

# Postcode to County Specification

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## Data Files

This product consists of 3 comma separated text files with a header record.

Files **CTY-FLL-UK-CSV\_1.csv** and **CTY-FLL-UK-CSV\_2.csv** together represent all current live Postcodes in the UK with their associated County data. Each file contains half of the national file - approximately 870,000 Postcode records – which allows each half to be opened in Excel versions 2007 and later if required. For database applications, both files can be loaded into your choice of database (e.g. Microsoft Access) and appended to create a single national data table of Postcodes.

File **CTY-FLL-UK-CSV-Retired.csv** contains Postcodes which have now been retired from the Postal system and therefore are no longer in circulation. This file is supplied free of charge to provide a comprehensive 'history' of Postcodes and the current county structure. It is recommended to use this data file in conjunction with the 'live' files above to achieve the maximum match rates for accurate analysis.

## Table Structure

Field	Description
<b>Postcode</b>	Full UK Postcode
<b>Traditional_County</b>	Traditional County name
<b>Administrative_County</b>	Administrative County Name
<b>Ceremonial County</b>	Ceremonial County Name
<b>Country</b>	Country Name
<b>Introduced</b>	Date the Postcode was introduced/ created
<b>Retired</b>	Date the Postcode was retired/ terminated

## The Postcode

Formerly a Postcode could contain between 1 and over 300 addresses. This is now restricted to a maximum of 100 although the average number of addresses per Postcode is 15.

There can be only one Locality per Postcode, i.e. all addresses in a Postcode have the same Locality.

Formerly a Postcode could cover addresses on up to 12 Thoroughfares. This is now restricted to 1 although some historic Postcodes may contain more.

## Administrative County

The Administrative County field provides the names of current administrative County areas. Where counties have been replaced by Unitary Authorities, Metropolitan Districts or London Boroughs, the names of those administrative areas have been provided instead.

## Traditional County

The following description is taken from the Association of British Counties (ABC, <http://postal-counties.com/>) from whom these definitions of Traditional Counties is sourced.

“Until 1974 the historic county names formed the “county” element in Post Office recommended postal addresses throughout most of the United Kingdom. However, in 1974, the Post Office changed the “postal counties” in Wales and some parts of England, basing the new ones on some of the new local government areas created in that year. Hence, such entities as “Avon”, “South Humberside” and “Dyfed” began to appear in postal addresses. However, these new “postal counties” were unpopular with many people and the historic county names have continued to be widely used in those areas affected. Furthermore, this policy was only applied to a part of the UK. In Scotland, Northern Ireland and much of England historic counties continued to form the “postal counties”.

Ironically, all but one of the local authorities from which the new 1974 “postal counties” took their names were abolished within 22 years! Names such as “Clwyd”, “North Humberside” and “Cleveland” are now long since historically redundant. Meanwhile, of course, the historic counties in these areas continue to be important cultural and geographical entities. The lesson is clear. In areas such as postal addressing, it is clearly desirable to use a fixed geographical framework: one divorced from the very changing names and areas of administrative units but, instead, rooted in history, tradition, public affection and understanding. The historic counties provide this geographical framework and are the only sensible choice to use as the county element in postal addressing.”

## Ceremonial County

The ceremonial county name.

## Country

The country name (England/ Scotland/ Wales/ Northern Ireland)

## Introduced

Month and year of the most recent occurrence of the postcode’s date of introduction in the form YYYYMM (year and month)

## Retired

If present, the most recent occurrence of the postcode’s date of termination in the form YYYYMM (year and month), otherwise: null indicates a ‘live’ postcode

Postcodes are terminated by Royal Mail for various reasons but most commonly it is due to the demolition/re-development of buildings or to postcode reorganisations.

Terminated postcodes are occasionally re-used by Royal Mail but not usually before an elapsed period of two or three years. In such circumstances, all terminated postcodes and their grid references are retained and a 'retired' date is added which provides a clear indication of a postcode’s status.

Area data assigned to terminated postcodes are updated prior to each release of this data, so the directory contains current information linked to each record.