



AIB (NI) Branch Closure Impact Assessment for

Newcastle Branch
28-32 Main Street
Newcastle BT33 0AD

**Newcastle branch will
close permanently on
12 November 2021 at 4:30pm.**

Information correct as at: 22 July 2021

Customer and Stakeholder feedback: Added September 2021

The way people bank is changing.

Between **2017 and 2020**, in what has been a challenging marketplace, we have seen a significant drop in the use of branch facilities, with an almost **33% reduction in number of customers visiting our branch network to conduct an over-the-counter transaction**. Many customers are increasingly choosing to carry out transactions more conveniently, through online, phone line and mobile banking services. In the same period, there has been a **52% increase in the volume of payments made online or via the mobile app**.

In responding to these changes we have made the decision to close some of our branches. We will be working hard to minimise the impact of this on both our customers and staff as we reshape into a sustainable, multi-channel bank to support our customers and the wider Northern Ireland economy into the future.

These changes are the result of a carefully considered, detailed strategic review in the context of a low interest rate environment, a competitive and challenging landscape, and changes in how customers interact with banks.

In reaching this decision to close we considered a number of different factors listed below:

- The usage and transaction volumes at the branch, and how this is declining.
- How customers are now choosing to do their everyday banking, and the availability of nearby alternative banking services such as the Post Office® and 'free to use' cash machines.
- The location of the remaining AIB (NI) branches in Northern Ireland.

We are signatories of the Access to Banking Standard with the Lending Standards Board. In this branch impact assessment, we have followed their guidelines on how to communicate this decision to our customers, and the steps we should take to measure the impact the closure will have on you.

What these changes mean for you.

We are working hard to minimise the impact of the branch closures on our customers. Following the branch closure, you can continue to use any AIB (NI) branch, or online services for your everyday banking, as well as your local Post Office® branch.

Following the closure, your sort code and account number will remain the same and you can continue to use your existing debit card and cheque book. However, accounts held at the Newcastle Branch will now be administered from the Newry branch.

We will support you through this change.

We understand that the closure of this branch will impact all of our customers, especially those who, due to personal circumstances, require additional support. We are committed to supporting you in accessing the banking services you require. We will provide large print letters and Braille letters to ensure you receive information in a way that is appropriate to your needs. We also have a dedicated specialist in each branch to provide

additional support and answer any queries you may have. Alternatively, if you have any questions or would like to discuss these changes, you can reach us on our Helpline **0345 646 0431** (9am to 5pm Mon-Fri), or call into any branch or you can email us through an online enquiry form at aibni.co.uk/closures with any specific queries or complaints relating to the branch closures. The team are happy to help you.

The following is a summary of the assessment for:

Newcastle Branch

Newcastle Branch information.

Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 4.30pm (Wednesday 10am to 4.30pm)
(closed at lunchtime from 12.30pm – 1.30pm).

CUSTOMER PROFILE

PERSONAL
CUSTOMERS



90%

BUSINESS
CUSTOMERS



10%

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BRANCH FACILITIES



COUNTER



EXTERNAL
ATM



32%

Reduction in the number of customers making an over-the-counter branch transaction between 31 December 2017 and 31 December 2020

Reduction in Personal customers making a branch transaction 6 or more times annually*		Reduction in Business customers making a branch transaction 6 or more times annually*	
31 Dec 2017 - 31 Dec 2019	31 Dec 2017 - 31 Dec 2020	31 Dec 2017 - 31 Dec 2019	31 Dec 2017 - 31 Dec 2020
33%	55%	29%	44%

64%

The number of customers who are digitally registered as at 31 December 2020

87%

Increase in the number of customers transacting at the Post Office® between 31 December 2017 and 31 December 2020

Increase in Personal customers who have transacted 6 or more times annually at the Post Office®*		Increase in Business customers who have transacted 6 or more times annually at the Post Office®*	
31 Dec 2017 - 31 Dec 2019	31 Dec 2017 - 31 Dec 2020	31 Dec 2017 - 31 Dec 2019	31 Dec 2017 - 31 Dec 2020
222%	211%	88%	65%

*Data was analysed from January 2017 – December 2020, however due to the impact of Covid-19 on usage, analysis for the period from January 2017 – December 2019 is also shown.

Nearest Alternative Services

Nearest **AIB (NI)** branch to Newcastle branch

The AIB (NI) branch listed below provides the same branch banking facilities and is fully accessible. It is within reach of public transport, check translink.co.uk for coach, train and bus timetables throughout NI. Public car parking is available (free car parking is not available).

