House of Commons

Business and Trade Committee

Post Office Horizon scandal: justice for sub-postmasters: Government Response

Fifth Report of Session 2026–27

HC 129

Business and Trade Committee

The Business and Trade Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Business and Trade and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

Liam Byrne (Labour; Birmingham Hodge Hill and Solihull North) (Chair)

Dan Aldridge (Labour; Weston-super-Mare)

Antonia Bance (Labour; Tipton and Wednesbury)

Chris Bloore (Labour; Redditch)

John Cooper (Conservative; Dumfries and Galloway)

Sarah Edwards (Labour; Tamworth)

Alison Griffiths (Conservative; Bognor Regis and Littlehampton)

Leigh Ingham (Labour; Stafford)

Justin Madders (Labour; Ellesmere Port and Bromborough)

Charlie Maynard (Liberal Democrat; Witney)

Mr Joshua Reynolds (Liberal Democrat; Maidenhead)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

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Contents

Report 1

Appendix 1: Government Response 3

Formal Minutes 16

Witnesses 17

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament 18

Report

1. The Business and Trade Committee published its report Post Office Horizon scandal: Justice for sub-postmasters (HC 1589) on 13 March 2026. The Government's response was received on 22 May 2026. The response is published as an Appendix to this Report. We also received a letter from Post Office Limited in response to the report, which has been published separately.[1]

2. We are grateful for the Government's constructive response and welcome the full or partial acceptance of 11 out of the 14 recommendations that we made. The Committee was pleased to see the continued progress in redress payments and that the Department finally "agrees with the Committee that, with hindsight, it would have been appropriate for Government to have delivered redress from the start (rather than the Post Office)". However, we have three concerns about the contents of the response. Details of these concerns are outlined below.

3. Firstly, on the Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS) we regret that the Government response says that redress claims may not all be settled in 2026. One of the reasons given that "where there are very complex elements to claims that need due consideration" rings alarm bells for us. We do not accept that complexity should be used as an excuse for delaying the settlement of any claims. We therefore ask that Post Office Ltd make every effort to ensure that such claims are given the priority and resources needed to settle them by the end of 2026, whatever their level of complexity.

4. Secondly, on the issue of compensation under the Horizon Conviction Redress Scheme (HCRS), we are perplexed why the Government is still insisting that it cannot make an upfront payment of £600,000 to all eligible claimants. As every claimant gets at least £600,000 in redress, we strongly believe this should be the amount given as the interim payment. We do not accept the Government's argument that this should only be paid if victims decide to accept the fixed sum. This approach sends out, whether deliberately or not, the message that those who do not accept the fixed sum risk receiving a lower amount than the £600,000. This may discourage sub-postmasters from recovering all that they deserve. We therefore ask the Minister to re-consider the issue of payments to HCRS claimants to remove even a perception of incentivising lower payments.

1 Letter from the Chair of Post Office Ltd to the Chair regarding responding to the Report, 26 May 2026

5. Thirdly, we are glad to see the Government accepted our recommendation that Fujitsu must live up to its commitment to make a significant contribution to the redress bill and urgently make an interim payment. However, the Government has not set a timetable for such a payment nor suggested a suitable interim amount. It should do this immediately. We take this opportunity to again publicly urge Fujitsu to immediately take action and make an interim payment.

Appendix 1: Government Response

Government Response to the Business and Trade Committee's report Post Office Horizon Scandal: Justice for sub-postmasters.

Overview of Redress Schemes

Post Office Ltd and the Government must make every effort to ensure that outstanding offers are issued and remaining claims are fully settled. Without exerting pressure on vulnerable claimants, we recommend that every effort be made to ensure that all redress payments are completed in 2026. The Government must make sufficient resources available to enable this. (Recommendation, Paragraph 13)

Accepted

The Department and the Post Office have made significant progress in the past 12 months. In the year up to 30 April 2026, over 4,600 more eligible claims were received, almost 6,000 more claims were settled and £596m more was paid out. This reflects the ambitions of the Secretary of State, who at the BTC hearing last November stated his desire to resolve all outstanding cases that had been received by the end of 2026. We continue to encourage potential applicants to schemes that are still open to come forward and submit an application when they are ready.

The Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS) has now closed to new applications, and we are confident that the overwhelming majority of potential claimants have now come forward. Prior to the scheme's closure, the Post Office ran an advertising campaign that reached an audience of 4.3m and issued internal communications throughout their network. Exceptional late claims are still being received, and it is important that vulnerable postmasters continue to be welcomed into the scheme if they missed the closure date through no fault of their own. The Post Office has made significant efforts to ensure that as many postmasters as possible have been contacted. It is possible that some payments could be made beyond the end of the year, but we are confident that this will only be in instances where claims have been received

after the closure deadline, or where there are very complex elements to claims that need due consideration. The Post Office is exploring routes to further support claimants through the Dispute Resolution Process.

The DBT-run HSS Appeals Process will continue to run until after the last HSS claimant has received an offer, providing another opportunity to ensure that claimants receive full and fair redress reflecting their personal experiences. The Committee will also note that the Department announced on 21 April that the Group Litigation Order (GLO) scheme will close to new applications on 31 July 2026, and formally close on 31 December 2026. We are working closely with claimants' lawyers to encourage the seven individuals who have not yet claimed to do so soon. Importantly, 90% of claimants in the scheme have now received full and final redress to recognise their deplorable experiences and their crucial role in bringing the scandal to light. The Department shares the Committee's desire to ensure that all claimants receive redress as soon as possible–and certainly by the end of this year. If vulnerable claimants need extra support to resolve their claim, the Department will continue to take a flexible and constructive approach.

The Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme (HCRS) and Capture Scheme are still comparatively new, and we expect claimants will continue to come forward for some time. However, there has been significant progress to date. As of 30 April 2026, 511 full and final claims for financial redress have been received via the HCRS and, of these, 492 have received payment. As of 30 April 2026, 93 Capture claims have been deemed eligible; of these, 41 have been paid. The Department will make every effort to ensure that redress is issued speedily to all postmasters who have brought, or who will bring, their claims forward.

Both the Department and the Post Office are steadfast in their desire to issue redress to all eligible postmasters as soon as possible and we recognise the importance of having sufficient resource in place to realise this aim. However, resource alone will not drive scheme progress. The Committee is right to recognise that caution must be exercised to avoid placing pressure on vulnerable claimants as we continue to encourage the submission of claims.

In order to ensure that redress reaches all those wronged by this scandal the Government and Post Office Ltd will need to work sensitively with victims who have suffered traumatic experiences and are understandably distrustful of them. To do this we recommend they work with trusted partners, such as the Restorative Justice Council, to develop more creative and proactive methods of outreach and engagement to encourage victims of the scandal to claim the redress they are owed. (Recommendation, Paragraph 14)

Accepted

The Government and the Post Office recognise the impact of postmasters' experiences and the understandable distress that some victims will have felt in coming forward as a result. We continue to work closely with the Restorative Justice Council, claimants' lawyers, the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board and others to find ways to support and encourage victims to claim redress or make use of the restorative justice programme that we have helped to put in place, and we will continue to do so. We will also continue to engage postmaster organisations to encourage claimants to come forward.

Importantly, in the past year we have launched an Information And Support Service to provide additional support to claimants who would benefit from this, to help them understand which scheme they should apply to, what evidence or documentation they should provide, and how they should set this evidence out. To date, the service has supported 56 claimants across the schemes.

We urge the Government to consult as widely as possible on the development of the scheme to ensure that the mistakes of previous schemes are not repeated. We recommend that the Government publishes the outcome of its consultations with stakeholders on the development of this scheme. We further recommend that the definition of a "close family member" should extend beyond spouses and children (both natural and by marriage). The Department for Business and Trade should consider parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, and nieces and nephews who can genuinely demonstrate adverse consequences of the scandal in its definition of "close family member", to ensure that all those entitled can access the redress they are owed. (Recommendation, Paragraph 19)

Broadly Accepted

On 19 March the Department published detailed proposals for the Family Members' Redress Scheme, which had been recommended by Sir Wyn Williams. This publication outlined, for further discussion with stakeholders, that:

> There will be an events-based route to claim for those who lack contemporaneous medical evidence of personal injuries suffered as a result of Horizon; and
>
> Noting the unique complexities with family members claims (including acute issues with accessing contemporaneous evidence), claimants will be provided with legal representation.

