



Business and Trade Committee

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# Post Office Horizon scandal redress: Unfinished business: Government response

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Fourth Report of Session 2024–25

HC 778

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# Business and Trade Committee

The Business and Trade Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Business and Trade and its associated public bodies.

## Current membership

Liam Byrne (Labour; Birmingham Hodge Hill and Solihull North) (Chair)

Antonia Bance (Labour; Tipton and Wednesbury)

John Cooper (Conservative; Dumfries and Galloway)

Sarah Edwards (Labour; Tamworth)

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## Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

## Publication

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## Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Business and Trade Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is [02037069000](tel:02037069000) (General enquiries) | [02037069000](tel:02037069000) (media enquiries); the Committee's email address is [commonsbtc@gro.parliament.uk](mailto:commonsbtc@gro.parliament.uk). You can follow the Committee on X (formerly Twitter) using [@CommonsBTC](https://twitter.com/CommonsBTC).

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# First Report

1. The Business and Trade Committee published its First report of Session 2024–25, [Post Office and Horizon scandal redress: Unfinished business](#) (HC 341) on 1 January 2025. The response was received from the Department for Business and Trade on 3 March 2025. The response and a cover letter from the Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports are published as an Appendix to this Report. Two further written statements to the House of Commons and House of Lords have added detail to the Department for Business and Trade’s strategy for accelerating redress to victims.<sup>1</sup>
2. Over 4000 claimants of the Horizon scandal are still waiting to settle their claims. The human cost of the unacceptable delay in making these redress payments is considerable. The Government’s response acknowledged this pain is exacerbated by poor administration of specific schemes.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore regrettable that Government has chosen to accept in full only three out of seventeen of the Committee’s recommendations, which if accepted would radically accelerate redress payments.
3. The Government has accepted our recommendation that Horizon Shortfall Scheme claimants receive the same access to authoritative facilitation and case management directions already available to claimants in other schemes (recommendation 6). We welcome this. But we are disappointed that the Government has not accepted our recommendation to make similar improvements in the Group Litigation Order Scheme (recommendation 12).
4. We recommended that the Government provide upfront legal advice for Horizon Shortfall Scheme claimants. This change would have tackled one of the most important sources of delay and burden in the claims process - and provided a way to restore fairness and faith among claimants. We regret that the Government has not accepted this recommendation.
5. We welcome the announcement that the Department for Business and Trade will take oversight for postmasters with convictions overturned by the courts. But the Government has not accepted our recommendation

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1 [Changes to responsibilities for Horizon overturned convictions redress: Statement made on 3 March 2025, HCWS483; and \[Horizon Redress: Statement made on 10 March 2025, HLWS503\]\(#\)](#)

2 [Post Office Horizon financial redress data as of 28 February 2025](#)

that administration of the Horizon Shortfall Scheme is transferred to the Department. We believe this is a mistake and remind ministers that the Post Office itself advises this transfer is made.

6. It is welcome that redress payments have significantly increased since the General Election. It is also welcome that the redress scheme is now fully funded. But the redress payment processes are still too slow. Victims claiming under the Horizon Shortfall Scheme continue to face significant upfront complexity without legal advice. Victims under the Horizon Conviction Redress Scheme are in fear of taking their case to final assessment. The promise of stronger instruction to lawyers alone is no substitute for the full implementation of the recommendations we have made.

This Committee will continue to advocate for justice for the Horizon victims. It is wrong that the claimants feel that the redress process is akin to a second trial. We therefore urge the Department for Business and Trade to re-consider and re-draft its response to our report and to address our recommendations in full, especially the future of the Horizon Shortfall Scheme oversight.

## Letter from the Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports, Department for Business and Trade, dated 3 March 2025

Dear Liam,

### Post Office And Horizon Redress: Government Response

The Government thanks the Committee for its report. I am grateful to Committee members for their interest and engagement on these important issues, which remain a key priority for my Department. We have sought input from the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board in preparing this Government response.

