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Operational focus

The operational publication for Post Office® branches

week **48**

17-23 February 2005

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An Operations Manual plus entitled 'Bureau de Change Anti-counterfeiting Security features on Euros and US Dollars' will be distributed with this edition of Operational Focus.

1. Bill Payments: Automated Payments booklet 2. All Post Office branches

Contributor: Steve Cole

Anglian Water bar-coded bills ~ processing problems

Anglian Water has advised us that there is a problem with some of their bar-coded bill payment books.

If you are presented with an Anglian Water bar-coded bill that does not scan successfully after three attempts:

- **you must** process the bill via transcash.

Do not charge a transcash fee for this transaction.

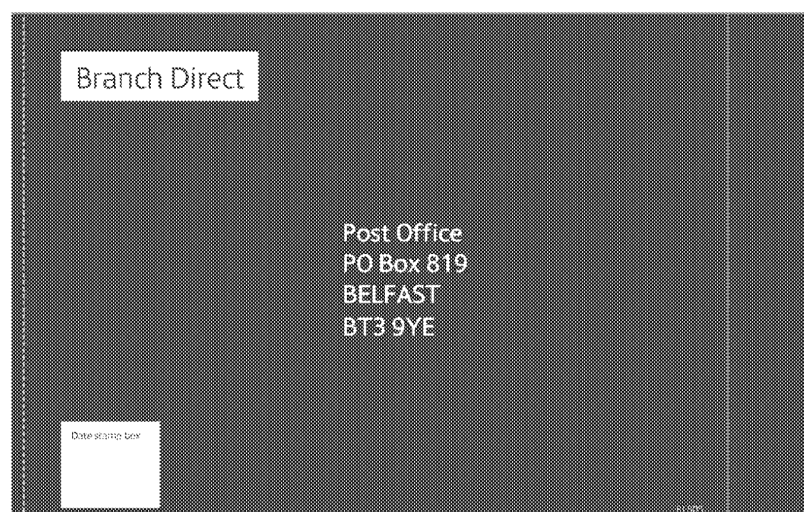
Please note: Horizon will **not** accept these bar-coded bills input manually as there are too many numbers on the bar-code.

2. Financial Services. All Post Office branches

Contributor: Olawunmi Babalola

Guaranteed Equity Bond and Growth Bond ~ new dedicated envelope

From Monday 28 February 2005, branches must use a dedicated GEB & Growth Bond Despatch Envelope (PL605) to send Guaranteed Equity Bond (GEB) and Growth Bond application forms for processing.



Distribution

From Friday 18 February 2005, all branches will receive an initial distribution of the envelopes

Stock code	Item description
PL605	GEB & Growth Bond despatch envelope

- If you have not received your GEB & Growth Bond Despatch Envelopes (PL605) by Monday 28 February 2005, contact the NBSC on **GRO** selecting option 6 for RML Swindon and quote the stock code above.

Please note: Continue to use your existing despatch procedures until you receive your new envelopes.

New despatch procedure

Each completed application form must be despatched daily with the customer's payment to meet the last priority services collection from your branch.

- Place all the Guaranteed Equity Bond and Growth Bond application forms with their associated cheques attached, in a GEB & Growth Bond Despatch Envelope (PL605). You may place more than one application in each envelope.

Please remember: These envelopes must only be used for the despatch of GEB and Growth Bond application forms and associated cheques.

- seal the envelope
- date-stamp the box on the front of the envelope.

When you hand the envelope to the collecting officer:

- make an entry 'BOI ENV' on the Confirming Your Collection Form (P4555)
- enter the number of PL605 envelopes you are despatching under this heading.

Please remember: These envelopes must not be placed in ordinary mail. You must ensure that it is signed for and given to the collecting officer.

3.

Government Services: DVLA - Motor Vehicle Licences. All Post Office branches

Contributor: Bruce Tuxford

MVL Saving Stamps ~ withdrawal

On Thursday 31 March 2005, £5 MVL Saving Stamps will be withdrawn from sale.

Customers may still redeem them to buy their car tax at vehicle licence issuing Post Office branches until 31 March 2006. After this, any MVL saving stamps that a customer still holds, can only be used at a DVLA Local Office or exchanged at DVLA.

