



[REDACTED]

Date
7 January 2025

[REDACTED]

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref: FOI2024/01460

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/01567

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (“**Post Office**”) on 4 December, which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“**FOIA**”).

In your email, you have requested the information shown verbatim in bold below:

“Thank you for your response to my Freedom of information Request dated 5th November 2024.

Firstly, in respect of my first question I am incredulous that you do not hold information on the numbers of people for or against proposed change and do not think your claiming to have agreed ‘Principles of Community Engagement’ as agreed with Citizens Advice negates your responsibility to conform to the Gunning Principles.

Thus, I would like answers to the following questions under the Freedom of Information Act: -

I What responsibility does the Post Office have under Common Law to adhere to the ‘Gunning Principles’?

II How does the Post Office discharge its duties to ensure “the results of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account” if it is unaware of the numbers of people for or against proposed change?

III Why did the post office ask if people supported the changes at Evington Post Office if it is not interesting in the numbers of people for or against the proposed change?

In respect to my original remaining two questions, I am making a further formal freedom of information request in respect to the consultation on this matter, as the previous request has been misinterpreted and refused on the grounds that I was requesting personal details of those who signed both mentioned petitions. I would therefore submit the following questions: -

I. I would like details of the petition mentioned in the report and its 1257 signatories specifically: -

- a) What was (were) the question(s) asked on the petition?**
- b) Who conducted the petition?**
- c) How many of the signatories live within Evington Village**
- d) Or within one mile thereof?**

II. Details of the Postmaster petition and its 440 signatories

- e) What was (were) the question(s) asked on the petition?**
- f) Who conducted the petition?**
- g) How many of the signatories live within Evington Village**
- h) Or within one mile thereof?"**

Question I, II and III are not a request for recorded information and are therefore not covered by the FOIA. However, under our section 16 FOIA duty to provide advice and assistance, we have previously confirmed Post Office public consultations relate to accessing Post Office services, not the change being proposed to a branch. These consultations are conducted following our 'Principles of Community Engagement', as agreed with Citizens Advice. Consequently, responses are not analysed on numbers for or against the proposed change, but on access to alternative Post Office services, should the proposed changes proceed. Please see the link below for further information:

https://www.postofficeviews.co.uk/user_uploads/principles-of-community-engagement-june-2024-1.pdf

Regarding your questions Ia), Ib), IIe) and II f), we can confirm that the petitions were not conducted by Post Office. However, we can confirm that the petition containing 1,257 signatories was scanned and emailed to Post Office by an employee at a local retailer, and the petition containing 440 signatories was handed in to a member of staff at Post Office, in paper format.

We have attached two documents which show the questions asked in the two external petitions. Please see documents titled, "FOI2024_1567 Postmaster Petition 440 Signatories_Redacted" and "FOI2024_1567 Petition 1257 Signatories_Redacted".

All personal data relating to the individuals who conducted or signed the petitions has been withheld under sections 40(2) and 40(3A) of the FOIA as the information constitutes personal data relating to other persons. This section exempts personal information from disclosure if the information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of the information would breach any of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR").

We consider that disclosure of this information is likely to breach the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed lawfully, fairly, and in a transparent manner. Disclosure would not constitute 'fair' processing of the personal data because these individuals would not reasonably expect their name, signature and / or address to be disclosed in relation to this request for information.

Regarding your questions Ic), Id), If) and Ig), about how many of the signatories live "within" or "within a mile thereof" of Evington Village, we can confirm Post Office does not hold data in the way you have requested this information. Whilst both petitions asked for either an address or postcode, neither provides enough information to accurately determine whether the signatories reside "within" or "within a mile thereof" of Evington Village, in order to answer these parts of your information request.

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 above within 40 working days of receipt of this response stating your reasons for your internal review request or alternatively, by emailing 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
www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Team
information.rights@postoffice.co.uk
<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/governance/access-to-information/access-to-information/>

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