Written Answer

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health Committee

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of progress in securing the future of rural post offices; and if he will make a statement.

Margot James Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy)

The Government understands the important role post offices play in communities across the country, especially in the more remote, rural areas. This is why in our manifesto we committed to secure the future of 3,000 rural post offices.

Thanks to Government investment the UK's network of 11,600 branches is at its most stable in decades, with over 98% of the UK population in rural areas within 3 miles of a post office. The investment is offering real improvements to customers, including an extra 200,000 opening hours every week and over 4,200 post offices open on a Sunday.

The Government's recent consultation will help us understand what the public and businesses expect from the Post Office and to understand more fully what subsidy is needed and what it should be used for.

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