Withdrawal

- At close of business on Thursday 31 March 2005, remove all £5 MVL Saving Stamps (MVLSS £5) from sale at your branch.

The 'sell' icon for this product will be removed on Friday 1 April 2005.

The ability to 'rem out' these items will be withdrawn on Friday 27 May 2005.

When you are required to return your stock to the NSSC Hemel Hempstead, you will receive a pre-printed Returns Form (RS1) listing all the items you are required to return.

- Return your stock to the NSSC Hemel Hempstead, as listed on your pre-printed Returns Form (RS1), on your next scheduled collection, in your normal returns pouch.
- You must return your stock to the NSSC, Hemel Hempstead when requested. Your branch will be liable for any MVL saving stamps not returned before the 'rem out' facility is removed.

Post Office saving stamps

Customers may now use Post Office saving stamps to save for their car tax.

If a customer uses both MVL saving stamps and Post Office saving stamps to buy their car tax, these must be attached to their own cards.

Both types of stamps should not be attached to the same card.

MVL saving stamps should be attached to a Vehicle Licence Saving Stamps Card (V218).

Post Office saving stamps should be attached to a Post Office saving stamps collector card (P6386).

- If the stamps have already been mixed by a customer, please refer to the Operations Manual *plus* week 18 for full details on redeeming a mixture of different saving stamps.

Please note: Post Office saving stamps cannot be used at a DVLA Local Office.

- If the customer has any additional questions, advise them to contact the DVLA on **GRO**

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...continued from page 3

Customer leaflets

DVLA

From Friday 18 February 2005, you will receive the following DVLA leaflet (as appropriate) from RML Swindon.

Item code	Description
INF174	Car Tax Saving Stamps
INF174NI	NI version Car Tax Saving Stamps
INF174W	Welsh version Car tax Saving Stamps

- If you have not received your leaflets by Thursday 24 February 2005, contact the NBSC on **GRO** selecting option 6 for RML Swindon and quote the relevant item code.

Post Office saving stamps

Additional supplies of Post Office Saving Stamp Registration leaflets (PL316A5) and Start up packs (P6385) will be distributed to all branches from RML Swindon from Friday 18 February 2005.

The amount of leaflets and packs you receive will be based upon whether your branch issues Motor Vehicle licence discs and sales of MVL saving stamps.

- If you have not received your leaflets and packs by Thursday 24 February 2005, contact the NBSC on **GRO** selecting option 6 for RML Swindon and quote the relevant item code.

Counter procedure

- From the Tuesday 1 March 2005, please hand the following items to customers who wish to purchase or redeem MVL saving stamps:
 - a DVLA Car Tax saving stamps leaflet
 - a Post Office saving stamp Registration leaflet (PL316A5) and special insert about saving for Christmas (CM393DL)
 - a Post Office saving stamp Start up pack (P6385) (if they are currently not a Post Office saving stamp customer) or
 - a Post Office saving stamps Collector card (P6386) (if they are a current Post Office saving stamp customer).

See Operations Manual *plus* week 18 for full details of redeeming a mixture of different saving stamps.

4.

Telephone Services. All Post Office branch

Contributor: Steven Lambert

HomePhone ~ new cut down application form

In response to feedback from Post Office branches, a cut down version of the Post Office HomePhone application form has been produced to speed up the counter transaction.

Please note: This is not a replacement for the Post Office HomePhone full application form (PL409A5), it is intended for use at busy periods only.

When the cut down version of the application form (PL619A5) is used, the customer is signing up to the Post Office HomePhone service in the same way as using the full application (PL409A5). However, this application assumes the customer wants to receive a quarterly bill and that they will not want to pay by any other method (such as Direct Debit or a Budget Payment Card).

Please note: This form must not be used for further information requests.

- If the customer wants to change their payment method, advise them to either:
 - fill in the full application form (PL409A5) or,
 - to call the HomePhone Customer Care Line on **GRO** (once they have received their welcome pack).

Distribution

Between Friday 18 February and Friday 25 February 2005, an initial distribution will be made to all Post Office branches by RML Swindon.

