- August 2019: [Subpostmasters suffering slow running and frozen terminals while Post Office searches for a fix to issues apparently caused by a software update.](#)
- August 2019: [The Post Office has fixed the latest problems with its Horizon system, affecting hundreds of branches.](#)
- October 2019: [A High Court judgment for a trial that focused on the Post Office's IT system at the centre of a multimillion-pound litigation will be announced early next month.](#)
- November 2019: [The Court of Appeal has rejected a Post Office application to appeal judgments made in its multimillion-pound battle with subpostmasters over IT system failures.](#)
- November 2019: [Peer calls for clear-out of Post Office board after Court of Appeal confirms major court defeat.](#)
- December 2019: [The Post Office has settled its long-running legal dispute with subpostmasters, and will pay £57.75m in damages.](#)
- December 2019: [Subpostmansters ended their legal battle with the Post Office at the optimal time, according to the lawyer that managed the High Court action.](#)
- December 2019: [Subpostmansters proved right on IT system failures as calls for full public inquiry mount.](#)
- December 2019: [Criminal Courts Review Commission to review Horizon judgment "swiftly".](#)
- December 2019: [National Federation of Subpostmasters cries foul after court ruling on controversial computer system.](#)
- December 2019: [Former Post Office CEO apologises to subpostmasters over Horizon scandal.](#)
- December 2019: [Call for former Post Office CEO to step down from public roles after IT court battle lost.](#)
- January 2020: [Fujitsu must face scrutiny following Post Office Horizon trial judgment.](#)
- January 2020: [Subpostmaster group calls for government to pay legal costs for Horizon trial.](#)
- January 2020: [Why subpostmasters are calling on the government to pay Horizon trial costs.](#)
- January 2020: [Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy says it did not make decisions in the Post Office's recent court battle.](#)
- January 2020: [Government should not be allowed to dismiss subpostmasters' claims over Horizon IT scandal.](#)
- January 2020: [Police sent information about potential Fujitsu staff perjury in subpostmaster prosecutions.](#)
- January 2020: [Prosecutions are a significant step closer to being sent to the Court of Appeal as Criminal Courts Review Commission forms a group of commissioners to review them.](#)
- January 2020: [Alan Bates: The "details man" the Post Office paid the price for ignoring.](#)
- February 2020: [The government has refused to pay the huge legal costs subpostmasters incurred in their battle with the government-owned Post Office, which they won.](#)
- February 2020: [Members of Parliament seeking a public inquiry into the Post Office Horizon scandal face huge challenges, but pressure and time could force justice.](#)
- February 2020: [Calls for inquiry into Post Office IT scandal increase in Parliament, with cross-party support.](#)
- February 2020: [Care Quality Commission to review concerns over Paula Vennells' appointment after they were raised by a former NHS consultant psychiatrist.](#)
- February 2020: [Government admits it was too passive managing Post Office as parliamentary pressure builds.](#)
- February 2020: [Minister says Post Office IT experts misled the government when it asked questions about subpostmasters' concerns over Horizon IT system.](#)
- March 2020: [Boris Johnson commits to "getting to the bottom of" Post Office Horizon IT scandal.](#)
- March 2020: [Boris Johnson's commitment to inquiry into Post Office scandal in doubt.](#)
- March 2020: [MPs call on PM to commit to full public inquiry into Post Office Horizon IT scandal.](#)
- March 2020: [Those who did not play by the rules in Post Office Horizon scandal "should face prosecution".](#)
- March 2020: [MPs told to hold to account those responsible for Post Office Horizon IT scandal.](#)
- March 2020: [The Post Office has sparked anger with secret settlements with subpostmasters outside the recent legal action against it.](#)
- March 2020: [Labour MP Karl Turner tells Computer Weekly that the Post Office Horizon scandal is the most grotesque version of predatory capitalism he has ever seen.](#)
- March 2020: [MP Kevan Jones has warned a government minister not to repeat the mistakes of predecessors in relation to the Post Office Horizon IT scandal.](#)
- March 2020: [Criminal Cases Review Commission to use Microsoft Teams to ensure review of subpostmaster prosecutions is held on time.](#)
- March 2020: [Post Office postpones subpostmaster compensation scheme amid Covid-19 crisis.](#)
- March 2020: [Meeting reviewing subpostmaster applications to appeal criminal prosecutions moves into second day.](#)
- March 2020: [Subpostmaster prosecutions to be considered by Court of Appeal for miscarriages of justice.](#)
- March 2020: [How subpostmasters made legal history with biggest referral of potential miscarriages of justice.](#)
- April 2020: [Met Police examines information about evidence given in court by Fujitsu staff on the Horizon IT system.](#)
