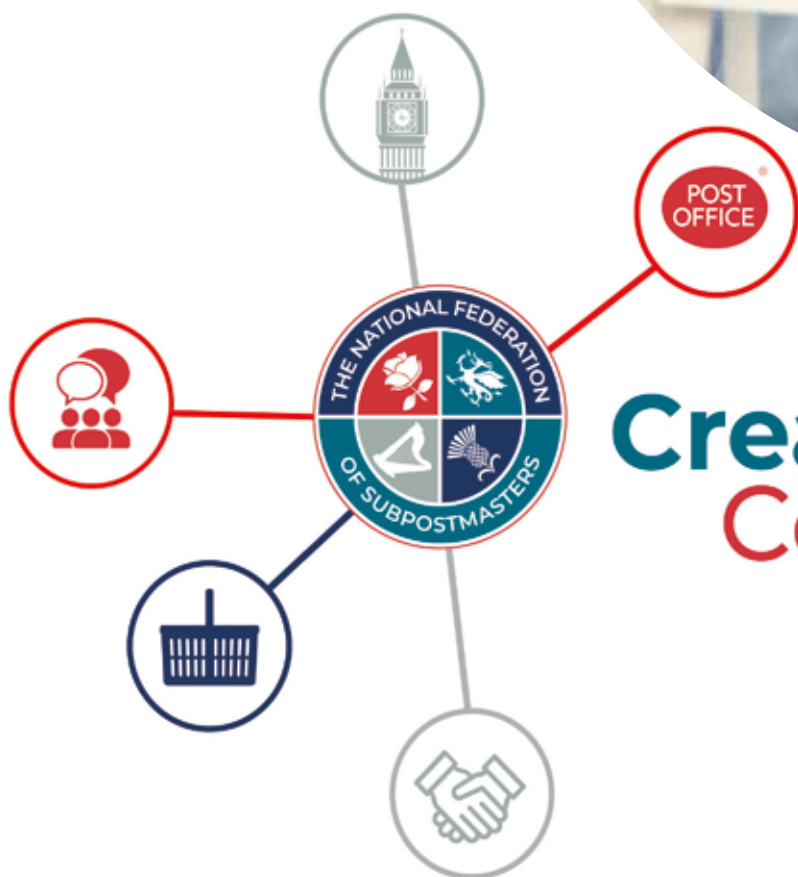


2019

ANNUAL REVIEW



Creating Connections



nfsp
The voice of the
UK's post offices

About the NFSP

The National Federation of SubPostmasters is a professional trade association representing independent business people who act as agents for Post Office Ltd. Our members own and operate sub post offices, which are 98% of the national post office network.

The NFSP exists to support subpostmasters to maximise profit from their post office and retail businesses. We are a member-focused organisation.

ANNUAL REVIEW 2019

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Chairman's foreword



Welcome to the 2018/19 Annual Review, which, due to the time-limited nature of the NFSP Chairperson role, is my last as Chair.

It's been another tough year in the retail sector. High numbers of high street operators – including some very big names – have closed or only managed to survive through merger or acquisition. So it is a testament to the expertise and durability of all our subpostmaster members who are still standing against this backdrop – and to the level of support provided by the NFSP of course!

For me it has been a different year as I have 'moonlighted' on the NFSP's Mails Segregation Team as the London-area adviser for around six months. I have loved this period as I have gone out and met more subpostmasters in my area than ever before and I'd like to think I've contributed successfully to the great progress we've made in hitting or moving closer to the segregation targets we are all working towards.

As Chair I've watched as Calum has seamlessly made the transition from Non-Executive Director to CEO. He has now settled into this role comfortably and has been steadily building our organisational capability, information reserves and – crucially – increasing our influence across government and within the postal industry to help the NFSP

achieve its goals.

