



Date
02 July 2025

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2025/00390

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (**"Post Office"**) on 7 June, 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:

"Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information regarding customer data breaches at Post Office Ltd from January 1st, 2023 to the present date:

- 1. The total number of reported customer data breaches during this period, and a breakdown of each year if possible.**
- 2. If possible, a year-by-year breakdown showing how many breaches were:**
 - a) Reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**
 - b) Involved customer personal or financial data**
 - c) Caused by internal human error vs external threats (e.g., phishing, hacking, system failure)"**

Please note, when scoping your request, we have applied the Data Protection Act 2018 definition of a personal data breach to broadly mean, *"the breach of security leading to accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed."* Within Post Office, we would typically use the term 'incident' to more clearly differentiate these from breaches notifiable to the Information Commissioner's Office (**"ICO"**).

We can confirm that Post Office does hold the information you have requested. The total number of customer incidents and data breaches from 1 January 2023 to 16 June 2025 was 309.

Please see the table below for a breakdown of the customer “data breaches” and “incidents.” Most of the figures relate to minor incidents reported by Post Office branches via our customer care service. These incidents could be things like a postmaster accidentally taking a credit card away from the line of vision of a customer. All incidents, no matter how minor are reported and are recorded as “incidents” rather than data breaches.

Year	Customer Incidents and Data Breaches	Notified to the ICO	Included Customer Financial Data
2023	134	0	11
2024	125	1	16
2025	50	0	13

We are withholding the breakdown of customer data breaches caused by either internal human error or external threats (e.g., phishing, hacking, system failure, etc.), because the information you have requested falls under the exemption in section 31(1)(a) of the FOIA, which relates to the prevention or detection of crime.

This exemption is engaged because providing the information will prejudice the prevention of crime by facilitating the possibility of a criminal offence being carried out.

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 relating to the reasons data breaches have occurred at Post Office, as this enhances transparency about the ways of working within the organisation.

On the other hand, there is a strong public interest in withholding information concerning the reasons for data breaches, as the information held could be used as the basis of criminal activity or a cyber-attack to try and obtain the information for

nefarious means. Disclosure of the information would potentially highlight security vulnerabilities within Post Office systems and processes and would prejudice the investigation of any incidents of criminal activity if it were to occur.

A disclosure made under the FOIA, is a disclosure to the world at large. Post Office takes its data protection responsibilities very seriously and has robust arrangements in place to protect IT systems and infrastructure. Despite genuine requests for information, some individuals may intend to misuse information to cause damage. Disclosure of this information into the public domain may enable criminals to exploit potential weaknesses to cause damage, disruption or profit using criminal means. It would therefore not be in the public interest to disclose this 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/>

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