Ms Andrea West
request-167807-cab115db@whatdotheyknow.com

Our reference : OOLO-9CHDKE

15 November 2013

Dear Ms West,

Ref: Freedom of Information Request – OOLO-9CHDKE

I am writing in response to your email of 15 October 2013, in which you have made further enquiries relating to the time taken to process transactions.

I am sorry you feel that we have not answered your request, but it is our considered view that we have answered it to the best of our ability in two previous enquiries.

The theme of your questioning has extended over a number of months and I thought it may help if I recapped our previous response to your request, and to try to put some more clarity around our response.

Your request of 9 August, reference OOLO-9AEBLN, asked us to confirm "*if all of these transactions actually earn subpostmasters the national minimum wage to carry out these transactions on your behalf?*". The transactions you were referring to were the processing of a pension payment, the processing of a bill payment, the issuing of a tax disc and processing a passport application.

I should make clear at the outset, the information you had requested is not information that Post Office Limited routinely generates or records for its day to day operations.

We have already made clear in our responses of 09 September and the 14 October; Subpostmasters are engaged by Post Office Limited via a contract for services and are therefore not employees of Post Office Limited. Additionally, they are not considered to fall within the statutory definition of a 'worker' and therefore the National Minimum Wage Act 1998, as referred to in your question above, does not apply to them.

We also advised you, Subpostmasters are not required to provide personal service; whilst many Subpostmasters choose to work in branch they are not obliged to do so and could instead engage members of staff to conduct transactions, as well as all other branch services. Some Subpostmasters may choose to engage a member of staff to conduct transactions at the branch whilst the Subpostmaster undertakes other commercial activities.

The Post Office network offers a wide range of products and services to customers; these products and services are available whilst the branch is open and trading although some products are available outside of the opening hours of a branch,

We should be mindful that branches do not process just one transaction type endlessly throughout any one hour or subsequently during any working day, but instead process a range of transaction types, each of which has a specific value. Additionally and as mentioned earlier, Subpostmasters are remunerated for services undertaken away from the physical branch, those processed through specific call centres, and as such it is possible that whilst the branch undertakes a transaction over the counter, for example a stamp book sale, it is possible that a further transaction is being processed in one of our call centres or online, for example a financial product sale, and in addition it is also possible that a transaction is conducted on behalf of the branch outside of its opening hours.

Returning to my earlier statement, I reiterate that the information you have requested is not information that Post Office Limited routinely generates or records for its day to day operations, and as such and as previously advised I am unable to confirm whether Post Office Limited holds the information you have requested. Please see our response to request OOLO-9AEBLN dated 06 September for our explanation of the Section 12 (1) exemption – cost limits and the subsequent likelihood of the engagement of the Section 43 (2) exemption – Commercial Interests.

I do hope that the above information has clarified our position with regard to your enquiries.

Yours sincerely

Kerry Moodie
Information Rights Team Leader
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http://www.postoffice.co.uk/our-publication-scheme