

Post Office issues update on 11,500 UK branches as ‘change’ planned

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Post Office issues update on 11,500 UK branches as ‘change’ planned

The Post Office will receive a £483 million investment into modernisation.



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By **Claire Schofield**

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The Government is maintaining the minimum requirement of 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK (Image: Getty)

The Post Office has issued an update on the future of its UK branches after a review raised concerns over counters closing.

Government ministers on Wednesday confirmed that the **Post Office** will maintain its 11,500-minimum branch requirement after acknowledging the role the stores play across ailing **UK high streets**. It means a minimum of 11,500 **UK branches will remain open** and a £483million investment will also be made over the next two years to carry out modernisation changes, including the installation of more self-service devices. The announcement comes after a green paper launched last summer on the future of the state-owned postal, banking and **retail** business, but the Post Office argued it was important to maintain nationwide coverage.

As well as maintaining the 11,500 branch threshold, a new requirement that over half of all branches must be full-time and full-service will also be introduced to ensure customers receive a more consistent service.

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The Post Office will also retain all six of its geographical access criteria, including that 99% of the UK population must be within three miles of their nearest outlet, and 90% within one mile.

The firm said the outcome of the government consultation will safeguard its future and will give it the certainty that it needs to implement its transformation plan, which includes modernising branches and upgrading technology to improve the efficiency 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.”

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

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.

Neil Brocklehurst, Post Office Chief Executive, added: “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.

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“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.”