



Dear Customer

**Lanchester Post Office®**  
**Lanchester News, 19 Front Street, Lanchester, Durham, DH7 0LA**

**Local public consultation decision**

I'm writing to confirm that following a period of local public consultation and review we have made the decision to proceed with the move of the above Post Office into Spar Store, 4 Front Street, Lanchester, Durham, DH7 0ER, where it will be operated by a retail partner.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to let us have their comments and provide information. All the feedback we received helped us to better understand the views of customers and their representatives and this was taken into account along with all other relevant factors, in making our decision. A summary of the feedback is enclosed along with an information sheet providing further details about the new branch.

After careful consideration of the feedback received, we remain confident that the layout and location of the new branch will continue to meet customer needs and deliver an excellent service, whilst securing the long-term viability of Post Office services in the local community.

The current branch will close at 13:00 on Monday 29 April 2019, with the new branch opening, at Spar Store, 4 Front Street, at 13:00 on Tuesday 30 April 2019. If there are any unforeseen schedule changes which mean these dates change, posters will be displayed in branch to let customers know.

During transfer of the branch customers requiring Post Office facilities may use any convenient Post Office service. Details of an alternative Post Office branch is provided below for your convenience:

- Stanley Post Office, 92 Front Street, Stanley, DH9 0HU

We're currently making the final arrangements for the move and further information will be provided in branch once the dates have been agreed.

This information is also available on the Post Office Consultation Hub at:  
[postofficeviews.co.uk](http://postofficeviews.co.uk)

We're carrying out this notification in line with our Principles of Community Engagement. A copy is available at the end of this letter.

Yours faithfully

*Daniel Rooney*

**Daniel Rooney**  
**Multiples Account Executive**

How to contact us:

[postofficeviews.co.uk](http://postofficeviews.co.uk)

[comments@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:comments@postoffice.co.uk)

**FREEPOST Your Comments**

. Registered No. 2154540.

Registered Office: 150 Finsbury Avenue, London, EC2Y 9AQ

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## **Appendix A**

### **Response to Local Public Consultation**

**Consultation started: 26 July 2018**

**Consultation ended: 13 September 2018**

#### **Consultation responses**

- 42 responses from customers

#### **Key issues raised**

- Access and space inside the premises
- Staffing
- Parking

#### **Response to issues raised**

##### Access and space inside the premises:

We recognise that the Post Office plays an important part in the lives of customers, particularly to older and disabled customers and we want to make our services as accessible as possible. Our aim is always to provide level access at our branches, we apologise that on this occasion this cannot be achieved.

The council have advised that there could potentially be some utility pipes underneath the site where a fixed permanent ramp was proposing to be installed. Unfortunately, this could not be confirmed as no plans of the utilities at the site were available and any work to establish would need to be undertaken by the council. The risk here is that if any utility pipes were found, the required cost to relocate would not be economically viable for the store. Therefore to maintain a post Office service in the area a portable ramp will be provided along with a sign at the entrance visible from the pavement explaining how to request the ramp, a bell and handrail will be installed at the entrance accessible from the pavement by wheelchair users. With the aim of further assisting customers an automated door will be installed at the entrance and the new operator will engage with the relevant authority in respect of a dedicated disable bay.

Inside, the new branch will be in line with Post Office specifications, making sure there is sufficient space for the new style local Post Office to operate alongside the retail offer. We will be working closely with the new operator on the internal layout and some existing fixtures, fittings and retail stock will be re-aligned or removed to make sure there is clear access into the premises. The entrance, aisles and queuing area will be kept free from obstructions ensuring adequate space is available for customers to move around the store and access Post Office services with ease.

##### Staffing

Although the local style format is a more modern way of offering Post Office services, it in no way compromises the professional service standards that we aim to provide at all of our branches. The new operator will be responsible for employing staff within the new branch and staffing levels will be carefully aligned to meet current and future customer demand. All staff handling Post Office transactions will be fully trained and the staff training approaches used are of the same high standard as those undertaken in all our branches. This includes respecting customer confidentiality and adhering to the stringent security procedures which will be put in place to protect staff and customers. Additionally, any staff that will handle Post Office transactions will also have completed compliance training for a number of areas, including Data Protection and Mail Handling

##### Parking

While I acknowledge the comments about parking in the area, it is fair to say that this is an issue faced in many locations nationwide and is not dissimilar to the existing site. As I am sure you will understand the availability of parking spaces is outside the direct control of Post Office Limited. However I have conducted a further review of parking and I can confirm there is a car park within 70 metres of the new branch and roadside parking available nearby. I am therefore satisfied that parking at the new branch will continue to meet the needs of customers using the Post Office.

