



Date  
11 July 2024

Post Office  
100 Wood Street  
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:  
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

## Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/00302

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (“**Post Office**”) on 17 February, which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“**FOIA**”). We apologise for the delay in responding to your request.

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

**“I request information relating to the process followed when a receipts and payments mismatch occurred on the Horizon System during a balance and what branches would experience during this process and the impact the mismatch would have.**

**Please note that when I refer to a receipt and payments mismatch, I am not just referring to the know bug called receipts and payments mismatch bug, I am requesting in relation to all receipts and payments mismatches regardless of the cause.**

**The period I am request information for relates to all versions of Horizon covering the period the Inquiry is investigating from 1999 onwards.**

**Particularly answer the following questions and provide the documentation to support the answer.**

**- If the branch has a receipts and payments mismatch, does the Horizon System**

**display a message to make the user aware of this receipts and payments mismatch when balancing?**

- **What does this message say?**
- **At what point during the balancing process does this message appear?**
- **When this message appears on screen what actions (if any) does the branch have to undertake on the Horizon System?**
- **When there is a receipts and payment mismatch is the branch able to produce a final balance report for the Stock Unit where the receipt and payment mismatch occurred.**
- **When there is a receipts and payment mismatch is the branch able to roll the stock unit over into the next Cash Account period or Trading Period?"**

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

Please note, whilst we have some information, our electronic searches only hold information from 2009 onwards, we are unable to locate any electronic information prior to this.

To avoid hitting the cost of limit under Section 12(1) of the FOIA, we have provided information from 2009 onwards. If we were to carry out additional searches for information dating back to 1999, this would involve extensive manual searches over a number of different locations and therefore would hit the cost limit, which currently stands at £450.

**- If the branch has a receipts and payments mismatch, does the Horizon System display a message to make the user aware of this receipts and payments mismatch when balancing?**

Yes, the Horizon system displays a message to the user.

**- What does this message say?**

The message that gets displayed is, as shown in section 3.7.2.3 in the attached PDF document entitled FOIA Appendix.pdf:

*“Balancing Error. Receipts and Payments do no match and require investigation. WARNING: Continuing may lead to an unbalanced Branch Trading Statement”.*

Please note, whilst we have a record of this message existing from 2009, we are unable to locate any information prior to this.

**- At what point during the balancing process does this message appear?**

This message appears when a ‘Stock Unit Balance Report’ has been previewed or printed. Please see section 3.7.2.3 and section 3.1.1 in the attached document entitled FOIA Appendix.pdf.

**- When this message appears on screen what actions (if any) does the branch have to undertake on the Horizon System?**

The user is provided with the following two options:

- Option 1 - Continue: If this option is selected the prepared balance report is printed.
- Option 2 - Cancel: If this option is selected, the rollover process aborted.

Please see section 3.7.2.3 in the attached PDF document entitled FOIA Appendix.pdf.

**- When there is a receipts and payment mismatch is the branch able to produce a final balance report for the Stock Unit where the receipt and payment mismatch occurred.**

Yes, the branch is able to produce a final balance report if the user selects the ‘Continue’ option. Please see section 3.7.2.3 in the attached PDF document entitled FOIA Appendix.pdf.

**- When there is a receipts and payment mismatch is the branch able to roll the stock unit over into the next Cash Account period or Trading Period?”**

Yes, the branch would be able to roll the stock unit over, but if there is no discrepancy. In the instance of a discrepancy, the branch would need to settle the discrepancy to be able to roll the stock unit over. Discrepancies can be queried or disputed in this process. Since 2021, this can be done directly via Horizon. Previously disputes could be raised via the National Branch Support Centre ('NBSC').

The process for handling discrepancies found in branch is published on our website here:

<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/horizon-scandal-pages/improving-our-systems-and-processes/>

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/>

**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](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/privacy)**