

House of Commons

[Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee](#)

****Inquiry launch – Post Office and Horizon**

Wednesday 4th March - for immediate release

Post Office & Horizon inquiry launched by BEIS Committee

The **Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Committee** has today launched an inquiry on issues emerging from the Horizon IT Court cases, looking at the impact on sub-postmasters and its effect on the future viability of the Post Office, and examining the lessons the Government and Post Office Ltd have learned from a scandal which saw hundreds of sub-postmasters accused of fraud.

Rachel Reeves MP, Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, has also written to Boris Johnson to press for further details on the public inquiry on Horizon to which the Prime Minister appeared to commit during [PMQs](#) on Wednesday 26th February.

Rachel Reeves MP, Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee said:

“Hundreds of sub-postmasters have suffered considerable distress, and many have had their lives ruined by the faults in the Horizon IT system. Following December’s High Court ruling in favour of the sub-postmasters, and the finding that Horizon was flawed, it’s right to examine what the Post Office Ltd and the Government have learned from this scandal and establish what steps they are taking to ensure something similar never happens again.

“The case also raises concerns about the damage caused to the relationship between Post Office Ltd and the sub-postmasters and about what this means for the future of our post-office network. We will hear from sub-postmasters about the impact of Horizon on their lives and take the opportunity to hold executives from Post Office Ltd and Fujitsu to account for their handling of the problems around the Horizon IT and accounting system”.

The Committee will be holding two evidence hearings as part of this inquiry. At the first session on the morning of Tuesday 10th March, the Committee will hear from sub-postmasters, the CWU, and the National Federation of Sub-postmasters. On Tuesday 24th March (am), the Committee is expected to question the current PO Ltd CEO, Nick Read, the former CEO, Paula Vennells, Fujitsu, a BEIS Minister and a representative from UKGI (UK Government Investments).

The BEIS Committee in the previous Parliament looked at issues around sub-postmasters’ revenue and income in its inquiry on the [future of the post-office network](#).

Inquiry on the Post Office and Horizon - terms of reference

The case raises a series of issues which are relevant to the BEIS Committee’s scrutiny of the Post Office Limited, including the following points:

- What damage has Horizon caused to the relationship between PO Ltd and sub-postmasters and will this impact on the PO network?
- What role did the National Federation of Sub-postmasters play in the Horizon scandal in terms of representing affected sub-postmasters?
- What steps are the Government taking to help sub-postmasters to overturn convictions if they were based on Horizon errors?
- Have the costs of the Horizon case adversely affected PO services and are there potentially more costs resulting from further civil and criminal litigation?
- How transparent is PO Ltd in its decision making and in its use of public money?

- What lessons has PO Ltd learnt and what steps is it taking to avoid similar problems?
- What role did BEIS and UKGI (UK Government Investments) play and is it reviewing its oversight of PO Ltd following Horizon?

Post Office and Horizon: evidence session 10th March

Tuesday 10 March, 10.30am (Venue: Committee Room, tbc)

Watch live on [Parliament TV](#)

Panel One: Alan Bates, Justice for Sub-postmasters Alliance and sub-postmaster; Wendy Buffrey sub-postmaster; Tracy Felstead sub-postmaster.

Panel Two: Andy Furey, Deputy General-Secretary, Communication Workers Union; Calum Greenhow, CEO, National Federation of Sub-postmasters

ENDS

Editor's Notes

At Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday 26th February:

[Kate Osborne \(Jarrow\) \(Lab\)](#) Q4. Like many other sub-postmasters, my constituent Chris Head was victim to the Post Office Horizon IT system scandal. These errors have resulted in bankruptcies, imprisonment and even suicide. Will the Prime Minister today assure Chris and others that he will commit to launching an independent inquiry? [900849]

[The Prime Minister](#) I am indeed aware of the scandal to which the hon. Lady alludes and the disaster that has befallen many Post Office workers—I have met some of them myself. I am happy to commit to getting to the bottom of the matter in the way that she recommends.

A Change.org [petition](#), started by Chris Head, calls for a full public inquiry into Horizon.

BEIS Committee

Media inquiries: Gary Calder calderg@parliament.uk /020 7219 7556

Committee Membership: Rachel Reeves MP (Chair) (Lab, Leeds West), Mark Pawsey MP (Vice-Chair), (Con, Rugby), Alan Brown (SNP, Kilmarnock and Loudoun), Richard Fuller MP (Conservative, North East Bedfordshire), Nusrat Ghani MP (Conservative, Wealden), Mark Jenkinson MP (Conservative, Workington), Peter Kyle MP (Lab, Hove), Pat McFadden MP (Labour, Wolverhampton South East), Anna McMorrin MP (Labour, Cardiff North), Alexander Stafford MP (Conservative, Rother Valley).

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