



# Branch Secretaries' Circular

June 2012  
Volume 22

## ***Your June 2012 news round up***

### ***Topics covered this month:***

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2. Network Transformation
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### **1. Conference 2012 footage**

Footage from this year's NFSP Annual Conference is now available for members to view online. Login to the members-only page of the NFSP website [www.nfsp.org.uk](http://www.nfsp.org.uk), then go to the 'Organisational Structure' section and select the 'Annual Conference' page.

### **2. Network Transformation**

A fifth joint Post Office Ltd (POL)-NFSP update was issued to all subpostmasters at the start of this month, and can be downloaded from the 'News to branches' page in the members-only section of the website. The document sets out the next steps for those who have expressed an interest either in converting to a new model, or leaving the network with compensation. Subpostmasters who have indicated that their preference is to remain as they are will not be contacted by POL for a Field Change Advisor visit to be arranged.

In addition, remuneration rates for the Main and Local models are now available to view on the 'Pay' page within the members-only section of the NFSP website.

### **3. Media coverage of Horizon disputes**

As a result of recent media coverage, members may be aware that Post Office Ltd (POL) has agreed to an independent audit of a handful of cases where Horizon irregularities are claimed to have taken place.

The NFSP is surprised that POL has chosen to follow this approach. We have seen no evidence in any of these cases that Horizon was at fault and we believe that the system remains robust.

#### **4. Government services at post offices**

In the coming weeks the NFSP will be calling on members to campaign on the vital DVLA contract.

The 10-year contract, which is expected to be awarded in late summer/early autumn, covers all existing DVLA work carried out at post offices; as well as new, additional services previously carried out by DVLA local offices. The contract will cover the whole of the UK, including Northern Ireland's Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA).

While the contract is of huge importance to the Post Office in its own right, it is additionally significant in that it will allow other government departments and agencies to award future contracts without having to go through a public procurement exercise. It is therefore essential that Post Office Ltd (POL) wins the contract to retain existing work and income; and to increase the prospects for additional work in the future and for our post offices to serve their communities as a genuine 'front office for government'.

Branch secretaries will be provided with further information ahead of the campaign's launch in July.

Meanwhile, Hammersmith & Fulham Council has agreed a deal with POL which allows its residents to pay for their council services at post offices across the UK post office network, including the 17 post offices in the borough.

The contract is expected to go live by the end of 2012 and will save the borough's taxpayers around £90,000 a year. It will give access to a range of council services including payments for council tax, business rates, housing rents and service charges.

Hammersmith & Fulham has signed a 'pan-London framework agreement', which allows other London councils to easily make similar arrangements with POL.

The provision of council services at post offices forms an essential part of government plans to make post offices the 'front office for government'. The NFSP continues to work closely with POL to ensure this important programme is as successful as possible.

#### **5. Post Office mutualisation**

At last month's NFSP Conference, Postal Services Minister Norman Lamb announced the creation of a Stakeholder Forum, to take forward discussions on the creation of a mutual Post Office.

The NFSP and Post Office Ltd will play key roles in the forum, together with other interested parties representing staff and customers. The NFSP has welcomed the initiative as an important step towards achieving a mutualised Post Office, and ensuring that subpostmasters have a far greater say in how the company is run.

In the next few days, the government is expected to publish its response to the public consultation on Post Office mutualisation. This should provide further information on the government's preferred nature and schedule for mutualisation. Details of the government's statement, together with the NFSP's response, will be published on the NFSP website.

To view the NFSP's written submission to the consultation, go to the 'Research and policy' section of the NFSP website.



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## 6. Independent Retail Show 2012

The NFSP is supporting a new exhibition aimed at independent retailers. The Independent Retail Show will take place at the Birmingham NEC on Sunday 28 and Monday 29 October 2012.

Further information on the exhibition will be provided to members in *The Subpostmaster* in the coming months; but in the meantime, members can find out more at the exhibition website: [www.independentretailshow.co.uk](http://www.independentretailshow.co.uk)

The latest companies to sign up to the show are off licence chain store giant Bargain Booze and in-store bakery supplier Country Choice. Other companies exhibiting include Barclaycard, Booker, Cuisine de France, Scandinavian Tobacco and Topps, along with speciality food and drink company Pride of Place.

## 7. Resources for independent retailers during July

July sees much activity in support of the independent retail sector.

The 'My Shop is Your Shop' campaign will stage its annual Independent's Day on 4 July, when the public will be encouraged to buy at least one thing from their local independent shop.

The campaign is inviting retailers to team up with other local shops and hold special events to celebrate their unrivalled contribution to their communities. There are a range of resources available, including campaign posters and ideas and advice on how to help the public appreciate the value of the high standards of service which independent retailers provide. These can be accessed at: [www.retailindieday.com](http://www.retailindieday.com)

An American initiative, Independent Retailer Month, is launching in the UK for the first time this year. It aims to support promotion of independent retailers throughout July by staging a conference and providing promotional resources and advice. For further information visit: [www.independentretailermonth.co.uk](http://www.independentretailermonth.co.uk)

## 8. Future editions of *The Subpostmaster*

Work is now underway on the August 2012 edition of *The Subpostmaster*. As always, your letters and input for stories or features for future editions is most welcome. Please see below the submission deadlines for forthcoming editions:

<b>August edition:</b>	Friday 13 July
<b>September edition:</b>	Friday 10 August
<b>October edition:</b>	Friday 7 September

Email your suggestions and contributions to: [thesubpostmaster@](mailto:thesubpostmaster@gro.co.uk)

**GRO**

## 9. Membership statistics

Membership statistics for May 2012 are attached to this BSC.