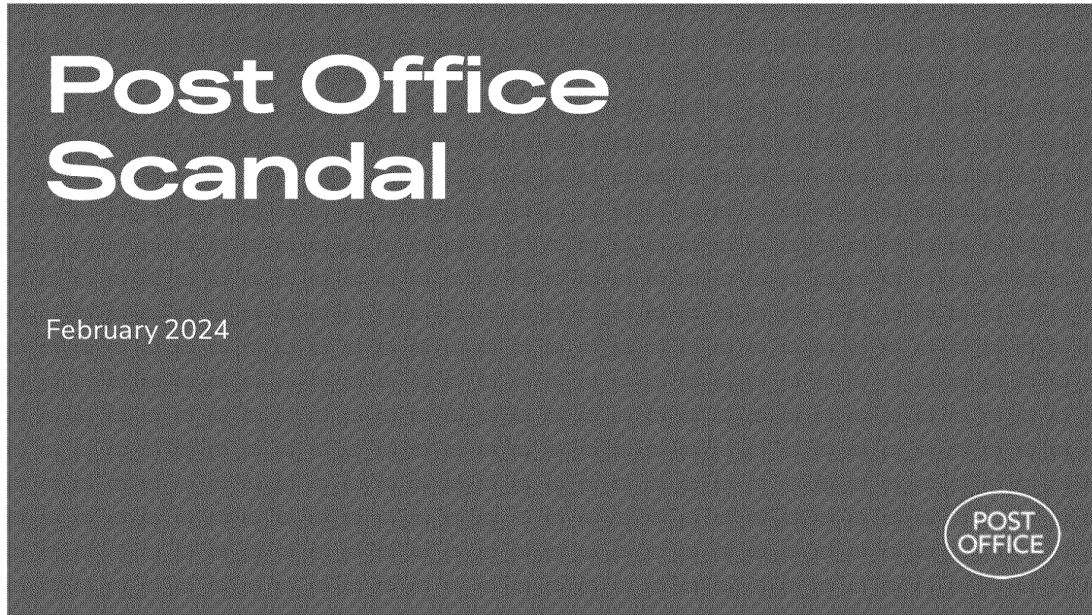


Post Office Scandal Live Training

SCHEDULE AND SCRIPT

Introduction



Hello and welcome to this live session about the Post Office Scandal. We have around *[insert number]* people in the room today [and we are live streaming the session, so welcome to those of you joining us from other Post Office locations or from home].

This is going to be something quite different to any session you are likely to have attended at Post Office before. That is purposeful. What happened in the past at Post Office is unique. It is vitally important that anyone who works for this business understands what happened and why, what the impact was and how your role, whatever it is within Post Office, is to safeguard Post Office from such events ever happening again.

Colleague support

Call the Employee Assistance

Programme confidential helpline on

GRO

GRO

, or email [contactus](#)

GRO

Our [Workplace Wellbeing Site](#) includes the details of our Mental Health First Aiders, who you can speak to for support.

This session will be impactful. It is likely to stir emotions. For some it may be upsetting. For some it may evoke anger. For others it may be quite depressing. Everyone taking part in this session needs to be aware of this – in yourself, but also in others. You may also find yourself reflecting on the session later and feeling these emotions or you may notice that others have a delayed response to the content of the session. All that I ask is that you are respectful of others reactions and understand that they may be different to your own. You will all be aware of the wellbeing support that is available from Post Office and we encourage you to use it – details are on the screen.

Let's start with why we are here.

We are not running these sessions to make anyone feel bad about what happened at Post Office in the past. We are running these sessions because, regardless of your role, as an employee or contractor of Post Office, you must:

- Be aware of what happened in the scandal and the destructive impact it had on Postmasters' lives and those around them.
- Understand the cultural conditions that enabled poor treatment of Postmasters over many years.
- Know how to act as an early warning system should you see conditions or behaviours in Post Office that, similarly, enable unacceptable behaviours or culture.

We cannot turn back time to repair the damage caused by Post Office to people's lives, but we owe it to the victims to ensure that anyone working for Post Office understands what happened and why.

We must fully face our past, not hide or shy away from what happened because we are ashamed. We have, instead, to be transparent about the issues to ensure nothing like it ever happens again.

ontents

Housekeeping
Scandal background
Impact
Why this happened at Post Office ?
What your role is now ?

So what is the plan for today's session?

Firstly, we will cover some of the background to the Post Office Scandal – helping you understand what happened when and what the key issues were that had such a devastating impact.


We will then talk about the impact of scandal and hear some of the testimony of victims about the impact that Post Office has had on their lives.

We will then consider why this happened – not in a way that prejudges the outcomes of Sir Wyn Williams' Inquiry, but in a way that suggests some of the cultural conditions that may have been present to allow such failings to occur.

And then finally, we will ask you to consider some key questions that will help you be vigilant about identifying unacceptable behaviours or culture in today's Post Office and we will ask you to make some commitments to honour the victims of the scandal.

Post Office Scandal Q&A

Questions will be collated once all learning sessions have been held and answer will be provided on the Intranet.



Join at
Slido.com
#2573 356

The session will have opportunities for interaction throughout. We will do some polls and we will run an anonymous Q&A throughout the session. These elements will all be online and to access them you will either need to scan the QR codes that we show on the screen or follow the links that we have provided in the invite to today's session. The first QR code and link for general Q&A is on the screen now. This session is one of a series of 3 sessions and we will collate and respond to the Q&As after the end of the 3 sessions rather than in each individual session.

Opening video: Headlines

Background and Timeline

0 response submitted

Rate out of 10, how much do you think you know about the background and the timeline of the Post Office Scandal?

0.0

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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Copy link

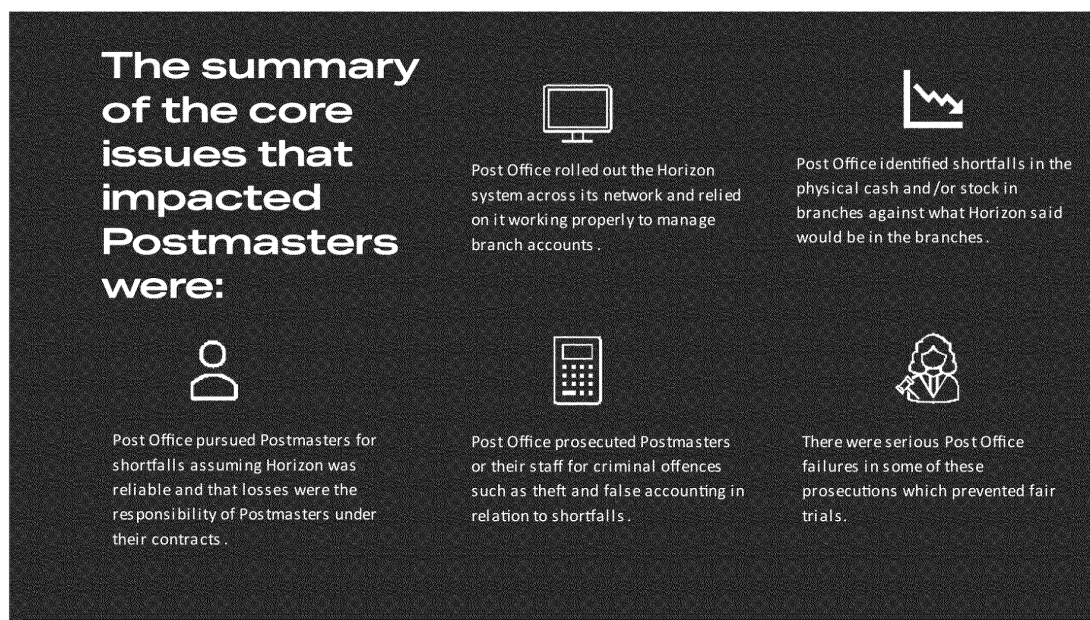
1 of 1

Let's start by taking a poll – I want each of you to rate out of 10 how much you think you know about the background of the Post Office scandal and what happened when at the start of this session. We

will then repeat the exercise at the end of talking through the timeline and see if people feel they know more, about the same amount (and hopefully not less) than they knew before we went through the timeline. So, the question you are answering is 'out of 10, how much do you think you know about the background and the timeline of the Post Office Scandal, with 10 being 'I know all the background and timelines' and 0 being 'I know very little about the Scandal at all'

So on average we have a score of X.X.