Since the new Government took office, the total amount of redress paid to victims of the Horizon scandal has **more than doubled**, with over 1,600 more victims having received redress since the end of June last year. In total, approximately £698 million has now been paid to over 4,400 claimants across the four Post Office Horizon schemes<sup>3</sup>.

Under the **Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS)**, approximately £315 million has been paid to eligible claimants as of 31 January 2025. This includes £33.3 million in interim payments to original claimants and £7.9 million in interim payments to late applications. **The new HSS Appeals Process will be launched shortly**, and we have committed to covering the reasonable costs of postmasters obtaining legal advice at each stage of the appeals process.

There are 111 claimants eligible for financial redress through the **Overtured Convictions (OC)** scheme, of which 82 claimants have submitted full and final claims. **All 111 eligible claimants have either reached full and final settlement or received a minimum of £200,000 through interim payments.** As of 31 January 2025, A total of approximately £65 million have been made in redress payments under this scheme, including further interim payments.

As of 21 February 2025, the Department has received **425** completed claims from postmasters eligible for the **Group Litigation Order (GLO)** scheme. A total of approximately **£136 million**, including interim payments, has been paid to claimants.

Over half of eligible GLO claimants have now settled their claim. A further 219 individuals have received partial or interim redress payments, including people who have not yet submitted full claims.

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<sup>3</sup> Derived using HSS and OC published statistics as of 31 January 2025 and GLO and HCRS published statistics as of 21 February 2025.

Since the new Government came in, we have launched the new **Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme (HCRS)**. This scheme is making very good progress. As of 7 February 2025, 589 individuals have been identified as having at least one conviction quashed by the Post Office (Horizon System) Offences Act 2024. As of 21 February 2025, 273 full and final claims for financial redress have been received through the HCRS, with 257 of these paid. All eligible applicants are entitled to an initial interim payment of £200,000, with 408 initial interim claims received by the Department and 398 of these paid. A total of approximately £182 million has been paid to claimants under this scheme, including interim payments.

The new Government has been determined to learn lessons from the past as we work to ensure that we deliver full, fair and prompt redress to victims, who have had to wait too long to receive justice. We recognise there is a need to ensure the same principles are used to assess how much exactly victims receive. We also agree that requests for information sent to victims should only be focused on seeking further evidence that will help increase offers. I can confirm that we have reinforced this point to our legal advisers and to the Post Office.

The Government will continue to look at gaps in the redress system. Following the publication of Kroll's independent report on the Capture system, we intend to publish our approach to redress for those postmasters who experienced shortfalls through use of Capture in spring 2025. The Government is also actively considering what further information and support can be introduced for HSS claimants to help them with their initial claims.

Additionally, you will have seen the statement I made today regarding changes to responsibilities for Horizon Convictions redress. We are broadening the scope of the HCRS and, as part of that, I can confirm that the Department for Business and Trade has agreed to take over responsibility from the Post Office for delivering redress to those whose convictions have been overturned by the courts. From Tuesday 3 June all existing and new overturned convictions claims will be processed by this Department.

Our responses to the recommendations made in your report are set out in the attached Annex.

Yours sincerely,

**Gareth Thomas MP**

Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports

Department for Business and Trade

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# Appendix: Government Response

## 1 Horizon Shortfall Scheme

### Role of Post Office

#### recommendation 1

*Despite repeated criticism from this Committee, Post Office Ltd is still in charge of the Horizon Shortfall Scheme. While the Committee welcomes that the appeals process will be administered by the Department for Business and Trade, swift action must be taken to deal with the thousands of claimants who still have not been given the redress that is owed to them. Sub-postmasters do not want Post Office Ltd to deal with redress and neither does Post Office Ltd itself. Post Office Ltd should not be deciding on what financial redress is owed to victims of its own scandal. The Government must finish the job in hand and remove Post Office Ltd from the Horizon Shortfall Scheme. (Paragraph 10)*

