

Victims Demand Independent Oversight as Government Controls Post Office Redress

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— Categories: Human Rights



Victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal are calling for the removal of government control over compensation schemes, claiming that the current system is plagued by delays, legal complexities, and insufficient transparency. Despite billions in allocated funding, many former sub-postmasters say they continue to face drawn-out and burdensome processes to obtain justice and financial redress.

Jo Hamilton, a former sub-postmistress wrongfully prosecuted due to the faulty Horizon IT system, criticised the structure of the compensation scheme. She described the current model as fundamentally flawed, asserting that the same authorities responsible for the original injustice are still managing the compensation process. More than 700 sub-postmasters were prosecuted between 1999 and 2015 after the Horizon software incorrectly flagged accounting discrepancies, resulting in wrongful convictions and financial ruin for many.

Campaigners, including Lee Castleton and Sir Alan Bates, have expressed concerns about the bureaucracy and legal barriers embedded in the redress system. They point to lengthy delays in payment, inconsistent communication, and the emotional toll caused by navigating a process they believe replicates the trauma of the original injustice. According to them, the experience is akin to undergoing a second trial, as they are forced to prove their innocence and lose all over again.

A recent report by the cross-party Business and Trade Committee described the current redress schemes as ineffective and recommended that the Post Office be entirely removed from administrative responsibilities. Members of Parliament urged the implementation of legally binding deadlines for compensation and the establishment of a truly independent oversight body. They noted that, while over £1 billion had been budgeted for redress, only a small fraction of that had reached victims, with a substantial amount spent on legal costs.

The Department for Business and Trade assumed control of the Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme in June 2025. Government officials maintain that this transfer demonstrates a commitment to reform and a focus on delivering compensation more effectively. However,

campaigners argue that unless a neutral, external panel is created, one including legal experts, forensic accountants, and victim representatives, there can be no true accountability or public trust.

With the public inquiry led by Sir Wyn Williams expected to publish interim findings soon, victims hope it will formally endorse the removal of both the Post Office and government from the redress process. They say an independent structure with enforceable timelines is essential to deliver justice for those still waiting for closure.