

# THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SUBPOSTMASTERS

Annual Plan 2024/2025

National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP)  
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The NFSP is a company limited by guarantee  
Company no: 9771284

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## Executive Summary

The National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP) is a professional trade association representing post office operators.

We are postmasters. Our non-executive board of directors is formed of serving postmasters who are nominated by their peers and operators of those classed as Strategic Partners so that the full aspect of the needs of the network are discussed. When we speak it is with a knowledge and authority which comes from knowing our business inside out. No-one can represent those who own and operate a Post Office more effectively, and our vision is to continue to fulfil that role, growing our influence for the benefit of our members.

The Core principles of the NFSP are to:

- negotiate changes to remuneration on behalf of and for the benefit of postmasters and those who own and operate post offices;
- challenge, review and comment on new or updated Post Office Ltd (PO) proposed policies or proposals on behalf of and for the benefit of postmasters and those who own and operate post offices;
- represent its members, including in relation to disputes with PO;
- provide welfare and support to postmasters in respect of the entirety of their operations, in each case, in relation to the postmasters' operation of Post Office Branches (including new models introduced by PO and forming part of the Post Office network) and all elements of business conducted from those premises; and all business carried on by postmasters on their own account from Post Office Branch premises in accordance with their contract for the operation of a Post Office Branch;

We will continue to build on these core principles as we seek to ensure that the relationship between postmasters, as investors in the network, and as the operator of the business.

Given the economic challenges we face in the coming year due to continued high inflation, the uncertainty around banking deposits, the ongoing revelations involving Post Office actions it is imperative that the relationship between postmasters and PO is as strong as possible and with shared appreciation of what each party brings to the relationship.

As the Post Office Horizon Inquiry moves towards phase 5, 6 & 7, this will continue to demand the time of the limited NFSP resources this year. Therefore, these resources have to be managed in such a way as to support Business as Usual, whilst ensuring that the needs of postmasters today are met. Therefore, the aims and objectives of this year's plan has been scaled back considerably to accommodate the time and resources that will be required.

*Annex A provides information about how the NFSP is structured in order to deliver our vision and mission in a way that is aligned to our values.*

*Annex B provides details of our current membership and confirms that the NFSP is a representative organisation as per the terms of the GFA.*

*Annex C provides our anticipated central budget for 2024/25. This section is commercially sensitive and should be treated confidentially.*

## Chief Executives Introduction

The challenges of the network have grown exponentially since the new year, thankfully due to the public and media interest in the events of the past so accurately portrayed in the ITV programme Mr Bates vs The Post Office.

However, since the programme was aired trust in the network towards Post Office as a business has plummeted. The Post Office has also lost its Chair due to tensions that existed between the business and its shareholder. This is on top of the Post Office losing its Communication Director after comments made in relation to victims of the Horizon scandal.

In essence, Post Office lurches from one crisis to another. It looks around for friends to support it and only sees those who want to put it out of its misery.

However, there is one group that wants to see the business genuinely change its culture so that it can continue to be a central part of communities the length and breadth of the UK and that is Postmasters. Those who own and operate this network have invested so much more than their own finances into the Post Office network. As investing Postmasters, it is in our intrinsic nature to want to see this business grow and thrive.

Everything that the NFSP seeks to do in the coming year is ensure that the needs of those who own and operate the network are heard at every level, that they are supported in their efforts to operate businesses that provide customers with the level of customer service that sets the PO network apart and that the relationship between Postmasters and Post Office is as positive as possible.

For the NFSP, given the toxicity in and around the network towards the Post Office as a business, its Board of Directors and Senior Management, we see it is fundamental that the governance of the Post Office has to change in the next financial year.

We are proposing an Oversight Committee, which does not change the ownership of the business but seeks to expand and develop Shareholder Relationship Framework. Crucially, this proposal can bring not only financial stability but cultural stability as well. These are two aspects that the Post Office and the network have been denied for too long.

The Oversight Committee will bring together a group of key stakeholders such as Government, the Post Office, recognised representative bodies and consumer champions to enable a level of scrutiny to the decision making within PO that has enabled crisis after crisis to knock at the businesses door. There are questions over whether the value of Postmasters investments has declined as a result.

