

The Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP
Chair, Business and Trade Committee
House of Commons
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Our ref

By email

Dear Mr Byrne

Date
17 December 2024

Post Office Horizon scandal: fast and fair redress

We are writing further to the Committee's session on 19 November 2024 at which Herbert Smith Freehills LLP ("**HSF**"), represented by Alan Watts, provided oral evidence.

During his evidence, Mr Watts offered to provide the Committee with a breakdown in relation to HSF's costs (Q198). We understand that our firm's client, Post Office Limited ("**POL**"), has since then provided further details of fees paid. Otherwise, we wanted to note:

1. Q196 asked *"Can you tell us how much in legal fees has been received in total from the Post Office and DBT in relation to the Horizon schemes?"*. For clarity, HSF has only billed POL in relation to Horizon matters: HSF has not been engaged by DBT.
2. The Committee's transcript in response to Q198 reads *"...There is also the GLO scheme. I think the cost in relation to that, to date, is about £13 million..."*. Mr Watts was referring to OC matters (not the GLO scheme, on which HSF is not instructed).
3. In response to Q224 Mr Watts referred to 8.4% of HSS applicants who received an offer having taken up the provision for legal advice made available to them by POL. Mr Watts wishes to correct this. That figure was those who have taken up the offer of a contribution towards legal advice as a percentage of the total applicant population (ie including those who have not yet received an outcome letter). Of those that have received an offer the percentage is 14.9% (ie approximately 1 in 7).
4. Differences between the figures Mr Watts provided on 19 November 2024 and those given by POL (including in its [response](#) to the freedom of information request it received) are, on our understanding, principally due to POL's numbers including VAT and/or disbursements (including the fees of a number of counsel retained by POL in connection with its remediation work as well as the costs of the Independent Evaluator and Independent Advisory Panels on the HSS and OC schemes – which are billed to POL via HSF). There will be other differences too, including the reference periods that have been used and the way the costs are categorised within our respective systems.

Yours sincerely

Herbert Smith Freehills LLP
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