- May 2020: [Subpostmasters who had their lives ruined by the Post Office's faulty IT system have received their damages after a High Court victory.](#)
- May 2020: [A senior Post Office executive at the centre of an IT scandal, who tried to mislead a High Court judge in relation to it, has left the organisation without fanfare despite many years of service.](#)
- May 2020: [Post Office re-examines hundreds of prosecutions that could have resulted from faults in Horizon IT system.](#)
- June 2020: [A campaign group representing subpostmasters wrongly prosecuted for theft and false accounting by the Post Office is raising money to help clear the names of victims of the scandal.](#)
- June 2020: [Subpostmasters to force scrutiny of government's role in Post Office IT scandal.](#)
- June 2020: [The Criminal Cases Review Commission sends 47 more subpostmaster cases to Court of Appeal and asks government to review private prosecution powers.](#)
- June 2020: [Select committee chair writes to former Post Office CEO demanding answers over her role in IT scandal.](#)
- June 2020: [The government has been accused of launching a review that fails in getting to the bottom of one of the biggest miscarriages of justice in UK history.](#)
- June 2020: [Subpostmasters will not cooperate with government review into IT scandal.](#)

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- June 2020: The government's proposed review of the Post Office IT scandal has received a further setback as forensic accountants join subpostmasters in refusing to back it.
- June 2020: Call for government review of Post Office Horizon scandal to have the power to force individuals to give evidence under oath.
- June 2020: Subpostmasters seeking justice in the Post Office Horizon IT scandal are regaining momentum in Parliament.
- June 2020: Healthcare regulator will be discussing concerns about former NHS boss chairing an NHS trust at an upcoming meeting.
- June 2020: Second Sight is working with law firm in appeals by subpostmasters against criminal convictions in Horizon IT scandal.
- June 2020: Post Office and Fujitsu blame each other for many of the failings in the Horizon IT scandal that wrecked lives.
- June 2020: Parliamentary Justice Committee to hold short inquiry into the rules and regulations surrounding private organisations' ability to initiate criminal proceedings.
- July 2020: Victims of the Post Office Horizon IT scandal need to raise thousands of pounds in a week or those responsible for their suffering will avoid scrutiny.
- July 2020: The government is set to face scrutiny over its involvement in the Post Office Horizon IT scandal, described as one of the biggest miscarriages of justice in modern UK history.
- September 2020: The government repeats that it won't pay victims' legal costs and confirms review into the scandal will not have the power to call witnesses.
- September 2020: Subpostmasters still not being told about all the known errors in the controversial Post Office branch accounting and retail system that they use.
- October 2020: The Post Office has chosen not to contest 44 out of 47 appeals, meaning most are likely to have their names cleared, but others still face a Court of Appeal battle for justice.
- October 2020: MPs are demanding the government holds a full statutory public inquiry into the Post Office IT scandal.
- October 2020: NHS regulator continues enquiries about the appointment of former Post Office CEO at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust as more damning details emerge.
- October 2020: Government minister met with former subpostmaster online in an attempt to get victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal involved in government review.
- October 2020: The Post Office is focusing urgently on fixing an IT error suffered by a subpostmaster amid the ongoing IT scandal.
- October 2020: Labour politicians are calling for the government to give the Post Office Horizon scandal inquiry the power to force witnesses to give evidence if they don't cooperate.
- October 2020: Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust has asked for external review of its process when appointing controversial executive.
- November 2020: Government faces scrutiny of its handling of the Post Office IT scandal that destroyed subpostmasters' lives and livelihoods.
- November 2020: Post Office branches offline during busy business hours after suffering an IT error that the Post Office said related to IT from supplier Fujitsu.
- November 2020: Fujitsu is refusing to explain what caused a national system outage in Post Office branches last week, despite the Post Office confirming the issue was the fault of the supplier.
- November 2020: The Metropolitan Police opens criminal investigation into Fujitsu staff who gave evidence in trials of subpostmasters wrongly prosecuted and even imprisoned for financial crimes.
- November 2020: Post Office criticised over vagueness of its explanation of the cause of a UK-wide IT failure that saw subpostmasters unable to do business.
- November 2020: Post Office says planned firmware update caused the problem that left branches unable to do business for 90 minutes.