The business has opportunities in mails, banking and travel to grow and continue to attract customers. However, these opportunities need to be provided across the network not just to a few. This is why the NFSP sees some offices thriving and

others struggling. Those offices in larger population densities tend to be performing better than those in more rural locations because the new services require population density as a key component.

This is why subsidy of the ongoing community network is vital to ensure that the rural network is maintained for customers who have seen services removed from their communities over the year on commercial grounds.

As owner operating Postmasters ourselves, we seek to build as strong a relationship with our fellow colleagues as possible. We encourage our colleagues to join in the two-way engagement that a supportive network can bring. Isolation is a concern amongst colleagues who are concerned about the viability of their businesses going forward.

The mission of the NFSP continues to be an organisation supporting members to operate post office and retail outlets. We represent their interests at every level of policy and decision-making. We offer an opportunity to belong to, and take part in, a community working together for a more successful future.

Together as a united body of Postmasters, we can help and support each other and work towards ensuring that this age-old business has the future our collective efforts deserve.

# NFSP Annual Plan 2024 – 2025

**Objective:** Oversight Committee

**Key Aims:** to set out a clear and manageable oversight structure, while ensuring the social purpose of the post office is met and the enabling of cultural change within the PO and network

**Deliverables:**

- Engage Government, DBT, Post Office and other key stakeholders
- Seek the engagement of and involvement with Postmasters
- Expand and improve the existing Shareholder Relationship Framework

**Metrics:**

- Development of an Oversight Committee white paper
- Establishment of discussions with key stakeholders on an Oversight Committee

**Objective:** Link in NFSP Directors with Product Directors of Post Office

**Key Aim:** Bring Postmasters insights into strategic thinking of individual Product Directors and Managers of Post Office

**Deliverables:**

- Meetings to be arranged between NFSP Director and PO Product Directors or Managers
- NFSP Directors to liaise with a small working group of serving Postmasters per product area
- Synopsis of meetings to be communicated with network

**Metrics:**

- Four meetings to be held each year between NFSP Director and PO Product Director and Managers
- Working groups of Postmasters linked to NFSP Board Director with product area of responsibility
- Evidence of key points being communicated with wider network

**Network Support**

**Objective:** Review engagement with members via Branch & Regional meetings

**Key Aim:** To provide a way in which the NFSP can engage with members to offer support, training, a sense of community and feedback on important issues affecting Postmasters

**Deliverables:**

- Regions commit to holding meetings either in person, via Teams or a hybrid between the two
- Test Regions chosen to operate Regional Coordinator role, with no Branch or Regional Secretary
- Minutes of each meeting produced and sent to Shoreham and members in the Region
- Training events provided on key Post Office product areas and how to improve your retail

- Encourage Postmasters in local areas to meet socially
- Prepare changes in Articles of Association for NFSP AGM in May 2025

#### **Metrics:**

- Views of members sought as to improvement in engagement within test Regions
- Increase in the number of and attendance at meetings across test Region
- Regional Coordinator chosen from within the Region and funded centrally
- Members have copies of minutes of meetings

#### **Advocacy**

**Objective:** Review awareness of the Advocacy Representative role amongst members

#### **Key Aims:**

- Ensure that if a member has a potential breach of contract situation with Post Office, they are aware of the support available to them via the NFSP
- Review and identify potential solutions to outstanding long-term and complex cases

#### **Deliverables:**

- Promote the availability of the Advocacy Representative role via our media channels
- Collate and identify patterns within cases, constructively challenging Post Office where required on behalf of members
- Develop the business case for a potential arbitrary service to be introduced for cases where the Postmaster has not engaged with Post Office to find a resolution

#### **Metrics**

- Member research sought to gauge improvements in awareness
- Evidence that the NFSP has challenged Post Office due to patterns in cases being identified
- Formulation of a solution to enhance Postmaster engagement with Post Office

#### **NET**

Objective: Review engagement with Post Office on issues affecting Postmasters and feeding into development of strategies by PO that affect Postmasters

