



Department for Business & Trade

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Horizon Compensation Advisory Board,

GLO and HSS Scheme Deadlines

Thank you for your continuous support to the Government on issues relating to delivering swift redress and justice for subpostmasters, which is a personal priority for me. I write to seek your guidance on taking forward on two of the schemes, in light of recent campaigns.

Group Litigation Order Scheme

You will be aware of calls for Government to set a deadline on the GLO Scheme for all redress to be paid by March 2025. I am concerned that setting such a deadline would put undue pressure on claimants to accept an offer that they do not believe to be fair for fear of missing the deadline.

However, I am conscious of the rate at which claims are being submitted. As of 31 October, we had received full claims from only 306 of the 492 postmasters. We understand from legal representatives that they have now received the majority of commissioned expert evidence reports, and that Post Office disclosure is largely complete. They should, therefore, have all the information required to enable them to submit claims to us. They have also told us that they expect to submit the majority of claims by Christmas, though many of them may be deemed incomplete on submission and require further evidence before the Department is able to assess them.

I noted in my recent oral evidence to the Horizon Inquiry that I am considering very carefully whether to set a deadline by which all claims need to be completed and submitted to the Department. I am mindful that there are some vulnerable claimants who may find it challenging to meet this deadline, and for those we would consider the reasons why they were unable to meet the deadline on a case-by-case basis. I do, however, want to incentivise the quicker submission of claims and help demonstrate that Government is moving matters along and helping to bring closure to the victims of the scandal. There is clearly a difficult balance here that I would welcome any advice that you may have on this matter.

Horizon Shortfall Scheme

The Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS) also remains open to applications. I am pleased that the Post Office is writing out to all postmasters who have not yet claimed to encourage those affected to come forward. However, I think there could be some merit in setting a realistic deadline for claims to be submitted. This would provide clarity to claimants and provide some incentive to put in claims, but it would also make it easier to instigate improvements to the operation of the scheme. Greater certainty on the total HSS cohort would allow DBT and Post Office to plan effectively, including to make sure that the right resource is in place to avoid any bottlenecks in the process and deliver redress as quickly as possible.

There is clearly a balance to strike, and it would not be right to take any steps that may prevent anyone eligible from making a claim or hamper their ability to develop a claim appropriately. We would therefore need to agree a date that provides appropriate notice to potential claimants, and we will need to work with Post Office in parallel to ensure their communication strategy is sufficient.

I would be grateful for the views of the Board on whether setting a deadline would be appropriate in either scheme, and any views on a suitable closure date for new applications to the HSS.

Best wishes,



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Secretary of State for Business & Trade and President of the Board of Trade