

News

Legal help with compensation claims

02 July 2025

We have been contacted by the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board to highlight potential areas of abuse around solicitors' charging practices in respect of sub postmasters impacted by the Horizon Post Office scandal.

The Advisory Board have raised concerns about charging including:

- whether lawyers should be charging where the compensation scheme provides for cost recovery from the Post Office or Department of Business and Trade;
- even if they can and should be charging, whether charging agreements are reasonable in the circumstances and
- whether the approach to any fee agreements and associated matters is appropriate, particularly given the vulnerabilities of claimants in these schemes.

Although the Board recognised that in the vast majority of these compensation cases most lawyers are not charging their clients, they have had reports of inappropriate charging.

We have [guidance on our expectations in respect of client fee arrangements](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/transparency-in-price-and-service/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/transparency-in-price-and-service/], as well as guidance on information about services that should be contained in [client care letters](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/client-care-letters/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/client-care-letters/]. This mentions the importance of being clear on costs at the outset.

Our stance on supporting those making claims is the same as for those applying for compensation for mis-sold financial products, as outlined in that specific guidance.

We have asked any sub postmasters concerned about fees charged for legal services, including in relation to the compensation scheme or other representation relating to the Horizon Post Office scandal, to let us know. Any concerns will be investigated, and if we believe solicitors have fallen below the standards expected of them, we will take action.

In line with your [reporting obligations](https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/reporting-notification-obligations/) [https://higher-rights.sra.org.uk/solicitors/guidance/reporting-notification-obligations/], if you know or suspect another regulated person is involved in serious misconduct, you should report it to us.