Postmaster support policy

Postmaster complaint handling

Version 3.1 | Public | May 2026

POST OFFICE

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1 Overview

1.1 Introduction

The relationship between postmasters and Post Office is vital to mutual success. Working in partnership with postmasters, we support them in serving our customers and communities.

This is one of ten postmaster support policies which provide a clear framework and define the standard for how Post Office supports and works in partnership with postmasters. Compliance with these policies also supports us in meeting business objectives and balancing the needs of our shareholder, employees, and other stakeholders. Details of all the postmaster support policies can be found in the 'Policy framework' section of this document.

The postmaster complaint handling policy is reviewed and updated annually, or more frequently as necessary. This ensures ongoing compliance with regulatory or legislative changes and reflects any lessons learned from both internal and external events. It is subject to annual review and approval by an authorised committee on behalf of the Board of directors. It is then adopted by Post Office Limited.

This policy is a non-contractual document provided for information. It does not form part of the contract between any postmaster[1] and Post Office[2].

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the operating standards for managing complaints received from postmasters, to make sure they are handled consistently, fairly and within agreed timescales.

1.3 Who must comply

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all employees[3] working within or for Post Office Limited, including permanent and temporary colleagues (consultants, contractors, third party agents and their employees), who are involved in postmaster complaint handling and management activities.

1.4 Corporate partners

The principles and procedures described in this policy for handling postmaster complaints also apply to corporate partners.

[1] In this policy only, "postmaster" refers to a limited company, partnership, limited liability partnership, other entity or individual that contracts, or contracted in the past, with Post Office for the operation of a Post Office branch.

[2] In this policy, "Post Office" and "Group" means Post Office Limited.

[3] In this policy "employee" and "staff" means all persons working for the Group, or on our behalf, in any capacity including employees at all levels, directors, agency workers, volunteers, interns, and contractors.

2 Principles

2.1 Core principles of the postmaster complaint handling policy

Post Office will:

Maintain an effective governance and assurance environment including:

- Documented and approved processes for managing complaints from postmasters.
- Acknowledging new complaints from postmasters within one working day and aiming to resolve them within 10 working days. Where this may not be possible, we will update the postmaster with the reason for the delay and expected resolution times and provide regular progress updates.
- Advising postmasters they can escalate a complaint for review, if they are unhappy with the response they have received.
- Escalated complaints will be reviewed by senior management within the Branch Support Centre, who will seek support from subject matter experts within the business where required. Where a mutually agreed resolution can't be achieved, the complaint will be escalated to a delegated committee on which there is postmaster representation.
- Identifying complaints or concerns that should be treated as whistleblowing and handling them in line with the Speak Up procedures.
- Analysing complaint data to identify common, systemic and/or recurring themes and issues, so they can be addressed to improve our business operations where appropriate.
- Using complaints data, postmaster satisfaction results and other insights to constantly improve the service received when a complaint is made
- Internal reporting on the management of postmaster complaints and service performance on a regular basis.
- Having a self-assessment control framework in place to make sure Post Office employees and processes are compliant with this policy.
- Quality assuring resolved complaints to make sure the correct processes were followed, the postmaster was supported, kept up to date on the status of the complaint, and the appropriate resolution was achieved.
- Providing annual refresher training on this policy for employees who are involved in the handling and management of complaints from postmasters.

Foster an environment where postmasters and Post Office work in partnership to resolve all postmaster complaints in good faith with fairness, transparency, and professionalism. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Encouraging the reporting of postmaster concerns.
- Treating complaints seriously and fully investigating concerns that have been raised.
- Informing postmasters of the different channels they can use to raise a complaint.
- Identifying Postmaster dissatisfaction with the process/outcome and offering them the opportunity to raise a formal complaint.

2.2 Postmasters

Many postmasters operate through limited companies or partnerships (and as individual postmasters may appoint managers to operate a branch on their behalf) any steps that need to be taken by a postmaster under this policy can be taken by someone authorised to act on that postmaster's behalf (such as a director, partner or manager)

3 Policy framework

3.1 Policy framework

The postmaster support policies are reviewed annually and set out guidelines on how Post Office should support postmasters across ten specific areas. Each policy stands on its own, but should be reviewed in conjunction with the others.

Setting branches up for success

- Postmaster onboarding
- Postmaster training

We're listening...

