

NEWSLETTER

THE IRISH
POSTMASTERS'
UNION



IRELAND'S POSTMASTERS – SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES, SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT

A Network Communities Rely On

Postmasters are the cornerstone of Ireland's 900 Post Offices, running the majority of these vital community hubs. They are independent small business owners who provide services that individuals and businesses rely on every day.

From pension and social welfare payments to banking, parcel services, and essential business transactions, post offices play an irreplaceable role in our local communities. For many towns and villages, they represent the last remaining touchpoint for public services, offering face-to-face support that digital alternatives simply cannot replace.

In a world where many services are moving online, Post Offices continue to be a vital, in-person access point for vulnerable individuals, cash users, and small businesses that need local, trustworthy postal and banking services. They offer secure, community-driven support that no online platform or automated system can replicate.

However, despite their vital role, Post Offices are facing increasing pressures from digitalisation, changing consumer habits, and financial strains. The Government's three-year financial package, introduced in 2022, was very welcome, and helped ensure the survival of postmasters across Ireland. The support of Oireachtas members was invaluable at that time, but now this support is set to expire in 2025, leaving Postmasters with an uncertain future unless a sustainable, long-term funding plan is put in place.

The Programme for Government has committed to maintaining Post Office funding, but this must now be supported by real, lasting investment that secures the future of the network and protects these essential services for the long term. Once again, we are asking for your help to make this happen for the benefit of your constituents and local communities throughout Ireland.

The Irish Postmasters' Union (IPU) stands ready to work alongside Oireachtas members to ensure that Post Offices remain at the heart of communities. Postmasters are prepared to continue delivering essential services, but securing the future of the Post Office Network requires a shared, long-term commitment.

With clear, strong government support, we can build a post office network that remains reliable, resilient, and central to our communities for generations to come.

Best Wishes,

Sean Martin

President,

Irish Postmasters' Union

Postmasters Welcome Renewal of Social Welfare Contract

The Irish Postmasters' Union welcomes the announcement by Minister for Social Protection Dara Calleary confirming the annual renewal of the Department's contract with An Post for the delivery of pensions, Child Benefit, and other Social Welfare payments through the Post Office network.

More than 25 million payments, totalling over €7 billion, were processed through post offices in 2024 — underlining the essential role post offices continue to play in communities across Ireland.

We thank Minister Calleary for his ongoing support and particularly welcome his commitment that those making new claims or changing payment arrangements will continue to be informed of their right to choose how they receive their payments - including the option to collect in person at their local post office. **It is vital that choice remains central to this service. Many, especially older citizens and people in rural areas, value face-to-face interaction and access to cash in their own community.**

Welcoming our New General Secretary, Sandra Tormey



We are pleased to introduce Sandra Tormey as our new General Secretary. With a wealth of experience in advocacy and leadership, Sandra brings a deep understanding of the challenges faced by postmasters and their communities.

She joins the Irish Postmasters' Union (IPU) at a crucial moment for the Post Office Network and is fully committed to standing with Postmasters, ensuring their invaluable role at the heart of communities across Ireland is not only recognised but supported.

Sandra's leadership will be defined by her determination, and steadfast focus on the welfare of Postmasters and the communities they serve. She will work tirelessly with Oireachtas members and other stakeholders to secure the long-term policy commitments and investment needed to create a sustainable, community-driven post office network.

This is a pivotal moment in securing the future of post offices, and under Sandra's leadership, the IPU are committed to finding practical, lasting solutions that will benefit Postmasters, businesses, and the communities that depend on them. Together, we will work to ensure that Post Offices continue to thrive and remain an essential service for generations to come.


Red C Poll

Post Offices are Vital to Local Communities


The recent RED C poll, commissioned by the Irish Postmasters Union (IPU), highlights overwhelming public support for Ireland's post office network. The results underscore the critical role post offices play across the country, reaffirming the need for ongoing government investment to ensure their future sustainability.

The latest RED C poll is clear: the public values their post offices, and 9 in 10 people believe their community would be worse off without one. To keep post offices as vital community hubs, €15 million in annual government funding is needed to secure their future and ensure they continue providing essential services to people and businesses nationwide.

Key Findings:

91%  agree that the post office remains crucial in today's digital age.

78%  state that their local post office offers valuable services that they cannot easily find elsewhere.

80%  see the post office as an essential part of their community's social infrastructure, placing it on par with key services like supermarkets, pharmacies, and health clinics.

