



Business and Trade Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Kevin Hollinrake MP
Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business,
Department for Business and Trade

23 January 2024

Dear Kevin Hollinrake

Post Office Horizon – Compensation: Expedition of payments

I write to seek your support for measures expediting financial redress to those postmasters who are still waiting for their claims to be settled.

As you know, together with Sir Bob Neill I asked the Justice Secretary that the draft Bill to overturn convictions is subject to pre-legislative scrutiny before it is introduced.

Either as part of a pre-legislative scrutiny process, or by way of amendment, I am anxious to ensure that the planned legislation includes provisions to expedite the payment of claims for those in the GLO scheme.

It was extremely concerning to hear evidence from Alan Bates last week regarding the length of time cases are taking to progress.

He told us that “they hit a dead end once they go into the Department”. Mr Bates has also given me sight of his letter that he has sent to you yesterday, which provides more disappointing statistics on the number of claims received, accepted and offers made.

Mr Bates has suggested ways in which the process could be speeded up, including financial penalties for claims not processed to agreed targets and for claims where no agreement has been reached, then they should go automatically to Sir Ross Cranston, whose team would need more resources.

Can I ask therefore that provisions are made in the Bill to enshrine a hard timetable for payments as Mr Bates suggests? Failing this, can I ask if you might be amenable to amendments from backbenchers aimed at such an objective? I am sure you agree that it is vital the new legislation meets the “Mr Bates Test” for rapid payment.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of the Business and Trade Committee