# Former Post Office CEO Paula Vennells Testifies at Horizon IT Inquiry Amid Wrongful Convictions Scandal



Paula Vennells, former CEO of the Post Office, testified for a third day at the Horizon IT inquiry in London. Vennells, who stepped down in 2019, acknowledged her responsibility for the series of wrongful convictions stemming from the faulty Horizon accounting software developed by Fujitsu, which led to financial discrepancies in subpostmaster accounts.

Vennells admitted that since the Court of Appeal judgment, she lost all employment and dedicated her time to the inquiry, attempting to address failures from her tenure. Conceding mistakes, she claimed she wasn't aware of systemic failures or withheld legal advice. Despite suggestions from Edward Henry KC that her actions were deliberate, Vennells maintained she relied on expert advice.

Subpostmasters' representatives, including those like Jo Hamilton and Lee Castleton who were wrongly convicted, interrogated Vennells. They highlighted failures in the mediation scheme intended to minimize compensation and fallacies in prosecutorial decisions without investigating the alleged losses.

The inquiry follows the passing of the Post Office (Horizon System) Offences Bill, which aims to quash wrongful convictions of subpostmasters between 1999 and 2015 and will provide compensation through the Horizon Convictions Redress Scheme. This legislation is pending royal assent to be enacted.