



Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP
Chair of the Business and Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

26 May 2025

Post Office Ltd
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Dear Liam,

Post Office Horizon scandal: Justice for the sub-postmasters

Thank you for your Committee's report and for the continued scrutiny that you and your colleagues have brought to securing redress for victims of the Horizon scandal. I am grateful for the clear focus your report places on the need to secure full and fair redress more quickly for those who have already waited too long.

I also welcome the Committee's acknowledgement that progress has been made in delivering redress. According to the most recent official data as of 30 April 2026, Post Office has now paid over 11,785 claimants £1.03 billion in redress across the schemes we administer, including £943 million paid through the Horizon Shortfall Scheme. While there is still more to do, this is important progress and reflects the significant effort to increase the pace of redress over the last year.

In addition to the response to your report my teams have worked with Government on, I want to provide some additional context on the following areas:

Transfer of remaining complex HSS cases and redress completion timeline

It remains my view that, whilst recommendations for fully assessed HSS claims are made by a panel of experts independent of Post Office, the resolution of these issues would have been best handled outside of Post Office. That said, with the scheme having closed to new applications since I gave evidence and following discussions between my teams and the Department for Business and Trade, I believe the treatment of complex cases within the HSS has meaningfully improved without needing to progress with a transfer at this stage and the additional disruption for postmasters / claimants that this would likely create. This accords closely with Sir Wyn's view as expressed in Volume 1 of the Horizon IT Inquiry Final Report: "I do not consider that the Post Office should be removed from delivering and administering HSS at this stage or in the foreseeable future".

The timescales for progressing fully assessed claims to offer stage are now shorter than they were, and we are continuing to work with our legal supplier to drive efficiencies. Postmasters deserve to have their claims properly considered and we, and the Independent Panel, are committed to the promises we have made to provide full and fair redress to applicants. The Panel can only do so based on the information that applicants are able to provide on their own, which is invariably very different to the claims which are able to be made by applicants with the benefit of legal advice. If applicants choose to stay within HSS and dispute their claims, we are moving them to revised offers as fast as we can and will be using similar methodology to that set out by the Horizon Shortfall Scheme Appeals (HSSA) whenever this is appropriate.

These improvements and the rate at which we are completing fixed-sum offer (FSO) cases give me confidence in the timeline for the substantial completion of HSS claims, which I outlined during my evidence to the Committee. We remain hopeful that the vast majority of FSO cases will be completed by the end of the summer, with some likely to extend beyond the autumn. As discussed during the evidence session, the more complex fully assessed cases will likely extend out towards the end of the year. I remain hopeful we will be able to resolve many of these

remaining cases by the end of the year, but there will be some which will not be resolved within the year owing to the large uptick in applications received in the run up to the closure date. With the support of the Department, we are also continuing to accept some further claims into the schemes if they have been unable to comply with the deadlines due to exceptional circumstances. We hope to have largely completed these by the end of the year. I would be happy to update the Committee with the progress made on HSS throughout the rest of the year.

Upfront Legal Advice

We have made the point on many occasions that the provision of upfront legal advice is a crucial step to ensuring that applicants to redress schemes are able to present a full claim (and therefore receive a commensurate offer) the first time around. We still believe this to be the case. However, we must also do all we can to ensure that applicants receive the best outcome they can as quickly as possible, within the parameters of the schemes as they stand. The Committee heard evidence from witnesses in January regarding the inconsistency in offers involving some HSS applicants, in comparison to outcomes subsequently received from the HSSA. Post Office became aware of this issue before the evidence session and was already working collaboratively with the Department to resolve the differences.

Noting the Committee's recommendation, access to legal advice has been provided in the HSS since its inception, but only *after* the Independent Panel has made its recommendation. This process will continue and applicants are able to continue to dispute their claims through Post Office's Dispute Resolution Procedure, should they wish to do so, rather than submitting an application to the HSSA. We are working together with the Department to ensure that applicants will not be disadvantaged by staying in the HSS to resolve their dispute, should they wish to do so, and are seeking all the relevant information we need to be able to give confidence to applicants and legal representatives that this issue is resolved.

Trauma-informed outreach

We are actively signposting to, and working with, the Restorative Justice Council on the trauma-related aspects of the scandal, whilst recognising that restorative justice must be led by the harmed person. The Restorative Justice Council has now launched its independent national restorative justice programme for those harmed by Horizon and Capture. The programme is voluntary and open to postmasters, their children and families. It follows a pilot phase, running from October 2025 to March 2026, during which the Council engaged with more than 250 people to ensure the programme was shaped by those who were harmed.

