



Dear Customer

**Villette Road Post Office®
53-55 Villette Road, Hendon, Sunderland, SR2 8RD**

Local public consultation decision

I'm writing to confirm that following a period of local public consultation and review we have made the decision and proceeded with the move of the above Post Office into HJ Foodstore at 70 Villette Road, Hendon, Sunderland, SR2 8RP, where it is operating by a retail partner.

The temporary postmaster at the current location decided to resign, therefore the premises would no longer be available for Post Office use and the branch closed on Wednesday 6 March 2019. Please accept our apologies for the inconvenience caused due to the temporary closure.

I can confirm your new-look Post Office branch opened at the new location on Thursday 21 March 2019 at 13:00, and is operating as one of our new local style branches.

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.

This information is also available on the Post Office Consultation Hub at: 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

Gail Burnett

**Gail Burnett
Area Network Change Manager**

postofficeviews.co.uk

comments@postoffice.co.uk

FREEPOST Your Comments

**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.**

Appendix A

Response to Local Public Consultation

Consultation started 22 January 2019

Consultation ended 5 March 2019

Consultation responses

- 4 responses from customers

Key issues raised

- Space & Queues
- Privacy
- Staff

Response to issues raised

Space & Queues

Internally, the new branch has been built 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 have worked closely with the new operator on the internal layout to make sure there is clear access into the premises. Aisles and the queuing area will be kept free from obstructions and adequate room will be provided for customers to move around and access Post Office services without difficulty.

This will ensure the Post Office counter area is easily accessible and customers including wheelchair users have sufficient space to move around the store. Post Office customers will also benefit from longer opening hours provided at the retail counter which will be open seven days a week, giving customers greater flexibility and the option of visiting the Post Office at times that suit them better. It also means that some customers won't have to join the main Post Office queue, helping to reduce waiting times at the main counter. Also staffing levels are aligned to meet customer demand particularly at peak times.

Privacy

The operator and their staff have been fully trained in Post Office transactions and to the same professional high standard as in all our branches. Their training includes guidance on respecting customer confidentiality and safeguarding privacy. They have also completed compliance training for a number of areas, including Data Protection and Mail Handling and to take all reasonable precautions to safeguard the mail in their care until it is despatched. Similarly with security, strict guidelines and procedures would be in place to safeguard customers, staff and the cash and stock entrusted to the operator's care.

Staff

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 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.

Appendix B

Villette Road Post Office information sheet															
Address	HJ Foodstore 70 Villette Road Hendon Sunderland SR2 8RP														
Opening hours	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon</td><td>08:00 – 19:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Tue</td><td>08:00 – 19:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Wed</td><td>08:00 – 19:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Thu</td><td>08:00 – 19:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Fri</td><td>08:00 – 19:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Sat</td><td>08:00 – 19:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Sun</td><td>08:00 – 19:00</td></tr> </table>	Mon	08:00 – 19:00	Tue	08:00 – 19:00	Wed	08:00 – 19:00	Thu	08:00 – 19:00	Fri	08:00 – 19:00	Sat	08:00 – 19:00	Sun	08:00 – 19:00
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Fri	08:00 – 19:00														
Sat	08:00 – 19:00														
Sun	08:00 – 19:00														
Distance	Within 50 metres from the current branch, along level terrain.														
Products & Services	A wide range of products and services will be available.														
Serving positions	There will be a Post Office serving point provided for use at the retail counter and available during shop opening hours.														
Accessibility	<p>Access and facilities The new premises has a wide door and level access at the entrance. Internally, there will be a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.</p> <p>Parking Roadside parking is available on Hastings Street adjacent to the new premises.</p>														
Retail	Convenience store														
Date of move	Thursday 21 March 2019 at 13:00														

Villette Road 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		
	New branch	
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	✓	
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).	✓	
Postal orders	✓	
Moneygram	✓	
Change giving	✓	
Bill payments		
Bill payments (card, barcoded or manual)	✓	
Key recharging	✓	
Driving		
Car tax	✓	
Licences		
Rod fishing licences	✓	
Travel		
Pre-order travel money	✓	
On demand travel money	Euros/Dollars	
Travel insurance referral	✓	
On demand travel insurance	✗	
Passport Check & Send	✗	
Mobile Top-ups & E vouchers	✓	
Payment by cheque		
✓		
Products marked ✗ are available at Sunderland City Post Office, 45-47 Fawcett Street, Sunderland, SR1 1RR		Opening times: Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri & Sat 09:00 – 17:30 Tue 09:30 – 17:30
Other Products are available at Tunstall Vale Post Office, Wilson's Convenience Stores, 128 Queen Alexandra Road, Sunderland. SR2 9AB		Opening times: Mon to Sat 06:00 – 21:00

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 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
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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.