#### recommendation 2

*If the Government is not able to do this for all claims in a timely way, Post Office Ltd must in the first instance transfer complex cases—that is, cases that are going through full assessment—for the Department to administer. For claimants who choose to take the fixed sum offer, Post Office Ltd must continue to take swift action and find solutions to automate case processing. Post Office Ltd should provide regular updates to the Committee on the progress of this. (Paragraph 11)*

- The Government partially accepts these recommendations.
- The new Government's priority is ensuring that full and fair redress is paid out to victims of the Horizon scandal as quickly as possible. Now that we have launched the Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme (HCRS), which is progressing at good pace, we can confirm that we have decided that the Department for Business and Trade should take on responsibility for claims currently being dealt with by the Post Office through its Overturned Convictions scheme. From 3 June this

year, the Department's Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme (HCRS) will broaden its scope and take on responsibility for redress for postmasters who have had their convictions overturned by the courts.

- The new Government is also pleased to hear that the Committee welcomes the upcoming Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS) Appeals Process. We are considering allowing those victims who have already raised a formal dispute with the Post Office, but not yet reached an agreement, to opt in to the forthcoming HSS appeals process.
- We will also continue to consider whether it should take over responsibility for making first offers under the HSS. This would not be a straightforward step, and risks significant disruption, which could cause delays in providing redress. A core principle will be ensuring that taking over responsibility would not slow down the pace of offers, nor add to the overall cost of administering the scheme. The Government will make a decision on whether to take over responsibility in Spring 2025.
- In the meantime, we continue to support and challenge the Post Office in delivery of the HSS. We expect the vast majority of remaining and future claims to be for the £75k fixed sum offer. Whilst the Post Office remains responsible for managing the delivery of HSS, fully-assessed claims are assessed by an independent panel of experts who make a recommendation on the value of redress. Post Office has never offered less than the amount recommended by the independent Panel.
- The new Government agrees that the Post Office must take swift action to process claims for the fixed sum offer in the HSS. Indeed, the Post Office has already introduced automation to support greater efficiency in this process and are looking at further opportunities to implement this. The new Government will encourage the Post Office to provide regular and timely updates to the Committee on progress.

## Providing up-front legal advice

### Recommendation 3

*Horizon Shortfall Scheme claimants currently receive no legal advice to help complete the complex questionnaire that acts as the gateway to the scheme. This acts against them receiving the full redress they are due. We recommend HSS claimants be given access to no-cost legal advice to support their entry into the scheme. (Paragraph 14)*

- The Government does not accept this recommendation.

- The HSS was designed so that claimants could apply without legal input, which was informed by the experience of the 2019 GLO proceedings. Claimants can, and are encouraged to, seek legal advice when they receive their HSS offer with funding for reasonable fees provided by the Post Office. That funding continues if they choose to challenge their offer.
- However, the Government recognises that the original application process for the HSS proved to be overly complex. It has taken steps with Post Office to address this, including the introduction of the £75k fixed sum with a shorter application form and improvements to the guidance and forms for full claims.
- Furthermore, those who are unhappy with an individually assessed settlement which they have previously agreed with the Post Office will be entitled to apply to the DBT-run HSS Appeals Process, when this is established in the next few months. Funding for legal advice will be provided for those disputing settlements through HSS Appeals.
- The Government is considering what further information and support can be introduced for claimants to help them make out their initial claims. It will report back to the Committee accordingly.

## Stronger instructions to lawyers

### recommendation 4

*The gold-plated legalistic process of the Horizon Shortfall Scheme is not best value for the public purse. The Government should therefore ensure that Herbert Smith Freehills and Post Office Ltd are instructed to use best endeavours to simplify and accelerate the settlement of claims. (Paragraph 18)*

- The Government agrees with this recommendation and has already previously recommended this to Post Office and HSF in turn. We continue to reiterate the importance of simplification and streamlining through its governance fora.

