

Postcode List Specification

Data Files

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

Files **PCL-XXX-EN-CSV_1** and **PCL-XXX-EN-CSV_2** represent all current live Postcodes in England. File **PCL-XXX-EN-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. 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
Postcode	Full UK Postcode (eg UB7 0EB)
Postcode Sector	The Postcode Sector (eg UB7 0)
Postcode District	The Postcode District (eg UB7)
Postcode Area	The Postcode Area (eg UB)
Introduced	Date the Postcode was introduced/ created
Retired	Date the Postcode was retired/ terminated

Full Postcode

The Full Postcode is the Postcode as most people would generally know and love it as written on envelopes for mailing purposes. (e.g. UB7 0EB). There are approximately 1.4 million Full Postcodes covering England.

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.

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

Postcode Sector

A Postcode Sector is everything bar the last two letters of the Postcode (e.g. UB7 0 from UB7 0EB). There are over 9,000 Postcode Sectors covering the UK - Sectors are used for more local and detailed mapping and analysis.

Postcode District

A Postcode District is the first half of the Postcode (e.g. UB7 from UB7 0EB). There are approximately 2,800 Postcode Districts covering the UK - Districts are often used for sales territory and franchise area applications.

Postcode Area

A Postcode Area is the first 1 or 2 letters of the Postcode (e.g. UB from UB7 0EB). There are 124 Postcode Areas covering the UK from AB to ZE. Postcode Areas are ideal for general national mapping and analysis.

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.