

NEWS

Post Office prosecutions during Horizon go-live phase are 'frightening'

The Post Office used subpostmasters as guinea pigs to test its software and take the rap for its errors

By Karl Flinders, Chief reporter and senior editor EMEA

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The Post Office's decision to prosecute subpostmasters using Horizon evidence during the software's early roll-out phase was "frightening", according to an IT expert who exposed its deficiencies.

With the <u>Post Office accused of perverting the course of justice</u> in its prosecutions of subpostmasters, forensic IT expert Jason Coyne described how the subpostmasters were treated as "guinea pigs".

Coyne did an early investigation into Horizon, as part of a court case in 2003, which revealed bugs in the Horizon system. He also <u>acted as an expert witness for the 555 subpostmasters</u>, led by <u>Alan Bates</u>, who proved the software was flawed in a 2018/19 court case.

When Horizon was being rolled out in thousands of Post Office branches in the early 2000s, the Post Office knew, as with all software, there would be bugs, he said. "We know the Horizon system went live with a number of issues – and there is nothing unusual about that. Every system goes live with bugs, but there has to be a judgement about their severity."

Coyne said bugs are often measured on severity and organisations make a judgement on the number of bugs they can accept going live based on these severity measures. "This is accepted by people and Horizon clearly went live in that state. The subpostmasters were used as guinea pigs to test that system," he said.

But when rolling out software with known bugs, Coyne said it is essential that every single potential software and user problem is thoroughly investigated. That didn't happen with Horizon. "The fact that the Post Office used that early roll-out period to prosecute people was frightening because lots of people in the Post Office will have known [Horizon was] going live with lots of bugs," he said.

In 2003, Coyne was appointed as an expert witness by a court during a legal battle between the Post Office and Julie Wolstenholme, the former subpostmaster at a branch in Cleveleys, Lancashire. In 2001, the Post Office attempted to sue Wolstenholme for the return of equipment used in the branch after her contract was terminated. But in a counterclaim, she said her employment was terminated unlawfully and raised questions about the reliability of the Horizon computer system used in branches.

Coyne found that helpdesk calls made by Wolstenholme showed evidence of software errors. "We were getting narrative within those call logs, from 2001, talking about problems such as data corruption, as well as hardware and power failure. We could see information from that early period that showed the type of problems were not caused by the subpostmaster," he said.

Read how, in preparation for the 2018 High Court battle, forensic IT expert Jason Coyne outsmarted an 'aggressive' Post Office to get to truth after inspection 'madness'

In his report, Coyne said: "There seems to be a number of [helpdesk call] logs which talk of 'large discrepancies' in stock figures, trial balances with 'all sorts of figures showing minus figures'. From a computer system installation perspective, it is my opinion that the technology installed at the Cleveleys subpost office was clearly defective in elements of its hardware, software or interfaces. The majority of the errors noted in the fault logs could not be attributed to being of [the subpostmaster's] making or operation of the system."

The Post Office attempted to convince Coyne to change his report, but when he refused, to hush up the report, it paid Wolstenholme a settlement, which included her having to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). The Post Office kept Coyne's report quiet.

Edward Henry KC, acting for victims of the Horizon scandal, wrote in his closing statement for phase four of the statutory public inquiry that Post Office staff conspired to pervert the course of justice when they "suppressed" and "withheld" evidence.

Henry referred to the Cleveleys case in his closing statement. He wrote: "Already the Post Office was more concerned with reputational fallout if word should get out that Horizon accounting data was unreliable, rather than recognising that Cleveleys was a red flag, requiring them to investigate whether Horizon accounting data was in fact reliable."

Computer Weekly <u>first exposed the scandal in 2009</u>, revealing the stories of seven subpostmasters and the problems they suffered as a result of the Horizon system (see below timeline of all Computer Weekly articles about the scandal).

• Also read: What you need to know about the Horizon scandal •

· Also watch: ITV's Post Office scandal documentary - Mr Bates vs The Post Office: The real story ·

Read all Computer Weekly articles about the scandal since 2009

- May 2009: <u>Bankruptcy, prosecution and disrupted livelihoods postmasters tell their story.</u>
- September 2009: <u>Post-masters form action group after accounts shortfall</u>
- November 2009: Post Office theft case deferred over IT questions
- May 2010: A pilot of the new Horizon Online system at Royal Mail has been scaled back after outages.
- February 2011: Post Office faces legal action over alleged accounting system failures
- October 2011: 85 subpostmasters seek legal support in claims against Post Office computer system.
- June 2012: <u>Post Office launches external review of system at center of legal disputes</u>
- January 2013: <u>Post Office admits Horizon system needs more investigation</u>.
- January 2013: Post Office announces amnesty for Horizon evidence
- January 2013: Post Office wants to get to bottom of IT system allegations.
- June 2013: Investigation into Post Office accounting system to drill down on strongest cases.
- July 2013: Post Office Horizon system investigation reveals concerns.
- October 2013: End in sight for subpostmansters claims against Post Office's Horizon accounting system.
- October 2013: Former Lord Justice of Appeal Hooper joins Post Office Horizon investigation.
- November 2013: <u>150 subpostmasters file claims over "faulty" Horizon accounting system.</u>
- September 2014: <u>Fresh questions raised over Post Office IT system's role in fraud cases</u>
- December 2014: MPs blast Post Office over IT system investigation and remove backing.
- December 2014: Why MPs lost faith in the Post Office's IT investigation, but vowed to fight on.
- December 2014: MPs to debate subpostmaster IT injustice claims.
- December 2014: MP accuses Post Office of acting 'duplicitously' in IT investigation.
- January 2015: MPs force inquiry into Post Office subpostmaster mediation scheme.
- January 2015: <u>Post Office faces grilling by MPs over Horizon accounting system</u>
- February 2015: Post Office CIO will talk to any subpostmaster about IT problems, promises CEO
- March 2015: Post Office ends working group for IT system investigation day before potentially damaging report.
- March 2015: MPs seek reassurance over Post Office mediation scheme

- March 2015: <u>Retiring MP aims to uncover truth of alleged Post Office computer system problems</u>.
- April 2015: Post Office failed to investigate account shortfalls before legal action, report claims.
- April 2015: <u>Criminal Courts Review Commission set to review subpostmasters' claims of wrongful prosecution</u>.
- June 2015: Post Office looking to replace controversial Horizon system with IBM, says MP.
- July 2015: <u>Campaigners call for independent inquiry into Post Office Horizon IT system dispute.</u>
- October 2015: <u>James Arbuthnot takes Post Office IT fight to House of Lords</u>.
- November 2015: The union that represents Post Office subpostmasters has warned of a problem with the Horizon system
- November 2015: Post Office IT support email reveals known Horizon flaw.
- November 2015: Group litigation against Post Office being prepared in Horizon dispute.
- February 2016: Post Office faces group litigation over Horizon IT as subpostmasters fund class action
- June 2016: Post Office chairman says there would be "considerable risk" associated with changing Horizon system
- November 2016: <u>The legal team hired by a group of subpostmasters will take their case to the next stage</u>.
- January 2017: The subpostmaster group action against the Post Office gets green light.
- March 2017: 1,000 subpostmasters apply to join IT-related group litigation against Post Office.
- April 2017: <u>Investigation into claims of Post Office miscarriages of justice appoints forensic accountant firm.</u>
- May 2017: <u>Hundreds of subpostmasters have applied to join IT-related legal action since March.</u>
- July 2017: Post Office defence in computer system legal case due this week.
- August 2017: <u>Campaigners submit initial evidence in group litigation against Post Office over Horizon IT system.</u>
- October 2017: <u>Subpostmasters' group action against the Post Office reaches an important milestone.</u>
- November 2017: An end is in sight for subpostmasters' campaign against alleged wrongful prosecution.
- November 2017: Judge in subpostmasters vs Post Office legal case over faulty computer system tells parties to cooperate.
- January 2018: Forensic investigation into Post Office IT system at centre of legal case nears completion
- April 2018: CCRC forensic examination of IT system at the centre of a legal case against the Post Office raises further questions.
- May 2018: Post Office branches unable to connect to Horizon computer system for several hours after morning opening time.
- October 2018: After over a decade of controversy, court battle between subpostmasters and the Post Office begins.
- November 2018: <u>Case against Post Office in relation to allegedly faulty computer system begins in High Court.</u>
- November 2018: <u>High Court case in which subpostmasters are suing the Post Office reveals known problem with a computer system.</u>
- November 2018: A High Court trial, where subpostmasters are suing the Post Office over faulty IT system, ends second week
- November 2018: Post Office director admits to Horizon errors and not sharing details with subpostmaster network.
- November 2018: The High Court trial in which subpostmasters are suing the Post Office has reached an important stage.
- December 2018: <u>CCRC may hold off subpostmaster decision until after Post Office Horizon trial</u>.
- December 2018: Court case where subpostmasters are suing the Post Office set to span at least four trials and extend into 2020.
- January 2019: <u>Subpostmasters' campaign group attacks Post Office CEO Paula Vennells' New Year honour amid ongoing court case
 </u>
- January 2019: Thousands of known errors on controversial Post Office computer system to be revealed.
- March 2019: <u>Tech under spotlight at High Court in second subpostmasters versus Post Office trial</u>
- March 2019: Post Office considered Horizon IT system "high-risk", court told
- March 2019: <u>CCRC watching Post Office Horizon trial closely.</u>
- March 2019: <u>Judge rules that Post Office showed "oppressive behaviour" in response to claimants accused of accounting errors.</u>
- March 2019: Post Office "lacked humanity" in the treatment of subpostmasters, says peer.
- March 2019: A High Court judge heard that the Post Office did not investigate a computer system error, despite being offered evidence.
- March 2019: Post Office legal team in the case brought by subpostmasters has called for the judge to be recused, questioning his impartiality.
- March 2019: A senior civil servant asked the Post Office to repay public money it had wrongly allocated to paying legal costs.