- November 2020: Court documents reveal the names of the Fujitsu employees under investigation for potentially providing misleading information in criminal trials.
- November 2020: The government allowed the Post Office to 'run amok' and destroy lives, says complaint to Parliamentary Ombudsman.
- November 2020: Campaigning politician demands access to documents that could prove that the Post Office lied.
- December 2020: Government denies responsibility for the abuse inflicted on subpostmasters by the Post Office over faulty IT system.
- December 2020: CEO at the centre of the scandal that saw innocent people bankrupted and some sent to prison steps down from NHS role as pressure for her resignation grows.
- December 2020: History made as subpostmasters wrongly prosecuted in Horizon IT scandal have convictions quashed.
- December 2020: The appointment of a former Post Office executive, who tried to mislead a judge, in the Football Association of Wales has been questioned by an MP.
- December 2020: Court of Appeal indicates subpostmasters can pursue appeal route that could do more damage to Post Office's reputation.
- January 2021: NHS trust defends its director appointment process following an external review of its recruitment of former Post Office CEO Paula Vennells.
- January 2021: Lawyers call for changes to digital evidence rule that made it easier for the Post Office to 'bamboozle courts' and make subpostmasters pay a heavy price for its IT failings.
- January 2021: The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) has referred four more subpostmasters' criminal convictions to appeal, as part of the biggest miscarriage of justice in modern UK history.
- February 2021: A former senior developer who worked for Fujitsu on the Post Office IT system that led to subpostmasters being falsely accused of fraud, has claimed bosses knew of fundamental flaws before going live.
- February 2021: Subpostmasters call for Boris Johnson to pause and reshape the government's Horizon inquiry.
- February 2021: Vote of no confidence in Football Association of Wales boss triggered by recruitment of former Post Office executive who tried to mislead a judge in IT trial.
- March 2021: Government agrees to change private prosecution rules that were abused by the Post Office in its pursuit of subpostmasters wrongly accused of financial crimes.
- March 2021: Subpostmaster victims who have spent millions bringing the Post Office IT scandal to light have received no reply to their concerns from Boris Johnson.
- March 2021: MP condemns department's 'bizarre' rejection of freedom of information request linked to Post Office IT scandal.
- March 2021: Football Association Wales boss steps down after losing confidence motion triggered by appointment of an executive involved in the Post Office IT scandal.
- March 2021: The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (SCCRC) is reviewing five cases of potential miscarriage of justice in relation to subpostmaster prosecutions.
- March 2021: Subpostmasters heading to Court of Appeal to clear their names in what is potentially the biggest miscarriage of justice in English legal history.
- March 2021: The Post Office does not have enough money to pay compensation to the subpostmasters it wrongfully prosecuted.
- March 2021: Angela van den Bogerd has left her role at the Football Association of Wales, following criticism of her part in Post Office IT scandal.
- March 2021: Court of Appeal hearing reveals Post Office instructed employees to destroy documents that undermined an insistence that its Horizon computer system was robust.
- March 2021: The Post Office was warned that a former Fujitsu employee had misled courts when giving evidence on its behalf.
- March 2021: Boris Johnson agrees with MP that those responsible for the Post Office Horizon scandal should be brought to book.
- March 2021: Former Post Office chief was paid over £400,000 when she left despite the organisation being involved in what would become the biggest miscarriage of justice in UK history.
- April 2021: The UK government faces a potential judicial review over its Post Office Horizon IT scandal inquiry, after subpostmasters formally wrote to the government seeking one.
- April 2021: The government is listening to calls for changes in how digital evidence is considered in court, as Post Office IT scandal spells out current rule's inadequacy.

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- April 2021: The Post Office's controversial contract with Fujitsu has been extended another year to help the organisation manage its exit.
- April 2021: The Post Office is to move work done by Fujitsu in-house when its outsourcing contract ends, and is already recruiting IT experts.
- April 2021: The Post Office has revealed the end to its controversial Horizon IT system which, through its errors and the Post Office's denial of them, caused huge suffering.
- April 2021: The UK government is the only block to fair compensation for subpostmasters who were wrongly punished for accounting shortfalls.
- April 2021: The Court of Appeal has overturned the criminal convictions of 39 subpostmasters who were blamed and punished for accounting shortfalls caused by computer errors.
- April 2021: Former Post Office CEO Paula Vennells has left roles in the church, Morrisons and Dunelm after postmasters' convictions were overturned in the Court of Appeal.