Since this publication we have received valuable feedback from stakeholders as to what is considered fair redress and which events should qualify for events-based payments, as well as on other issues. In addition, both Lost Chances and claimants' legal representatives have been extremely helpful in providing additional data on the makeup of the cohort and various types of claims that claimants may look to make. This will be valuable in ensuring we are adequately prepared for the claims we receive.

We are also grateful for your Committee's contribution to our development of the family members redress scheme. The 19 March publication included our proposed definition of "close family member", namely children, partners, parents and siblings. This is consistent with that applied in the Windrush and Infected Blood redress schemes. This definition balances the difficulty of proving particular relationships and the likely severity of the impact on different types of family member. The department does not intend to change this definition of "close family member".

Further details about the Family Members' Redress Scheme will be published in due course, in advance of the intended opening of the scheme this summer.

Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS)

As it is nearing completion, we reluctantly conclude that Post Office Ltd should continue to administer all remaining HSS claims for the £75,000 fixed-sum that were received prior to the 31 January 2026 deadline. All remaining complex HSS cases should be transferred to DBT to be assessed. The Department should move swiftly to establish to this and ensure the process is properly resourced. (Recommendation, Paragraph 31)

Not Accepted

The Department agrees with the Committee that, with hindsight, it would have been appropriate for Government to have delivered redress from the start (rather than the Post Office). The Government has previously announced that it is considering whether a single independent body should deliver redress across Government, as recommended by the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, the NAO and Horizon Compensation Advisory Board, which would help avoid such issues in the future.

The Department agrees that the Post Office should administer remaining claims opting for the Horizon Shortfall Scheme fixed-sum offer. Assessment of such claims is relatively straightforward, and the company has shown that it is up to the task. As of 30 April 2026, a total of approximately £943 million has been paid out on the HSS (including interim payments).

Approximately £629 million has been paid in fixed sum awards to 8,394 claimants (1,279 of whom are claimants who had previously applied for full assessment but then switched to the fixed sum), and approximately £119 million has been paid in top-ups to previously settled claimants. The company stated at the Committee hearing that it expected to have issued the bulk of remaining fixed sum offers by the end of this summer, and the bulk of fully assessed offers by the end of this year. The Department will look to support it in achieving this.

However, as set out in response to the Committee's previous report, transferring fully assessed HSS cases to DBT would slow the delivery of redress and would negatively impact claimants' experiences. The Department would need to set up and develop this capability to respond to claims. That would take many months, with claims paused in the meantime. It would also run counter to the recommendations of Sir Wyn Williams, who said in his Horizon Inquiry Volume One report that he does "not consider that the Post Office should be removed from delivering and administering HSS at this stage or in the foreseeable future." (6.164)

The Department is assured that the Post Office and their legal advisors have the capability needed to resolve more than 200 assessed applications that they are currently processing, along with expertise that comes with having resolved 2750 such claims in the past. The scheme's dispute process has been successful in facilitating full and fair settlements for challenge claims, with DBT and Post Office continuously considering potential improvements to hasten decision-making.

Now that the scheme has closed to applications, the Post Office is dealing with a significantly decreased population of claims. In the Department's view, the best course of action is to allow Post Office to finish the job. This will be the quickest way to ensure that claimants receive full and fair redress. Claimants who receive an offer will rightfully have the opportunity to appeal that offer via the DBT process should they wish to, but the Department will continue to work with the Post Office to ensure that claimants receive the correct redress in the first instance.

DBT and the Post Office referred the handling of fixed-sum cases without shortfall evidence to Sir Gary Hickinbottom for review. He has reviewed this process and provided recommendations on it, which the Department has accepted in full. Sir Gary has advised that, subject to implementation of those recommendations, the process is appropriate, robust and fair, and does not apply more than the necessary burden on claimants. The Government has published his full report on gov.uk. The Department and the Post Office has published guidance outlining the procedures for managing and processing of HSS cases without shortfall evidence. This guidance ensures that claimants have a clear understanding of how their claims

will be handled. We consider that this revised process will ensure that applicants will obtain that redress in a manner that is fair to all claimants. The Department will continue to work with the Post Office to ensure claims are processed as quickly as possible, but it is important that the Post Office completes this work.

