# Brian Buckle’s fight for compensation highlights failures in wrongful conviction support



Brian Buckle’s struggle for justice encapsulates the harrowing reality faced by those wrongfully imprisoned. After spending five long years behind bars for crimes he vehemently maintained he did not commit, the 51-year-old is now caught in a relentless battle not just for recognition of his innocence, but also for compensation that may never come.

In 2017, Buckle was convicted of a series of serious offences involving a child, crimes alleged to have occurred over two decades earlier. Following his conviction, he was subjected to what he described as a "horrendous" prison life, thrust into a cell with violent offenders, where he felt forgotten and dehumanised. His account of daily survival in prison reflects a profound mental toll—stating he felt like just a number, lost within a system that showed little concern for his claims of innocence.

Buckle’s tenacity led him to invest nearly £500,000—drawn from his savings, an inheritance, and even the sale of his father-in-law’s house—to secure a re-trial, ultimately vindicating him in May 2023. The fresh evidence that underpinned his exoneration revealed critical flaws in the DNA evidence previously used against him. This monumental breakthrough, although sweetened by freedom, has not translated into the financial recompense or acknowledgment he expected.

Despite the Court of Appeal quashing all guilty verdicts in an astonishingly swift 80 minutes, the Ministry of Justice responded with a letter stating that while they accepted his innocence regarding the charges, he had not sufficiently proven his non-involvement "beyond a reasonable doubt." Such bureaucratic language, Buckle noted, exacerbates the trauma of his wrongful conviction, echoing a sentiment often expressed by those like him: it feels like a second injustice wrapped in legal jargon.

In recent years, discussions around compensation for wrongful convictions have gained momentum, particularly with the UK Government's move to address injustices faced by other wrongfully convicted individuals, like those within the Post Office scandal. Announced compensation of £600,000 for affected sub-postmasters signifies a growing acknowledgment at the governmental level of the critical need for fair reparations, yet such progress remains inconsistent.

Buckle’s plight illustrates a systemic issue that persists across the justice landscape in England and Wales. His local MP, Ben Lake, remarked that the changes made to the legal framework governing compensation in 2014 have resulted in inadequate support for many who suffer from wrongful convictions. Lake emphasised that while no system is infallible, the rights of those wrongfully imprisoned should not be overlooked or trivialised.

As Buckle continues to navigate the aftermath of his ordeal, including coping with PTSD that haunts his mornings with vivid memories of incarceration, he is also bolstered by a growing public outcry. A petition advocating for his compensation has amassed over 40,000 signatures, reflecting a wider call for justice not only for Buckle but for all who have endured similar fates.

This case underscores the urgent need for reform within the justice system, not merely to avert such travesties in the future, but also to ensure that those who suffer its failures are appropriately compensated and provided support as they attempt to rebuild their lives. As the Ministry of Justice reassures that it is committed to supporting individuals navigating the aftermath of miscarriages of justice, the reality remains that much work lies ahead to transform words into meaningful action.

Brian Buckle’s ordeal serves as a stark reminder of the human cost of wrongful convictions—a cost that extends far beyond financial implications, affecting mental health, familial relationships, and personal identity. While he remains in pursuit of compensation, he articulates a deeper need: validation of his innocence and acknowledgment of the grave mistakes made against him. Only then can he hope to fully reclaim his life from the shadows of a broken system.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14639535/I-wrongly-imprisoned-FIVE-years-child-sex-crimes-used-life-savings-prove-innocence-Im-told-Ill-never-penny-compensation.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-600000-of-new-compensation-for-every-wrongfully-convicted-postmaster> - The UK Government has announced that every Postmaster who was wrongfully convicted and has had their conviction overturned as it was reliant on Horizon evidence will be offered £600,000 in compensation. This initiative aims to provide swift and fair compensation to those affected by the Post Office scandal, where hundreds of sub-postmasters were wrongfully convicted due to flaws in the Horizon IT system. The compensation package includes interim payments and covers legal fees, ensuring that individuals receive the support they need to rebuild their lives.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-for-miscarriage-of-justice> - Individuals in England and Wales who have had their conviction overturned can apply for compensation under the Miscarriage of Justice Compensation Scheme. To be eligible, applicants must have had their conviction quashed by the courts, and the appeal must have been submitted within specific timeframes. The application process involves providing necessary documents, such as the appeal form and court judgment, to the Miscarriages of Justice Applications Service (MoJAS). The amount of compensation is determined on an individual basis by an independent assessor.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-compensation-after-a-miscarriage-of-justice> - This official guidance document outlines the process for applying for compensation after a miscarriage of justice in England and Wales. It details the necessary documents required, including the appeal form and court judgment, and provides information on how applications are decided. The document also highlights the importance of submitting applications promptly and offers contact details for the Miscarriages of Justice Applications Service (MoJAS), which handles compensation claims for wrongful convictions.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/miscarriage-of-justice-application-service-mojas-claims-management-information/miscarriage-of-justice-application-service-mojas-claims-management-information> - This publication provides statistical information on the Miscarriage of Justice Application Service (MOJAS) claims management. It includes data on the number of applications received, accepted, and refused, as well as the total amount of compensation paid. The report also discusses the average time taken from application receipt to compensation payment and highlights recent changes, such as the removal of deductions for saved living costs from compensation payments. This information is crucial for understanding the compensation process for wrongful convictions in the UK.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/06/wrongly-convicted-in-britain-no-longer-forced-to-pay-saved-living-costs-in-prison> - The UK Ministry of Justice has abolished the controversial practice of deducting 'saved living costs' from compensation payments to individuals wrongfully convicted. This change ensures that victims of miscarriages of justice are not penalized for expenses they did not incur while imprisoned. The decision was welcomed by those affected, who had previously faced deductions from their compensation for costs they did not save during their wrongful imprisonment. The move aims to provide fairer compensation and acknowledges the hardships endured by the wrongfully convicted.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/law/article/2024/jun/11/uk-system-wrongful-conviction-payouts-lawful-european-court-rules> - The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that the UK's system for compensating individuals wrongfully convicted is lawful. This decision comes after a lengthy legal battle involving several men who were wrongfully imprisoned and later exonerated. The ruling has significant implications for the compensation process in the UK, affirming the legality of the current system. However, it also highlights the need for potential reforms to ensure fair and adequate compensation for those who have suffered due to miscarriages of justice.