



Information Rights Team
Post Office Limited
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Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
London EC2Y 9AQ
033 3665 3951

Our reference: FOI201710101257

Mr Mark Daniels
request-437620-50f8957b@whatdotheyknow.com

23 October 2017

Dear Mr Daniels,

Freedom of Information Request – FOI201710101257

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited ("**Post Office**") on 10 October 2017, which we are dealing with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In your email you have requested the following information:

As of 31st July 2017, how many Post Office Branches were classed as Temporary Closures? Of the total, how many

1) are Local Branches

2) are Main Branches

3) have been closed for more than 12 months

We can confirm that Post Office does hold information related to your request.

Our Network Transformation Programme is the largest branch modernisation programme in our history, transforming our branches to help improve their profitability and to benefit our customers with modern retail environments and longer opening hours, including over 4000 branches now open on Sundays. As a result of this modernisation programme we have now converted over 7000 Post Office branches to our Main or Local models, and the numbers are growing every day as more and more Postmasters take up the opportunity to take advantage of the funding currently available.

As the number of new model branches increases the make-up of the Post Office branch network is changing. These new branch models form part of the overall network alongside existing models. We are clear in our regular reporting of our branch network that it is always based on the number of trading Post Offices at that point in time.

Unfortunately, from time to time, Post Office branches can temporarily close for reasons beyond our control, such as the resignation or retirement of a postmaster (where a replacement postmaster has not come forward) or even fire or flood that mean the premises can't be used for a significant period of time. Occurrences of this nature can take place whatever the format of the branch, be it a traditional or new model branch. If a sustainable solution is not quickly forthcoming following a temporary closure then we hold the location on our files as temporary closed in case the situation changes and

there is an opportunity going forward to restore a sustainable service. There are examples of services returning to communities after many years.

The Post Office network is undergoing unprecedented change and the numbers and make-up of branches is changing all the time. With the numbers of Mains and Local branches increasing we are also adding services in new locations and have added to our mobile fleet to bring services to even more communities. At the end of March 2017, the most recent official snapshot figures, there were 11659 open and trading branches.

Quite separately, the information that we maintain on temporary closed branches separates them into those closed below and above 18 months. These do not count towards the open and trading figures and are branches that have closed for reasons beyond our control.

At the end of July 2017 there were 358 branches that had been closed for less than 18 months. These are either very recent closures, that will likely re-open quickly, or slightly longer term where we are actively working on a solution. There are a further 418 that have been closed for over 18 months, some of which would have been closed for many years, and are likely to be where no one has come forward to operate the service or there are no suitable premises available. We maintain these on the list as circumstances may change overtime to enable a sustainable Post Office service to be restored at a later date. We recognise that in some cases this may not be feasible given the length of time, or there may no longer be a requirement in that location, but we have found that our new operating models have enabled services to be restored even after a number of years. Within these totals there are 197 local branches, 46 closed for over 18 months, and 46 main branches, with 2 closed for over 18 months. Again, for the avoidance of doubt, Post Office does not count temporary closed branches towards its network numbers.

I hope the information I have provided on this occasion is useful, however 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 below stating your reasons for your internal review request.

Information Rights Manager
Post Office Limited
Information Rights Team
1st Floor, Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
London
EC2Y 9AQ
foia@postoffice.co.uk

If, having requested an internal review by Post Office Limited, 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: 01625 545 700
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'K Moodie'.

Kerry Moodie

Information Rights Team

information.rights@postoffice.co.uk

<http://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/access-information>
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