We welcome the fact that individuals appealing their awards under the Horizon Shortfall Scheme Appeals (HSSA) process are able to access funded legal advice, and we support the continuation of this provision. However, we are concerned that this should not create a gap in support for those eligible individuals who are still progressing through the Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS) and have not yet received their payment award. We recommend that any eligible individual currently going through the HSS who has not yet settled should also be entitled to funded legal advice should they wish to access it. This will ensure that they are not disadvantaged or forced to delay seeking assistance until the HSSA stage. (Recommendation, Paragraph 35)

Not Accepted

The Department believes that it is crucial to ensure claimants in the HSS are able to fully articulate their claim in the first instance. We recognise that some claimants will require support to do this. This is why we have set up the Information and Support Service, in conjunction with the Post Office, ensuring that claimants can seek advice to support them through the process.

There will be some instances where claims are uniquely complex; however, most claimants to the HSS have received full and fair redress without the need of legal advice. For many claimants, the £75,000 fixed-sum payment sufficiently recognises the harms caused by Horizon shortfalls and the policy has been crucial in speeding up the process. In instances where claims are complex and would benefit from legal advice, this is available at the point at which they are fully assessed. As the Committee is aware, claimants can initially seek legal support to help them understand their first offer, and if they are unhappy or unsure they can proceed to either the scheme's dispute process or transfer to the DBT-run appeals process, both of which provide access to legal support.

The Department notes that there are potentially detrimental consequences to providing legal support at an earlier stage. Obtaining and utilising legal support takes time and there is only a finite number of firms with expertise in this area. There is a concern that a wide uptake of legal support would overwhelm the process and slow down the issuing of redress, particularly for straightforward claims at or below the value of the fixed-sum offer, which are far less likely to benefit. To introduce upfront legal advice at such a late stage would be unfair to those who settled before, without having access

to legal advice at an earlier stage. In response to Volume 1 of the report of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, the Department agreed that claimants who accepted an HSS Fixed Sum Offer without legal advice at an earlier stage can seek permission to appeal. The Department has agreed to fund legal advice to claimants entering this process. On 20 May, further details about this process were published on gov.uk, accompanied by a ministerial statement. The Government previously committed to providing postmasters in this process with funded legal support. The tariff of reasonable legal costs was published alongside the ministerial statement outlines the funded legal advice available to postmasters in this process.

Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme (HCRS)

Every eligible, wrongly convicted applicant to HCRS now has a right to at least £600,000 in compensation. The Government must immediately take the compassionate act of making this payment upfront to all those eligible as soon as possible, regardless of whether sub-postmasters then seek additional redress through the fully-assessed route. (Recommendation, Paragraph 40)

Not accepted

In Volume 1 of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry report, Sir Wyn Williams noted that he could not be convinced "that the Fixed Sum Offer should, in effect, become a guaranteed minimum payment for all claimants regardless of when they make a choice to revert from assessment to the fixed-sum." Claimants have the option to go down the route of accepting the fixed-sum offer, or pursue a detailed claim assessment. The Department agrees with him.

The Department believes it is important to retain the distinction between interim payments and a final settlement. A settlement is the final, total compensation amount agreed upon to resolve a claim, whereas an interim payment is an early, partial payment made before the claim process fully concludes.

Fixed-sum offers provide claimants who do not wish to have their claim fully assessed with a full and fair settlement, helping them to move through the claim process quickly. The settlement finalises the entire claim and allows the claimant to move forward with their lives.

The interim payment policy is designed to provide claimants with breathing space, and a meaningful opportunity to consider whether a full assessment would be beneficial to them. Applicants receive an upfront preliminary

payment of £200,000 once they are confirmed as eligible for the scheme and have passed ID checks, with the payment being made within 10 working days. In our view, this is a significant interim payment, which gives claimants time to consider their preferred option.

If a claimant decides to pursue a detailed claim assessment, their preliminary payment is topped up to £450,000 upon submission of a fully substantiated claim. If they decide to take the £600,000 fixed-sum–whether as an alternative to pursuing a detailed claim assessment, or within 3 months of receipt of an initial detailed offer–the balance of the claim is paid within 10 working days and the claim settled.

The Scheme is also open to considering, on a case by case basis, and by exception, individual cases for additional interim payments during the claim process where there is evidence of financial hardship.

