

1st February 2010

Royal Mail Group

Adrian Rutherford

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Freedom of Information Unit
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Sheffield
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www.royalmail.com

Dear Mr. Rutherford

Re: Freedom of Information Request

I am writing in response to your request for information dated 1st January 2010. We have considered your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following information:

“Please provide details of all thefts by Royal Mail employees in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. Please provide the date, location of the theft, details of the incident/what was taken (especially if mail was stolen), whether these items were recovered, and what punishment or disciplinary action followed.”

I can confirm that this information is held by Royal Mail in electronic format. However, this information is considered to be commercially sensitive and exempt from disclosure under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act. This information is likely to be utilised by Royal Mail’s competitors and presented out of context resulting in unfair damage to customer confidence. This would place Royal Mail at a significant disadvantage to other postal operators who offer their own products in direct competition with Royal Mail but are not required to publish or disclose equivalent information themselves.

This exemption is subject to the public interest test. Although there is public interest in the performance of Royal Mail, we believe this interest is satisfied through reporting to Postcomm and Consumer Focus. Royal Mail publishes details of our overall performance against nationally agreed targets on its website www.royalmailgroup.com.

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Information relating to Royal Mail alone, without equivalent information from competitor's, would not enable customers to make an informed choice about the postal operator or service they wish to use. Further, Royal Mail Group is a publicly owned company and there is a real and direct public interest in its commercial performance and ability to operate on a level playing field with competitors in a highly competitive market. Therefore in our view the overriding public interest lies in maintaining this exemption.

Royal Mail constantly reviews security to ensure the continuing integrity of the mail operation and we have a zero tolerance approach to any dishonesty. The overwhelming majority of all letters posted arrive safely at the correct destination but we remain vigilant to any risk to the operation. It remains the case that the huge majority of our people are scrupulously honest and take huge care over the mail entrusted to them by our customers.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you do have a right of appeal. If you wish to do so please set out in writing your grounds of appeal and send to The Head of Information Compliance, Royal Mail Group, Company Secretary's Office, 100 Victoria Embankment, LONDON, EC4Y 0HQ an internal panel will then review the decision, and you will be advised of the outcome.

If you decide to appeal and are still not satisfied with our response you also have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Daniel Tulp
Freedom of Information Case Officer
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