

## **Customer and Stakeholder Engagement: Blackwood**

On 30 November 2022 we announced the closure of 114 branches, including our branch at Blackwood. The following provides detail of the stakeholder engagement we have undertaken, and feedback received, since our announcement.

### **Customer and stakeholder contact**

On 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> January, we wrote to all regular users of this branch. The letters advised customers of the reasons behind our decision and effective date of closure. They also provided customers with details of the nearest alternative HSBC UK branch, alternative ways to continue to access their usual banking services and how to access the closure Impact Assessment.

We wrote to Chris Evans, Constituency MP and Rhiannon Passmore MS, on 30 November 2022 to advise of our decision to close the branch and offered to meet to explain the reasons and how we would be supporting all our customers during this period of change.

At announcement we also wrote to a number of key stakeholders. These included:

- Post Office
- HM Treasury
- Cash Action Group
- CBI
- British Chambers of Commerce
- Which?

On 23 January 2023 our Local Director additionally wrote to the following key local stakeholders to advise of our decision to close:

- Elizabeth Aldworth, Council Leader
- John Hold, Clerk to Town Council
- Ceri James, Post Office
- Library
- Age Concern
- Trussell Trust
- Homestart
- Caerphilly People First

We published an Impact Assessment on our public website. The assessment provides further details on the reasons behind our decision, the information used, the nearest HSBC UK and Post Office branches, alternative ways to bank and how to contact the bank for additional support. To view these reports just scan the QR code or visit <https://www.hsbc.co.uk/branch-finder>. Copies are also available in the closing branch.



Posters have been displayed at the branch with information on the nearest HSBC UK branch and cash machine as well as the nearest Post Office counter.

We provided extensive training to our branch teams in order that they could fully support both personal and business customers with accessing alternative ways to bank. Following this training our branch staff have been proactively engaging with customers, particularly those who are reliant on the branch services, to help them look at the alternatives that are available, including the services provided by the Post Office.

We have also been engaging with the nearest Post Office counters to the branch to ensure they know we are closing, are aware of the services they can provide to our customers and to address any queries or concerns they may have in meeting the needs of our customers.

### **Customer and stakeholder reaction/feedback**

- We have written to Chris Evans, Constituency MP, who met with our Local Director, Andrew Ferns, remotely on 21 December 2022. Chris Evan raised concerns around our staff, the premises and vulnerable customers. Andrew shared the support we are providing to vulnerable customers both pre and post closure which includes community tablets, community pop-ups and our contacting of vulnerable customers. Concerns were raised regarding the building once the branch has closed which were passed on to the freeholders.
- Our Local Director, Andrew Ferns, also met with Rhiannon Passmore MS on 12 January 2023. Discussions were held with regards to community support post closure and working together to ensure education and support is carried on in the future. A further meeting is being arranged to see what can be done for the community. We also shared details on how to apply for consideration for a Banking Hub.
- We received an email from Councillor Kevin Etheridge which some queries regarding the closure. We responded setting out our contacting strategy for vulnerable customers and our community support both pre and post closure. The information provided was shared with other local councillors.
- General customer sentiment is sadness that the branch is closing as they will miss having a local branch where they can discuss their banking with a member of staff. They have been receptive to hearing about other ways they can do their banking once the branch has closed.

## Follow up action taken

- We have proactively contacted our vulnerable customers who use the branch to understand how they currently bank. During these calls we have taken the time to understand our customers specific circumstances, for example, where they live or the transport they use. This has allowed us to provide our customers with information on the services that may be suitable for them, such as the local Post Office or digital options available through mobile or online banking.
- We have offered customers the opportunity to attend a HSBC@Home session focused on alternative ways to bank. HSBC@Home is our digital education programme and has been designed to educate and upskill customers on a range of topics from digital tools and services to fraud and financial fitness.
- The branch has been speaking with customers who have no access to a compatible device for online banking, about our community tablet programme. This programme supports customers getting online and educates them in how to navigate online and mobile banking.
- The branch team will be holding Pop Up events once the branch closes. Our branch experts will be on hand to offer important advice on how to reduce the risk of fraud on your account, give guidance and support on the different ways customers can do their banking, including the services available at the Post Office and help with queries about our products and services.

## Contacting the bank after closure

Following the closure of this Branch, if you have any questions or need advice on how to access our services, you can contact us in the following ways:

- Visit us at <https://www.hsbc.co.uk/waystobank/>
- Contact us on 03457 404 404 (+44 1226 261 010 from outside the UK). Currently open 8am-8pm every day. Here you can:
  - Get help with your day-to-day banking enquiries
  - Talk to us about your closing branch
- Visit any HSBC UK Branch (branch hours can vary so please check our website before you visit at <https://www.hsbc.co.uk/branch-finder>)

Braille, Large Print and Audio copies of this document can be provided upon request.