

Reference: 2026-008

Thank you for your email in which you requested the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA):

Please disclose the following information, for the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, and 2024/25:

- 1. The average cost of an investigation (GBP)**
- 2. The average duration of an investigation (in months)**
- 3. The percentage of investigations which resulted in a positive outcome for the SFO (successful prosecution, fine)**
- 4. The percentage of investigations which were abandoned by the SFO**
- 5. The percentage of investigations which resulted in no action being taken.**

The above refers to investigations into individuals and firms and refers to all investigation types.

Response

Please see below our response to your questions.

Question 1

We do not hold this information in the form requested. Case costs are reviewed on an individual basis rather than as an average and vary significantly depending on factors such as internal and external resources required and the duration of each investigation.

However, you may find relevant collective financial information in our published Annual Reports and Accounts:

[SFO Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25 - GOV.UK](#)

[SFO Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24 - GOV.UK](#)

For information from previous years, please visit the National Archive website: [Archive Timeline - UK Government Web Archive](#)

Question 2

During this period, the average duration of an investigation from acceptance by the Director of the SFO to an investigative outcome was c.50 months. An investigative outcome is the first recorded outcome of an investigation, this may be a charge, a decision to enter DPA negotiations, or termination.

Question 3

We have interpreted 'positive outcome' to mean successful prosecution outcomes including Deferred Prosecution Agreements, guilty pleas, or convictions after trial. During this period, around 25% of the SFO's case outcomes resulted in at least one successful prosecution outcome.

The 75% that did not result in a 'positive outcome' includes cases we opened but were closed before announcing for reasons including the case, upon investigation, may not have been for

the SFO. Any cases that have charged where the prosecution is still underway is not included in either figure.

Questions 4 & 5

The SFO does not use the term 'abandoned investigations' or 'no action taken'. During the period in question, around 65% of SFO investigations were terminated without charge.