We are going to start with a summary of the core issues that impacted Postmasters before we go into a more detailed timeline of events. Before we dive in, I want you all to be clear that you are not expected to remember all the details or make notes – we simply want you to take in as much as you can. You will be able to go over it again, at a pace which suits you, during the e-learning module.



The summary of the core issues that impacted Postmasters were:

- Post Office rolled out the Horizon system across its network and relied on it working properly to manage branch accounts.
- Post Office identified shortfalls in the physical cash and/or stock in branches against what Horizon said would be in the branches.
- Post Office pursued Postmasters for shortfalls assuming Horizon was reliable and that losses were the responsibility of Postmasters under their contracts. This meant that Post Office recovered money from Postmasters and Postmasters' contracts were regularly suspended and terminated.
- Furthermore, Post Office prosecuted Postmasters or their staff for criminal offences such as theft and false accounting in relation to shortfalls.
- There were serious Post Office failures in some of these prosecutions which prevented fair trials. This was because Post Office did not investigate the reliability of Horizon data, even when Postmasters complained that the shortfalls were being caused by the Horizon system and then failed to disclose information about the reliability of Horizon that would have supported the Postmaster's defence.

I have just used the the term prosecution throughout the explanation of issues impacting postmasters, and you will hear me use both conviction and prosecution throughout the timelines section in a moment so I want to briefly touch on the neuances between them; prosecution is when a person has been charged with wrongdoing/committing a crime, where as a conviction is when a person has been found guilty of committing said crime/wrongdoing. While Post Office was prosecuting the Postmasters, only the UK legal system has the authoirty to convict them.



29th December 1660

It is critical that everyone in Post Office has an appreciation for the events of the scandal, so we are going to go into the timeline of events in more detail but will cover it all pretty quickly.

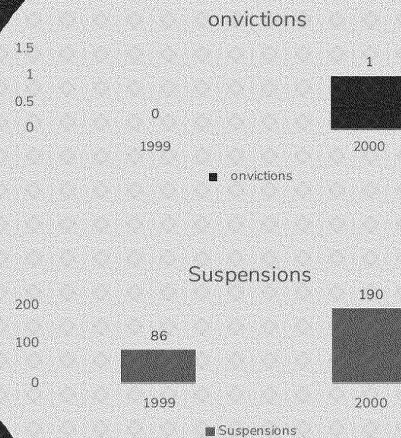
As you all know Post Office is a near 400 year old business and some of the seeds of what happened in the scandal were doubtlessly sown in that long history. We will, however, focus on the period from around the turn of the millennium through to today.

1999



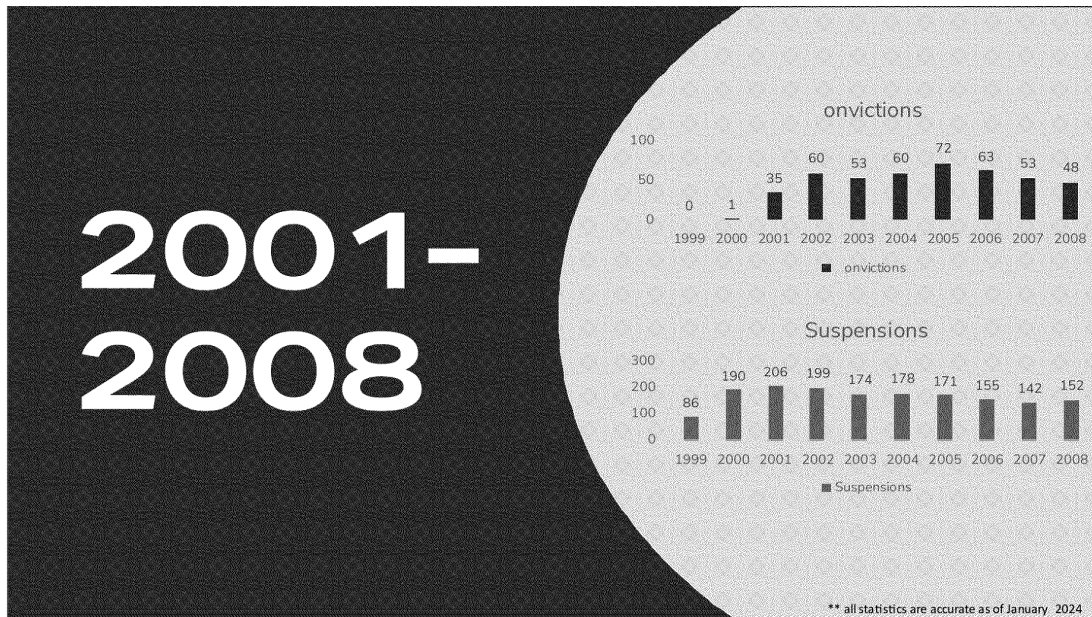
In 1999, Post Office began the installation and rollout of Horizon. Horizon effectively computerized the transactions and accounts undertaken in Post Offices across the UK. Back in 1999, Post Office did not prosecute any Postmasters and it suspended 86 Postmaster contracts.

2000



** all statistics are accurate as of January 2024

In 2000, the rollout of Horizon continued. 190 Postmasters were suspended and the first conviction based on evidence from Horizon took place.

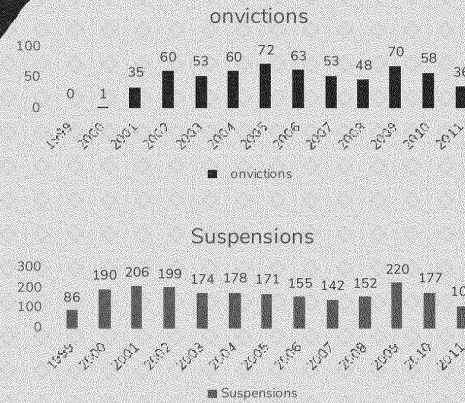


In 2001, 206 Postmasters were suspended and 35 Postmasters were convicted, then you can see that over the next 7 years, on average 167 Postmasters were suspended every year and 58 Postmasters were convicted every year.



In 2009, whilst Post Office suspended 220 Postmasters and prosecuted 70 Postmasters, the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance was founded by Alan Bates.

