

Royal Mail Address Files

This information sheet explains what PAF is and how it works; if you have gone through the official street naming and numbering process, you may experience temporary problems because businesses and other organisations are unable to find your new address on PAF. Read on to find out how to overcome these problems...

1. The street naming and numbering (SNN) schedule

The **street naming and numbering (SNN) schedule** is the document produced by a local authority to make an address official. It is sent to a number of organisations including Royal Mail which adds it to its database(s) (See *Royal Mail address files* below). You have also received a copy of this schedule and we advise you to keep this for future reference as it enables you to prove that your address is now official.

2. Royal Mail postcode files

Once Royal Mail is informed by the local authority of a new address, it will add the address to one of its address files.

The **Postcode Address File (PAF)** is the main address file where all official addresses are stored.

The **Not Yet Built (NYB)** file is used to create addresses for properties which are under construction; this allows Royal Mail to allocate an address whilst ensuring that properties which don't yet have a secure mailbox don't receive any mail.

It is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that they contact Royal Mail to inform them when a property becomes occupied so that Royal Mail can move the details from the NYB file to the Postcode Address File (PAF). However, this can be overlooked, so if the address of your newly built or converted property is not on PAF, this may be why. This can be easily rectified by contacting Royal Mail on: addressdevelopment@royalmail.com or phoning them on 08456 045060.

PAF is used by various bodies such as utility companies and financial services providers to reduce fraud by confirming that an address is official.

However, although Royal Mail will add an address to PAF very promptly, problems arise because the organisations which subscribe to PAF receive only occasional updates. Depending of the type of subscription they've chosen, these updates can be anything from daily to a year. This causes a delay between an address becoming official and an organisation's database reflecting this change. Please see the information in paragraph 3 below showing how you can rectify this.

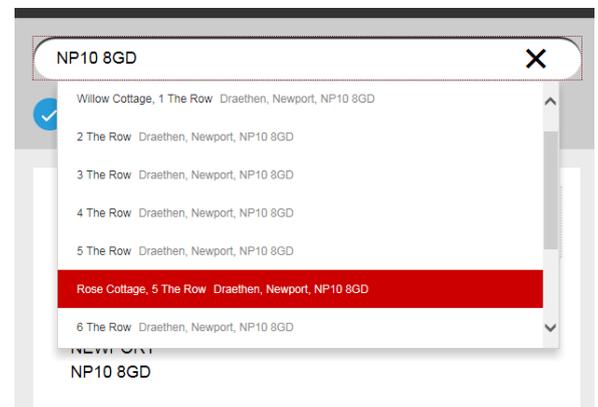
The Alias File

Royal Mail has also has an **Alias** file. The main identifier for a building is its number (if it has one) and this number will *always* take precedence over a name. If your property has a number *and* a name, the name will be added to the Alias file while the number will be on PAF. Royal Mail's Postcode Finder (see below) contains addresses held on PAF **and** names held on the Alias file. Therefore, if you (or a predecessor) have added a name to your numbered property, it will appear twice here.

Please see this example (right) of *No 5 The Row*. The residents have chosen to add *Rose Cottage* to their address; you can, therefore, see that it appears twice on the Postcode Finder – once as *5 The Row*, and again as *Rose Cottage, 5 The Row*.

This is because the address, 5 The Row, is on the Postcode

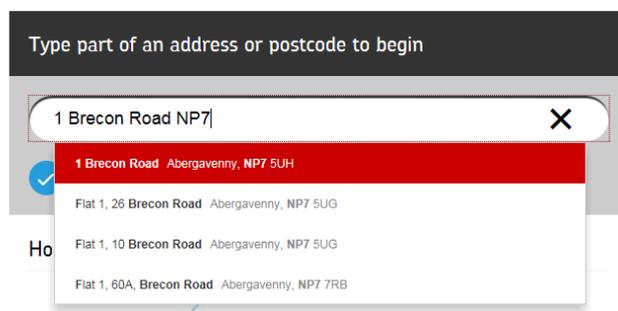
Address File while the name, *Rose Cottage*, is on the Alias File. Both appear here on the Postcode Finder.



3. Using the Postcode Finder and proving that your address is official

Find a postcode or address

The postcode or address finder tool allows you to search for the address details of locations across the UK. Simply start by typing a postcode or address and select the most appropriate result to see the full address.



If an organisation does not yet have your address on their file, you can send them a copy of your SNN schedule which proves that the address is official.

If they feel that this is not sufficient, you can also send them a copy of this document which explains how PAF works and how they can check PAF live by using the Royal Mail's online Postcode Finder. This shows live information from Royal Mail's database and includes up to date information on all official addresses.

Go to: <https://www.royalmail.com/find-a-postcode>

Type in the first line of the address and the postcode; if the address is official, it will appear on the list.