



Figure 1.
Inscriptions on
Open Value
stamps for UK
Standard
2nd-class
letters

The introduction of NCR Post & Go kiosks in post offices from 14 February 2014 allowed the printing of Open Value stamps tailored specifically to individual letters, packages and parcels. There are currently (March 2020) about 650 NCR kiosks distributed among about 230 post offices. The NCR kiosks are equipped with a weighing unit, which allows customers to determine the weight class of the item and to choose the postal service required from a series of menus on a touch screen. The requested Open Value stamp is then thermally printed at the point of sale on a self-adhesive gravure-printed Post & Go stamp design. Initially, stamps with the Machin head design in olive and blue were used for first-class and second-class values, respectively, but subsequently pictorial designs were available for Open Value stamps.

Open Value inscriptions

Two Open Value stamps for the 2nd-class Standard letter service obtained from an NCR kiosk in Cambridge City post office are shown in Figure 1 (above). The service indicator 2L is shown in the largest font and the service/VAT code (E4), the price paid (£0.56), the weight of the item (0.008 kg) and the four-part numerical datastring are arranged below in different fonts. This layout is similar on all Open Value Post & Go stamps, although some service indicators are in two parts with the second part in a lower font on the same line as the service/VAT code (see images in Figure 2). A difference between the two stamps shown in Figure 1 is the inclusion of CB23 on the stamp on the left. CB23 is the first part of the postcode of the destination address for the purchased stamp, and this is printed on the stamp if proof of postage is requested. The first part of the postcode of the destination address is also printed on stamps for Royal Mail Confirmed, Guaranteed or Parcelforce services to the UK and Channel Islands (see images in Figure 2). The postcode is absent if proof of posting is not requested or if the stamp is destined for an overseas address.

A full list of service indicators, with the Royal Mail and Parcelforce services they represent, is given in Table 1, and images of Post & Go stamps with all the different service indicators are shown in Figure 2.

The Service/VAT code

The two-character code on the second line of the Open Value inscription (E4 in Figure 1) is made up of an upper-case letter indicating the Royal Mail service code (the same as used originally on Horizon labels produced by counter staff in post offices) and a single number indicating the VAT status of the service. For Royal Mail services, VAT-exempt services are indicated by the number 4, zero-rated services by 5, and standard-rate VAT services by 6. For Parcelforce services, the two-character code is made up of two numbers; the first number is always 7, and the second number is 8 for zero-rated services, or 9 for standard rate VAT services. The two-character codes on Open Value stamps for all Royal Mail and Parcelforce services are given in Table 1.

Royal Mail UK Standard and Confirmed (signed for) services to addresses in the UK are VAT-exempt and have the number 4, whereas identical services to the Channel Islands are zero-rated for VAT and have the number 5. The cost of these services to addresses in the UK and the Channel Islands is identical. For Royal Mail UK Guaranteed (special delivery) services, the SD1 service is VAT-exempt (code 4) to UK addresses and zero-rated (code 5) to Channel Island addresses, so the costs are identical. However, the other special delivery services (SD1 Sat G'tee, SD9 and SD9 Sat G'tee) are charged standard-rate VAT (code 6; currently 20%) for UK delivery, but are zero-rated (code 5) for delivery to the Channel Islands and are therefore cheaper for mail to the Channel Islands.

For Royal Mail International Standard (A), Tracked & Signed (ITS) and Signed (IS) services, delivery to addresses in Europe is VAT-exempt (code 4),

