



Information Rights Team  
Post Office Limited  
Ground Floor  
Finsbury Dials  
20 Finsbury Street  
London EC2Y 9AQ

Your reference:  
Our reference: FOI2021/00573

Mr John O'Sullivan

request-760212-187f5eec@whatdotheyknow.com

19 July 2021

Dear Mr O'Sullivan,

### **Freedom of Information Request – FOI2021/00573**

I am writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited ("**Post Office**") on 24 June, which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("**FOIA**").

In your email you have requested the following information:

*Thank you for a reply to my request. Without going to the cost of an exact number can you confirm that POL will hold a signed copy of a contract for all SPM appointments?*

This was further clarified by you on 7 July in which you said:

*I am asking if you can confirm thanks to robust procedure and policy that you would hold a signed contact for all SPM appointments. You would have this information without recourse to looking through each document as it is not possible to employ someone as a SPM without the necessary paperwork being completed and held on file. Is this the case?*

As we previously explained in our response to you (FOI2021/00452), Post Office believes that to determine whether we definitely hold the information that you require, it would significantly exceed the cost limit set out under Section 12(1) of FOIA. Even though you are not requesting exact figures in this request, Post Office would still have to carry out searches of its records to determine whether a signed copy is held or not.

The appropriate cost limit for Post Office is set at £450<sup>1</sup>. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, and in locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Contracts are held both physically and electronically depending on when a postmaster first started. To establish the total number of signed contracts would require searching multiple stores and in the case of physical records, examining each store to determine whether a signed contract was held. Given the number of branches, this would take significantly longer than 18 hours. Consequently, Post Office is not obliged by the FOIA to process the request further.

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<sup>1</sup> S3(3) - The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/3244/regulation/3>

As we also mentioned in our previous response, Post Office believes that the only way in which a request could be framed that brings it within the cost limit would be to focus the request on specific branches. It is likely, however, that such a request would be refused as it would likely breach the Data Protection Act 2018 as we would consider the information to be the personal data of the postmaster.

If you have any queries about this response, please contact me. Do remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

I am sorry I could not provide you with the information you requested on this occasion, however if you are dissatisfied with the handling of this response, you do have a right to request an internal review. You can do this by writing to the address below stating your reasons for your internal review request.

Information Rights Manager  
Post Office Limited  
Information Rights Team  
Ground Floor  
Finsbury Dials  
20 Finsbury Street  
London  
EC2Y 9AQ  
[information.rights@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:information.rights@postoffice.co.uk)

If, having requested an internal review by Post Office, 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: 0303 123 1113  
<https://ico.org.uk>

Yours sincerely,



David Sinclair  
Information Rights Team  
[information.rights@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:information.rights@postoffice.co.uk)  
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