Something I am especially pleased about is that over the course of 2018/19, the NFSP's Branch and Regional activity has improved as a result of major changes to the content of meetings – something led by the NFSP Retail Team. Attendance has improved significantly in many regions and we will continue to work in 2019/20 to increase engagement and attendance across the entire Branch network.

Lastly, as I am standing down as Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our members who are a constant source of inspiration and (positive) challenge to us as an organisation; our Branch Secretary network whose dedication we owe so much to; and to the NFSP's hard-working staff at NFSP HQ in Shoreham-by-Sea and in our national Retail and Mails Segregation teams. It has been a pleasure to serve as the Chair of our organisation.

Nilesch Joshi
Chairman

The NFSP in numbers



*Based on responses given to the 2019 NFSP Member Survey of independent sub post offices

Chief Executive's introduction

David Frost hosted a TV show in the early 1960s called *That Was The Week That Was*. As I write this introduction to the 2018/2019 Annual Review, it feels very much like 'that was the year that was', given how quickly it has passed.

It has been an extremely busy year for the NFSP, providing the subpostmaster perspective in discussions with government decision-makers, Post Office Ltd (PO) and a host of other stakeholders. This was a priority for me when entering the role of CEO and we have made huge strides in the last year. Thanks to the NFSP, there is now an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on post offices which brings together key industry players and politicians from both sides of the House of Commons. We will continue to work within Westminster in 2019/20 to make sure subpostmasters' voices are heard.

One significant area of growth the network has experienced over the last year has been in banking. Banking transaction volumes have increased, as has the overall value of banking deposits. However, as banks continue to close their branches, not only have customers migrated to post offices but the risks associated with providing banking services have also migrated to post offices. I'm talking about security issues, forgeries and so on.

The NFSP has long argued that subpostmasters are not paid fairly for providing banking services. In 2018/19, there was some concession from PO and it increased the payment rate for deposits by 8p. Does this truly reflect the time, effort and risk involved? I'd be surprised if anyone reading these words truthfully answers 'yes'.

The NFSP continues to work on subpostmasters' behalf to ensure transaction payment rates – for banking and other services – are fair and reflect the amount of work and responsibilities involved.

Moving on, I would like to congratulate all subpostmasters who have worked with their staff to ensure that national mails segregation performance has continued to improve. Last year, the network achieved the Letters/Large Letter target and shared a bonus payment of £900,000.

We have reached our target for Letters/Large Letters again and are getting closer each month to the 1st and 2nd Class parcel targets. A lot of this is down to the knowledge and dedication of the NFSP's Mails Segregation Team, which – since July 2017 – has been working with the network to provide segregation advice and support.

Turning to our Annual Conference now – our theme this year is Creating Connections. This theme is reflective of the work the NFSP does to create connections for the benefit of our members – through the support and advice we offer subpostmasters via our nationwide Retail and Mails Segregation teams and the staff at our Shoreham HQ, and the relationships we build with industry stakeholders and government decision-makers.

One thing we've done throughout 2018/19 is to show PO what the connections are between their actions and the experiences of subpostmasters across the network.

That is to say, we have told them what the consequences of their policies have been and what they may be in future – backed up by research and other data we have gathered. What we've also done in 2018/19 is foster a far more constructive dialogue with PO. We challenge, but we also provide solutions. This approach is making a huge difference



“What we've also done in 2018/19 is foster a far more constructive dialogue with PO”

and I am confident that subpostmasters will start to realise the benefits of it soon.

Of course, I'm not suggesting that everything is rosy. But a good relationship between PO and the network is vital – you can't have one without the other, so we both need each other to succeed. What's difficult, then, is that subpostmasters, and the NFSP, see PO generating a profit at a time when network remuneration is down and offices are closing on a daily basis.

It bears repeating that the NFSP didn't agree to the Simplification programme and fought for the cost-cutting element to be cancelled. We didn't succeed for Simplification phase 1 – but thanks to our Negotiating Committee, Simplification phase 2 was cancelled, saving the network from losing £6.8m in income. All that said, I don't want to live in the past – I want us to learn from it. I want to be in a position in a year's time where PO puts the network at the heart of its decisions and the network feels able to trust PO at least a bit more. There is, of course, so much to do for us to get there and I have to say that I am thoroughly enjoying the challenge.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at this year's Conference – and on into 2019/20.

