

Victims of Post Office horizon scandal to benefit from new compensation scheme

- Chancellor Rishi Sunak launches new government compensation scheme for postmasters who played crucial role in uncovering Horizon IT scandal
- Scheme will ensure the postmasters who were the first to take legal action against the Post Office over the failings of its Horizon IT computer system will be compensated fully and fairly
- After winning the landmark case, the group only received a fraction of the £43 million pay-out due to a “no win, no fee” agreement with their litigation funding company

Rishi Sunak said a new compensation scheme will be set up in the coming months targeted at the postmasters who brought and won the landmark High Court case against the Post Office over the failings. The 2019 ruling paved the way for millions of pounds worth of future pay-outs and led to the Court of Appeal quashing the convictions of postmasters who were wrongly accused of committing crimes.

Despite winning nearly £43 million in compensation in 2019, the group was left financially disadvantaged after having to pay significant legal costs based on a “no win, no fee” agreement with Therium – the company which funded its litigation. Due to the terms of their legal agreement each postmaster received a small fraction of the settlement – equating to around £20,000 each.

Their action meant they were also ineligible to apply to the Historical Shortfall Scheme (HSS) which was set up to by the Post Office following the scandal to compensate postmasters who had to personally cover shortfalls in their branch’s accounts caused by the Horizon IT.

The new scheme will ensure that those who uncovered the injustice receive the same level of compensation as the postmasters who claimed through the HSS.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Whilst it cannot take away the years of distress, the postmasters who have suffered terribly over the Post Office Horizon scandal deserve to be fairly compensated.

That’s why we’ll be introducing a new compensation scheme for those who led and won the landmark legal case over the failings, so they

can receive their fair share.

We'll continue to stand by postmasters and their families.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak said:

The Horizon IT dispute has had a devastating impact on postmasters and their families, with many losing their livelihoods or being wrongly convicted for crimes they didn't commit.

Without the efforts of these postmasters, this terrible injustice may have never been uncovered so it is only right that they are compensated fully and fairly.

That is why we have set up this new compensation scheme for those who played a crucial role bringing this scandal to light, which I hope provides a measure of comfort.

Postal Affairs Minister Paul Scully said:

The pain and distress that the Horizon scandal has inflicted on hundreds of postmasters over the years cannot be overstated.

Without the efforts of the 555 pioneering postmasters who brought this to court, this injustice may never have seen the light of day nor would the statutory inquiry have been set up, which is why I made it my priority to ensure they are all fairly compensated.

While we can't right the wrongs of the past, I hope this important compensation package is a turning of the page, as we continue working with the Post Office to ensure something like this can never happen again.

The scheme comes after the government announced a separate scheme last year to provide funding for full and final settlements for eligible postmasters who have had their Horizon-related conviction overturned, with those eligible to receive an interim payment of up to £100,000 each.

More details of the new scheme, including how postmasters can submit compensation claims, will be set out by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy in due course.

Shepherds Bush Housing Association Limited – update to gradings under review listing

Press release

Providers being investigated for an issue regarding their compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard are added to the regulator's GUR list.



The Regulator of Social Housing reports today (22 March) that it has updated Shepherds Bush Housing Association Limited's gradings under review listing.

We are currently investigating a matter which may impact on the provider's compliance with both the governance and financial viability elements of the Governance and Financial Viability Standard.

On 22 December 2021, we initially placed the provider on the gradings under review list in respect of its governance grading only.

The regulator notifies that a provider's grading is under review when its compliant grade (G1 and G2 for governance, and V1 and V2 for viability) is being investigated in relation to an issue which may result in a downgrade to a non-compliant grade (G3 or G4 for governance, V3 or V4 for viability).

The regulator's [gradings under review list](#) is available on its website.

Further information

For press office contact details, see our [Media enquiries page](#).

For general enquiries, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.

Notes to editors

- The GUR lists providers where we are investigating a matter that might result in them being assessed as non-compliant in relation to the regulator's Governance and/or Financial Viability Standard.
- The [regulatory standards](#) can be found on the regulator's website.
- The regulator promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver and maintain homes of appropriate quality that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.

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[New body to make UK world-leading centre for telecoms innovation](#)

- Will guide firms seeking R&D funding or collaboration on Open RAN and other disruptive tech
- Comes as new stats show two-thirds of UK premises can access lightning-fast gigabit broadband

The UK will be a world leader in telecoms research and development under plans for a new government-funded organisation dedicated to boosting innovation in the country's telecoms supply chain.

The UK Telecoms Innovation Network (UKTIN) will act as an information point for telecoms companies looking to access funding or testing facilities for R&D and opportunities to collaborate on developing new and improved technologies for UK mobile and broadband networks.

The government has today [launched](#) a competition for organisations to apply for up to £10 million to establish and run the centre, which will support innovators at the right time to scale up, develop their products, gain better access to telecoms markets and drive exports abroad.

It comes as new independent figures from [ThinkBroadband](#) show that two-thirds of UK homes and businesses (66.75%) can now access lightning-fast gigabit broadband. This is a huge rise on 2019 when coverage was just 6 per cent and shows rapid progress is being made in the government's plan to speed up the

rollout of better broadband and level up communities with faster internet speeds.

The UKTIN will be run by a consortium of organisations with telecoms expertise and will support knowledge sharing and collaboration on open and interoperable network technologies such as Open RAN, which allows telecoms companies to mix and match telecoms equipment rather than having to rely on a single supplier when building or maintaining networks.

The technology is considered crucial to the government's £250 million [strategy](#) to lower barriers for firms seeking to enter the UK telecoms supply chain – which will increase competition, drive up the quality of products and services and reduce the UK's current reliance on a small number of international suppliers.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said:

The UK Telecoms Innovation Network will be the first port of call for any telecoms company looking to access R&D funding and a matchmaker for firms looking to join forces on cutting-edge projects.