2009- 2011



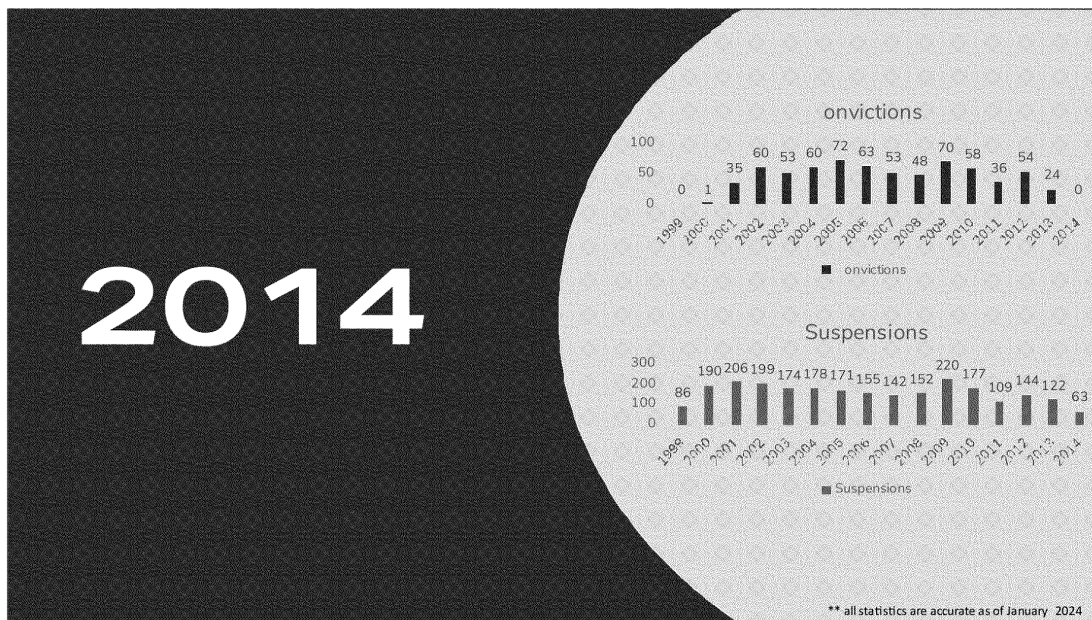
2012



In 2012, Post Office appointed independent, external forensic accountants, Second Sight to lead an investigation into Horizon.



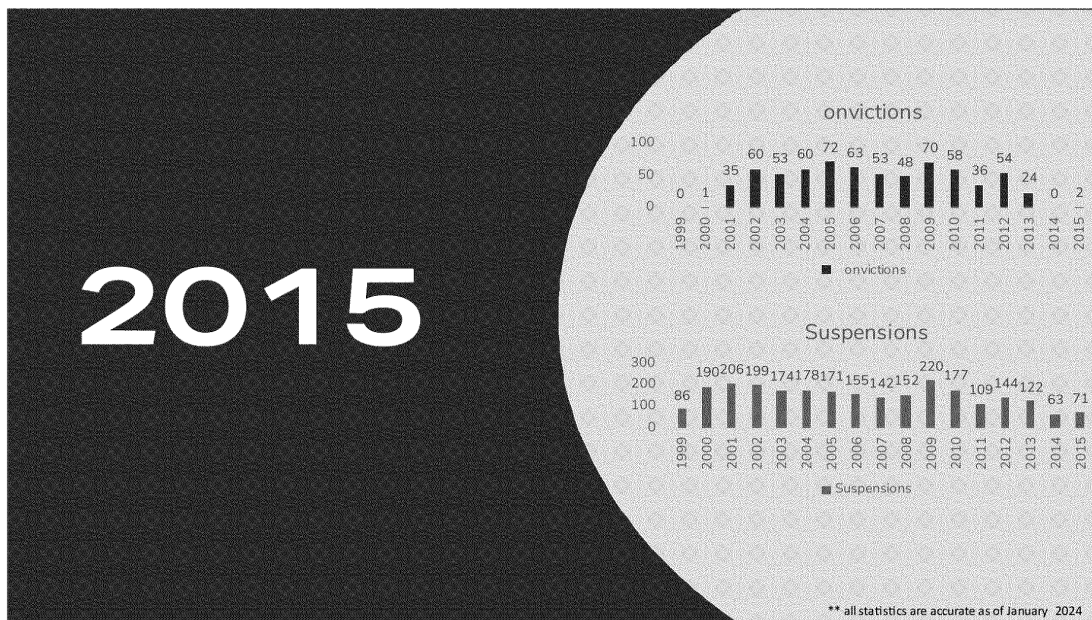
In 2013, Second Sight produced an interim report on their findings about Horizon. As a result of that, Post Office set up a mediation scheme between Post Office and impacted Postmasters attempting to resolve their claims.



Post Office continued suspending and prosecuting Postmasters between 2012 and 2014.



In 2015, Second Sight published the second part of their report investigating issues with Horizon. Post Office terminated the contract with Second Sight and also made the decision to stop prosecuting Postmasters in the same year.



The final 2 prosecutions made by Post Office were in 2015.



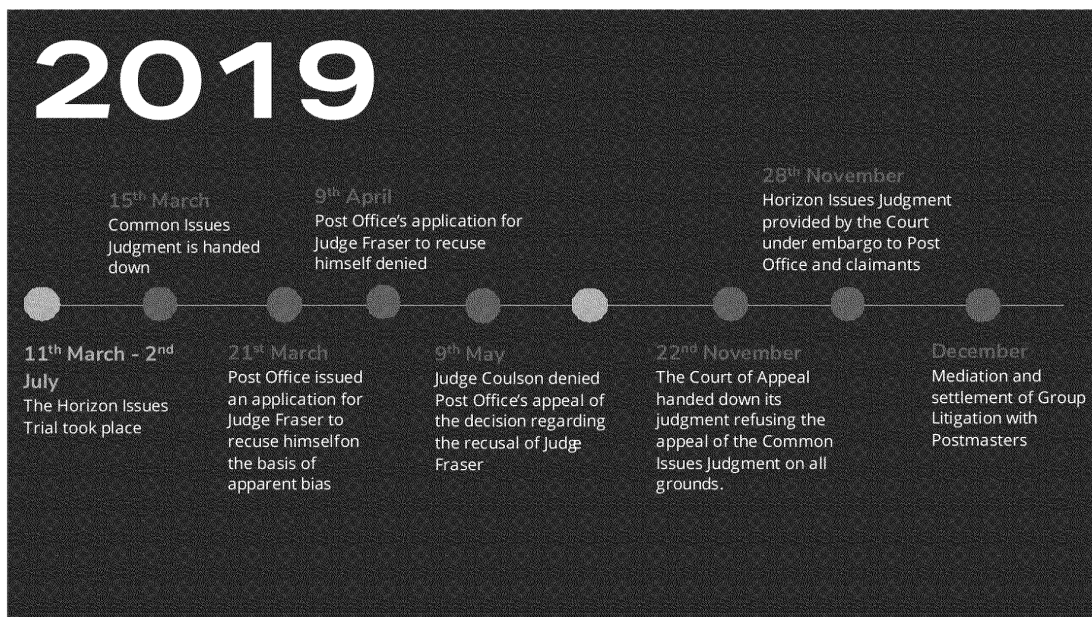
A group of mostly former Postmasters issued a civil litigation claim against Post Office in 2016, effectively attempting to settle their dispute with the Post Office through the Courts.



In 2017, the High Court issued what is known as a group litigation order, which effectively uses representative test cases where there are groups of legal claims raising similar issues. This was granted in the name of lead claimant Alan Bates, so was known as Bates vs the Post Office. There were 555 Postmasters' names attached to the order and there were expected to be 6 different trials looking at different aspects of the Postmasters claims.



In November 2018, a four week trial was held to look into the 'common issues'. These 'common issues' were mainly the terms of the contract that Post Office had with Postmasters.