Quashed Convictions

We deplore the poor historical state of record keeping by the Ministry of Justice, Post Office Ltd, the Crown Prosecution Service and Royal Mail Group. Action must be taken to mitigate the risk that individuals eligible to have their convictions quashed are being missed. We recommend that Post Office Ltd undertakes a further, comprehensive review of its archival records to ensure that all Horizon-related cases, particularly those involving more than one family member, have been identified. We also recommend that the Ministry of Justice conducts a renewed review of all available data sources, including Post Office Ltd records, Crown Prosecution Service datasets and court records, to verify that additional cases have not been overlooked. Finally, we urge the Government to work with sub-postmaster representative organisations to issue a public appeal encouraging anyone who believes they may have been wrongly convicted as a result of Horizon to come forward and provide their details to the Ministry of Justice. (Recommendation, Paragraph 47)

Partially Accepted

Prior to the Committee making this recommendation, the legal team in the Post Office had commenced a further detailed review of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) 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. The 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 the Post Office shared relevant information identified with the MoJ to enable identification of those convictions that were automatically quashed. The 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.

The Ministry of Justice does not accept the recommendation to conduct a review of all available data sources to verify that additional cases have not been overlooked. The Ministry of Justice has made extensive efforts to identify all individuals with a conviction in scope of the Act which has included gathering records from Post Office Ltd, Royal Mail Group, and the Crown Prosecution Service. We have carefully considered every conviction for which relevant data is held. The Government recognises that, due to the age of many of these cases and records, some individuals could be missing from our records. Therefore, we encourage and implore organisations to carry on sharing any additional records or information they find with MoJ which may be of relevance, including any records discovered by the Post Office as it continues to review archival records. Furthermore, there will always be channels for individuals to notify us if they think their conviction is in scope of the Act, and we have sought to publicise this in our communications to postmasters published on gov.uk.

The Department for Business and Trade recognises that not all of those with quashed convictions will choose to apply for redress. However, to ensure that no one is left behind, the Department has already written to those who were informed that their convictions are quashed but had not yet applied to the scheme, encouraging them to apply. We sent 142 letters, which led to 31 additional HCRS registrations so far. The Department is engaging with the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters to discuss what more could be done to encourage anyone who believes they may have been wrongly convicted as a result of Horizon to come forward and provide their details to the Ministry of Justice.

The Ministry of Justice must ensure all records available to the department are rigorously checked before issuing requests for additional information. This would help prevent unnecessary re-traumatisation and prevent exacerbating sub-postmasters' understandable distrust in the system. Vulnerable individuals should be offered legal aid to respond to requests for information. (Recommendation, Paragraph 53)

Partially Accepted

The Government accepts the principle of ensuring all records relating to an individual's conviction are rigorously checked before asking that person for additional information to help determine if they have a conviction quashed by the Act.

Our existing casework process is proactive and seeks to gain information from multiple data sources before we send any requests to individuals. This includes gathering data from the Police National Computer, Post Office Limited, HM Courts and Tribunals Service, HM Revenue and Customs and the Criminal Cases Review Commission. This is to limit the burden placed on the individual.

Due to the age of these convictions, there is not always sufficient information available for the Government to determine if a conviction is in scope of the Act. However, it is possible that individuals may sometimes hold additional information which helps prove this. The Government therefore believes it is vital to also allow individuals the opportunity to provide such information if they have it. This is supported by a number of cases whereby an individual's case has been reassessed to be in scope of the Act upon receipt of additional information from the individual or their representative.

Civil legal aid may already be available for vulnerable individuals through Exceptional Case Funding, which is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Individuals may also be able to seek legal support from organisations such as Citizens Advice or Law Centres.

The Ministry of Justice should establish a formal, transparent appeals mechanism, with access to independent review outside the Ministry of Justice. Claimants should have access to legal representation, and where government error has caused them additional cost, they should be fully reimbursed and compensated. (Recommendation, Paragraph 59)

Partially Accepted

When the Ministry of Justice casework team assess that a conviction does not meet all of the criteria to be quashed by the Act, this decision is not final. It is always open for individuals to provide further information to challenge the decision and the Ministry of Justice may also continue to seek information from criminal justice partners. On receipt of further information, the decision can be sent to a panel of staff chaired by a senior civil servant. This panel determines if the new information changes the initial casework assessment and puts a conviction in scope of the Act. This process has been followed in a number of cases where further information was received and

has resulted in convictions being determined to be in scope. Therefore, the Government does not agree that a new or separate formal appeals process needs to be set up for its casework decisions.

