



Dear Customer

**St Johns Wood Post Office®  
28-32 Circus Road, London, NW8 6PE**

**Local Public Consultation Decision**

I'm writing to confirm that following a period of local public consultation and review the decision has been made to proceed with the proposal to move St Johns Wood Post Office to a nearby retail store which will be known as SW Food Store, 41-45 Charlbert Street, London, NW8 6JN where it would be run by our new retail partner. This change is being made as part of the continuing modernisation of our network, to achieve commercial sustainability and will help us to provide services that will meet customer needs and safeguard future service provision in St John's Wood, now and for the long-term.

**Local Public consultation**

We held a local public consultation which began on 8 August 2018 and ran until 19 September 2018 during which we welcomed feedback and comments on access arrangements in relation to the new location. During the public consultation period we received 201 individual representations from customers and local representatives, along with a petition opposing the change. We also held a customer forum to talk about our plans and answer questions.

The main feedback expressed concern about the change of the branch to one run by a retail partner, with comments focusing on the location and size of the proposed new premises, the level of service that would be provided, the suitability of the new operator and the impact of the move on the local community. We also received feedback querying why St Johns Wood Post Office can't remain at the current location.

On this latter point, as the branch is not sustainable in its present form, the need arose to work with a retail partner to provide Post Office services for the people of St John's Wood. Whilst we were open to the new branch operating from the existing location with a new retail partner, the terms of the lease at the current premises meant this was not possible and so our only option was to seek an alternative location from which a new retail partner could operate the branch.

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, before making our decision.

**Getting to the new location**

With any relocation it is inevitable that whilst some customers will have an easier journey to the new location, regrettably others will have slightly further to travel. We carefully considered factors such as the local terrain, parking and transport links when developing our proposal. We also took account of whether there were any particular local road traffic issues that may negatively impact accessibility.

When considering the consultation feedback, we reviewed public transport and the availability of parking. The new site is approximately 370 metres away from the existing location and can be accessed from St John's Wood Terrace which is a straight road from the current location. For customers using their own transport to access the branch there is a fee paying car park on Kingsmill Terrace with 237 spaces approximately 400 metres from the premises and a further 7 fee paying parking bays on Charlbert St approximately 30 metres away. There is a bus stop approximately 270 metres from the new branch.

Additionally, we will inform the local authorities of the change and explore what steps can be taken to improve access provisions in this area for less able customers, such as the provision of designated disabled parking in the vicinity and directional signage to the new Post Office branch. In conclusion, I remain satisfied that customers in St John's Wood will continue to have good access to Post Office services.

### **The new St Johns Wood Post Office**

We know that the Post Office plays an important part in the lives of customers, including our older and disabled customers, and we want to ensure our services are as accessible as possible. Access into the store will be level with an automatic door at the entrance to the premises.

The new premises will undergo a complete internal refurbishment to provide a bright, modern open-plan branch with the introduction of a convenience store alongside the Post Office service. The branch will operate from a newly built dedicated open plan Post Office area to the left hand side of the store and customer access both into and within the store will meet Post Office Ltd's own accessibility standards and all applicable legislation. Externally the store front will include Post Office signage and an opening hours board.

There will be directional signage from the entrance door through to the new Post Office area. To make sure there is sufficient space for Post Office customers, including wheelchair users, to move around the store and reach the Post Office area without hindrance, the entrance area and shopping aisles will be kept free of obstructions. The Post Office counter will be built to Post Office specifications and will include lighting to industry standards, low level counters, PIN pads and hearing loops. There will be space for people to wait for service and customer seating will also be provided.

There will be four counter serving positions which has been based on current and forecast future business levels; two open plan positions, one traditional floor to ceiling screened position which will also provide travel money services, and an open plan service point at the retail counter. Open plan serving positions are successfully used across our Post Office network as an alternative to the more traditional positions. There is still a partitioned screen but this is lower, helping to provide a more personal service and discreet conversations when needed. Following the move, the Post Office will be open on Sundays, providing customers with more flexibility around their visits.

