



[REDACTED]

Date
10 October 2024

[REDACTED]

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/00356

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (“**Post Office**”) on 27 February, which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“**FOIA**”). We sincerely apologise for the delay in responding to your request.

In your email you have requested the information shown verbatim in bold below:

“Please disclose, preferably by PDF, a copy of the briefing Henry Staunton received before seeing or having a conversation with Sarah Munby of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in early January 2023 relating to issues arising out of what is now known as the Horizon scandal.”

We can confirm that Post Office does hold the information you have requested. However, we have determined that some of the information should be withheld under 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 the Chairman BEIS Permanent Secretary Briefing as this helps promote transparency in Post Office business and reassurance about the way public money is being spent. We also

recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of more specific information relating to communications between Post Office and the Permanent Secretary, as this increases transparency about the Horizon IT Scandal.

On the other hand, there is a very strong public interest in withholding information concerning the financial and negotiating strategies of Post Office which would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial interests of Post Office. Disclosing such information would allow Post Office's competitors an unfair advantage as it would reveal sensitive financial information and business development plans. Therefore, disclosing this data will provide competitors an unfair advantage and hinder the Post Office's ability to operate in a fair marketplace, resulting in commercial damage.

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