

[REDACTED]

Date
26 September 2024

[REDACTED]

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/00262

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (“**Post Office**”) on 5 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 this request.

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

“I would like to know:

-How many private prosecutions the Post Office carried out between 1992 to 1 January 2024.

-I would like a breakdown of this data which includes: total number of prosecution by year, type of offence pursued, outcome (eg conviction/acquittal/case dismissed)

-How many county court judgements (CCJs) has the Post Office obtained against subpostmasters between 1992 and 1 January 2024?”

We can confirm that Post Office does hold some of the information you have requested.

Regarding the first part of your request, please see the table in the Annex below for the number of private prosecutions carried out by Post Office between 1 January 1992 and 1 January 2024 (both inclusive) together with the alleged offence types and outcomes, where that information is known. As Post Office and Royal Mail Group used to be one entity, the table includes a) all cases that Post Office is aware

of which resulted in a decision to prosecute by Royal Mail Group before its separation from Post Office in April 2012 and b) those prosecuted by Post Office post-separation. The table excludes all cases that did not result in a decision to charge (e.g., investigations that resulted in no further action or that resulted in a caution) as well as all cases that were prosecuted by other bodies like the Crown Prosecution Service, the Department of Work & Pensions, and the Scottish and Northern Irish prosecution services.

Although you have requested the 'type of offence pursued', in most cases, the exact offence for which an individual was prosecuted is not known (especially pre-1999). As such, Post Office has had to rely on casework spreadsheets that categorise cases by reference to 'case type', the accuracy of which we cannot guarantee. Please see column 6 of the table in the Annex for a list of the case types that were prosecuted each year.

The figures in the table are based on the dates that individual cases were set up, although the eventual prosecution and outcome might have occurred in a later year. This is the simplest and most accurate way to identify cases per year since information as to the date of charge, prosecution or eventual outcome is not always known. Consequently, the figures include cases where the investigation started between 1 January 1992 and 1 January 2024, but some might have been prosecuted after their setup dates.

Overall, given the historical nature of a sizeable proportion of the data concerned, with some dating back 32 years, we cannot be certain about the accuracy or completeness of the information we have provided, including the prosecution outcome in every case. Please note that Post Office continues to receive material from third parties regarding cases. Consequently, the figure provided in response to this request may change in the future and is correct only as of 24 September 2024, based on current information known to Post Office.

Regarding the third part of your request relating to the number of County Court Judgments ("CCJs") that Post Office obtained against sub-postmasters ("postmasters"), we are unable to provide comprehensive information covering the whole 32 years requested. To do so would exceed the appropriate cost limit prescribed for fulfilling a request under section 12 of the FOIA. The records that might be relevant for the whole period are potentially held in thousands of Post

Office branch files, each of which would require a manual review to determine what information we hold and then to locate, retrieve and extract it.

However, in the spirit of transparency and under our duty to assist and advise under section 16 of the FOIA, we have limited available information (gathered at the time from various casework spreadsheets) which shows that Post Office obtained at least 98 CCJs against postmasters in the period of 2005 to 2017. This information is based on an exercise we conducted in 2022, which was not for the purpose of a request under the FOIA. We cannot guarantee its accuracy or completeness.

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

Annex

| Year | Overall No. of Prosecutions | No. of Acquittals | No. of Convictions | No. of Prosecutions that were either dismissed, dropped, discontinued, could not proceed, or the outcome is unknown | Case Type |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| 1990s (Specific date of set up unknown but known to be in the 1990s) | 10 | 1 | 7 | 2 | Unknown Case Type, Giro Suppression, Cash Loss, Pensions & Allowances (P&A) Encashment Fraud, Plastic Bank Note Envelope Discrepancies, Theft, Theft / False Accounting, P&A Laundering |
| 1992 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | Suppression, P&A Encashment Fraud |
| 1993 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 2 | P&A Encashment Fraud, Cash Loss, Motor Vehicle Licence Loss |
| 1994 | 10 | 0 | 9 | 1 | Cash Loss / Audit Discrepancy, P&A Overclaims, Motor Vehicle Licence Loss, P&A Encashment Fraud, Other |
| 1995 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 1 | P&A Laundering, P&A Fraud, P&A Overclaims, P&A Encashment Fraud |
| 1996 | 31 | 1 | 27 | 3 | Audit Shortage, Cash Loss, Counter Snatch, False Accounting, Giro Suppression, Other, P&A Encashment Fraud, P&A Overclaims, Plastic Bank Note Envelope Discrepancies, Suppression, Theft of Official Cash |
| 1997 | 60 | 2 | 54 | 4 | Allegations affecting the Character, Audit Shortage, Cash Loss, Counter Snatch, False Accounting, P&A Encashment Fraud, P&A Fraud, P&A Laundering, P&A Overclaims, Plastic Bank Note Envelope Discrepancies, Postal Order Theft / Fraud, Remittance Shortage, Robbery, Stock Loss, Suppression |
| 1998 | 93 | 1 | 86 | 6 | Allegations affecting the Character, Audit Shortage, Bureau Theft / Fraud, Burglary, Cash Loss, Compensation Fraud, Counter Snatch, Counterfeit, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Overclaims, External Fraud, Giro Suppression, LBU Discrepancy |

