



Post Office News - July 2022

Post Office continues Drop & Collect branch trial

The Post Office is continuing to [trial a new branch format](#). Drop & Collect branches offer prepaid parcel collection and returns, and bill payment services. Stamp books, mobile, top-ups, National Lottery and gift cards may also be provided at these branches. However, more complex services including banking services are not offered.

Post Office Ltd (POL) states that during the trial, they will monitor usage and local feedback. The new format is being piloted on a small scale before POL looks at any wider introduction. Branches will be branded as 'post offices' and operators will process transactions from a small handheld device.

The new model is designed to be more attractive to operators and compete in the growing parcels market. POL also says the format has been developed to increase customer access to services, simplify the customer experience and reduce transaction times.

Some stakeholders have expressed concerns that the reduced service model could undermine the Post Office brand and take business from existing branches.

Citizens Advice warns on mail redirection affordability

The rising cost of mail redirections means this essential service is becoming a luxury add-on, according to [new research from Citizens Advice](#). Mail redirections can be arranged at [post offices](#), as well as online via the Royal Mail website.

Whilst legally Royal Mail is required to deliver redirection at an affordable price, the cost of a 3 month redirection has jumped by over 70% since 2012. Our latest findings show people can face many problems when their post goes missing -

resulting in a range of harms from missed health appointments to damaged credit scores and court summons.

We found that the high cost of the service, which starts at £33.99, is putting many off redirecting their post. Since November 2021 Royal Mail has offered a [discount to people in receipt of some benefits](#). But people on low incomes are still more likely to be locked out of mail redirection because they can't afford to pay. Although Royal Mail's discount on redirection makes it more affordable, Citizens Advice evidence shows the service is still out of reach for many people.

Citizens Advice is calling on Ofcom and Royal Mail to make redirection more affordable.

PO becomes first government-approved digital ID provider

The Post Office, with digital identification company Yoti, has become the [first government-approved digital ID provider](#). This will allow UK citizens to prove their identity with an app instead of physical documents when applying for a job or renting a property.

POL says the Post Office is now a one stop shop for identity services. It is the only provider that offers digital identity services as well as in-branch verification services for people unable to, or choosing not to, use online channels.

Post Office EasyID has also been certified to enable digital identity checks for Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) checks.

Crown office and postal delivery staff to strike this summer

Further [industrial action affecting the UK's 114 Crown post offices](#) is planned for 11 July. This is the 3rd day of strike action by post office workers so far this year.

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) says POL has failed to make a substantial improvement to their pay offer, and members have rejected a pay offer worth 3% and a £500 lump sum. The union describes this as a "massive real-terms pay cut" that is "woefully inadequate".

Strike action by Royal Mail workers and managers is also expected to disrupt postal deliveries this summer.

[Royal Mail managers](#) have voted to strike over plans to remove 542 frontline delivery managers alongside a redeployment programme which would bring in "worsening terms and conditions". The Unite union has warned that letter and parcel delivery chaos is "inevitable".

Separately, the CWU has [balloted 115,000 postal workers](#). The CWU is seeking a pay rise for its members in line with the rate of inflation and says it must come with no strings attached. Royal Mail has offered 2%. The result of the ballot will be announced on 19 July.

Royal Mail expands services

Consumers are set to receive more Sunday parcel deliveries from Royal Mail. The company has made its [Sunday delivery service](#) available to over 12,000 of its online retailer customers, a significant increase from the 75 large online retailers previously able to use the service. Any retailer or marketplace seller using Royal Mail Tracked24 is now able to provide a next day delivery for items ordered on a Saturday.

Royal Mail is expanding its '[healthcare at home](#)' services, with the launch of a new division Royal Mail Health. Services include a partnership with Pharmacy2U to ensure NHS patients can [order and receive prescribed medications](#) quickly and conveniently with free delivery.

The company is also planning trials for postal delivery workers to [check on vulnerable residents](#) during their rounds. Royal Mail says this will build on current informal services. Similar health-related services are provided by [other national postal operators](#) around the world.

Supreme Court rejects Royal Mail appeal against Ofcom fine for competition law breach

The Supreme Court has [refused](#) Royal Mail's request to appeal against Ofcom's 2018 decision to fine it £50 million for breaching competition law. Ian Strawhorne, Interim Director of Enforcement at Ofcom, said: "We welcome the Court's decision. All companies must play by the rules, and Royal Mail had a special responsibility to ensure its behaviour was not anti-competitive – its actions were unacceptable. We hope that our fine, which has been upheld in full by the courts, will ensure that Royal Mail and other powerful companies take their legal duties very seriously."

Citizens Advice publishes annual consumer advice and advocacy report

Our [annual consumer report 2021-22](#) is now available. The report sets out details of how we have helped people through our consumer service, as well as our work on energy, post and cross-cutting consumer issues.