Item code	Description
PL619A5	Post Office HomePhone A5 cut down

- If you do not receive your application forms by Monday 28 February 2005, contact the NBSC on 0845 601 1022 selecting option 6 for RML Swindon and claim non receipt.

Further supplies

- From Monday 28 February 2005, order further supplies as required, from RML Swindon, on your normal scheduled order, using the item code above.

Please note: The A5 cut down leaflet (PL619A5) is supplementary to the full application (PL409) you must stock both items until further notice.

Counter procedure

- Check the customer has completed the application form in full.

Please remember: If the customer has been at their current address for less than three years **they must** complete the contact number and preferred contact date section.

- Enter your branch (FAD) code in the 'OFFICIAL USE ONLY' section.

Despatch

- Despatch all completed PL619A5 applications **daily** with all other Post Office HomePhone applications that you have accepted during the day, in the HomePhone Business Reply Envelope with the green corner (PL341).

5.

Travel Services: Bureau de Change on-demand and pre-order.
Bureau de Change branches

Contributor: Raj Kalsi

Combating fraud ~ distribution of publications

As the level of fraudulent activity involving Euros and US Dollars remains a significant issue for the business, two different publications have been prepared to help you to combat fraud and provide you with details on how to identify fraudulent Euro and US Dollar notes.

All branches

With Operational Focus, in this week's pouch, you will receive an Operations Manual *plus* entitled 'Bureau de Change Anti-counterfeiting Security features on Euros and US Dollars'. This details the most prominent security features on Euro and US Dollar notes, and has been designed as a compact document that will be easy for you to refer to when you are carrying out Bureau de Change transactions at the counter.

On-demand and Euro Dollar branches

You will also receive a Training Workbook entitled 'Fighting Fraud' which is currently being distributed by RML Swindon.

The purpose of this workbook is to ensure you have achieved a satisfactory level of expertise to be able to prevent fraud.

- If you have not received your copy by Friday 18 February 2005, contact the NBSC on **GRO** selecting option 6 for RML Swindon.

Further details, including a letter explaining the process to be followed, will be sent directly to you.

Please remember: You must pass the 'final test evaluation' in the back of the workbook by Thursday 31 March 2005.

6. Miscellaneous - Automated Remittances. All Post Office branches

Contributor: Mark Haldane

Inward stock remittances ~ process correctly

Since the Automated Remittances procedures were introduced in August 2004, there has been an increase in the number of branches incorrectly processing the stock they receive.

Up to 2,000 stock related errors are produced each week, mainly because branches are not entering their remittances on the same day as they receive them.

If you do not enter your remittance on the day you receive it, it may be show up in a different Cash Account week to the despatch date recorded by the NSSC Hemel Hempstead. This will then generate errors.

Each individual error has to be investigated. This requires extra resource which impacts on our aim to reduce administration costs.

Branch performance regarding this problem will be monitored over the coming months and branches with unacceptable error levels will be contacted.

- Always enter your stock remittance onto the Horizon System as soon as possible **on the day of receipt**.
- Refer to the Interim Operations Manual, Automated Remittances booklet, for full details on inward remittance procedures.

7. Miscellaneous - Cash Handling and Distribution. All Post Office branches

Contributor: Michael Newcombe

Commemorative Coins ~ new counter and accounting procedures

With immediate effect, the Accounting and Counter procedures for Commemorative Coins will change.

The first coin affected by these changes will be new £5 Battle of Trafalgar coin. See article 8 in this week's Operational Focus for details.

New distribution procedure

Commemorative Coins will now be sent to you from your Cash Centre as a cash item.

They will **no longer** be distributed as a stock item from NSSC, Hemel Hempstead.

Distribution will be to selected branches only, based on previous sales.

New accounting procedures

Remitting in

- When you receive your Commemorative Coins treat them as a normal 'Remittance In' cash item.
- Refer to the Interim Operations Manual, Automated Remittances booklet, Subsection 2, page 3 for details.

Declaring your Overnight Cash on Hand (ONCH)

- In order to balance at the end of the day and at the end of the Cash Account week, you must declare your Commemorative Coins on hand.

A £5 Commemorative Coin item has been added to the ONCH picklist on Horizon for this purpose.

