



Dear Customer

Southend-On-Sea Post Office®
207 High Street, Southend-On-Sea, SS1 1LN

Changes to your branch

We recently asked for your views on some key areas of our plans to franchise Southend-On-Sea Post Office. In total, we received 4 responses.

Thank you to 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 finalising our plans.

After careful consideration of the feedback received, we are confident that 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 Southend-On-Sea.

A summary of the key issues raised and our response to each key issue is enclosed, along with an information sheet providing further details about the branch.

The branch will remain at its current location, but to enable us to make the necessary changes to the branch, it will be necessary for it to close at 17:30 on Saturday 26 January 2019. However, it will reopen at 09:00 on Tuesday 29 January 2019. During the transfer of the branch, customers requiring Post Office facilities may use any convenient Post Office service. Details of two nearby alternative Post Office branches are provided below for your information:

- Westcliff On Sea Post Office, 150 Hamlet Court Road, Westcliff-On-Sea, SS0 7LN
- Sutton Road Post Office, 88 Sutton Road, Southend-On-Sea, SS2 5EW

For this short period of closure, for customers requiring DVLA Photocard Driving Licence renewal and Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence application services, the nearest branch is: Rayleigh Post Office, 71 High Street, Rayleigh, SS6 7EJ, approximately 6 miles away. Likewise, for customers who require Biometric Enrolment for the Home Office services, the nearest branch is: Dartford Post Office, 19 Hythe Street, Dartford, DA1 1AB, approximately 29 miles away.

I am sure that customers at Southend-on-Sea Post Office will continue to receive excellent service in the years to come.

You can also find a copy of this letter on our website at postofficeviews.co.uk.

Yours faithfully

Roger Gale
Network & Sales Director
Post Office Limited

Response to key points raised

Key points raised:

- Access to Biometric Enrolment service for the Home Office
- The customer lift is small and unsuitable / difficult for customers using mobility scooters
- Access to Post Office services should the customer lift be non-operational

Response to key points:

From early 2019 the Home Office will transfer the Biometric Enrolment Service to a new national provider and this service will no longer be available at Post Office branches. In the interim period, the Biometric Enrolment service will be available Dartford Post Office, 19 Hythe Street, Dartford, DA1 1AB, approximately 29 miles away.

The customer lift has a capacity of 10 persons/800Kg and there is a service plan that ensures a call out for servicing and repairs within 2 hours of reporting a fault.

In the emergency that the customer lift is non-operational, customers that cannot use the stairs can alert staff who can arrange for most transactions to be completed on the ground floor.

Southend-On-Sea Post Office information sheet				
Address	WHSmith 207 High Street Southend-On-Sea SS1 1LN			
Opening hours		Mon	09:00 – 17:30	
		Tue	09:00 – 17:30	
		Wed	09:00 – 17:30	
		Thu	09:00 – 17:30	
		Fri	09:00 – 17:30	
		Sat	09:00 – 17:30	
		Sun	10:00 – 14:00	
Products & Services	The same wide range of products and services will still be available with the exception of the Biometric Enrolment service for the Home Office.			
Serving positions	There are seven serving positions in total, made up of one screened and six open plan. The total number of serving positions has been based on current and future predicted business levels.			
Additional facilities	Three self-service kiosks for mails transactions including home shopping returns, E Top-Ups, and a range of bill payments.			
Access & facilities	There are two sloping entrances into the branch, both with automatic doors. A low level serving counter, low level writing desk and hearing loop will continue to be available.			
Retail	Stationery, books and news			
Date of temporary closure	Closed from 17:30 on Saturday 26 January 2019 re-opening at 09:00 on Tuesday 29 January 2019.			

To get this information in a different format, for example, in larger print, audio or braille please 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

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.