# Sir Alan Bates condemns government for low Post Office Horizon compensation offer



Sir Alan Bates, a prominent figure in the long-standing fight for justice regarding the Post Office Horizon scandal, has disclosed that he has been offered a “take it or leave it” compensation sum that is less than half of what he initially claimed. At the age of 70, Bates, who received a knighthood last year for his relentless advocacy, has openly criticised the government’s handling of the compensation process, likening it to a “quasi-kangaroo court.” His remarks reflect widespread discontent among former post office operators, over 900 of whom were unjustly convicted of crimes such as fraud and theft between 1999 and 2015—charges rooted in the faults of the Horizon IT system that had misreported financial discrepancies.

Bates suggests that the Department for Business and Trade, which oversees the compensation mechanisms, has betrayed initial commitments made when these schemes were introduced. He expressed frustration in an interview with the Sunday Times, stating that assurances for a non-legalistic approach to compensation have proven to be “worthless.” According to him, his latest offer amounts to a mere 49.2% of his original claim following his appeal to an independent reviewer, Sir Ross Cranston. The varying responses received by claimants under the Group Litigation Order (GLO) scheme, which was established to provide restitution for the 555 claimants who took the Post Office to court, exemplify the inconsistency of the claims assessment process. Under the GLO, claimants can opt for a fixed payout of £75,000 or negotiate their own settlements. Nonetheless, many still contend that the proposed amounts are woefully inadequate.

The call for reform has gained traction, with Bates advocating for an independent body to oversee compensation programmes for public sector scandals. However, he also apprehensively noted the likely resistance from the civil service, predicting bureaucratic roadblocks in the proposal's actualisation. The growing frustration stems not only from inadequate financial offers but also from significant delays in receiving compensation, as many victims continue to wait for fair settlements despite a prior commitment from the government to expedite the process.

The ongoing ramifications of the Horizon scandal continue to attract public and media attention. Recent reports indicate that hundreds of erstwhile post office operators are now set to be compensated following the accidental leak of their personal information by the Post Office. Yet, individual payouts will be capped at £5,000, further aggravating public sentiment that the government has not done enough to rectify the injustices suffered by the individuals involved.

With the court of public opinion shifting in favour of victims, the potential for structural changes within compensation frameworks becomes increasingly evident. For instance, a proposed new law by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak aims to exonerate victims and streamline compensation, but critics argue that it still falls short of necessary reforms. Public disquiet looms large, linked to broader concerns about accountability that some advocate should extend to Fujitsu, the IT firm behind the Horizon system. While the government has reiterated its commitment to delivering appropriate compensation and allowing for independent reviews, critics maintain that a “legalistic” and bureaucratic approach continues to hinder timely justice.

This view is echoed by other experts advocating for a more transparent and efficient compensation process. Despite the promises made and a public inquiry ongoing since 2022 to shed light on these injustices, many remain sceptical about the commitment of authorities to bring about meaningful change, as evidenced by the lack of arrests or charges against individuals implicated in the scandal.

