

News story

Government supports postmasters impacted by Horizon scandal by providing funding for late applications to Historical Shortfall Scheme

Government extends funding for Post Office to enable late applications by postmasters to Historical Shortfall Scheme.

From: [Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy \(/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy\)](#) and [Dean Russell \(/government/people/dean-russell\)](#)

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- Government extends funding for Post Office to enable late applications by postmasters to Historical Shortfall Scheme
- funding will ensure that postmasters impacted by Horizon scandal can receive the compensation they are owed fairly and quickly
- new Postal Affairs Minister Dean Russell said: “We are ensuring that innocent postmasters who were unable to tap into the Historical Shortfall Scheme do not miss out on the compensation they deserve.”

The Post Office will be able to accept late compensation applications from postmasters to the Historical Shortfall Scheme thanks to government funding that has been extended today (Thursday 6 October) to support those impacted by the Horizon IT scandal.

The Historical Shortfall Scheme was launched in May 2020 to compensate postmasters who had to cover financial shortfalls in their branch’s accounts caused by the Horizon IT system but were not convicted.

The government and Post Office have made great progress on delivering compensation to postmasters through the scheme fairly and quickly, with 82% of eligible claimants having now received an offer, and with £52 million being offered in total.

Despite this, there remain individuals who were unable to apply for the scheme while it was open, for example due to ill health or through being abroad. To ensure these postmasters receive the compensation they are owed, today the government has extended its financial support to Post Office so that it can accept eligible late applications as part of the Historical Shortfall Scheme.

Postal Affairs Minister Dean Russell said:

“My priority is to ensure that all those impacted by the Horizon scandal receive compensation fairly and quickly.

“By coming forward with additional funding, we are ensuring that innocent postmasters who were unable to tap into the Historical Shortfall Scheme do not miss out on the compensation they deserve.”

Post Office will be writing out to all individuals who have contacted them about a late application to the Historical Shortfall Scheme to inform them of this. The government encourages any other individuals who may have been eligible to claim compensation under the Historical Shortfall Scheme to contact Post Office to discuss their position.

All late applications will be managed through existing Historical Shortfall Scheme processes, including an assessment by the Independent Advisory

Panel, to ensure claims are considered consistently with those already submitted.

Background information

The Post Office Horizon scandal, which began over 20 years ago, has had a devastating impact on the lives of many postmasters. Starting in the late 1990s, the Post Office began installing Horizon accounting software, but faults in the software led to shortfalls in branches' accounts. The Post Office demanded sub-postmasters cover the shortfalls, and in many cases wrongfully prosecuted them between 1999 and 2015 for false accounting or theft.

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