



[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Date
08 December 2025
Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref: FOI2025/00549

Classification:
Public

Dear [Redacted],

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2025/00639

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (“**Post Office**”) on 04 September 2025, which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“**FOIA**”). We previously extended the deadline of this case on 02 October 2025, 30 October 2025 and 27 November 2025, in order to consider the public interest for section 43(2) of the FOIA, relating to Commercial Interests.

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

“In the absence of a detailed breakdown of unidentified losses across the Post Office Network please provide recorded information that details the calculation you use to arrive at the total Provision. In addition please also provide any recorded information as to what additional data sources you have identified that are now used to enhance the provision calculation and better estimate potentially unidentified losses.”

We can confirm that Post Office does hold the information you have requested. However, the information you requested regarding unidentified loss calculations is being withheld as it falls under the exemptions in section 43(2) Commercial Interests and section 31(1)(a) and s31(1)(b) Law Enforcement of the FOIA.

Section 43(2) commercial interests 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 may be a public interest in disclosure of information relating to the detailed unidentified loss calculation that has been requested, and held by Post Office, as this enhances transparency about the ways of working within Post Office and reassurance about the way public money is being spent.

However, there is a strong public interest in withholding information as it would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial interests of Post Office, and directly our Postmasters. This is because the Branch Losses Provision, documents in detail the sources used to arrive at Post Office's best estimate of unidentified losses across the Post Office Network, which as stated on page 193 of our Annual Report & Consolidated Financial Statements 2023/24 ("**ARA 23/24**"), is a common business practice for any retailer and are not disclosed in the ARA 23/24.

The sources used to calculate the unidentified losses are being withheld as the methodology may reveal operational weaknesses, reveal the commission that Post Office receives to particular contracted services, fraud detection strategies and inventory control processes and as such it would not be in the public interest to disclose information if Post Office would be unable to protect its commercial interests and operate in a fair marketplace regarding the data that drives the calculation of estimated potential unidentifiable losses and are commercially damaged by the release of the information resulting in loss of revenue, increase of operational cost, fraud or theft which could lead to loss of reputation, customer trust and brand damage

The information you have requested also falls under the exemption in section 31(1)(a) and 31(1)(b) of the FOIA, which relates to the prevention or detection of crime and apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This exemption is engaged because providing the detailed calculation will prejudice the prevention of crime by facilitating the possibility of a criminal offence being conducted and also prevent the future apprehension and thereby prosecution of offenders.

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 may be a public interest in disclosure of information relating to the detailed calculation held by Post Office, as this may enhance transparency about the ways of working within Post Office.

On the other hand, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information within the calculation, as the document could be used as the basis of criminal activity. Disclosure would facilitate an increased risk to branches of a criminal offence being committed, and may reveal branch cash holdings, including where there is higher than normal operational cash levels. Revealing actual cash held in branch increases the risk of a crime being committed, such as robbery and disclosing the information increases the risk to Postmasters of theft and their safety along with our customers. Disclosure of the information would also prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, including the investigation of any incidents of criminal activity and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Therefore, in light of the overall public interest tests carried out above Post Office have determined that the public interest falls in favour of withholding the Branch Losses Provision document.

The ARA 23/24, 'Notes to the Financial Statements' on page 96 under 'Branch losses provisions' explains the basis under which estimates are defined. The ARA 23/24 can be found via the following link:

<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/governance/key-reports-statements/post-office-annual-report-accounts-2023-24/>

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