

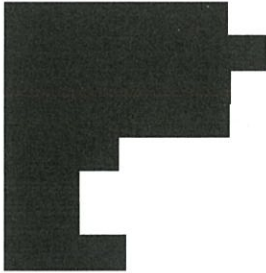


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Our Reference:  
FOI2020/06833  
Date:  
6 July 2020

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 16 June 2020 requesting the following information:

- “1. How many bags of mail/parcels were delivered in the year 2019? (this is the total amount shipped from BFPO to troops abroad, or at home, in the year 2019).**
- 2. Who are the current delivery partners that BFPO utilise to carry out their mail delivery. For each delivery partner, please can you specify the following sub questions;**
  - a. Annual spend (including price per kilo of mail)**
  - b. Delivery destinations**
  - c. Contract length**
- 3. The use of Postal And Courier Electronic Records (PACER) in a tracking delivery reference, information of most importance are;**
  - a. The current pricing and cost of operating PACER**

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- b. How does PACER operate? Is this a generic barcode method that can only be tracked by MOD?**
- c. Who supplied the technology for the current tracking services?**
- d. Was this supplier part of a competition or single sourced?**
- e. How many mail bags were tracked using PACER in 2019?**

**Any and all information regarding the topic of Mail Delivery and PACER would be greatly appreciated."**

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

This letter is to inform you that in respect of your request for information under Question 2a we have carried out a Public Interest Test (PIT) against the following qualified exemption: Section 43 (Commercial Interests). Section 43 is a qualified exemption and subject to public interest testing, which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The PIT concluded that Section 43 applies to the release of the price per kilo of mail but not to the annual spend. This is because release of both of these together (and in particular the price per kilo) would enable an individual to deduce individual price information that would be considered to be commercial-in-confidence. As such, it would cause prejudice to the commercial interests of both the Department and the relevant contractors. I have considered it necessary to apply the higher-level of prejudice against release of the exempted information of "would" rather than "would be likely to".

The other information you have requested is as follows.

Q1 - For the calendar year 2019 there were 178,725 bags.

Q2 - Current delivery partners annual spend (excluding the price per kilo), delivery destinations and contract length are, as follows:

- **Airmail Ltd:**
  - Annual contract value = £78,944.00
  - Contract Length = 4 years
- **Hellmann Worldwide Logistics Ltd:**
  - Annual contract value = £1,448,155.98
  - Contract Length = 4 years
- **National Air Cargo GmbH:**
  - Annual contract value = £190,975.58
  - Contract Length = 4 years
- **Ad HOC - DHL:**
  - Annual contract value = £19,473.09
  - Contract Length = No Contract – paid for via off contract approval
- **Ad HOC – Air Canada:**
  - Annual contract value = £128,822.51
  - Contract Length = No Contract – paid for via off contract approval
- **Royal Mail Group:**
  - Royal Mail:
    - Annual spend = £509,909.99

- Contract Length = No contract held and business is conducted on a requirement basis – supply and demand.
- Parcel Force:
  - Annual spend = £180,676,23
  - Contract Length = No contract held and business is conducted on a requirement basis – supply and demand.
- Delivery destinations – I am withholding this information under Section 21 of the FOI Act (information accessible by other means). This is an absolute exemption and not subject to a PIT. This information available as open source at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-forces-post-office-locations>

Q3 - Information on PACER is, as follows:

Operating costs for support are £24,709.34 per annum (FY 2019/20), excluding maintenance or change costs that vary from year to year.

The system produces containers which all have a system produced barcode (unique ID number) and this number is used to track containers through the BFPO mail pipeline. Mail is sorted to these containers and barcodes from external mail companies can be scanned and tracked into these containers.

Beumer Group UK own and supply PACER software. This was a Single Source procurement. 178,725 bags were tracked in 2019.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that further information on the BFPO is held at <https://www.gov.uk/bfpo>.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely



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