



Date
4 June 2025

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref:

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2025/00281

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (**"Post Office"**) on 23 April, 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 (with our answers below each question):

"The Post Office has recently decided to franchise 108 directly owned Post Offices by autumn this year."

Could you please provide me with the following information:

1. What will the process of deciding on the new franchisee for each Post Office be?

Post Office run adverts on the 'Run a Post Office' website to obtain expressions of interest in running franchises in Directly Managed Branch locations. This is where all Post Office opportunities are advertised, and you can find the website at the following link:

<https://runapostoffice.co.uk/>

The applications received are evaluated and potential postmasters are contacted and put through an onboarding journey, which includes both financial and suitability assessments. If successful, both parties then agree a contract to run the franchise.

2. Will local communities be directly involved in the decision, and if yes, what will be the nature of that involvement?

Local communities are kept informed on any activity relating to changes in branches, including franchising opportunities or plans, via our 'Post Office Views' hub. At the below link, you are able to search for any specific branch, view proposed changes and access public consultations:

<https://www.postofficeviews.co.uk/>

3. Have there been any offers from potential franchisees for any and/or all 108 Post offices?

Post Office can confirm that offers have been received from potential franchisees. As of today, 4 June 2025, further details relating to 75 branches are now available on our corporate website. Please see the latest updates at the links below:

<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/media-centre/#/news/post-office-details-proposed-franchise-plans-for-first-tranche-of-last-remaining-108-directly-managed-branches-497742>

<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/media-centre/#/news/post-office-details-proposed-franchise-plans-for-second-tranche-of-last-remaining-108-directly-managed-branches-497953>

4. How many offers has there been for each?

5. If any of the offerees are companies, can you supply their names?"

The link provided above details several individual operators and the branches that they will be taking over.

The remainder of the operators are being withheld as this 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 various details of the Post Office network, specifically franchising, as this helps promote transparency in Post Office business. We particularly understand the attention this has gained via the media and with the public, given the important role Post Office plays in every community.

However, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information as it would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial interests of Post Office and the third parties involved in the franchising process.

It is important to remember a disclosure under FOIA is made into the public domain. Thus, disclosing information relating to any offers in the franchising of branches would be likely to prejudice Post Office's commercial interests as this is a live, ongoing process, where some offers are undergoing review, and some offers are only at the stage of expressing interest. By disclosing details of potential or selected partners, including company names, we may harm any commercial relationship between Post Office and these business/companies, most of which are not likely subject to the FOIA.

Bidding companies would not expect their details or offers to be disclosed under requests for information, particularly at such an early stage in the application process. This would provide rival bidders with a great deal of sensitive information about these companies, allowing them to scrape together any other publicly available information, in order to gain an advantage in a very competitive marketplace.

Therefore, we consider it would not be in the public interest to disclose this information as Post Office would be unable to operate in a fair marketplace regarding the competitive dialogue procedure and would be commercially damaged by the release of 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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