



Brent Jay

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Date  
7 February 2024

Post Office  
100 Wood Street  
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

**Classification:**  
Public

Dear Brent,

## Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/00006

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**”).

We can confirm that Post Office does hold some of the information you have requested in your email shown verbatim in bold below:

### **“1. How many "Notice to Leave" packs were issued in 2023?”**

Our Post Office advice line logged and issued 531 Notice to Leave packs in 2023.

### **2. How many completed "Notice to Leave" packs were submitted in 2023?”**

The Postmaster Onboarding team received 819 completed Notice to Leave packs in 2023.

### **3. a) How many temporary closures started in 2023?”**

186 branches were reported as newly temporarily closed during January 2023 to March 2023.

We are unable to provide all the information you have requested as the data for April to December 2023 is currently being collected and is unaudited.

Please note that the number of temporary closures during this period is impacted by the Morrisons acquisition of Martin McColls and Morrisons subsequent decision to close several Martin McColls stores, some of which included Post Office branches.

**b) How many of these are now open?**

Post Office only holds audited date up to March 2023. As at March 2023, 36 branches of the 186 branches are open.

**4. a) How many branches changed formats in 2023? E.g. from a Local to Drop & Collect or Traditional to Outreach etc.**

**b) Could you break this number down into separate types of change as exemplified above.**

We are unable to provide all the information you have requested as the data for April to December 2023 is currently unaudited. We can however provide data to March 2023.

A total of 28 branches opened and have had a change of format since December 2022 to March 2023.

<b>Format Type in Dec 2022</b>	<b>Format Type in March 2023</b>	<b>Number of Branches</b>
Main	Local	8
Main	Outreach	1
Local	Main	4
Local	Outreach	2
Traditional	Local	10
Traditional	Outreach	2
Outreach	Local	1

**5. How many branches were taken on by temporary/emergency agents in 2023?**

44 branches were taken on by temporary Postmasters in 2023.

**6.a) How many branches changed the person responsible for the contract in 2023?**

6 branches changed the person responsible for the contract in 2023.

**b) Does this number include any for Strategic Partners, if so how many branches did that affect?**

None of these included Strategic Partners.

**7. a) How many branches permanently closed in 2023? i.e. No replacement is being sought.**

**b) Please break this down into branch types. E.g. DMB, Local, etc.**

There were no closures in 2023 where no replacement was sought.

**8. a) How many completely new branches opened in 2023?**

**b) Please break this down into branch types. E.g. Banking Hub, Drop & Collect, etc.**

The information requested is available [here](#).

As the information is reasonably accessible to you by other means, Section 21 of the FOIA exempts Post Office from providing a copy of the information within this response.

Please note that Banking Hubs are not Post Office branches as they do not provide access to Post Office products and services.

**9. Could please give the "churn" figure for 2023?**

**This is apparently the Post Office terminology for turnover of Post Offices. Please see: [https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/12542/pdf/Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee Oral evidence: Royal Mail and the Post Office, HC 1045 Tuesday 17 January 2023](https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/12542/pdf/Business,EnergyandIndustrialStrategyCommitteeOralevidence:RoyalMailandthePostOffice,HC1045Tuesday17January2023) Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 17 January 2023 Nick Read: "We are speaking with Citizens Advice about the term "temporary". It is a little misleading. We want to make sure that we are all agreed on what "temporary" means and when we replace post offices. I would reiterate that this year we have had less turnover in post offices than we have done for eight years-the churn, as we call it, in terms of post offices. We have had only 168 this year that have churned, which we are very pleased about. It is a reflection on the fact that we are working hard to make sure we are serving rural and urban communities as best we can."**

Post Office does not have audited information for the full year 2023, only January to March 2023. However, this information is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in section 43(2) of the FOIA, which relates to information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). In applying this exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure.

We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of information concerning details of the "churn" figure for 2023 as this helps promote transparency in Post Office and reassurance about the way public money is being spent.

However, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information as it would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial interests of Post Office and Postmasters. This is because disclosing information about "churn" figures would prejudice Post Office's ability to enter competitive dialogues. Post Office operates in a highly competitive market and any information regarding these figures would be beneficial to its competitors. By disclosing these figures this would potentially result in specific products and services no longer being offered at branches resulting in a loss of revenue to the Post Office and to Postmasters.

It would not be in the public interest to disclose information if Post Office would be unable to operate in a fair marketplace regarding the competitive dialogue procedure and are commercially damaged by the release of the information.

In addition, branch churn can happen for several reasons. Therefore, providing this information would harm Post Office and could provide an unrealistic or misleading picture of the Post Office network.

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](mailto: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](http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints)

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Team  
[information.rights@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:information.rights@postoffice.co.uk)

<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/governance/access-to-information/access-to-information/>

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