Calum Greenhow
Chief Executive Officer

2019

OUR STRATEGY

In the NFSP's 2018 Annual Review, we outlined how the organisation was adapting in order to support subpostmasters in a retail environment that has changed dramatically.

In recent years, declining public demand for Post Office services and developments in online shopping forced post office operators to expand their retail offers to survive. Indeed, the NFSP's recent Member Survey shows how this has played out over time: only a minority of NFSP members (36%) in 2019 stated that they generate more take-home income from the post office element of their business than their retail element.

In response to this changing landscape, the NFSP identified the need to make changes in order to provide improved, practical services to help build members' retail and business skills as well as continuing to represent subpostmasters by fighting for fair pay and conditions (which remains a fundamental purpose of the NFSP). The benefits of these changes have been realised during 2018/19 – and will continue to be realised in years to come.

Our Annual Review for 2018/19 outlines the progress the NFSP has made in providing support to members and effectively representing subpostmasters' interests in three key areas identified as priorities for the year:

- Good governance and organisational infrastructure
- Practical support for members – covering the work of the NFSP Retail and Mails Segregation Teams
- Effective communication and representation



Overview of 2018/19

Before exploring the progress made against the NFSP's three main priorities for 2018/19, we can take a wider look back over the NFSP's year.

CEO Calum Greenhow took over officially from George Thomson on 1 June 2018, having been actively involved for several months as the CEO designate. In his first year in charge, Calum has overseen a growth in NFSP membership and an increase in the level of influence we have across the industry.

NFSP membership, at the time of writing, stands at over 8,000. New independent operators continue to join our membership ranks and we have been working to forge strong links with multiple operators at the same time – with





“PO is listening to us more and we are able to exert more influence”

The NFSP can provide a voice for both independents and multiples

OneStop joining the NFSP in 18/19.

Independent sub post offices have always been the core of the NFSP's membership and at the heart of our activities. This remains the case today – indeed, our Regional Non-Executive Directors are all independent subpostmasters.

At the same time, and as outlined earlier in this report, the landscape of the post office network has changed with multiple operators expanding their post office portfolios and, accordingly, the NFSP has sought to work with these multiple operators.

By building relationships with multiple operators and bringing them on board as members, the NFSP is stronger than ever.



Where interests overlap, we can now provide a voice for independents AND multiples in discussions with Post Office Ltd (PO), government and other industry stakeholders – and our collective voice is louder than ever.

The NFSP's relationship with PO has developed during 2018/19. Recognising that in a difficult retail environment, the success of the post office network is dependent on the success of Post Office Ltd, we have sought to operate as a 'critical friend' of PO. By advising and informing, by providing a measured and rational voice for subpostmasters – backed up by data and intelligence we have gathered – PO is listening to us more and we are able to exert more influence for the benefit of subpostmasters.

In 2018/19 we also carried out a major piece of work to refresh our branding. This included an update to the NFSP's logo, which had previously remained unchanged for more than 120 years!

Our new primary logo maintains the broad style of the old logo – with the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom clearly represented to emphasise the UK-wide remit of the NFSP's work.

While remaining true to our historical roots, we have simplified the logo, improving its printed qualities and making it far more versatile to use. We also introduced a fresher, more modern colour palette.

We've also introduced a new secondary logo which states our role as 'the voice of UK post offices', using the same colour palette.

Alongside this rebranding exercise the NFSP also revisited and formalised its purpose in our new Vision, Mission and Values.

These not only outline our reasons for existing but act as a framework to shape our future activities and decision-making.

The NFSP's Vision, Mission and Values are outlined overleaf.