- Postmaster complaint handling

Network monitoring, cash and stock management and account support

- Network monitoring
- Network operational support
- Network cash and stock management
- Network transaction corrections
- Postmaster account support
- Postmaster discrepancy review and resolution

Our agreement with the postmaster

- Postmaster contract management

3.2 Additional policies

You can find the full set of postmaster support policies on Branch Hub in the 'Help to run your branch' section or by visiting https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/governance/post-office-policies/post-office-policies.

3.3 Policy queries

If you have any queries about this policy, or any of the other postmaster support policies, you can email us at postmastersupportpolicies@postoffice.co.uk.

4 Where to go for help

4.1 Postmaster wellbeing

Postmaster wellbeing matters to us. Branch Hub provides an online space where postmasters can find help and support when they need it. This could be to deal with an urgent or emerging situation, accessing professional resources, or getting friendly support and advice by joining a community group.

4.2 Branch Hub

Branch Hub provides useful information and services to help postmasters run their branch and self-service their needs.

4.3 Reporting a concern – how to 'Speak Up'

Post Office strives to foster an environment where everyone feels comfortable speaking up. We encourage everyone to raise concerns about wrongdoing, illegal activities, or unethical behaviour.

To support this, we have several reporting channels:

- The Speak Up reporter's line manager.
- Contacting the "Speak Up" service, a confidential reporting service which is operated by an independent company on behalf of Post Office.
- Direct to the Speak Up Manager at speakup@postoffice.co.uk

Information and contact details

Speak Up:

- Telephone number: 0800 041 8159
- http://speakup.postoffice.co.uk which is a secure online web portal
- Email direct: speakup@postoffice.co.uk
- Through the QR code below.

4.4 Postmaster complaints

If a postmaster or a member of their branch staff has any concerns with this, or any of the other postmaster support policies, they can raise a complaint via Branch Hub. You can find more information about how we handle postmaster complaints in the Postmaster complaint handling policy available on Branch Hub and the corporate website.

4.5 National Federation of SubPostmasters

Postmasters may also contact the National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP) for help and support, by:

- calling its helpline on 01273 452324
- emailing admin@nfsp.org.uk
- visiting its website NFSP.org.uk

5 Document control

5.1 Document control record

Version	Document review period	Policy – effective date
1.0	Annual	23 January 2025
2.0	Annual	29 April 2025
2.1	Update	16 July 2025
3.0	Annual	20 November 2025
3.1	Update to template	20 May 2026

5.2 Policy approval

Committee	Date approved
On behalf of the Board	20 November 2025

Next policy annual review date: 30 November 2026

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Definitions

Board of directors - Post Office Limited's Board of Directors comprises the Chair, a Senior Independent Director, seven other Non-Executive Directors and two Executive Directors. You can find more information on the Board by visiting our Post Office Corporate website.

Complaint – any oral or written statement of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, from, or on behalf of, a postmaster (whether a limited company, a partnership, a limited liability partnership or an individual) about the provision of, or failure to provide, a product, process or service from Post Office, or the way that Post Office interacts with the postmaster.

Complaint handler – any employee of Post Office who is in a position to receive a complaint from a postmaster through one of the preferred complaint reporting channels.

National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP) – a professional trade association which exists to support postmasters.

Corporate partner – a corporate business that operates post offices in several locations within its retail estate. A corporate partner is likely to operate from more than 25 retail stores, has centralised support functions/head office management and has strategic alignment to future Post Office Limited propositions/network growth.

Whistleblowing – the act of a person, or postmaster, making a disclosure they reasonably believe is (a) in the public interest, and (b) regarding past, present or likely future wrongdoing, which falls into one or more of the following categories:

- criminal offences (this may include types of financial impropriety such as fraud)
- failure to comply with an obligation set out in law (including regulatory breaches)
- miscarriages of justice
- endangering of someone's health and safety
- damage to the environment
- covering up wrongdoing in the above categories
- a breach of Post Office's policies and procedures
- behaviour that harms or is likely to harm the reputation or financial wellbeing of Post Office

Appendix 2 – Governance responsibilities

The policy sponsor is responsible for overseeing this policy and the policy owner is responsible for making sure the content is up-to-date and can be implemented. The owner will make sure it is implemented in practice and will inform the owners of other impacted policies where new or significant changes are made to it.

Once approved, the policy owner is responsible for overseeing compliance with this policy and providing assurance to the Board of directors.

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