#### Key Aims:

- Use Postmaster evidence based data to work with PO to improve areas affecting Postmasters
- Enable Postmasters to understand the work the NFSP does to enhance the relationship with Post Office

#### Deliverables

- negotiate improvements to remuneration on behalf of and for the benefit of postmasters;
- Work with Post Office to reduce its central costs

- challenge, review and comment on new or updated Post Office Ltd (PO) proposed policies or proposals on behalf of and for the benefit of postmasters;

**Metrics:**

- Demonstration that Postmaster remuneration has improved
- Where costs have been reduced savings are shared with Postmasters
- Improvement in the working relationship between Post Office and NFSP

**Public Affairs**

**Objective:** Support NFSP involvement in Inquiry

**Key Aims:** Ensure that the NFSP's involvement in the Inquiry is documented

**Deliverables:**

- Providing documentation to the Inquiry as required
- Providing questions for witnesses
- Reviewing written and oral statements to the Inquiry
- Attending the Inquiry as required

**Metrics**

- Evidence that the NFSP is engaging with the Inquiry as required
- Updates on developments of the Inquiry are communicated to Postmasters

**Objective:** Ensure that Postmasters are heard by Government, Post Office and key stakeholders

**Key Aims:** Collating research on issues affecting Postmasters and bringing outcomes to members and key stakeholders

**Deliverables:**

- Conduct monthly remuneration survey
- Analyse Branch & Regional Secretaries logs for patterns and anomalies
- Analyse external stakeholder research from Citizens Advice, Ofcom, Consumer Scotland, Retail Northern Ireland, IRC, Rural Services network & House of Commons Library
- Ensure political engagement across Westminster and devolved Governments

**Metrics:**

- Outcomes of monthly remuneration survey are conveyed to members
- Collate data from Branch & Regional Secretaries logs into useable format
- Provide briefings on external research
- Evidence Postmasters issues are being provided to Government, Post Office and key stakeholders



**Objective:** Review political engagement across Westminster and devolved Governments

**Key Aim:** Promote to politicians and key stakeholders the issues and challenges that Postmasters face in relation to the operating and viability of their businesses.

**Deliverables:**

- Ensure engagement with key MP's and legislators
- Provide briefings for the Working Group with Government & Post Office
- Engage with the All Party Political Group (APPG)
- Regular meetings with officials of DBT
- Provide briefings on relevant Postmaster issues and upcoming debates
- Organising events in Westminster, Holyrood, Stormont & Senedd, to include Postmasters

**Metrics:**

- Document interactions with key MP's and legislators
- Key discussion points of Working Group, APPG meetings and engagement with DBT officials are provided to members
- Evidence briefings of key stakeholders ahead of debates on matters important to Postmasters
- Evidence attempts made to host Postmaster events in Westminster, Holyrood, Stormont and Senedd

**Marketing & Design**

**Objective: Complete an NFSP brand review**

**Aim:** To determine our message and visual identity still resonates with our target audience and communicates who we are.

**Deliverables:**

- An exploratory study to understand our brand's effectiveness, and how we align to our vision and mission. This would encompass internal/external branding and our membership journey.

**Metrics:**

- Measuring brand metrics through various methods (determined in the proposal) such as social media listening, analysis of online reviews, qualitative interviews, focus groups, and website analytics.

**Objective: Marketing of the NFSP**

**Aim:** To ensure the NFSP remains relevant and engaging to its membership, and is proactive in recruiting new members

**Deliverables:**

- Producing a suite of marketing materials to promote member benefits of the NFSP.
- Developing a marketing plan to promote member benefits to the membership.

- Producing marketing materials to recruit new NFSP members.
- Ensuring all NFSP branded materials meet the NFSP visual identity guidelines.

**Metrics:**

- Measuring take-up of member benefits such as NFSP+ and the Advocacy Project.
- Tracking numbers of NFSP membership against marketing activity.

