



Information Rights Team
Post Office Limited
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Our reference: APP201601280930

Mr Robert Whittaker
request-298764-eac954ea@whatdotheyknow.com

09 November 2016

Dear Mr Whittaker,

Freedom of Information Request - APP201601280930

I am writing in response to a request from the Information Commissioners Office who are considering your complaint, and have asked Post Office Limited ("**Post Office**") to provide you with the details of the complex issues which prevented us from responding to your request for re-use within the 20 working day deadline.

The delay in responding to you was caused by Post Office's activity in reviewing the material available to customers using the internet to obtain up to date information about Post Office branches. Some of these complex processes included the review of internal data processing, liaison with a range of functions around the business and seeking to understand and develop technical matters relating to the handling of the information which involved external third parties to improve Branch Finder and the data available to internet enquiries about Post Offices.

Ensuring that customers using the internet have the most up to date information about Post Offices is a long-term on-going project for Post Office. As Post Office was undergoing a review involving complex issues, it was not possible to respond to you more promptly.

Post Office, however, sought to assist by the publication of a list last October, which was in an open machine readable format and has recently been updated.

Where we are asked for a list, our practice is to refer to Branch Finder and to exempt disclosure under s21 of the Freedom of Information Act 200 ("**FOIA**") where we issued you with a refusal notice in our letter dated 17 September 2014 and subsequent requests we received.

Where Post Office have disclosed the list as at the end of March each year we have allowed re-use under the Non-Commercial Government Licence with the proviso that it is explained that the data may not be up to date and refers users of the data to Branch Finder for up to date information. In this way Post Office ensures our customers do not use the services of other available competitors for the services we provide due to frustration and to limit the unauthorised re-uses of Branch Finder on the internet which are outside of Post Offices control.

Within the history of our previous responses to you, we have always been very clear why Branch Finder is the best way for our customers to obtain the most up to date information and location of our branches, and provided you with regular updates to let you know that we were dealing with your request.

Post Office apologises for the delay in responding to you and wish to explain that in our attempt to provide advice and assistance to you with the information you have sought over a number of requests, we now disclose a list of branches as at the end of March each year in an open machine readable format.

We are however not at the stage where we can grant a licence to re-use the disclosed list on our website or information from Branch Finder searches under an Open Government Licence, due to the changes to the Post Office Network, notwithstanding the tremendous change as a result of the transformation of our branches under the Network Transformation Programme which is on-going. This is because the information from the list as at the end of March or from Branch Finder searches would be out of date within a very short period of time as the data is only accurate at a given point in time.

Yours sincerely



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