

## **Modernising the network**

**Under our Network Transformation programme, we have modernised more than 7,650 branches up and down the country over the last six years, with more still in the pipeline.**

**This has been a huge success, but it is far from the end of the story for our network.**

### **Why are you opening more branches?**

The competitive landscape in the high street is changing and we must adapt and develop our network to meet the needs of our customers, both consumers and business. We need to offer convenient access to Post Offices when and where our customers want them in a competitive market place.

We've come a long way in the last few years – modernising more than 7,650 branches across the country – offering 200,000 extra opening hours and franchising many of our directly managed Post Offices to give customers bright modern branches in a vibrant local business. But there's more we need to do to make sure we can meet changing customer needs.

Over the last few years we have been opening small branches in areas where there wasn't previously a Post Office, especially urban areas, so that we can offer customers convenient access and longer opening hours. We know that customers want convenient access for everyday transactions like post, bill payments and withdrawing cash

### **What is a local Post Office branch?**

Like most high street retailers, we have had to develop a more flexible approach to how we provide services to our customers. In local branches, instead of a separate Post Office counter area, customers access Post Office services at a low-screened, open-plan, modern serving point that's part of the retail counter. Local branches offer a wide range of Post Office products and services, often over longer opening hours and sometimes seven days a week, so customers can access their Post Office when it's convenient.

### **I'm interested in running a Post Office. How do I apply?**

For more information or to search for business opportunities in your area, please visit our website [runapostoffice.co.uk](https://runapostoffice.co.uk)

### **I want more information about mail products and services**

Royal Mail is responsible for all postal matters including the collection and delivery of mail and the location of post boxes. For more information, please visit [royalmail.com](https://royalmail.com)

## **Why are you franchising Directly Managed branches?**

Franchising Directly Managed branches is a successful approach to continue to offer Post Office services in communities in a more sustainable way – partnering with a retailer to offer a Post Office combined with a shop brings the benefits of shared footfall and overheads.

Franchising forms 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, now and for the long-term. The most effective way to secure the long term viability of Post Office services is through a carefully selected retail partner. The vast majority of our 11,600 Post Office branches, large and small, are successfully operated in this way with retail partners and we believe this is the best approach to keeping Post Offices in main shopping locations and at the heart of communities where they play in an important role in local economies.

Alongside modernising our branch network, we're continuing to develop our services to remain relevant for customers. As well as traditional post and other services, today's Post Office network provides for the collection or return of online shopping, offers a 'click and collect' service for foreign currency available from over 3,500 branches and day-to-day banking for the majority of customers of UK banks - 99 per cent of UK personal banking customers and 75 per cent of business customers can now carry out day-to-day banking at any of our branches.

## **How will it affect me?**

In most cases the branch will continue to offer the same wide range of products and services as currently and will still be operated by friendly, trained staff, often over extended opening hours. There will be a consultation or engagement period first to seek your views on things like accessibility and opening hours.

## **Why is my branch closed and how can I find out what's happening?**

Sometimes unplanned changes happen to the Post Office network which are outside of our control. For example the postmaster might resign or there might be a building problem such as flooding. Where this is the case we'll try to let you know as soon as possible by displaying posters locally and further information will be available on our Consultation Hub. You can also find details of other branches in the area by visiting our website at [postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder](https://postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder)

If a branch closes we will work closely with the Postmaster to resolve any issues to enable us to restore a service as quickly as possible. Where this isn't possible or if the operator can no longer run the branch we'll seek to identify a new Postmaster in the local area and will advertise the opportunity on our website [runapostoffice.co.uk](https://runapostoffice.co.uk). If you know of any retail partners who may be interested in a vacancy, please do share the link with them. As soon as we have a suitable plan in place for the area we'll let our customers and their representatives know and will ask for feedback on our plans.

## **How will I know if there are changes planned for my branch?**

If there are any changes planned to the branch you use, information posters will be displayed in the branch. If we're carrying out a public consultation, customer leaflets will also be available in branch, which you can take home, explaining more about the changes. You can also search by branch name, code or postcode on our Consultation Hub to find out more. This will provide an information letter with full details of the change and when it's going to happen.

## **How will you take my views into account before making any changes?**

We want to know what you think and as we plan changes, we will ask for your views on key areas.

If we are proposing to move your branch to new premises, we will carry out a six-week local public consultation before we make a final decision on the new location. During that time, you can let us know what you think about our plans. At the end of consultation, all feedback will be carefully considered before we make a final decision on the proposed move. More information on how we communicate change is available in our “Principles of Community Engagement” available on our Consultation Hub or at: [postoffice.co.uk/modernising-post-office](https://postoffice.co.uk/modernising-post-office)

## **What factors do you consider before making the decision to proceed with any changes?**

Post Office Ltd welcomes all feedback but the key factors taken into account in coming to a decision are customer access to, into and inside the proposed new or alternative branches, with particular regard to vulnerable customers. We will also consider any local community issues affected by the proposal.

People often raise common issues such as car parking, traffic and road conditions. Naturally we will consider carefully any impact the changes may have on these local issues

## **How do I find out about the decisions you have made?**

We will keep you informed by displaying posters in the branch to support you through any changes. Details will also be published on our Consultation Hub under closed consultations. If you have taken part in a local public consultation and registered your views electronically, you will also be sent a link to our Consultation Hub when the final decision is announced. If you have written to us, we will write to you to let you know our final plans.

## **What do I do if I think you haven't following the Principles of Community Engagement?**

If you think we haven't followed the “Principles of Community Engagement” 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.