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### **Equitable Life policyholders must be properly compensated**

The Government must apologise to Equitable Life policyholders and set up a payment scheme to compensate them for their losses, Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Keighley and Ilkley Kris Hopkins has said.

Cllr Hopkins was speaking following the publication of a report from Parliamentary Ombudsman Ann Abraham which found that regulators at the former Department of Trade and Industry and the Financial Services Authority failed in their duty to verify the financial position of Equitable Life over a 10-year period.

Previously seen as one of the safest companies with which to save and invest, Equitable Life's crash in 2001 all but wiped out the savings and pensions of more than one million policyholders including many older people.

Ms Abraham's report, which has taken four years to produce, ruled that the Labour Government was guilty of maladministration on 10 counts and cited five examples of injustice to policyholders.

"The Parliamentary Ombudsman's report is damning in relation to the regulatory failings which took place including between 1998 and 2001 when Gordon Brown, as Chancellor, had personal responsibility for this area," commented Cllr Hopkins.

"He cannot seek to brush this scandal under the carpet and must instead admit responsibility for what happened, apologise to policyholders and set up an appropriate payment scheme to compensate those who were affected.

"Sadly, it is estimated that around 30,000 policyholders have died, many in poverty, since Equitable Life crashed seven years ago.

"It is therefore essential that Mr Brown and his Government act quickly to accept responsibility for what happened and then set about putting it right."

ENDS