



Kate Osborne MP
January 2022 Newsletter

Hello,

I hope that you were able to have a proper rest over the Christmas and New Year. I am writing to you to update you on my work in Parliament and around the constituency in January. I am looking forward to continuing to represent the Jarrow constituency in 2022, it has been a difficult two years, but I feel positive and optimistic for the year ahead. It is a real honour to represent the people of our community, and I will continue to do so to the best of my ability.

My New Year's Resolution is to continue to fight hard for the people of the Jarrow constituency as every passing day under this incompetent, clueless Conservative Government means falling living standards, low wages, insecurity, and the running down of our NHS. This is a Government that has lost the plot, and more importantly, has lost the trust of people in this country. My first column for the Shields Gazette this month covers my resolutions and a pledge to constituents to keep up the fight against this Government. You can read it in full [here](#).

Post Office Horizon Scandal

At the beginning of January, I sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), raising concerns around the Post Office Horizon Scandal compensation scheme and that it exclusively excludes the 555 litigants, from the proceedings brought against Post Office Ltd back in 2018/2029 from claiming.

Along with support from 93 other cross party opposition MPs who signed the letter, I urged the Secretary of State to address this problem and recognise that it is wholly unfair and immoral to exclude this group of people from full and fair compensation for their suffering. The Government must put in place an external compensation scheme that is outside the scope of the post office and provide this group with the redress they not only deserve but are entitled too. You can read the letter in full below:



Kate Osborne MP
Member of Parliament for Jarrow
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

(Correspondence sent via email)

5th January 2022

Dear Secretary of State

We are writing to you today with concerns around the Post Office Horizon Scandal compensation scheme and that it exclusively excludes the 555 litigants, from the civil proceedings brought against Post Office Ltd back in 2018/19, from claiming.

Through their efforts and determination, the 555 litigants, who won their civil proceedings, have opened the door to around 2500 applications into the Post Office Historical Shortfall Scheme which is set to cost the taxpayer in excess of £300 million. Their fight for justice has also helped 72 victims to date have their convictions quashed with another 650+ remaining under review. Without the efforts of this group, none of the above would ever have been achieved and Post Office Ltd would still be following the narrative that the Horizon System is robust.

It therefore cannot be right that those who decided not to join the original litigation now have access to full and fair compensation whilst the group of 555 litigants have only recovered a tiny fraction of their losses.

It has also come to light that external reports were available as early as 2011 by Ernst & Young regarding the robustness of Horizon and again in 2015 the now infamous Clarke Advice that showed evidence given at criminal trials was incorrect and is subject to investigation by the Met Police. Had these documents and others been made available during the civil litigation, the group of litigants could have secured further funding to continue with the case rather than forced into settlement due to lack of funds.

The exclusion of these litigants from the compensation scheme is having and will continue to have a direct and devastating impact on these individuals and their families, especially as they exposed the scandal against all odds and have been left with the legal bill for doing so.

All those affected by this scandal, including consideration given to the 555 litigants, have suffered deep distress and trauma, and have faced stigma throughout the last few years. They must receive compensation that is commensurate with the suffering they have faced.

Failure to do this with speed will inevitably lead to further bankruptcies, loss of homes, potential further suicides, and death of those already at an advanced age before they are able to obtain justice and redress for their ordeal.

The cost of bankruptcy has a cost to the taxpayer, and this also may prevent these people from working and paying taxes. The mental health impact on these individuals and their families cannot be taken lightly and lack of action only exasperates this problem. We have already seen 2 suicides as a direct result of this scandal, and we cannot afford anymore.



Kate Osborne MP
Member of Parliament for Jarrow
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

We urge you to address this problem and recognise that it is wholly unfair and immoral to exclude this group of people from full and fair compensation for their suffering. The government must put in place an external compensation scheme that is outside the scope of the Post Office and provide this group with the redress they not only deserve but are entitled to.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Osborne MP
Member of Parliament for Jarrow

And all those here undersigned:

Debbie Abrahams MP	Margaret Ferrier MP	Justin Madders MP
Tahir Ali MP	Yvonne Forvargue MP	Rachael Maskell MP
Fleur Anderson MP	Vicky Foxcroft MP	John McDonnell MP
Tonia Antoniazzi MP	Gill Furniss MP	Ian Mearns MP
Hannah Bardell MP	Patricia Gibson MP	Navendu Mishra MP
Paula Barker MP	Preet Gill MP	Jessica Morden MP
Hilary Benn MP	Mary Glendon MP	Gavin Newlands MP
Ben Bradshaw MP	Patrick Grady MP	Chi Onwurah MP
Kevin Brennan MP	Sarah Green MP	Kate Osamor MP
Deidre Brock MP	Andrew Gwynne MP	Stephanie Peacock MP
Richard Burgon MP	Emma Hardy MP	Toby Perkins MP
Dawn Butler MP	Helen Hayes MP	Jess Phillips MP
Ian Byrne MP	Wera Hobhouse MP	Luke Pollard MP
Ruth Cadbury MP	Sharon Hodgson MP	Yasmin Qureshi MP
Dan Carden MP	Rachel Hopkins MP	Gareth R Thomas MP
Alistair Carmichael MP	George Howarth MP	Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP
Wendy Chamberlain MP	Christine Jardine MP	Virendra Sharma MP
Sarah Champion MP	Dan Jarvis MP	Andrew Slaughter MP
Bambos Charalambous MP	Kim Johnson MP	Zarah Sultana MP
Rosie Cooper MP	Kevan Jones MP	Sam Tarry MP
Daisy Cooper MP	Ruth Jones MP	Valerie Vaz MP
Jeremy Corbyn MP	Gerald Jones MP	Claudia Webbe MP
Jon Cruddas MP	Mary Kelly Foy MP	Matt Western MP
Judith Cummins MP	Ben Lake MP	Alan Whitehead MP
Alex Cunningham MP	Ian Lavery MP	Philippa Whitford MP
Janet Daby MP	Kim Leadbeater MP	Mick Whitley MP
Martyn Day MP	Emma Lewell-Buck MP	Nadia Whittome MP
Marsha de Cordova MP	Clive Lewis MP	Beth Winter MP
Tan Dhesi MP	David Linden MP	Peter Wishart MP
Allan Dorans MP	Tony Lloyd MP	Mohammad Yasin MP
Julie Elliott MP	Caroline Lucas MP	

In addition to my letter to the Secretary of State, I also tabled an Early Day Motion on the Post Office Horizon compensation scheme. The motion has been signed by 104 MPs who are further showing support to this important issue. If you would like to read the motion in full along with which MPs that have signed it, you can view the [EDM here](#).

Minister's reply:

I received a response from the BEIS Minister regarding the excluding of the 555 litigants in the Post Office Horizon Scandal compensation scheme.

Although the Minister states that they will continue to work with the 555 litigants to see what the Government can do, I will do all I can to continue to push for an external compensation scheme outside of the scope of the Post



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10 January 2022

Dear Kate,

Thank you and the other members who signed for your letter of 5 January regarding the 555 litigants in the Group Litigation Order (GLO) against Post Office Ltd (POL).

In December 2019, Post Office Limited and claimants in the High Court group litigation reached a substantive settlement of £42.75m plus costs. Post Office Limited also issued an apology and this concluded the civil case against the company.

I understand the strength of feeling by postmasters who only received a portion of the £42.75m. I recognise that they have performed a substantial public service by exposing the wrongdoings within the Post Office. I have met some of the individuals and I recognise their deep frustration at the fact that because they agreed that the settlement with the Post Office would be a full and final one, they do not qualify for the compensation schemes which the Post Office is now running for other sub-postmasters. Without their work the scandal would not have been exposed, the Inquiry would not have been launched, fundamental change in the Post Office would not have been delivered and compensation for other postmasters impacted by Horizon would not have been announced. I will continue to work with them to see what the government can do.

Since the December 2019 settlement, Post Office and Government have taken action to set right many of the wrongs of the Horizon scandal. A Historical Shortfall Scheme (HSS) has been set up for those who were not part of the 555 and were not wrongfully prosecuted. The scheme received over 2,400 applications. This number was higher than the Post Office had anticipated when the scheme was established. The Post Office is committed to the successful delivery and timely completion of the scheme. In July 2021 the Government announced interim payments of up to £100K for those with Overturned Criminal Convictions (OCC); so far 57 interim payments all at £100K have been paid out of 62 applications. In December 2021 I announced Government will make funding available to facilitate Post Office making final compensation payments to postmasters whose convictions have been overturned. The first opening offer for compensation or an Overturned Criminal Conviction has been made.

I am deeply sympathetic to the impact the Horizon IT system has had on postmasters. It is important that we learn lessons so that something similar can never happen again. That is why Government has set up the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry and put it on a statutory footing to ensure that it has all the powers it needs to investigate what happened, establish the facts and make recommendations for the future. Sir Wyn has included human impact in the list of issues the Inquiry will look at as well as the strategy adopted by POL during the litigation.

Office to be put into place that can provide the 555 with the redress that they are entitled to. You can read the Minister's response in full below:

The Government will cooperate fully with the Inquiry to ensure that the facts of what happened are established and lessons are learned.

Yours sincerely,



PAUL SCULLY MP

Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Labour Markets
and Minister for London

DVSA Test Centre, Bede Industrial Estate

I have continued working hard to urge the DVSA to repeal their decision to close the South Shields Driving Test Centre on the Bede Industrial Estate in Jarrow. Despite agreeing to meet with the local driving community on the 28th January, the DVSA sent out an email confirming their plans to close the test site. I was extremely disappointed that this announcement went out before our scheduled meeting and I, alongside the leader of the council Tracey Dixon and South Shields MP Emma Lewell-Buck will be meeting with representatives from the DVSA alongside the local driving community.

