

No. 480/2020

29<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Colleagues

## **POST OFFICE: HORIZON SCANDAL – RETIRED HIGH COURT JUDGE LEADS INQUIRY**

Further to LTB337/20 Dated 26<sup>th</sup> June.

Branches and members will recall that on 10<sup>th</sup> June, Paul Scully MP, Small Business and Postal Affairs Minister, announced there would be an “Independent Review” into the Horizon scandal and subsequently there were numerous calls from MPs and also Darren Jones, Chair of the BEIS Select Committee, calling for this to be a judge-led statutory inquiry rather than a “review”. Also, EDM 593 which currently has 77 signatures reiterated this call.

Today the Government has announced that this “review” will now be called an “inquiry” although disappointingly it remains non-statutory, meaning it will lack the subpoena powers and ability to take evidence under oath that are afforded to statutory inquiries.

The inquiry will though be chaired by Sir Wyn Williams, a retired High Court Judge. The Terms of Reference for the inquiry has also been expanded which is a positive. The Government claims this change is following feedback from former Postmasters.

The link to the full press release from BEIS is below and the key headlines are as follows:

- Sir Wyn Williams will lead the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, which will start its work immediately
- inquiry will establish a clear account of the implementation and failings of Horizon over its lifetime
- it will also now gather available relevant evidence from this period from Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/retired-high-court-judge-to-lead-post-office-horizon-it-inquiry>

We obviously welcome this development and whilst the Government has in our opinion not gone far enough by failing to make this a statutory inquiry, we are pleased to see the appointment of an experienced retired High Court Judge. We would now hope this appointment will ensure the factors leading to the terrible injustices suffered by many Postmasters cannot happen again. We also intend to press Sir Wyn Williams to fully hold to account those senior Post Office Directors who have inflicted so much misery on so many.

Further developments will be reported.

Yours sincerely

**Andy Furey**  
**Assistant Secretary**