Ultimately this is about making the UK the best place in the world to develop rapid and seamless new technology for the digital networks that will power our economy well into the 21st century.

The UKTIN will be tasked with creating an up-to-date database of information on R&D funding in the public and private sector. It will also create an annual report which maps out the latest developments and opportunities in disruptive and innovative telecoms technology in the UK, including Open RAN.

Setting up the UKTIN was one of the key recommendations in last year's report from the Telecoms Diversification Taskforce: an independent body set up by the government to advise on necessary steps to transform the UK's telecoms supply chain so it is more competitive, innovative and secure.

The UKTIN is expected to be up and running by the end of the year, with the winning consortium announced in the summer.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Up to £10m is available for the competition. We are asking applicants to submit two bids one for £5m and another for £10m. We will then determine the bid which represents the most value for money.
- Funding for the UKTIN is subject to Programme Business Case approval.
- The deadline for applications is noon on 20 May 2022.
- We will be holding a briefing event for companies who are interested in applying to the competition on the 7 April 2022. Please register your interest online [here](#) to attend.

Government's preferred candidate for the role of UK Statistics Authority Chair

Press release

Lord True has today confirmed Sir Robert Chote as the preferred candidate for the role of UK Statistics Authority Chair



Lord True has today confirmed Sir Robert Chote as the government's preferred candidate for the role of UK Statistics Authority Chair.

Sir Robert is a former head of the Office for Budget Responsibility and the Institute for Fiscal Studies and is currently serving part-time as the first chair of the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council, an independent body created in 2021 to bring greater transparency and independent scrutiny to NI's public finances. He also chairs the external advisory group of the Parliamentary Budget Office in the Republic of Ireland.

Sir Robert studied economics at Queens' College, Cambridge (where he is now an Honorary Fellow), journalism at City University in London and public policy at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Washington DC. He has an honorary doctorate from the University of York and is a Visiting Professor at Kings College London. He was knighted in 2021 for services to fiscal policy and the economy.

The recommendation follows a fair and open recruitment process following the requirements of the Governance Code for Public Appointments. Pre-appointment scrutiny by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC) will follow shortly.

Minister of State at the Cabinet Office Lord True said:

I am delighted to confirm Sir Robert Chote as the preferred candidate for the office of Chair of the UK Statistics Authority. Sir Robert has all the attributes, experience and independence of judgement needed to lead the UKSA Board and the regulation of UK statistics.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sir David Norgrove for his work as UK Statistics Authority Chair over the last five years”.

Following a pre-appointment hearing, PACAC will publish their recommendations, which the government will consider before deciding whether to finalise the appointment in consultation with HM the Queen.

Notes to Editors:

- Sir Robert Chote has been Chair of the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council since 2021. Previously he was Chair of the Office for Budget Responsibility (2010-20), Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (2002-10), an adviser to senior management at the International Monetary Fund (2000-02), Economics Editor of the Financial Times (1995-1999) and a economics and business writer on The Independent (1990-94).
- The Panel for the campaign was made up of: Alex Chisholm, Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary Jayne-Anne Gadhia, Lead non executive, HMRC Sian Jones, Deputy Chair, UK Statistics Authority Clare Lombardelli, HM Treasury Chief Economic Adviser Graeme Archer, Vice President and Head, Research & MST Statistics, GSK R&D

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[Government funds vital works to restore Hammersmith Bridge to former glory](#)

- government confirms it will step in to provide up to one-third of costs to stabilise the bridge
- takes total funding injected into the structure by government to nearly £7 million
- ministers remain committed to supporting local council to fully reopen the bridge to all traffic

Ministers have announced a multimillion-pound funding package for vital restoration works to Hammersmith Bridge, as government confirms it will fund one third of the costs to stabilise the structure.

The announcement today (22 March 2022) is a landmark moment in the bridge's history. Almost £3 million will be injected into the project by ministers, so it remains permanently open to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic. This comes ahead of further strengthening works to open it up to motorists and takes total government funding for the bridge's restoration to nearly £7 million.

The government has been pivotal in ensuring the bridge was reopened to cyclists, pedestrians and river traffic in July 2021, after it was shut in 2019 following the discovery of cracks in its pedestals.

Previous government funding of £4 million went towards immediate mitigation works to the structure, which involved blast cleaning and inspections to its pedestals, helping ensure there were no long-term risks to its reopening.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Today, I'm giving Londoners reassurance this government will do everything in its power to keep this vital, historic structure open.

We're investing millions into its restoration, ensuring local residents can continue to cross the river by foot or bike and I look forward to working further with the local council on future works to reopen the bridge to motorists.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

This is an incredibly important day in the long history of Hammersmith Bridge.

Following an enormous amount of work by engineers, government, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and TfL, I can confirm we will be injecting millions of pounds into its restoration, so it stays open to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic.

We will not lose momentum. Work is already underway to ensure the structure is reopened to motorists as soon as possible and returned to its former glory.

After over a year of delay with sorting out the bridge, the government injected fresh impetus by setting up a special [Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce](#) in September 2020, bringing together all parties to discuss both long-term and temporary solutions – this has now delivered on its promise.

The release of today's funding, which amounts to £2.93 million, comes after ministers approved the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham's business case.

Engineering firm Mott MacDonald will carry out the stabilisation works, which will involve the use of elastomeric bearings, allowing any pressure to be applied equally to all 4 corners while protecting the vulnerable cast-iron structure.

Pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic will still be able to use the bridge throughout the duration of these works, with stabilisation expected to take less than a year to complete.