



Dear Customer

Local public consultation - Have your say

**Bishop Auckland Post Office
28-29 Victoria, Avenue Bishop, Auckland, DL14 7JH**

We will be reopening the above Post Office branch on Thursday 26 January 2023 in a new location - Premier Store, 40 Newgate Street, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7EG where it would operate as one of our local style branches with a new postmaster.

Why are we moving?

Following the resignation of the postmaster, the branch closed on 21 December 2022. We have therefore had to identify an alternative location to continue to offer Post Office services to the local community.

Our priority is to safeguard our services in the locality in the longer term and the relocation of Bishop Auckland Post Office will enable us to maintain a Post Office service to our customers within the local community.

We'd like your help

We're now starting a period of local public consultation and your feedback is important to us as it will help to inform our decision. For more details of the new service and accessibility, please see the branch information summary later in this consultation document.

What exactly are we consulting on?

Whilst the decision has already been made to move Bishop Auckland Post Office branch, we would still like your views on access into and inside the new location. We'd welcome your comments on the following areas:

- **Are the new premises easy for you to get into and is the inside easily accessible?**
- **Are there any other local community issues which you believe could be affected by or affect the change?**
- **Is there anything we could do to make it easier for customers?**

Please note the change of management of the branch is a decision for Post Office Ltd and therefore we are not seeking feedback on this aspect of the change.

Local Public Consultation starts	17 January 2023
Local Public Consultation ends	28 February 2023

This Post Office service will reopen on Tuesday 26 January 2023 at 13:00, however this does not affect the period of public consultation which is ongoing until 28 February 2023.

You can share your views on the change through our easy and convenient online questionnaire via postofficeviews.co.uk. When entering the website, you can use the search function to find the consultation for this branch either by branch name, postcode or the unique branch code **293309**

How to share your views:

Consultation Hub (postofficeviews.co.uk)

comments@postoffice.co.uk

Call: 03452 66 01 15

Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

FREEPOST Your Comments – N.B. This is the full postal address. Items sent by Freepost take 2 working days, please allow enough time for responses to be received.

Want to tell us what you think right here and now? Scan here.

If you don't have a QR code scanner on your phone, you can find one in your app store.



Good to know

- Customers will access Post Office services at a low-screened, open-plan, modern serving point that's part of the retail counter.
- Working with the postmaster, we'd adapt the current store layout, fixtures and fittings to accommodate the Post Office till if needed.
- The Post Office will offer a similar range of products and services over longer opening hours so customers can access their branch when it's convenient. Customer satisfaction with local style branches is high, and many customers visit outside traditional opening hours.
- All staff employed to work in the new branch will be trained to the highest standards with on-going training on products and services, as well as operational and service-related matters.
- Posters and leaflets will now be displayed in branch to let customers know about the change and to ask their views.
- Any information we receive will be carefully considered as we finalise our plans.
- If you are a local representative, we will write to you again at the end of the consultation to respond to the main issues raised and to explain our final plans for the branch.
- This consultation is being carried out in line with our Principles of Community Engagement which have been agreed with Citizens Advice, Citizens Advice Scotland and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland - the independent statutory consumer watchdogs. An extract relating to Consultation is available at the end of this letter.

If you are a local representative, it would be helpful if you could share this information through your social media channels and with any local groups or organisations that you know within the community, for example on noticeboards, local charities and in GP surgeries, to help our customers and your constituents understand what is happening to Bishop Auckland Post Office. If you would like a supply of posters, please let us know. Our contact details can be found at the bottom of the first page.

Thank you for considering our changes and supporting Bishop Auckland Post Office.

Yours faithfully

Kenny Lamont

Kenny Lamont
Network Provision Lead Manager
Post Office Limited

Bishop Auckland Post Office Information Summary

New Location

Premier Store, 40 Newgate Street, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7EG

Opening Hours

Mon - Fri	09:00 - 18:00
Sat	09:00 - 13:00
Sun	Closed

**During the Coronavirus pandemic the branch may need to make changes to its opening hours.
The latest available branch information can be found on our website
www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder**

Products & Services

Similar services will still be available, however excluding Passport Check & Send and Vehicle Tax.

Serving positions

There will be one open plan serving position. The total number of serving positions has been based on current and future predicted business levels.

Access

Access will be level at the entrance to the new premises. Internally there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.

Getting there

The new branch will be located approximately 200 metres away from the previous branch location, along mostly level terrain. Roadside parking is available within 50 metres of the new branch and a car park 200 metres away. Public transport available to and from the surrounding areas.

Retail

Convenience store.

To get this information in a different format, for example, in larger print, audio or braille call 03452 66 01 15 or Textphone 03457 22 33 55.