71%  report that they would be negatively impacted if their local post office were to close.

82%  of 18-34-year-olds agree that their community would be worse off without a post office.

89%  believe it is important for the government to continue investing in keeping post offices open, reflecting strong public demand for long-term government support.

Storm Éowyn

During Storm Eowyn, as severe weather disrupted travel and daily life, Postmasters went above and beyond to keep their communities connected. Many extended their opening hours, ensuring people - particularly those relying on cash payments - received their pensions and social welfare supports without delay.

For those most at risk, Postmasters personally checked in on them, ensuring they were safe and had access to essential services. They provided reassurance to those isolated or unable to leave their homes and were the first point of contact for many in need. Their actions reinforced their role as trusted community members who step up in times of crisis.



Spotlight On....

Padraig McNamara, Granard Post office



I have been a postmaster for 33 years, continuing a family legacy that has lasted over a century. My mother had the post office before me, and her uncle before that. Taking on the role wasn't something I originally planned, I stepped in when my mother became ill, and over time, I grew to love it. The post office is more than just a workplace for me; it's a vital part of the community, and I take great pride in serving the people who rely on it every day.

My post office serves a catchment area of 8,000–8,500 people, covering parts of Longford, Cavan, and Westmeath. With both banks in town having closed, people now depend on us for banking services, bill payments, savings, and, most importantly, cash withdrawals. Many of our customers - particularly the most vulnerable - still rely on physical cash to manage their finances.

We also provide insurance services, parcel and letter deliveries, and State Savings accounts, which people use to put money aside for Christmas, communions, and holidays. Despite the essential services we offer, running a post office has become increasingly difficult. The costs of staffing, insurance, and day-to-day operations keep rising, and postmasters are struggling to stay open.

Looking to the future, I worry about the survival of the post office network. We need €15 million annually to secure post offices and ensure they remain open. Without proper funding, we risk going the way of other countries where post offices closed, and with them went the local shops, pubs, and even the churches, leaving once-thriving towns struggling to recover.

If the government is serious about supporting rural communities, they need to invest in the post office network, ensuring we can continue to serve the people who depend on us. Otherwise, it will cost far more to rebuild these services once they are lost.

Show your support, use your local post office

Post office Products and Services

Your local post office offers a wide range of products and services that are designed to cater to the needs of individuals, families, and businesses, and include everything from postal services to financial services and government services.



An Post Money

- ▶ Credit Card (Classic & Flex)
- ▶ Loans
- ▶ Green Loan
- ▶ FX Cash & Currency Card
- ▶ Current Account
- ▶ Money Mate

Mails & Parcels

- ▶ SOAR & Other Stamp Products
- ▶ Packets & Parcels
- ▶ Prepaid Gift Jiffy Bag / Box
- ▶ Advantage Cards

Government Services

- ▶ TV Licence & Stamps
- ▶ Dog Licence
- ▶ Garda Fines
- ▶ Passport Express

Retail Products

- ▶ Billpay
- ▶ Money Transfers
- ▶ Postal Money Order
- ▶ Western Union Send/Receive
- ▶ Agency Banking Lodgements and Withdrawals (AIB & BOI)
- ▶ GVS One4all / Chip&Pin / Gaming

- ▶ An Post Mobile SIMs and phones (PO Only)
- ▶ National Lottery
- ▶ Garlanna Products
- ▶ Leap Cards
- ▶ Mobile Phone Top-ups

NTMA

- ▶ Prize Bonds
- ▶ Fixed Term Savings Products
- ▶ Regular Savings Products
- ▶ Deposit Accounts

Welfare

- ▶ Social Welfare Transactions

Providing Social Connection

Anyone listening to Joe Duffy's Liveline on 6th March last will have heard how listener Margaret Cotter posted a letter to herself regularly as a means to ward off loneliness. She would walk into town on a Thursday and post a letter to herself, so that the postman would have to call to her home, and she'd have a chat with him. While she said this was 40 years ago, as postmasters we know only too well that today there are many people in our communities whose only social contact is their post being delivered or coming into the post office for their social welfare payments.

Official figures show that 20% of Irish people have reported feeling lonely most or all of the time, the highest level in the EU. The World Health Organisation describes loneliness as a 'pressing health threat'. We cannot put a price on the social connection provided by post offices and the role postmasters play in looking out for the vulnerable and the lonely. It is priceless.

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