



Peter C. Bell

Date
5 June 2024

request-1064606-922dad8b@whatdotheyknow.com

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:
Public

Dear Peter C. Bell,

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/00003

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (“**Post Office**”) on 2 January, which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“**FOIA**”). Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding to your request.

In your email you have requested the information shown verbatim in bold below:

“[Estimate of amounts taken to suspense account]

When a sub-postmaster or mistress encountered a Horizon related "loss" they were required to make good any discrepancy in the accounts.

What is your best estimate of the amounts that Post Office received from sub-postmasters and postmistresses as a result of Horizon errors and how much of that amount has yet to be repaid to them.

Please provide your response in electronic form.”

We can confirm that Post Office does hold the information you have requested.

Firstly, for context and background information and in response to your reference ‘amounts taken to suspense account’: Evidence relating to the use of Post Office suspense accounts, including historically, continues to be examined in the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, and includes evidence from Post Office’s Chief Financial

Officer which can be found here [WITN09840100 Alisdair Cameron - Witness Statement | Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry: \(postofficehorizoninquiry.org.uk\)](#)

As of 1 February 2024, Post Office's current best estimate of the amounts that it received from postmasters as a result of shortfalls which were potentially caused by Horizon errors, totals £36.1m. This estimate is based on the claims for Horizon "losses" submitted by postmasters and those of which have been assessed by Post Office through the Horizon Shortfall Scheme and Overturned Convictions redress arrangements, which totals £34.8m. In addition, Post Office has provided information to the Department for Business and Trade regarding claims the Department has received to its GLO Scheme for Horizon "losses", which total £1.3m.

As of 1 February 2024, £22.8m has been paid by Post Office for Horizon shortfalls to claimants through the Horizon Shortfall Scheme and the Overturned Convictions redress arrangements.

Please note that the schemes providing redress for postmasters operate on the presumption that shortfalls were caused by Horizon unless there is direct evidence to the contrary.

Under the section 16 of FOIA duty to provide advice and assistance, you should note that the actual value of Horizon "losses" is likely to be materially higher than the sum outlined above. However, Post Office is not able to estimate this higher value with any appropriate level of confidence. This is because:

- (i) All the redress schemes remain open for claims; Post Office and the Department for Business and Trade have, as of 1 February 2024, not assessed all claims received, and it is believed to be certain that these unassessed claims will include amounts for Horizon "losses"; and
- (ii) Not all applications made to Post Office or the Department for Business and Trade by Postmasters underwent an assessment to quantify the value of any Horizon "loss" prior to payment being made, meaning the value of any Horizon "loss" within the claim is unknown.

Please note, for the purpose of this response Horizon "loss" is assumed to represent a payment made by a postmaster to Post Office for a shortfall that they should not have been held responsible for because it was either potentially caused by a bug,

error or defect in the Horizon IT System and / or because the circumstances of the loss were not appropriately investigated by Post Office.

It may also be of interest to you to know that the redress schemes in place for postmasters include provision for human costs, such as personal injury, distress and inconvenience, harassment, loss of reputation and bankruptcy costs where these are directly related to shortfalls. There is no exhaustive list of the types of individual losses being compensated, nor are there 'caps' on amounts.

You can find more information about redress for postmasters on Post Office's website: corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/the-horizon-it-scandal/

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of this response, you do have a right to request an internal review. You can do this by writing to the address above within 40 working days of receipt of this response stating your reasons for your internal review request or alternatively, by emailing information.rights@postoffice.co.uk.

If, having requested an internal review by Post Office, you are still not satisfied with our response you also have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113
www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Team
information.rights@postoffice.co.uk
<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/governance/access-to-information/access-to-information/>

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