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# Horizon Shortfall Scheme appeals process

## Statement made on 30 January 2025

Statement UIN HCWS399

### Statement made by



**Gareth Thomas**

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Commons



### Statement

In September 2024 the Secretary of State announced that the Government would be introducing an independent Horizon Shortfall Scheme Appeals process. This will help ensure that all HSS claimants have the full opportunity to receive fair compensation and reflects a recommendation from the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board.

During my December statement to the House, I promised that I would provide an update in the New Year.

Firstly, I can confirm that my Department is in the final stages of procuring a contract for its legal advisors on Appeals cases, which will include an initial assessment of each postmaster's case. We will also be appointing a separate firm as secretariat for the scheme's Independent Panel and Reviewer shortly, once the procurement process is complete.

My officials will shortly send to both appellants' representatives and the Advisory Board a draft of detailed principles and guidance. These will ensure that the HSS Appeals scheme is fit for purpose and provides a satisfactory outcome for affected postmasters, in line with the Advisory Board's recommendation. They will also establish the eligibility criteria. We will continue to engage both groups on all aspects of the scheme.

I can also announce that this Government is committed to covering the reasonable costs of postmasters obtaining legal advice at each stage of the appeals process. As with appeals under the GLO and HCRS schemes, we will do this using a legal tariff. We strongly encourage potential appellants to take up this offer and only seek the advice of firms who have signed-up to these tariffs. We are working with appellants' legal representatives so that we can establish these tariffs as soon as possible.

Clarity about the principles of the scheme and our support for appellants' legal costs will mean that legal representatives can begin to produce cases for appeal. We expect that the first cases will be ready for submission in the spring.

Eligible postmasters within Post Office's HSS Dispute Resolution Procedure will receive a letter in spring inviting them to transfer their case to HSS Appeals.

I will provide a further update to the House nearer to that time.

### Statement from

Department for Business and Trade



## Linked statements

This statement has also been made in the House of Lords

### Department for Business and Trade ➤

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Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Legislation)

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