



Dear Customer

Sheerness Post Office®
33 Broadway, Sheerness, ME12 1AA

Local Public Consultation Decision

I am writing to confirm that, after careful consideration of the feedback received and all other relevant factors, we have decided that there is sufficient access to alternative Post Office services to cope with demand in the area, so we will proceed with our decision to close Sheerness Directly Managed branch.

As you will recall from my previous letter, we recently opened three new local branches in the area; The Clock Tower, High Street (20) and Queensway Post Office branches. With these new branches in place, we are confident there will be sufficient convenience and choice for customers without the need to retain the current Directly Managed branch.

To ensure our people working in the branch do not face a period of extended uncertainty while we finalise our plans for service provision in the area, Sheerness Post Office will be operated on our behalf by an experienced interim operator until the branch closes. During this period, the branch will continue to operate from the same site and all the same wide range of products and services will continue to be available.

Public consultation responses

During the 12 week local consultation period, we received 34 individual representations from customers and local representatives. Much of the feedback we received focused on the size of the alternative locations and the accessibility of Post Office services in the area. All the feedback helped us to better understand the views of customers and their representatives, and I would like to thank everyone who took the time to let us have their comments and provide information.

Access to Post Office services

We've considered the feedback received during consultation from customers and local representatives very carefully, particularly the concerns raised around future accessibility of our services. With any closure it's inevitable, but regrettable, that some customers will be inconvenienced. However, with The Clock Tower Post Office located approximately 0.1 miles from Sheerness Post Office, High Street (20) Post Office approximately 0.2 miles away and Queensway Post Office approximately 1.3 miles away, there are a number of alternative Post Office branches in the surrounding area, along with good public transport provision.

We are confident that our new branches have the capacity to meet customer demand and cater for additional customers, offering a wide range of Post Office products and services and, due to the extended opening hours, providing continued good access to our services. The small number of Post Office products and services that will not be available at our new branches, such as Passport Check & Send, Identification services, change giving and high value banking, will continue to be available at Minster on Sea Post Office. This branch is located approximately 3.4 miles from Sheerness Post Office and can be reached by a regular bus service.

We are satisfied that all of the alternative branches have sufficient capacity to absorb additional business and meet the needs of local businesses and personal customers. Additionally, we are working closely with the operators of the alternative branches to make sure that they are ready to meet the additional footfall and maintain quality of service. We have been working closely with the new operators to plan their interior store layouts, to ensure optimum use of the space within the store and that access into and inside the branches is kept clear and free of obstacles. To ensure customer needs are met, we will closely monitor waiting times and usage at the alternative branches.

Staff at the alternative branches are fully trained in Post Office transactions and staffing levels will be reviewed and carefully aligned to meet customer demand. Further information about the alternative branches in the area are given in the information sheet at the end of this letter.

In respect of our people working at Sheerness branch, we have a strong track record of supporting our people through change and we will do all that we can to find a solution that works for each individual within the options available.

Conclusion

It's clear that the Post Office plays an important part in the lives of our customers living and working in the area and we want to make our services as accessible as possible. Without doubt, the Post Office has a special position in the community. I am confident that the remaining branches in the area will meet customer needs both now and in the future, ensuring residents have continued access to Post Office services while delivering an excellent service.

Whilst we finalise plans for service provision in the area, Sheerness Post Office will remain open and be operated by an experienced interim operator. To enable us to transfer the service to our interim operator, Sheerness Post Office will be temporarily closed from 17:30 on Wednesday 7 November 2018, re-opening at 13:00 on Thursday 8 November 2018.

Posters will now be displayed in branch to let customers know about this decision. We're currently making the final arrangements for the closure of Sheerness Post Office and further information will be provided in branch once the date has been agreed.

Yours faithfully



Roger Gale
Network & Sales Director
Post Office Limited

How to contact us:

postofficeviews.co.uk

comments@postoffice.co.uk

FREEPOST Your Comments

Post Office Limited is committed to protecting your privacy. Information about how we do this can be found on our website at postoffice.co.uk/privacy

Items sent by Freepost take two working days to arrive, so responses by Freepost should be sent in sufficient time to arrive before the end of the consultation period. Working days do not include Saturdays or Sundays. Responses received after the deadline will not be considered.

