



Hello,

We've been reviewing and improving the support we give branches, based on the type of calls we get into the Branch Support Centre and the reasons for Transaction Corrections. One of our improvements was to introduce a dedicated team as part of the Helpline who can support you if you have balancing issues. This team is now up and running.

Most of the balancing issues are caused by customers changing their mind or a keying mistake. To identify what went wrong to enable us to correct it, it is always easier for branches if the day-to-day processes such as cash declarations, balancing and compliance are followed by everyone in your branch.

We're making changes to some Horizon screens to make it easier to avoid mistakes and we will continue to improve screens based on your feedback.

We've also learnt through our dedicated balancing team that often branches are unsure how to resolve issues when they face them.

To support you, we have created some important guides which cover information to help you in:

- Running an efficient Post Office branch
- Branch Balancing
- Branch Discrepancies and Transaction Corrections

These guides will give you an overview as well as some helpful reminders and useful tips.

By following the guidance and processes it will be easier to flag potential issues, so that these can be investigated and dealt with quickly.

Remember, help or additional training is available if you or your team need it – contact your Area Manager and they can refer you to the relevant training.

I hope you find these printed guides useful. They have also been published on Branchfocus (28 October), and we value your feedback and further suggestions via One website version of Branchfocus.

You can also email feedback and questions to postmastersquestions@postoffice.co.uk

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Julie Thomas
Operations Director



Branch support guides

This booklet contains some important guides to help you with:

- Running an efficient Post Office branch
- Branch Balancing
- Branch Discrepancies and Transaction Corrections



Running an efficient Post Office branch

This page covers key information on running an efficient Post Office branch. It gives you an overview as well as some helpful reminders and useful tips that you can use on a daily basis.

Accurate Cash Declarations

The first step to running an efficient branch is making sure that an accurate cash declaration is completed daily. This will help you to identify and investigate any variances on a daily basis.

Please complete an accurate cash declaration by value, for all notes and coins. The best time to complete this is as late as possible in the day, but before 7pm every day.

If you use shared stock units: when you have declared the cash you will have the option to select variance; always check the variance prior to printing.

If you use individual stock units: when you have declared the cash, you will automatically be advised if there is a discrepancy.

Useful tip: always write the variance figure +/- on the top of the printed cash declaration and retain this for two years.

During the working day

There are some simple steps to remember when using Horizon. These include the following:

- Make sure your Horizon online basket is empty before serving the next customer
- Double check the amount on screen after entering the customer's transactions; does Horizon say pay customer (**GREEN**) or take from customer (**RED**)?
- When completing chip and pin transactions make sure you press the correct icon; withdrawal or deposit
- Double check physical cash being transferred to or from the customer;
- For large cash deposits/withdrawals, if possible ask another member of staff to double check this for you
- When accepting Transaction Corrections and settling to make good cash, remember to physically introduce/withdraw the cash
- When dealing with currency transactions, double check you've selected the correct icon: Sell (if selling to the customer) or Buy Back (if you're buying back from the customer).

Remittances of Cash, Stock & Currency

When preparing remittances for despatch always:

- Ask another member of staff to double check the contents of a pouch before sealing it, if possible.
- Make sure you accurately record the amounts you are returning.

When receiving remittances always:

- Physically check what you have received matches with your delivery note.
- Double check manually when inputting quantities of stock items.

If you have not received what is stated on your delivery note, please contact the Branch Support Centre.

Useful tip: Attach the receipt to the remittance advice note, as this makes it easier if you have to check it again later.

Balancing

Balancing is required each month.

Although not required, we encourage you to also balance weekly, so if there are issues it will help you identify any discrepancies quickly and within a shorter timeframe.

