

Postmaster support policy

Postmaster Onboarding

Version 2.1 | Public | April 2025



Contents

- 1 Overview 3
 - 1.1 Introduction 3
 - 1.2 Purpose 3
 - 1.3 Who must comply..... 3
 - 1.4 Strategic partners 3
- 2 Principles and framework..... 4
 - 2.1 Core principles 4
 - 2.2 Postmasters 5
 - 2.3 Policy framework..... 5
 - 2.4 Additional policies..... 5
- 3 Where to go for help 6
 - 3.1 Postmaster wellbeing..... 6
 - 3.2 Reporting a concern – how to ‘Speak Up’ 6
 - 3.3 National Federation of SubPostmasters..... 6
 - 3.4 Policy queries 6
- 4 Document control 7
 - 4.1 Document control record..... 7
 - 4.2 Policy approval..... 7
- 5 Appendices 8
 - Appendix 1 – Onboarding journey timelines..... 8
 - Appendix 2 – Definitions..... 9
 - Appendix 3 – Governance responsibilities..... 9



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 Onboarding policy is reviewed and updated annually, or more frequently as necessary. This ensures ongoing compliance with regulatory or legislative changes and to reflect any lessons learned from both internal and external events. It is subject to annual review and endorsement at the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee (ARC). 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 postmaster¹ and Post Office².

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the minimum operational standards required for the onboarding of postmasters and their teams.

1.3 Who must comply

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all employees³ 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 onboarding activities (including Banking Hubs) on behalf of Post Office.

1.4 Strategic partners

Strategic partners are outside of the scope for this policy and follow a separate process designed for corporate businesses.

¹ In this policy, "postmaster" refers to a limited company, partnership, limited liability partnership, other entity or individual that contracts 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 and framework

2.1 Core principles

Post Office will:

Maintain an effective governance and assurance environment including:

- Documented and approved processes for onboarding new postmasters.
- Evaluating all onboarding feedback received from applicants, postmasters and their teams, and taking the relevant corrective actions where appropriate.
- Quality assuring onboarding activities completed by Post Office employees, to make sure they are completed accurately.
- Having quality assurance self-assessment controls in place to make sure Post Office employees and processes are compliant with this policy.
- Providing annual refresher training on this policy for employees who are involved in postmaster onboarding activities (including Banking Hubs).

Foster an environment to deliver postmaster onboarding in good faith with fairness, transparency, and professionalism. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing a postmaster onboarding process to attract and appoint the best possible postmasters. This helps to reduce network churn and attrition and enables Post Office to maintain a stable and sustainable network.
- Making sure applicants and their teams are given the right levels of support throughout the onboarding journey, to lay the foundations for a sustainable, collaborative, and transparent future partnership.
- Providing comprehensive supporting documents and telephone calls to make sure applicants feel supported throughout the onboarding journey.
- Tailoring onboarding journeys to the Post Office branch type (including Banking Hubs).
- Reviewing detailed financial assessments, submitted by applicants, to check the ongoing financial sustainability of the operation.
- Applicants attending a suitability assessment to discuss their business plan, their knowledge and any experience that will support them in running a post office.
- Advising the applicant what training they will have to complete if successful.
- Making sure, through a comprehensive vetting process, all applicants (and their branch team/branch assistants) are able to meet their legal, regulatory, and contractual obligations.

On completion of postmaster onboarding activities:

- Applicants who are unsuccessful in the onboarding process to run a post office branch will not be able to reapply for the same branch within a six-month period.
- Existing postmasters who are unsuccessful in the onboarding process to run a Banking Hub will not be able to reapply within a six-month period, unless they are invited to apply by Post Office for a new Banking Hub that will be opening near to their branch.
- If applicants are successful in the onboarding process, but the requested branch or Banking Hub is unavailable, they can reapply for another branch or Banking Hub straightaway.
- If successful, an agreement is created and sent to the applicant for signature.
- The applicant has the right to appeal an unsuccessful suitability assessment and will be given details on how to do this at the time.

- The agreement is signed by, or on behalf of, the postmaster and returned to Post Office where it will be checked and countersigned by a Post Office Limited representative. A copy of the signed agreement is returned to the postmaster.
- Once the agreement between the postmaster and Post Office is signed, the operational branch transfer, where applicable, and training dates will be mutually agreed and scheduled.

Where a postmaster submits their notice to leave there will be a leaving interview to understand why they are closing the branch. All reasons for leaving and feedback is shared with the business. Closures within two years of the start of the tenure are also reviewed by the onboarding team to identify any improvement opportunities that can be made to the postmaster onboarding journey and experience.

2.2 Postmasters

- Each postmaster and member of the branch team will be issued with a unique ID and passwords to access Post Office systems. The postmaster is responsible for making sure each member of the branch team has been registered by Post Office Ltd and issued with their own unique Post Office ID and this is not shared or used by any other individual on any occasion.

2.3 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 accounting dispute resolution

Our agreement with the postmaster

- Postmaster contract management

2.4 Additional policies

You can find the full set of postmaster support policies at:

<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/governance/post-office-policies/post-office-policies>

3 Where to go for help

3.1 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.

