



[REDACTED]

Date
17 September 2024

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/01143

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (“**Post Office**”) on 18 August, 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:

**“For every year since 2012, can you provide a branch count for each strategic partner you deal(t) with.
Are you able to provide a % increase in income year on year that these partners provide to Post Office Limited by year please.”**

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

However, the information you requested is being withheld as it falls 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 strategic partners 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 as well as the strategic partners that operate Post Office branches on our behalf. Competitors could use that information to see how our retail partnerships are performing and this could put Post Office at a competitive disadvantage.

For example, it could reveal, over a significant period of time, how many retailers have left/joined and / or reduced/increased their branch numbers which could potentially damage Post Office's brand or reputation and / or its ability to negotiate commercial agreements with existing or new partners who will have access to information that could result in them offering less favourable terms to operate Post Offices on our behalf.

Regarding the second part of your request on the percentage increase in income year on year that these partners provide to Post Office by year, providing this information would reveal which retailer(s) Post Office are most reliant on for income which could affect ongoing or upcoming contract negotiations or operational agreements. Therefore, the public interest in withholding this information outweighs the public interest in releasing it.

It would not be in the public interest to disclose information if Post Office would be unable to operate in a fair marketplace and are commercially damaged by the release of the information.

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