

Independent Assurance Reviewer sought to examine DWP's activities relating to Post Office staff prosecutions

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An independent Reviewer will assess the steps taken by the Department for Work and Pensions regarding its prosecutions of Post Office staff during the Horizon period.

- The Government is recruiting an independent Reviewer to examine historical DWP prosecutions of Post Office staff for welfare related fraud.
- The review will cover the period from 23 September 1996 to 31 March 2012.
- Applications close at 10:00 on 13 April 2026.

An independent Reviewer will assess the steps taken by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) regarding its prosecutions of Post Office staff during the Horizon period.

To ensure full independence, the Reviewer will be appointed through an open external recruitment process, overseen by a panel with an independent Chair. Once appointed, the Reviewer will produce a report for the Permanent Secretary, setting out any findings and recommendations.

During the Horizon period, DWP prosecuted around 100 Post Office staff for welfare-related fraud, such as theft of benefit books. Horizon data did not play an essential role in any of its prosecutions and instead it relied on direct evidence, including surveillance, stolen benefit books recovered from Post Office premises, handwriting analysis, and witness statements from claimants.

Since 2022, DWP has searched its archives, reviewed thousands of files, and written to courts to recover relevant material. That work also found no evidence that Horizon data played an essential role in any of its prosecutions.

To provide an additional layer of assurance, the independent Reviewer will assess whether the department's approach has been thorough and robust. Following discussion with the Horizon Compensation Advisory Board, individuals and organisations will also have the opportunity to submit information directly to the Reviewer.

To apply visit: Independent Assurance Reviewer - Civil Service Jobs by 10:00 on 13 April 2026.

Additional information:

- The period covered by the Post Office (Horizon System) Offences Act 2024 runs from 23 September 1996 to 31 December 2018. The Crown Prosecution Service took over DWP's prosecution function in 2012, which is why the review period ends on 31 March 2012.
- DWP does not have the power to review criminal convictions. The appropriate route is through the courts or by applying to the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), which has the power to refer a case to the Court of Appeal.
- Anyone who believes they have been wrongly convicted is strongly advised to consider applying to the CCRC as soon as possible.
- The review is expected to conclude within six months of the Independent Reviewer's formal

appointment.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-assurance-reviewer-sought-to-examine-dwps-activities-relating-to-post-office-staff-prosecutions>