## Speed of the Independent Panel

### recommendation 5

*The Committee has learned that it will take around 18 months for the Independent Panel to assess outstanding claims on the Horizon Shortfall Scheme. We have also learned that the Post Office are expecting thousands of new cases to come forward. A panel central to the process that assesses*

*all claims meeting twice a week will not deliver swift justice for sub-postmasters. The Independent Panel must be resourced to meet full time until the majority of first offers have been issued. (Paragraph 22)*

- The Government partially accepts this recommendation.
- The new Government agrees that it has taken too long for claims to be assessed under the HSS. However, the introduction of the £75k fixed sum is already having a significant impact. As of 31 January 2025, approximately £171 million has been paid in award top-ups and £75,000 awards.
- The Post Office is working with its legal suppliers to ensure that Panel resource is increased to reflect the workload on the HSS. However, Panel capacity is not the only constraint on progressing cases. The Government is working with the Post Office to ensure that all parts of the HSS process are as streamlined as possible so that redress can be accelerated. The Post Office is increasing its operational resource accordingly.

## **Establishing a case facilitator for the Horizon Shortfall Scheme**

### **recommendation 6**

*Claimants under the Horizon Shortfall Scheme lack the same access to authoritative facilitation and case management direction available to claimants in other schemes. This can be remedied by introducing an empowered case facilitator similar to the role played by Sir Gary Hickinbottom for Overturned Convictions. We recommend that the Department and Post Office Ltd establish such roles, agreeing their functions with claimants and their legal representatives. (Paragraph 27)*

- The Government accepts this recommendation.
- The Government agrees that case facilitators have proved valuable in other schemes by encouraging lawyers for the two parties to reach agreement. The Post Office has committed to explore the proposal to appoint someone with case management responsibilities to support the HSS and engage with DBT and applicant representatives on this proposal; we are committed to working on this with them.
- The Government will appoint a case facilitator to support the delivery of the HSS Appeals process, which will begin to consider cases in the next few months. That facilitator will also deal with any cases remaining in the Post Office's HSS Dispute Resolution Process.

## Giving claimants the benefit of the doubt

### recommendation 7

*The Department should work with Post Office Ltd and claimants' representatives to establish an independent case facilitator with a defined role in assessing whether it is reasonable to subject a claim's basis of calculation to further scrutiny through requests for information. When requests for information are considered reasonable, it should take no longer than 20 working days to be sent to the claimant from the submission of a claim. (Paragraph 30)*

- The Government does not accept this recommendation.
- The Government agrees that requests for information (RFIs) should be sent to the claimant as quickly as possible following the submission of a claim. It does not believe that setting deadlines for this process would be in the best interest of claimants, given that these requests are aimed at helping to substantiate the losses claimed. If this process is rushed, it may affect the quality of the RFI and in turn, inhibit the claimant's opportunity to provide the required information to increase their award.
- A case facilitator would also need to familiarise themselves with the details of the case in order to consider the validity of a request for further information. That would add unacceptable time and cost to the process.
- We do, however, agree that requests for information should be sent in a timely way and we will reinforce this in our regular reviews with the Post Office of the scheme's progress.

## Cutting down on needless requests for information

### recommendation 8

*Requests for information under the Horizon Shortfall Scheme should only be made where it is deemed reasonable to increase the offer value to claimants, or in the rare instance where there may be reasonable concern about a claim's basis of calculation. Where redress offers are calculated in-line with indicative bands or redress guidelines, we recommend that offers should be made at or above the top-end of such indicative limits. An independent case facilitator should be established with a role—on appeal by claimant representatives—in swiftly considering whether a request for information is reasonable for the above purposes. (Paragraph 33)*

- The Government partially accepts this recommendation.