However, the MoJ casework team will now send reminder letters to individuals that have previously been notified that further information is needed to determine if their conviction is quashed by the Act. These reminder letters will outline the panel process and how it may be available to individuals who send further information.

Civil legal aid may already be available for vulnerable individuals through Exceptional Case Funding, which is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Individuals may also be able to seek legal support from organisations such as Citizens Advice or Law Centres.

Role of Fujitsu

Fujitsu must live up to its commitment to make a significant contribution to the redress bill. The final redress amount sought from Fujitsu should take into account appreciation and interest on the borrowing that funded the Government's contribution, as well as the legal and administrative costs incurred. The Government should seek an interim payment from Fujitsu as a matter of urgency. (Recommendation, Paragraph 65)

Accepted

The Department accepts this recommendation, noting that Fujitsu has acknowledged its 'moral obligation' to contribute to the costs of the scandal. Minister McDougall met Fujitsu in December, continuing discussions between the Department and Fujitsu as to the scale of their full contribution. This follows the then Secretary of State for Business and Trade's meeting with Fujitsu's Chief Executive and Director of Fujitsu Services Ltd in Japan in March 2025. As explained at the Business and Trade Committee hearing on 6 January, Fujitsu and the Department will need to properly consider the Inquiry's findings about accountability for the scandal before the value of Fujitsu's contribution can be determined. Despite this, the Department agrees–and has told Fujitsu–that an interim payment would be desirable. This is a matter for the company to consider.

We recommend that the Government should publish, on a regular and transparent basis, the value of all contracts and contract extensions awarded to Fujitsu across the public sector. We further recommend that Fujitsu extend the scope of its current self-imposed moratorium and refrain from bidding for any new Government contracts other than

where essential service continuity requires it, either directly, as part of a group or consortium, or as sub-contractor to any supplier seeking taxpayer-funded contracts. (Recommendation, Paragraph 70)

Accepted

The Government already regularly publishes the value of contracts and contract extensions between government and its suppliers under the Procurement Regulations 2015 (PCR15) and the Procurement Act 2023.

Under PCR15, all contracts over £12,000 (inc. VAT), are required to be published on Contracts Finder, and all contracts over that threshold (other than Framework call-offs) must be published to Find a Tender Service. For contracts that are above the threshold, a notice must be published to Find a Tender Service for contract extensions.

The Procurement Act 2023 and subsequent Procurement Regulations 2024 set out robust transparency requirements relating to public sector contracts, including the new requirement to publish a notice of awarded contracts that are below the given threshold. Section 75 of Schedule 8 of the Procurement Act states that a contract change notice must be published before the modification/extension of a contract.

Capture

The Government should bring forward legislation to quash Capture-related convictions, as it did for those relating to the Horizon IT system in 2024. (Recommendation, Paragraph 79)

Agree to consider

The Government agrees to consider this recommendation further and will update the Committee on any future decisions it makes in relation to Capture convictions.

Post Office Ltd must learn from past mistakes and should think carefully before opposing appeals against pre-Horizon convictions. (Recommendation, Paragraph 80)

Accepted

The Post Office wants all unsafe pre-Horizon convictions to be overturned and is doing all it can to achieve this. The Post Office has to act in accordance with the rules and requirements of the independent judicial system and its legal duties as the original prosecutor, which, given past mistakes, the Post Office takes very seriously. The established legal routes of appeal are the only way the safety of convictions can be determined. The Post Office understands why this is a sensitive issue for the Committee,

for those impacted and for the public at large, but would like to assure the Committee that the 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. The Post Office scrutinises all appeals to the CACD carefully and obtains the advice of external independent legal advisers and two King's Counsel before decisions are taken at delegated Board level, by the Remediation Committee, with the proper governance procedures.

The Post Office is directed by the CACD under the Criminal Procedure Rules to produce a Respondents Notice that must address the legal and factual issues that the Court may wish to consider and that the Post Office believes are pertinent to the appeal. As the former prosecutor, the Post Office has a duty to assist the Court and the Appellant with the Appeal and the decision-making process. The Respondent's Notice is a legal document that 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 its Capture data in prosecutions carried out by the Post Office. The Post Office welcomes guidance from the CACD on Capture cases and will of course continue to review its position and, if required, adapt its approach to appeals once the CACD has given judgment.