Alternative branches in the area

The Clock Tower Post Office

Address	84 High Street Sheerness ME12 1UB						
Post Office Opening hours	<table border="1"><tr><td>Mon – Thu</td><td>07:00 – 20:00</td></tr><tr><td>Fri & Sat</td><td>07:00 – 21:30</td></tr><tr><td>Sun</td><td>08:00 – 20:00</td></tr></table>	Mon – Thu	07:00 – 20:00	Fri & Sat	07:00 – 21:30	Sun	08:00 – 20:00
Mon – Thu	07:00 – 20:00						
Fri & Sat	07:00 – 21:30						
Sun	08:00 – 20:00						
Distance	Approximately 0.1 miles away from Sheerness Post Office branch, along level terrain.						
Accessibility	<p>Access and facilities Access to the branch is level; an automatic door will be installed at the entrance. A low level serving counter and hearing loops are available.</p> <p>Transport/Parking Time restricted parking is available on The Broadway with 6 spaces, approximately 30 metres away.</p>						

High Street (20) Post Office

Address	20 High Street Sheerness ME12 1NL				
Post Office Opening hours	<table border="1"><tr><td>Mon – Sat</td><td>07:00 – 23:00</td></tr><tr><td>Sun</td><td>08:00 – 23:00</td></tr></table>	Mon – Sat	07:00 – 23:00	Sun	08:00 – 23:00
Mon – Sat	07:00 – 23:00				
Sun	08:00 – 23:00				
Distance	Approximately 0.2 miles away from Sheerness Post Office branch, along level terrain.				
Accessibility	<p>Access and facilities There is a ramp at the entrance to the branch and a wide door. A bell and signage will be available for assistance.</p> <p>Transport/Parking Time restricted parking is available nearby for up to 8 cars.</p>				

Queensway Post Office

Address	124 Queensway Sheerness ME12 1LL				
Post Office Opening hours	<table border="1"><tr><td>Mon – Sat</td><td>07:00 – 21:30</td></tr><tr><td>Sun</td><td>08:00 – 21:30</td></tr></table>	Mon – Sat	07:00 – 21:30	Sun	08:00 – 21:30
Mon – Sat	07:00 – 21:30				
Sun	08:00 – 21:30				
Distance	Approximately 1.3 miles away from Sheerness Post Office branch, along varied terrain.				
Accessibility	<p>Access and facilities Access to the branch is level. A bell and signage will be available for assistance.</p> <p>Transport/Parking Parking is available for 2 cars outside the branch. Public transport services are available to and from the surrounding area.</p>				

Post Office® services available

For information about product availability call 03457 223344 or to provide you with details of maximum value of transactions please speak to the operator. Customers can also shop online at www.postoffice.co.uk

	Sheerness	The Clock Tower	High Street	Queensway
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	✓	Express 24 & 48	Express 24 & 48	✓
British Forces Mail (BFPO)	✓	✓	✓	✓
International letters & postcards (inc. signed for & Airsure)	✓	✓	✓	✓
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) up to a maximum value.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Postal orders	✓	✓	✓	✓
Moneygram	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bill payments (card, barcoded or manual)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Key recharging	✓	✓	✓	✓
Driving				
Car tax	✓	✓	✗	✗
Driving licence renewals	✓	✗	✗	✗
Licences				
Rod fishing licences	✓	✓	✓	✓
Document Certification Service	✓	✗	✗	✗
Travel				
Pre-order travel money	✓	✓	✓	✓
On demand travel money	✓	Euros/ Dollars	Euros/ Dollars	Euros/ Dollars
Travel insurance referral	✓	✓	✓	✓
On demand travel insurance	✓	✗	✗	✗
Passport Check & Send	✓	✗	✗	✗
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers				
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Payment by cheque	✓	Car tax only	Car tax only	✓
Products marked ✗ are available at Minster on Sea Post Office , full details overleaf.				

Minster on Sea Post Office											
Address	4 Chapel Street Minster on Sea Sheerness ME12 3QG										
Post Office Opening hours	<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Mon & Tue</td> <td style="text-align: center;">08:00 – 17:30</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Wed</td> <td style="text-align: center;">08:00 – 18:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Thu & Fri</td> <td style="text-align: center;">08:00 – 17:30</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Sat</td> <td style="text-align: center;">08:00 – 18:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Sun</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Closed</td> </tr> </table>	Mon & Tue	08:00 – 17:30	Wed	08:00 – 18:00	Thu & Fri	08:00 – 17:30	Sat	08:00 – 18:00	Sun	Closed
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Wed	08:00 – 18:00										
Thu & Fri	08:00 – 17:30										
Sat	08:00 – 18:00										
Sun	Closed										
Distance	Approximately 3.4 miles away from Sheerness Post Office branch, along varied terrain.										
Products & Services	The same wide range of products and services will be available as Sheerness branch including Driving Licence renewals, Security Industry Authority licensing and Passport Check & Send.										
Accessibility	<p style="text-align: center;">Access and facilities</p> <p>There is a ramp with a handrail at the entrance to the branch. A low level serving counter, low level writing desks and hearing loops are available.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Transport/Parking</p> <p>There is a frequent bus service between Sheerness Post Office and this branch. The nearest bus stop is approximately 120 metres away. Roadside parking is available nearby.</p>										

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.

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

¹ We 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.