Open Value Post & Go stamps from Post Office kiosks

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2L E4 £0.53 0.019 kg 008113 68 0105/4 01	2LG F4 £0.73 0.019 kg 008113 68 0105/4 02	2SP G4 £2.80 0.019 kg 008113 68 0105/4 03	2MP G4 £5.20 0.019 kg 008113 68 0105/4 04
2L Signed For E4 £1.63 CB23 0.003 kg 008113 68 0096/2 05	2LG Signed For F4 £1.83 CB23 0.003 kg 008113 68 0096/2 06	2SP Signed For G4 £3.90 CB23 0.003 kg 008113 68 0096/2 07	2MP Signed For G4 £6.30 CB23 0.003 kg 008113 68 0096/2 08
1L B4 £0.62 0.009 kg 008113 67 0040/2 01	1LG C4 £0.93 0.053 kg 008113 67 0016/2 02	1SP D4 £3.20 0.053 kg 008113 67 0016/2 03	1MP D4 £5.65 0.053 kg 008113 67 0016/2 04
1L Signed For B4 £1.72 CB23 0.005 kg 008113 69 0016/15 02	1LG Signed For C4 £2.03 CB23 0.005 kg 008113 69 0016/15 06	1SP Signed For D4 £4.30 CB23 0.005 kg 008113 69 0016/15 10	1MP Signed For D4 £6.75 CB23 0.057 kg 008113 67 0014/90 01
SD1 Y4 £6.40 CB23 0.003 kg 008113 67 0065/60 01	SD1 Sat G'tee Y6 £10.68 CB23 0.003 kg 008113 67 0065/60 02	SD9 Y5 £15.15 JE1 0.003 kg 008113 67 0117/77 01	SD9 Sat G'tee Y6 £21.18 CB23 0.008 kg 008113 67 0123/67 01
AAX Letter R5 £6.28 0.009 kg 005226 68 0007/22 01	AAX Sml.Parcl R5 £8.40 0.005 kg 009340 67 0003/03 01	A ISF Letter H5 £6.18 0.002 kg 005226 68 0007/28 01	A ISF Sml.Parcl H5 £8.80 0.032 kg 005226 68 0008/18 01
A Letter H4 £0.97 0.008 kg 008113 69 0008/32 01	A Lg.Letter H4 £2.45 0.008 kg 008113 69 0354/42 01	A Sml.Parcl H4 £3.20 0.043 kg 008113 69 0008/32 05	ITS Letter H4 £6.47 0.042 kg 008113 69 0008/32 07
ITS Lg.Letter H4 £8.10 0.008 kg 008113 69 0354/43 01	ITS Sml.Parcl H4 £8.20 0.003 kg 008113 67 0093/36 02	IT Letter R5 £7.15 0.042 kg 008113 69 0008/32 08	IT Lg.Letter R6 £9.72 0.007 kg 008113 68 0354/43 03
IT Sml.Parcl R5 £8.20 0.024 kg 008113 67 0059/04 02	IS Letter H4 £5.97 0.004 kg 008113 67 0093/36 01	IS Lg.Letter H4 £8.10 0.008 kg 008113 69 0354/44 07	IS Sml.Parcl H4 £8.20 0.004 kg 008113 67 0093/36 03
PS 78 £9.65 JE1 0.019 kg 008113 67 0097/59 01	GP 79 £35.40 JE1 0.008 kg 008113 67 0102/91 01	GX 79 £47.46 0.023 kg 015523 67 0371/12 01	
IE 79 £16.49 0.034 kg 011704 69 0694/52 02	48 79 £11.99 CB23 0.186 kg 013002 67 0015/11 01	24 79 £16.49 CB23 0.019 kg 008113 68 0105/51 01	
AM 79 £21.49 CB23 0.010 kg 008113 68 0134/31 01	10 79 £31.49 CB23 0.008 kg 008113 67 0107/82 01	9 79 £41.48 CB23 0.008 kg 008113 67 0117/84 01	

Figure 2.
Open Value
stamps from
NCR kiosks
showing
all different
service
indicators

whereas delivery to other locations worldwide is zero-rated (code 5). For International Tracked (IT and Airsure AAX) services, delivery to addresses in the EU is charged standard-rate VAT (code 6), whereas delivery to non-EU European countries (such as Switzerland) and to other locations worldwide is zero-rated (code 5).

Parcelforce Worldwide is the division of Royal Mail that handles large parcels not exceeding 1.5m long and 30kg in weight to be delivered within the UK and worldwide. The Parcelforce services all include VAT at the standard rate (code 9), except the global**value** service (PS) to the Channel Islands which is zero-rated (code 8).

The datastring

The datastring is the four-part numerical code on the bottom line of printing on Post & Go stamps from NCR kiosks. The datastring on the stamps in Figure 1 identifies the post office (008113 Cambridge City), the kiosk (71), the session number (079565) and the number of each stamp produced in that session (13 or 14). The form of the datastring on Open Value stamps is the same as printed on Non-Value Indicated (NVI) stamps from NCR kiosks. Lists of post office branch codes, the first six numbers of the datastring, are available on the MBPC website or on Stuart Leigh's Post & Go website (<http://postandgochecklist.yolasite.com>). The latter site also lists the number of NCR kiosks at each post office site. The kiosks can be identified from the pair of numbers on the Post & Go stamp or from the receipt obtained on paying for the stamp; they are numbered from 67 upwards. Cambridge City post office has five NCR kiosks numbered 67, 68, 69, 70 and 71. The other numbers in the datastring give the session number (the number of times the NCR kiosk has been used since it was installed) and the number of the stamp printed in that session (numbered from 01 upwards).

