

THE POSTCODE ADDRESS FILE ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

Minutes of meeting held at 13:00 on 17 April 2025

At the offices of Experian, 6th Floor, Cardinal Place, 80 Victoria St, London, SW1E 5JL

And by video conference

Present

Ian Beesley	Chairman
Richard Hartland	Data8
Paul Cresswell	Experian
Nick Chapallaz	GeoPlace
Ron Wilkinson	Improvement Service, Scotland
Neil Haydock	Independent Consultant
Paul Brough	Mail Users' Association

In attendance

Ian Evans	AMU
Alasdair MacHardy	AMU

Attending by video link

Rob Parker	CACI
Stuart Watt	GB Group
Ian Paterson (items 1-3)	Mail Competition Forum
Vicky Groombridge	Sagacity

Apologies

None

Secretariat

Paul Roberts

1 Welcome and Introductions

THE BOARD welcomed Vicky Groombridge, Director of Products at Sagacity, as a new member of the PAB. Vicky represents the interests of the marketing and data analytics/modelling community.

2 Chairman's Update

2.1 Mail Users' Association (MUA)

THE CHAIRMAN reported that PAB member Paul Brough had been appointed chair of the MUA. The BOARD congratulated Paul on his appointment and wished him well in the role.

2.2 PAB Chairman's meeting with Ofcom

Further to previous PAB meetings. THE CHAIRMAN advised he was still awaiting a date to meet with Ofcom and would keep the PAB updated as this is confirmed.

3 Market Developments

3.1 Cancellation of PAF licences

THE AMU advised they had established a database of the reasons given when users cancelled PAF use. The analysis would be refined with further experience, to take account of underlying shifts in behaviour.

SP representatives suggested five categories for the analysis: switching SP, ceasing all addressing products, moving to an alternative addressing solution not involving PAF, company liquidation, company consolidation.

Board members also reported that there appeared to be companies listed as PAF providers on PoweredbyPAF who had ceased trading. The AMU advised they would investigate this.

ACTION: THE BOARD invited the AMU to provide a further report on the analysis at the October 2025 PAB meeting.

3.2 2024/25 PAF Revenue and Initial Forecast for 2025/26

In advance of formal annual reporting, the AMU advised that PAF revenue was likely to have been slightly higher in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24, with a small reduction in the overall number of end users. The early forecast for 2025/26 was that revenue would be flat. Formal reporting of PAF financial performance would be presented at the October PAB meeting, in line with previous years.

3.3 Ongoing Global Market Changes affecting PAF sales

THE BOARD had a preliminary discussion of the possible impact of current global market conditions and other changes.

3.4 Public Sector Licence (PSL)

The Government Digital Service (DGS) was currently being restructured, with the aim of consolidating digital expertise to improve public services. The AMU were continuing to engage with the relevant DGS team, but no change to the current five-year public sector licence was currently envisaged. The AMU would continue to monitor developments with the National Data Library (NDL), both as to content and public availability.

THE AMU reported there were 6,500 registered PSL users, with a small percentage of those registered not currently using PAF. Most of these were at the low volume end of the spectrum, such as Parish Councils. The AMU also advised that applications for new licences were currently continuing to run at around 25 applications a month.

3.5 Developer Licence

THE AMU reported that levels of downloads and subsequent conversion rates into licensed users remained consistent, and the licence continued to be viewed as a valuable product for newer PAF customers.

3.6 Micro-business Licence

THE AMU confirmed that there continued to be a small but consistent level of new micro-business licence customers for PAF.

3.7 Charity Licence

THE AMU advised that PAF licences for registered charities with an annual turnover of less than £1million had spiked during COVID, but have now returned to pre-pandemic levels and continued to be taken across a wide range of sectors, especially health, religion, and education.

4 AMU Engagement with RM Operations

4.1 Performance Measures

THE AMU advised that it was currently analysing the relationship between the level of PAF changes reported by offices and the level of manual sortation of mail required.

ACTION: THE BOARD invited the AMU to provide an update later in 2025/26.

