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Post Office Report to Expose Human Cost of National Scandal

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A landmark moment in the long-running Post Office inquiry will take place today, as the first part of the final report is published, focusing on the human toll and compensation issues surrounding one of the gravest miscarriages of justice in British legal history.

Thousands of sub-postmasters were wrongly accused of theft, fraud, and false accounting due to faults in the Post Office's Horizon computer system, developed by Fujitsu. More than 900 individuals were prosecuted and 236 imprisoned, many losing homes, livelihoods, and their reputations in the process.

The inquiry, chaired by retired High Court judge Sir Wyn Williams, has heard harrowing testimony from dozens of victims since it began in 2022. Many spoke of the personal destruction they endured after being blamed for financial discrepancies they had not caused. The ITV drama Mr Bates vs The Post Office brought widespread public attention to the issue last year, igniting public outrage and drawing over 20 million viewers to inquiry livestreams.

Today's report will concentrate on the adequacy of compensation offered to victims, an issue Sir Wyn has pursued with determination, even admitting last year that he had stretched his remit to give the matter the attention it deserved. He previously criticised the government's redress schemes as a "patchwork quilt with a few holes in it", and held four separate hearings to address the concerns raised.

Former sub-postmaster Lee Castleton, one of those falsely accused, has been vocal in his criticism of the compensation process. "This is destructive," he told the BBC. "You've got a cohort of people that still believe they were right," Castleton argued that the Post Office should never have been allowed to oversee its compensation process and suggested Sir Wyn himself would have been better placed to ensure fairness.

Despite progress, justice remains elusive. The second part of the report, identifying those responsible, may not be released until 2026, as it must undergo legal procedures to allow individuals criticised a right of reply. Criminal prosecutions, if they proceed, are unlikely to begin before 2028, according to police.

The government, which now oversees the redress schemes, continues to face questions over whether its response has matched the gravity of the scandal. Victims, many of whom are elderly or unwell, have voiced growing frustration over the slow pace of justice.

While today's findings are expected to reinforce the need for full and fair compensation, they will not deliver closure. For the victims of the Post Office scandal, the road to accountability remains painfully long.