As the legal and social narrative surrounding the Horizon scandal unfolds, the battle for justice continues, with Bates and many others holding out hope for a system that truly prioritises victims over red tape. The cry for a fair and just resolution grows louder, set against the backdrop of a legacy marked by wrongful accusations and the ruin of countless lives.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/24/sir-alan-bates-given-take-it-or-leave-it-offer-of-less-than-half-his-post-office-horizon-claim), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/24/sir-alan-bates-given-take-it-or-leave-it-offer-of-less-than-half-his-post-office-horizon-claim)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/24/sir-alan-bates-given-take-it-or-leave-it-offer-of-less-than-half-his-post-office-horizon-claim), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/398ea8cc-aa2d-4dab-b48e-4d980bc20327), [[4]](https://apnews.com/article/797199a37c4dbb91e0a4f1f9567fe96f)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/566976e4-de40-486d-a324-4ddff4446516), [[6]](https://time.com/6552764/uk-post-office-scandal-police-investigate-potential-fraud/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/24/sir-alan-bates-given-take-it-or-leave-it-offer-of-less-than-half-his-post-office-horizon-claim> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/may/24/sir-alan-bates-given-take-it-or-leave-it-offer-of-less-than-half-his-post-office-horizon-claim> - Sir Alan Bates, who led the 20-year campaign for justice for post office operators over the Horizon scandal, has revealed he has been handed a 'take it or leave it' compensation offer of less than half his original claim. The 70-year-old, who was knighted last year, has accused the government of presiding over a 'quasi-kangaroo court' system for the compensation. More than 900 post office operators were convicted of offences including fraud, false accounting and theft between 1999 and 2015 after the faulty Horizon IT system falsely showed that money was missing in branch accounts. The convictions were overturned by parliament last year. Many are still awaiting damages despite the previous government announcing that those who have had convictions quashed are eligible for £600,000 payouts. Bates has also accused the Department for Business and Trade, which administers the compensation schemes, of reneging on assurances given when they were set up and told the Sunday Times a promise they would be 'non-legalistic' had turned out to be 'worthless'. He said he was given a final 'take it or leave it' offer, which amounted to 49.2% of his original claim after appealing and being referred to the scheme’s independent reviewer, Sir Ross Cranston. The campaigner is now calling for the creation of an independent body that would administer compensation schemes for public sector scandals but cautioned: 'I can already hear the sharpening of goose quills across Whitehall as the civil service prepares to snow politicians under with reasons it would not work.' He added: 'The sub-postmaster compensation schemes have been turned into quasi-kangaroo courts in which the Department for Business and Trade sits in judgment of the claims and alters the goalposts as and when it chooses. Claims are, and have been, knocked back on the basis that legally you would not be able to make them, or that the parameters of the scheme do not extend to certain items.' The group litigation order (GLO) scheme was set up to achieve redress for the 555 claimants who took the Post Office to the high court between 2017 and 2019. Under the GLO, claimants can take a fixed sum of £75,000 or seek their own settlement. If there are disputes in individual cases, they are referred to an independent panel for review. Post office operators can also seek a final view from Cranston, a former high court judge, if they believe the panel has got it wrong. A Department for Business and Trade spokesperson said: 'We pay tribute to all the postmasters who have suffered from this scandal, including Sir Alan for his tireless campaign for justice, and we have quadrupled the total amount paid to postmasters since entering government. We recognise there will be an absence of evidence given the length of time that has passed, and we therefore aim to give the benefit of the doubt to postmasters as far as possible. Anyone unhappy with their offer can have their case reviewed by a panel of experts, which is independent of the government.' Earlier this week, it emerged that hundreds of former post office operators will be compensated by the Post Office after it accidentally leaked their names and addresses in June 2024. The Post Office said individual payouts will be capped at £5,000, although higher claims may still be pursued.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/398ea8cc-aa2d-4dab-b48e-4d980bc20327> - More than two decades after challenging the Post Office over account shortfalls, Sir Alan Bates and other victims of wrongful convictions tied to the flawed Horizon IT system are still fighting for full compensation. Despite a 2019 High Court victory and a subsequent political pledge to expedite redress, many including Bates have yet to receive fair compensation. There have been criticisms about the complex, bureaucratic nature of compensation schemes, delays, and low offers compared to the significant financial gains of the scandal's perpetrators. Calls for reforms include establishing a 'centre of expertise' within the government to streamline compensation processes. The Post Office maintains a commitment to deliver redress, but victims express frustration with the prolonged and legalistic nature of the current system, hindering justice and closure.
4. <https://apnews.com/article/797199a37c4dbb91e0a4f1f9567fe96f> - UK police have launched a fraud investigation into the Post Office for wrongfully accusing over 700 postmasters of theft and fraud, due to a faulty computer system called Horizon, supplied by Fujitsu. Between 1999 and 2015, the flawed system falsely indicated financial discrepancies, leading to severe financial and personal repercussions for many postmasters, including bankruptcies, prison sentences, and even suicides. Despite victims' continuous efforts, it wasn't until 2021 that the Court of Appeal quashed 39 convictions, acknowledging the Post Office's egregious investigative failures. A public inquiry has been ongoing since 2022, but no arrests or charges have been made against individuals or affiliated companies. A recent TV docudrama, 'Mr. Bates vs the Post Office,' has reignited public outrage and led to new victims seeking justice. The Post Office's current CEO, Nick Read, supports the increased awareness and encourages affected postmasters to come forward for compensation.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/566976e4-de40-486d-a324-4ddff4446516> - The UK Home Office has awarded two contracts worth nearly £25 million to Fujitsu since the general election in July. This decision has sparked controversy due to Fujitsu's involvement in the Post Office Horizon IT scandal, which resulted in wrongful convictions of over 900 postmasters based on faulty software data. Despite prominent Labour MPs previously calling for a ban on Fujitsu receiving state contracts, the company was granted a £9.6 million contract for hardware procurement and a £15 million contract for law enforcement software services. Jo Maugham of the Good Law Project criticized the government's action as a disservice to the scandal's victims, who await proper compensation. Fujitsu had pledged not to bid on new government contracts until the inquiry into the scandal is concluded, except for existing agreements. The government has maintained that the contracts comply with Fujitsu's bidding restrictions and affirmed its commitment to holding those responsible for the scandal accountable.
6. <https://time.com/6552764/uk-post-office-scandal-police-investigate-potential-fraud/> - U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has announced a new law aiming to exonerate victims of the Post Office scandal, a major miscarriage of justice where hundreds of employees were wrongfully convicted due to faults in the Horizon IT financial software. The proposed legislation includes an upfront compensation payment of £75,000 for affected individuals. The scandal, which ran from 1999 to 2015, saw over 700 sub-postmasters accused of financial misconduct based on software errors, resulting in wrongful prosecutions and severe personal consequences for many. With over 93 convictions overturned to date and the government paying out £124.7 million in compensation, the ongoing issue has drawn renewed public attention following an ITV TV series highlighting the injustices. Further investigations by the Metropolitan Police focus on potential fraud and perjury committed by individuals associated with the Post Office and Fujitsu, the software developer. An official inquiry led by Sir Wyn Williams continues to address the extent of the injustice and identify responsible parties.