- Requests for information are issued in the HSS to help substantiate heads of loss that have been claimed by the postmaster and are therefore always aimed at increasing the potential offer of compensation. However, the Government recognises that these requests can be overwhelming, particularly given the trauma that many postmasters experienced due to Horizon and the challenges that may come with recalling these events. It also recognises that due to the passage of time, it can be very difficult to produce documentary evidence to support claims. The scheme is designed to accommodate these evidential difficulties as far as possible.
- While claims which are supported by evidence are more likely to be successful, where the postmaster is unable to evidence a claim, their claim will nonetheless be accepted in whole or in part if it is considered to be fair in all the circumstances (for example, if it is reasonable to not expect the postmaster to have that evidence).
- The Government will work with the Post Office to ensure that requests for information are only issued where necessary to support awards being made and that the communication of these requests is handled sensitively and in the interests of claimants.
- Where redress offers are calculated in line with indicative bands or redress guidelines, DBT works with Post Office to ensure the approach is fair and consistent. Again, those who are unhappy with a settlement which they have previously agreed with the Post Office will be entitled to apply to the DBT-run HSS Appeals Process, when this is established in the next few months.

## Mediation route

### **recommendation 9**

*The Independent Panel on the Horizon Shortfall Scheme is already backlogged. To keep cases moving, disputed first offers to claimants must not be reassessed by the Independent Panel but instead move straight into external mediation. (Paragraph 36)*

- The Government partially accepts this recommendation.
- The new Government agrees that the number of cases being reassessed by the HSS Independent Panel as part of the Dispute Resolution Process is causing delays.

- The HSS Independent Panel plays an important role in ensuring that outcomes under the scheme are consistent and fair. This is an important safeguard, particularly for claimants who are unrepresented.
- However, the Government has agreed with the Post Office that where possible, claims will be reassessed internally by the Company based on the information provided. It will look to agree settlements with the claimant bilaterally following this reassessment.
- As is currently the case, the claimant will have the opportunity to proceed to an independent mediation if no agreement can be reached.

## Introducing legally binding timeframes

### recommendation 10

*Sub-postmasters should not be left in limbo, waiting years for the redress that they are due with no light at the end of the tunnel. Ongoing delays are unacceptable and action must be taken to rectify this. The Committee reiterates the recommendation of its predecessor—binding timeframes for each stage of the Horizon Shortfall Scheme process must be introduced to draw this saga to a close. To ensure that claimants are not adversely impacted, timeframes should only be imposed on the administrators of the scheme, so that claimants have the time they want to consider their positions. (Paragraph 39)*

- The Government does not accept this recommendation.
- The Government inherited a Horizon Shortfall Scheme that, amongst other criticisms, was seen as too legalistic and took too long to resolve claims. We are working hard to resolve these problems. But the time taken to resolve claims in future will not be affected by the imposition of timeframes, even if they are described as “binding”. The Horizon Compensation Advisory Board has commented:

“Board members reiterated their position that the introduction of penalties for exceeding binding timeframes for redress schemes would not achieve the desired outcome of speeding the delivery of fair compensation to victims of the scandal. They saw the intuitive appeal of this idea but considered that it would not work. Such limits:

- would not change the behaviour of those responsible for the schemes;
- would not adjust to complex cases or allow for the variable quality of independent reports; and

- would not be fair on those who had been paid within time.
- Instead, what is required is practical action. The Government is working with the Post Office to make the scheme more efficient by introducing the £75k fixed offer; limiting the number of Dispute Resolution Process cases going back to Panel; minimising Requests for Information; improving case management; automating time-consuming, administrative processes ; and supporting the Post Office to increase the number of staff working on the scheme and to deploy resources where they are most needed.
- Settlements include interest, which recognises the delays that claimants have experienced in receiving redress. The Post Office is also making interim payments, where possible, to ensure that postmasters are not out of pocket whilst they wait for an outcome or if they choose to dispute their offer.
- As a result of these steps, the Government expects this backlog to be reduced significantly in the coming weeks. The Government will update the Committee on the progress of reducing the backlog in Spring.
- However, implementing fines for delays would have a significant impact on cost and be unfair to the taxpayer.