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The judgment from the common issues trial was handed down on 15th March 2019. The judgment was extremely critical of Post Office and required fundamental changes to the relationship between Post Office and Postmasters. In the judgment, Post Office was found to:

1. Be operating an unfair contract for its Postmasters
2. Be acting oppressively
3. Have inadequate document management and administration processes
4. Have a culture of excessive secrecy

5. Not be training its Postmasters properly
6. Have poor levels of support for Postmasters
7. Not be properly investigating causes of apparent losses in branches
8. Not to be managing Horizon properly or transparently

{CLICK for animation}

A further trial, known as the Horizon issues trial, took place between 11th March 2019 and 2nd July 2019. As you would expect from the name of the trial, this trial focused on the technical aspects of the Horizon system.

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The reason that the Horizon issues trial took so long was that, after the Common Issues Judgment, Post Office attempted to ask the managing judge, Mr Justice Fraser, to recuse himself – effectively stop being the judge for the trial – because he was biased. The judge did not recuse himself and when Post Office tried to appeal this, their application was called “without substance”, “misconceived”, “fatally flawed”, “untenable” and “absurd” by the judge who heard the appeal.

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Post Office also appealed the Common Issues Judgment itself. The Court of Appeal handed down its judgment on 22nd November refusing the appeal on all the grounds Post Office had appealed on. The judgment asserted that Post Office had “made sweeping statements about the trial and judgment that were demonstrably wrong” and that Post Office had effectively argued that it “was not obliged to treat Postmasters with good faith, and instead was entitled to treat them in capricious or arbitrary ways which would not be unfamiliar to a mid-Victorian factory-owner”.

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On 28th November 2019, the Horizon Issues Judgment was provided by the Court under embargo to Post Office and the claimants. It found previous versions of Horizon were not robust and there was a material risk that bugs, errors and defects could have caused shortfalls in postmasters’ accounts.

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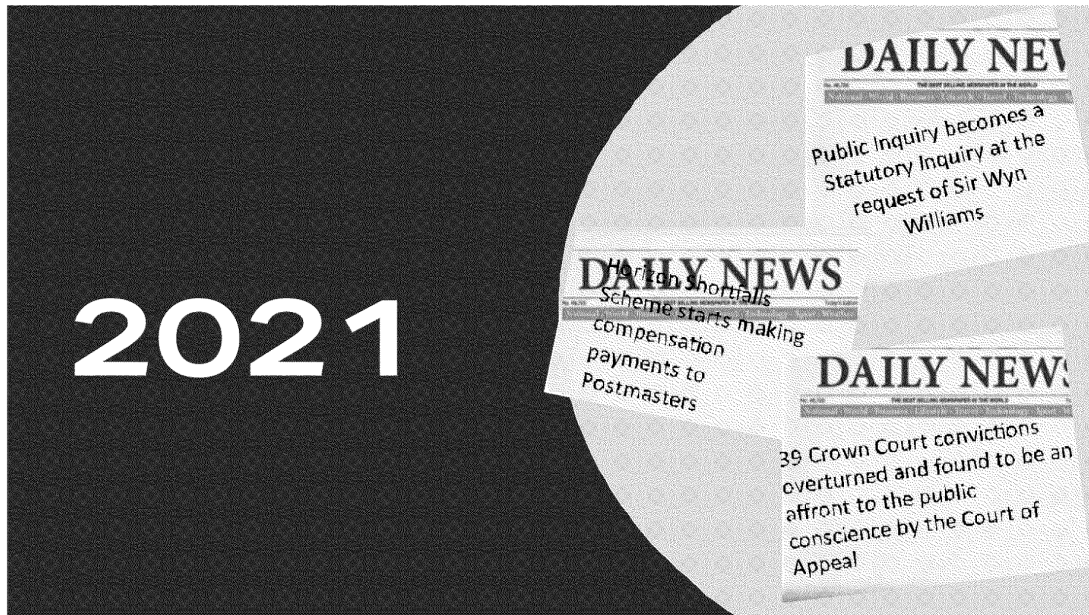
In December 2019, Post Office completed mediation with the claimant Postmasters and reached a settlement to end the Group Litigation Order. As a result, Post Office paid the claimants £43m plus legal costs.

The Horizon Issue Judgment was then handed down publicly on 16 December 2019. The Judge, Mr Justice Fraser, referred two former Fujitsu employees to the Director of Public Prosecutions for potential prosecution.



Sir Wyn Williams was appointed to head a public inquiry into what went wrong at the Post Office.

The first 6 Magistrate Court Postmaster convictions were quashed at Southwark Crown Court after an extensive post-conviction disclosure exercise by Post Office to help enable Postmasters' appeals through the courts.

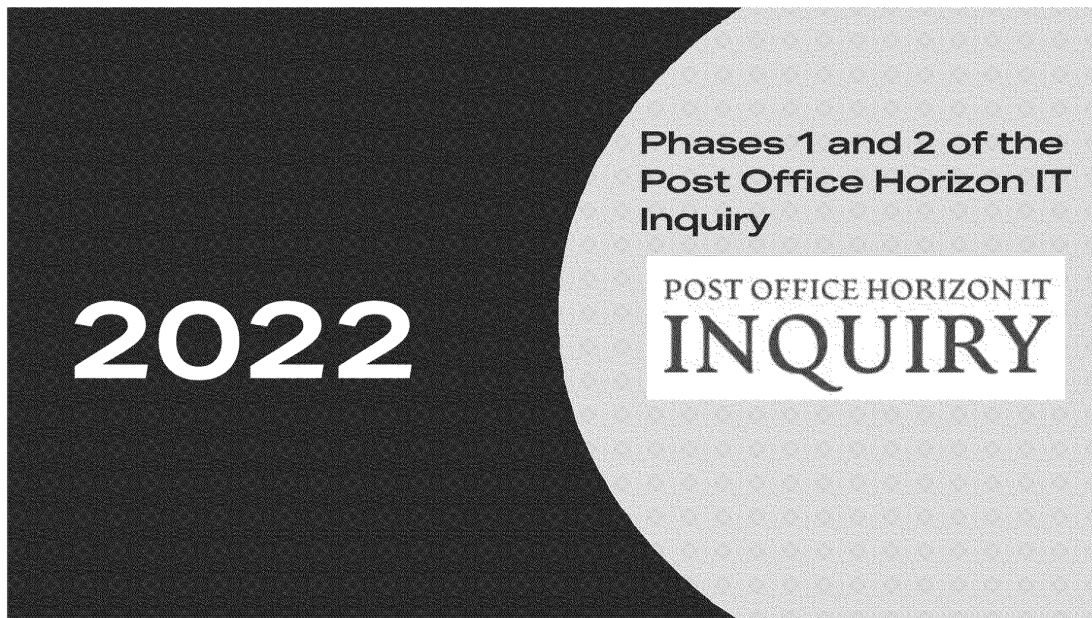


Sir Wyn Williams requested that the public inquiry into what went wrong at the Post Office was upgraded to a Statutory Inquiry. This was granted by the Government giving Sir Wyn more powers to compel witnesses to provide evidence.

