

Branch Closure Impact Assessment

Closing branch:
University Road
28 University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NH

Closure date:
24/06/2021

Information correct as at:
February 2021



The world of banking is changing and so are we

Bank of Ireland customers in Northern Ireland have been steadily moving to digital banking over the past 10 years. The pace of this change has increased recently. Since 2017, for example, digital banking has increased by 50% while visits to our branches have sharply declined. Increasingly, our customers are using Post Office services with 52% of over-the-counter transactions now made in Post Office branches.

We have invested in technology that enables customers to bank digitally - including launching a new banking app and updating our online banking. Alongside this we have also introduced digital ways to pay with Google Pay and Apple Pay. Today, almost 80% of our customers are using online as their preferred channel to open a personal account.

As we continue to adapt, we must change how we provide banking services. Therefore, after careful consideration, we have made the difficult decision to close University Road branch on 24 June 2021. However, in line with regulatory guidance, we will consider the impact on customers of the closure date should lockdown measures be in place at that time.

How we made the decision to close this branch

When we close a branch, we complete a detailed analysis which includes:

- ▶ How customers are choosing to bank with us.
- ▶ How often customers use the branch and how that is changing.
- ▶ The other ways for customers to do their everyday banking including the distance to alternative banking services.
- ▶ Access to cash including the impact on those who may need additional support.
- ▶ Availability and frequency of public transport.
- ▶ Location of remaining branches in Northern Ireland.

What will this mean for our customers?

We will invest in a smaller, modernised network of 13 branches with improved online services for customers. In addition, our customers can bank at over 500 Post Office branches across Northern Ireland, see page 7 for more information.

Following the closure, you can continue to use any Bank of Ireland branch in Northern Ireland for your everyday banking. You can also use your local Post Office and withdraw cash at the nearest free-to-use cash machine (see page 6 to find out where they are located). However, accounts held at University Road branch will now be administered from Belfast City Branch. Key account details such as your sort code and account number will not change and you can continue to use your existing debit card and cheque book.

We are committed to supporting you through this change and the other ways you can continue to do your banking with us.

This document outlines the reasons for our decision and the alternative services available. It also sets out the steps we have taken to minimise the impact of our decision to close University Road branch on our customers.

We are writing to members of the local community – including MPs, MLAs and Councillors, as well as Northern Ireland business groups and charities – and will provide further information on the changes on request. We will also include their feedback in updates of this document.

We are also communicating with a wide range of stakeholders in relation to this change, including local representatives, business organisations, and advocacy groups.

Vulnerable customers

Bank of Ireland UK recognise that the closure of this branch impacts customers who find themselves in a vulnerable position, particularly during this period of COVID-19 restrictions. We are committed to supporting you, whatever your circumstances, so you can continue to access the banking services that you need – whether through Bank of Ireland UK or elsewhere. We will ensure that you receive information in a way which is appropriate to your needs, for example by providing larger print letters and branch closure information. If you are experiencing difficulties in accessing the branch, we can provide support to answer any queries that you may have. This support will also extend to us calling you if we believe that we can provide you with further help by phone. Our branch staff will also continue to be available to help and support you during the branch closure period.

Access to Banking Standard

We are signatories of the Access to Banking Standard, with the Lending Standards Board. The Standard, an agreement between the Government and the banking sector, sets out steps we should take to measure the impact of our decision to close a branch on our customers, how we should communicate this decision to them and the steps we should take to help them continue to bank with us.

As part of the Access to Banking Standard, we will send this Impact Assessment to customers of branches that are closing when we announce our decision to close. A copy of this document is also available at the branch that is closing or to download from our website.

We will publish an updated version on our website, which includes any communication and feedback from stakeholders, before the branch closes.

How to contact us

If you have any feedback or would like to know what additional steps you can take to continue banking with us, please call us on **03457 365 555** (lines are open Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm and Saturday 9am - 2pm).

More information is available on our website, bankofirelanduk.com/service-changes

University Road branch information

Monday - Friday 10am – 4pm (Lunchtime closing 12.30pm -1.30pm)

University Road branch facilities:



Inside
Cash Machine

YES



Outside
Cash Machine

YES

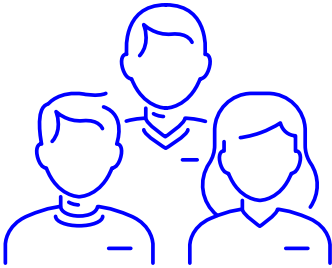


Counter
Service

YES

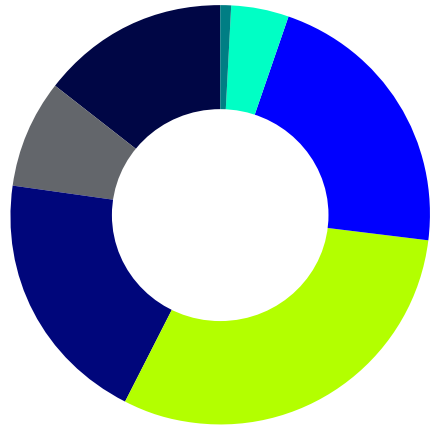
Fully accessible for customers

University Road customer profile



90% Personal customers

10% Business customers



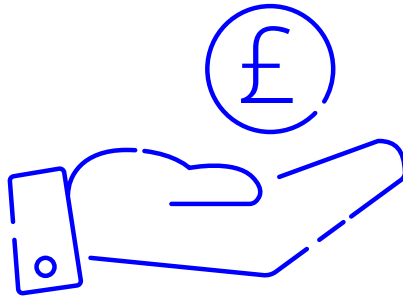
Age of personal customers using University Road branch

< 18	1%	45-54	22%
18-24	5%	55-64	9%
25-34	24%	> 65	6%
35-44	34%		



How University Road customers are banking with us

The way that customers are banking at University Road branch has changed. The number of over-the-counter transactions has reduced by 64% in the past 4 years and the number of visits to the branch have fallen. 63% of customers at the branch are now digitally active, carrying out their everyday banking online or using the app.



64%

The reduction in the number of over-the-counter transactions in the last 4 years.



63%

of our customers are digitally active

Other Bank of Ireland branches

All Bank of Ireland branches listed below provide a full branch banking service and are fully accessible. They are within reach of public transport and public car parking. These branches are open Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm (lunchtime closing 12.30pm - 1.30pm).

Bank of Ireland
1 Donegall Square South
Belfast
BT1 5LR
1.2 miles

Bank of Ireland
202 Andersonstown Road
Belfast
BT11 9EB
3.6 miles

Bank of Ireland
275/279 Antrim Road
Glengormley
BT36 7QN
6.6 miles

Nearest Post Office

Botanic Gardens
95 University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NG
0.3 miles
(walking – 5 mins)

Customers with a debit card can make immediate cash deposits and card withdrawals up to their cash machine limit, and make balance enquiries. Personal and business customers can also deposit cash and cheques using a paying-in slip at any Post Office branch (the cash deposit limit for personal customer is £2,000, limits also apply to business customers). Deposits made at the Post Office using a paying-in-slip will take at least one additional day to credit to your account. We are planning to enhance services for business customers with the Post Office later this year.

Other local banks

AIB
35 University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NH
0.1 miles

Ulster Bank
91-93 University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NG
0.2 miles

Danske Bank
49-51 University Road
Belfast
BT7 1ND
0.3 miles

Nearest free-to-use cash machines

AIB
35 University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NH
0.1 miles

Ulster Bank
91-93 University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NG
0.2 miles

Distances are based on postcode via AA Road Planner from closing branch to alternative service by road.

Broadband available close to this branch*

	Availability	Highest available download speed	Highest available upload speed
Standard	✓	16mbp/s	1mbp/s
Superfast	✓**	80mbp/s	20mbp/s
Ultrafast	✓**	500mbp/s	35mbp/s

* www.checker.ofcom.org.uk/broadband-coverage

** Broadband packages in this category are available to some, but not all addresses in this postcode

Other ways for customers to do their everyday banking

We want to make staying in control of your everyday banking as easy and convenient as possible. Over the years, we've introduced many ways you can bank without having to come into a branch.



The Post Office

Everyday banking available at Post Office branches:

- ▶ Cash withdrawals using your debit card
- ▶ Cash deposits
- ▶ Cheque deposits
- ▶ Account balance enquiry.



Bank of Ireland banking app

Carry out a wide range of banking activities, and manage your accounts with our banking app.



Online banking

Do your banking online, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Bank of Ireland online banking puts you in control.



Telephone banking

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can hear your balance, check transactions, pay bills and transfer money. Call 03457 365 555.



LINK cash machines

Withdraw cash free of charge at any cash machine displaying the LINK sign. You can check your balance, print off a mini statement and request a receipt too.

More information at bankofirelanduk.com/waystobank

Definition of key terms

“Branch facilities” - Breakdown of services available within the branch.

“Counter service” - Banking completed over the counter with a cashier – usually deposits of cash or cheques, cash withdrawals, or receiving change.

“Customer profile” - Type of customers of the branch; business or personal.

“Digitally active” - Customers who use our 365 services, online, on the banking app or on the phone.

“Everyday banking” - Withdrawing cash, paying bills, transferring money to other accounts, checking account balances, lodging cash and cheques.

“Fully accessible” - Refers to access to branches and services such as, wide doors, lowered counters, ramp access, hearing loops.

“Lending Standards Board” - The Lending Standards Board (LSB) is an organisation whose mission it is to drive fair customer outcomes within financial services through independent oversight.

“Nearest” - Closest services available, within 1 mile.

“Over-the-counter Transaction” - Refers to withdrawals and lodgements etc made in the branch.

“Transactions” - Refers to payments in to and out of your account, such as lodging or 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.

We can provide this document in Braille, in large print and on CD or audio tape.

Please ask any member of staff for details.

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