



Dear Customer

Pontardulais Post Office®
156 St Teilo Street, Pontardulais, Swansea, SA4 8RA

Changes to Pontardulais Post Office®

Earlier this year we asked you for your views about our plans to change the above Post Office to one of our new-style local branches. We received 24 responses and I would like to thank everyone who took the time to let us have their comments and provide information.

Our plans are now finalised and your new-look Post Office is scheduled to open at the current location on Thursday 24 January 2019 at 13:00.

To make this change happen, the branch will need to close for refurbishment on Tuesday 15 January 2019 at 12:30, however the following branches will be happy to provide customers with Post Office services during this period. Should these dates change, posters will be displayed in branch to let customers know.

- Gorseinon Post Office, 8 Alexandra Road, Gorseinon, Swansea, SA4 4NW
- Hendy Post Office, 50 Iscoed Road, Pontardulais, Swansea, SA4 0UP

Below outlines the main comments we received on our plans and our response to these. Posters are also being displayed in the branch to let customers know about the change.

A copy of our final plans for this branch is published on our website at postofficeviews.co.uk.

Thank you for your time taken.

Yours faithfully

Annete Thomas

Annete Thomas
Area Network Change Manager

Key points raised:

- Access and space whilst queuing especially at peak times.
- Changes to the products and services
- Keep the closure for refurbishment to a minimum

Response to key points:**Access and space**

We fully recognise people can be wary of change and we are pleased that you took the time to let us know what's concerning you. The new style Post Office will operate from an open plan counter located at the end of the retail till at the rear of the store, enabling customers to carry out a wide range of Post Office products and services alongside retail transactions. During identified busy periods and to help manage waiting times, the postmaster is expected to manage staffing levels at retail and Post Office service points appropriately.

Lastly, there will be sufficient space for Post Office customers to move around within the store, including wheelchair users, so they can reach the Post Office area without hindrance. Some internal adjustments to fixtures and fittings will be made to accommodate this.

Changes to the products and services

The new-style local format is a simpler operating model than a traditional style Post Office. It is designed to handle products and services that are automated meaning that customers can be served quickly and efficiently and transactions processed more quickly. You may need to go to an alternative Post Office for a small number of transactions which are more complex or manual, paper based transactions. However the majority of services will still be available and the new branch will still be able to transact manual banking and Royal Mail and Parcelforce Worldwide International Parcel Services. Additionally cheques will continue to be accepted as a method of payment.

The small number of services that will no longer be available at Pontardulais Post Office will continue to be offered at Gorseinon Post Office.

Closure period for refurbishment

We recognise that even a short term closure will be inconvenient, for which we apologise. However we've been working with the postmaster to keep the closure to a minimum and we will ensure that the nearest alternative branches are displayed on a poster in the branch. We've also given you 2 weeks' notice of the closure period, so you have time to make necessary alternative arrangements.

We hope that you will enjoy using the new Post Office.

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 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.

*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 representatives², the Consumer Advocacy Bodies and selected charities³, 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 branch⁴
- 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-week⁵ 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

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

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.