

Apology from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Icelandic-Water Trawlermen Compensation Scheme 2009

Following complaints by former Icelandic water trawlermen and local MPs, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman) conducted an investigation into the Icelandic Water Trawlermen Compensation Scheme 2009 run by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The Ombudsman found maladministration by BIS in her report. She found that we failed to ensure that the new rules applying to the Trawlermen Compensation Scheme 2009 were set out sufficiently clearly in the consultation document. As a result, the trawlermen and their representatives did not understand exactly how their service was going to be assessed for the purposes of the scheme. As a consequence of this, trawlermen and their representatives were given false expectations as to what the 2009 scheme would deliver.

On behalf of BIS I apologise for our not setting out clearly enough in the consultation document how the 2009 scheme would operate and how it would differ from previous schemes. I am also sorry that some applicants to the scheme expected to receive compensation but did not qualify; and others did not receive as much compensation as they were expecting.

The Ombudsman recommended that we pay £1000 to those trawlermen (or their representatives) who applied to the Trawlermen Compensation Scheme 2009 with a reasonable expectation of receiving compensation. We have accepted this recommendation.

The Ombudsman's recommendation does not apply to applicants in any of the following categories:

- new claimants to the 2009 scheme who did not provide information relating to Icelandic waters fishing when the Department requested that they do so;
- where fishing in Icelandic waters had finished before 1 January 1974;
- where the £20,000 maximum had been paid under earlier schemes;
- where claimants were personal representatives or executors of a deceased former trawlermen who did not provide evidence required by the Department of their status (for example a Letter of Administration or a Grant of Probate).

Over the coming weeks, we will write to all eligible people to confirm addresses, bank details and other key information. We are doing this as quickly and efficiently as possible. If you are eligible for the £1000 payment, you should have heard from us by the end of May 2012.

If you made an application to the Icelandic Water Trawlermen Compensation Scheme 2009 and you have moved house or there is a change in circumstance you want to tell us about before our letter to you arrives, please write to us by 30 April 2012 at the following address:

Trawlermen Consolatory Payments
3rd Floor Abbey 1
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Or by e-mail to Trawlermen@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Martin Donnelly
Permanent Secretary
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Further information is available at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/employment-matters/strategies/trawlermen>

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