This branch is open Monday-Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm.
(Wednesday 10am to 4.30pm). (Closed at lunchtime from 12.30pm – 1.30pm).

Newry

42-44 Hill Street,
Newry, BT34 1AU



20.5 Miles Away

Shortest distance by road as obtained from rac.co.uk

**You can bank at
any AIB (NI) Branch**

Find out more at aibni.co.uk



NEAREST POST OFFICE® TO NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Address:

6 Railway Street, Newcastle,
County Down,
BT33 0AL

Distance (from closing branch):
0.2 miles away*

*Shortest walking distance obtained from rac.co.uk

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As an AIB (NI) customer, you can avail of the following services at the Post Office®:

- Get a balance, withdraw cash and lodge cash using your Visa Debit card.
- Lodge cash using a Post Office Cash Deposit card. Your account is credited immediately.
- Lodge cash using a pre-printed lodgement slip. Cash deposits made using a pre-printed lodgement slip will take one additional day to credit to your account.
- Lodge cheques using a pre-printed lodgement slip. The clearing cycle will begin when we receive the cheque, usually the next banking day.
- Exchange notes for coin (business customers only).
- Cash cheques up to an agreed daily limit (business customers only).
- Lodge cash up to £20k using Timesaver (business Quick-lodge customers only), credited the following working day.

Find out more at aibni.co.uk/ways-to-bank/post-office

NEAREST LOCAL BANKS



Ulster Bank

29 Upper Square
Castlewellan BT31 9DB
4.3 miles away*

Santander

49-51 Market Street
Downpatrick BT30 6LP
12.5 miles away*

NEARBY FREE TO USE CASH MACHINES



Post Office®

6 Railway Street
Newcastle BT33 0AL
0.2 miles away*

Smyths

4 Railway Street
Newcastle BT33 0AL
0.2 miles away*

*Shortest walking distance obtained from rac.co.uk

Broadband available close to this branch[†]

	Highest available download speed	Highest available upload speed	Availability
Standard	18mbp/s	1mbp/s	✓
Superfast	80mbp/s	20mbp/s	✓
Ultrafast	1000mbp/s	1000mbp/s	✓

[†]Information found on checker.ofcom.org.uk and searching branch postcode.

Other ways for customers to do their everyday banking

We want to make banking that works around your schedule, and is as easy as possible. We offer a range of convenient ways to bank, so you can manage your money whenever you need to, from wherever you are, without needing to visit a branch.



Online Banking – Be it a desktop, tablet or phone, you have the flexibility of banking at a time and place that suits you.



Mobile Banking – To use the Mobile Banking App you'll need to be registered for Online and Phonenumber Banking. This enables you to securely check your balance, pay your bills, and transfer funds to any UK account. You can even apply for a personal loan.



Phonenumber Banking – Phonenumber 0345 793 0000 (available 8am-midnight, 7 days a week) gives you an automated self-service facility that gives you a secure and confidential banking service that fits your schedule.



Cash Machines – Our cash machines are not just for cash transactions. Using your AIB (NI) Visa debit card and PIN, you can make balance enquiries, print off a mini statement and change your PIN.



Post Office® Services – Everyday banking is available at the Post Office®. You can check your balance, withdraw and lodge cash and cheques and make transactions.



Google Pay & Apple Pay – By adding your debit card or personal credit card to your phone, you can pay when seeing the Contactless logo.



Contactless – For debit and credit cards with the Contactless symbol, you can simply touch and pay for items that cost £45 or less.



Cashback – A Visa debit card allows you to make purchases with cashback up to £100. Please note, not all merchants will offer cashback.

More information at: aibni.co.uk/ways-to-bank

Definition of key terms:

‘Branch facilities’ – The list of services available within the branch such as counter, ATM, enquiries and appointments.

‘Counter transactions’ – Over-the-counter banking activities completed with a cashier. This usually consists of transactions such as withdrawals and lodgements.

‘Customer profile’ – The split between the type of customers who use the branch; business or personal.

‘Digitally Registered’ – Customers who are registered for AIB’s online, mobile or phonline banking services, and business customers who are registered for iBusiness Banking

‘Everyday banking’ – Checking account balance, lodging or withdrawing cash or cheques, and transferring money to other accounts.

‘Footfall’ – The number of customers who conduct over-the-counter transactions.