Our Vision, Mission and Values

OUR VISION

The collective voice of post office operators offering members representation, support and solutions to realise the full potential of their businesses.

OUR MISSION

A membership-led organisation, supporting members to operate post office and retail outlets. We represent their interests at every level of policy and decision-making. We offer an opportunity to belong to, and take part in, a community working together for a more successful future.

OUR VALUES

Member-focused

Our Board is formed of members, voted for by their peers, and with members' interests at its heart. Members are at the forefront of what we do. Our representation of and support for members is written into our rules and guides our day-to-day decision-making. We have a responsibility to our members to strive to understand and meet their needs, and to ensure our activities are broad enough to offer something for all. We seek value for money for our members in all that we do.

Supportive

We care about our members, about the people we work with and about the relationships we have. We take time to understand the needs of others, showing empathy and compassion. We are honest in our words and deeds.

Respectful

We act professionally at all times, we respect others and their opinions. We treat people as we would like to be treated. We encourage and celebrate diversity and are sensitive to individual circumstances.

Trusted

We are honest and straightforward in our interactions with others. We act with integrity and authenticity. We are consistent and fair in our treatment of others. We build trust



by being open about our activities, transparent about our decision-making, successfully delivering our objectives, and demonstrating our clear commitment to our members' interests.

Knowledgeable

We are experts in our fields. We understand our industry and our members' businesses. We employ the right people and we encourage them to share their knowledge with others in a way which is accessible to all. We are smart enough to know what we don't know and ask for help when required.



More than 100 meetings were held in 2018/19 using a new and improved format

Good governance and organisational infrastructure

Every organisation needs the right structures, resources and people in order to be fit for purpose and every organisation needs to evolve – at least to some degree – in order to remain fit for purpose.

The NFSP has, of course, evolved significantly in recent years – becoming a professional trade association and bringing in new teams to provide members with practical post office and retail support. We are not standing still and continue to develop – although the changes made in 2018/19 have been more about fine-tuning.

Throughout 2018/19 we have developed the skills of our Board of Non-Executive Directors. The Board is comprised of serving subpostmasters (each representing one of 10 UK regions) and three representatives from multiple organisations with a portfolio of post offices (WHSmith, Ryman and SPAR). Our Regional Directors in particular play an active role in supporting NFSP members and are a key link between our Head Office staff, Branch

and Regional volunteer network and wider membership. Accordingly, we have sought to equip them with the skills to support and represent members even more effectively through a tailored training package.

A new Director induction package was introduced in 2018/19 and three incoming Directors benefited from this. It is vital that new Directors have a good understanding of the NFSP's organisational culture – as outlined by our Vision, Mission and Values – as they enter their new role and are able to meet our Head Office team, who will provide them with support in the future.

We also continue to monitor the diversity of the Board of Directors to ensure, as a group, it is representative of the wider NFSP membership. As mentioned, the current board is composed of serving subpostmasters as well as representatives from multiple organisations – and a range of office model types are represented: Local, Main, Community and 'Traditional'.

“We are not standing still and continue to develop. The changes in 2018/19 were fine-tuning”



➔ With activities led by the NFSP Retail Team, we have also worked to increase the quantity and quality of NFSP Branch and Regional Meetings across the country – as well as the way we promote meetings via *The SubPostmaster* magazine and NFSP website. More than 100 meetings were held in 2018/19 using a new and improved format which links members with NFSP commercial partners, the Mails Segregation Team and Post Office Ltd, which have led sessions across the UK on key themes such as security, banking and audits.

Feedback on the new Branch and Regional Meeting formats has been overwhelmingly positive with virtually all (97%) who provided feedback stating that – because of the new meeting style – they would attend their next local meeting.

In 2018/19 the incoming Chief Executive led a capability audit of the NFSP's executive staff. This involved one-to-one discussions with all Head Office staff and a review of colleagues' skills and training needs.

