

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

██████████  
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA190819-0474

17 September 2019

Dear ██████████

Thank you for your request for information which the Greater London Authority (GLA) received on 19 August 2019. Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested:

*I wish to submit an electronic petition to the Mayor of London that I initiated on Change.org. I notice that your guidance states that electronic petitions must include the email addresses of people who have signed in order to "validate the petition".*

*Please can you answer the following questions:*

- 1. How does the provision of people's email addresses allow the GLA to "validate" a petition?*
- 2. How can you validate a person's identity through the provision of an email address?*
- 3. What use does the GLA intend to make of the names and email addresses provided by people who have signed the petition?*
- 4. What will happen to people's names and email addresses in the GLA's possession?*
- 5. Please can you provide the relevant legislation that shows that the Mayor of London has the right to demand a person's email address as a prerequisite for validation of a petition under data protection legislation?*

You also clarified that your request was in reference to guidance at <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/petitions>

Our response to your request is as follows:

As stated on the petitions guidance page, members of the public or organisations may also ask the Mayor if they can present petitions to him directly, in which case it is a matter for the Mayor

as to what he is content to accept. The petition would then not be routed through the London Assembly. Members of the public may also write to the Mayor directly about their petition:

Mayor of London  
Greater London Authority  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA  
[mayor@london.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@london.gov.uk)

The scope and procedure for submitting a petition to the Assembly are set out in the GLA's Standing Orders at 3.20 and 3.21:

[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla\\_standing\\_orders\\_may17.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_standing_orders_may17.pdf)

In answer to your specific questions:

1. How does the provision of people's email addresses allow the GLA to "validate" a petition?

GLA Standing Orders set out a number of requirements which petitions must meet if they are to be 'in order'/valid and therefore presented to the London Assembly. For hard copy petitions, this includes a requirement that the petition sets out each petitioner's name (either printed, or as a legible signature). If the petition is organised on the internet, the petitioners' names and email addresses must be included. It is not uncommon for public bodies to require a petition to include names and email addresses/postal address in order to be treated as valid.

2. How can you validate a person's identity through the provision of an email address?

We cannot and do not.

3. What use does the GLA intend to make of the names and email addresses provided by people who have signed the petition?

Other than those of the lead petitioner, the personal details - names, signatures and addresses, including email addresses for an electronic petition - of petitioners are not published by the Assembly or provided to Assembly Members (other than the Member who initially received the petition) except in exceptional circumstances - for example where a petition is addressed to the full London Assembly. Handling of petitions falls under the "public task" legal requirements for processing data under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

4. What will happen to people's names and email addresses in the GLA's possession?

Following formal presentation of a petition at an Assembly meeting, the Assembly forwards the petition on to either the Mayor or the relevant Functional Body to whom the petition is addressed, in order that they may respond to the petition. As set out above, the Assembly does not otherwise process the petition and petitions are destroyed by the Assembly 6 months after their formal receipt.

Any petitions that are passed to the Mayor's Office are scanned and logged by the Public Liaison Unit on the Authority's correspondence handling system and those records are held by the GLA for up to 8 years.

This is in line with our [Records Management Policy](#), which states that *"the majority of records held by the GLA should be retained, reviewed and disposed of as follows:*

*• GLA records should be retained for the duration of the Mayoral Term in which they were created (i.e. the current Mayoral Term) and for the duration of the subsequent Mayoral Term."*

5. Please can you provide the relevant legislation that shows that the Mayor of London has the right to demand a person's email address as a prerequisite for validation of a petition under data protection legislation?

The London Assembly is not the same as the Mayor of London. In order to present a valid petition to the London Assembly, the petitioner must follow the rules that the Assembly have created for such, as set out in the Authority's Standing Orders. The relevant legislation for the setting of Standing Orders is the Greater London Authority Act 1999.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA190819-0474.

Yours sincerely

  
**Information Governance Officer**

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>