- April 2019: <u>Subpostmaster claimants' legal team makes application for the Post Office to pay millions of pounds of costs associated with trial</u>
- April 2019: Post Office to appeal judgment from first Horizon trial
- April 2019: The Post Office's claim that the judge overseeing the case concerning its controversial Horizon IT system was biased has been dismissed.
- April 2019: MP questions government over Post Office Horizon case.
- April 2019: Government says no conflict of interest in trial despite Post Office chairman's dual role
- May 2019: The Court of Appeal has refused the Post Office's application to appeal a major decision in the Horizon IT trial.
- May 2019: The Post Office has applied for permission to appeal judgments from the first trial in its IT-related legal battle with subpostmasters.
- May 2019: <u>Judge in the Post Office Horizon trial order s organisation to pay the legal costs, and refused permission to appeal judgment.</u>
- June 2019: Post Office asks Court of Appeal for permission to appeal judgment in first Horizon trial
- July 2019: The Post Office has admitted that some subpostmasters are at risk of accounts not balancing due to an error it does not understand.
- July 2019: Problem revealed during High Court trial left subpostmaster with £18,000 surplus after IT system failed to register all cash scanned in
- August 2019: <u>Subpostmasters suffering slow running and frozen terminals while Post Office searches for a fix to issues.</u>
- August 2019: The Post Office has fixed the latest problems with its Horizon system, affecting hundreds of branches.
- October 2019: A High Court judgment for a trial that focused on the Post Office's IT system will be announced early next month.
- November 2019: The Court of Appeal has rejected a Post Office application to appeal judgments made in its battle with subpostmasters.
- November 2019: Peer calls for clear-out of Post Office board after Court of Appeal confirms major court defeat.
- December 2019: The Post Office has settled its long-running legal dispute with subpostmasters, and will pay £57.75m in damages.
- December 2019: <u>Subpostmasters ended their legal battle with the Post Office at the optimal time</u>.
- December 2019: <u>Subpostmasters proved right on IT system failures as calls for full public inquiry mount.</u>
- December 2019: Criminal Courts Review Commission to review Horizon judgment "swiftly".
- December 2019: <u>National Federation of Subpostmasters cries foul after court ruling on controversial computer system.</u>
- December 2019: Former Post Office CEO apologises to subpostmasters over Horizon scandal.
- December 2019: <u>Call for former Post Office CEO to step down from public roles after IT court battle lost.</u>
- January 2020: <u>Fujitsu must face scrutiny following Post Office Horizon trial judgment</u>
- January 2020: <u>Subpostmaster group calls for government to pay legal costs for Horizon trial</u>.
- January 2020: Why subpostmasters are calling on the government to pay Horizon trial costs.
- January 2020: Government says it did not make decisions in the Post Office's recent court battle.
- January 2020: Government should not be allowed to dismiss subpostmasters' claims over Horizon IT scandal
- January 2020: Police sent information about potential Fujitsu staff perjury in subpostmaster prosecutions.
- January 2020: Subpostmaster prosecutions are a significant step closer to being sent to the Court of Appeal.
- January 2020: Alan Bates: The "details man" the Post Office paid the price for ignoring.
- February 2020: The government has refused to pay the huge legal costs subpostmasters incurred in their battle with Post Office.
- February 2020: MPs seeking a public inquiry into the Post Office scandal face huge challenges, but pressure and time could force justice.
- February 2020: Calls for inquiry into Post Office IT scandal increase in Parliament, with cross-party support.
- February 2020: <u>Care Quality Commission to review concerns over Paula Vennells' appointment</u>
- February 2020: Government admits it was too passive managing Post Office as parliamentary pressure builds.
- February 2020: Minister says Post Office IT experts misled the government when it asked questions about IT system.
- March 2020: Boris Johnson commits to "getting to the bottom of" Post Office Horizon IT scandal.
- March 2020: Boris Johnson's commitment to inquiry into Post Office scandal in doubt.
- March 2020: MPs call on PM to commit to full public inquiry into Post Office Horizon IT scandal.
- March 2020: Those who did not play by the rules in Post Office Horizon scandal "should face prosecution".
- March 2020: MPs told to hold to account those responsible for Post Office Horizon IT scandal.

