

Bill to compensate Post Office victims will be more than £1bn

More than £1bn will be spent on compensating victims of the Post Office's faulty Horizon IT software, according to a senior civil servant.

Only the taxpayer is currently lined up to foot the bill, Carl Cresswell, director of business resilience at the Department of Business and Trade, told MPs on the Business and Trade Committee.

While Fujitsu "seem open" to contributing to the cost, the government is not currently negotiating with the Japanese software-maker on a figure, he said.

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To begin sum negotiations now may be "wrong", said Mr Cresswell, the official tasked with overseeing one of the Post Office compensation schemes, called the Group Litigation Order (GLO).

"If we were to agree a sum of money now and then the Horizon IT Inquiry were to find something material that could affect that negotiation, I think it would be wrong of us, on behalf of the taxpayer, to reach a pre-emptive agreement," he told MPs.

The combined cost of compensating sub-postmasters is said to be "slightly over £1bn", he added.

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Former sub-postmaster Alan Bates has said that even with massive public support and awareness following the success of the ITV drama that bore his name, his compensation claim is

Well over 95% of victims will submit a claim, Mr Cresswell said, and will do so by August or early July.

The government last week said it was [pressing ahead with the legislation to automatically quash convictions](#) before the summer recess begins in late July.

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But based on the current pace, a solicitor for sub-postmasters said it could take one to two years to see full and final redress, a timeframe said to be “unacceptably long” by MPs and victims’ solicitors.

The faulty software, called Horizon and made by Fujitsu, led to accounting errors which made it appear that sub-postmasters were stealing money or submitting fraudulent accounts. As a

result, hundreds were convicted and many more had their lives and reputations ruined.

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The government has committed to compensation for those affected and to overturning wrongful convictions.