

Minister gives stamp of approval to protecting Post Office network

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Government response to the Post Office Green Paper published today by Ministers, confirming that the minimum branch requirement will be maintained.

- Post Office network protected for the future, with the Government maintaining the minimum requirement of 11,500 branches.
- New commitment introduced that over half of all branches must be full-time and full-service.
- Over £480 million to transform the Post Office into a modern, efficient business while preserving its vital role in communities.

The long-term future of community post offices has been secured today as Government confirmed plans to retain the number of branches serving millions of loyal customers across the country.

In its response to the Post Office Green Paper, a review launched last year to assess the future of the Post Office, Ministers have maintained the existing minimum requirement of 11,500 branches.

This will ensure local communities across the UK retain access to the vital services Post Offices provide, such as sending and receiving parcels, banking and ID renewals, and follows fierce campaigning to protect the much-loved high street staples.

In a further boost to locals and small businesses, a new requirement will be introduced that ensures a minimum number of full-time, full-service branches, guaranteeing a high-quality and more consistent service for customers.

Post Office Minister Blair McDougall said:

Post offices at the heart of our communities have delivered invaluable services on high streets across the country for decades.

Protecting branches has always been our priority. I am proud to confirm the network will be safeguarded for the future and that the Post Office will have the certainty to implement its transformation plan.

I would like to thank the postmasters and everyone who responded to the Green Paper - your contributions have helped shape the Post Office for generations to come.

Neil Brocklehurst, Post Office Chief Executive, said:

The Government's Green Paper response provides direction for our network and

recognises the essential in-person services our postmasters and partners offer to make everyday life easier for communities across the UK.

The Government's investment is also a vote of confidence in Post Office's transformation. It means we can continue to upgrade branches and their technology to provide the modern and efficient retail experience which our customers expect from their local post office.

We will continue to work closely with postmasters, partners and Government throughout Post Office's transformation and, with the right conditions, I'm confident we will see a thriving Post Office network across the UK for generations to come.

To support the transformation of the Post Office into a modern, efficient business, the Government will be making a significant investment of £483 million over the next two years.

This includes funding to modernise branches with new technology such as self-service devices and to improve delivery of products and services to better the customer experience. This funding will also enable a major technology transformation programme that will transition operations away from Fujitsu and ultimately assist with the long overdue replacement of the Horizon system.

Recognising the unique role that the Post Office plays in British life and the lifeline it provides, today's announcement underlines the Government's determination to protect that role and give the Post Office the stability it needs to plan for the future.

In addition to upgrading and protecting services, a further £37.4 million will be provided to assist the Post Office in delivering redress to victims of the Horizon scandal and participating in the final stages of the Horizon IT Inquiry. This drives forward the Government's long-standing commitment to ensure that all those who suffered as a result of this miscarriage of justice receive the compensation and support they deserve.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-gives-stamp-of-approval-to-protecting-post-office-net-work>