



Dear Customer

**Wokingham Post Office®**  
**16 Broad Street, Wokingham, RG40 1AA**

**Local public consultation decision**

I'm writing to confirm that, following a period of local public consultation and review, we have made the decision to proceed with the proposal to move the above Post Office into WHSmith at 26-28 Market Place, Wokingham, RG40 1AN, where it will be operated by WHSmith High Street Ltd. I am really pleased to advise that in addition to Sundays, opening hours have been extended further to those detailed in our proposal letter to include earlier opening and later closing on Monday – Friday and earlier opening on Saturdays.

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 key issues raised in the consultation and our response to each of them 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 new branch will continue to meet customer needs and deliver an excellent service, whilst securing the long-term viability of Post Office services in Wokingham.

The current branch will close at 17:30 on Wednesday 19 June 2019, with the new branch opening at 08:30 on Thursday 20 June 2019.

You can also find a copy of this letter on our website at [postofficeviews.co.uk](http://postofficeviews.co.uk). When entering the website you will be asked to enter the code for this branch: **008939**

Posters will now be displayed in branch to let customers know about this decision.

Yours sincerely

**Roger Gale**  
**Network & Sales Director**  
**Post Office Limited**

[postofficeviews.co.uk](http://postofficeviews.co.uk)  
[comments@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:comments@postoffice.co.uk)  
FREEPOST Your Comments

## **Appendix A – Response to Local Public Consultation**

**Consultation started**                      **16 January 2019**  
**Consultation ended**                      **27 February 2019**

### **Consultation responses**

- 280 responses from customers and local representatives

### **Customer forum event**

Held on 18 February 2019 attended by approximately 82 members of the public.

### **Key issues raised**

- **Getting to the new location**
- **Access**
- **Staffing**
- **Impact on the local community and rationale for the move**
- **Current premises**
- **Range of products and services**
- **Potential impact of local markets**
- **Customer Forum**

### **Response to issues raised**

#### **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 further to travel. We carefully considered factors such as the local terrain, parking or 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.

The new branch will be located approximately 180 metres from the current branch, along varied terrain. For customers using their own transport, Elms Road multi-storey pay & display car park, with 178 spaces and 9 designated disabled bays available, is approximately 180 metres away. In addition, directly outside the WHSmith premises there are several designated disabled bays. For customers wishing to pay by cash for their parking, the nearest alternative car park would be the Cockpit Path with 106 spaces and free designated disabled bays which is approximately 150 metres away. For those using public transport to get to the new branch, the nearest bus stop is approximately 205 metres from the new location.

#### **Access**

The branch will operate from a newly built dedicated open plan Post Office area located towards the rear 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. Access into the store will be level with automatic doors installed at the entrance to the premises. 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.

#### **Customer service**

There will be three counter serving positions which has been based on current and forecast future business levels; two open plan positions and one traditional floor to ceiling screened positions which will also provide travel money services. Additionally there will be two self-service kiosks for mails transactions including most home shopping returns, E Top-Ups, and a range of bill payments. Following the move, the Post Office will be open on Sundays and with the extended opening and closing times Monday to Friday along with the earlier opening on Saturdays, this will provide customers with more flexibility around their visits. We will continue to monitor service demand in the Wokingham area, along with customer usage at the new branch following the move and will work with WHSmith to make sure service standards are maintained.

## **Staffing**

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.

Any person employed to work in Wokingham 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 WHSmith 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.

## **Impact on the local community and rationale for the move**

The Post Office and WHSmith benefit from each other's service range and customer footfall. We are both an integral part of services provided on the high street across the UK, and both absolutely committed to providing excellent customer service. We believe the best approach to retaining this branch, so it can continue to serve its community effectively and sustainably, is to transfer to a third party retailer. WHSmith already successfully operate over 150 Post Office branches to very high standards. We are confident that Wokingham Post Office will meet those same high standards.

## **Current premises**

The Wokingham callers' office, is a service provided by Royal Mail and not ourselves. Post Office Ltd and Royal Mail are separate businesses but we are not aware that Royal Mail plan to make any changes to this local service, so would expect it to be unaffected by our relocation. Any future use of the vacated Post office area would be considered carefully by ourselves.

## **Range of products and services**

A wide range of services would still be available at the branch, with the exception the collection of undelivered items of mail which will not transfer. This is a service provided by Royal Mail and it will be retained at the adjacent sorting office or at an alternative location nearby. Customers can choose to have their undelivered mail, re-delivered for a small fee to any convenient Post Office, including the new branch in Wokingham.

## **Potential impact of local markets**

When making these types of decisions we take access to the Post Office very seriously and we've taken into account that on market days it is busier with shoppers, including outside WHSmith. The market traders are required to comply with the relevant traffic and pedestrian regulations, and with the market stalls being located in the pedestrianised area, we are satisfied that these measures mean that access to the store will not be compromised.

## **Customer Forum**

Concern was raised that the customer forum details should have been included at the proposal stage, but unfortunately we cannot book a local venue prior to the consultation going live. Once the customer forum venue booking has been confirmed posters and leaflets are made available in branch. We have taken on board customer feedback with regards to Wokingham customer forum and we will continue to review how we can improve the forum experience for our customers.

## Appendix B

<b>Wokingham Post Office information sheet</b>															
<b>Address</b>	WHSmith 26-28 Market Place Wokingham RG40 1AN														
<b>Opening hours</b>	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Mon</td><td>08:30 – 18:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Tue</td><td>08:30 – 18:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Wed</td><td>08:30 – 18:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Thu</td><td>08:30 – 18:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Fri</td><td>08:30 – 18:00</td></tr> <tr><td>Sat</td><td>08:30 – 17:30</td></tr> <tr><td>Sun</td><td>10:00 – 14:00</td></tr> </table>	Mon	08:30 – 18:00	Tue	08:30 – 18:00	Wed	08:30 – 18:00	Thu	08:30 – 18:00	Fri	08:30 – 18:00	Sat	08:30 – 17:30	Sun	10:00 – 14:00
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<b>Products &amp; Services</b>	A wide range of services will still be available at the branch. The collection of undelivered items of mail will not transfer. This is a service provided by Royal Mail and it will be retained at the adjacent sorting office or at an alternative location nearby.														
<b>Serving positions</b>	There will be three serving positions in total; one screened and two open plan. The total number of serving positions has been based on current and future predicted business levels.														
<b>Additional facilities</b>	Two self-service kiosks for mails transactions including home shopping returns, E Top-Ups, and a range of bill payments.														
<b>Access &amp; facilities</b>	<p>Access will be level with automatic doors installed at the entrance to the new premises. Low level serving counters, a low level writing desk and hearing loops will be available.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Parking</b></p> <p>Elms Road multi-storey pay &amp; display car park with 178 spaces and 9 designated disabled bays available, approximately 180 metres away. Several designated disabled bays directly outside the premises.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Buses</b></p> <p>Public transport available to and from the surrounding areas.</p>														
<b>Route</b>	Approximately 180 metres away from the current branch, along varied terrain.														
<b>Retail</b>	Cards and Stationery														
<b>Date of move</b>	Thursday 20 June 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 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.