## 2 Group Litigation Order Scheme

### Introducing binding timeframes

#### **recommendation 11**

*The Committee welcomes that the majority of first offers for the Group Litigation Order Scheme will be complete by March 2025. This, however, does not address the time it takes between first offer and final payment. Sub-postmasters have waited long enough. The Government should aim wherever possible to complete Group Litigation Order redress claims by March 2025 as suggested to us in evidence from Sir Alan Bates. We know that this will not be possible for some claims due to the complexity of the claim or the vulnerability of claimants, so the Government must introduce binding timeframes at each stage of Group Litigation Order Scheme, with financial penalties awarded to the claimant if these timeframes are not met. As with the Horizon Shortfall Scheme, timeframes should only be imposed on the Government side, giving the sub-postmaster ample time to consider their position. (Paragraph 43)*

- The Government partially accepts this recommendation.

- The Government inherited a Group Litigation Order Scheme which has similarly been criticised for being too legalistic. The Government has undertaken to respond to the Advisory Board's recommendations aimed to ensure that redress for any future scandal is non-adversarial. It has also been working hard with claimants' lawyers to speed up claims and offers.
- As of 21st February 2025, 425 full claims had been received by the Department. Of these 425 claims, 265 have been paid and a further 4 have accepted offers and are awaiting payment. Another 138 postmasters have received offers from the department and the remaining 18 are awaiting offers.
- The Department expects to make redress offers in respect of 90% of completed claims within 40 working days. Redress will be paid in full when offers are accepted. If an offer is challenged, the claimant will receive 80% of it.
- We therefore expect to pay substantial redress to the great majority of GLO members by 31 March.
- The Department has set a target to issue a substantive response to 90% of challenge cases received after 1 December within 40 working days of receiving a complete challenge. Claims will be assessed in the date order in which they were submitted, so no challenge submitted before 1 December will be left behind.
- The Government is pleased to note that as of 21 February 2025, 95% of claimants (18 out of 19) who submitted complete challenges after 1 December received their substantive response within 40 working days of doing so.
- Claimants already receive compensation for the time taken to deal with claims, in that interest is paid on most aspects of claims in accordance with standard legal principles: the amount payable therefore increases over time.
- The Department and Addleshaw Goddard have brought in additional staff to assist, and as the outstanding initial offer claims reduce, further staff will focus on settling challenged claims.
- In summary, introducing financial penalties would not speed up the process above or beyond the steps already taken by the Department.

## Role of independent adjudicator

### Recommendation 12

*It is disappointing that the Department does not believe the Independent Reviewer should be given a greater role in the Group Litigation Order Scheme, despite the former Post Office Minister confessing that it was a mistake not to do so. Sir Ross Cranston is a former High Court Judge with a wealth of experience that is not being used to the full. The Government should give the Independent Reviewer greater powers to case manage Group Litigation Order claims throughout the whole process. (Paragraph 49)*

- The Government does not accept this recommendation.
- The Department recognises that there is a greater role for the Case Management function to play in the GLO Scheme. The Case Management function within the GLO scheme is delivered by Dentons, the scheme's independent claim facilitators. Dentons provide a dedicated team with a wealth of experience in facilitating mediation and resolving disputes, and crucially in managing large volumes of claims while doing so. We are encouraging Dentons to play an active role in the scheme as they can and will continue to do so.
- The Department is productively working with claimants' solicitors and Dentons to maximise the benefit of the role of the facilitation process in the scheme. It is accepted and was envisaged at the Scheme's inception that facilitated discussions would be appropriate in specific cases, whereas the Panel and Reviewer process should be reserved for points of Scheme Principles.
- The Department greatly values Sir Ross Cranston's expertise and it was for that reason that he was appointed as the Scheme's Reviewer. However, this is a very distinct role with a much lower time commitment than the role played by Sir Gary Hickinbottom on the Overturned Convictions Scheme. Sir Ross is currently chairing an inquiry into the November 2021 Channel crossing tragedy and would not be able to commit additional time to the GLO scheme. The current arrangement ensures that Sir Ross' expertise is used on points of scheme principle and fairness rather than administratively on case management.
- At this late stage in the GLO scheme (where over three-quarters of claims have been submitted and over half of eligible GLO claimants have accepted their claim), we therefore do not agree that Sir Ross' role should be extended or that a second case facilitator should be appointed to that scheme.