- March 2020: The Post Office has sparked anger with secret settlements with subpostmasters outside the recent legal action against it.
- March 2020: Labour MP Karl Turner: Post Office Horizon scandal is the "most grotesque version of predatory capitalism" he has ever seen.
- March 2020: MP Kevan Jones has warned a government minister not to repeat the mistakes of predecessors in Post Office Horizon scandal.
- March 2020: <u>Criminal Cases Review Commission to use Microsoft Teams to ensure review of subpostmaster prosecutions is held on time.</u>
- March 2020: <u>Post Office postpones subpostmaster compensation scheme amid Covid-19 crisis.</u>
- March 2020: Meeting reviewing subpostmaster applications to appeal criminal prosecutions moves into second day.
- March 2020: <u>Subpostmaster prosecutions to be considered by Court of Appeal for miscarriages of justice</u>.
- March 2020: How subpostmasters made legal history with biggest referral of potential miscarriages of justice.
- April 2020: Met Police examines information about evidence given in court by Fujitsu staff on the Horizon IT system.
- May 2020: Subpostmasters who had their lives ruined by the Post Office receive their damages after a High Court victory.
- May 2020: A senior Post Office executive who tried to mislead a High Court judge in relation to it, has left the organisation without fanfare.
- May 2020: Post Office re-examines hundreds of prosecutions that could have resulted from faults in Horizon IT system.
- June 2020: <u>Subpostmasters prosecuted for theft and false accounting by the Post Office raise money to help clear the names of victims of the scandal</u>.
- June 2020: <u>Subpostmasters to force scrutiny of government's role in Post Office IT scandal</u>.
- June 2020: The Criminal Cases Review Commission sends 47 more subpostmaster cases to Court of Appeal.
- June 2020: Select committee chair writes to former Post Office CEO demanding answers over her role in IT scandal.
- June 2020: The government has been accused of launching a review that fails in getting to the bottom of one of the biggest miscarriages of justice in UK history.
- June 2020: <u>Subpostmasters will not cooperate with government review into IT scandal</u>.
- June 2020: Government's proposed review of the Post Office IT scandal has received setback as forensic accountants join subpostmasters in refusing to back it.
- June 2020: <u>Call for government review of Post Office Horizon scandal to have the power to force individuals to give evidence under oath.</u>
- June 2020: Subpostmasters seeking justice in the Post Office Horizon IT scandal are regaining momentum in Parliament
- June 2020: Healthcare regulator will be discussing concerns about former NHS boss chairing an NHS trust at an upcoming meeting.
- June 2020: <u>Second Sight is working with law firm in appeals by subpostmasters against criminal convictions in Horizon IT scandal.</u>
- June 2020: Post Office and Fujitsu blame each other for many of the failings in the Horizon IT scandal that wrecked lives
- June 2020: <u>Justice Committee to hold short inquiry into the rules and regulations surrounding private organisations' ability to initiate criminal proceedings</u>.
- July 2020: Victims of the Post Office Horizon IT scandal need to raise thousands of pounds in a week or those responsible for their suffering will avoid scruting.
- July 2020: The government is set to face scrutiny over its involvement in the Post Office Horizon IT scandal.
- September 2020: The government repeats that it won't pay victims' legal costs and confirms review into the scandal will not have the power to call witnesses.
- September 2020: <u>Subpostmasters still not being told about all the known errors in the controversial Post Office branch accounting and retail system that they use</u>
- October 2020: The Post Office has chosen not to contest 44 out of 47 subpostmaster appeals, but others still face a Court of Appeal battle for justice.
- October 2020: MPs are demanding the government holds a full statutory public inquiry into the Post Office IT scandal.
- October 2020: NHS regulator continues enquiries about the appointment of former Post Office CEO at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.
- October 2020: Government minister met with former subpostmaster online in an attempt to get victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal involved in government review.
- October 2020: The Post Office is focusing urgently on fixing an IT error suffered by a subpostmaster amid the ongoing IT scandal.
- October 2020: <u>Labour politicians are calling for the government to give the Post Office Horizon scandal inquiry the power to force witnesses to give evidence.</u>
- October 2020: Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust has asked for external review of its process when appointing controversial executive.
- November 2020: Government faces scrutiny of its handling of the Post Office IT scandal that destroyed subpostmasters' lives and livelihoods.
- November 2020: Post Office branches offline during busy business hours after suffering an IT error that the Post Office said related to IT from supplier Fujitsu.
- November 2020: <u>Fujitsu is refusing to explain what caused a national system outage in Post Office branches last week, despite being blamed.</u>
- November 2020: The Met Police open criminal investigation into Fujitsu staff who gave evidence in trials of wrongly prosecuted subpostmasters
- November 2020: Post Office criticised over vagueness of its explanation of the cause of a UK-wide IT failure that saw subpostmasters unable to do business.
- November 2020: Post Office says planned firmware update caused the problem that left branches unable to do business for 90 minutes.

- November 2020: Court documents reveal the names of the Fujitsu employees under investigation for potentially providing misleading information in criminal trials
- November 2020: The government allowed the Post Office to 'run amok' and destroy lives, says complaint to Parliamentary Ombudsman
- November 2020: Campaigning politician demands access to documents that could prove that the Post Office lied.
- December 2020: Government denies responsibility for the abuse inflicted on subpostmasters by the Post Office over faulty IT system.
- December 2020: <u>CEO at the centre of Post Office scandal steps down from NHS role as pressure for her resignation grows</u>
- December 2020: History made as subpostmasters wrongly prosecuted in Horizon IT scandal have convictions guashed.
- December 2020: The appointment of a former Post Office executive, who tried to mislead a judge, in the Football Association of Wales has been questioned by an MP
- December 2020: <u>Court of Appeal indicates subpostmasters can pursue appeal route that could do more damage to Post Office's reputation.</u>
- January 2021: NHS trust defends its director appointment process following an external review of its recruitment of former Post Office CEO Paula Vennells
- January 2021: <u>Lawyers call for changes to digital evidence rule that made it easier for the Post Office to 'bamboozle courts'</u>
- January 2021: The Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) has referred four more subpostmasters' criminal convictions to appeal.
- February 2021: A former Fujitsu senior developer who worked for Fujitsu claimed bosses knew of fundamental flaws in Post Office system before going live
- February 2021: Subpostmasters call for Boris Johnson to pause and reshape the government's Horizon inquiry.
- February 2021: Vote of no confidence in Football Association of Wales boss triggered by recruitment of former Post Office executive who tried to mislead a judge in IT trial
- March 2021: Government agrees to change private prosecution rules that were abused by the Post Office in its pursuit of subpostmasters wrongly accused of financial crimes.
- March 2021: Subpostmaster victims who have spent millions bringing the Post Office IT scandal to light have received no reply to their concerns from Boris Johnson.
- March 2021: MP condemns department's 'bizarre' rejection of freedom of information request linked to Post Office IT scandal
- March 2021: Football Association Wales boss steps down after losing confidence motion triggered by appointment of an executive involved in the Post Office IT scandal.
- March 2021: The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission (SCCRC) is reviewing five cases of potential miscarriage of justice in relation to subpostmaster prosecutions.
- March 2021: Subpostmasters heading to Court of Appeal to clear their names in what is potentially the biggest miscarriage of justice in English legal history
- March 2021: <u>The Post Office does not have enough money to pay compensation to the subpostmasters it wrongfully prosecuted.</u>
- March 2021: Angela van den Bogerd has left her role at the Football Association of Wales, following criticism of her part in Post Office IT scandal.
- March 2021: Court of Appeal hearing reveals Post Office instructed employees to destroy documents that undermined an insistence that its Horizon computer system was robust
- March 2021: The Post Office was warned that a former Fujitsu employee had misled courts when giving evidence on its behalf.
- March 2021: Boris Johnson agrees with MP that those responsible for the Post Office Horizon scandal should be brought to book.
- March 2021: Former Post Office chief was paid over £400,000 when she left despite the organisation being involved in what would become the biggest miscarriage of justice
 in UK history.
- April 2021: The UK government faces a potential judicial review over its Post Office Horizon IT scandal inquiry, after subpostmasters formally wrote to the government seeking one.
- April 2021: The government is listening to calls for changes in how digital evidence is considered in court, as Post Office IT scandal spells out current rule's inadequacy.
- April 2021: The Post Office's controversial contract with Fujitsu has been extended another year to help the organisation manage its exit.
- April 2021: The Post Office is to move work done by Fujitsu in-house when its outsourcing contract ends, and is already recruiting IT experts.
- April 2021: The Post Office has revealed the end to its controversial Horizon IT system which, through its errors and the Post Office's denial of them, caused huge suffering.
- April 2021: The UK government is the only block to fair compensation for subpostmasters who were wrongly punished for accounting shortfalls
- April 2021: <u>The Court of Appeal has overturned the criminal convictions of 39 subpostmasters who were blamed and punished for accounting shortfalls caused by computer errors.</u>
- April 2021: Former Post Office CEO Paula Vennells has left roles in the church, Morrisons and Dunelm after postmasters' convictions were overturned in the Court of Appeal.
- April 2021: The biggest miscarriage of justice in UK history is set to get bigger as more subpostmasters take their cases to the Court of Appeal.
- May 2021: Post Office IT scandal CEO has no excuse for her inaction in preventing the biggest miscarriage of justice in UK history, says Criminal Cases Review Commission chairperson.
- May 2021: <u>Subpostmasters</u>, <u>MPs and the public call for a full statutory judge-led public inquiry into the Post Office Horizon scandal, following another damning court iudgment.
 </u>
- May 2021: Government says it wants to ensure a fair pay-out for the 555 subpostmasters who defeated the Post Office in a legal battle.

