



Post Office News - November 2022

New figures show Post Office handling record amounts of cash

In August 2022, £3.45 billion in cash deposits and withdrawals were handled at Post Offices. This was the first time the amount had exceeded £3.4 billion in a month and was up almost £140 million month-on-month (£3.32 billion, July 22). A record £805 million in personal cash withdrawals took place in August 2022, up almost 21% on August 2021. Post Office attributes the continuing high levels of cash withdrawals to the on-going closure of local bank branches. People are also increasingly turning to cash to manage their budget.

Doubts over improvements for postmaster remuneration

POL has announced that remuneration for processing the Energy Bill Support Scheme and other government schemes is expected to be worth around £3m for postmasters. However, the National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP) has criticised the remuneration offer stating "it does not come close to what is needed" as it amounts to about only £260 per postmaster. This comes after the latest remuneration survey of sub-postmasters showed that 70% are currently earning less than the National Minimum Wage from income generated by their post offices.

Second phase of British Gas Post Office pop-ups announced

Approximately 100 more British Gas Post Office pop-Ups will be introduced between now and early next year. The initiative is designed to provide people with face to face energy advice and support at selected post offices on specific days from money and energy advisers from local British Gas Energy Trust funded charities. The announcement follows a successful pilot earlier this year which saw the Post Office host over 30 events in 17 locations.

Adjournment of Horizon inquiry requested

Lawyers for the unfairly convicted postmasters have accused the Post Office of failing to disclose more than 30,000 essential documents. They also called for the inquiry to be adjourned until all the relevant documents are made available. But the Post Office denied the claims and said: "We emphatically refute any suggestion that we have intended to obfuscate attempts ... to obtain these documents." The current stage of the inquiry aims to uncover what was behind the scandal.

The government has also extended funding for the Post Office to enable late applications by postmasters to the Historical Shortfall Scheme. This will be available to people that were unable to apply for the scheme while it was open, due to illness or being abroad. The Post Office will be writing to all individuals who have contacted them about a late application to inform them of the deadline extension.

New Research shows post office a sought after establishment

New research from Market Financial Solutions shows that more than 9/10 people say the traditional post office is still an "essential" or "important" element of the high street. This is a higher score than supermarkets and GPs. Citizens Advice research also shows that post offices remain popular and well used. Nearly 9 in 10 adults (88%) across GB use a post office at least once a year. Almost half (45%) visit a post office once a month or more often.

Royal Mail Strike action latest

The CWU said it had decided to withdraw industrial action notices for the 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10 November following a legal letter from Royal Mail. The next full Royal Mail walkout will go ahead as planned on Monday 28 November. There will also be partial strike action on 14, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 30 November and 1, 2 December.

Further dates could be added over the Christmas period if an agreement is not reached. Royal Mail have warned of up to 10,000 job cuts and more layoffs if strikes continue. Royal Mail said it would try to keep services running during

industrial action, but warned of “significant disruption” on strike dates and a knock-on effect across the days surrounding them.

Both Royal Mail and the CWU have agreed to engage in talks through the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas).

100 days left to use stamps without barcodes or swap out

Royal Mail is urging consumers to [use up stamps without barcodes by 31 January 2023](#). Alternatively, consumers can [swap them for new barcoded stamps](#). Royal Mail first introduced barcodes to its stamps in February 2022 as part of what the company described as its “extensive and ongoing modernisation drive”.

Royal Mail invests in automation at Gatwick Mail Centre

Royal Mail has invested in a [new large parcel conveyor in Gatwick Mail Centre](#) to support the automation and customer tracking of larger parcels in the network. The conveyor is capable of processing around 3 000 large parcels per hour. A second large parcel conveyor will launch soon in Royal Mail’s South Midlands Mail Centre with the potential for additional launches in mail centres across the UK in the future.

Universal Postal Union research on global postal development

The Universal Postal Union, the UN specialised agency for international postal cooperation, has released [new research findings](#) comparing the reliability, reach, relevance and resilience of postal services across the world. The report ranks the UK’s postal service highly for reliability, reach, and resilience. However, the UK scores less well for relevance - a measure of how well the postal service has adapted to the needs of the next generation of customers.

Global parcel theft on the rise, with UK the worst-affected market

[Research](#) published by Penn Elcom suggests that UK parcel piracy has grown by 5% in the last year compared to 2021. This amounts to an estimated £320 million in stolen goods. UK residents reported an increase in parcel problems since the previous 12-month period, with 12% of people reporting a parcel lost or stolen, up from 7% between May 2020 and April 2021. [Citizens Advice](#) research on parcel problems shows that 28% of the problems that people face when buying an item online are related to a parcel being left in an insecure location.