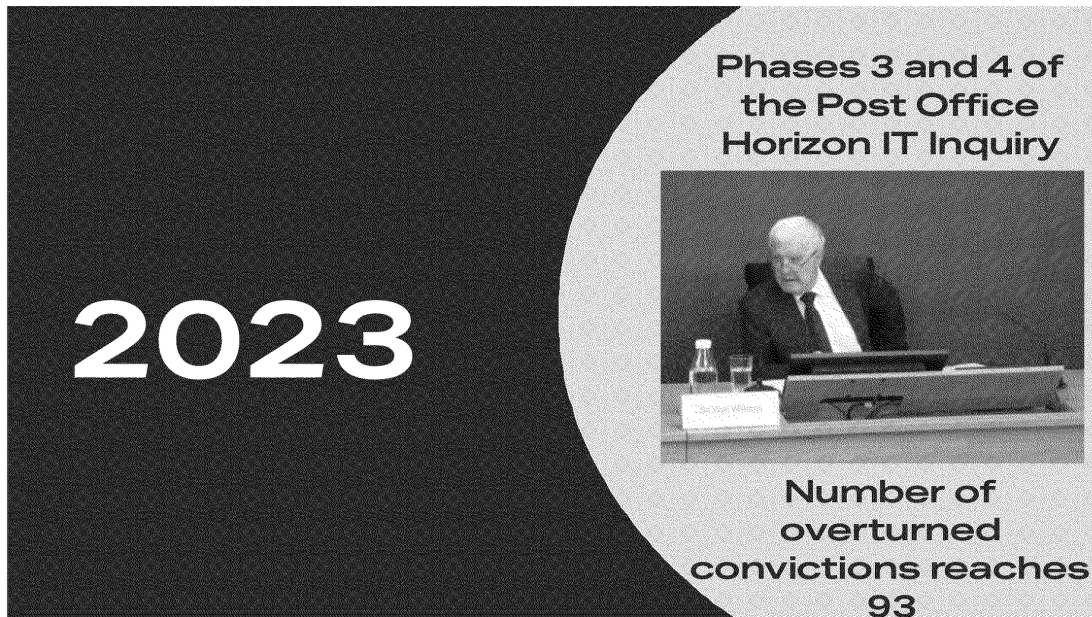
Post Office started making payments from the Horizon Shortfalls Scheme, which was set up to compensate Postmasters for the various losses they suffered at the hands of the Post Office. The losses being compensated through the scheme are not just the shortfalls that Postmasters paid back

to Post Office, but also losses for things like loss of income, impacts on health and impacts on reputation. To date Post Office has made offers worth over £120m to over 2500 claimants through this scheme.

On 24th April 2021, 39 Crown Court convictions were overturned by the Court of Appeal. In overturning these convictions, the Court of Appeal also found that the convictions were an affront to the public conscience. This meant that the court not only found that the way in which Post Office prosecuted these Postmasters meant they were not able to have a fair trial, but that the way in which Post Office had prosecuted the Postmasters meant that it was unfair for the Postmasters to have faced trial at all. These findings are known as the Hamilton judgment taken from the name of the lead appellant, Jo Hamilton.

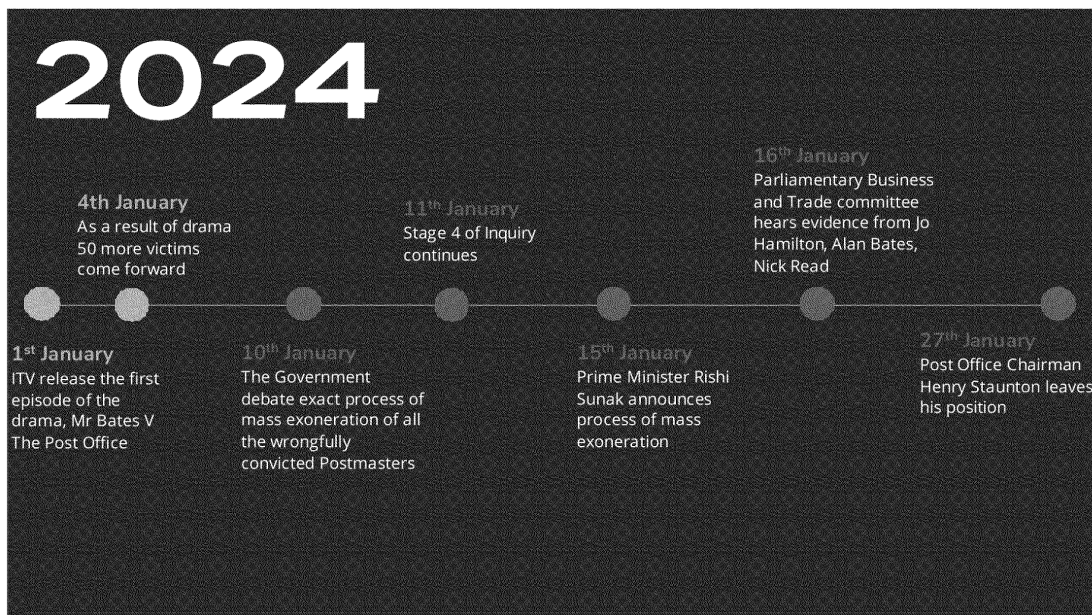


Phases 1 and 2 of the public inquiry chaired by Sir Wyn Williams began. The early testimony including shocking stories shared by Postmasters and their families as part of the human impact hearings. We will hear some of these stories later in this session.



Phases 3 and 4 of the public inquiry were held in 2023. These phases have focused on operations and the action taken against Postmasters and others. It has involved a number of former and current Post Office employees giving evidence.

At the end of 2023, the number of overturned convictions of Postmasters had reached 93, but there are still many more convictions left to be overturned and the victims have found the process slow.



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2024 has seen reinvigoured public interest in the Scandal following the release of the ITV drama Mr Bates V The Post Office, which told the story of several of the Postmasters who were at the heart of

the Scandal (For example, Alan Bates, Jo Hamilton, Lee Castleton to name just a few). As a result of the drama approximately 50 more victims have come forward.

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The 10th January saw the first Government debate on the process, timeline and logistics of a mass exoneration for the wrongfully convicted Postmasters.

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Then, following a short recess, Stage 4 of the inquiry re-started on the 11th January.

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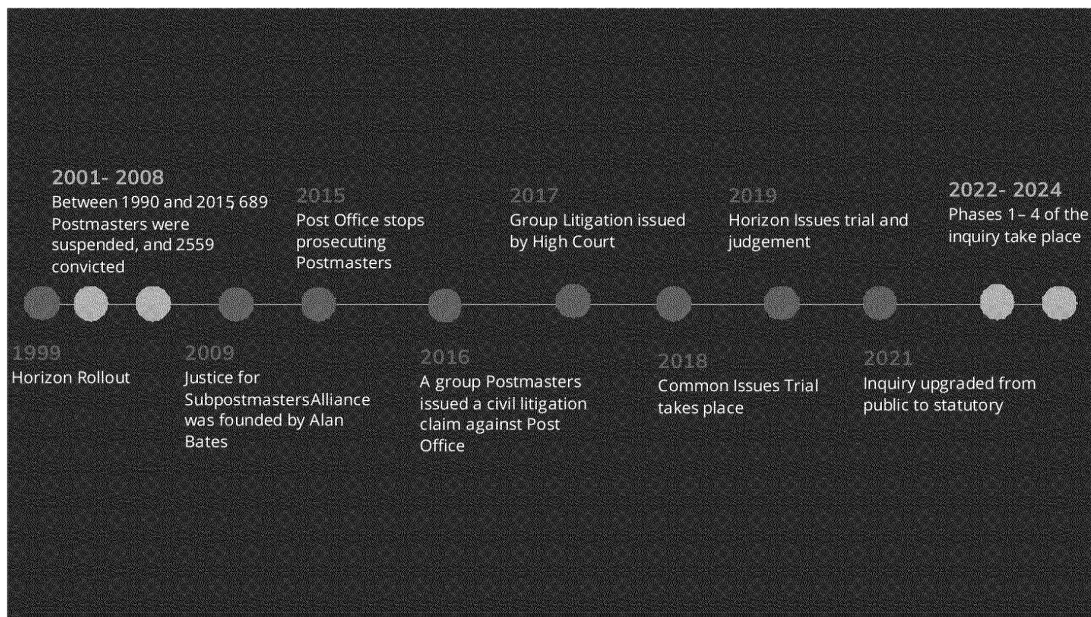
Next on the 15th January, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced process for mass exoneration, and pledged an upfront payment of £75,000 to the 555 former postmasters who brought a group lawsuit.