**Objective:** Support postmasters' digital customer engagement activities.

**Key Aim:**

- Providing support to Postmasters for raising awareness of in branch services across digital platforms

**Deliverables:**

- Develop the "Take that step" character to portray different PO products
- Explore the medium of video shorts to help engagement with the campaign.
- Support Postmasters in raising local and national awareness of the availability of services at post offices such as banking, mails and travel

**Metrics:**

- Develop a suite of "Take That Step" content for Postmasters to utilise both through digital channels and in branch
- Adoption and use of the "Take That Step" content by Postmasters

**Objective:** Encourage Postmasters to utilise the digital resources and toolkits through key NFSP communications channels.

**Key Aim:**

- Identify research into why so few Postmasters are digitally engaged?
- Identify if the way Postmasters market themselves impacts their business either positively/negatively?
- Encourage Postmasters to understand digital marketing best practice and what good looks like.

**Deliverable:**

- Provide Postmasters with information/insight into the different social media platforms they should be using to promote their business.
- Engage with Postmasters who are promoting their businesses digitally to share best practice with members.

**Metrics:**

- Demonstrate information sharing of information/insights in social media and digital marketing
- Production of step by step guide to each of the social media channels, how to access them and top tips on how to use

**Objective:** Improve ease of access to NFSP resource content

**Key Aims:**

- To improve the user experience of the NFSP website.

### **Deliverable:**

- Develop a proposal to improve user experience and website navigation.
- Review how campaign toolkit materials can be displayed on the NFSP website for members.
- Review the NFSP website

### **Metrics:**

- Production of peer to peer messaging on the benefit of the use of digital promotion of a Postmasters business
- Measure of digital awareness of and use amongst Postmasters

### **Communications**

**Objective:** Develop an NFSP Communication and Marketing strategy and plan

**Key aim:** To align all internal and external communications to enable organisations goals and vision to be achieved.

### **Deliverables:**

- Scope out, research and review the development of a communications and marketing strategy.

### **Metrics**

- Production of a written communications and marketing strategy.
- Development of a communications and marketing plan informed by the communications and marketing strategy.

**Objective:** Developing postmaster-led content for NFSP communication channels

### **Key aim:**

- Tell the story of real life experiences of Postmasters who demonstrate a benefit to their communities

### **Deliverables:**

- Develop the NFSP Podcast: The Post Report
- Produce and edit content from Postmasters and other key stakeholders in Post Office and Government
- Encourage Postmasters to write their own blogs on aspects that interest them within the Post Office world
  - Retail help
  - Mails support
  - Security advice
  - Etc
- Establish a working group within the NFSP to gain feedback and gain different views on the NFSP communication channels.

### **Metrics:**

- At least 10 episodes produced and aired by March 2025
- Expansion of the number of colleagues writing their own blog

**Objective:** Delivering joined up communications, informed by the communications strategy

### **Key Aims:**

- Keeping Postmasters updated and informed about news and events within the Post Office world
- Review the development of the weekly newsletter
- Balance the reactive needs with a proactive narrative
- Improve membership sign up to our website

### **Deliverables:**

- Monitoring and analysis of the email newsletter statistics -via MailChimp
- Developing a system of email communications to respond to email unsubscribes, sign ups etc.
- Produce content that keeps Postmasters informed on the key developments that affect the Post Office and their businesses
- Deliver the email campaign to encourage members to register to our website and a guide on how to register on our website
- Think pieces on LinkedIn to grow engagement
  - Concern over NED appointments
  - Governance of the PO
  - Oversight Committee

### **Metrics:**

- Improvement in the number Postmasters who open and read the weekly newsletter
- Evidence of the content produced by the NFSP has been reactive to events taking place but has also been narrative driven
- Improvement in the number of members accessing our website

**Objective:** Improving the level of internal communication so that colleagues are aware of developments within the NFSP and how they are involved

**Key Aim:** Review the level of internal communication with NFSP colleagues so that they are kept up to date with events affecting the network and the NFSP

### **Deliverables:**

- Providing monthly updates including what is going on in Shoreham
- Providing an update on what work is being undertaken across departments
- Updating colleagues on work in progress as to the annual plan

### **Metrics:**

- Improvements in the awareness of NFSP employees as to events
- Increase in cross departmental engagement within NFSP employees
- Improvement in NFSP employee understanding of their roles importance to the NFSP working on its annual plan

**Objective:** Review the SubPostmaster magazine and what improvements could be made

**Key aim:**

- Review our current publisher and establish if there are alternative ways the magazine could be produced
- Understand how members view the magazine, what they want from it.
- Use these learnings to inform a review and refresh of the magazine including content/layout/number of publications etc.