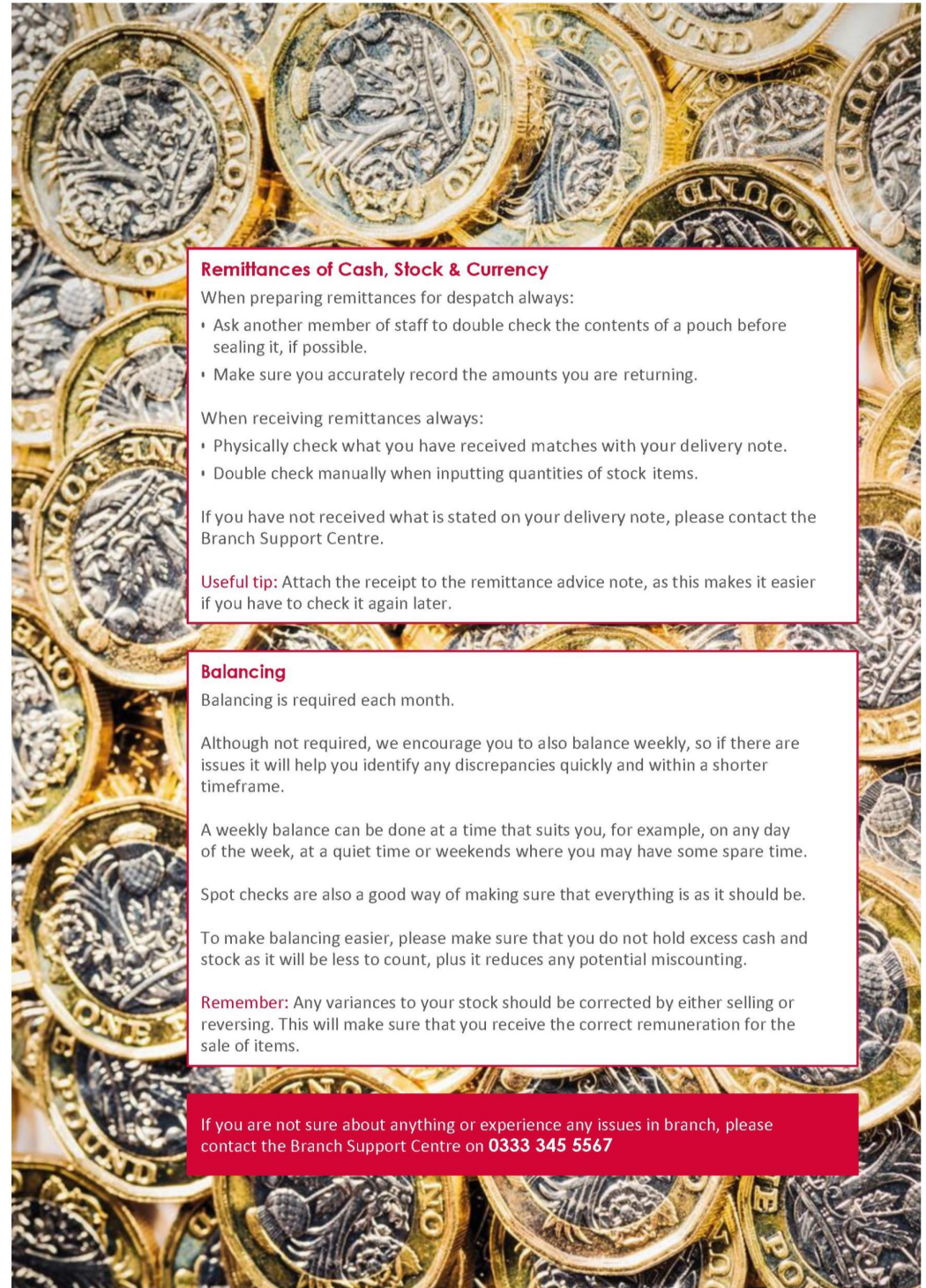
A weekly balance can be done at a time that suits you, for example, on any day of the week, at a quiet time or weekends where you may have some spare time.

Spot checks are also a good way of making sure that everything is as it should be.

To make balancing easier, please make sure that you do not hold excess cash and stock as it will be less to count, plus it reduces any potential miscounting.

Remember: Any variances to your stock should be corrected by either selling or reversing. This will make sure that you receive the correct remuneration for the sale of items.

If you are not sure about anything or experience any issues in branch, please contact the Branch Support Centre on **0333 345 5567**



Branch Balancing

Balancing is required each month, but we also encourage you to balance weekly, so if there are issues it will help you identify any discrepancies quickly. Here is some guidance if you have any issues.

I have declared my cash and there is a discrepancy, what should I do first?

- Recount the cash and check it has been entered onto Horizon correctly
- Check bulk coin – a full bag may have been opened or it may be covered from view
- Check bundled notes – different values may have become mixed together
- For a shared stock unit, check the correct number of cash declarations have been made. Could a cash declaration have been missed or completed more than once?
- If you have lottery or paystation, has the physical cash been removed from your retail side and included in Post Office cash?
- If you have an ATM, have the correct amounts been entered daily?

My branch has multiple stock units (SU) and there is a discrepancy, what should I do?

- Check transfers between stock units have been accepted (in each stock unit – Back Office [F14], Rems & Transfers [F5], Transfers IN [41] and accept any pending transfers)
- Has money or stock been physically transferred between people but not through Horizon?
- Is it possible you have served whilst attached to the incorrect SU? If so, you will need to check the affected stocks and transfer any losses or gains between the two (this should be easy to identify because there will be a shortage in one SU and a gain in the other).