- May 2021: The Post Office has contacted hundreds of people it might have wrongly prosecuted for financial crimes.
- May 2021: The miscarriages of justice involving subpostmansters are the most disturbing element of the Post Office Horizon scandal but it goes much deeper.
- May 2021: The supplier at the centre of the Post Office Horizon scandal has so far escaped the ramifications of its role in the biggest miscarriage of justice in UK history.
- May 2021: Another two former subpostmasters have had their convictions for financial crimes overturned, following a hearing in Southwark Crown Court.
- May 2021: The government inquiry into the Post Office Horizon scandal is set to be made statutory with the power to compel witnesses and evidence.
- May 2021: The government confirmed that the inquiry into the Post Office Horizon IT scandal will be given statutory status and wider scope.
- May 2021: The Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance has agreed to meet the former judge heading up the inquiry into the Post Office scandal that ruined the lives of hundreds
 of subpostmasters.
- May 2021: <u>Criminal Cases Review Commission will not allow pressure on its resources to prevent subpostmasters seeking a review of their criminal convictions.</u>
- May 2021: Professional IT body wants changes to how computer evidence is used in court in the wake of the Post Office case.
- June 2021: The Post Office Horizon scandal inquiry begins with subpostmaster campaign group waiting for full details before committing its support.
- June 2021: What the Post Office told government about decision to sack investigators examining subpostmaster prosecutions could identify if the government was part of a
 cover-up.
- June 2021: The Post Office has so far compensated about 400 subpostmasters who suffered losses as a result of computer errors that they were wrongly blamed for.
- July 2021: Another 10 subpostmasters are set to have their criminal convictions quashed as part of one of the biggest miscarriage of justice in British history.
- July 2021: The government has made no contact with subpostmasters two months after it said it would work with them to ensure they get speedy and fair compensation.
- July 2021: The cost of a scheme set up to compensate subpostmasters who were victims of the Horizon IT scandal will exceed £300m
- July 2021: The government will pay interim compensation within weeks to subpostmasters who were wrongly convicted of crimes due to computer errors.
- August 2021: A further four subpostmasters are set to have their wrongful convictions overturned in the latest development in the Post Office Horizon scandal.
- August 2021: The government has failed to provide fair compensation to the subpostmasters who exposed the full extent of the Horizon scandal to the world.
- August 2021: <u>Subpostmasters demand more clarity on Horizon public inquiry before committing their support</u>.
- September 2021: <u>Six more subpostmaster convictions referred for appeal in Post Office IT scandal</u>.
- September 2021: Government minister holds secret meeting with Post Office Horizon scandal victims.
- October 2021: <u>The public inquiry into Post Office scandal scandal to hold its first public hearing early next month.</u>
- October 2021: Government minister investigating Horizon IT project in 2000 described the Post Office board as 'appalling, short-sighted and partisan'.
- November 2021: The behaviour of Post Office management was so egregious that the supplier of the faulty software escaped large financial penalty.
- November 2021: Former Fujitsu staff who gave evidence in subpostmaster trials have been questioned by police for a second time.
- November 2021: Former subpostmasters convicted of crimes based on data from error-prone Post Office computer system continue to embark on appeals.
- November 2021: The first hearing in the Post Office Horizon scandal public inquiry hears why victims should be paid compensation immediately.
- November 2021: The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission is investigating eight potential miscarriages of justice linked with faulty Post Office IT system.
- November 2021: The Post Office will waive professional legal privilege for documents relating to legal advice it received regarding subpostmaster prosecutions.
- November 2021 A total number of 65 subpostmasters have now had criminal convictions overturned in Post Office Horizon scandal.
- November 2021 <u>Subpostmasters asked to withdraw support for Post Office scandal inquiry.</u>
- November 2021: Seven more subpostmasters have been cleared after the Post Office charged them for crimes caused by its faulty Horizon software
- November 2021: The Post Office made clear its support for a change in UK law regarding computer evidence which aided wrongfully convictions.
- November 2021: The chair of the Post Office scandal public inquiry has confirmed the compensation of a group of subpostmasters will be revisited.
- December 2021: Government must go further after agreeing to pay compensation for wrongly convicted subpostmasters.
- December 2021: <u>Pressure on government to pay fair compensation to subpostmasters left out of current schemes</u>
- January 2022: MPs back call for government to reverse decision to exclude subpostmasters from fair compensation.
- January 2022: <u>A parliamentary select committee was told that the Post Office is unable to accurately calculate compensation for some Horizon scandal victims.</u>
- January 2022: The Post Office received subsidies worth over £1bn last year to pay subpostmaster compensation.
- January 2022: Government widens subpostmaster miscarriage of justice compensation scheme in Horizon scandal.
- January 2022: Government open to finding a way to properly compensate victims of the Horizon scandal without setting a dangerous legal precedent.

