

Reference: 1528655

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1 December 2022

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about meetings between Ofcom and Royal Mail on the need for the Universal Service to change and modernise.

We received this request on 9 November 2022 and have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

Your request

You asked: *'Royal Mail tells me it has held a number of meetings with Ofcom about the need for the Universal Service to change and modernise. Do you have records of these meetings and what was discussed please?'*

Our response

In July of this year Ofcom published our [Review of Postal Regulation](#) ("our Review"). Our Review discussed the regulation of postal services for the next five years, including the Universal Service.

Royal Mail's [consultation response](#) to our Review discussed potential changes that could be made to the Universal Service (for example, see paragraph 3 in the Executive Summary), as well as highlighting further commentary on this issue in its [Half Year](#) and [Full Year Results](#) for Financial Year 2021-22.

Modernising the Universal Service was also referred to in Royal Mail's [Half Year results](#) for Financial Year 2022-23, which were published earlier this month.

Turning to your request, we can confirm that modernising the Universal Service has been discussed in meetings between Ofcom and Royal Mail, and we hold records of such meetings. However, we are unable to disclose this information as we consider its disclosure is exempt under section 44 of the FOI Act.

Section 44 exempts the disclosure of information which is prohibited by or under any enactment. We are prohibited under section 56 of the Postal Services Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act") from disclosing information which relates to a business, which we have obtained as a result of Part 3 of the 2011

Act, so long as that business continues to be carried on, unless we have the consent of that business or one of the statutory gateways for disclosure under section 56(2) of the 2011 Act is met, none of which applies here. Section 44 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Gloria Akinyemi

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#).

Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF