

Private Panellist Guide

Posting stamped test items at Royal Mail postboxes

Thank you for your participation in our studies as a receiving and posting panellist.

The aim of the studies is to measure Royal Mail's 'Quality of Service' - that is, the proportion of mail items Royal Mail delivers on time. The results of the studies allow Royal Mail to improve the service they provide to homes, businesses and communities across the UK.

We measure Royal Mail's Quality of Service using test items - anonymous items of mail posted and received by panellists like you. As a panellist, it's your job to post and receive test items and report to us when you have done so, so that we can calculate the time it takes for Royal Mail to deliver your items.

[This guide explains step by step how to post stamped test items at Royal Mail postboxes.](#)

We recommend that you download this PDF to your desktop for easy access.

General information

- Test items can be letters and parcels of different sizes.
All test items will have a postage stamp or postage label already applied by us.
- You will receive a **sender's pack** once per week. This will contain the test items you need to post, along with a **posting plan** telling you when you need to post them.
For more information, watch our video '[Receiving your posting pack](#)' or consult our manual.
- You can post test items at any postbox in your **postcode area**. You can identify which postcode area a postbox is in by checking the **first one or two letters** of the **postbox ID number** shown on the timeplate, which are highlighted in yellow in the example below:

Last Collection Time

Monday to Friday

7.00pm

A later collection is made at **7.30pm**
from the Postbox at
Mount Pleasant Mail Centre,
Rosebery Avenue.

Saturday

12.45pm

Other Collections

Additional collections may be made throughout the day until
the last time shown.

 **08457 740740**
 **www.royalmail.com**
 **0845 6000606**


Royal Mail

Postbox number **EC1 129**

These letters should match the first one or two letters of your home postcode.

- Large parcels can be posted at a Royal Mail parcel postbox. Instructions for doing this are provided later on in this manual.
- It is very important that you use the Mailagents app to report posting your test items **at the postbox as you post your test items**. Make sure that the location services (GPS) function is activated on your mobile device at the moment you post your test items - if you are unsure how to do this, please consult our manual on the topic.
- Please remember to **never** disclose to Royal Mail employees that you are participating in the study.
- In addition, feel free to watch our video on this topic.
Simply click on the following link:
['Posting stamped test items at Royal Mail postboxes'](#)


The following steps explain the process and your tasks.



Please note: You have already received your sender's pack!
If you want to learn more about this, please have a look at the manual or our video ['Receiving your posting pack'](#).

1.

Check the **posting plan** to see which test items need to be posted today:

POSTING PLAN	
PARTICIPANT ID 11111	First name, Last name
Project	Stamped Mail
Posting Period	03/10/2022 - 07/10/2022
Receipt of posting package	<p>Please confirm receipt of the test package with the delivery date and package number (package ID) on the same day in the Mailagents App.</p> <p>Package ID: 3405 Receipt date:</p> 
Test bundles	Please confirm the posting of the test letters on the day of posting by stating the posting date, time and posting address through the Mailagents App . Different posting addresses can also be selected interactively there.
Problems? Comments?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We are at your disposal at any time. Simply send us an e-mail to: support@mailagents.uk

PLAN			ACTUAL (YOUR NOTES)		
Bundle ID	Posting date	Number of test items	Posting type (Post Office / Postbox)	Posting date	Posting time
111426	Monday 09/03/2019	4			:
111427	Tuesday 10/03/2019	2			:
111428	Wednesday 11/03/2019	3			:
111429	Thursday 12/03/2019	1			:
111426	Friday 13/03/2019	5			:
111427	Saturday 14/03/2019	2			:

* Please note that this is an example and variations are possible.

2.

Before you insert the test items, you need to remove the elastic band or paperclip, if there is one, and scan the QR code for these items. This can be found on the slip contained with the test item bundle, as shown below:



The QR code represents **all** of the test items in the bundle. A bundle consists of up to **3 items**. You should post all of the items in the bundle together at the same time.

3.

Ensure location services are turned on in the app.

4.

Post the items into any postbox in your postcode area on the date listed in your posting plan.

Please note: Although some Collect+ branches are now accepting some Royal Mail items, they are not currently set up to accept Stamped mail items, including the test items you post on the survey.



Please do not send any test items at Collect+ branches, as they will not be accepted there and you will not be able to enter the branch as the posting location you used on the Mailagents app.

Instead, please post your test items at a postbox, Post Office or Royal Mail Delivery Office.

Please note: Strictly follow your posting plan. Test items need to be posted **before the last collection time** on each day from Monday to Saturday. The last collection time will be displayed on the timeplate of the postbox, as shown in the example on page 2.



If you cannot post an item according to the posting plan for any reason, such as not receiving your sender's pack on time, please post the item on **the next available day** on which you are able to post, as soon as possible after the scheduled date.

Alternatively, you can post the item on the **evening before** the scheduled date - be sure to do this **well after the last collection time**, so that the item is collected on the scheduled posting date.

If this is not possible either, it is permissible to post the item on the scheduled date after the last collection time.

In all cases, take extra care to accurately record the date and time when you actually posted the item.

If you use a **parcel postbox** to post large parcels, the parcels need to be **removed from the mail bag** before being posted into the parcel postbox loose.

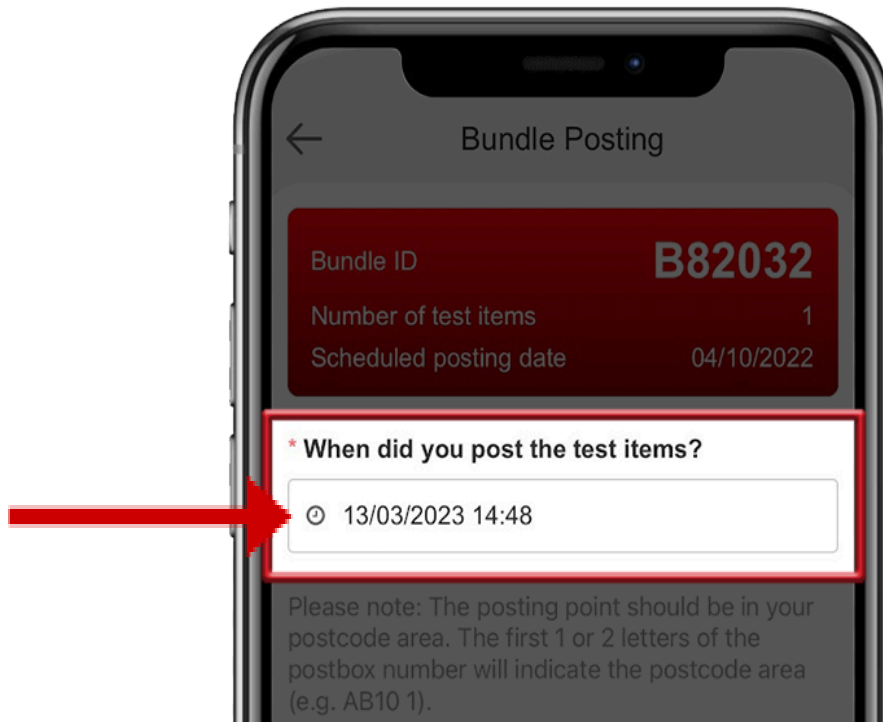
Do not insert the mail bag or the Sales Order Summary into the postbox. Instead, you can dispose of the Sales Order Summary and post the mail bag back to us in a parcel addressed to 'Freepost SPECTOS'. The postage costs of this Freepost parcel will be paid by us, so you don't need to add any stamps or postage labels to this parcel.



Please note: Never forget to remove the elastic band or paperclip and slip with the QR code on before posting!

5.

In the app, enter the **date** and **time** of posting:



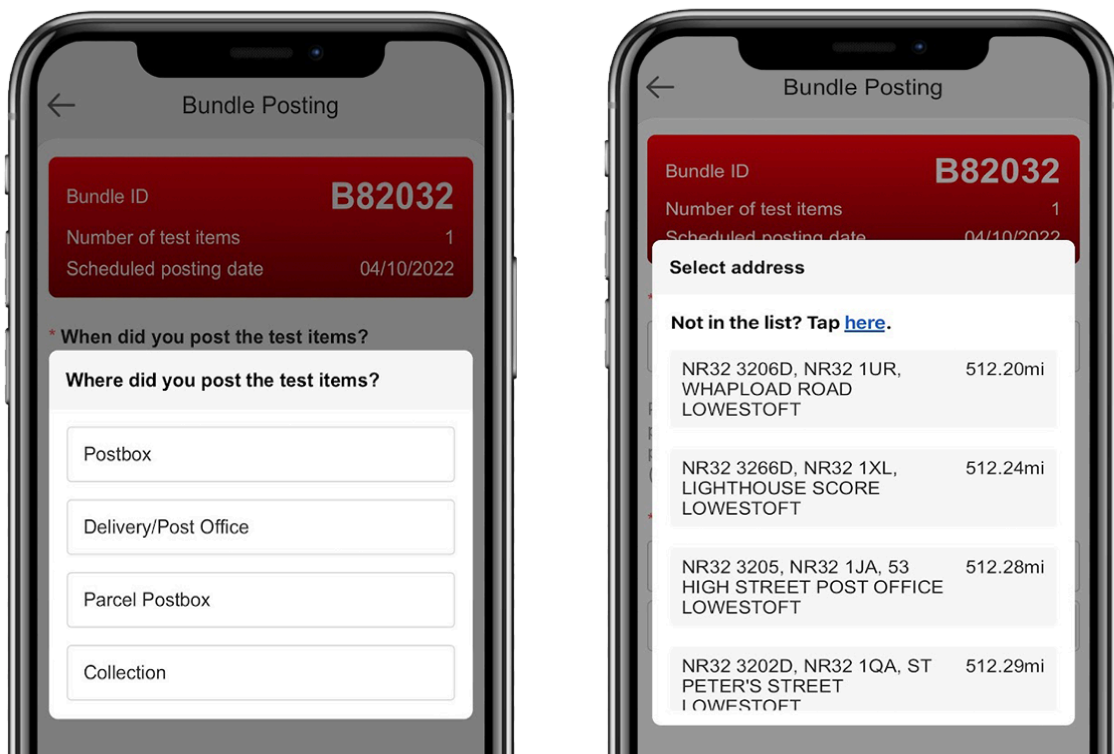
* Please note that image variations are possible due to regular app updates.



Please note: Be sure to record the time of posting accurately **to the nearest minute** - do **not** round it to the nearest 5 or 10 minutes. Rounding the posting time even by just 1 or 2 minutes can be enough to cause the item to be considered to have met the last collection when it did not, or vice versa!

6.

Select the posting method used and the correct posting location you used from the locations shown to you:



* Please note that image variations are possible due to regular app updates.



Please note: Be careful to record the correct postbox you used by checking the **postbox ID number** at the bottom of the timeplate, as shown in the example on page 2.

Postboxes without a Royal Mail timeplate are **not** Royal Mail postboxes!

Please note: There are many locations where two or more postboxes are located directly next to each other, or where a postbox is located directly outside, or even inside, a Post Office or a Royal Mail Delivery Office. Where two or more postboxes are directly next to each other, each slot is considered to be a **separate postbox** and will have its own unique ID number.



Royal Mail postboxes will have a Royal Mail timeplate displaying a postbox ID number, whilst Post Offices and Delivery Offices will not.

In these scenarios, please **take extra care** to record the correct posting location you used. Please be especially careful not to record items as posted at a Post Office/Delivery Office if you used the postbox outside, or vice versa. Please refer to the **Annex** of this manual for examples of various situations to watch out for. If you are unsure which posting location to record, please get in touch with us.



Please note: If you are having trouble finding the postbox you are near in the app, please type the start of the postbox ID into the search function and click the search button - this looks like a magnifying glass.

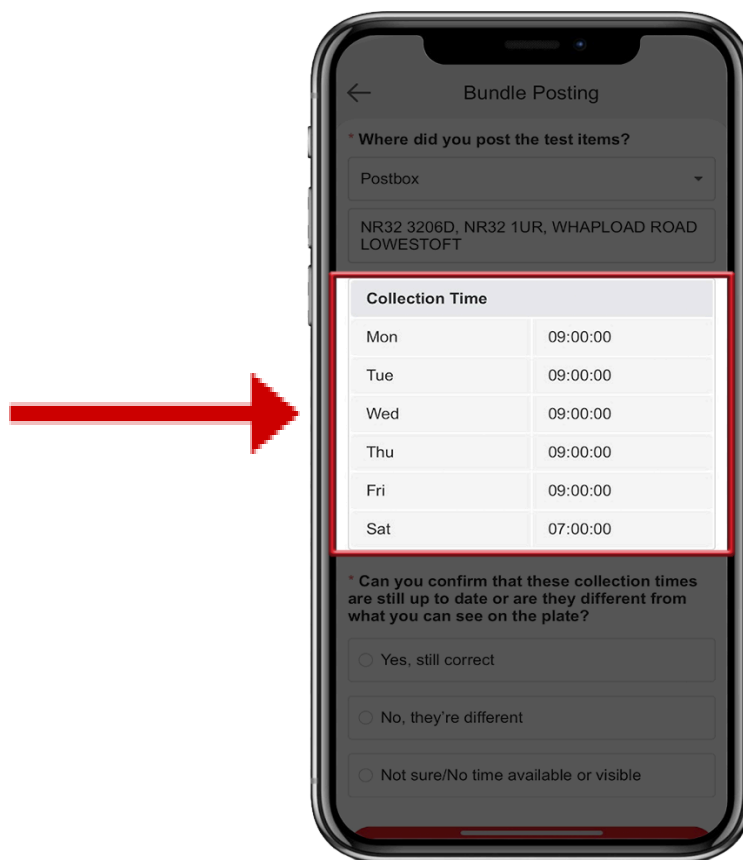
Please post in your home postcode area. If your postcode is AB1 1AA for example, you can post anywhere in the AB postcode area.

* Where did you post the bundle?

Postbox

Enter postcode or postbox ID

7. Confirm the **last collection time** of the posting location:



Bundle Posting

* Where did you post the test items?

Postbox

NR32 3206D, NR32 1UR, WHAPLOAD ROAD
LOWESTOFT

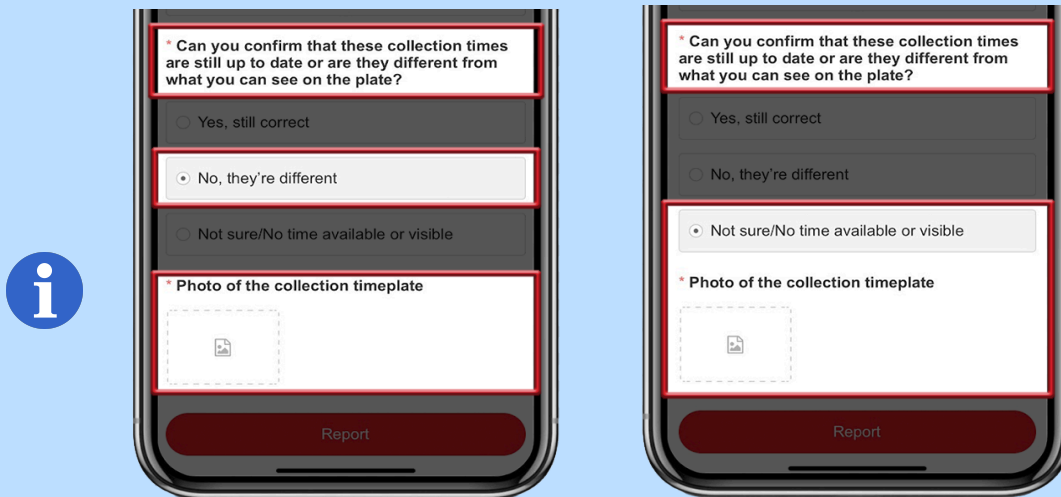
Collection Time	
Mon	09:00:00
Tue	09:00:00
Wed	09:00:00
Thu	09:00:00
Fri	09:00:00
Sat	07:00:00

* Can you confirm that these collection times are still up to date or are they different from what you can see on the plate?

☐ Yes, still correct
☐ No, they're different
☐ Not sure/No time available or visible

* Please note that image variations are possible due to regular app updates.

Please note: If the **last collection time** shown in the app is **different** from what you can see on the timeplate, you are **not sure about the last collection time or no time is available or visible**, take a photo of the timeplate and upload it:



* Please note that image variations are possible due to regular app updates.

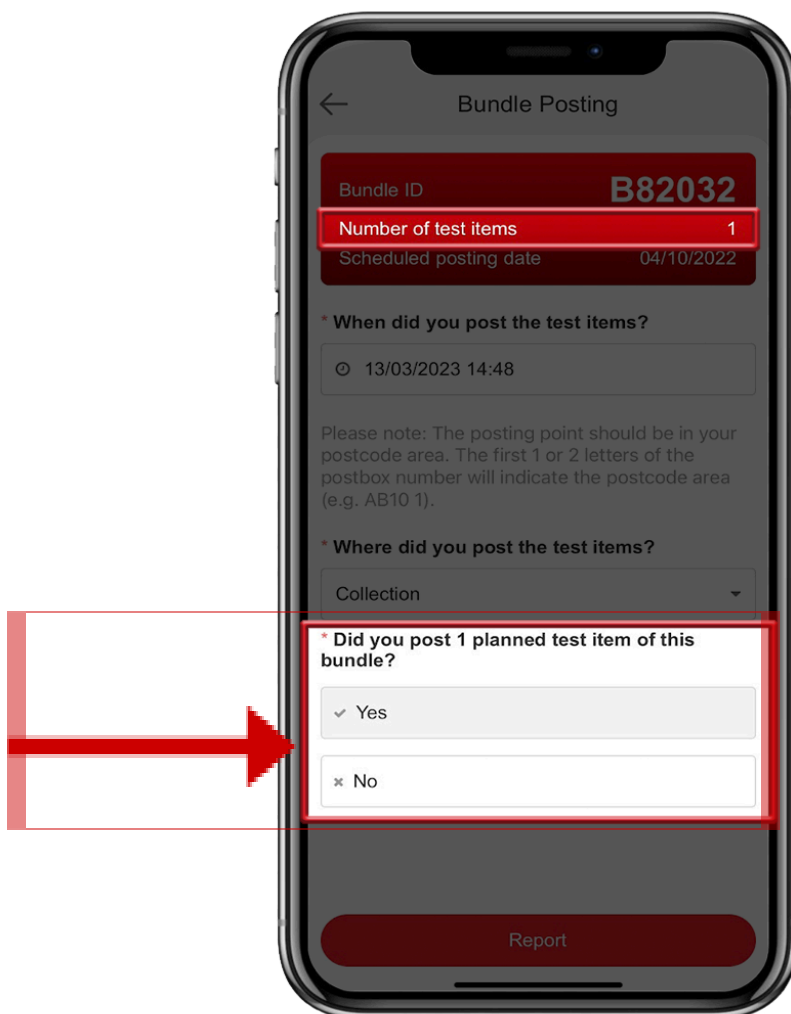
Please make sure that the photo includes the **whole** of the timeplate, including both the Monday-Friday and Saturday last collection times and the postbox ID number. If the postbox ID number is not visible, please include some of the surroundings of the postbox in the photo, as this will help us to identify the postbox.

8.

Also, if you notice any postbox defects, such as missing or damaged timeplates, please take a photo and upload it to the app. Please remember to follow the guidelines outlined in step 7 above when taking the photo.

9.

Compare the number of test items due to be posted with the number of test items you have actually posted. If there is a difference, please note it:



Bundle Posting

Bundle ID **B82032**

Number of test items **1**

Scheduled posting date 04/10/2022

* When did you post the test items?

🕒 13/03/2023 14:48

Please note: The posting point should be in your postcode area. The first 1 or 2 letters of the postbox number will indicate the postcode area (e.g. AB10 1).

* Where did you post the test items?

Collection ▾

* Did you post 1 planned test item of this bundle?

✓ Yes

✗ No

Report

* Please note that image variations are possible due to regular app updates.

Thank you for helping to improve the service Royal Mail provides to homes, businesses and communities!

Annex - Multiple Posting Locations

There are many locations where two or more posting locations are situated directly next to one another. Some of these may be different types of posting locations, such as a postbox located directly outside a Post Office.

When posting at these locations, **take extra care** to note and accurately record the correct posting location you used, and to not confuse different posting locations. Below are some situations to watch out for:

Double aperture postboxes

These consist of two postboxes combined into a single unit as shown below:



Each of the two slots is a separate postbox with its own timeplate, and will have its own ID number on its timeplate - these are often very similar (e.g. EC1A 100 and EC1A 1001), so take care not to confuse them. Make a note of which slot you posted the bundle into and the ID number displayed on the timeplate below that slot.

Posting suites

These typically consist of multiple slots built into a wall. They are often located outside Post Offices or Royal Mail sites:



These work in the same way as double aperture postboxes - each slot has its own postbox ID number, and you will need to carefully note which slot you used and the ID number displayed for it.

Postboxes located outside Post Offices or Delivery Offices

It is common for one or more postboxes to be located directly outside a Post Office or Royal Mail Delivery Office, as shown in the example below, or even occasionally inside a Post Office:



Notice that the postbox has a Royal Mail timeplate displayed. There will be no such timeplate displayed in the Post Office. The postbox will have a unique ID number displayed on the timeplate, but there will be no similar unique ID number displayed in the Post Office.

You should only record a bundle as posted at the Post Office if you have gone **inside the building** and **handed the bundle over at the counter or posted it using a self-service machine**. If you used the postbox outside, or a postbox with a Royal Mail timeplate inside the building, you should record the item as posted at the postbox, making a note of the ID number displayed on the timeplate.

Posting slots within Post Offices

At some Post Offices, there are slots into which you can insert prepaid letters or parcels, which look similar to this:



Notice that these slots do not have a Royal Mail timeplate. These posting facilities are operated by the Post Office, and mail posted into them will be processed by the Post Office staff and collected by Royal Mail as part of the Post Office collection. **If you post a bundle at one of these locations, this is a Post Office posting. Record the bundle as posted at the Post Office.**