New counter procedure

Commemorative coins are no longer treated as a stock item, therefore they will not show up on your stock on hand screen.

Commemorative coins cannot be sold through the Horizon system as they are now treated as a cash item.

As the 'sale' of Commemorative coins will not show as a value item on Horizon, it is important to deal with Commemorative coin transactions separately to other transactions wherever possible.

In the case of multiple transactions being conducted by a customer, if the Horizon sequence below is followed, Horizon will only show the volume and not the value of the coin, therefore you may be at risk of not taking the payment for the coin. Failure to do so will result in a loss to your branch when balancing.

There is no limit to the number of coins a customer may purchase.

- If a customer requests a receipt, issue them with a miscellaneous receipt (P1091L), recording the value and date-stamping the receipt.

Entering the transaction onto Horizon

Following the sequence below, will allow for the capture of 'sales' of Commemorative Coins as volume but not value.

It is essential that volumes of 'sales' are entered either at the time of the transaction or at the end of the Cash Account week. Failure to do so, will affect remuneration for this product.

- From the Desktop select:
 - Transactions (F1)
 - Serve Customer (F1)
 - Other Products (F13)
 - More Products (F16)
- enter the total number of coins 'sold'
- select the appropriate £5 coin icon (for the Battle of Trafalgar coin, £5 Traf Coin - F13)
- touch the Finish icon (Enter) and settle the transaction.

Methods of payment

Commemorative coins can be purchased by cash, cheque supported by a Cheque Guarantee Card (up to the guarantee limit of the card) or Post Office saving stamps.

Please remember: If Commemorative coins are purchased by cheque, you must punch the frequency calendar at the back of the cheque book.

See the Operations Manual, Methods of Payment booklet, para 12.3, page 61, for details.

Treatment of circulated coins

Commemorative coins **must not** be given to customers in payment, or in change, unless the customer has asked to purchase the coins.

Although these £5 coins are intended as commemorative pieces, they are legal tender and you must accept them if offered in payment for goods or services.

If you accept any of these coins in payment for goods or services:

- **do not** re-issue them to customers
- declare/hold them on Horizon as 'Unusable Coin'
- remit them to your Cash Centre using the 'Unusable Coins' (F4) icon.

8.

Cash Handling and Distribution. All Post Office branches

Contributor: Michael Newcombe

New £5 Commemorative Coin ~ Battle of Trafalgar

On Monday 7 March 2005, a new £5 Commemorative Coin, 'Battle of Trafalgar' will be officially available for sale at selected Post Office branches.

Distribution

From Monday 21 February 2005, these Commemorative Coins will be sent to selected Post Office branches from their Cash Centres.

- If you have a local demand for this product and have not received any of these Commemorative Coins by Friday 4 March 2005, please contact your local Cash Centre helpline to order them.

The minimum order is 25 coins per bag (£125). Commemorative Coins may be ordered in multiples of 25 per bag.

Accounting and Counter procedures

- Refer to the 'Commemorative Coins ~ new counter and accounting procedures' article (article 7) in this week's Operational Focus for details.

Period of sale

- Keep these coins on sale until Wednesday 7 September 2005.

Do not return these coins until instructed to do so.

9. Miscellaneous - Cash Handling and Distribution. All Post Office branches

Contributor: Mark Haldane

Remitting coin to Cash Centres ~ change to procedure

From Monday 21 February 2005, you must no longer put the Horizon produced coin advice note into an envelope before handing it, with the coin, to the Cash In Transit collection officer.

This will make it easier for the collection officer to check that the coin collected matches both the coin advice note and the Horizon Collection Receipt.

Change to procedure

- Follow the coin remittance procedure as normal.
- Scan the P6097 label on the coin advice note and produce the Horizon Collection Receipt. **Do not** put the coin advice in an envelope.
- Give it to the collection officer along with the coin and Horizon Collection Receipt (HCR) who will check it before signing the HCR.

10. Miscellaneous - Local Schemes - Travel and Ticket. East Staffordshire travel scheme branches

Contributor: Andy Walsh

East Staffordshire travel scheme 2005

From Monday 7 March 2005, selected Post Office branches will start to issue concessionary travel passes on behalf of East Staffordshire Borough Council.

