



Mr Jes Staley
Chief Executive Officer
Barclays
1 Churchill Place
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London
E14 5HP

October 2019

Dear Mr Staley

Open letter: Barclays plans to cease allowing cash withdrawals at post offices

We write to request that Barclays does not proceed with its plans to cease allowing customers to withdraw cash at post offices from January 2020.

Around 15 million separate cash withdrawals were made by your customers at post offices last year, with around 10 million of these taking place in rural locations. We do not doubt that your organisation considered these figures when making its decision – but perhaps you underestimated the impact that removing this service will have on the livelihoods and wellbeing of a great many people.

The 2019 Access to Cash review stated that around 8 million people in the UK would struggle to cope in a cashless society. This is a staggering number and indicates that now is not the time to cut off customers' ability to access cash at the post office – which, particularly for people in rural areas, is the only possible outlet for this service.

Your plans will leave many vulnerable and disadvantaged people at risk of financial exclusion and potential exploitation. This will lead – variously – to increased expenditure, debt and increased isolation and loneliness.

The solutions you propose for affected customers – namely cashback through other businesses and investing in your ATM network – will not serve as effective countermeasures.

There are around 3,000 'Community' status post offices that are formally designated by Post Office Ltd and Government as being the 'last shop in the village'. By definition, there are no other businesses from which customers might obtain cashback in these locations and it clearly would not be cost-effective for you to install c.3,000 ATMs in these remote rural locations.



ATMs are themselves problematic for many older people, and those living with dementia and/or certain disabilities. Many older people feel exposed and vulnerable to theft when using cash machines, and therefore require staffed resources such as post offices or bank branches to access their money.

Your organisation has closed nearly 500 branches in the last five years; over that period, vulnerable customers have come to rely on their local post office as a safe and trusted environment to make face-to-face cash withdrawals. Through this latest decision, you continue to remove the safety net that a face-to-face service provides vulnerable customers when making a cash withdrawal.

We see no way around the fact: people will suffer as a result of your decision. We urge you to reconsider your plans and reverse this decision before the impact on the lives of your most vulnerable customers is realised.

Your sincerely

Calum Greenhow
Chief Executive Officer
The National Federation of SubPostmasters