Post Office Limited
Post Office Customer Support
Finsbury Dials
20 Finsbury Street
EC2Y 9AQ

Marion Fellows MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

3 March 2020

Dear Ms Fellows,

I am writing further to your recent questions to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). As your question relates to operational matters for the Post Office, I have been asked to reply. The question and response is set out below.

How many Crown Post Offices have (a) operated and (b) closed in (i) Scotland, (ii) Wales, (iii) Northern Ireland and (iv) England in each of the last five years. (1247)

Our Directly Managed branches have traditionally accounted for a small proportion of our overall Network of over 11500 branches. We believe that our move to a franchise model over the last number of years has been effective in maintaining Post Offices in communities across the UK.

The Post Office is not immune to the pressures facing all high street retailers. The franchise model works for the Post Office and the retailer, our customers, and the high street more generally, by lowering overheads such as property costs and allowing the businesses to benefit from each other's footfall.

I should stress that this isn't about closing branches. Franchising our Directly Managed Branch network is the means by which we can preserve these services on high streets and in town centres, providing customers the same products and services over longer opening hours at less cost.

We must continue to evolve our network to meet our customer needs with branches that are commercially sustainable – as we do so we will continue to consider the viability of directly managed branches in particular areas, alongside the opportunities we may have for franchising and opening more new branches.

As requested, I have provided details below of the number of Directly Managed Branches within our network year on year since 2015.

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DMB NUMBERS 2015 - 2019 (Calendar Year)					
	2015	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
No. of DMBs at Year Start	**334**	**315**	**286**	**267**	**233**
England	284	270	245	228	200
Scotland	24	22	20	20	16
Wales	19	16	15	13	11
Northern Ireland	7	7	6	6	6
No. of DMB Changes in Year	**19**	**29**	**19**	**34**	**105**
England	12 franchises 1 Merger 1 closure*	22 franchises 2 Merger 1 closure*	17 franchises	23 franchises 5 closures‡	88 franchises 1 merger 5 closures*
Scotland	2 franchises	2 franchises	0	4 franchises	5 franchises
Wales	3 franchises	1 franchise	1 franchise 1 closure	2 franchises	6 franchises
Northern Ireland	0	1 closure	0	0	0
No. of DMBs at Year End	**315**	**286**	**267**	**233**	**128**

* Includes 1 Force Majeure Closure

‡ Includes 2 Force Majeure Closures

(Force Majeure is defined as an unforeseen circumstance which is out with our control)

I trust this information is useful.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Read
Group Chief Executive Officer