4.2 Delivery Office (DO) reported changes to PAF

THE AMU advised that 76% of offices had proactively submitted a PAF changes report in March 2025, the highest figure in the last year.

THE AMU also reported that the number of offices in the lower performing group had reduced from 45% to 35% over the past year

THE BOARD welcomed progress in this area and requested further regular updates from the AMU, together with further development and implementation of performance measures.

5 Service Level Agreement Between the AMU and RM Operations

5.1 AMU response to the PAB Forcefield Analysis of the environment for introducing a new AMU/ RM Ops Service Level Agreement

- Overall AMU efforts, including dedicated AMU resources, had resulted in increased frequency and levels of Delivery Office (DO) reporting of changes required to addresses in PAF.
- THE AMU had worked closely with the central RM Communications Team to reinforce the importance of accurate data in PAF via exposure through RM TV and social media campaigns. A strapline aimed directly at front-line employees: 'It's in your hands', was now being used in these communications campaigns. In discussion, PAB members stressed the importance of assessing the success of communications campaigns.
- The circulation to Regional Operations Directors (RODs) of Delivery Offices monthly performance league tables on reporting of PAF changes was working well.
- Technology could be more fully utilised to capture and report PAF information (especially via PDAs). It was hoped that ongoing work with the RM Operations Nerve Centre could help raise the priority for PAF data needs in future PDA development.
- THE AMU confirmed that they were triggering the maximum penalty clauses within the current SLA framework, but PAB members questioned whether the penalties were visible enough in the RM Operations accounts and would need to be reviewed under the proposed new SLA.
- The implications of the ongoing trial of delivery changes under the USO for PAF change reporting would be assessed towards the end of the summer.

5.2 Feedback from RM Operations on the Draft new SLA

It was still not clear where RM Operations ownership of a new SLA would rest. AMU discussions were continuing with senior Operations managers. Nor had the AMU yet received feedback on the draft SLA submitted by the PAB which had been sent by the AMU to RM Operations for comment.

With the start of a new financial year, the way should be clearer for active engagement with RM Operations on these matters. The AMU were keen to get a new SLA agreed by the end of Q2 2025/26, with implementation to be confirmed following that. THE BOARD expressed the urgency with which progress on a new agreement with RM Operations for PAF validation and updating was needed

ACTIONS:

THE BOARD:

- invited the AMU to advise on how the communications campaign success was being measured;
- extended an invitation to the Head of the RM Operations Nerve Centre to attend a discussion on PAF reporting at the July 2025 PAB meeting;
- invited the AMU to provide a flowchart of the current PAF change reporting process, as background to future discussions;
- invited the Chairman to explore with the AMU how to engage with the current trial of a revised USO for second class mail;

6 Audit & Investigation Activity

6.1 Key points from Q36 & Q37 DQM reports

The reasons for the downturn in the changes score in recent quarters had not yet been resolved, and the AMU would be meeting DQM before the end of April to investigate further. THE BOARD and the AMU also agreed that a review of how the weighting mechanism works would be valuable.

ACTION: THE BOARD invited Vicky Groombridge to discuss the weighting mechanism with the AMU and DQM, and to advise on the need for a PAB working group to review and recommend possible updating of the weighting formula.

6.2 Business Names Activity

THE AMU reported that its volume of analysis and changes to business names in PAF had reduced slightly in the past two months due to migration to a new RM CRM system. It noted that responses to customer mailings remained the principal source of information.

Data from other sources took much longer to analyse, with Business Rates information proving to be a more successful source of information than Companies House information.

7 Turnaround Time for Supplying Postcodes to Local Authorities

GeoPlace reported that local authorities had recently experienced reduced timeliness with RM providing postcodes for new addresses. The AMU advised that the CRM migration had unexpectedly impacted processes temporarily. All turnaround times were now back within specification.

ACTION: THE BOARD invited the AMU to liaise with GeoPlace to check whether there were any outstanding requests from the affected period.

8 Next Meeting

17 July 2024, 13:00 – 15:30. Venue: Royal Mail, 185 Farringdon Road, London, EC1A 1AA

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