I'm therefore satisfied that customer needs will be met. We will continue to monitor service demand in the St John's Wood area, along with customer usage at the new branch following the move and will work with our new operator to make sure service standards are maintained.

### **Access to Post Office services and products**

A wide range of services will be available at the new branch, with the exception of DVLA Photocard Driving Licence renewal and Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence application services. The nearest branch providing these services is Swiss Cottage Post Office, 9-10 Harben Parade, Finchley Road, South Hampstead, London, NW3 6JS, approximately 1 mile away which can be reached by a number of frequent bus services. Information on routes and timetables can be accessed at [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk).

### **Customer service training and existing staff**

Post Office runs a robust recruitment process and appointments are only made when we are entirely satisfied that the applicant has met all of our criteria. We are satisfied our new partner has demonstrated to us that they are an appropriate franchise partner to operate the service in St John's Wood and are committed to delivering excellent customer service.

Any person employed to work in St Johns Wood Post Office will be trained to the highest Post Office standards and, just as with branches we run ourselves, the branch staff will receive on-going training on products and services, as well as general operational and service related matters. Post Office Area Managers will work with our new partner and the branch team to provide support, in the same way they already do in existing Post Office branches operated by us or other retail partners.

Staff, who will work exclusively in the Post Office, will be trained to provide information on financial products, including savings and insurances. Product information will also be available for customers to take away with them and our website and specialist customer helplines also provide information on what's available and how to make a purchase. Further details of the new branch, including opening hours, are provided in the enclosed information sheet.

It's pleasing to hear of the high regard for our existing staff and we understand that this is a difficult time for our colleagues. In respect of the team working at the current branch, we have a strong track record of supporting our people through change. We will do all that we can to find a solution that works for each individual within the options available.

### **Conclusion**

After careful consideration of the feedback received, I am confident that the new branch will continue to meet customer needs and deliver an excellent service, whilst helping to provide future sustainability for the branch and maintaining a Post Office presence in St John's Wood. The current branch will close at 17:30 on 21 November 2018, with the new branch opening at 09:00 on 22 November 2018.

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

Yours faithfully



**Roger Gale**  
**Sales & Trade Marketing Director**  
**Post Office Limited**

How to contact us:

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

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

**St Johns Wood Post Office information sheet**

<b>Address</b>	Unistar Wholesale Limited SW Food Store 41-45 Charlbert Street London NW8 6JN														
<b>Post Office Opening Hours</b>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Tue</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Wed</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Thu</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Fri</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Sat</td><td>09:00 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Sun</td><td>Closed</td></tr> </table>	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	Closed
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<b>New Opening times of Post Office service at retail counter</b>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon - Sat</td><td>07:30 – 23:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Sun</td><td>08:00 – 23:00</td></tr> </table>	Mon - Sat	07:30 – 23:00	Sun	08:00 – 23:00										
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<b>Products &amp; Services</b>	The same wide range of products and services will be available, with the exception of DVLA Photocard Driving Licence renewal and Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence application services.														
<b>Serving positions</b>	There will be four serving positions in total; one screened, two open plan and a Post Office serving point at the retail counter. The total number of serving positions has been based on current and future predicted business levels.														
<b>Accessibility</b>	<p align="center"><b>Access and Facilities</b></p> <p>Access will be level with an automatic door at the entrance to the proposed premises. Low level serving counters, a low level writing desk and hearing loops will be available.</p> <p align="center"><b>Parking/Public Transport</b></p> <p>There is a fee paying car park on Kingsmill Terrace with 237 spaces approx. 400 metres from the premises and a further 7 fee paying parking bays on Charlbert St approx. 30 metres away. Public transport available to and from the surrounding areas.</p>														
<b>How far away is it?</b>	Approximately 370 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain.														
<b>Retail</b>	Convenience store														
<b>Date of change</b>	22 November 2018														

**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 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.