

# Approval of Funds for Full & Final Settlement for Postmasters with Overturned Criminal Convictions

I have received the enclosed letter regarding the settlement funds for Postmasters:

## **Approval of Funds for Full & Final Settlement for Postmasters with Overturned Criminal Convictions**

This House is aware of the distressing impact that problems with the Post Office's Horizon IT system have had on the lives and livelihoods of many postmasters.

The Court of Appeal handed down a landmark judgment on 23 April 2021 which quashed the convictions of 39 postmasters whose prosecution had relied on Horizon evidence. 72 convictions have now been quashed to date, and several others are in progress. There are potentially hundreds more postmasters whose convictions have relied on Horizon evidence and may seek to have their convictions quashed.

We want to see these postmasters with quashed convictions compensated fairly and swiftly. So far, the vast majority of postmasters who have had their convictions quashed have each received an interim compensation payment of up to £100,000 while they wait for the next steps in the proceedings.

I am pleased to confirm that today the Government is making funding available to facilitate Post Office to make final compensation payments to postmasters whose convictions have been overturned. We are working with Post Office to finalise the arrangements that will enable the final settlement negotiations to begin as soon as possible. By providing this funding, Government is helping Post Office deliver the fair compensation postmasters deserve.

With the Secretary of State's status as sole shareholder in the Post Office, my Department continues to engage actively with Post Office Limited on this and will maintain strong oversight of the compensation process.

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## Post office: Compensation Payments for Postmasters with Overturned criminal

# convictions

I have received the enclosed update from Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Labour Markets about compensation Payments for Postmasters with Overturned criminal convictions.

Dear Colleagues,

I know members across the House are aware of the longstanding Horizon issues whereby postmasters were prosecuted and convicted on the basis of Horizon evidence that we now know to be unreliable. On 23 April 2021, the Court of Appeal handed down a landmark judgment which quashed the convictions of 39 postmasters. To date 72 postmasters have now had their historical convictions quashed.

I have been clear in Parliament that Government wants to see postmasters who were prosecuted and convicted on the basis of Horizon evidence fairly compensated as quickly as possible. I wrote to you in July 2021 to inform you that Government would be providing funding support to Post Office to make interim payments of up to £100,000 to eligible postmasters who have their convictions quashed. These payments are intended to provide postmasters with some financial relief in advance of full and final settlements being reached with them by Post Office.

As of 29 November, the Post Office has received 66 applications for interim payments. Of these, 62 offers have been made and 50 accepted and payments made. Payments made to date have all been for the maximum interim amount of £100,000.

I am also pleased to inform you of the steps Government is taking to facilitate the settlement of claims and the payment of compensation to the postmasters whose criminal convictions were based on Horizon data and have been quashed.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in his capacity as sole shareholder in the Post Office, has agreed to make funding available to provide Post Office with the necessary resources to enable it to reach full and final settlements of compensation claims in a timely manner.

We are now working with Post Office to finalise the arrangements that will enable the final settlement negotiations to begin as soon as possible. The final settlement of claims for compensation is for Post Office and individual postmasters or their representatives to agree. It will involve claims being evidenced and quantified so that fair payments can be made providing postmasters with the compensation that they deserve.

My department continues to engage regularly with Post Office regarding its settlement of compensation claims. I am committed to seeing these longstanding Horizon issues resolved, learning what went wrong through the

Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, and ensuring something like this cannot happen again.

I have today notified the House of this decision in a Written Ministerial Statement, which you will find attached.

Yours ever,

**PAUL SCULLY MP**

Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Labour Markets

Minister for London

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## Conservative principles

The government needs to reconsider its policies as we move away from emergency measures to handle the pandemic.

We need a growth policy based on cutting tax rates and backing individuals and small businesses as they innovate, serve customers and expand.

We need a levelling up policy based on making it easier for people to follow their personal journeys through better education and training, scope to work for yourself or build a business, the opportunity and freedom to turn your interests and hobbies into ways of sustaining your life

We need an ownership policy encouraging and helping more people to own their own home, to build their own business, to become shareholders in the company they work for, to accumulate savings for a rainy day and for their retirement.

We need a public sector policy to deliver great education, health and social care, with choice for the users, free at the point of need.

We need a strong policy for the UK as an important influence for the good in the world, protecting our borders, helping our allies and being proud of our country.

We need to defend everyone's right to democratic debate and challenge to government, preventing those who would stifle our national conversation by self serving wokery.

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# My Written Question asking the Minister for Vaccines and Public Health about the monthly cost of Test and Trace

The Department of Health and Social Care has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (56360):

## **Question:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the costs are of NHS Test and Trace each month. (56360)

Tabled on: 15 October 2021

## **Answer:**

**Maggie Throup (Minister for Vaccines and Public Health):**

The costs for NHS Test and Trace vary each month according to the prevalence of COVID-19. The budget for NHS Test and Trace activities in 2021/22 is £15 billion. On average this equates to approximately £1.25 billion per month.

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# Why were there shouts of Resign to the Health Secretary?

I sat through the Health Secretary's latest statement in disappointed silence. I have heard a few Ministerial statements over the years that have bombed with the Ministers own side as this did, but do not recollect cries of Resign before from the government benches. Sajid Javed needs to ask himself why and start improving the way he does the job.

I guess the impatience with the Secretary of State reflects pent up anger about the way Ministers are constantly telling us the NHS cannot cope despite £64 bn more being spent on health this year than two years ago. Ministers are unable to answer basic questions about plans to recruit more, to increase beds, to improve air filtration in health settings, to improve infection control, and to find new treatments.

The PM and the Treasury both want the Health Secretary to get a grip on staffing budgets. They want him to turn the extra gold for the NHS into extra capacity and lower waiting lists. They want the NHS through a combination of vaccines, better treatments and extra capacity to show it can

handle a realistic volume of covid disease going forward.

I did not ask another question as so many of my questions recently have not produced informative answers. My advice to Secretary of State is simple. Go through all the main issues with the CEO of NHS England so you can tell us how the money is being spent, how you will increase capacity, how you will improve infection control, how you will expand the range of covid treatments, how you will bring down the waiting list and then come back to the Commons with a plan to get better results. If the CEO cannot supply you with decent answers you need to consider how this can be brought about.

The public regard you as responsible. The CEO is your chosen person to run the NHS under your supervision, so make sure you know what is happening and are able to defend it.