The Communications Team (now the Policy and Communications Team) has undergone a change of personnel and refreshed the focus of its activities – more detail of these changes and the benefits they bring to NFSP members is provided later in this Annual Review.

A comprehensive NFSP member survey was conducted in early 2019 covering a range of subjects relevant to subpostmasters' businesses and their relationship with the NFSP.

As well as feeding into the discussions the NFSP has with Post Office Ltd and other decision-makers (more detail on this will be provided later in this Annual Review), the results from this survey will also form a key part of our capability audit activities in the coming year.

We will be able to identify additional areas of support that members require and where we can do more to promote awareness of the services available to NFSP members.

“We have worked to increase the quantity and quality of meetings”



Questions from the floor at the 2018 Annual Conference

Supporting subpostmasters to realise the full potential of their retail offer



In 2018/19, the NFSP has provided practical, retail-focused assistance to more than 300 subpostmasters. In the majority of cases, this assistance took the form of one or more retail support visits – which are the ‘bread and butter’ of the NFSP Retail Team. These visits vary in content and outcomes according to the need of the subpostmaster – from advice on making cost-free changes to layout and supplier referrals, to the comprehensive refit service Concept 2 Conclusion.

As well as helping subpostmasters looking to boost their retail sales, the NFSP Retail Team – alongside our partners at Commercial Plus and the NFSP’s operational support team – has worked with several subpostmasters facing financial difficulties and risking closure. By drawing on a range of expertise, we have successfully assisted subpostmasters on the verge of closure in 2018/19.

This Annual Review showcases two sub post offices that received support from the NFSP in 2018/19.

One of these case studies – that of Lockerbie Post Office – demonstrates how the NFSP can revitalise a sub post office’s retail offer and help generate extra revenue and profit; the other – that of Margetson Crescent Post Office – shows how effective the NFSP can be in helping subpostmasters through tough times and, as a result, keeping their offices going.

The Retail Team has also provided tailored advice to help subpostmasters sell their post office in 2018/19. Team members are experts in providing low, or zero-cost recommendations to help improve the look and feel of a retail business. This is invaluable for subpostmasters at a time when they may be unwilling to invest further funds in their business.

Across all 300+ offices supported in 2018/19, the Retail Team has received 100% positive feedback. →

“Across 300+ offices supported in 2018/19, the Retail Team has received 100% positive feedback”





➔ Every subpostmaster surveyed reported back to us that they were satisfied with the service received.

In 2018/19 the NFSP Retail Team launched a new 'Buy a Post Office' service. This service is aimed at both entirely new post office operators and existing subpostmasters looking to purchase another office. The 'Buy a Post Office' service helps potential operators put together their business plan and

prepare for their PO interview, as well as providing initial advice and guidance once the new subpostmaster opens their office.

So far NFSP 'Buy a Post Office' customers have a 100% interview pass rate. This is a great way for the NFSP to help ensure that suitably capable operators are taking on post offices – and are doing so in a way that best equips them for

CASE STUDY

LOCKERBIE POST OFFICE

Karen Wilson heard NFSP Retail Team member Robert Clack talk at a PO Quarterly Business Meeting. Karen told us that at the time she was struggling to be innovative with her retail offer and was on the verge of giving up.

Karen was inspired by Robert's talk and asked him to pay her a visit to discuss changes she could make.

Robert was able to quickly identify improvements.

He noted that a lot of the retail space wasn't being used effectively and recommended that three distinct areas be created: one for the post office and related packaging items; one for newspapers and magazines, confectionery, tobacco and lottery; and one for greetings cards and stationery.

Karen said: "Once Robert had been to my store, straight away I could see it with a fresh pair of

eyes. Robert pointed out the good and the bad things regarding the store but the main thing was, with every negative he would back it up with a positive."

Robert instigated a total upheaval in Karen's greetings cards range – out went all the old cards and a full 5m display of new cards was introduced. A new till area was introduced as well as a host of new shelving and display units. All window and door posters were removed to allow natural light in and increase visibility into and around the store.