- April 2021: The biggest miscarriage of justice in UK history is set to get bigger as more subpostmasters take their cases to the Court of Appeal.
- May 2021: Post Office IT scandal CEO has no excuse for her inaction in preventing the biggest miscarriage of justice in UK history, says Criminal Cases Review Commission chairperson.
- May 2021: Subpostmasters, MPs and the public call for a full statutory judge-led public inquiry into the Post Office Horizon scandal, following another damning court judgment.
- May 2021: Government says it wants to ensure a fair pay-out for the 555 subpostmasters who defeated the Post Office in a legal battle.
- May 2021: The Post Office has contacted hundreds of people it might have wrongly prosecuted for financial crimes.
- May 2021: The miscarriages of justice involving subpostmasters are the most disturbing element of the Post Office Horizon scandal – but it goes much deeper.
- May 2021: The supplier at the centre of the Post Office Horizon scandal has so far escaped the ramifications of its role in the biggest miscarriage of justice in UK history.
- May 2021: Another two former subpostmasters have had their convictions for financial crimes overturned, following a hearing in Southwark Crown Court.
- May 2021: The government inquiry into the Post Office Horizon scandal is set to be made statutory with the power to compel witnesses and evidence.
- May 2021: The government confirmed that the inquiry into the Post Office Horizon IT scandal will be given statutory status and wider scope.
- May 2021: The Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance has agreed to meet the former judge heading up the inquiry into the Post Office scandal that ruined the lives of hundreds of subpostmasters.
- May 2021: Criminal Cases Review Commission will not allow pressure on its resources to prevent subpostmasters seeking a review of their criminal convictions.
- May 2021: Professional IT body wants changes to how computer evidence is used in court in the wake of the Post Office case.
- June 2021: The Post Office Horizon scandal inquiry begins with subpostmaster campaign group waiting for full details before committing its support.
- June 2021: Whatever the Post Office told government about its decision to sack investigators examining subpostmaster prosecutions for theft could identify if the government was part of a cover-up.
- June 2021: The Post Office has so far compensated about 400 subpostmasters who suffered losses as a result of computer errors that they were wrongly blamed for.
- July 2021: Another 10 subpostmasters are set to have their criminal convictions quashed as part of one of the biggest miscarriage of justice in British history.
- July 2021: The government has made no contact with subpostmasters two months after it said it would work with them to ensure they get speedy and fair compensation.
- July 2021: The cost of a scheme set up to compensate subpostmasters who were victims of the Horizon IT scandal will exceed £300m.
- July 2021: The government will pay interim compensation within weeks to subpostmasters who were wrongly convicted of crimes due to computer errors.
- August 2021: A further four subpostmasters are set to have their wrongful convictions overturned in the latest development in the Post Office Horizon scandal.
- August 2021: The government has failed to provide fair compensation to the subpostmasters who exposed the full extent of the Horizon scandal to the world.
- August 2021: Subpostmasters demand more clarity on Horizon public inquiry before committing their support.
- September 2021: Six more subpostmaster convictions referred for appeal in Post Office IT scandal.
- September 2021: Government minister holds secret meeting with Post Office Horizon scandal victims.
- October 2021: The public inquiry into a scandal that saw subpostmasters imprisoned after being blamed for accounting shortfalls will hold its first public hearing early next month.
- October 2021: A government minister investigating the controversial Horizon IT project in 2000 described the Post Office board of directors as 'appalling, short-sighted and partisan'.
- November 2021: The behaviour of Post Office senior management during the Horizon scandal was so egregious that the supplier of the faulty software has escaped a large financial penalty.
- November 2021: Former Fujitsu staff who gave evidence in subpostmaster trials have been questioned by police for a second time.
- November 2021: Former subpostmasters convicted of crimes based on data from error-prone Post Office computer system continue to embark on appeals.
- November 2021: The first hearing in the Post Office Horizon scandal public inquiry hears why victims should be paid compensation immediately.
- November 2021: The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission is investigating eight potential miscarriages of justice linked with faulty Post Office IT system.
- November 2021: The Post Office will waive professional legal privilege for documents relating to legal advice it received regarding subpostmaster prosecutions.
- November 2021: A total number of 65 subpostmasters have now had criminal convictions overturned in Post Office Horizon scandal.
- November 2021: Subpostmasters asked to withdraw support for Post Office scandal inquiry.
- November 2021: Seven more subpostmasters have been cleared after the Post Office charged them for crimes caused by its faulty Horizon software.
