



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date
02 December 2024

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/01370

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (“**Post Office**”) on 10 October 2024, which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“**FOIA**”).

In your email you have requested the information shown verbatim in bold below, with our answers to each part:

“I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

1.Please provide details of any financial transactions between Post Office Limited (invoices, payments, reimbursements) and Mishcon de Reya LLP, since 2018.

a.Please also provide the details of what these payments relate to.

2.Please provide the amount Post Office Ltd has spent on its Directors & Officer's Insurance policy - both i). the annual premium and ii). any additional payments, for each of the following years:

a.2012

b.2013

c.2014

d.2015

e.2016

f.2017

g.2018

h.2019

i.2020
j.2021
k.2022
l.2023
m.2024

3.For any additional payments, please provide further information on what these payments relate to.

4.Please provide the total cost of the payment made by Post Office Limited to Post Office's insurers in 2021 to cover ongoing legal costs incurred by Ms Paula Vennells relating to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, and the cost of any further payments of this type."

We can confirm that Post Office does hold the information you have requested to questions 1 - 4 (above). We have found one payment made directly to Mishcon de Reya LLP in 2022, which was to reimburse former Post Office Chief Executive Paula Vennells' costs under the Director and Officer ("D&O") insurance. One payment was also made to Post Office's insurers in 2021 to cover ongoing legal costs incurred by Ms Vennells relating to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

We hold the payment amounts made by Post Office for the D&O insurance, but this and the insurance costs outlined above, 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 of the way that Post Office manages its finances, as this helps promote transparency in Post Office business 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 our insurers. Competitively sensitive information covers any non-public strategic information about a business's commercial policy. It includes, but is not limited to, future pricing and output plans. Historical commercial information is far less likely to be sensitive, particularly if individual businesses' commercial activities cannot be identified in it.

Complying with competition law is good business practice. Long-term compliance saves money by avoiding the potential for fines and significant damage to a company's reputation. 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 for D&O insurance and are commercially damaged by the release of the information.

5. Please provide a breakdown, by amount, provider, and summary of engagement, of any "exceptional legal costs" as mentioned in the Post Office Annual Report & Consolidated Financial Statement, of the following years:

a. 2018

b. 2019

c. 2020

d. 2021

e. 2022

f. 2023

g. 2024"

The information that you have requested to Q5 above is available from the Post Office corporate website here: <https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/governance/key-reports-statements/post-office-annual-report-accounts-2022-23/>. The information requested in relation to exceptional legal costs can be found on pages 9 to 15 of the latest Annual Reports & Consolidated Financial Statements for the year 2022/23.

As the information is reasonably accessible to you by other means, under section 21 of the FOIA, Post Office are not required to provide a copy of the information with this response. For previous years the Post Office Annual Report and Accounts can be found on the Companies House website here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-information-about-a-company>

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/>

Post Office Limited is committed to protecting your privacy, information about how we do this can be found on our website at www.postoffice.co.uk/privacy