## Requests for Information (RFIs)

### recommendation 13

*The Department should ensure that offers to claimants are delivered at or above the top-end of the illustrative redress bands and guidance established under the guidance and principles of the Group Litigation Order scheme. Further requests for information should only be made in order to increase the offer value to claimants, or in the rare instance where there may be reasonable concern about a claim's basis of calculation. A claim's named case facilitator should have a defined role in swiftly considering whether a request for information is reasonable for the above purposes. (Paragraph 52)*

- The Government does not accept this recommendation.
- Requests for information are intended to enable the Department to increase its offers to claimants, including where there is a reasonable concern about the basis of calculation.
- The Department recognises the feedback from claimants and their representatives that such requests are in some cases being made late into the process and is therefore keen for such requests to be made as early as possible. Adding an additional layer of governance by requiring the claim facilitator to agree to the request would increase the time taken to issue such requests which would exacerbate delays.
- We can, however, confirm that Addleshaw Goddard are aware of the importance of making it clear that RFIs are only issued to seek further information that could help increase an offer to claimants.

## 3 Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme

### Informing claimants of their right to redress

#### recommendation 14

*While it is reassuring that the Government have put a timeframe on completing eligibility checks, we are concerned that some individuals may never know of their right to redress. The lack of data published means it is difficult for the Committee to fully scrutinise progress of this scheme across all Home Nations. The Government must set out a plan for how it will notify postmasters in scope of the Act of their right to redress plus timeframes in which these issues will be resolved. The Government must also update the Committee monthly with the following data, broken down by England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland:*

*a. How many people are under consideration as qualifying for remedies under the Post office (Horizon System) Offences Act 2024 and the Post Office (Horizon System) Offences (Scotland) Act 2024.*

*b. How many people have been confirmed as qualifying for the reliefs specified by the Acts.*

*c. The number of people who have been written to about their right to redress.*

*d. How many people that have been paid under the Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme.*

*e. The total amount that has been paid to claimants under the Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme, and the total cost of administering the scheme. (Paragraph 58)*

- The Government does not accept this recommendation.
- Since July 2024, individuals who have had their convictions quashed by the Act have been notified via a letter from the Ministry of Justice. In this letter, individuals are also notified that they are eligible for redress and invited to come forward to apply to the Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme. For England and Wales, the Government publishes monthly data on the assessment of convictions against the Act's criteria and the notification of individuals that they have had a conviction quashed, on gov.uk here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-office-horizon-system-offences-act-2024-quashed-convictions-management-information>.
- As of 7 February, the total number of individuals who have been or are being assessed in England and Wales was 953<sup>4</sup>.
- Notification of individuals in Scotland and Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the relevant devolved government. Publication of these data in respect of Scotland and Northern Ireland is a matter for those governments.
- The justice authorities in Northern Ireland and Scotland have not published regular updates like the Ministry of Justice; however, some public ad hoc updates have previously been provided, here:

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4 Please note in February 2024, the Post Office and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) made the MoJ aware of a total of 944 records for possible individuals who may have been convicted because of the faulty Horizon accounting system. Previous Management Information releases published by the MoJ reported that number as 936. Following a routine review of our datasets, the Department has identified that eight individuals had not been included in this total. This has now been rectified making the total 944.

- Northern Ireland – As of 13 February 2025, 16 individuals had been notified their convictions had been quashed. The convictions of five remaining individuals are currently being assessed.
- Scotland – As of 27 February, the total number of individuals being assessed is 96, with 57 individuals identified as having convictions quashed by the Act, and one individual identified as having an alternative to prosecution for a relevant offence. 13 individuals have been identified as not having a quashed conviction, and the final 25 individuals are in the process of being assessed.
- In addition, the Government publishes monthly data on the progress of redress here: [Post Office Horizon financial redress data for 2025 - GOV.UK](#) As of 21 February 2025, £182 million had been paid, including interim payments. 398 people have received interim payments and 257 have reached full and final settlements.
- Considering these UK Government data are already published, the Government does not think it is necessary to provide separate data on these matters.