The new local style Post Office will operate from an open plan till, located at the shop counter, enabling customers to carry out a wide range of Post Office products and services alongside retail transactions. The change also means that local residents will benefit from significantly longer opening hours, including Saturday and Sunday afternoon, and longer opening times throughout the week, so customers can use our services at times that suit them better

I have carefully considered our original proposal and the feedback received during the local public consultation period, along with the impact on local residents and the wider community. Having also reviewed pedestrian and vehicular access to the new site, I am confident that the new branch is suitably located and that this new way of offering Post Office services will continue to meet customer needs, whilst helping to provide long term viability and future sustainability for Post Office service provision in the local community.

## Appendix B

Lanchester Post Office information sheet															
<b>Address</b>	Spar Store 4 Front Street Lanchester Durham DH7 0ER														
<b>Opening hours</b>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon</td><td>08:00 – 21:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Tue</td><td>08:00 – 21:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Wed</td><td>08:00 – 21:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Thu</td><td>08:00 – 21:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Fri</td><td>08:00 – 21:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Sat</td><td>08:00 – 21:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Sun</td><td>08:00 – 21:00</td></tr> </table>	Mon	08:00 – 21:00	Tue	08:00 – 21:00	Wed	08:00 – 21:00	Thu	08:00 – 21:00	Fri	08:00 – 21:00	Sat	08:00 – 21:00	Sun	08:00 – 21:00
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Sat	08:00 – 21:00														
Sun	08:00 – 21:00														
<b>Distance</b>	40 metres away from the current branch, along level terrain.														
<b>Products &amp; Services</b>	The same wide range of products and services will still be available.														
<b>Accessibility</b>	<p><b>Access and facilities</b></p> <p>Currently there is a step at the entrance to the proposed premises, however a portable ramp will be made available on request along with clear signage and a bell which will be accessible from the pavement by wheelchair users to alert staff to customers requiring assistance.</p> <p><b>Parking</b></p> <p>There is a car park within 70 metres of the proposed premises and roadside parking is also available nearby.</p>														
<b>Retail</b>	Convenience store														
<b>Date of move</b>	Friday 5 April 2019 at 13:00														

**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.**

Lanchester Post Office® services available	
Our Customer Helpline on 03457 223344 will be happy to help you with any queries about product availability or provide you with details of maximum value of transactions. Customers can also shop online at <a href="http://www.postoffice.co.uk">www.postoffice.co.uk</a>	
	New branch
<b>Mail</b>	
First & Second Class mail	✓
Stamps, stamp books (1 <sup>st</sup> class 6 & 12 only, 2 <sup>nd</sup> 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. signed for & Ainsure)	✓
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	✓
<b>Withdrawals, deposits and payments</b>	
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	✓
<b>Bill payments</b>	
Bill payments (card, barcoded or manual)	✓
Key recharging	✓
<b>Driving</b>	
Car tax	✓
<b>Licences</b>	
Rod fishing licences	✓
<b>Travel</b>	
Pre-order travel money	✓
On demand travel money	Euros/Dollars
Travel insurance referral	✓
On demand travel insurance	x
Passport Check & Send	x
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓
National Lottery Terminal	x
<b>Payment by cheque</b>	✓
Products marked x are available at <b>Stanley</b> Post Office, 92 Front Street, Stanley, DH9 0HU	
Opening times: Mon – Fri 09:00 - 17:30 Sat 09:00 - 15:00	

## **Principles of Community Engagement on changes to the Post Office network**

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 closure<sup>1</sup>/ 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.

We will **Engage** - where we are seeking feedback on a decision that has been made on:

- Re-opening of a temporarily closed branch in a new location (where the branch has been closed for more than three months)
- Franchising of a Directly Managed branch in its existing site

While the decision to proceed will have already been made, we will welcome suggestions about specific aspects of the change such as access arrangements and the internal layout. We will provide four weeks' notice or, where extenuating circumstances prevent this, we will provide as much notice as possible.

During this period we will display a poster in branch and provide information online. We will contact locally elected representatives<sup>2</sup>, the Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities<sup>3</sup>, providing clear information on any changes to services or access arrangements at the branch. We will ask locally elected representatives to share information with other key community outlets (such as notice boards, local charities, magazines, GP surgeries etc.). We will publish the outcome of the engagement online and in branch, providing a summary of key issues raised with a clear response to each and any changes made to our original plans.

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

- Permanent closure of a Post Office branch<sup>4</sup>
- 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-week<sup>5</sup> local public consultation, informing customers, locally elected representatives, Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities 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**  
**Call: 03452 66 01 15**  
**Textphone: 03457 22 33 55**

<sup>1</sup>We will provide an update to locally elected representatives if the status of the temporarily closed branch has not changed after 12 months.

<sup>2</sup> Locally elected representatives include but are not restricted to the Member of Parliament, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, or Northern Ireland Assembly, Local Authority Chief Executive, Ward Councillors, Parish or Community Council.

<sup>3</sup> 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 2 and 3 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.