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| Press Release | New POL Logo -04-03-09 |
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### **1 July 2015**

**CHANGES TO BALHAM POST OFFICE SERVICE CONFIRMED – INCLUDING EXTRA OPENING HOURS**

* **Post Office will open for an extra 8 hours per week**
* **Modern branch, easily accessible with automatic door, low-level counters and writing desk**
* **Wide range of Post Office products and services**
* **Decision follows public consultation and customer forum**

The Post Office has decided to change the way it operates Balham Post Office, and create a modern branch with extended opening hours for customers. The branch will stay at its’ existing location 92a Balham High Road, London SW12 9AF.

The decision follows a six-week public consultation during which Post Office invited customers and interested parties to give their comments on the proposals, including holding a customer forum. The Post Office has carefully considered the feedback gathered during this time.

The new Balham branch will be run by RT Incorporated Ltd, and they plan a major refurbishment of the premises, providing a brand new, modern Post Office branch and a retail offer of confectionary, tobacco, stationary and greeting cards. To make this happen, the service will have to close temporarily whilst the new branch is made ready. We and your new operator will work hard to keep the closure period to a minimum, so you can start using your new branch as quickly as possible. Fit out plans are now being finalised and as soon as we have dates agreed with RT Incorporated Ltd, we’ll let you know; we’ll also provide full details of the arrangements in place for alternative service provision whilst Balham Post Office is temporarily closed.

The move is part of a major modernisation programme across the Post Office network designed to ensure that Post Office branches are sustainable, profitable and no longer reliant on Government funding. The modernisation programme is making it easier for customers to do business, through longer opening hours and modern retail environments.

Balham Post Office is currently one of around 323 Crown branches directly owned by Post Office Ltd. The vast majority of Post Office branches - over 10,000 - are successfully run by carefully selected third parties within their retail premises.

The Post Office’s priority is to ensure that it can provide the services that will meet customer needs, both now and into the future, and secure the long-term viability of the organisation and the network.

There will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of changes to Balham Post Office. Post Office Ltd is working to ensure the needs of branch colleagues are met whether that is a transfer to the new employer or redeployment in the Post Office. Permanent staff have the legal right to transfer to the new operator if they wish under TUPE legislation.

Roger Gale, Crown Network General Manager, said: “We are committed to keeping a Post Office branch in Balham and to maintaining the same levels of service for our customers. We believe the best way for us to do this is to change the way we operate the branch, so following the change it will be run by RT Incorporated Ltd rather than by us directly.”

The new Balham Post Office will have six serving positions following its move, in line with current and predicted business levels.

The branch will continue to offer the same wide range of products and services as are offered at present, on demand travel money, Passport Check & Send, Car tax and Digital Application Service and an external cash machine.

Post Office services will be available from 9am - 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am – 5.30pm Saturday, adding a total of eight hours per week, giving greater convenience for customers.

RT Incorporated Ltd’s retail offer will be confectionary, stationery and greeting cards. They regard the Post Office network as a vital part of community services and the company’s director has successfully operated a number of Post Office branches in London since 2003.

They have demonstrated that they will be able to successfully run Balham Post Office, showing they can deliver excellent standards of customer service, with trained staff promoting products and services in a modern environment, over extended opening hours.

Recent Post Office research shows that customer satisfaction levels are just as high for customers visiting franchise branches as for those who access Post Office services via the existing Crown network.

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**Notes to editors**

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| **Balham Post Office Information Sheet** | |
| **Post Office Opening**  **hours** | |  |  | | --- | --- | | Mon | 09:00 – 18:00 | | Tue | 09:00 – 18:00 | | Wed | 09:00 – 18:00 | | Thu | 09:00 – 18:00 | | Fri | 09:00 – 18:00 | | Sat | 09:00 – 17:30 | | Sun | Closed | |
| **Products & Services** | The same wide range of products and services will still be available  including:  On demand travel money  Passport Check & Send  Car tax  Digital Application Service |
| **Serving positions** | There will be six serving positions in total (the total number of serving positions has been based on current and future predicted business levels), |
| **Access and facilities** | Access will be level and an automatic door at the entrance to the branch. A low level serving counter, a low level writing desk and hearing loops will be available.  An external Post Office ATM machine, |
| **Retail** | Confectionary, tobacco, stationery and greetings cards. |
| **Date of**  **change** | **Tbc** |