## Remove the fear factor

### **recommendation 15**

*The Department should act swiftly to remove the fear factor from the Horizon Conviction Redress Scheme, ensuring that the redress offered under a full assessment settlement is never valued at below the optional fixed-sum redress which was initially available to a claimant. It should further communicate this change to current claimants and consider whether undue pressure may have formed a part of the decision of some settled claimants to opt out of a full assessment. The approach established under this recommendation for fixed-sum settlement offers should be applied as a matter of general principle across all schemes. (Paragraph 61)*

- The Government does not accept this recommendation.
- There is no timeframe within which an applicant needs to decide whether they should accept the fixed sum or pursue a detailed claim assessment.
- In the HCRS and OC schemes, we are funding legal advice for claimants to support them in calculating what amount of redress they are due and to support their decision on which redress route they wish to engage with and to make that claim.

- We recognise the hardship already endured by affected postmasters and the fixed sum route for redress represents an accessible and swift route for accessing redress whilst constituting a sum which represents a fair settlement for the majority.
- Whilst no amount of money can right the wrongs of the past, we strongly encourage claimants to engage with a detailed assessment of their losses where these are expected to comprise in excess of the £600k fixed sum.
- Applicants receive an upfront preliminary payment of £200,000 as soon as they are confirmed as eligible for the scheme and have passed ID checks. This aims to relieve some of the immediate financial hardship while they consider their preferred option.
- If a claimant decides to pursue a detailed claim assessment, their preliminary payment is topped up to £450,000 upon submission of a fully substantiated claim.
- If they decide to take the £600,000 fixed sum, the balance of the claim is paid and the claim settled.

## Binding timeframes

### recommendation 16

*The Government must introduce binding timeframes for administrators at each stage of the process under the Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme, with financial penalties awarded to the claimant if these deadlines are not met. As with the Horizon Shortfall Scheme and Group Litigation Order Scheme, these timeframes should only be applied on the Government's side so that claimants have the space and time needed to consider their offer. (Paragraph 63)*

- For the reasons given in response to recommendation 11, the Government does not accept this recommendation.

## Transparency for legal costs

### recommendation 17

*The Department should publish a regular transparency report detailing external legal costs incurred under all schemes. It is important that the report is produced in a manner that minimises the potential for wider confusion about the basis under which legal costs are billed, distinguishing the cost of disbursements incurred by firms where possible. Where separation of*

*cost categories is not possible, the Department should provide a clear and accessible summary of the meaning and limitations of the data provided. (Paragraph 66)*

- The Department is happy to commit to publishing these data on a quarterly basis.
- We have previously been providing regular updates to the Select Committee on spend across schemes, including on external legal costs. This has been shared by way of a quarterly update letter from Government Ministers, which has then been published on the Committee's website.
- In light of your recommendations, however, we will now publish this information on gov.uk.
- In common with the rest of Government, the Department also routinely publishes all transactions it makes over £25k on a quarterly basis.

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# Formal minutes

**Tuesday 18 March 2025**

## Members present

Liam Byrne, in the Chair

Antonia Bance

John Cooper

Sarah Edwards

Alison Griffiths

Sonia Kumar

Charlie Maynard

Gregor Poynton

Joshua Reynolds

Matt Western

## Report Consideration

Draft Report (*Post Office Horizon scandal redress: Unfinished business: Government response to the Committee's First Report*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 6, read and agreed to.

Appendix agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Fourth Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134)

## Adjournment

Adjourned till Tuesday 25 March at 2.00pm

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# List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

## Session 2024–25

Number	Title	Reference
3rd	Make Work Pay: Employment Rights Bill	HC 370
2nd	Priorities of the Business and Trade Committee	HC 423
1st	Post Office and Horizon scandal redress: Unfinished business	HC 341