Distribution

You will shortly receive the following items directly from the NSSC Hemel Hempstead.

- If you do not receive all of the items by Monday 21 February 2005, please contact the NSSC Hemel Hempstead on

GRO

Passes

Scheme ID	Product code	Stock code	Product description	Price
1325	07	ESTAF CON05	Concessionary Pass	£12.50

Other stock items

Product description	Stock code
Weekly Summary form	LS1
East Staffordshire Weekly Summary	LS268

Pass prices

The price of a pass is £12.50 from Monday 7 March 2005 until Saturday 1 October 2005 and £6.25 from Monday 3 October 2005 until Tuesday 28 February 2006.

Counter procedure

There are no changes to the issuing procedure for this year's scheme.

Please remember: Only renewal applicants who are aged 60 and over and who are permanent residence of East Staffordshire Council can be issued with a travel pass at a Post Office branch. All other applicants must be directed to East Staffordshire Council.

Accounting

- Complete the Weekly Summary Forms (LS1 and LS268), in duplicate, as normal and despatch it to Chesterfield weekly in the brown pouch, along with any spoilt stock.

For information on how to enter the transaction onto Horizon, please see the Horizon System User Guide, Booklet E, Transactions-Serve Customer-Part three, Section 17, page 58.

11.

Miscellaneous - Local Schemes - Travel and Ticket
All London Boroughs Freedom Pass scheme branches

Contributor: Andy Walsh

London Boroughs Freedom Passes ~ change to delivery

Currently, the NSSC Hemel Hempstead send all London Boroughs Freedom Passes and associated items to branches by first class post.

From Monday 21 February 2005, London Boroughs Freedom Passes will be sent to branches on their **scheduled orders** from the NSSC Hemel Hempstead.

Scheme ID	Product code	Stock code	Product description
2275	1	ELD06LONB	Elderly Persons Freedom Pass
2275	2	DIS06LONB	Disabled Persons Freedom Pass

All other associated items (listed below) will continue to be sent to branches, from the NSSC Hemel Hempstead, by first class post.

Product description	Stock code
Elderly Photo card	LBS 01
Disabled Photo card (selected branches)	LBS 02
Wallets	LBS 04
Application forms	LBS 05 Rev 04
Freedom Pass information leaflet	LBS 07 Rev 04
Migration flyer	LBS 09
Branch record of issues and spoilt passes	LBS 12
Weekly dispatch label	P4337
Weekly Accounting form	LS1

Please note: Passes and associated items will therefore arrive at branches at different times.

12. Miscellaneous - Cash Handling and Distribution. All Post Office branches

Contributor: Paul Duckworth

Overnight Cash Holding Form (P4105) ~ no longer required

Approximately 400 branches a week still continue to complete and despatch the weekly Overnight Cash Holdings Form (P4105) to their local Inventory Team.

You **no longer** need to complete and despatch this form.

- However, **you must** continue to complete a valid and accurate cash declaration (by denomination) on the Horizon system each day, before your cut off time.

Refer to the pull out in Operational Focus, week 50 for details.

13. Miscellaneous - Local Schemes - Travel and Ticket. All Telford & Wrekin travel scheme branches

Contributor: Andy Walsh

Telford & Wrekin Quarterly passes

The fourth quarter of the Telford and Wrekin quarterly passes expire on Thursday 31 March 2005. The passes will be withdrawn from sale at the close of business on Wednesday 2 March 2005.

Quarter one passes (April - June 2005) will be available for sale from Thursday 3 March 2005.

Distribution

You will shortly receive the following items directly from the NSSC Hemel Hempstead.

- If you do not receive all of these items by Thursday 17 February 2005, please contact the NSSC Hemel Hempstead on

GRO

Scheme ID	Product code	Stock code	Product description	Price
2194	32	QTR1 TFD05	Quarter 1 Bus Card	£23.00

Weekly Summary Form (LS1)

- Complete the Weekly Summary form (LS1) at the close of business on Wednesday 2 March 2005, showing details of the withdrawn quarter four passes.
- Despatch the top copies of the LS1 to Chesterfield as normal.