- November 2021: The Post Office made clear its support for a change in UK law regarding computer evidence that was making prosecution 'onerous' – a change which later helped to wrongfully convict subpostmasters.
- November 2021: The chair of the Post Office scandal public inquiry has confirmed the compensation of a group of subpostmasters will be revisited.
- December 2021: Government must go further after agreeing to pay compensation for wrongly convicted subpostmasters.
- December 2021: Pressure on government to pay fair compensation to subpostmasters left out of current schemes.
- January 2022: Almost 100 MPs have backed a call for the government to reverse its decision to exclude 555 subpostmasters from fair compensation.
- January 2022: A parliamentary select committee was told that the Post Office is unable to access information to accurately calculate compensation for some Horizon scandal victims.
- January 2022: The Post Office received subsidies worth over £1bn last year, including a £685m payment just last month, in a scheme labelled Post Office Historical Matters Compensation.
- January 2022: Government widens subpostmaster miscarriage of justice compensation scheme in Horizon scandal.
- January 2022: Government officials are open to finding a way to properly compensate victims of the Horizon scandal without setting a dangerous legal precedent.
- January 2022: The subpostmaster campaign group responsible for exposing the Post Office Horizon scandal is to meet with the government to discuss fair compensation for their suffering.
- January 2022: Fujitsu cannot hide away as taxpayers pick up the bill for the Post Office scandal triggered by its IT system, say peers.
- February 2022: Victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal are being denied the millions of pounds they are owed as the government delays compensation resolution.

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- February 2022: Victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal are due to tell their devastating stories to the statutory inquiry.
- February 2022: MPs are demanding urgent action by the government to provide full compensation to a group of 555 Post Office Horizon scandal victims who have so far been left out.
- February 2022: Victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal have been suffering in silence for many years, but the current public inquiry is giving them a voice, and people are listening.
- February 2022: Horizon inquiry questioning raises hopes of fair compensation for victims so far left out.
- February 2022: Government set to backtrack on untenable position on subpostmaster compensation.
- March 2022: The Post Office and Fujitsu failed to alert subpostmasters to a software error that caused them to be wrongly blamed for accounting shortfalls.
- March 2022: Horizon inquiry hearing sheds light on subpostmaster federation's role in hushing up IT problems.
- March 2022: 555 subpostmasters to get fair compensation after government U-turn on its stance on High Court settlement.
- March 2022: Compensation goal finally in sight for 555 Post Office scandal victims, after 13 year campaign.
- April 2022: Fujitsu bags £430m government contracts despite rising cost of Post Office Horizon scandal.
- April 2022: The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission expects more subpostmasters with potential wrongful convictions to come forward.
- April 2022: Former subpostmasters who were wrongfully convicted and punished for crimes have not yet received full compensation over a year after their convictions were overturned.
- April 2022: A former Fujitsu worker has been questioned under caution for the third time as police investigate potential perjury in trials of subpostmasters wrongfully convicted of financial crimes.
- May 2022: Paula Vennells could be stripped of her CBE as the Honours Forfeiture Committee commits to reconsider its award in the light of the Post Office Horizon scandal.
- May 2022: Lawyer negotiating compensation for victims of Post Office scandal says the two sides are 'poles apart' on valuations.
- May 2022: Inquiry into Post Office scandal moves to Scotland, with differences in English and Scottish law raising further serious questions about subpostmaster prosecutions.
- May 2022: The chair of the Post Office Horizon scandal inquiry has brought forward hearings about compensation as victims warn that at this rate "people will die" before they get anything.
- May 2022: The Criminal Cases Review Commission is to contact 88 more potentially wrongfully convicted Post Office workers.
- May 2022: The Post Office Horizon IT system at the centre of a national scandal will be replaced by 2025, with a supplier expected to be named in August.
- May 2022: Victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal in Scotland raise further questions about Post Office and government conduct.
- May 2022: Government accused of 'passing the buck' and 'not knowing what it is talking about' after stating it has no plans to review court rules on computer evidence.
- May 2022: Computer Weekly spoke to the barristers at Henderson Chambers that fought the Post Office in the High Court to expose the widest miscarriage of justice in UK history.
- June 2022: Two more Post Office Horizon scandal victims have had their wrongful convictions overturned.
- June 2022: The 555 subpostmasters who exposed the depth of the Post Office Horizon scandal could finally be fairly compensated.