My office has been in regular contact with members of the driving instructor community and I'm 100% behind the campaign to save our Test Centre and I encourage as many people as possible to sign the online petition to urge the DVSA to reconsider the closure of our Test Centre and the relocation of its services via www.change.org/p/stop-the-proposed-closure-of-south-shields-driving-test-centre

You can read more about my efforts to call for a U-turn over these plans in my latest Shields Gazette column [here](#). I have also submitted an Early Day Motion on the wider issue of DVSA test centre closures as centres across the country are facing the same challenges as the South Shields Driving Test Centre. You can read the EDM in full and see which MPs have sponsored it here - [DVSA test centre closures - Early Day Motions - UK Parliament](#)



Meeting with Gateshead council representatives:

I was grateful to meet with Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director for Children, Adults and Families at Gateshead Council and Cllr Gary Haley, Gateshead Council Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, to discuss an update regarding children and young people within the Gateshead wards of the Jarrow constituency, free school meals, the social care workforce, and children's services.

I was deeply saddened to hear about the impact of years of underfunding into children's services that this Conservative Government has had on the services that the council are able to provide as well as how the number of children taking into the care of the council has increased over this period too.

I will be raising these issues with the government at my earliest opportunity and will always look to stand up for the children and young people of the Jarrow constituency.

Good news:

Little Theatre

I was extremely pleased to hear that the Little Theatre in Cleadon has received funds from Suez Community Trust which will be used to repair the roof of the theatre. The theatre is over 75 years old and after getting this repair work done, I hope it will be open for many more years to come.

Jarroviaan Jaguars

A huge congratulations to the Jarroviaan Jaguars who are finally getting the chance to compete in the Tropical 7s in Florida. I am especially proud that a team from Jarrow will be the only team representing the UK in the competition!

#KillTheBill

Great news this month, the Government lost a series of key votes in the House of Lords around the Policing Bill. This is a dangerous piece of legislation and we must do all we can to keep the pressure up to **Kill The Bill**.

Downing Street

In May 2020 and on numerous other occasions, whilst Jarrow constituents, along with people throughout the UK sacrificed so much to keep their family and friends safe, all at a time when Boris Johnson was at a “Bring Your Own Booze” party in his back garden with dozens of others.

Whilst we all await the outcome of the Sue Gray inquiry, I, like many of you, am outraged. It is vital that the Prime Minister be held to account for lying to Parliament and breaking Covid-19 rules on multiple occasions. He and his party are the representatives of hypocrisy.



With Covid rates soaring in the North East, I had some concerns over the government's easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

I am particularly concerned for clinically vulnerable people across our communities who will become even more at risk if restrictions are eased.

We know that symptoms of this strain seem to be mild, but deliberately allowing it to spread like wildfire across the country is reckless and will put unnecessary pressure on our NHS and those who provide essential services across our region.

Boris Johnson shouldn't be using a public health crisis to try and distract from his abysmal leadership. After the revelations about drinks gatherings at Downing Street in lockdown, I have been contacted by many constituents disgusted at his actions.

His position has now become untenable, and he must resign.

Tyne Tunnel Update:

Labour MPs in the region were able to meet with representatives from the Tyne Tunnel to the new open road tolling system. Several constituents have contacted me and my office about this new system and those concerns have been raised.

On a similar note, the new tolling system has seen emissions fall by 90% since its introduction, which is excellent news for us all and our environment.

I will be sure to keep regular contact with TT2 to make sure local people's voices are being heard, and to ensure that constituents concerns are being fully addressed.

Cabinet Office questions

I was able to question the Paymaster General in the Common's, after the shocking news that the Government broke the law by handing out contracts to those with political connections, which truly highlighted that cronyism is rife in the Tory Party. You can see my question in full [here](#).

Rising cost of gas and electric

The rising cost of gas and electricity is hitting working class people the hardest and these are the people who are already struggling with cost-of-living increases.

The Government needs to urgently intervene in this crisis. If not, constituents like ours will be placed in the position of choosing between heating or eating and this is simply not acceptable. You can read my full statement on the increasing cost of gas and electric in my article for Labour Outlook [here](#).



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Kate Osborne MP



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Advice Surgeries:

Make sure to check my social media channels to find out when my upcoming surgeries are!

As always if you need any assistance from me or my team please contact me at kate.osborne.mp@parliament.uk or call 0191 466 1509 and I will do everything I can to help.

Visit my website or social media to keep up to date with my work throughout the month.

Facebook: [@kateosbornejarrow](https://www.facebook.com/kateosbornejarrow)

Twitter: [@kateosbornemp](https://twitter.com/kateosbornemp)

Website: www.kate-osborne.co.uk

Warmest wishes,

Kate Osborne MP

Member of Parliament for the Jarrow constituency