

## *Discrepancies between Local Authority and Royal Mail addresses*

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### ***There can be discrepancies between addresses issued by the local authority and those used by Royal Mail for the delivery of mail.***

Whilst Monmouthshire County Council has the legal power to issue an address, Royal Mail has responsibility for issuing postcodes.

Each organisation has its own way of recording data and individual sets of rules governing how this data is managed; because of this, Royal Mail is not always able to match the local authority address exactly.

Monmouthshire County Council creates addresses according to British Standard BS7666, the national standard for addressing. This form of address **always** includes the name of the road on which the property is located, where the road name is an officially designated one (as opposed to an unofficial, locally used road name).

#### ***Postcodes***

In urban areas, where there are many properties located in close proximity on numbered streets, Royal Mail will issue postcodes relating to the names of the streets. The names of these streets will obviously then be included in the address.

However, in rural areas, there are many isolated properties on stretches of rural roads; rather than allocate a postcode for every road on which properties are located, Royal Mail allocates a postcode for the area.

For example, a single, urban road may have 80 properties, all of which could have an identical postcode.

A single, rural road, on the other hand, may encompass just five properties; its three neighbouring roads may have another nine properties. Rather than allocating four postcodes (one for each road involved) for only 14 properties, Royal Mail will allocate a single, geographical postcode for the area.

Because these postcodes are attached to an area rather than a road or street, Royal Mail does not include the road name in its postal address.

If your local authority address includes an officially designated road name, you can ask Royal Mail to add the road name to your address; however, they can only do this if the owners of other properties on the road are in agreement.

For example, if you live on Maple Lane along with five other properties, and Maple Lane is not included in your postal address, provided that your neighbours are in agreement, Royal Mail will add Maple Lane to your postal address and issue you with a new postcode. This postcode will relate to the road name rather than the geographical area.

Whilst this **may** be advantageous in the long run, in the short to medium term, there are issues you will need to be aware of.

#### ***Postcode Address File (PAF)***

The Postcode Address File (PAF) is Royal Mail's main address file where all official addresses are stored.

Royal Mail makes requested changes to PAF very promptly; however, other external organisations subscribe to PAF (for example, utility companies and financial services providers, as well as other commercial organisations).

These subscribers receive only occasional updates to their data; depending of the type of subscription they've chosen, these updates can range from daily to a year. This causes a delay between your address being officially changed and an organisation's database reflecting this change.

(For more information on PAF, please see our [Royal Mail Postcode Address File information Sheet](#) or ([link to Royal Mail website PAF Code of Practice](#).)

The information will also have to filter down to Ordnance Survey (whose data generally informs Sat Nav companies), Google, and other mapping facilities.

Therefore, the implications of a change of address may include:

-  The need to inform all your contacts that your address has changed;
-  Your postcode not being recognised on databases using Royal Mail's PAF data;
-  Your postcode not being recognised by either Google or other online maps, or sat nav systems;

These issues could take up to a year to resolve.