Returning stock to the NSSC

You will shortly receive the pre-printed Returns form (RS1) from the NSSC, Hemel Hempstead, listing the stock that you will need to return.

- Return all appropriate stock to the NSSC, Hemel Hempstead on your next scheduled return after Wednesday 2 March 2005.

Please refer to the Interim Operations Manual, Automated Remittances booklet, subsection 5, page 17, for details on remitting out stock.

14. Miscellaneous - Office Equipment. Directly managed branches only

Contributor: Dave Thorne

Mobile Induction Loop ~ distribution

From Friday 4 March 2005, all directly managed branches will receive a Mobile Induction Loop (MISC777) with full instructions, from RML Swindon.

- If you do not receive your Mobile Induction Loop by Tuesday 15 March 2005, contact the NBSC on GRO selecting option 6 for RML Swindon.
- Use the Mobile Induction Loop if:
 - your fixed induction loop develops a fault
 - you need to speak to anyone with a hearing aid away from the fixed induction loop at your branch.

Please note: The mobile induction loop must be kept on charge when not in use, full instructions are included with the kit.

15. Miscellaneous - Operational Publications. All Post Office branches

Contributor: Steve Austin

Operations Manual ~ distribution of revised Operations Manual booklets

From Monday 21 February 2005, revised versions of the following Operations Manuals will be distributed to all Post Office branches and to other Operations Manual users:

- Inland mail services booklet (COMB 6/4)
- International mail services booklet (COMB 7/5)
- Stores Ordering booklet (COMB 47/4).

If you do not receive the new booklets by Tuesday 1 March 2005, please contact the NBSC on 0845 601 1022 selecting option 6 for RML Swindon.

Mails booklets

Both mails booklets have been updated to include full smart post instructions. Additionally, the Inland mail services booklet has been updated to include the Postcode and Address Finder instructions for Standard Parcels.

Please note: The third mails booklet 'Postage and other mail services' is currently being updated and will be distributed separately, at a later date.

When you receive the new mail services booklets:

- remove the previous versions, Inland mail services booklet (COMB 6/3) and International mail services booklet (COMB 7/4) from the Volume 2 binder (Postal Services)
- insert the new booklets (dated January 2005) into the same places according to the order on the binder cover
- destroy the previous versions (dated July 2003) in accordance with local instructions for paper disposal.

Stores Ordering booklet

When you receive the new Stores Ordering booklet:

- remove the previous version, Stores Ordering booklet (COMB 47/3) from the Volume 5 binder (Post Office Procedures and Services)
- insert the new booklet (dated February 2005) into the same places according to the order on the binder cover
- destroy the previous versions (dated May 2003) in accordance with local instructions for paper disposal.

16. Miscellaneous - Operational Publications. MoneyGram branches

Contributor: Raj Kalsi

Operations Manual plus week 47 'MoneyGram' ~ correction

Operations Manual Plus week 47 'MoneyGram International Money Transfer', shows the item code for the MoneyGram Worldwide Agent Directory as MDG1, this is incorrect.

The correct item code is MGD1.

- Please amend your copy of the Operations Manual Plus week 47.

Actions for week commencing Monday 21 February 2005

Please note that this table is unlikely to contain details of every action you will need to take during this week.

You will need to continue to read all relevant Operational Focus articles, and plan your actions in the same way you normally plan for changes.

Product	Change	Actions	Date	Article ref
Preston Bus Ltd travel scheme	Scheme ends at all Post Office branches	Withdraw items from sale at close of business	Wednesday 23 February	Week 47, article 16
First Edinburgh travel scheme	New tickets	Put on sale	Thursday 24 February	Week 47, article 14
Coin Cover	New version - The Written Word	Put on sale	Thursday 24 February	Week 39, article 6
Jane Eyre - special issue	Stamps, Presentation Packs, Miniature sheets and Prestige Stamp Books	Put on sale	Thursday 24 February	Week 39, article 7
Jane Eyre - special issue	First Day Envelopes	Withdraw from sale at close of business	Thursday 24 February	Week 39, article 7
Chip and PIN	Extra icon added	Use new icon	Thursday 24 February	Week 47, article 5

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