



Dear Customer,

I'm pleased to let you know that in collaboration with Payzone, we will be opening a new type of Post Office branch in your area at Somal News, Food & Wine, 19/23 Front Street, Chester-Le-Street, DH2 3LJ commencing on Tuesday 26 September 2023 at 13:00.

In order to strengthen the network and enhance its commercial sustainability, we have introduced a lighter, flexible branch format called Drop & Collect, which has been developed to take advantage of the opportunities a vibrant, and increasingly competitive, parcels market offers.

Consumer shopping habits have been changing and the popularity of online shopping has transformed the parcels market at pace. Drop & Collect will help us address gaps in service coverage, ensuring that we have the best network for parcels across all parts of the UK. This will strengthen the Post Office brand and improve the ability to compete for additional business from new carriers for the wider network.

The new Drop & Collect at Somal News, Food & Wine, will offer Post Office services from a handheld device, providing convenient access for customers to bill payments and prepaid parcel collections and returns. To maximise accessibility to these services that our customers are increasingly seeking, more complex services like personal and business banking will not be available at this branch. Details of the opening hours and the products and services available are provided overleaf. If there are any unforeseen circumstances which mean the opening date changes, posters will be displayed in store to let customers know.

A wider range of Post Office services are available from the nearby branches at West Pelton Post Office, 14 St Pauls Terrace, West Pelton, Stanley, DH9 6RU and Pelton Fell Post Office, 1 Craghead Road, Pelton Fell, Chester-le-Street, DH2 2NH. The latest available branch information can be found on our website, www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder

Please feel free to share this information via your social media channels and with others who may be interested to hear about the new branch and the services it offers.

We're carrying out this notification in line with our Principles of Community Engagement. An extract relating to this Notification is available at the end of this letter.

We hope that you and the local community will support the Post Office network in your area.

Yours faithfully,

Natalie Liff

Natalie Liff

Propositions Manager

Network Propositions

How to contact us:

comments@postoffice.co.uk

postofficeviews.co.uk

FREEPOST Your Comments

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.

Opening times & Post Office services available	
Mon - Fri	06:00 – 22:00
Sat	07:00 – 22:00
Sun	07:00 – 21:00
Mail	
Parcel collect and return – prepaid only	
Other	
Bill payments	
Mobile top-up service	
For information about product availability call 03457 22 33 44.	

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 **Notify** - where we are informing customers of changes around:

- Opening hours
- Temporary closure¹/ temporary service interruption
- Re-opening of a temporarily closed branch in the same site
- Opening a new branch unrelated to a previous closure
- Location used by a Mobile Post Office within a community

We will display a poster in branch (or nearby if appropriate) to notify customers of the above changes, providing four weeks' notice. Where four weeks' notice is not possible, we will provide notice as soon as we are able to. For temporary closures we will include details of the nearest alternative Post Offices and our customer helpline/textphone.

These Principles have been agreed with Citizens Advice, Consumer 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, Consumer 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.

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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.

We notify locally elected representatives including 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, selected charities, local Citizens Advice, Age UK, Northern Ireland's Disability Action and Northern Ireland's Rural Community Network. They are also encouraged to share all information additionally with local groups and organisations who they believe have an active interest in changes to their local Post Office.