Robert and Karen agreed that she should aim to be the 'best in town' for greetings cards and this has been realised in style. Card sales have increased many times over, as have profit margins. Stationery sales have shot up too.

Karen said: "Our customers are loving our new-look store. One year



ago I would never have thought that this would be possible. I cannot believe how much my retail has changed. We are busy all the time, even in what used to be quiet periods. My card sales have increased – never in my wildest dreams did I think I could achieve such an increase in sales."

“In 2018/19 the NFSP Retail Team launched a new ‘Buy a Post Office’ service”

the future.

The Retail Team, led by the Director of Commercial and Retail, has also worked throughout 2018/19 to help subpostmasters improve their retail offer and increase their profit margins.

Since its inception in 2017, the Retail Team has brought together a range of commercial partners that offer exclusive or favourable deals on

products and services for NFSP members. At the time of writing this Annual Review, we have as many as 31 commercial partners covering:

- Business services, utilities and environment
- Business transfer
- Coins and collectibles
- EPoS
- Eyewear
- Food and drink-to-go
- Gifts and greetings
- Insurance
- Mobile and tech accessories
- Photography and photobooths
- Point of sale and display
- Shopfitting
- Stationery and packaging
- Transport



We are always looking to develop our partner list and in 2018/19 we have started working with Norcon EPoS and Intelligent Retail EPoS, Tracks Publishing Ltd (greetings cards), Coffee Boss, and DLK Photography.

All offer great value deals for NFSP members and the feedback we’ve received on our new partners so far has been extremely positive.

We also brokered a fantastic deal for NFSP members on note and coin counters – part-funded by PO – which in total has saved our members £750,000.

CASE STUDY

MARGETSON CRESCENT POST OFFICE

PHOTO: J. THOMAS



Mahendra Singadia and his wife Angelina run Margetson Crescent Post Office.

In recent years, the husband and wife team had experienced a significant drop in their post office income, which Angelina described as “shockingly low”.

Each month their pay was consistently £2,000 down on the previous year.

As a result, they could only afford to employ one member of staff and drew only just enough personal income from the business to cover their living expenses.

Angelina told the NFSP that sometimes they had little money left to pay for food and almost lost their house because they struggled

Margetson Crescent PO is looking like a viable business once again

to make their mortgage payments.

Mahendra’s health began to decline and between this, their financial difficulties and the demands of running the post office, they put Margetson Crescent on the market in 2018.

In late 2018 the NFSP was able to work with Angelina and assist with various operational issues she was experiencing in her post office, as well as providing commercial and retail support through the NFSP’s Retail Team and commercial partners.

The impact of this support is being realised now – through tailored advice and intervention, Margetson Crescent PO is looking like a viable business once again and has been taken off the market.

Angelina described the support she received as ‘a blessing’ and she now feels optimistic about the future.



A workshop on mails segregation at the 2018 NFSP Conference proved popular among attendees

Practical mails support

In terms of the continuation of the progress made since the Mails Segregation Team's inception in 2017, 2018/19 has been a successful year.

The year got off to a great start as we saw the Mails Segregation Team's work begin to pay off (quite literally).

In April 2018, subpostmasters were paid a share of £900k due to the Letter/Large Letter target being achieved during 2017/18.

In 2018/19 the Team has continued to work with subpostmasters and their staff to improve mails segregation knowledge and performance.

Since the Team's inception we have supported over 4,000 offices and made nearly 11,000 visits or in-depth phone calls.

