



HM Passport
Office

Parliamentary Correspondence Unit
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Email xxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx

Website www.gov.uk/hm-passport-office

Mr Mark Baker

Email: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

Reference: FOICR 34098/15

Date: 9 February 2015

Dear Mr Baker

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your e-mail of 6 January, in which you ask for information on the availability of passport applications forms in the Post Office. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your information request and Her Majesty's Passport Office response are set out below.

I am informed by the Post Office that your department prevents the Post Office from providing Passport Application forms in any other Post Office Branch other than those selected for the Passport check and send service. Would you please supply confirmation that this restriction is part of the contractual arrangement you have with the Post Office and if so what the rationale is behind such a restriction? If no such restriction exists can you explain why your application forms are not available in most Post Office Branches?

It is part of the contractual arrangement between Her Majesty's Passport Office (HM Passport Office) and Post Office Ltd (POL) that Post Office branches which are not part of the Passport Check & Send network, do not hold stocks of passport application forms. Staff within such branches have not received the appropriate training and therefore cannot provide information about the service, or offer the full Check & Send arrangements. HM Passport Office also has to consider the costs of distribution, stock management, and of keeping application form packs up to date.

HM Passport Office works in very close partnership with POL to provide an accessible, efficient and effective service to the general public. Currently around 2,800 Post Office branches and sub branches supply passport application form packs to the public and over 99% of the UK population live within 10 miles and 95% of the population within 5 miles of a Post Office branch offering the Check & Send service.

In partnership with POL we conduct regularly reviews on the number and location of branches that are able to offer the Check & Send service. As a result of these reviews we have added a further 50 branches were added to the network in 2013/14. We have also agreed with POL that, should a branch providing the Check & Send service close, then, unless there is a branch offering the service within a reasonable distance, the service will transfer to a nearby branch.

In keeping with the Freedom of Information Act, we assume that all information can be released to the public unless it is exempt. In line with normal practice we are therefore releasing the information which you requested via the www.gov.uk website.

I hope that this information meets your requirements. I would like to assure you that we have provided you with all relevant information that Her Majesty's passport Office holds.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to the address below, quoting reference FOICR 34098/15. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

Information Access Team
Home Office
Ground Floor, Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
e-mail: FOIRequests@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Yours sincerely

H Reid
Parliamentary Correspondence Unit