**Deliverables:**

- Explore views of the working group and members relating to the Subpostmaster magazine Identify options on layout, print number and content
- Identify options on layout, print number and content ideas
- Explore Editor interview styles

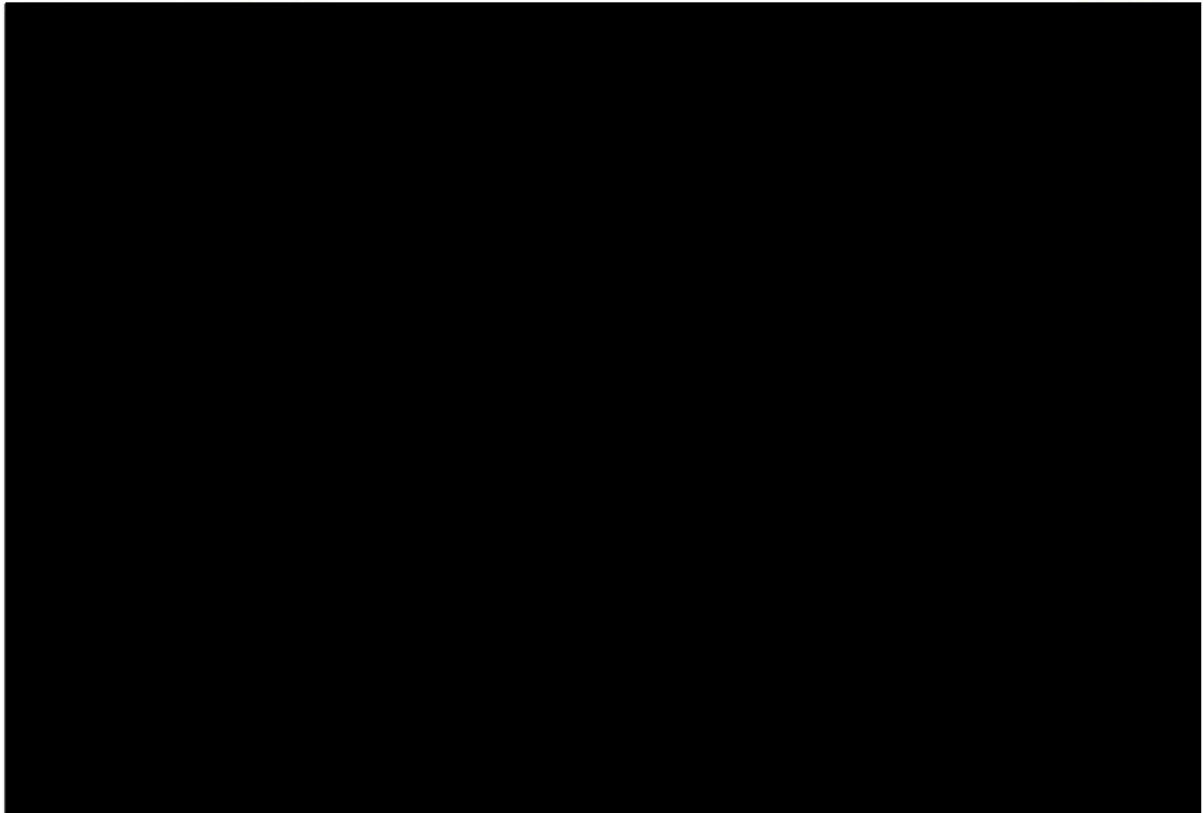
**Metrics**

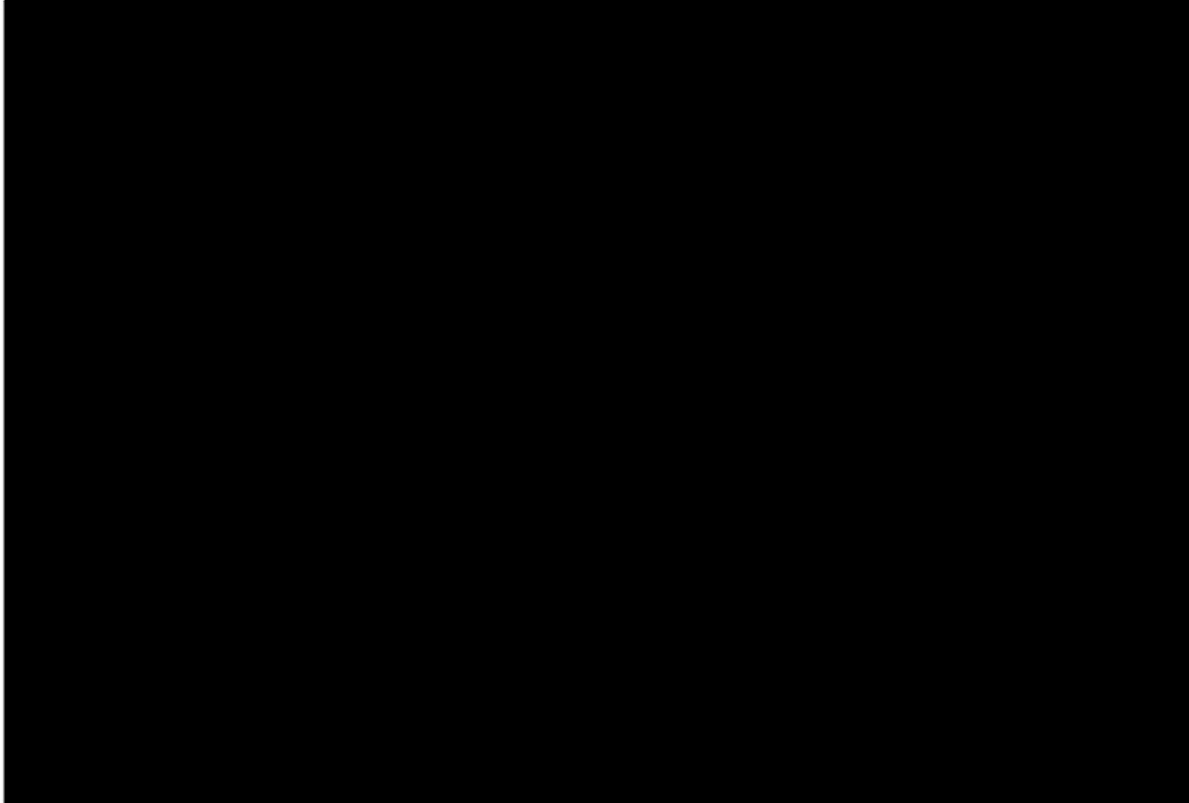
- Evidence based decision on the review of the Subpostmaster layout, print size and content
- Decision on the type of interview style that is most helpful and informative to Postmasters

