

13th April 2010

Royal Mail Group

Ganesh Sittampalam

By email: request-30669-66169bxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Freedom of Information Unit
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Royal Mail Sheffield
Pond Street
Sheffield
S98 6HR

foi@royalmail.com
www.royalmail.com

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Freedom of Information Request

I am writing in response to your email on the 12th March 2010. We have considered your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In your email you requested the following:

"A list of all current agreements Royal Mail has to deliver unaddressed mail for either the town of St Neots or the PE19 postal area."

We do hold information relevant to your request; you requested a list of "current" agreements and we have identified agreements in place at the time of processing your request for the delivery of unaddressed (Door to Door) mail in the PE postcode area. However, this information is considered to be commercially sensitive and we believe its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of Royal Mail. Therefore, we consider it to be exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act, Prejudice to Commercial Interests.

Door to Door is an unregulated mail product in the highly competitive direct mail and advertising markets within which Royal Mail has only a minority share. This information, if disclosed, would be likely to be used by Royal Mail's competitors to target their own business and promotional activity within the area concerned. The information would reveal the current levels of business in this particular area and enable competitors to target Royal Mail's Door to Door customers with their own services therefore prejudicing the commercial interests of Royal Mail.

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This provision is subject to the public interest test. Royal Mail recognises that there is public interest in the issue of unaddressed mail and that not everyone wishes to receive such mail. For this reason Royal Mail provides customers with an opt-out service for unaddressed mail delivered by Royal Mail; details are provided on our website www.royalmail.com. However, we do not believe that the requested information would further inform the public in relation to the provision of Door to Door or the opt-out service. The information would be of interest to other companies offering direct marketing services but we do not believe that it would serve the interests of the public to place Royal Mail at a commercial disadvantage by allowing them to make use of Royal Mail's own business information.

Royal Mail Group is a publicly owned company and there is a real and direct public interest in its commercial performance. It is very much in the public interest that Royal Mail is able to compete fairly in an open market, with a strong public interest in maintaining fair competition and parity of treatment in the postal market. As I have stated above, Door to Door mail is not regulated by Postcomm and Royal Mail should be allowed to operate on a level playing field with competitors who would not be required to disclose equivalent information themselves. Therefore in our view the public interest lies in maintaining this exemption as we do not consider public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the likely damage to Royal Mail's commercial interests and prejudice to the postal market that would result from disclosure.

I am sorry that your request cannot be met on this occasion. If for any reason you are not satisfied with this response, you do have the right to request a review. If you wish to do so please set out in writing your grounds of appeal and send to the Head of Information Compliance, Royal Mail Group, Company Secretary's Office, 100 Victoria Embankment, LONDON, EC4Y 0HQ. An internal panel will then review the decision, and you will be advised of the outcome

If, having requested an internal review by Royal Mail, you are still not satisfied with our response you also have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

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Yours Sincerely

Daniel Tulp
Freedom of Information Case Officer
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