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|--|-----|---|-----|---|---|
| | | | | | (understood to relate to the supply chain), Motor Vehicle Licence Loss, P&A Encashment Frauds, P&A Frauds, P&A Laundering, P&A Overclaims, 1 x Postal Order Theft / Fraud, 10 x Robbery, Theft, Theft / False Accounting |
| 1999 | 114 | 3 | 107 | 4 | Allegations affecting the character, Armed Robbery, Attempted Armed Robbery, Audit Shortage, Bureau Theft / Fraud, Burglary, Cash Loss, Counter Snatch, Disputed Transactions, Fraud (Internal), Giro Suppression, P&A Encashment Fraud, P&A Fraud, P&A Laundering, P&A Overclaims, Postal Order Theft / Fraud, Remuneration Fraud, Robbery, Suppression |
| 2000s (Specific date of set up unknown but known to be in the 2000s) | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | Unknown Case Type, Theft of postal packets from over counter |
| 2000 | 103 | 5 | 92 | 6 | Allegations affecting the character, Bureau Theft / Fraud, Burglary, Cash Loss, Conspiracy to Defraud / Obtaining by Deception, Disputed Transactions, False Accounting, Giro Suppression, Offences Against the Person, P&A Encashment Fraud, P&A Fraud, P&A Laundering, P&A Overclaims, Theft (P&A), Theft / Fraudulent Encashment (P&A) |
| 2001 | 69 | 4 | 61 | 4 | Audit Shortage, Audit Shortage / False Accounting, Cash Loss, Conspiracy to Defraud / Obtaining by Deception, Directly Managed Branch Cash Loss, DWP Fraud, DWP Overclaims, False Accounting, Giro Suppression, Obtaining postal services by deception, P&A Encashment Fraud, P&A Fraud, P&A Overclaims, Stock Loss, Suppression, Television Licence Fraud / Theft of Postal Packets, Unknown Case Type |
| 2002 | 78 | 4 | 65 | 9 | Allegations affecting the character, Audit Shortage, Audit Shortage / False Accounting, Cash Loss, Deception, Directly Managed |

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|------|-----|---|----|----|---|
| | | | | | Branch Cash Loss, DWP Fraud, DWP Overclaims, Girobank Suppression, Green Giro Fraud, P&A Fraud, P&A Overclaims, Suppression of Banking Document, Theft |
| 2003 | 68 | 3 | 51 | 14 | Allegations affecting the character, Audit Shortage, Audit Shortage / False Accounting, Bureau Loss / Fraud, Cash Loss, Cash Services – Remittance / Plastic Bank Note Envelope Dispute, Directly Managed Branch Cash Loss, DWP Fraud, DWP Overclaims, False Accounting, Giro bank Suppression, P&A Fraud 5 x P&A Overclaims, Supply Chain - Remittance / Plastic Bank Note Envelope Dispute, Suppression of Banking Document, Theft / False Accounting |
| 2004 | 104 | 2 | 98 | 4 | Allegations affecting the character, Audit Shortage, Audit Shortage / False Accounting, Cash Services – Cash Centre Internal Cash Loss, Cash Services – Remittance / Plastic Bank Note Envelope Dispute, Directly Managed Branch / Crown Office Cash Loss, Disputed Transactions, DWP Fraud, DWP Overclaims, Misuse of Postage Labels, Other, Suppression of Banking Document, Theft / False Accounting |
| 2005 | 73 | 2 | 65 | 6 | Allegations affecting the character, Audit Shortage / False Accounting, Banking Fraud, Banking Post Office Card Account Fraud, Cash Services – Cash Centre Internal Cash Loss, Crown Office Cash Loss, DWP / Inland Revenue Giro cheque Exception Fraud, DWP Fraud, DWP Overclaims, Giro cheque Exception, Mail Offence (Theft / Tampering / Delay), Misuse of Postage Labels, Other |
| 2006 | 60 | 1 | 51 | 8 | Allegations affecting the character, Audit, Audit Shortage / False Accounting, Banking Credit / Debit Card Fraud, Banking Post Office Card Account Fraud, Cash Services – Cash Centre Internal Cash Loss, Cash Services – Remittance / Plastic Bank Note Envelope (PBNE) Dispute, Crown Office Cash Loss, DVLA, Missing |

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|--------------|----|---|----|---|---|
| | | | | | Voucher, Misuse of Postage Labels, Other, Post Office Card Account, 1 x Supply Chain – Internal Cash Loss, Suppression of Banking Document |
| 2007 | 52 | 1 | 47 | 4 | Audit, Audit Shortage / False Accounting, Banking Cheque Fraud, Banking Post Office Card Account Fraud, Crown Office Cash Loss, Disputed Transactions, Mint Redemption, Missing Voucher, Misuse of Postage Labels, Other, Post Office Card Account, Postage Label, Suppression, Suppression of Banking Document |
| 2008 | 77 | 0 | 76 | 1 | ATM (Inflated), Audit, Bureau, Cash Loss, Cheque (Inflated), Cheque Fraud, Fraud (Internal) 4 x Lottery, Other, Post Office Card Account, Postage Label, Remuneration Fraud, Stock (Inflated), Theft (Inflated) |
| 2009 | 64 | 1 | 61 | 2 | Business Concern, Cash Loss, Credit / Debit Card Fraud, Fraud (Internal), Lottery, Post Office Card Account, Postage Label, Stock (Inflated), Supply Chain – Remittance / PBNE Dispute, Theft (Internal) |
| 2010 | 41 | 3 | 37 | 1 | Bureau, Business Concern, Cash Loss, Fraud (Internal), Post Office Card Account, Suppression |
| 2011 | 44 | 2 | 41 | 1 | Business Concern, Cash Loss, Fraud (Internal), Post Office Card Account, Postage Label, Supply Chain – Internal Cash Loss, Suppression, Theft (Internal) |
| 2012 | 44 | 3 | 41 | 0 | Business Concern, Cash Loss, Cheque Fraud, Fraud (Internal), Post Office Card Account, Postage Label, Suppression |
| 2013 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | Cash Loss |
| 2014 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | Cash Loss |
| 2015 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | Allegations against character |
| 2016 to 2017 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2018 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | Non-branch related |
| 2019 to 2024 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |