



Horizon Compensation Advisory Board

Report of nineteenth meeting held on 10 December 2024

Members present: Prof. Christopher Hodges (Chair); Lord Arbuthnot; Prof. Richard Moorhead, Lord Beamish (formerly Kevan Jones MP). Also present: Carl Creswell, Rob Brightwell, Eleri Wones, Charlotte Heyes (all Department for Business and Trade – “DBT”).

Family members

1. Minister Thomas had indicated to the Williams Inquiry that he had asked officials to look again at the possibility of redress for family members of postmasters. The Board welcomed this.
2. The Board noted that redress was already given to postmasters for the impact on their whole families of some financial losses – for instance, the loss of the family’s home. In their view it was essential that family members should also be given redress for damage to their health resulting from the effect of the scandal on postmasters, especially where that damage was continuing. In some cases this health damage had affected the family member’s long-term finances – for instance by reducing their ability to earn.
3. The family members affected would generally be partners, parents, children or siblings who were living with the postmaster at the time. However, the Board noted that in some cases there might be an effect on members of the extended family – for example, those who worked in the family business.
4. The Board noted that it could be even more difficult for family members to provide evidence of the impact on them of the scandal than it is for postmasters themselves. DBT would need to take a sympathetic approach to this issue. However, the Board accepted that it might be almost impossible to show that the scandal had caused some types of impact.
5. DBT agreed to reflect on the Board’s advice and to provide further updates as work progresses.

Developing approach to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in the Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme (HCRS)

6. Officials provided information on the Department’s latest thinking on how best to use ADR to resolve HCRS claims where the Department’s initial offer was not accepted, building on the existing use of ADR in other schemes.

7. The Board encouraged DBT to give case managers maximum flexibility to use whichever ADR approach was most appropriate in the circumstances of a given case. That means keeping any rules as simple as possible. They stressed the importance of independent oversight and proactive case management.

Updates

8. DBT provided an update on ongoing work relating to the planned independent appeals process in relation to the Horizon Shortfall Scheme (HSS), including the drafting of principles and guidance.
9. The Board had received assurance from the Post Office that it had agreed a plan to address the issue of Remediation Unit staff who had previously been employed in roles of interest to the Inquiry. The Board welcomed this assurance.
10. Sir Gary Hickinbottom was planning to meet claimants' representatives, Post Office and DBT in late January to review the approach to loss of opportunity claims. Based on his review, he intended to produce guidance which would be applied to all Horizon schemes.
11. DBT confirmed that it planned to publish a Government response to the Kroll report on Capture in December.
12. The Board noted that the Ministry of Justice published [monthly management information](#) on the number of people in England and Wales who had been notified that their convictions had been overturned by the Post Office (Horizon System) Offences Act 2024.
13. The Board requested a discussion at its March meeting of the availability of redress to employees of postmasters affected by the scandal.
14. The Board noted that an [exchange of correspondence](#) between the Secretary of State and the Board had been published online. The Board had advised the Secretary of State that there was a real risk that setting a deadline for completion of the GLO scheme would re-traumatise vulnerable victims of the scandal. Imposing a deadline ran a significant risk of causing avoidable and unnecessary harm. Further, it would not achieve the desired outcome of speeding resolution of the delivery of fair compensation to them.
15. The Board noted the substantial progress which had been made during the preceding twelve months set out in data for the progress of each scheme as at 29 November published as part of the [Post Office Horizon financial redress data](#) – the Act to overturn convictions and redress already agreed with 98 of the individuals concerned, plus resolution of over 200 GLO claims and half of OC

claims. They also found the data visualisations helpful as a way of demonstrating progress.