In 2018/19, the Team was tasked with making improvements in performance by targeting five key segregation errors:

- 1st Class parcels in 2nd Class parcel bags
- 2nd Class parcels in 1st Class parcel bags
- Meter Mail items found in mail bags
- PPI items found in mail bags
- Unlabelled mail bags

As of P10 2018/19, the team is expecting, on current run rates, to achieve the following by the end of the year:

- Reduce the number of 1st Class parcels in 2nd Class parcel bags by 19.1% (891 down to 721 mail bag failures)
- Reduce the number of 2nd Class parcels in 1st Class parcel bags by 21.7% (741 down to 540 mail bag failures)
- Reduce the number of Meter Mail items found in all mail bags by 30.9% (986 down to 681 failures)
- Reduce the number of PPI items found in all mail bags by 6.8% (739 down to 689 failures)
- Reduce the number of mail bags that weren't labelled by a staggering 53% (1,057 down to 497 mail bag failures).

In total it is forecast that the Team will have reduced the number of errors made in mail bags for the subpostmasters that it supports from 4,414 to 3,168, an overall improvement in the total volume errors of 28.2% compared to the previous year.

We recognise that PPI is still an issue, and this is in the main due to the complexity of the labels produced and the knowledge of subpostmasters and their teams.



“The Team supported 54 PO mails workshops in September and October 2018”

It is forecast that the Team will have reduced the number of errors made in mail bags for the subpostmasters that it supports from 4,414 to 3,168

Throughout 2018/19, the Mails Segregation Team has produced regular articles in *The SubPostmaster* magazine around the subject of PPI as well as other articles on mails segregation improvement opportunities along with flow diagrams that could be torn out for office use, as well as delivering workshops at branch meetings.

We also continue to work with PO to simplify processes and improve our understanding of the errors being identified by Royal Mail.

The great news is that, because of the hard work the team and subpostmasters have put in, as of P10 we are in very good shape to hit the Letter/Large Letter target set at 88.5% for this year.

Performance figures for March 2018 to February 2019 for subpostmasters the Mails Segregation Team support are shown in the table, below.

Mail bag type	Target	March 2018	February 2019
1ST CLASS PARCEL	97.5%	92.7%	95.0%
2ND CLASS PARCEL	97.5%	93.5%	95.0%
LETTER/LARGE LETTER	88.5%	89.5%	91.8%

Quite clearly there has been significant growth through the year and we continue to position ourselves to achieve the target for next year for all three mail bags. The target for 2019/20 for Letters/Large Letters will increase by 1.5% to 90% due to phasing.

Also during 2018/19, the Mails Segregation Team has been on the road supporting and advising subpostmasters at Branch and Regional meetings across the UK.

At the 2018 NFSP Annual Conference, the Mails Segregation Workshop delivered by the Team was very highly rated by delegates on their Conference feedback forms. This workshop was replicated successfully at 64 Branch and Regional meetings in 2018/19.

The Team supported 54 PO mails workshops in September and October 2018 – reaching approximately 1,400 attending subpostmasters.

The NFSP was also asked by PO to support it in 2018/19 with the development of new segregation laminate guides which are currently under trial in 60 offices (with plans to extend the trial to 1,000 offices).

Lastly, we are working very closely with multiples such as McColl's, Southern Co-op, ScotMid, Paydens & North East Convenience Stores in order to boost overall segregation performance – to the benefit of all post office operators.

Effective communication and representation

As mentioned earlier in this Annual Review, during 2018/19, the NFSP reviewed the activities and purpose of its Communications Team, prompted by the departure of the Director of Communications and Strategy.

After a period of review, the decision was made to revise and expand the structure of the team.

In its new format, the Policy and Communications Team – comprising the Head of Policy and Research, Communications Manager, and Research and Communications Assistant – is already making improvements to the way the NFSP communicates with members and increasing the profile of our work in the public arena.

In 2018/19, we have made enormous strides in getting subpostmasters firmly on the political radar. The NFSP was instrumental in the establishment of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Post Offices – which brings together MPs

from both sides of the House of Commons and other industry stakeholders to discuss issues affecting the post office network.

Throughout 2018/19 we have met regularly with the Postal Affairs Minister and government departments. In every instance we provide the subpostmaster perspective – not only highlighting areas of detriment experienced across the network, but actively proposing solutions to improve pay and conditions for subpostmasters.

