



Information Rights Team  
Post Office Limited  
Ground Floor  
Finsbury Dials  
20 Finsbury Street  
London EC2Y 9AQ

Your reference:  
Our reference: IR2022/00634

Mr John O'Sullivan  
request-873837-0f55606e@whatdotheyknow.com

1<sup>st</sup> November 2022

Dear Mr O'Sullivan,

**Internal Review under the Freedom of Information Act  
IR2022/00634**

I am writing in response to your request for an Internal Review of Post Office Limited's ("Post Office") handling of your recent request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA").

Whilst your Internal Review request is in relation to your request for recorded information under FOI2022/00536, we believe it is also important to understand the context of this request which also includes your requests for recorded information under FOI2022/00423 and FOI2022/00474.

1. In your request for recorded information under Ref: FOI2022/00423 received by Post Office on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022, you requested the following information:

*Can you please say what % of mails items accepted in PO Branches and put through Horizon are prepaid, purchased online, freepost or Home Shopping Returns for the year ending March 2022. What were the figures for 2018 and 2012.*

2. Post Office responded to your request on 11th July 2022 advising that due to the way that mail items are processed and retained through Post Office systems, we are unable to calculate the percentages you have requested and therefore we do not hold this information.

3. In your request for recorded information under Ref: FOI2022/00474 received by Post Office on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2022, you requested the following information:

*In SPM pay advice lines 0451, 0452 and 0187 obtain and trigger payment for online and prepaid postage. Do you not have this information, and can you not share the in-crease or decrease in payment or percentage over time?*

4. Post Office responded to your request 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022 advising that we have based our results on your request for financial years ending 2012, 2018 and 2022 which you had listed in the preceding request, FOI2022/00423, and advised you that the only sales reference in use during financial years ending 2012, 2018 and 2022 was sales reference 0187 Home Shopping Returns. The table below shows Home Shopping Returns (0187) as a percentage of overall remuneration

As a Percentage of Overall Remuneration	March 2012	March 2018	March 2022
0187 Home Shopping Returns	1.16%	2.85%	4.32%

5. In your request for recorded information under Ref: FOI2022/00536 received by Post Office on 10th August 2022, you requested the following information:

*How much Royal Mail postage purchased online is handed into Branch and what % of Postal volume and lost sales that represents.*

6. Post Office responded to your request on 22nd August 2022 advising that Post Office does not hold this information as not all items where postage is purchased online are processed through our systems. In terms of the percentage of Postal volume and lost sales that represents Royal Mail postage purchased online that is handed into branch, we do hold this information, however Post Office considers it would be likely to harm the Commercial Interests of the third party (as defined by s43(2) FOIA).
7. On the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022, you contacted Post Office to request an Internal Review of its decisions. A copy of the body of your email is provided below and I have provided the references numbers to the FOI request you refer to in square brackets:

*In 11 July [FOI2022/00423] you said this Due to the way that mail items are processed and retained through Post Office systems, we are unable to calculate the percentages you have requested and therefore we do not hold this information. You later said you had some of it [FOI2022/00474] and then some more and you now claim that you cant share any of it because it is commercial sensitive [FOI2022/00536]. Spm would love to know how much it is to help plan for the future. So given your change of tack and evasive nature of replies please look at this again.*

### **Appeals Officer's Response**

8. In line with the requirements of the FOIA and the associated Code of Practice, we have carried out an internal review of your request for information and the way your request has been handled by the Information Rights Team in accordance with the Act.
9. Based on this review, I have partially upheld your appeal and revised our response in relation to FOI2022/00536. I will address each of your points in turn.
10. In relation to FOI2022/00423, I can confirm that Post Office does not hold information relating to the percentages for prepaid, purchased online, freepost due to the way that mail items are processed and retained through Post Office systems.
11. Relating to FOI2022/00472, I can confirm that Post Office does hold this information which is fundamentally different to what you previously asked for in FOI2022/00423, as it was in relation to a specific sales reference "0187" for Home Shopping returns.

12. Relating to FOI2022/00536, Post Office advised in relation to part 1 of your enquiry that we do not have this information as not all items where postage is purchased online are processed through our IT systems. I can confirm that this is correct.
13. In terms of the second part of your request, Post Office interpreted your request as relating to mail items purchased online and accepted in Branch. However, after liaising with the relevant business area as part of this internal review, I can confirm that not all items accepted in Branch are purchased online and we do not hold this information. The exemption cited in our response letter of 22 August therefore falls away. We apologise for this oversight but hope this now explains the situation.

## **Conclusion**

14. Having reviewed these cases, I am satisfied that our responses for requests FOI2022/00423 and FOI2021/0042 were correct. However, I can confirm that the response for FOI2022/00536 was not fully correct and has therefore been revised as per points 12 and 13 above.
15. In the event that you remain unhappy with the handling of this request, you also have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner who can be contacted at the address below:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 0303 123 1113  
<https://ico.org.uk>

Yours sincerely,

Internal Review Officer  
**Information Rights Team**

[information.rights@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:information.rights@postoffice.co.uk)  
<http://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/access-information>