The Department must ensure it understands the extent of the problem. Therefore, it must urgently investigate the number of potential cases relating to Post Office pre-Horizon IT systems to judge whether there has been a further mass miscarriage of justice. (Recommendation, Paragraph 81)

Accepted

The Department and the Post Office remain committed to understanding whether issues existed with pre-Horizon systems which could have caused similar harms to postmasters affected by Horizon and Capture faults. The Department is already working with the Post Office to establish a clear picture of the Post Office pre-Horizon IT systems and software used within the Post Office before Horizon, what functions they had and what evidence exists of operating issues/faults. This is considered the best place to start in light of the paucity of testimonial and documentary evidence. As this work progresses, we will report any significant findings and planned next steps to the Committee.

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 16 June 2026

Members present:

Liam Byrne, in the Chair

Dan Aldridge

Antonia Bance

Sarah Edwards

Leigh Ingham

Charlie Maynard

Post Office Horizon scandal: justice for sub-postmasters: Government Response

Draft Report (*Post Office Horizon scandal: justice for sub-postmasters: Government Response*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 5, read and agreed to.

A Paper was appended to the Report as Appendix 1.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fifth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Adjournment

[Adjourned till Tuesday 23 June at 2.00pm]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 6 January 2026

Mr David Eaton, Former Sub-postmaster; **Mrs Glenys Eaton**, Former Sub-postmaster Q1–11

Dr Neil Hudgell, Director, Hudgell Solicitors; **David Enright**, Partner, Howe & Co Solicitors; **Kieran O'Rourke**, Partner, Howe & Co Solicitors Q12–47

Paul Patterson, Director, Fujitsu Services Ltd Q48–84

Nigel Railton, Chair, Post Office Ltd; **Joanne Hanley**, Remediation Unit Director, Post Office Ltd 85–116

Amanda Pearce, Casework Operations Director and Interim Chief Executive, Criminal Cases Review Commission Q117–132

Blair McDougall MP, Minister for Small Business and Economic Transformation, Department for Business and Trade; **Carl Creswell**, Director of Post Office Policy, Department for Business and Trade; **Alex Davies-Jones MP**, Minister for Victims and Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls, Ministry of Justice; **Christina Pride**, Deputy Director, Criminal Appeals and Miscarriages of Justice Policy, Ministry of Justice Q133–191

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the publications page of the Committee's website.

Session 2026–27

Number	Title	Reference
4th	UK-EU relations a decade on	HC 126
3rd	Competition and market functioning in the UK live music industry	HC 128
2nd	The regulation of postal services	HC 131
1st	Investing in the UK economy	HC 123

Session 2024–26

Number	Title	Reference
17th	Pre-appointment hearing with the Government's preferred candidate for the Chair of the Competition and Markets Authority	HC 1723
16th	Post Office Horizon scandal: Justice for sub-postmasters	HC 1589
15th	Small business strategy	HC 1057
14th	Toward a new doctrine for economic security: Government Response	HC 1666
13th	Priorities of the Business and Trade Committee for 2026	HC 1411
12th	UK-India Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)	HC 996
11th	Toward a new doctrine for economic security	HC 835
10th	US Economic Prosperity Deal	HC 1306

Number	Title	Reference
9th	Draft Legislative Reform (Disclosure of Adult Social Care Data) Order 2025	HC 1140
8th	Export led growth: Trade with the Asia-Pacific region	HC 1048
7th	Industrial Strategy	HC 727
6th	How to strengthen UK-EU relations: Policy Priorities for the Summit	HC 908
5th	How to strengthen UK-EU relations	HC – 814
4th	Post Office Horizon scandal redress: Unfinished business: Government response	HC 778
3rd	Make Work Pay: Employment Rights Bill	HC 370
2nd	Priorities of the Business and Trade Committee	HC 423
1st	Post Office and Horizon scandal redress: Unfinished business	HC 341
7th Special	UK-India Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA): Government Response	HC 1832
6th Special	US Economic Prosperity Deal: Government Response	HC 1545
5th Special	Export led growth: Trade with the Asia-Pacific Region: Government Response	HC 1324
4th Special	Industrial Strategy: Government Response	HC 1305
3rd Special	How to strengthen UK-EU relations: Policy Priorities for the Summit: Government Response	HC 1267
2nd Special	Post Office Horizon scandal redress: Unfinished business: Government response	HC 969
1st Special	Make Work Pay: Employment Rights Bill: Government response	HC 932