

**Horizon Compensation Advisory Board**  
Secretariat: Department for Business and Trade  
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Admiralty Place  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2DY

Sir Wyn Williams  
Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
Aldwych House,  
71-91 Aldwych,  
London,  
WC2B 4HN  
By email to [posecretariat@postofficehorizoninquiry.org.uk](mailto:posecretariat@postofficehorizoninquiry.org.uk)

28 May 2025

Dear Sir Wyn,

### **Post Office Compensation: Lawyers Charging Issues**

I am writing as Chair of the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board, on behalf of colleagues and myself: The Rt Hon Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom, The Rt Hon Lord Beamish, and Professor Richard Moorhead.

We write to ensure you are aware of an issue that has come to our attention whilst sitting on the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board. As you know there is provision for legal advice in relation to the compensation schemes, with the exception of initial HSS claims. Some are recovery on a reasonable costs basis (the OC scheme) others on the basis of fixed tariffs. Where there are fixed tariffs, they have been agreed by all firms representing large numbers of claimants.

It has come to our attention at various points that other firms charge their clients on a range of bases, including on a no win no fee basis and with the potential for or expectation of recovery from compensation. Some of these have appeared to us to be potentially inappropriate in professional conduct terms. Where we have those concerns, we have reported these to their regulators. Conversely, we are very conscious too of the legitimate argument that if a lawyer and client freely agree a fee arrangement that they feel offers them the most appropriate level of representation then that is a matter for them.

We have also been alerted in recent days to an arrangement which appears to charge substantial sums seeking recovery from compensation payments. We are reluctant to go into too much detail given this is an allegation which has not been fully investigated and on which we do not ourselves have a concluded view. It is with the relevant regulator, and we have worked with them to satisfy ourselves that it is under proper consideration. The allegations might be summarised as suggesting quite serious undue influence being exercised over some

vulnerable claimants and either over-charging, charging for work not carried out, or seeking to recover retrospectively for work done pro bono. Substantial sums of money have been paid over under these arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hodges

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Chair, Horizon Compensation Advisory Board