

# Firm behind computer system at heart of Post Office scandal says it has 'moral obligation' to contribute to compensation for victims

The boss of Fujitsu has apologised for the Horizon scandal and said the company has a "moral obligation" to contribute to the compensation scheme for victims.

Paul Patterson, director of Europe's Fujitsu Services Limited, told a committee of MPs that he was sorry on behalf of the company, which developed the faulty IT software [that ruined the lives of hundreds of sub-postmasters.](#)

Between 1999 and 2015, more than 700 Post Office branch managers were handed criminal convictions after discrepancies in the Horizon system made it appear as though money was missing at their stores.

[at the heart of hundreds of wrongful convictions.](#)

"Fujitsu would like to apologise for our part in this appalling miscarriage of justice," Mr Patterson said.

"We were involved from the very start.

"We did have bugs and errors in the system and we did help the Post Office in their prosecutions of the sub-postmasters and for that we are truly sorry."

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Mr Patterson said he did not know exactly when bosses first knew of issues related to the Horizon IT software, but that it had bugs at a “very early stage”.

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He went on to say that the company has a “moral obligation” to

contribute to the compensation scheme for those affected by the scandal – many of whom lost their homes and were financially ruined.

He said that he has spoken to the company's bosses in Japan and it expects to have a conversation with the government about how much compensation it should pay.

Mr Patterson has been in his current role since 2019 but has worked for Fujitsu since 2010.

Asked if staff knew before 2010 that there were bugs in the system, he said that was for the inquiry into the scandal to establish – but his “gut feeling” is that this was the case.

He acknowledged the firm gave evidence which helped send innocent people to prison.

He added: “The information shared with the Post Office as part of our contract with them was very clear – the Post Office also knew there were bugs and errors.”

Mr Patterson said he did not know why the company didn't act when it knew there were glitches in the system.

“I don't know, I really don't know,” he said.

“On a personal level I wish I did and following my employment in 2019, I've looked back on those situations for the company and from the evidence I've seen, I just don't know.”

Mr Patterson is appearing alongside Post Office boss Nick Read as public and political anger continues over the Horizon scandal in the wake of the ITV drama Mr Bates Vs the Post Office, which documented the sub-postmasters' 20-year fight for justice.

Mr Read acknowledged it is possible that some of the money taken from Horizon scandal victims went into pay for Post Office executives.

But he said the company has not “got to the bottom of the nub of what was going on” with that cash.

Earlier Alan Bates and other campaigners who the drama was centred on blamed red tape and bureaucracy on delays for subpostmasters accessing compensation.

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