

Reference: 01484880

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08 August 2022

Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about the cease of Royal Mail international reply coupons and discussions between Royal Mail and Ofcom. We received this request on 19 July 2022 and have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the “FOI Act”).

Your request

You asked:

Royal mail stopped selling International Reply Coupons since 31st December 2011, hereby I would like to obtain following information from the regulator of postal service, Ofcom.

- 1. Did Royal Mail consult Ofcom about this matter? If so, please provide related correspondence between Ofcom and Royal Mail.*
- 2. Did Ofcom hold any internal review or public consultation on this matter? If so please provide relevant records.*
- 3. Did Ofcom, as the regulator of UK’s UPU (Universal Postal Union) membership, made any communication with UPU about this matter? If so please provide related correspondence.*

Background

International Reply Coupons (IRCs) are part of an initiative run by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) to allow someone sending a letter to another country to pay for the postage in advance. Participation is voluntary.

The scheme is not referenced in the Postal Services Act 2000 or 2011. It is therefore a commercial product and it is for Royal Mail to decide whether to participate or not.

[Royal Mail decided to withdraw from the scheme](#) on 31 December 2011 because there was limited demand. Note, it is not the only UPU member to take this decision; the USA made the same decision in 2013 also citing poor take up.

Our response

Ofcom does not hold information in response to your request. Having searched our records, we cannot find any reference to any communication/meeting with Royal Mail regarding its decision to stop selling IRCs. IRCs are an unregulated product, therefore we would not expect Royal Mail to have consulted with us.

If you have any queries, then please contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine Childs

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