Bishop Auckland Post Office services available	
For information about product availability call 03457 223344. For details of maximum value of transactions, please speak to the operator.	
	New branch
Mail	
First & Second Class mail	✓
Stamps, stamp books (1 st class 6 & 12 only, 2 nd class 12 only)	✓
Special stamps (Christmas issue only) & postage labels	✓
Signed For	✓
Special Delivery	✓
Home shopping returns	✓
Inland small, medium & large parcels	✓
Express & contract parcels	✓
British Forces Mail (BFPO)	✓
International letters & postcards (inc. Tracked & Signed)	✓
International parcels up to 2kg & printed papers up to 5kg	✓
Parcelforce Worldwide International parcels	✓
Articles for the blind (inland & international)	✓
Royal Mail redirection service	✓
Local Collect	✓
Drop & Go	✓
Withdrawals, deposits and payments	
Post Office Card Account	✓
All personal and business banking cash withdrawals, deposits, balance enquiries & enveloped cheque deposits (card, barcoded or manual).	✓
Postal orders	✓
Moneygram	✓
Change giving	✓
Bill payments (card, barcoded or manual)	✓
Key recharging	✓
Driving	
Vehicle tax	✕
Travel	
Pre-order travel money	✓
On demand travel money	✓
Travel insurance referral	✓
On demand travel insurance	✓
Passport Check & Send	✕
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓
National Lottery Terminal	✓
Payment by cheque	✓
Products marked ✕ are available at Church Street Post Office , 48 Church Street, Shildon, DL4 1DR	Opening times: Mon – Fri 09:00 - 17:00 Sat 09:00 - 12:00

Principles of Community Engagement on changes to the Post Office network (extract)

A full version of this document is available on our Consultation Hub - postofficeviews.co.uk

We are committed to engaging and supporting our customers and their representatives as we make changes to the Post Office network. The following principles will be adopted when communicating about changes to your local Post Office branch.

We will **Consult** where we are seeking feedback on proposals prior to a decision being made on the:

- Permanent closure of a Post Office branch¹
- Permanent relocation of a Post Office branch (including the franchising of a Directly Managed branch to a new site)

We will carry out a six-week² local public consultation, informing customers, locally elected representatives³, Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities⁴ of the proposal. This information will also be made available online and for a Directly Managed branch a press release will be issued to local media. We will ask locally elected representatives to share information with other key community outlets (such as notice boards, local charities, magazines, GP surgeries etc.).

The consultation will ask specific questions on areas where we would like feedback on access to Post Office services and will confirm when the change will happen if the decision is made to proceed. We will provide clear information on any changes to services as well as access to and into the new branch.

We welcome all feedback with the following factors being taken into account in making our decision, which we expect to make within four weeks of the close of consultation:

- Customer access to, into and inside the new or alternative branch/branches with particular regard to vulnerable consumers
- Any local community issues which could be affected by or affect the proposal

At the end of the consultation process we will write to locally elected representatives, Consumer Advocacy Bodies and respondents to the consultation (where practical) to confirm our decision and provide a summary of key issues raised with a clear response to each. This information will be made available online and in branch (where possible).

These Principles have been agreed with Citizens Advice, Citizens Advice Scotland and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland; the independent statutory consumer watchdogs.

What to do if you feel these Principles haven't been followed:

Please get in touch so we can investigate your complaint. We'll explain in our reply whether we believe we have followed our Principles of Community Engagement and will provide you with the contact details for the relevant consumer watchdog (Citizens Advice, Citizens Advice Scotland or the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland) if you're not satisfied with our response. The watchdog will independently assess whether we have followed the Principles of Community Engagement process (rather than the decision itself) and recommend any actions with respect to the complaint.

Postofficeviews.co.uk

Comments@postoffice.co.uk

FREEPOST Your Comments

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Textphone: 03457 22 33 55

¹ There may be a small number of cases where due to circumstances outside our control we have no option other than to permanently close a branch in a particular location. In these cases, the consultation will seek feedback on alternative Post Office service provision in the area.

² If the consultation includes more than four weeks in July in Scotland and Northern Ireland or more than four weeks in August in England and Wales, we will extend the period by one calendar week. We will not start any local public consultation during the two-week period which includes the Christmas and New Year bank holidays.

³ Locally elected representatives include but are not restricted to the Member of Parliament, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Parliament, or Northern Ireland Assembly, Local Authority Chief Executive, Ward Councillors, Parish or Community Council.

⁴ Selected charities are local Citizens Advice, Age UK, Northern Ireland's Disability Action and Northern Ireland's Rural Community Network. All parties referred to in ³ and ⁴ above are encouraged to share all information with local groups and organisations who they believe have an active interest in changes to their local Post Office.