I have recounted the cash and still have a discrepancy, what can I do next?

- If you accept cheques: do the cheques match the figure on the balance snapshot? and has the correct value been remmed out of the branch during the current Balance Period (BP)?
- Physically check your stock again and compare against your stock report; sell/reverse any variances if you need to.
- Produce a Transaction Log (TL) (F4 Reporting – 32). If your cash variance was minimal at your last cash declaration, then take your TL from that point until your current cash declaration was made. Look for possible mis-keyed amounts, duplicate transactions, 0 value transactions and values that could have been entered as deposits rather than withdrawals.

I have physically counted all the cash and stock, what else can I check?

Transaction Reversals

- Has a receipt been put to the side to be reversed later and forgotten about?
- Print transaction reversals via a Transaction Log (F4 Reporting – 32) and examine it for anything you think looks unusual.
- Has the Method of Payment part of the transaction been reversed instead of the actual transaction?

Transaction Corrections (TCs)

(F14 Back Office – F4 Reporting – F2 Reporting Office – 62 & 64)

- The processing of a TC must be followed by physically putting in cash or a cheque, or removal of cash; depending on the type of correction and option selected. Has this been done?

Suspense Account

(F14 Back Office – F2 Weekly Accounting – F2 Weekly Accounting Office – 24)

- Print the suspense account and check all entries in the final right-hand column.
- All remittance shortage or surplus must be authorised before adding to the suspense account – is the figure correct?
- Has a TC has been issued to remove an amount but you have not physically removed it from the suspense account?

Remittances (REMs)

(F14 Back Office – F4 Reporting – F3 Reporting Rems – 41 & 42)

- Have you accepted/prepared a rem in/out – was it done correctly?
- If any pouches are still in the branch, reverse them out, open them and check the contents.

Transaction Log **(F14 Back Office – F4 Reporting – 32)**

- Has a cash withdrawal been left in the basket and paid out to the next customer as well?
- Has a business deposit been entered onto Horizon incorrectly?
- Check for similar values or double or half of the discrepancy you are looking for
- If you have CCTV, compare this with the TL.

If you continue to have a discrepancy after using this guide or you're having trouble balancing your ATM or Lottery, please call the Branch Support Centre on **0333 345 5567**.

Branch Discrepancies and Transaction Corrections

We understand how stressful it can be when differences arise. We want to work with you to resolve these as soon as possible. Here is some guidance if you have any concerns and issues.

Branch Discrepancies

Who can I contact if I need help with a branch discrepancy?

Please call the Branch Support Centre on 0333 345 5567. They will be able to provide support and assistance over the phone to help you try to find the discrepancy and what caused it. Calling us early means we can quickly identify and fix the cause of an issue and hopefully avoid these happening again.

What if the reason for the discrepancy can't be found?

If the reason for the discrepancy can't be found when you first contact us, we will escalate to a dedicated Branch Support Case Handler who can investigate this.

They will:

- Check several systems in detail to try and establish the reason for the discrepancy.
- Aim to complete their investigation within two weeks.
- Talk you through the results in detail.
- Arrange extra support and/or training for you, if required.
- Following this call your Case Handler will discuss whether you are happy to resolve the discrepancy yourself or settle centrally while a more in-depth investigation takes place.
- Confirm that while the discrepancy is being investigated you won't be asked to repay the amount.

If the Branch Support Case Handler cannot find the reason for the discrepancy, the Contract Investigation and Resolution Team (CIRT) will investigate further.

What can I do if I would like an explanation to be reviewed?

If you have further questions about the discrepancy once an explanation has been given to you, please let your Branch Support Team contact know. The CIRT will then review the explanation given.

Transaction Corrections

Who can I contact if I need help with understanding a Transaction Correction?

Please call the number shown on the Transaction Correction notification. They will:

- Explain the reason for the Transaction Correction.
- Answer any questions you may have.

What if I disagree with the reason for the Transaction Correction?

Please call our Transaction Correction Disputes Team on 0333 665 1019 or contact them at disputesteam@postoffice.co.uk.

They will:

- Acknowledge your dispute in writing within three working days.
- Discuss whether the Transaction Correction should be settled centrally or whether a compensating Transaction Correction should be arranged. While the dispute is being investigated, you won't be asked to repay the amount.
- Fully investigate your case, contacting relevant teams and using several systems.
- Send you the results of the investigation with any evidence found to support the findings within 10 working days
- Arrange extra support and/or training for you, if required.

If the root cause still can't be explained, another specialist team, the Contract Investigation and Resolution Team, will review the details.

