

POST OFFICE OVERTURNED CONVICTIONS
INDEPENDENT COMPENSATION ASSESSMENT PANEL
(PECUNIARY LOSSES)

JANUARY 2025 REPORT

Introduction

Following discussion with the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board, this quarterly report has been commissioned by the Department of Business and Trade¹.

Figures

The position in respect of claims as at 3 January 2025 (Column 2), with the figures as at the end of the previous quarter (30 September 2024) for comparison (Column 1), is as follows.

	Column 1	Column 2
Number of Overturned Convictions	(111)	111
Number of Claims Notified	(111)	111 ²
Number of Ongoing Particularised Pecuniary Claims Received (i.e. Net of Full and Final Settlements)	(8)	10
Number of Assessed Offers Made in Ongoing Claims (i.e. Net of Full and Final Settlements)	(3)	5
Number of Offers Accepted (£600,000)	(54)	58
Number of Offers Accepted (other than £600,000)	(6)	8
Number of Ongoing Claims in which Interim Payments Made	(51)	45 ³
Number of Claims Referred to Panel	(0)	1
Number of Claimants Assessed by Panel	(0)	0
Number of Assessments/Offer after Assessment Accepted	(0)	0
Number of Full and Final Settlements	(60)	66
Number of Claims Closed	(51)	59 ⁴
Total Amount of Interim Payments in Ongoing Claims	(£18.67m)	£18.74m ⁵
Total Amount of Final Payments	(£39.86m)	£46.12m ⁶

Observations

1. Most of the continuing work of the Panel has been in the form of the Panel Chair giving directions in individual cases to speed the resolution of claims or specific issues within a claim. The Chair continues to regard this case management function as vitally important.

2. As the figures above show, although not of course as quickly as we would like, cases within the OC Scheme cohort continue to be settled. As indicated in the last Quarterly Report, as cases settle, it is expected that a diminishing number of higher value, more challenging cases will be left. It is likely that claims for future loss – in most cases, the highest value head of loss and the most challenging – will feature with increasing prominence in these cases. At the September 2024 meeting with the parties, the Panel Chair directed the parties’ representatives to attempt to identify individual cases with issues in respect of future loss which are unlikely to be compromised by the parties without assistance, with a view to determining these issues/claims at an assessment hearing early next year.
3. Following that direction, at the Panel Chair’s next regular meeting with parties on 14 November 2024, a claim was identified where the future loss/lost opportunity claimed had not been agreed – and was unlikely to be agreed without assistance from the Panel – and directions were given for the assessment of that claim together with a parallel claim from the Claimant’s wife (who is a claimant within the GLO Scheme). The parties continue to attempt to identify other cases with similar issues that might be ready for assessment, and a further hearing for directions has been fixed for 3 February 2025 to consider (amongst other things) whether any other cases can be joined in this assessment. Because it is intended to give guidance in relation to such claims (including the evidential challenges provided by such claims), as envisaged in the last Quarterly Report, all parties to the OC Scheme and the GLO Scheme have been given the opportunity to make (initially, written) submissions on the identified issues. Four have indicated they intend to make submissions.
4. That assessment is due to be heard by the Panel on 24-25 February 2025. As indicated, in addition to assessing the losses of the Claimant and his wife, it is hoped to provide an opportunity for the Panel to give anonymised guidance in respect of such claims that may assist other parties in this and the other Horizon Schemes where future loss/lost opportunity claims are made.
5. The next regular meeting between the Panel Chair and the parties is due to take place on 18 February 2024.
6. The Chair continues to have the following particular concerns about factors which may slow future progress.
 - (i) Whilst an increasing percentage of the claimants – over half – have now accepted the £600,000 initial offer or lodged a particularised pecuniary loss claim for assessment, it is clear that some claimants are finding difficult the decision as to whether to accept that offer or proceed with a particularised claim. Some appear to have been reluctant to engage with the process before the end of the evidence phase of the Inquiry (now, of course, concluded). Although an informed decision may require legal and accountancy evidence, there do not appear to be reports of any substantial delays from that source. However, the Chair is anxious to ensure that each claimant is in a position to make an informed decision on the initial offer as soon as possible. The timetable for these claims will be on the agenda for the next meeting of the Chair with the parties on 18 February 2025. It is hoped that most claimants who have not yet done so will be able to make that decision by 31 March 2025.
 - (ii) Whilst of course some individual claims are currently awaiting an expert report or Counsel’s opinion to enable it to progress, the capacity of the claimants’ teams still

does not appear to be a factor slowing the progress of claims; and the Chair has received some assurance that this should not be an issue in the future even where claimants' representatives have significant claims in other Horizon redress schemes. The Chair considers that this is an aspect which will require periodic review. However, in any event, the general picture of the challenges faced by claimants and their representatives set out in previous reports continues. The Chair remains of the view that careful and regular case management of the individual cases will be the best way to progress these claims.

- (iii) The finalisation of the pension model which Post Office intends to use in assessing pension claims continues to delay the final assessment of at least one claim. The Chair gave directions to ensure that the legal representatives of the claimant in that claim have given Post Office feedback on the model, which will hopefully avoid delays in future pension claims. The adoption of the model is in the hands of the Post Office. It is hoped that the model will be complete and approved through the Post Office governance procedures, and therefore available for use in the assessment of individual cases, by the end of February 2025.
- (iv) Interim payments have now been made to all claimants whose claims have not been fully and finally settled. The Chair has made it clear that claimants may make an application to the Panel if they are dissatisfied with the payments made to date.
- (v) More generally, concern continues about "governance procedures" within the Post Office and/or DBT leading to delay and disruption of the procedures and timetable set out on the scheme.

Sir Gary Hickenbottom
Chair
30 January 2025

¹ This is the third report of the Chair of the OC Scheme Panel. The first report, published in July 2024, included a brief overview of the scope and processes involved in the Scheme, as well as data and observations. The second report, published in October 2024, and this report focus on the current data and observations on progress.

² This is the total number of claimants who have been in contact with the PO regarding the Overturned Convictions Redress Scheme (not all of whom have yet applied for an initial interim payment). Because claimants whose convictions were overturned by statute – as opposed to the court, as in this cohort – are the subject of a different redress scheme, the number of claimants now in the OC Scheme cohort (111) are probably a closed group. That number is unlikely to rise.

³ This is the total number of claimants to whom interim payments have been made, including £163,000 initial interim payments, proactive settlement payments, non-pecuniary settlements, and other interim or part settlement payments. This figure does not include claimants who had received interim payments but subsequently fully and finally settled their claims. Interim payments have now been made to all claimants whose claims have not been fully and finally settled.

⁴ Of the 66 full and final settlements, 6 claims still have outstanding legal costs to be agreed or assessed before they can be closed. One claimant has settled their costs but awaits a payment via the court.

⁵ This figure includes all interim payments and includes proactive, part and non-pecuniary settlement payments; but does not include interim payments made to claimants who have subsequently fully and finally settled their claims.

⁶ This figure includes all £600,000 settlements as well as those who have accepted offers following submission and assessment of a particularised claim.