# Former subpostmaster takes legal action against Post Office over Horizon scandal



Lee Castleton, a former subpostmaster, has taken the unprecedented step of filing legal action against both the Post Office and Fujitsu, marking him as the first individual to seek justice in relation to the infamous Horizon IT scandal. The scandal has been described as one of the most extensive miscarriages of justice in UK history, impacting numerous subpostmasters whose lives and careers were irrevocably altered due to the flaws in the Horizon IT system.

Castleton's involvement in this long-running saga began when he purchased a post office in Bridlington, East Yorkshire, in 2003. However, it wasn't long before he encountered significant issues; within a year, his Horizon system indicated a mysterious £25,000 shortfall. Despite contacting the Post Office's helpline an astonishing 91 times, Castleton, like many others, suspected that the errors stemmed from the problematic software rather than any wrongdoing on his part.

In 2007, the Post Office took Castleton to court over the alleged losses, and due to his financial constraints, he had to represent himself. This courtroom struggle culminated in a ruling that ordered him to repay not only the alleged shortfall but also additional costs amounting to £321,000, ultimately leading to his bankruptcy. Speaking of his ordeal, Castleton commented, “I want justice and to be publicly vindicated,” highlighting the distressing impact the legal battle had on his personal life.

The public inquiry into the Horizon scandal, held in 2023, revealed that the Post Office was aware that Castleton's financial predicament would likely result in his bankruptcy should a legal challenge ensue. Nonetheless, it was noted that the corporation felt compelled to defend the integrity of the Horizon system. Stephen Dilley, representing the Post Office during Castleton's civil claim, admitted during the inquiry that the organisation wanted to “show the world” its commitment to the controversial IT system, even at the expense of Castleton's wellbeing.

Following the adverse legal decision, Castleton faced multiple hardships, including the closure of his shop, the sale of his house, and a relocation to rented accommodation. Compounding these financial and emotional stresses, his family life was severely affected; his wife suffered from stress-induced seizures, and their children's schooling was disrupted due to bullying.

With the representation of his solicitors from Simons Muirhead Burton, Castleton is now pursuing a judicial review aimed at overturning the judgment against him, which he alleges was procured through fraudulent means. Specifically, Castleton's legal team contends that the Post Office conspired with Fujitsu to conceal evidence demonstrating the unreliability of the Horizon system, thereby undermining his defence in the earlier court case.

Additionally, Alan Bates, a prominent advocate for other victims of the scandal, suggested that further legal actions might be contemplated if delays continue regarding the government’s compensation scheme. Currently, there are four primary compensation schemes—Horizon Shortfall, Group Litigation Order, Overturned Convictions, and Horizon Convictions Redress—overseen by the government, which has allocated £1.8 billion to address claims.

As of January 2023, official reports indicated that approximately £663 million had been distributed to over 4,300 claimants, proceeding through various interim payments. These compensations have varied significantly, ranging from £10,000 to amounts exceeding £1 million.

Castleton has not yet applied to the government’s compensation scheme, but he did receive a preliminary interim payment. Both the Post Office and Fujitsu have been contacted for comment regarding the evolving legal situation.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366620988/Former-subpostmaster-to-sue-Post-Office-and-Fujitsu-for-judgment-obtained-by-fraud> - This article corroborates Lee Castleton's legal action against the Post Office and Fujitsu, highlighting his claim that the judgment against him was obtained by fraud and that he seeks justice and public vindication.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/03/19/lee-castleton-sub-postmaster-horizon-post-office-fujitsu/> - This article supports the details of Lee Castleton's case, including his financial struggles and the legal battle with the Post Office, as well as his current pursuit of overturning the civil judgment against him.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-65015945> - Although not directly available in the search results, this BBC link typically covers news related to the Post Office scandal and could provide further context on Castleton's situation and the broader impact of the Horizon IT scandal.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/post-office-horizon-scandal-compensation-schemes> - This link would typically provide information on the government's compensation schemes for victims of the Horizon scandal, including details on the distribution of funds and the various schemes available.
* <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-administration-and-constitutional-affairs-committee/inquiries/post-office-horizon-scandal/> - This link provides information on parliamentary inquiries into the Post Office Horizon scandal, which could offer insights into the broader context and government responses to the issue.
* <https://www.postoffice.co.uk/about-us/our-response-to-the-horizon-inquiry> - This link would typically provide the Post Office's official response to the Horizon scandal, including any actions taken or statements regarding the controversy and compensation for affected subpostmasters.