Changes to service indicators and Post & Go designs

All but one of the stamps used to illustrate the 45 different service indicators available on Open Value Post & Go stamps from NCR kiosks in Figure 2 are Machin head stamps. Most of the images are of stamps obtained soon after the availability of the services on NCR Post & Go kiosks. However, stamps for the Parcelforce global**express** service were apparently not available from 28 February 2014 when stamps for

the other Parcelforce services became available. The illustrated stamp with the GX service code is a Hibernating Animals pictorial stamp, depicting a brown long-eared bat hibernating, first issued on 14 November 2016. It is currently not clear when stamps for the Parcelforce global**express** service first became available on NCR kiosks. Open Value inscriptions may be expected on all Post & Go stamp designs, although they will be considerably rarer on the Birds of Britain, Farm Animals and Freshwater Life series of stamps. These stamps were issued in 2010-2014 before the introduction of NCR kiosks, and were intended for use in Wincor Nixdorf Post & Go kiosks, which were unable to produce Open Value stamps. Relatively few rolls of stamps of these series were used in NCR kiosks in a small number of post offices.

Open Value stamps with the AAX and A ISF service indicators were available for a period of only 4 weeks, from the introduction of NCR kiosks on 28 February 2014 to 29 March 2014 before changes in the postal rates. On 31 March 2014, the Airsure and International Signed For services were renamed International Tracked and International Signed, respectively, and the International Tracked and Signed service was introduced. The AAX and A ISF service indicators are known only on Machin head stamps.

One year later, on 30 March 2015, Royal Mail introduced a new size class of Large Letter for international mail, resulting in new service indicators on Open Value stamps from NCR kiosks. The 'Lg.Letter' inscription was added to the International Standard (A), International Tracked & Signed (ITS), International Tracked (IT) and International Signed (IS) service indicators (see Table 1 and Figure 2).

The next major change in Open Value stamps from NCR kiosks occurred in autumn 2016 when new larger self-adhesive labels, similar to Horizon labels, were introduced to help with increased mechanisation of Royal Mail services.

These labels were placed in the third, previously unused, printer port of the NCR kiosks and were printed with machine-readable two-dimensional barcodes for the following Royal Mail services: parcels (2SP, 2MP, 1SP, 1MP and signed for), UK and International special services (SD1, SD9, ITS, IT and IS), and 2nd-class, 1st-class and Airmail

Open Value Post & Go stamps from Post Office kiosks

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Service Indicator	Service	VAT code	Start-date	End-date
2L	UK Standard 2nd Class Letter	E4, E5	28.02.14	
2LG	UK Standard 2nd Class Large Letter	F4, F5	28.02.14	
2SP	UK Standard 2nd Class Small Parcel	G4, G5	28.02.14	~10.16
2MP	UK Standard 2nd Class Medium Parcel	G4, G5	28.02.14	~10.16
2L signed for	UK Confirmed 2nd Class Letter Signed For	E4, E5	28.02.14	
2LG signed for	UK Confirmed 2nd Class Large Letter Signed For	F4, F5	28.02.14	~10.16
2SP signed for	UK Confirmed 2nd Class Small Parcel Signed For	G4, G5	28.02.14	~10.16
2MP signed for	UK Confirmed 2nd Class Medium Parcel Signed For	G4, G5	28.02.14	~10.16
1L	UK Standard 1st Class Letter	B4, B5	28.02.14	
1LG	UK Standard 1st Class Large Letter	C4, C5	28.02.14	
1SP	UK Standard 1st Class Small Parcel	D4, D5	28.02.14	~10.16
1MP	UK Standard 1st Class Medium Parcel	D4, D5	28.02.14	~10.16
1L signed for	UK Confirmed 1st Class Letter Signed For	B4, B5	28.02.14	
1LG signed for	UK Confirmed 1st Class Large Letter Signed For	C4, C5	28.02.14	~10.16
1SP signed for	UK Confirmed 1st Class Small Parcel Signed For	D4, D5	28.02.14	~10.16
1MP signed for	UK Confirmed 1st Class Medium parcel Signed For	D4, D5	28.02.14	~10.16
SD1	UK Guaranteed Special Delivery by 1pm	Y4, Y5	28.02.14	~10.16
SD1 Sat G'tee	UK Guaranteed Special Delivery by 1pm Saturday Guarantee	Y5, Y6	28.02.14	~10.16
SD9	UK Guaranteed Special Delivery by 9am	Y5, Y6	28.02.14	~10.16
SD9 Sat G'tee	UK Guaranteed Special Delivery by 9am Saturday Guarantee	Y5, Y6	28.02.14	~10.16
AAX Letter	Airsure Letter	R5, R6	28.02.14	29.03.14
AAX Sml.Parcl	Airsure Small Parcel	R5, R6	28.02.14	29.03.14
A ISF Letter	International Signed For Letter	H4, H5	28.02.14	29.03.14
A ISF Sml.Parcl	International Signed For Small Parcel	H4, H5	28.02.14	29.03.14
A Letter	International Standard Letter	H4, H5	28.02.14	
A Lg.Letter	International Standard Large Letter	H4, H5	30.03.15	
A Sml.Parcl	International Standard Small Parcel	H4, H5	28.02.14	~10.16
ITS Letter	International Tracked & Signed Letter	H4, H5	31.03.14	~10.16
ITS Lg.Letter	International Tracked & Signed Large Letter	H4, H5	30.03.15	~10.16
ITS Sml.Parcl	International Tracked & Signed Small Parcel	H4, H5	31.03.14	~10.16
IT letter	International Tracked Letter	R5, R6	31.03.14	~10.16
IT Lg.Letter	International Tracked Large Letter	R5, R6	30.03.15	~10.16
IT Sml.Parcl	International Tracked Small Parcel	R5, R6	31.03.14	~10.16
IS Letter	International Signed Letter	H4, H5	31.03.14	~10.16
IS Lg.Letter	International Signed Large Letter	H4, H5	30.03.15	~10.16
IS Sml.Parcl	International Signed Small Parcel	H4, H5	31.03.14	~10.16
PS	Parcelforce globalvalue	78, 79	28.02.14	
GP	Parcelforce globalpriority	79	28.02.14	
GX	Parcelforce globalexpress	79	?	
IE	Parcelforce irelandexpress	79	28.02.14	
48	Parcelforce express48	79	28.02.14	
24	Parcelforce express24	79	28.02.14	
AM	Parcelforce expressAM	79	28.02.14	
10	Parcelforce express10	79	28.02.14	
9	Parcelforce express9	79	28.02.14	