- January 2022: The subpostmaster campaign group to meet with the government to discuss fair compensation.
- January 2022: Fujitsu cannot hide away as taxpayers pick up the bill for the Post Office scandal triggered by its IT system, say peers.
- February 2022: Victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal are being denied the millions of pounds they are owed as the government delays compensation resolution
- February 2022: <u>Victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal are due to tell their devastating stories to the statutory inquiry.</u>
- February 2022: MPs are demanding urgent action by the government to provide full compensation to a group of 555 Post Office Horizon scandal victims
- February 2022: Victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal have been suffering in silence for many years, but the current public inquiry is giving them a voice.g.
- February 2022: Horizon inquiry questioning raises hopes of fair compensation for victims so far left out.
- February 2022: Government set to backtrack on untenable position on subpostmaster compensation.
- March 2022: The Post Office and Fujitsu failed to alert subpostmasters to a software error that caused them to be wrongly blamed for accounting shortfalls
- March 2022: Horizon inquiry hearing sheds light on subpostmaster federation's role in hushing up IT problems.
- March 2022: <u>555 subpostmasters to get fair compensation after government U-turn on its stance on High Court settlement.</u>
- March 2022: <u>Compensation goal finally in sight for 555 Post Office scandal victims, after 13 year campaign</u>.
- April 2022: Fujitsu bags £430m government contracts despite rising cost of Post Office Horizon scandal.
- April 2022: The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission expects more subpostmasters with potential wrongful convictions to come forward.
- April 2022: Former subpostmasters who were wrongfully convicted have not yet received full compensation a year after convictions were overturned.
- April 2022: Fujitsu worker has been questioned under caution for the third time as police investigate potential perjury in trials of subpostmasters
- May 2022: Paula Vennells could be stripped of her CBE as the Honours Forfeiture Committee commits to reconsider its award.
- May 2022: <u>Lawyer negotiating compensation for victims of Post Office scandal says the two sides are 'poles apart' on valuations</u>.
- May 2022: <u>Inquiry into Post Office scandal moves to Scotland, with differences in English and Scottish law raising further serious questions.</u>
- May 2022: Horizon scandal inquiry chair has brought forward hearings about compensation amid warnings "people will die" before they get anything
- May 2022: The Criminal Cases Review Commission is to contact 88 more potentially wrongfully convicted Post Office workers.
- May 2022: The Post Office Horizon IT system at the centre of a national scandal will be replaced by 2025, with a supplier expected to be named in August.
- May 2022: <u>Victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal in Scotland raise further questions</u>.
- May 2022: Government accused of 'passing the buck' and 'not knowing what it is talking about' after stating it has no plans to review rules on computer evidence
- May 2022: Henderson Chambers fought the Post Office in the High Court to expose the widest miscarriage of justice in UK history.
- June 2022: <u>Two more Post Office Horizon scandal victims have had their wrongful convictions overturned.</u>
- June 2022: Those that exposed Post Office scandal could finally be fairly compensated.
- June 2022: Forensic accounting firm that 'knows where the bodies are buried' will be released from confidentiality obligations by the Post Office
- June 2022: Lawyers negotiating compensation valuations for former subpostmasters have brought in independent scruting
- June 2022: Subpostmaster campaign group is a step closer to achieving what it was originally set up to do
- July 2022: More former subpostmasters have their wrongful convictions for theft and fraud overturned in the Court of Appeal.
- July 2022: When the Post Office's lie about the Horizon system failed to silence subpostmaster critics, it took more extreme measures.
- September 2022: The Met Police have interviewed a former subpostmaster as part of an investigation into potential perjury by former Fujitsu staff.
- September 2022: <u>Public inquiry into the Post Office Horizon scandal airs disappointment over the slow interim payments to victims.</u>
- October 2022: Public inquiry has begun phase two with a request for adjournment as Post Office fails to disclose relevant documents.
- October 2022: <u>Victims demand that the perpetrators of the Post Office Horizon IT scandal face the public inquiry.</u>
- October 2022: Eujitsu's part in causing the extreme suffering of subpostmasters will be made clear as the IT supplier begins giving evidence at a statutory inquiry.
- October 2022: A dereliction of duty saw subpostmaster federation ignore its members when IT problems hit and allowed the Post Office destroy their lives.
- October 2022: Politicians are keeping up the pressure to block government contracts being awarded to Fujitsu.
- October 2022: <u>Problems reported with the Post Office's Horizon IT system before its roll-out should have been regarded as a "show-stopper."</u>
- October 2022: Horizon system code writers lacked basic programming skills, according to the task force set up to investigate problems.
- October 2022: <u>Trials of the Horizon system in Post Office branches led to a warning that "tragedy was not far away"</u>.

