

Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry to hold public sessions to probe human impact and the institutional settings

- The Inquiry will hold open sessions to hear from those in the most senior positions in the Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to understand what went wrong in relation to Horizon
- public sessions will also be held to understand the human cost to those impacted by the longstanding Horizon dispute

Senior members of the Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will be invited to give evidence in formal open sessions as part of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, its Chair Sir Wyn Williams has announced today.

The non-statutory inquiry is committed to understanding and acknowledging what went wrong in relation to Horizon and to ensuring that there is a public summary of the failings that occurred at Post Office Ltd so that they should never be repeated.

The Inquiry follows the conclusion and a settlement of £57.75 million in December 2019 at the end of a long-running civil court case brought against Post Office Limited by a group of postmasters regarding issues related to the Horizon IT system.

Sir Wyn Williams, who was appointed Chair of the inquiry in September, has today published a [Statement of Approach](#), setting out how the Inquiry will engage with relevant parties. Further details will be published at the end of November.

Evidence gathering will occur in a number of different forms and in a manner which is designed to maximise the receipt of information. There will be:

1. Public sessions: focus groups sessions will be held in winter 2020 to 2021 so that persons affected by the failings in the Horizon system can share their accounts of the human cost and impact. Sir Wyn hopes to hear from current and former postmasters, employees of the Post Office Limited, relevant third parties (including but not limited to contractors and/or those who have represented postmasters interests, or who have been involved in mediation and/or dispute resolution processes with the Post Office Limited) and the family of friends of these groups.

In May 2021 Sir Wyn will invite the senior members of the Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and BEIS to provide evidence in a public and open setting.

2. A call for evidence and a people survey: formal invitations will be extended to collect written evidence via a call for evidence being launched

at the close of November 2020, and a people survey conducted in early 2021. These will support the Inquiry's understanding of the institutional setting and the experience of postmasters and employees/contractors at the Post Office Limited both historically and as the company seeks to respond to the findings in the Horizon judgments and implement the measures set out in the Settlement Agreement.

3. Private hearings: Sir Wyn will also welcome personal accounts and/or sensitive evidence in select private hearings throughout winter 2020 to 2021.

Sir Wyn Williams, Chair of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, said:

My approach to evidence gathering is intended to build on the findings in the Horizon judgments (No 3 and No 6) and analysis which will be undertaken by the Inquiry Secretariat of written material which will be provided to the Inquiry by Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and BEIS. I fully understand that many participants have an expressed view that their experiences have not been properly acknowledged and that there has been a failure to hold anyone to account for what occurred over very many years.

The process of obtaining evidence will be robust and transparent wherever possible although there may be instances in which the need to respect privacy and the need for sensitivity means that private hearings will have to be accommodated.

Sir Wyn's [Statement of Approach](#) includes an Expression of Interest form for participants to register their interest in the sessions described here.

Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu, which supplied the Horizon system, and BEIS have committed to fully cooperating with the Inquiry.