‘Fully accessible’ – Access to branches such as, wide doors, lowered counters, ramp access, and hearing loops.

‘Lending Standards Board’ – primary self-regulatory body for the banking and lending industry, whose goal is to drive fair outcomes for both personal and business customers through independent oversight.

‘Over-the-counter transaction’ – Refers to transactions such as withdrawals and lodgements made in the branch.

‘Post Office® transaction’ – Customers who have made a counter transaction at a Post Office® branch in the past 12 months.

‘Transaction’ – Payments in to and out of your account, such as transferring money to other accounts, and lodging and withdrawing cash or cheques.

‘Vulnerable Customer’ – The Financial Conduct Authority defines a vulnerable customer as someone who, due to their personal circumstances, is especially susceptible to harm, particularly when a firm is not acting with appropriate levels of care.

Branch Closure Impact Assessment - Newcastle



Customer and Stakeholder feedback (Added September 2021)

Communicating these changes to our customers

We are committed to doing all we can to minimise any impact on our customers and communities. We wrote to all of our affected customers and included a branch closure impact assessment booklet which provided information on the rationale for our decision and alternative ways for everyday banking, including Phonline, Mobile and Online Banking, as well as visiting the Post Office®.

We also made customers aware of our other branches and free cash machines nearby. We displayed in-branch posters, updated our website, and notified local media channels of these changes. We also advised customers who visited the branch and made branch closure impact assessments available to them.

Engaging the local community

In addition, during July we contacted the following local community stakeholders to advise of the changes we were making, the timing of such changes, rationale for these changes and to provide the opportunity for them to engage with us:

- MLAs, Councils, Community groups, Charities and Business stakeholders, providing details of the changes and offered follow up meetings.

We proactively contacted the following:

- All local Executive Ministers
- NI Secretary of State and Shadow Secretary of State
- Members of the NI Affairs Committee
- Local constituency representatives:
 - MLAs – Sinéad Bradley, Sinéad Ennis, Colin McGrath, Emma Rogan and Jim Wells
 - MP – Chris Hazzard
- Newry, Mourne and Down Council
- Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
- Down Business Centre Limited
- Age NI
- Alzheimer's Society
- Disability Action NI
- Federation of Small Business
- NI Chamber of Commerce
- Consumer Council Northern Ireland
- Retail NI
- Institute of Directors NI

Feedback we received

We held calls with:

- Representatives of Colin McGrath MLA
- Stuart Dickson MLA and Andrew Muir MLA
- Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA
- Age NI, Alzheimer's Society and Consumer Council

We met with:

- Retail NI
- Federation of Small Business

Feedback received told us that both customers and stakeholders were disappointed that their branch was closing and concerns were raised about the ability to access banking services and access to cash in their locality.

Concern was also expressed for the impact that branch closures could have on local high streets and sought to understand plans for the properties that we will be exiting from. Many customers and stakeholders also called out a concern for impacted branch staff.

Actions we have taken to support our customers through this change, and respond to feedback

- Focussed on customers who may require additional support with a personalised phonecall from our branch-based team to ensure customers understood the options and support available to them.
- Provided additional information and guidance to customers about using the Post Office®, in some cases introducing customers to the local Post Office®.
- Listened to customers who contacted us directly and responded in writing to help them understand the alternative ways to bank, including those services available locally.
- Engaged directly with the Post Office® about feedback/customer concerns at both a central and local level.
- Hosted customer support sessions in the impacted branches to explain and set-up customers on Phonline, Online and Mobile Banking.

Newcastle branch will close permanently on 12 November 2021 at 4:30pm.

Our branch staff will be available to help, or you can talk to us on our dedicated helpline **0345 646 0431**, open 09:00 – 17:00, Monday to Friday. You can also visit our website **aibni.co.uk/closures** for further information, frequently asked questions, or to email us through an online enquiry form with any specific queries or complaints relating to the branch closures. You can of course contact AIB in the usual way, by visiting any of our remaining branches, calling the customer contact centre on **0345 6005 925** or writing to us.

If you need additional support, contact us directly on the number above, or call into the branch to speak to one of our dedicated specialists. If you are a business customer, you can also raise a query via your Relationship Manager, in addition to the options outlined above.

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If you need this brochure in Braille or in large print, ring **0345 646 0431** or ask your branch. Customers with hearing difficulties can use our Text Relay service by dialling **18001 0345 6005 925**.

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