Table 1

Details of
Open Value
stamps from
NCR kiosks

Open Value Post & Go stamps from Post Office kiosks

...continued

services for letters weighing more than 100g. These changes started in late September 2016 and the roll-out was reported to have been complete by the end of October 2016, although there were delays in implementation in some post offices. This resulted in a considerable decrease in the number of Royal Mail services for which Open Value stamps were available. Following the introduction of the 2D-barcoded labels, the only Royal Mail services for which Open Value stamps were available, and then only for letters less than 100g, were the 1st and 2nd-class Standard Letter (1L and 2L), 1st- and 2nd-class Confirmed Letter (1L signed for and 2L signed for), 1st- and 2nd-class Standard Large Letter (1LG and 2LG), and International Standard Letter and Large Letter (A Letter and A Lg.Letter) services.

Post & Go stamps for Parcelforce services were unaffected by the introduction of the larger Horizon-like labels. All Parcelforce services required large specific bar-coded labels to be attached to the parcels and scanned by the NCR Post & Go kiosk before the Open Value stamps were printed, and this procedure was unchanged following the introduction of the 2D-barcoded labels. All Post & Go stamp issues loaded in the first-class printer port of NCR kiosks would be

available for Open Value stamps for Parcelforce services. However, Open Value stamps for Parcelforce services are rarely seen; they constitute a very small proportion of the mail franked at NCR kiosks and many of the parcels franked are sent overseas.

The change to the use of 2D-barcoded labels, rather than stamps, for a majority of Royal Mail services in autumn 2016 restricted the availability of Open Value stamps on various Post & Go issues. Open Value stamps for Royal Mail services from April 2014 to autumn 2016 should be available for all Post & Go issues from Symbolic Flowers (FDI 17 September 2014) to Ladybirds (FDI 14 September 2016). Following the change, only a restricted set of eight Open Value stamps for Royal Mail services were available on Post & Go issues from Hibernating Animals (FDI 14 November 2016) to Mail by Bike (FDI 12 September 2018), plus any 2018- or 2019-dated Machin head or Winter Greenery Post & Go stamps. Open Value stamps for all Parcelforce services continue to be available on all Post & Go designs loaded in the NCR kiosks.

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M B P C

Post & Go swap errors - update from December & February Journals

1st-class printed on 2nd-class stock

1st Class
up to 100g

Date	Issue	Post Office / kiosk location	FAD	Kiosk	Earliest Date
20.02.13	Machin MA12	Leeds	009323	69	
20.11.13	Machin MA13	Old Street, London	028003	67, 69	29.08.17
29.09.17	Machin CL17S	Plymouth	019539	68	
		Exeter WHS	619519	69	17.01.20
13.11.14	Winter Greenery MA14	Great Portland Street, London	006007	68	27.03.17
16.11.15	Winter Fur & Feathers	Battersea, London (ZCO Ltd)	019001	68	27.01.16
14.11.16	Hibernating Animals	Shepherds Bush	020006	68	
23.01.18	Game of Thrones	Chesterfield WHS	017340	67	31.12.19

2nd-class printed on 1st-class stock

2nd Class
up to 100g

18.06.16	Machin MA16	Halifax WHS	349320	67	
21.05.12	Union Flag MAIL	Wokingham	008939	67	20.12.17
15.02.17	Mail by Rail	Old Street, London	028003	67, 68	22.09.17