

Reference: 1561312 & 1561313

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Dear

28 February 2023

## Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your requests for information about complaints we have received about postal operators.

We received these requests on 31 January 2023 and have considered them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”).

### Your request and our response

*‘1. Please can you give me a breakdown of how many complaints you have received for each delivery company of each of the last three years.*

*2. Please can you provide me with a breakdown of what were the most complained about issues regarding couriers for each of the last three years’*

For the purposes of this request, the terms “delivery company” and “couriers” have been interpreted as ‘postal operators’ as defined under section 27(3) of the Postal Services Act 2011, that is, “a person who provides (a) the service of conveying postal packets from one place to another by post, or (b) any of the incidental services of receiving, collecting, sorting and delivering postal packets”.

#### Question 1

While we do hold some information relating to the number of complaints about specific postal operators, we are unable to disclose this information as we consider it exempt from disclosure under Section 44 of the Act. Section 44(1) provides that information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure is prohibited by or under any enactment. In this instance, disclosure of such information is prohibited under section 56 of the Postal Services Act 2011 (the PSA). Section 56 of the PSA prevents us from disclosing information that we have obtained, as a result of Part 3 (“regulation of postal services”) of the PSA, which relates to the affairs of a particular business (so long as the business is

being carried on), unless we have the consent of that business or one of the other gateways for disclosure in section 56(2) of the PSA applies. None of the gateways apply here. Section 44 is an absolute exemption under the Act and does not require a public interest test.

You may wish to have a look at the Royal Mail website as it publishes an annual complaints report. The latest one can be found here: [royal-mail-annual-complaints-and-compensation-2021-22.pdf](https://www.royalmail.com/press-and-media/press-releases/2022/02/2022-annual-complaints-report) ([internationaldistributionsservices.com](https://www.internationaldistributionsservices.com))

## Question 2

Only a relatively small number of consumers directly contact Ofcom in relation to postal services and when they do, it can cover a range of issues relating to any of the postal operators across the letters and parcels markets. Below is a table of complaint numbers and issues raised for each of the last three years.

Issue	Number	% of total complaints
<b>2019-2020</b>		
Delivery issues	71	38%
Redirection	13	7%
Quality of service	8	4%
Lost Mail	8	4%
Pricing	7	4%
Residual matters	79	43%
<b>Total complaints</b>	186	
<b>2020-2021</b>		
Delivery issues	138	44%
Delayed mail	39	12%
Lost mail	26	8%
Redirection	16	5%
Quality of service	9	3%
Residual matters	87	28%
<b>Total complaints</b>	315	
<b>2021-2022</b>		
Delivery issues	117	45%
Lost mail	22	9%
Delayed mail	19	7%
Redirection	11	4%
Surcharges	10	4%
Residual matters	79	31%
<b>Total complaints</b>	258	

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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