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On the 16th January we heard evidence was given at the Parliamentary Business and Trade committee, from Jo Hamilton, Alan Bates, Nick Read, Kevin Hollinrake and the Director of Fijitsu.

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Finally, at the end of January, on the 27th the Post Office chairman Henry Staunton left his role.



So, as you can see, it is a long and troubling timeline.

0 response submitted

Rate out of 10, how much do you think you know about the background and the timeline of the Post Office Scandal?

0.0

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

<https://forms.office.com/e/1geV3V5qYG>
Copy link

1 of 1

So let's take another poll – I want each of you to again rate out of 10 how much you think you know about the background of the Post Office scandal and what happened when. So again, the question you are answering is 'out of 10, how much do you think you know about the background and the timeline of the Post Office Scandal, with 10 being 'I know all the background and timelines' and 0 being 'I know very little about the Scandal at all''

So on average we have a score of X.X. That's an improvement of X.X if my maths is correct.

Impact



There have been both financial and reputational impacts on Post Office as a result of the scandal.

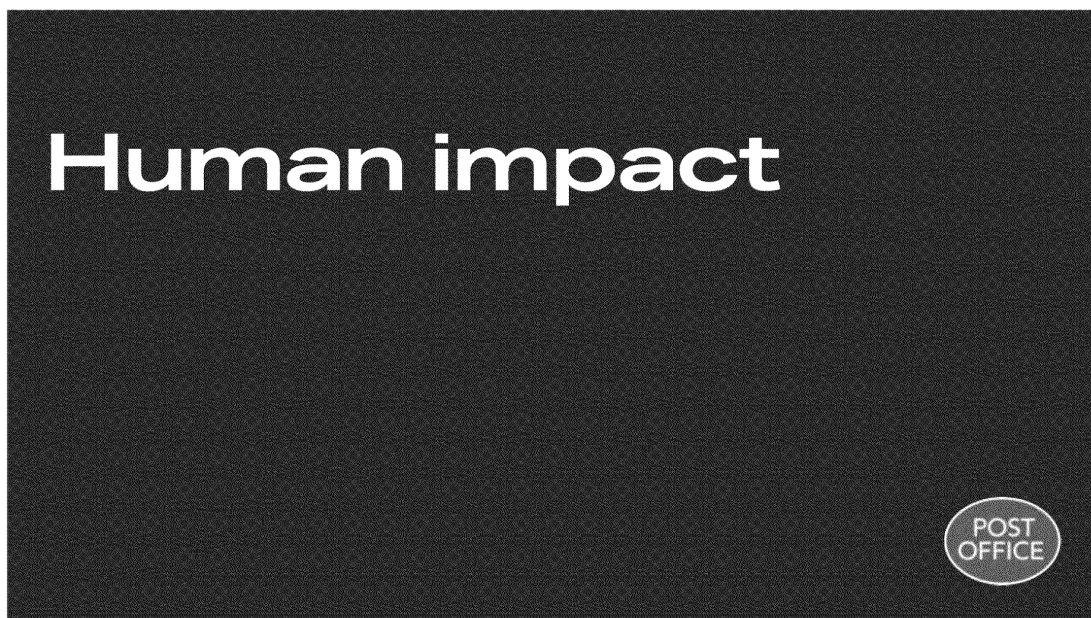
Financially, Post Office has spent hundreds of millions of pounds on compensating victims, on legal fees and on changing the way Post Office works. Post Office has needed to rely on its shareholder, technically the Secretary of State for the Department of Business and Trade, but effectively the Government, to provide funding for some of the compensation, as Post Office would not be able to afford to provide meaningful compensation on its own. There is also a reality that the current Post Office is spending money on the issues of the past, which limits its ability to do its best for its current Postmasters, employees and customers – effectively those who use and work in today's Post Office are paying for the issues of the past.



Reputationally, Post Office has also been damaged significantly. Post Office has a long and proud history of being known for being trusted and the scandal has shaken people's confidence and trust in the Post Office. Some of the things said about Post Office have been extremely damning and you can see some of these headlines on screen now.



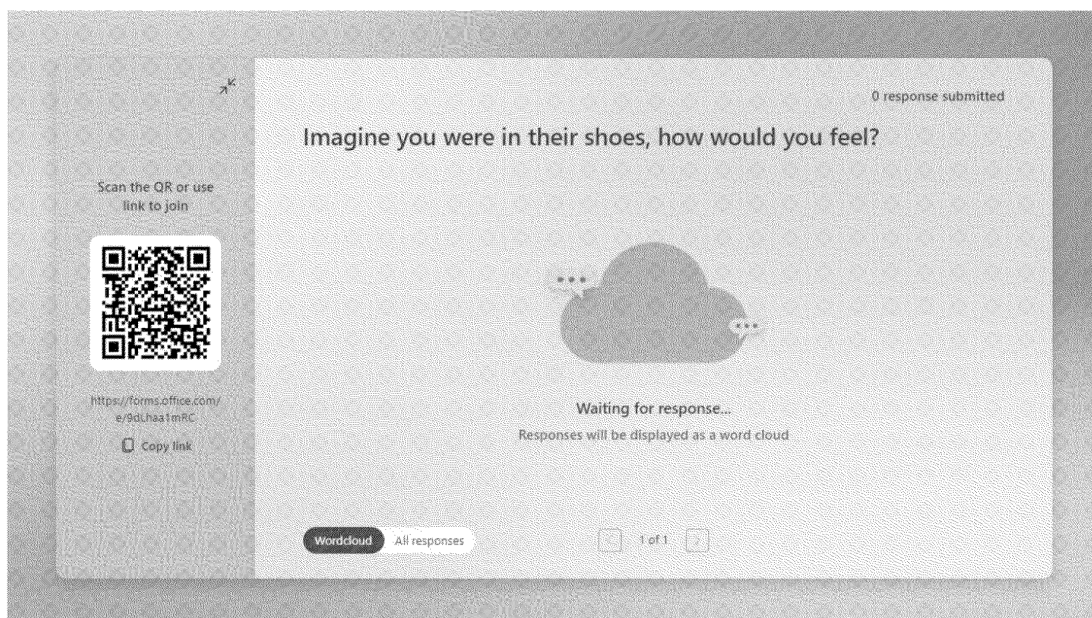
And here are some of the things that the Courts have said about Post Office.



However, these financial and reputational impacts are nothing compared to the human costs of the scandal. We are now going to hear some of the moving stories of the people who suffered at the hands of Post Office.

[Dislaimer before video]

Let's hear from some of those affected.



Now that you have listened to these stories, I would like you to spend some time reflecting on how watching this has made you feel and how you would feel if you were in their shoes. As you are reflecting, I would appreciate you using your devices to record some of the words that come to your mind. We will then have a look at those shared feelings together.

We can see the wordclouds of feelings starting to take shape.

I want to stop here for a bit more reflection time now that you can see your words and the words of your colleagues.

[TIME DEPENDENT - OPEN FLOOR FOR REFLECTIONS]

Thank you for those reflections.

Culture and Behaviours

We have spent quite some time understanding what happened and the impact it had. We will now spend some time thinking about why this might have happened, without prejudging the outcomes from Sir Wyn Williams' Inquiry. This is critical because if we can have a set of working assumptions about why it happened, we can ensure that the same cultural conditions and behaviours that appeared to exist in the past no longer have a place in today's Post Office.

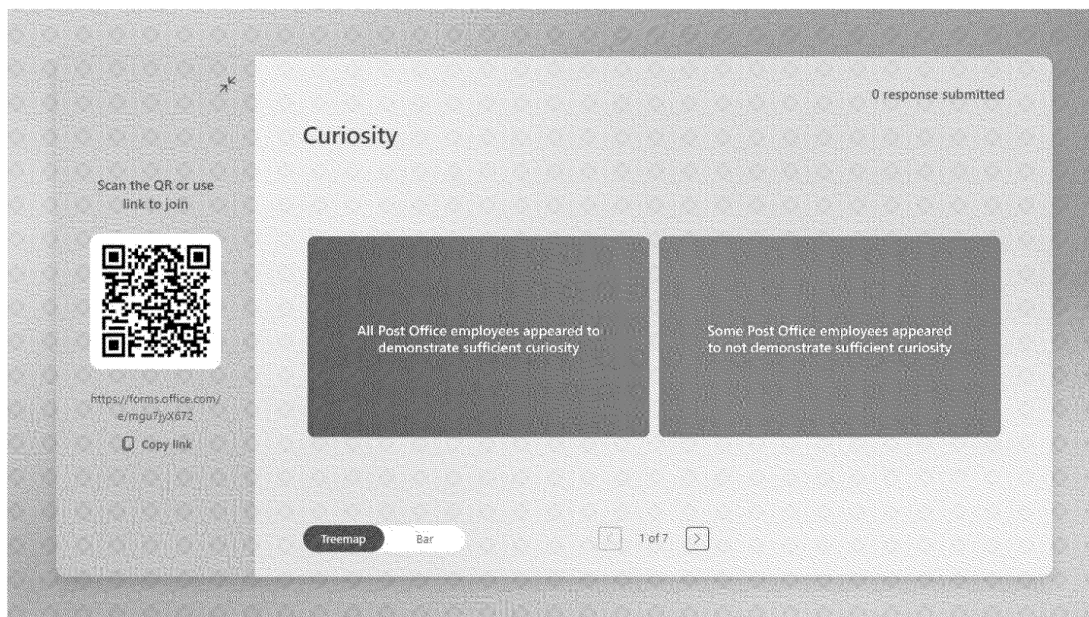


There are 7 factors we would like you to consider, they are:

- Curiosity
- Capability
- Transparency
- Oversight
- Bias
- Speaking up
- Individual behaviours

From what you have learnt today and from what you already knew of the Post Office scandal before you attended today we want you to think about each of these factors and make a judgment of what you think you might have seen and experienced in Post Office at the time of the scandal – and we are going to do a further exercise to do that. When you follow the QR code or link you will be taken to 7 sets of 2 statements and we ask you to choose which of the statements you think was most likely to be the cultural condition at Post Office back when the scandal took place. For those of you

who were here at the time, I recognize that this will seem overly simplistic, too binary, and may differ somewhat from your personal experience, but I'd ask you to take the exercise in the spirit intended, which is to consider how we safeguard our current and future culture.



We want you to consider 2 statements for each of the 7 cultural conditions

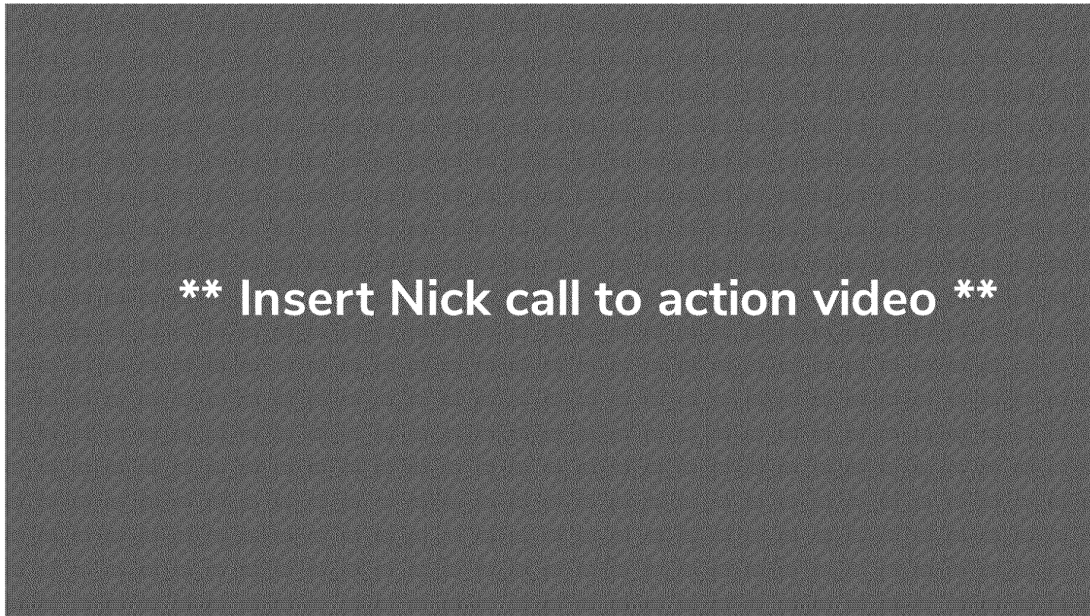
So, let's review the results.

- Curiosity – All Post Office employees appeared to demonstrate sufficient curiosity/Some Post Office employees appeared to not demonstrate sufficient curiosity
- Capability – All Post Office employees appeared to have the skills and capabilities to do their jobs well/Some Post Office employees appeared to not have the right skills and capability levels to do their job well
- Transparency – Post Office appeared to be an open and transparent business/Post Office appeared to be a secretive business
- Oversight – There seemed to be the right level of oversight into what was happening within Post Office/There seemed to be a lack of oversight in some areas of the Post Office
- Bias – There didn't appear to be pre-conceived biases in the Post Office that impacted individual's actions/There appeared to be pre-conceived biases in the Post Office that impacted individual's actions
- Speaking up – There appeared to be a culture where employees spoke up and challenged things within Post Office/There appeared to be a lack of speaking up and challenging within Post Office
- Individual behaviours – All Post Office employees appeared to demonstrate excellent individual behaviours/Some Post Office employees appeared to demonstrate poor individual behaviours]