3.2 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
- To a frontline team, e.g. area managers, the Branch Support Centre, and Grapevine.

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.



3.3 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

3.4 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 Document control

4.1 Document control record

Version	Document review period	Policy – effective date
1.0	Annual	23 January 2025
2.0	Annual	25 March 2025
2.1	Annual	29 April 2025

4.2 Policy approval

Committee	Date approved
POL ARC	25 March 2025

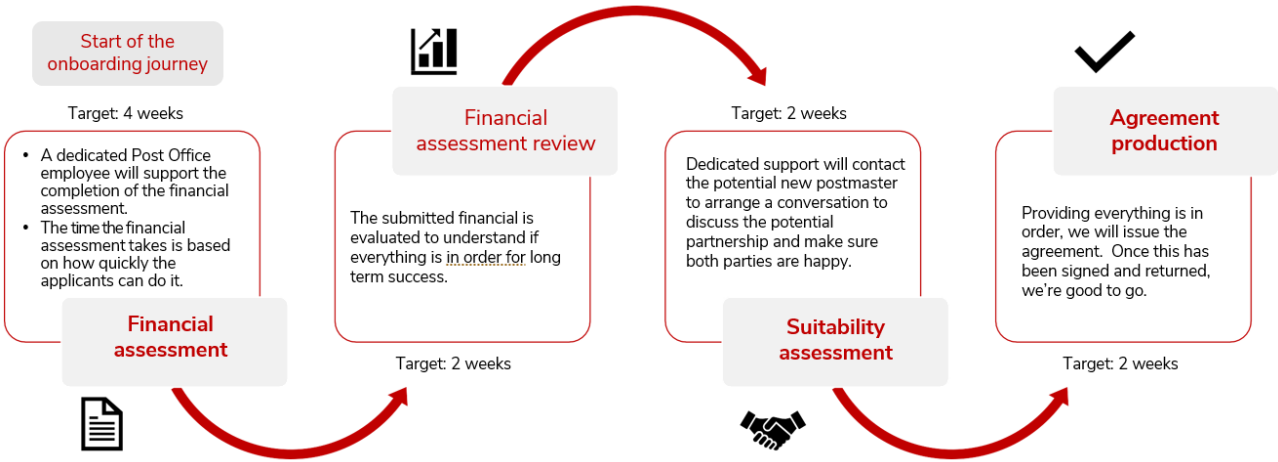
Next policy annual review date: 31 March 2026



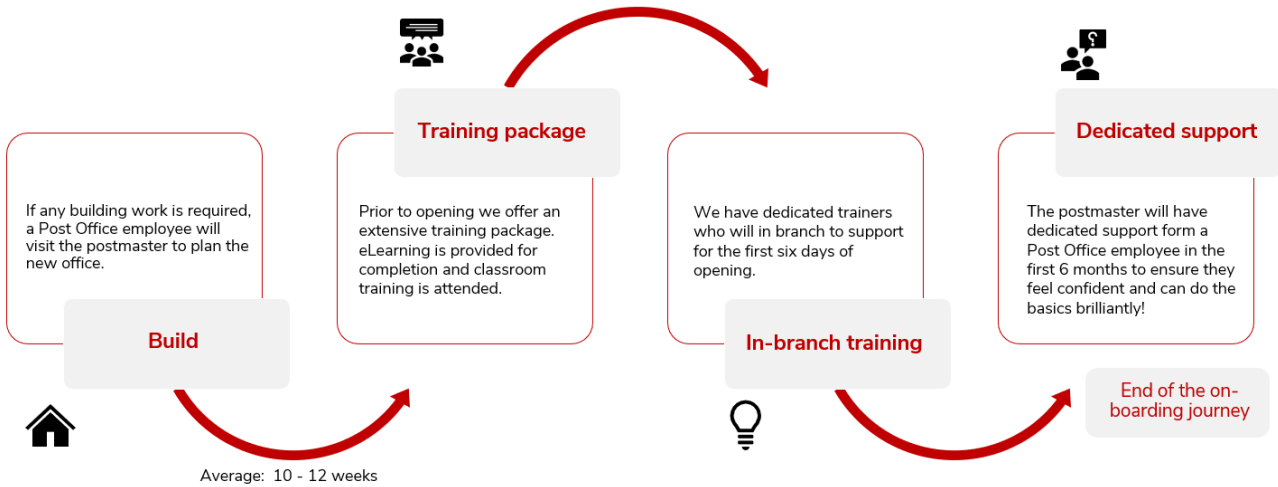
5 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Onboarding journey timelines

Branch onboarding journey - application



Branch onboarding journey - support



Appendix 2 – Definitions

Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee – is the Committee of the Post Office Limited Board which reviews and approves postmaster support policies.

Branch assistant – Someone who is employed by a strategic partner or postmaster to work in a post office branch.

Banking Hub – A Post Office-managed space where people can do their day-to-day banking and talk to community staff from their own bank once a week.

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

Strategic partner – A corporate business that operates post offices in several locations within their retail estate. A strategic 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.

Appendix 3 – 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 Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee is responsible for overseeing compliance with this policy.

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