# Sir Alan Bates condemns UK government compensation scheme as 'quasi-kangaroo courts' amid Horizon scandal fallout



Sir Alan Bates has issued a scathing critique of the UK government's handling of compensation schemes for the victims of the Horizon IT scandal, branding them “quasi-kangaroo courts.” His remarks capture the deep-seated frustration among more than 900 subpostmasters wrongly prosecuted from 1999 to 2015 due to the flawed Horizon accounting software. This system falsely indicated financial anomalies, leading to devastating personal and financial repercussions, including wrongful convictions and tragic suicides.

In his piece for the Sunday Times, Bates, a relentless advocate for justice, expressed dismay that his own compensation offer is less than half of what he originally sought. He raised serious concerns about the arbitrary nature of current compensation criteria, alleging that the Department for Business and Trade has been changing the rules at will. “Claims are often rejected based on legalistic technicalities,” he noted, underscoring the failures of a system that was designed to deliver fair and straightforward redress.

The previous government may have pledged significant compensation—up to £600,000 for those with overturned convictions—but many victims, including Bates, find themselves still lacking adequate compensation. The group litigation order (GLO) scheme, established between 2017 and 2019 to address the claims of 555 primary applicants, has failed to satisfy. Even the option for claimants to seek an independent review, supposedly overseen by a retired High Court judge, has not granted the sense of justice that so many desperately seek.

Calls for a radical overhaul are growing louder as Bates demands an independent body to manage compensation claims, a viewpoint echoed by numerous campaigners and legal professionals familiar with the matter. Critics of the government's management of the scandal have pointed out that despite a High Court victory in 2019 and promises to expedite compensation, the processes remain mired in complexity and red tape, echoing the frustrations felt under the old regime.

Recent revelations indicate that many victims are being offered compensation sums far below their original claims. Bates has roundly rejected several of these offers, describing them as “cruel” and “derisory.” He advocates for a systematic overhaul of the current framework, arguing that a dedicated governmental body could improve both the efficiency and transparency of the compensation process, thus preventing further injustices from occurring.

The Post Office scandal starkly illustrates the failures in systems designed to safeguard citizens, underlining the urgent need for decisive action to deliver the justice that has been long denied. While government representatives have voiced acknowledgment of the suffering experienced by the subpostmasters and promised enhanced oversight, the grim reality remains that many victims continue to feel abandoned by the very institutions intended to support them. As Bates pushes for judicial review to ensure equitable treatment, the pursuit of justice rages on, with many clinging to the hope for a more just future free from the failings of the past.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/bates-says-post-office-scandal-compensation-schemes-are-quasi-kangaroo-courts-F36KVZCUGBK6TMD2IOEX24AYMA/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/bates-says-post-office-scandal-compensation-schemes-are-quasi-kangaroo-courts-F36KVZCUGBK6TMD2IOEX24AYMA/> - Sir Alan Bates, a former subpostmaster, has criticized the UK government's compensation schemes for victims of the Horizon IT scandal, describing them as 'quasi-kangaroo courts.' He claims that the Department for Business and Trade arbitrarily alters the criteria for claims, leading to rejections based on legal technicalities. Despite previous announcements of £600,000 payouts for those with quashed convictions, many victims are still awaiting compensation. Bates advocates for an independent body to oversee compensation processes for this and similar public sector scandals.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/31/post-office-horizon-scandal-alan-bates-rejects-cruel-compensation-offer> - Alan Bates, a former sub-postmaster, has rejected the UK government's compensation offer related to the Post Office Horizon scandal, deeming it 'cruel' and 'derisory.' The offer amounted to about a sixth of his original claim. Bates, whose story inspired the ITV drama 'Mr Bates vs The Post Office,' has been campaigning for justice after being wrongfully accused due to the flawed Horizon IT system. He criticizes the government's approach to compensation and suggests that legal action may be necessary to achieve fair redress.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/398ea8cc-aa2d-4dab-b48e-4d980bc20327> - Despite a 2019 High Court victory and political pledges to expedite redress, victims of the Post Office Horizon IT scandal, including Sir Alan Bates, continue to fight for full compensation. The compensation schemes have been criticized for their complexity, bureaucracy, and delays. Many victims have received offers significantly lower than their original claims, leading to calls for reforms such as establishing a 'centre of expertise' within the government to streamline compensation processes.
5. <https://www.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. 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.
6. <https://www.time.com/6552764/uk-post-office-scandal-police-investigate-potential-fraud/> - UK 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.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/05/16/alan-bates-rejects-second-offer-compensation-post-office/> - Alan Bates has rejected a second offer of compensation for the Post Office Horizon scandal, stating that it amounts to around 30% of the sum he is seeking. Bates, whose fight for justice inspired the ITV drama 'Mr Bates vs The Post Office,' has been battling the Post Office since 2003 after his contract was terminated when he refused to accept blame for shortfalls on his account. He criticizes the government's approach to compensation and suggests that legal action may be necessary to achieve fair redress.