- November 2022: Game of 'hardball' in Horizon negotiations left subpostmasters exposed to tragedy
- November 2022: Confirmation bias led Post Office to prosecute subpostmasters without investigation, inquiry told.
- November 2022: SCCRC has referred six cases of potential wrongful convictions of subpostmasters to the High Court of Justiciany.
- November 2022: <u>Fujitsu expert witness in subpostmaster trial 'manoeuvred' into role, public inquiry told</u>.
- November 2022: Post Office changed view of Horizon problems before roll-out, because of a 'sunk cost fallacy'.
- November 2022: <u>Team working on controversial Post Office Horizon EPOSS software was the 'joke of the building'</u>.
- November 2022: The Post Office IT scandal inquiry's appointed expert IT witness was "troubled" by the lack of integrity of data from the Horizon system
- November 2022: <u>Telegram from British Embassy in Tokyo to UK government reveals pressure on ministers to sign off controversial contract.</u>
- November 2022: <u>Subpostmaster federation deliberately kept public in dark over computer problems</u>.
- December 2022: Post Office boosted its 'coffers' as Horizon system threw up unexplained shortfalls, inquiry told.
- December 2022: Post Office scandal "cock-up or cook-up"?
- December 2022: <u>Criminal Cases Review Commission calls on more convicted subpostmasters to come forward.</u>
- January 2023: Former subpostmaster Alan Bates, who 'pulled up trees and moved mountains', turns down OBE offer
- January 2023: Advisory board goal for Post Office scandal victims to be returned to rightful financial position.
- January 2023: Former Fujitsu staff under police investigation to face Post Office IT scandal inquiry.
- February 2023: Post Office's most senior executives hushed up Horizon errors, public inquiry told.
- March 2023: Post Office attempted to replace controversial Horizon system 10 years ago, but was put off by project's scale and cost.
- March 2023: <u>IT worker tells public inquiry that the Post Office Horizon helpdesk was toxic, rudderless and racist.</u>
- March 2023: <u>Subpostmaster demands names of Post Office executives who crushed him to suffocate truth.</u>
- April 2023: <u>CCRC says 'door open' for more reviews of subpostmaster convictions</u>.
- April 2023: The Post Office has extended a contract with Fujitsu after being unable to resolve technical issues related to migrating its IT to the cloud
- April 2023: Post Office paid IBM millions when it ended proposed contract to replace Horizon.
- April 2023: The Post Office ended a proposed contract with IBM to replace its controversial Horizon system after work had already started.
- May 2023: More Post Office software-related convictions overturned takes total to 86.
- May 2023: <u>Fujitsu staff had 'unrestricted and unauditable' remote access to Post Office branch systems</u>
- May 2023: Post Office lawyer bragged how team 'destroyed attack on the Horizon system' and put woman in prison
- May 2023: Post Office executive told to report false bill of health on controversial software.
- May 2023: <u>Campaigning former subpostmaster fears compensation for scandal victims will be delayed to 2025</u>.
- May 2023: Post Office scandal cover-up a 'dark chapter' in government, corporate and legal history.
- June 2023: Post Office CEO told MPs that the organisation is telling some subpostmasters it won't oppose them if they appeal
- July 2023: Public inquiry hears how Post Office security withheld evidence from people it suspected of theft.
- July 2023: Former Fujitsu IT chief evidence postponed after late Post Office disclosure.
- July 2023: Post Office inquiry must examine role of court rules around use of computer evidence
- July 2023: Peer calls for every Post Office prosecution to be reviewed.
- July 2023: Horizon inquiry adjourned as Post Office disclosure failures threaten to 'derail' proceedings
- July 2023: Horizon inquiry chief threatens Post Office with 'criminal sanctions' over disclosure failures.
- July 2023: Subpostmaster compensation deadline will be missed, warns public inquiry chair.
- July 2023: CCRC refers two more subpostmaster convictions for appeal.
- July 2023: Post Office tried to convince independent IT witness that he was wrong about Horizon.
- August 2023: MP calls for review of computer evidence rule which led to subpostmasters being wrongly convicted
- August 2023: <u>Six subpostmaster appeals to be heard in Scottish court.</u>
- September 2023: Post Office employee changed story for witness statement used to destroy subpostmasters.

- September 2023: Post Office had no interest in subpostmaster welfare, says Fujitsu memo
- September 2023: Government offers £600,000 to subpostmasters with overturned convictions.
- September 2023: <u>Five more subpostmasters have IT system-related convictions overturned.</u>
- October 2023: Government 'breached privacy' of Horizon victims with compensation offer.
- October 2023: <u>First subpostmaster Horizon conviction overturned in Scotland</u>
- October 2023: Amnesia hides names of individuals behind Post Office's 'head on a spike' strategy,
- October 2023: <u>'Angry' lawyer warned against Post Office computer investigation in 2010 email.</u>
- October 2023: Former Post Office executive admits he wouldn't sign unfair contract he pushed on subpostmasters
- October 2023: Post Office auditors presumed subpostmasters were 'on fiddle' or 'in muddle'
- October 2023: Bill for the Post Office scandal over £1bn.
- November 2023: Post Office disclosure failures delay Horizon scandal inquiry again.
- November 2023: Former Post Office manager has no memory of preparing witness statement.
- November 2023: Post Office scandal inquiry postpones more key witness hearings.
- November 2023: Controversial Fujitsu contract with Post Office extended again.
- November 2023: <u>CCRC refers posthumous appeals against convictions to Crown Court for first time.</u>
- November 2023: Paula Vennells' email fuelled Post Office Horizon cult, inquiry told
- November 2023: Slow government response to Post Office scandal compensation forces new legislation.
- December 2023: Post Office lawyer with his fingerprints all over IT scandal spreads blame.
- December 2023: <u>Undisclosed document could reveal pressure on Fujitsu expert witness.</u>
- December 2023: Post Office prioritised its 'bottom line' over justice
- December 2023: Former Post Office investigator called subpostmaster campaigners 'crooks'.
- December 2023: <u>Current Post Office executive in denial of Horizon cover-up</u>
- December 2023: Government advised to overturn all Post Office scandal convictions
- December 2023: Government reveals its own slow progress in compensating Post Office scandal victims
- December 2023: 'No hiding place' for those responsible for Post Office Horizon scandal.
- December 2023: Post Office gets government handout as Horizon replacement costs increase 'significantly'.
- January 2024: Post Office Horizon scandal explained: Everything you need to know.
- January 2024: Metropolitan Police launches second criminal investigation in Post Office scandal.
- January 2024: Rules around digital evidence are partly to blame for miscarriages of justice history.
- January 2024: Fujitsu gets stay of execution as MPs support exoneration of wrongfully convicted subpostmasters.
- January 2024: 'Hero' subpostmaster accuses government of diversion tactics through 'weaselly' statistics
- January 2024: <u>How Fujitsu became a central part of the Post Office scandal</u>.
- January 2024: <u>Hundreds of subpostmasters to have convictions quashed in blanket exoneration</u>.
- January 2024: Post Office scandal inquiry hits mainstream after dramatic start to year
- January 2024: Fujitsu 'morally obliged' to contribute to subpostmaster financial redress amid 'insane' delays.
- January 2024: Over 900 subpostmaster convictions wouldn't have happened without Post Office-backed law change.
- January 2024: Anger sparked by TV drama forces Fujitsu to put public sector contract bids on hold.
- January 2024: Fujitsu boss describes Post Office behaviour as 'shameful and appalling'.
- January 2024: Concerns of an expert witness in subpostmaster trials were ignored by Fujitsu.
- January 2024: <u>Urgent question asks which ministers knew of Post Office's plan to remove judge</u>
- January 2024: <u>Fujitsu agrees to support former subpostmasters' families beyond financial redress</u>
- January 2024: Committee chair asks minister to back 'Mr Bates clause'.

- January 2024: Expert IT witness outsmarted an 'aggressive' Post Office to get to truth after inspection 'madne
- January 2024: MP demands answers from government minister over second faulty Post Office IT system.
- January 2024: <u>Pre-Horizon users contacting lawyers as more Post Office IT horror stories emerge</u>.
- February 2024: Government 'dragging it out' by refusing to share knowledge of Post Office trial 'delaying tactic'.
- February 2024: <u>'People are now listening,' Post Office inquiry told as latest phase ends</u>.
- February 2024: Post Office scandal: Phase four's rogues' gallery.
- February 2024: More than 1,000 subpostmasters could have used second faulty Post Office system.
- February 2024: <u>Post Office Horizon IT scandal inquiry: Two years of shocking revelations.</u>
- February 2024: Post Office CEO refused to meet government minister without her lawyer after 2015 Horizon report.
- February 2024: Post Office IT insider and the software decision that lit the Horizon scandal.
- February 2024: Controversial Post Office Capture system was developed in-house
- February 2024: <u>Law to clear hundreds of wrongfully convicted subpostmasters expected in July.</u>
- February 2024: <u>Unisys investigating potential involvement in controversial Post Office system.</u>
- February 2024: King Charles strips disgraced Post Office CEO of her CBE
- February 2024: <u>Post Office scandal roundup: Fourth Estate in full throttle</u>
- February 2024: Government won't rush to include Post Office Capture convictions in overturning legislation
- February 2024: Government should face legal deadlines on paying Post Office victims.
- February 2024: 'Pathetic' Post Office spat detracts attention and fuels 'disdain' for authority.
- February 2024: Post Office CEO's claim to be 'working hard' on Capture investigation in doubt.
- March 2024: MPs demand Fujitsu be 'nailed down' on financial promise to Post Office scandal victims
- March 2024: KC names Post Office staff he believes conspired to pervert the course of justice.
- March 2024: Perverting course of justice and contempt of Parliament: a week in post-drama Post Office scandal.

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