

Reference: 1971282

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

7 April 2025

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about PAF and postcode decisions.

We received this request on 10 March 2025 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

Your request

My questions made under the FOIA are:

- 1. Since inception of the PAF Code of Practice, how many postcode decisions have been made?*
- 2. How many were successfully made?*
- 3. How many were unsuccessfully made?*
- 4. What was/were the reasons for both the successful and unsuccessful decisions in each and every case?*
- 5. In each and every case, how many of both the successful and unsuccessful cases were initiated and desired by Royal Mail, and how many were initiated by customer demand?*

Our response

The PAF is a file of over 30 million delivery points across the UK which is owned by Royal Mail, who are therefore responsible for its maintenance and provision of managed access. PAF data is primarily created and used as an operational tool for Royal Mail to use when processing, sorting and delivering mail items. Royal Mail has established a [Code of Practice](#) to govern the management of PAF and it explains why and how any changed addresses will be introduced.

While Ofcom is responsible for ensuring Royal Mail undertake action to ensure the accuracy of the PAF through our enforcement of the Postal Service Act (2000), Royal Mail is responsible for the practical task of maintaining the data.

Ofcom does not have a role in assessing applications for PAF data changes and does not receive information from Royal Mail about its decisions. We therefore do not hold any of the requested data.

While the PAF is a useful data source for many digital services and systems, it is the responsibility of PAF users, such as delivery companies, to meet their own customer needs. Third party use of PAF data, and issues arising from it, is unlikely to be justification for a change to the PAF data itself, such as a change to a postcode area or additional address lines data. Third parties facing difficulties using the data need to find solutions based on the available data, unless a change to PAF can be justified.

It is worth noting provisions in the Code of Practice that discuss processes where the local council or authority may implement a change in an area that justifies a change to the PAF data. Local issues affecting accessibility to particular addresses and delivery points may justify action from a local council, prior to any considerations relating to the PAF.

If you have not already done so, it is recommended that these questions are directed at Royal Mail to see if the Address Management Unit can assist – details are found on the ‘Powered by PAF’ website [here](#).

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk – quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

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Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress. Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner’s Office](#).