In addition, we are always working to expand the list of stakeholders with whom we can work on areas of common interest. In 2018/19 we have linked up with Citizens Advice, the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) and Federation for Small Business (FSB) – to name just a few.

As mentioned earlier in this Annual Review, the NFSP aims to act as a measured and rational voice for subpostmasters – and we aim to back up

“We have met regularly with the Postal Affairs Minister and government departments”



The NFSP was instrumental in the establishment of the APPG on Post Offices – bringing together MPs from all sides of Parliament



“We tested out reactions to several potential new areas of magazine content”

what we say with up-to-date and accurate information. In 2018/19, we sought to actively improve the amount and quality of information we have on subpostmasters' experiences by conducting a comprehensive member survey. In early 2019, we commissioned a research provider to carry out a quantitative telephone survey of 1,000 independent (ie non-multiple) NFSP members. The survey covered key themes such as income, banking services, challenges faced by the subpostmaster, plans for the future and engagement with the NFSP.

Strict fieldwork targets were set by region and post office model (Main, Local etc.) and data were weighted in line with the overall population of independent NFSP members. The results are robust and reliable, and can be treated as representative of the population.

At the time of writing this Annual Review, the survey results are 'hot off the press' but have already fed into discussions with senior figures at PO and have been presented to government officials (and will of course be shared with NFSP members in due course).

We are extremely grateful to all NFSP members who took part in the survey – you can be assured that we are making use of the findings with the intention of improving pay and conditions for subpostmasters as we promised.

We intend to carry out further research in 2019/20 and we encourage all members to take part in any future studies.

In 2018/19 the NFSP reviewed the way we communicate and engage with our membership.

This highlighted several areas where we felt improvements could be made – including our website, forum and social media accounts.

Much of this work will continue into 2019/20 and onwards, but one significant change in 2018/19 was a refresh of the contents and look and feel of *The SubPostmaster* magazine.

In September 2018 we gathered the views of NFSP members on *The SubPostmaster* and some potential changes to the design and content we were considering via a focus group and series of in-depth interviews.

Members' feedback was – in the main – highly consistent:

- **The SubPostmaster is well liked and is seen as a prestigious publication compared with other trade publications members have read.**
- **The primary focus of The SubPostmaster should be to help subpostmasters improve their post office and retail businesses.**
- **The SubPostmaster should take a strong line on the NFSP's purpose and what it is doing to benefit subpostmasters.**



One significant change in 2018/19 was a refresh of the contents and look and feel of *The SubPostmaster* magazine

We tested out reactions to several potential new areas of magazine content and, based on the feedback received, we have introduced a number of new items to *The SubPostmaster* monthly content:

- **Advice Centre pages – bringing together useful hints and tips from the NFSP's Negotiating Committee, forum and social media.**
- **News analysis – exploring developments in the industry and considering what the impact might be for subpostmasters.**
- **Category management – providing an overview of a different retail category each month, with hints and tips for introducing or maximising sales from these lines.**
- **Partner of the month – showcasing the products and services offered by a different NFSP retail partner each month.**

We also tested out various new designs for the magazine's front cover among members. The new design was introduced in November 2018 – and was chosen as it was seen to improve and modernise the old cover but didn't represent a significant departure from the previous style, which had positive associations for the members we spoke to.

INTO 2019/20 AND BEYOND

Moving forwards:

- We will continue to support and represent subpostmasters and continue to improve the ways in which we do so.
- We will continue to create connections that benefit subpostmasters.
- We will continue to inform NFSP members about what we are achieving on their behalf and the services and benefits available to them as members.
- We will continue to support subpostmasters to maximise their income from the post office and retail elements of their business.
- We will continue to provide tailored mails support – with the intention of hitting targets and achieving bonus payments.
- We will continue to be available to members who need advice and support, through our Branch network and through our Head Office Team.





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The voice of the
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NFSP

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