



Date
23 May 2024

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/00283

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited ("**Post Office**") on 8 February, which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("**FOIA**").

We can confirm that Post Office does hold some of the information you have requested, and we have provided the answers alongside your questions, which are shown verbatim in bold below.

In providing our response to your questions, it's worth noting that Post Office and Royal Mail are separate organisations, which we explain for three reasons:

1. Post Office is not responsible for the delivery or redelivery of mail and parcels, or for the collection of unpaid postage fees.
2. Third-party statistics for digital fraud in relation to delivery scams do not always differentiate between Post Office and Royal Mail.
3. We can only enforce against unauthorised use of our own registered trademarks and intellectual property.

"I would like you to provide the following information:

How many complaints have you received regarding phishing scams involving texts from the Post Office. I would like this data yearly from 2019 (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)

Post Office does not hold this information in the form requested as we do not have a specific complaint classification for phishing scams, nor scams relating to text messages purported to have been sent by Post Office. Individuals use many and varied terms to describe attempts to obtain their personal information.

How much money per year does the Post Office spend on combating online fraud? (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)

We can confirm Post Office does hold this information; however, we believe 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 how much Post Office spends on combating online fraud, as this enhances transparency about the ways of working within Post Office, and the use of public funds.

On the other hand, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information as it could be used to inform criminal activity or aid the ability to carry out a cyber-attack. The amount of money spent on combating and preventing online fraud is sensitive information that must be safeguarded to ensure the security and integrity of our IT systems. Disclosure of this information would be likely to lead to individuals or groups with malicious intents, to carry out criminal activity on Post Office IT systems and we do not believe it is in the public interest to disclose this information.

What policies does the Post Office have in place to alert customers of phishing scams that involve texts, emails, or other material relating to postal services”

Post Office has implemented robust preventative measures to safeguard our customers and our brand. Our approach includes:

- **Advanced Monitoring and Detection**
- **Enforcement**
- **Implementation of DMARC Protocols**
- **Customer Education and Awareness:** We believe informed customers are the first line of defence against phishing. Through ongoing awareness campaigns such as paid social advertising, media engagement, and content on our consumer website, we equip our customers with the knowledge to identify and avoid becoming a victim of phishing scams and digital fraud.

By understanding the dynamic nature of digital fraud and phishing scams, Post Office remains committed to adapting our strategies and employing comprehensive preventative measures to protect our customers and our brand from these ever-evolving threats.

- **Process and Implementation:**

Identification and Takedown of Fraudulent Use

- **Intellectual Property Infringement Assessment**
- **Enforcement through Digital Brand Protection Partner**

Consumer Awareness and Phishing Campaigns

- **Monitoring and Response:** We are continually vigilant in monitoring phishing scams and fraudulent activities, assessing the need for consumer awareness campaigns based on the volume and severity of incidents.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** We are committed to educating the public on the dangers of phishing scams through targeted campaigns, leveraging social media, press and other communication channels to disseminate crucial information on recognising and avoiding scams.

Further information and content on Post Office consumer safeguarding can be found on our consumer website by visiting the following webpage:

<https://www.postoffice.co.uk/fraud-protection>

We can also confirm that a safeguarding policy is currently being drafted and intended to be published on the Post Office website at a future date.

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