- June 2022: Forensic accounting firm that 'knows where the bodies are buried' will be released from confidentiality obligations by the Post Office to give evidence to public inquiry.
- June 2022: Lawyers negotiating the compensation valuations for former subpostmasters who suffered wrongful convictions have brought in independent judicial scrutiny to break an impasse.
- June 2022: Subpostmaster campaign group is a step closer to achieving what it was originally set up to do as government launches compensation scheme for its members who did not receive fair payouts.
- July 2022: More former subpostmasters have their wrongful convictions for theft and fraud overturned in the Court of Appeal.
- July 2022: When the Post Office's lie about the Horizon system failed to silence subpostmaster critics, it took more extreme measures, say victims of the scandal.
- September 2022: The Met Police have interviewed a former subpostmaster as part of an investigation into potential perjury by former Fujitsu staff.
- September 2022: Chair of statutory public inquiry into the Post Office Horizon scandal has aired his disappointment over the slow progress in making interim payments to victims.
- October 2022: The public inquiry into the Post Office scandal has begun phase two with a request for adjournment amid allegations that the Post Office is failing to disclose relevant documents.
- October 2022: Victims demand that the perpetrators of the Post Office Horizon IT scandal face the public inquiry.
- October 2022: Fujitsu's part in causing the extreme suffering of subpostmasters will be made clear as the IT supplier begins giving evidence at a statutory inquiry.
- October 2022: A dereliction of duty saw subpostmaster federation ignore its members when IT problems hit and allowed the Post Office destroy their lives.
- October 2022: Politicians are keeping up the pressure to block government contracts being awarded to Fujitsu because of its role in the Post Office Horizon scandal.
- October 2022: Problems reported with the Post Office's Horizon IT system before its roll-out should have been regarded as a "show-stopper."
- October 2022: Horizon system code writers lacked basic programming skills, according to the task force set up to investigate reported problems with the controversial software.
- October 2022: Trials of the Horizon computer system in Post Office branches in 1999 led to a warning from subpostmasters that software problems meant "a tragedy was not far away".
- November 2022: 'Hardball' negotiations between the government, the Post Office and ICL meant subpostmasters were ignored and thrown into a tragedy that could have been averted.
- November 2022: Post Office investigators were so convinced that subpostmasters were cooking the books that they failed to investigate alleged IT problems, a public inquiry has been told.
- November 2022: SCCRC has referred six cases of potential wrongful convictions of subpostmasters to the High Court of Justiciary.
- November 2022: A former Fujitsu technology expert who defended the Horizon system's robustness in court was unhappy after being 'manoeuvred' into acting as an expert witness.
- November 2022: Insider tells public inquiry that the Post Office continued to roll out the controversial Horizon system despite a 'considerable' number of errors, because it was too committed.
- November 2022: Former members of the ICL team developing software for the Post Office Horizon EPOSS system were unqualified and engaged in poor software development practices.
- November 2022: The Post Office IT scandal inquiry's appointed expert IT witness was "troubled" by the lack of integrity of data from the Horizon system that was used to send people to prison.
- November 2022: Telegram from British Embassy in Tokyo to UK government reveals pressure on ministers to sign off controversial contract.
- November 2022: The National Federation of Subpostmasters (NFSP) deliberately kept stories of Horizon errors quiet because it "did not want to kill the project".
- December 2022: The Post Office was 'keen' to make subpostmasters cover unexplained accounting shortfall as its business struggled, public inquiry hears.
- December 2022: The second phase of the Post Office Horizon IT scandal raised more questions over who did what, when and where, with shocking revelations at every turn.
- December 2022: The Criminal Cases Review Commission wants former subpostmasters to come forward if they think they were prosecuted by the Post Office based on data from the Horizon computer system.

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- January 2023: Alan Bates, who fought for decades to expose the Post Office Horizon IT scandal, says it would be inappropriate to accept an OBE when former Post Office CEO still holds her CBE.
- January 2023: The advisory board set up to oversee compensation awards to 555 victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal has agreed a goal of returning them to the financial position they would have been in had the scandal not happened.
- January 2023: Two former Fujitsu workers, who are currently under police investigation for possible perjury, will give evidence and face questions in Post Office inquiry.
- February 2023: The Post Office messaging strategy was designed to reassure staff that the Horizon accounting system was robust after Computer Weekly first revealed problems in 2009.
- March 2023: Post Office attempted to replace controversial Horizon system 10 years ago, but was put off by project's scale and cost.

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