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| To: Minister Thomas | From: Elena Michael |
| SCS: Carl Creswell, Director, Post Office and Business Engagement, Bickerton - DG | Date: 25 July 2024 ; David |

FOR DECISION: PUBLICATION OF HORIZON REDRESS SCHEME REPORTS**Summary:**

To increase transparency of the redress schemes, the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board recommended that the Department publish regular reports on progress and pinch-points in all three Horizon-related redress schemes from their respective case managers. Your predecessor agreed to this recommendation; however, reports were not finalised in time to be published before the election was called.

Recommendations:

- Agree case managers on each scheme should produce monthly reports of progress of the Horizon redress schemes.
- Agree that the Department should publish the GLO Scheme report on gov.uk, and Post Office should publish the reports on the Horizon Shortfall Scheme and Overturned Convictions on their website.

Timing: Publication as soon as possible. The reports were not finalised in time to be published before the General Election. They have subsequently been updated to reflect scheme data from the end of June.

Context

1. The Department already publishes monthly data on gov.uk which outlines the number of claims received, offers made, offers accepted and amounts paid across the current three Horizon schemes: the Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS), the Overturned Convictions (OC) Scheme and the Group Litigation Order (GLO) Scheme. The Secretary of State has agreed that these monthly publications should continue under the new administration.
2. In February 2024, the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board recommended we publish a more detailed breakdown across the schemes detailing where

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cases are in the system and include independent commentary outlining the reasons for any delays to settlement.

3. Previous Ministers agreed and commissioned these reports for publication, but they were not finalised before the announcement of the General Election.
4. Dentons have produced the report on the GLO Scheme. They were procured as part of the GLO Scheme as specialists in alternative dispute resolution, facilitating discussions between the claimants and Department with the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable resolution as quickly as possible.
5. Dentons have oversight of where claims are in the system, and what influences there are on pace of delivery. Their report cites the initial slow disclosure from Post Office and delays in obtaining evidence as reasons for delays in the resolution of some GLO cases. It also outlines the Department's introduction of the £75k fixed sum award as a positive influence on the resolution of claims. To note, Post Office disclosure is now complete.
6. The Post Office is responsible for delivery of the HSS and OC, with oversight from the Department, and they retain full responsibility for the data published on its website. Post Office have produced the report on the HSS and non-pecuniary (i.e. non-financial) claims on the OC. These two reports contain mainly factual information regarding where claims are in the process.
7. Sir Gary Hickinbottom, retired High Court judge, chairs an independent panel that assesses the pecuniary losses (i.e. financial losses) of postmasters in the OC Scheme. Sir Gary has therefore produced the report on pecuniary claims on the OC Scheme. His report cites delays for reasons such as claimants being traumatised or otherwise suffering from mental health issues, Post Office being slow to respond to requests and time taken to take decisions through governance processes.
8. The reports have already been useful in making improvements to address issues identified. For example, we are trialling a pilot to reduce the evidential threshold burden on the GLO scheme, which has so far proved successful.

Points for Consideration

9. The department ensures appropriate assurance is carried out when publishing statistics in the public domain. Post Office Limited data assurances may not be parallel to departmental practices. General advice has been provided to Post Office Limited to mitigate risks concerning incorrect or disclosive data, but quality control and disclosivity checks on data published by Post Office Limited remain their sole responsibility.
10. Officials will review these reports before publication but will only provide factual comments to ensure that they are sufficiently independent and are therefore trusted by subpostmasters.

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11. The Department has made a public commitment to publish these monthly reports, as recommended by the Advisory Board. A decision not to publish may be seen as a reverse of the position to be transparent and result in some criticism.

Recommendation

12. We recommend you agree to the monthly publication of these reports as outlined above.

Next steps

13. If you agree, we will finalise the reports and publish them over recess.
14. We will also send a copy to the Advisory Board and Select Committee.

Annexes

Annex A: Draft GLO Compensation Scheme report

Annex B: Draft Post Office Horizon Shortfall Scheme report

Annex C: Draft Post Office Overturned Convictions non-pecuniary claims report

Annex D: Draft Post Office Overturned Convictions pecuniary claims report

Clearance list

| Team | Clearance necessary? | Named lead who has cleared |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------|
| SCS | Mandatory | Carl Creswell |
| Analysts | Yes | Monique Ebell |
| Communications (inc named Press Officer) | Yes | Harriet Clarke |