The full programme began last month and is initially funded for five years. Although funded jointly by the Department, Fujitsu and Post Office, it will be delivered independently by the Restorative Justice Council. It offers a range of routes for those who may wish to engage, including facilitated meetings, listening sessions, wellbeing support and indirect communication. I hope this gives the Committee assurance that this work is being taken forward on a long-term, independent and trauma-informed basis.

Separately, we are engaging with both the Restorative Justice Council, Wandsworth Mediation Service and other postmaster representative groups, support groups and unions to try to reach those in the HSS who are finding it difficult to engage with the Post Office. We know that many postmasters have suffered and still live with trauma and have difficulty in accessing the redress to which they are entitled. We are designing a programme of outreach for those people, which aims to give them a method of obtaining justice, with support from third parties and particularly with the support of the trauma specialists within the Restorative Justice Council. I understand the Restorative Justice Council will send letters about this programme later this month and I commit to keeping your Committee updated on this as we progress.

Review of archival records to identify all Horizon-related conviction cases

I was concerned to hear the experience of Mrs Glenys Eaton who gave evidence to the Committee alongside her husband. Cases such as Mrs Eaton's are extremely challenging for the court system, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Post Office to uncover and there was no record of a conviction for her in any of these organisations' archives. The only reference to a possible conviction appears in a newspaper article which notes that both Mr and Mrs Eaton were arrested but it contained no further detail. Given the passage of time, over 20 years since these events took place, any relevant records across all organisations may not be available.

As we highlight in the Government response, prior to the Committee making this recommendation, the legal team in Post Office had commenced a further detailed review of the Ministry of Justice Disclosure cases and Post Office believes a comprehensive set of data is available to the MoJ.

The Post Office holds over 80 million documents on one platform alone as well as other platforms and hard copy archives. Post Office has made significant efforts over four years to identify this material during the post-conviction disclosure exercise it undertook with Peters & Peters. This exercise was halted when the Post Office (Horizon System) Offences Act (2024) and the Scottish equivalent came into being and Post Office shared relevant information identified with the MoJ to enable identification of those convictions that were automatically quashed.

Post Office has always provided information and assistance to the Ministry of Justice whenever it finds anything in its work which may be relevant to a conviction and we will continue to do so.

Appeals against pre-Horizon convictions

I recognise the seriousness of the Committee's concern about pre-Horizon convictions. Where any such conviction is unsafe, it should not stand, and Post Office is doing all it properly can to support that outcome. Post Office must nevertheless act in accordance with the rules and requirements of the independent judicial system and our legal duties as the original prosecutor, which, given past mistakes, Post Office takes very seriously. At present, the safety of individual convictions can only be determined through the established legal routes of appeal. Outside the usual legal routes of appeal, the only path to quashing all qualifying Capture-related convictions would require the Government to decide to introduce legislation to overturn qualifying Capture convictions as was done with Horizon. This is a matter for Government and Parliament.

I understand why this is an important issue for the Committee, for those impacted and for the public at large, but I would like to assure you that Post Office's decisions in these and all other cases before the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) (CACD) are taken with a great deal of thought and consideration, and in accordance with the established law and evidence. Post Office scrutinises all appeals to the CACD carefully. We obtain advice from external independent legal advisers and two King's Counsel before any decisions on cases are taken at delegated Board level, by the Remediation Committee, with the appropriate governance process.

As the former prosecutor, Post Office also has a duty to assist both the Court and appellant. Where directed by the Court of Appeal under the Criminal Procedure Rules, Post Office must file a Respondents Notice addressing the legal and factual issues that may be relevant to the Court's consideration of the appeal. That document necessarily addresses the grounds of appeal and the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) Statement of Reasons with regard to the law and established legal principles.

No case involving the Capture software has been heard by the CACD yet and so there has been no judicial scrutiny of the Capture software and/or the Post Office's use of Capture data in

prosecutions carried out by Post Office. Post Office will of course continue to review its position and adapt its approach to appeals once the CACD has given judgment.

Investigate scale of miscarriages of justice linked to pre-Horizon IT systems

As I explain above, while cases which reference pre-Horizon systems have now been referred to the CACD, none of these matters have yet been considered. The legislation brought forward for Horizon convictions followed a significant number of cases having been considered by the CACD where convictions were overturned by that Court and based on very clear failures relating to prosecutions relying on Horizon evidence. While it is my clear view that Post Office would want to see any unsafe convictions overturned, the introduction of further legislation to overturn qualifying Capture convictions is a question for Parliament and Government. I want to reassure the Committee that we are cooperating fully with the Court on all referred cases and will continue to do so.

I hope you find this update helpful. We will continue to work closely with the Department and other relevant bodies to improve processes where we can and support the delivery of full and fair redress as quickly as possible. I am grateful for the Committee's continued engagement and I will of course continue to keep the Committee updated on progress.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Railton', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nigel Railton
Chair, Post Office Ltd