



[REDACTED]

Date
17 September 2024

[REDACTED]

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/00074

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (“**Post Office**”) on 11 January 2024, which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“**FOIA**”). We sincerely apologise for the delay in responding to this request.

In your email you have requested the information shown verbatim in bold below, and we confirm that Post Office does hold some information in scope of your request:

1. a) How many Post Office branch managers (sub-postmasters and sub-postmistresses) the UK and Derbyshire were charged with financial misconduct in relation to the Horizon scandal between 1999 and 2015?

We have interpreted this question as asking us for the number of postmasters who were charged for allegedly committing “*financial misconduct*” offences based on Horizon-related evidence, in part or in whole, between 1999 and 2015 (both inclusive). We have interpreted financial misconduct to include offences such as theft, fraud, false accounting, concealment or suppression of a valuable security, money laundering, and obtaining a money transfer / property by deception, and those where the offence is unknown.

Based on the data available as of 16 August 2024 and subject to the considerations outlined in the later part of this letter, 680 postmasters were charged with financial misconduct between 1999 and 2015. This number takes all relevant charges into account regardless of the prosecuting authority, that is, one of Post Office, Royal

Mail Group Limited, the Crown Prosecution Service, Department for Work and Pensions, and the Northern Irish and Scottish prosecutors.

Overall, given the historical nature of the data concerned, with some dating back 25 years, we cannot be certain about the accuracy or completeness of the information we have provided, including the specific allegations for which postmasters were charged. Post Office continues to receive material from third parties regarding cases. Consequently, the numbers provided in response to this request may change later and are correct only as of 16 August 2024.

Out of the total figure of 680, fewer than 10 Derbyshire postmasters were affected. As such, we have withheld their number under sections 40(2) and 40(3A) of the FOIA as it constitutes personal data relating to other persons. These sections exempt personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would breach any of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the UK GDPR.

We consider that disclosure of that number is likely to breach the first data-protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed lawfully, fairly, and in a transparent manner. Disclosure of that number would not constitute 'fair' processing of the personal data, as it may lead to the identification of postmasters from Derbyshire.

b) Can you break down the nature of these charges?

We have interpreted "the nature of these charges" to mean the type of offences with which the postmasters were charged as already outlined in response to part 1 (a).

Please see the table below for the breakdown:

Offence	No. of Cases
Unknown	307
Concealing or suppression of a valuable security contrary to s20 of the Theft Act 1968	2
Concealing or suppression of a valuable security contrary to s20 of the Theft Act 1968 and false accounting contrary to s17 of the Theft Act 1968	1
False accounting	93

False accounting and fraud contrary to one of the offences under the Fraud Act 2006	1
false accounting and one of the money laundering offences under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002	1
Fraud	67
Obtaining a money transfer / property by deception contrary to s15A of the Theft Act 1968	1
Obtaining a money transfer / property by deception and false accounting	1
Procuring the execution of a valuable security by deception contrary to section 20(2) of the Theft Act 1968	1
Theft contrary to s7 of the Theft Act 1968	161
Theft and false accounting	32
Theft and concealing or suppression of a valuable security	3
Theft and obtaining a money transfer / property by deception	1
Theft and fraud	7
Theft, obtaining a money transfer / property by deception and concealing or suppression of a valuable security	1

2. a) Of those charged, how many Post Office branch managers were convicted in relation to financial misconduct?

Out of the total of 680 postmasters prosecuted for financial misconduct offences outlined in part 1a) above, 567 were convicted.

b) What were the nature of these convictions?

The 567 postmasters referred to in 2(a) above were convicted of one or more of the offence types outlined in our response to part 1(a) above.

Please note that in dealing with this request, we have been guided by the following additional considerations:

The figures above are restricted to postmasters (including branch managers, managers, shop managers, and other individuals whose roles are unknown) charged with financial misconduct offences, as your request is limited to postmasters. They exclude individuals known to be in non-postmaster roles (e.g. assistants, clerks,

customers, postal officers, etc.) who were also charged with financial misconduct offences in the same period (1,107).

The figures are based on the years that individual cases were commenced for investigation, although the charges or eventual convictions might have occurred in later years. This is the simplest and most accurate way to identify cases per year since information as to the date of charge or eventual conviction is not always known. Consequently, the figures include cases that were set up between 1999 and 2015, some of which might have resulted in a conviction or other outcome post-2015.

Please note that, other than cases that were prosecuted by Post Office itself, no analysis has ever been conducted across cases that have been prosecuted by other authorities to confirm whether a case relied on Horizon data or not. However, cases prosecuted by other authorities have been included, except where it can be clearly demonstrated that Horizon data was not relied on (e.g., murder, armed robbery, burglary, perverting the course of justice, etc.).

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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