



Sir Alan Bates, the leading campaigner for subpostmasters received his knighthood in September 2024. He was recognised in the King's Birthday Honours for his service to justice, having founded the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance. He continues to campaign today for subpostmasters who still have financial redress.

Honesty

Trustworthiness, Ethical Standards, Integrity, Truth

Alan Bates is a former subpostmaster. He was a leading campaigner for victims of the British Post Office scandal, in which over 700 postmasters were accused of dishonesty. They received criminal convictions between 2000 and 2015. Actually, the postmasters were not dishonest; they had to use a particular accounting software package called 'Horizon' which made it look like money was missing in their branches. Alan Bates formed the Justice for Subpostmasters Alliance, (JFSA) in 2009. The JFSA was a group of postmasters that met, shared their experiences and resolved to expose the real truth no matter how long it took.

In 1999, the Post Office's single shareholder, the government, began automating accounting processes at about 14,000 Post Offices branches. This saw the introduction of a centralised computer system from supplier Fujitsu which all branches were connected to.

There were problems with the system, and the Post Office instructed staff at the call centre to tell Postmasters who were experiencing problems, that they were the only ones.

The Post Office workers were accused of financial crimes such as theft and false accounting. Some became bankrupt and others were sacked. Hundreds were sent to prison. The lives of the victims and their families were severely impacted.