

Some quotes from the national press on EMAG's success in the Judicial Review

The Herald

Government defeated in battle over Equitable Life's collapse

The Government yesterday suffered a humiliating defeat in its long campaign to evade responsibility for the crash of Equitable Life nine years ago, when the High Court ruled that ministers had unlawfully rejected a report by the parliamentary ombudsman urging policyholder compensation.

The judgment opens the way for up to one million policyholders to receive at least some redress, after Lord Justice Carnwath said the 24,000-member Equitable Members Action Group (Emag) were "substantial victors" in their petition for judicial review of the Government's decision in early 2009.

Independent

Equitable Life victims win legal battle against government

Hundreds of thousands of victims of the Equitable Life scandal may be in line for government compensation after all, following a High Court ruling against the Treasury yesterday.

Two senior judges said the Treasury had acted unlawfully earlier this year in rejecting many of the findings of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, Ann Abraham.

The Treasury's decision to disregard many of Ms Abraham's conclusions enabled it to instruct Sir John Chadwick, a retired judge, to devise instead a compensation package within very limited guidelines. The Equitable Members Action Group (Emag), which brought the case yesterday, has previously warned that up to 90 per cent of the victims would miss out under the remit given to Sir John.

Lord Justice Carnwath and Mr Justice Gross said the Government's response to Ms Abraham's report "lacked cogency" and gave the Treasury 21 days to respond and outline the action it now expects to take.

David Prosser: Justice for Equitable Life moves closer

Many congratulations to the doggedly determined Equitable Members Action Group, which has won yet another victory over a government that has attempted to frustrate justice – both natural and legal – at every turn.

EMAG's successful legal challenge to the way in which the Government proposes to compensate victims of the Equitable scandal (or more correctly, not compensate 90 per cent of them) will force ministers to think again.

Daily Mail

Light at end of the tunnel: Victims of the Equitable Life disaster win in the High Court

Hundreds of thousands of Equitable Life savers could receive compensation after the Government suffered a High Court defeat yesterday.

Crucially, the judges ruled that Sir John Chadwick, who has been appointed by the Government to consider compensation, would have to look at all claims from 1991 - as proposed in the report - rather than 1999.

Colin Slater, of the action group, which represents around 21,000 people who lost savings, said: ' Hundreds of thousands more policyholders are now eligible for some form of compensation, and their relative losses are much bigger.'

Telegraph

Government was wrong over Equitable Life report, rules High Court

Thousands more Equitable Life policyholders could now receive compensation from the Government after a landmark ruling in the High Court.

In the latest twist of an almost decade-long saga, the court on Thursday rejected the Treasury's decision to ignore some of the findings made by Parliamentary Ombudsman Ann Abraham last year.

The ruling was also welcomed by Ms Abraham. "The Government's response to my report was deeply disappointing, providing insufficient support for the rejection of many of my findings of maladministration on the part of the regulators and my conclusions that injustice resulted from those failings," she said.

"The court has now found that Government's response was in large part unlawful, not being supported by cogent reasons for rejecting my findings," she added.

The Conservative Party added that the Government should now "give policyholders the justice they deserve". Mark Hoban, shadow financial secretary, said: "From the outset we accepted all of the Ombudsman's findings and this judgment vindicates our position. The Government should have ... got on with job of making payments to policyholders who have lost out because of regulatory failure."

Guardian

Equitable Life victims win in high court

Hundreds of thousands more victims of the Equitable Life debacle could now be entitled to compensation after policyholders claimed a high court victory in their long battle with the government over payouts.

The judges gave ministers 21 days to respond to the ruling and say what course of action they proposed to take.

They refused the Treasury permission to appeal, and awarded the claimants 60% of their legal costs, estimated at more than £300,000. The Treasury can still ask the court of appeal itself to hear the case.

At the hearing in July, Dinah Rose QC, the barrister representing policyholders, accused the government of "blinkered single-mindedness" in the way it had fought calls for full compensation to be paid to victims. She had asked the judges to rule the Treasury's response unlawful, "incomprehensible" and "irrational".

On 4 November, Equitable campaigners are planning to march on parliament, where they intend to unveil a stack of 15 coffins to symbolise the 15 policyholders who are dying every day, "waiting for justice".

The story was also carried on Channel 4 News, BBC Radio (various), BBC "Working Lunch" and BBC Radio 4 Moneybox (Saturday lunchtime).