

8 October 2010

Royal Mail Group

Mr S. Moran

By email: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

Freedom of Information Unit
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Royal Mail Sheffield
Pond Street
SHEFFIELD
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Dear Mr Moran,

I am writing in response to your request for information received 10th September 2010 which has been considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following information:

"Please could you provide me with, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the up to date locations of:

- 1. Every Post Box with the last collection times.*
- 2. Post Offices, with opening times, a 'plain address' will suffice.*
- 3. Depot's/Sorting Offices. Same information as Post Offices.*

That the Royal Mail currently operates."

I can confirm that we do hold information in regards to point one of your request, however this information is considered to be exempt from disclosure under section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act, prejudice to commercial interests. The information requested has been gathered by Royal Mails own business resource and continues to invest in updating and improving the accuracy of the information held. This information therefore has a commercial value to Royal Mail which would be undermined by its release into the public domain. This would clearly be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of Royal Mail; significantly reducing, if not removing completely, Royal Mail's ability to exploit the information commercially.

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Furthermore, there are plans in place for Royal Mail to provide postbox location information through various forms of media. Releasing this raw data would deny Royal Mail Group the full benefit of providing this service directly to customers, and it would be detrimental for customers to be drawn to alternative websites for reasons of cross-marketing and promotion of other services provided by Royal Mail Group and Post Office Ltd.

Section 43(2) is subject to the public interest test. Royal Mail recognises that there is an interest in promoting access to postboxes and informing the public of postbox locations, however there is also public interest in protecting the commercial interests of any business from unfair prejudice. As a publicly owned company there is significant public interest in protecting the commercial interests of Royal Mail Group and its ability to provide public mail services. In the face of declining mail volumes, Royal Mail is reliant on revenue from all possible avenues. As Royal Mail has developed this data at its own expense and continues to invest in updating and improving the accuracy of the information we believe the public interest is in favour of withholding the information requested. Furthermore, by the information being available directly through Royal Mail it will be accurate and up to date, and therefore more reliable and beneficial to the public.

In regards to point two of your request the address and normal opening hours for every branch of the Post Office is available from the Post Office website: http://www.postoffice.co.uk/portal/po/finder?catId=20700386&pageId=ftn_finder_po_postoffice. Using this tool you can search for all branches in a particular town or postcode area.

Under section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and the public interest test therefore does not apply.

Finally in response to point three of your request, a spreadsheet has been enclosed detailing the address of each Delivery Office and SPDO. It is important to note that this is the most recent data we have available in the format you require, and there may be some discrepancies due to closures and movement occurring since it was last updated.

You also requested the opening times of Delivery Offices. Due to the recent changes that have taken place in regards to opening times of Delivery Offices the information we hold is significantly outdated, and new information has not yet been collated centrally. To gather this information we would be required to contact each Delivery Office individually, which would significantly exceed the cost limit set out under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, due to the size of the network. The cost limit for Royal Mail Group is set

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at £450, or 18 hours for one person to identify, retrieve and collate the required information, as such we are not required to respond to this part of your request.

It is difficult to advise how you may narrow your request to fit within the cost limit if you require the information on a national scale, however if there is a specific postcode area you are interested in, it may be possible to identify the information you require within the cost limit.

I am sorry we are unable to meet your request in full on this occasion, however hopefully the information that has been provided is useful to you. 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 request, and you will be advised of the outcome.

If you decide to appeal and are still not satisfied with our response you also have a right to 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

Yours sincerely

Kate Fearn
Freedom of Information Support Officer
Freedom of Information Unit
Enc: Deliver Office Addresses