## NFSP Annual Plan Timeline

NFSP Annual Plan 2024-2025

Part 1 of 2



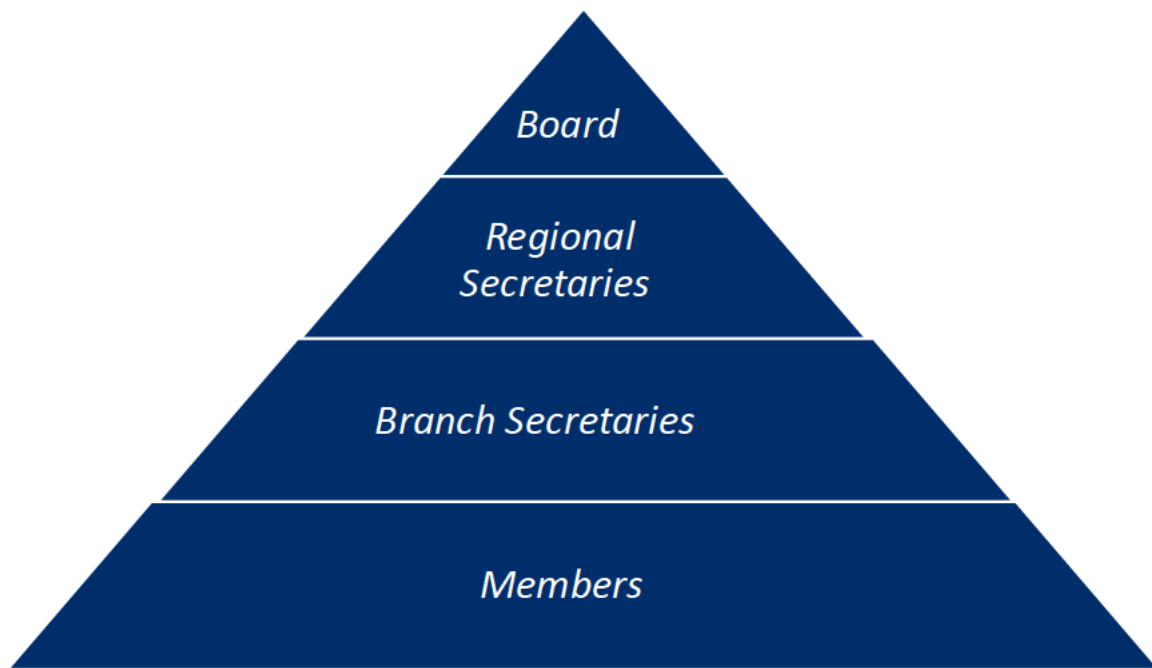


## Annex A: Organisational overview

The National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP) is a professional trade association representing post office operators. Around 98% of the post office network is operated by self-employed businesspeople operating as agents of Post Office Ltd.

Management accountability and strategic direction is provided by an elected non-executive board. Non-Executive Directors are serving postmasters and are elected by their region every three years. Each region also has a Regional Secretary and a Treasurer, who are appointed by the members in their region. Within each region there are a number of branches which each have a Branch Secretary. Branch Secretaries are nominated and elected by members within their area and are responsible for providing local support for members.

Figure 1:1 Organisational Structure



The Board and the regional and branch network are supported by the executive team and its staff. It can draw upon specialist external support (e.g. financial and legal services) as required. The current structure of the organisation is provided below (Fig 1.2).



Figure 1.2: Executive structure 2024/25



## Annex B: Membership

The NFSP's membership as at 31 March 2024 is 8500 branches, which includes outreach branches and those operated by multiple partners who have chosen to join the NFSP.

*Member benefits* The NFSP provides access to a number of products and services for the benefit of our members. This includes:

<p><i>Representation of postmasters in negotiations with PO covering:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remuneration.</li> <li>- Terms and conditions.</li> <li>- Practical and operational matters e.g. security and tax issues.</li> <li>- Contractual matters including individual representation.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Access to expert support including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mails Support Team.</li> <li>- Retail support.</li> <li>- Operational support.</li> <li>- Tax advice.</li> <li>- Employment law and HR matters.</li> <li>- Business support.</li> <li>- Trauma counselling.</li> <li>- Benevolence fund for postmasters in need.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Access to specialised and discounted products including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public liability insurance for qualifying members.</li> <li>- Malicious attack cover.</li> <li>- Identity theft helpline.</li> <li>- Tax and VAT insurance.</li> <li>- Legal advice.</li> <li>- Discounted commercial products and services.</li> <li>- Access to a relief scheme.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Information, news and analysis through a range of communications channels including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The SubPostmaster, the bi-monthly magazine sent to all members.</li> <li>- Direct emails on regional and national issues</li> <li>- Social media groups – including WhatsApp and Facebook</li> <li>- Website providing tools and resources to support post office and retail operations</li> <li>- Regional and national meetings</li> <li>- Annual conference</li> </ul>

## Annex C: Annual operating budget