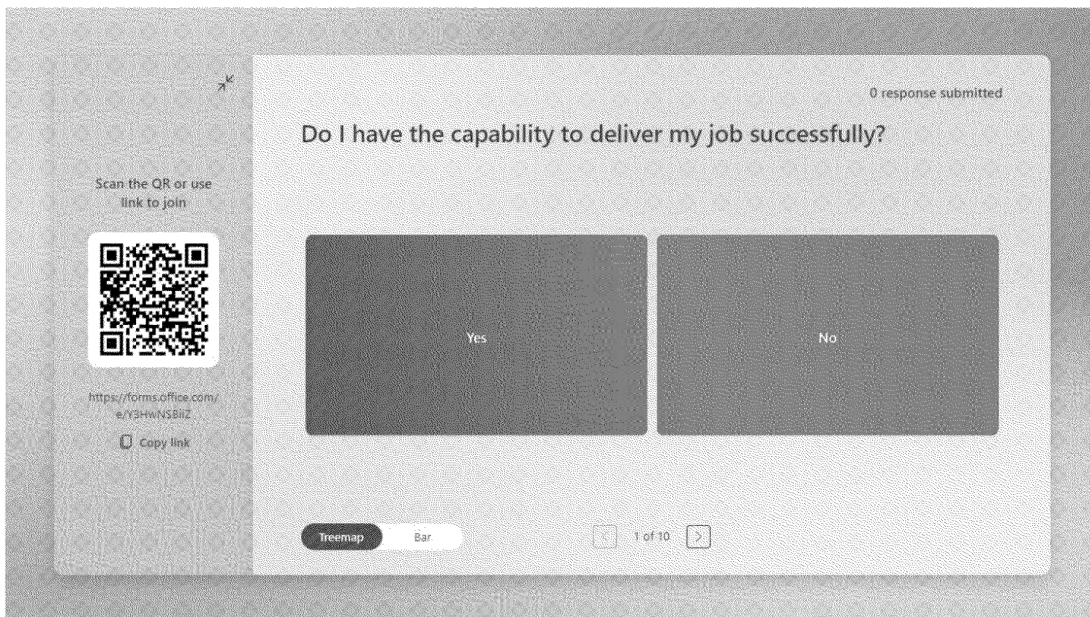
So we can see some very clear assumptions about the cultural conditions at Post Office at the time of the scandal from those questions.

As we have said a number of times, the statutory Public Inquiry is continuing to investigate the detail of what went wrong, why and the accountability for the scandal. In the meantime, everyone working in today's Post Office is accountable for helping to ensure that the past fully informs our future.

We are now going to hear from Nick about what we expect from each and every person working in Post Office today.



As Nick says, given the failures in the past culture of Post Office, we all need to be even more vigilant about when we see these behaviours and conditions in Post Office.

A screenshot of a digital form titled "Do I have the capability to deliver my job successfully?". The form is displayed on a light grey background. On the left side, there is a QR code with the text "Scan the QR or use link to join" above it and a URL "https://forms.office.com/e/Y3HwNSBRZ" below it, with a "Copy link" button. The main area of the form has two large, dark grey rectangular buttons labeled "Yes" and "No". At the top right of the form, it says "0 response submitted". At the bottom of the form, there are two tabs: "Treemap" (selected) and "Bar". To the right of the tabs is a progress indicator showing "1 of 10" with navigation arrows.

To help each and every one of us with that we have developed something called the 'Yes check'. The 'Yes check' is a series of questions that you can ask yourself at any time and if you answer any of the questions with a 'No', you are asked to speak up via your manager, another Post Office manager or

through our Speak Up channels. Doing this is an easy way of playing your part in safeguarding the culture of Post Office from the behaviours and conditions of the past.

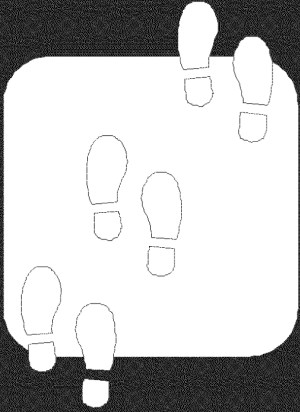
We are going to ask everyone to complete the 'Yes check' now and you will also be asked to complete them as part of a mandatory e-learning module that will follow these sessions in March.

We are going to show the collective results of the 'Yes check' to take a bit of a live temperature check and for us to consider areas of focus, so please be honest in your answers and be assured that your answers remain will confidential at an individual level.

So, let's do the Yes check – 10 questions that we want you to answer 'yes' or 'no' to.

So the results from the 'Yes check' show us the following: *[comment on results and make some suggestions on next steps for individuals of any themes identified, comment on the role of managers in any themes and comment on any themes that need taking away centrally]*

What to expect next?



- ✓ 'Yes check' available on the Hub
- ✓ E-learning training module
- ✓ Ethical decision making framework

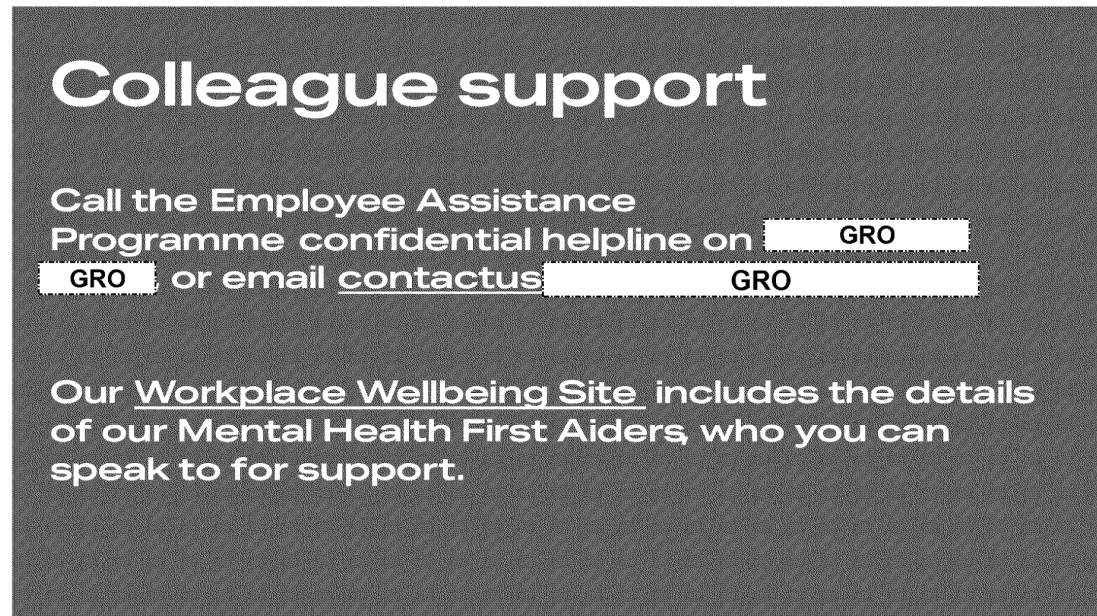
We are now coming to the end of today's session, but before we reflect on everything we have covered today, let's quickly take a look at what you can expect to see over the coming weeks and months to empower you in safeguarding the culture of Post Office.

The first thing that will be available to you, via the intranet, is the Yes-check. As we have shown in this session, this tool can be used anytime, anywhere and as frequently as you like. It is critical that each of us individually are contributing to protecting and improving Post Office's culture. This will be available from March on the Hub homepage.

Further, there will be a mandatory E-learning for all colleagues to complete in March on Success Factors. This training module will look again at some of the topics we have covered today; it is absolutely vital for us all, to recognise the impact, understand the cultural conditions that enabled the poor treatment of Postmasters, learn the early warning signs and feel empowered to report them.

Lastly, in the coming months, we will launch a new Ethical Decision Making Framework. This model is designed with all Post Office colleagues in mind, regardless of position, and will ensure we review

our actions and make robust decisions. More information on this is to follow, so make sure to keep an eye out.



Colleague support

Call the Employee Assistance Programme confidential helpline on **GRO** **GRO** or email [contactus](#) **GRO**

Our Workplace Wellbeing Site includes the details of our Mental Health First Aiders, who you can speak to for support.

I want to finish by reminding you all again of the support that is available to you – details are again on screen. Whilst I know the content today will have been difficult for some colleagues, it is vitally important that we do talk about what went wrong in the past in order to ensure that we have the commitment and focus across Post Office to learn from the past and safeguard our culture going forwards.

Thank you again for your time and ongoing commitment.