

14th September 2012

Royal Mail Group

Mr Nice

By Email: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

Information Rights Team
(Freedom of Information Act)
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Dear Mr Nice

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request (Our Reference: DTUP-8X8E6E)

I am writing in response to your recent request for information dated 16th August 2012. Your request has been considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following information:

- 1. How may compensation claims were logged between 1/4/2011 and 30/4/2012*
- 2. Of those claims concluded, please advise how many were successful*
- 3. What is the average value of those successful claims?*

I can confirm that the information you requested is held by Royal Mail Group. However, the information is commercially sensitive and considered to be exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act - *Commercial interests*. This exemption applies because the information, if disclosed, would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of Parcelforce and Royal Mail Group.

Parcelforce Worldwide is an entirely commercial organisation which provides collection and delivery services for express packages and parcels within the UK and throughout the world. The publication of this information would place Parcelforce Worldwide at a significant disadvantage to rival companies. Parcelforce Worldwide operates in a highly competitive market and companies in direct competition with Parcelforce products and services would not be required to publish equivalent information themselves. Disclosure of the information requested would be likely to damage perception of Parcelforce Worldwide without enabling customers to make any comparison with other companies on a like-for-like basis. We are not aware of any other parcel carrier which publishes or releases information regarding compensation claims they receive.

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This exemption is subject to the public interest test. As stated above, Parcelforce Worldwide provides collection and delivery services for express packages and parcels; it must compete for all of its business with rival carriers. We consider that it is in the public interest to ensure fair competition and protect normal market forces. It would not serve the interests of the public to place one company at a commercial disadvantage to competitors.

For the reasons set out above we do not believe that this information would enable customers to make a fully informed choice without access to equivalent information for other parcel carriers. Parcelforce customers are able to submit claims for compensation and details of how to do this are freely available from the Parcelforce website - www.parcelforce.com. All claims are treated seriously and assessed in line with published terms and conditions; every valid claim is paid in line with those terms and conditions. We believe that the interests of customers are met through the provision of this claims process.

Significantly, Royal Mail Group is a publicly owned company and there is a real and direct public interest in its commercial performance. Royal Mail is reliant on the revenue from its commercial services, including those provided by Parcelforce, to maintain its business and provide the public with a daily collection, delivery and 'one price goes anywhere' service. We do not believe that it would service the interests of the public to prejudice these interests. We therefore believe that in this case the overall balance of public interest favours maintaining the exemption and withholding the information you requested.

I am sorry we are unable to meet your request on this occasion. If for any reason you are not satisfied with this response, you do have the right to request a review. If you wish to do so please set out your reasons in writing and send to the Head of Information Governance, Royal Mail Group, Company Secretary's Office, 100 Victoria Embankment, LONDON, EC4Y 0HQ. An internal panel will then review the request, and you will be advised of the outcome.

If, having requested an internal review, you 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
SK9 5AF
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

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Yours sincerely

Daniel Tulp
Information Rights Officer
Company Secretary's Office