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Our ref: MCSL2021/19301  
Your ref: JE3121

23 August 2021

Dear Julie,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 July to the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, on behalf of your constituent, Kevin Brown of ██████████ Sunderland, about the compensation of subpostmasters following the Horizon IT scandal. Your letter has been forwarded to BEIS and I am replying as this matter falls within my Ministerial portfolio.

I am sorry to learn about the difficulties experienced by Mr and Mrs Brown. The Government understands the serious impact that issues arising from faults with the Horizon IT system, and the Post Office's management of these issues, have had on affected postmasters' lives and livelihoods. Having met a group of affected postmasters with the Prime Minister on 30 April, I recognise the distress that postmasters and their families have suffered since faults with the Horizon system began, with some having their livelihoods and businesses taken away and some convicted of crimes which we now know they did not commit.

The Post Office has accepted that it got things wrong and has apologised. However, I am clear that this apology must only be the start of a process that leads to real and fundamental change at the Post Office.

It is essential that we determine what went wrong at the Post Office during this period to make sure a situation like this cannot happen again. To establish what must change, the Government launched the independent Horizon Inquiry led by retired High Court Judge Sir Wyn Williams FLSW in September 2020. The Inquiry converted to a statutory footing on 1 June, with updated Terms of Reference which can be found here at [questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-19/hcws40](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-19/hcws40).

In December 2019, the Post Office and claimants in the Group Litigation Order (GLO) reached a substantive settlement of £57.75 million. The Post Office also issued an apology. This concluded the civil case against the Post Office. The Government was not party to this litigation, which was settled between the Post Office and the GLO, both of whom were legally represented.

The interim compensation you refer to in your letter is for postmasters who have seen their Horizon-related convictions overturned. It is understood that some members of the GLO did have criminal convictions at the time and will likely be eligible for an interim payment.

Thank you once again for taking the time to write. I hope the information above is helpful to you in your response to Mr Brown.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Scully', written in a cursive style.

**PAUL SCULLY MP**

Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Labour Markets  
Minister for London