



Ministry  
of Defence



DE&S Policy Secretariat

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Defence Equipment & Support  
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Reference: FOI2023/14839

20 December 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 24 November requesting the following information:

4. *Why can't dependents with registered businesses, who live overseas, use the BFPO postal service? Due to the cost of using overseas postal services, and the rising cost of living, some individuals cannot continue their businesses. This is despite having registered their business as requested by BFGnet, and registering for tax purposes within their country of residence, they still have to use the local service. The BFPO service is available to them and would be much cheaper to use, but currently, they cannot utilise this service for business use.*

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. The information you requested can be found below, and has been extracted from Part 1, Chapter 3, Paragraph 7 of Joint Service Publication 367 (Defence Mail Policy), entitled "Use of BFPO to Operate a Business":

*"Customers who are operating a business overseas for personal gain are not authorised to use the BFPO facilities to forward or receive mail items connected with that business. The MOD pays for the transportation of mail to and from overseas by air or surface means; therefore, to allow customers to use the BFPO to operate a business for personal gain would constitute an abuse of public money. Individuals who are authorised to operate businesses overseas are advised that they should use local civilian post offices to receive or send goods connected with their business."*

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that the mission statement for the British Forces Post Office (BFPO) is "To provide an efficient and effective Postal & Courier Service to sustain the fighting power of UK Armed Forces overseas." The BFPO is structured to focus on the morale component of deployed operational personnel and those located overseas in firm bases, including families, via Defence connect activity.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact us in the first instance at the address above. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for 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.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint 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. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

DE&S Policy Secretariat