

Justice for Sub-postmasters Bill

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Explanatory notes to the Bill, prepared by the Drafter, are forthcoming.

EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Drafter of the Bill (Mr E Z Granet) has made the following statement, which a minister would be obliged to give under section 19(1)(a), of the Human Rights Act 1998:

In my view the provisions of the Justice for Sub-postmasters Bill are compatible with the Convention rights.

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BILL

TO

rectify a great injustice and for connected purposes.

B E IT ENACTED by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Purported convictions of no effect

- (1) The purported convictions listed in Schedule 1 are declared to have been null, void, and of no effect from the moment of their pronouncement.
- (2) For all legal purposes, the people purportedly convicted in the cases listed in Schedule 1 are to be treated as never having been convicted.
- (3) The responsible authorities listed in Schedule 2 shall have the duty to, within six weeks of the passage of this Act, remove any records which purport that the people in the cases in Schedule 1 were convicted.
- (4) In addition to the purported convictions being null, void, and no effect, it is hereby declared that the people listed in Schedule 3, who were purportedly convicted in the cases in Schedule 1 were affirmatively innocent in law and fact of the offences for which they were purportedly convicted.

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2 Compensation and vindication

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- (1) The people listed in Schedule 3 shall be entitled to compensation in the amounts laid out in Schedule 4 according to their particular services.
- (2) Where such people are no longer living, their legal heirs shall be entitled to such compensation. If a person listed in Schedule 3 had no legal heirs, such compensation shall be redistributed *pro rata* amongst those people in Schedule 3 who are living or have identifiable legal heirs.

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- (3) The Secretary of State shall have the duty to direct affirmative steps to ensure that compensation is paid speedily without the need for action on the part of the people listed on Schedule 3 or the heirs thereto.
- (4) Such compensation shall be paid within six weeks of the passage of this Act, provided that if extreme circumstances render this impossible in any individual cases, the Secretary of State shall inform both Houses of Parliament promptly of such failings. 5
- (5) Notwithstanding any other enactment, such compensation shall not be subject to any form of taxation on receipt. 10
- (6) His Majesty's Stationery Office shall prepare for each of the people in Schedule 3 (or the legal heirs thereto) a certificate of innocence, to be issued under His Majesty's Royal Sign Manual, confirming both the innocence of such persons and the great injustice which was done to them. 15

3 Honours for sub-postmasters

The Prime Minister shall direct the Cabinet Office to prepare, within six weeks of the passage of this Act, a special list of honours to be recommended to His Majesty for those wronged sub-postmasters and in particular those who led the campaign for justice, for their services to justice, with the dual purpose not only of honouring such services but also of publicly signalling their complete vindication. 20 25

4 Savings Clause

- (1) The compensation to the people listed in Schedule 3 shall represent full and final settlement of the injustice done to them, and bars any future civil claims in any court or tribunal in the United Kingdom against either the Crown or any private party for unlawful actions taken as a result of the purported convictions. 30
- (2) Subsection (1) does not prevent the criminal prosecution in future of any natural or legal person who, by unlawful acts or omissions, brought about the purported convictions listed in Schedule 1. 35

5 Amendment of Schedules 1 & 3

- (1) For a period of five years after the commencement of this Act, the Secretary of State must, on the application of the Justice for Sub-postmasters Alliance, add any requested cases or individuals to Schedule 1 and 3 respectively, unless the Secretary of State finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the cases or individuals are not instances of a miscarriage of justice. 5
- (2) Any decision to refuse to add such names by the Secretary of State under subsection (1) must be made in writing and include reasons for the decision. 10
- (3) Where a case or individual is added to the relevant Schedule under subsection (1), all references in this Act to time limits from commencement of this Act shall be read to apply to the case or individual as from the date of the amendment of the relevant Schedule. 15

6 Non-disclosure and arbitration agreements void

- (1) Any agreement regarding non-disclosure, confidence, or other restrictions on speech signed between, on the one part, a person named in schedule 3 or the heirs thereof, and on the other, Post Office Limited, are null, void, and of no effect, and may not be enforced in any court or tribunal in the United Kingdom. 20
- (2) Any agreement regarding arbitration or other forms of mandatory alternative dispute resolution or otherwise limiting the right of access to a court or tribunal, on the one part, a person named in schedule 3 or the heirs and relatives thereof, and on the other, Post Office Limited, may not be enforced in any court or tribunal in the United Kingdom except with the consent of the person named in schedule 3 or the heirs thereof. 25 30

7 Bill of Pains and Penalties

- (1) The purported award of the rank of Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire to Paula Anne Vennells is hereby declared to have been null, void, and of no effect, being vitiated by the deception and immorality of said Paula Anne Vennells. 35

(2) The insignia of said Most Excellent Order are considered to be the property of the Crown, and, in the event Paula Anne Vennells does not return such insignia within six weeks of the commencement of this Act, continued possession thereof shall be regarded as theft and punishable according to the law on that offence.

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(3) The purported conveying of the Holy Orders of the diaconate and of the priesthood in the Church of England on Paula Anne Vennells are declared to have been null, void, and of no effect, with the purported sacramental character of such conferral being vitiated and rendered ineffective by the deception and dishonesty of Paula Anne Vennells.

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8 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland.

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(2) This Act comes into force on the day on which this Act is passed.

(3) This Act may be cited as the Justice for Sub-postmasters Act 2024.

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Presented by The Drafter of the Bill (Mr E Z Granet)

*Ordered, by The Drafter of the
Bill (Mr E Z Granet) to be
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