



Date  
16 May 2025

Post Office  
100 Wood Street  
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:  
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

## Freedom of Information Request – FOI2025/00275

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (**"Post Office"**) on 23 April, 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. We can confirm that Post Office does hold the information you have requested. We have responded to each of your questions in the body of your request below:

**"Before I ask any questions, please consider the following facts:**

- 1. Our own village Post Office was closed as part of your scandal, hence the establishment of our Outreach Post Office.**
- 2. There have always been and still are at least 2 or 3 sub Post Offices within 2 or 3 miles distance from our Village of Horspath.**
- 3. To resolve the situation we have found a sub Post Office willing to take on an Outreach Post Office here.**

**Answers to the following Freedom of Information questions will be shared with our MP Freddie Van Mierlo, our County Councillor Tim Bearder and of course the Trustees of the Friends of Horspath.**

- 1. What exactly is preventing us from continuing to operate an Outreach facility**

**here in Horspath? You have told us you carried out a review, so detailed findings of that review would certainly help us to understand more fully your reluctance to re-open.**

We can confirm that we hold a network review plan. However, the review findings are being withheld as they fall 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 concerning details of reviews or consultations about the future of Post Office branches, including within the Horspath area in this instance, 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. This is because disclosing information about Post Office reviews and strategy when dealing with the future of branches in its network, would give an unfair advantage to competitors in understanding which location and format, as well as specific retailers, it intends to engage with. If this information were released, then competitors would potentially be able to understand its replacement strategy across the whole network.

The information would also reveal footfall data, product purchase groupings, format, and costings. If released, this information could be targeted by companies offering similar products and services as they would be aware of a branch closure from our statutory notification obligations thereby reducing the commercial viability of Post Office. 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 procedure and are commercially damaged by the release of the information.

You may find it helpful to know that when a postmaster gives notice to leave or there is an unplanned branch closure, we undertake a review of post office services at a local level to determine whether services should be replaced. We consider customer footfall, operating and set up costs for a new branch, whether a branch can operate

sustainably in the future, whether a subsidy is needed, proximity to alternative post offices, and whether a service is needed to meet access criteria.

Customer usage in the Horspath area has declined in the last five years. The branch also received a subsidy to remain operational. In addition to a subsidy, if the outreach service moved to operate from Wheatley Post Office, there would be additional setup costs to operate from a different branch.

As part of the review, we also took into account the availability of nearby alternative branch access, noting that Woodfarm Local Branch is 2.2 miles away, Wheatley Main Branch 2.5 miles away and Risinghurst SPSO Branch is 2.85 miles away.

## **2. Who makes the final decision in your organisation to close or indeed reopen your facilities?**

This is a collective decision across several business areas in Post Office. The Post Office Network Team will receive notification of a closure, then review the access requirements and commercial performance before making a recommendation on next steps. This recommendation will be reviewed by the proposition owner for outreach and the field teams for the area to ensure no considerations have been missed, and then the decision will be implemented.

## **3. Can we see the formal communication to our Outreach, explaining its closure, together with information from you informing the public of that decision please.?"**

You may find it helpful to know that a closure poster for Great Milton (the core branch for the Outreach) was sent and the stakeholder letter for the closure included reference to Horspath outreach closing too, but Horspath Parish Council were not included in the official list.

Unfortunately, Horspath Parish Council did not receive a separate closure poster and the stakeholder letter due to human error. Please find attached copies of the poster titled "FOI2025\_00275 Horspath Outreach Service OX33 1RP – Closure Poster" and letter titled "FOI2025\_00275 Great Milton OX44".

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](mailto: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](http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints)

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Team  
[information.rights@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:information.rights@postoffice.co.uk)  
<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/governance/access-to-information/access-to-information/>

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