

# WALK VISIBILITY SERVICE

## Customer User Guide

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**Version**

1.1



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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Document Purpose & Audience**

This document describes the Walk Visibility Service for Royal Mail Customers.

It sets out the design and process for the service along with suggested steps for Customers to make best use of the files and information made available. The intended audience is Software Suppliers, Wholesale Customers and any other sending Customers who would like to utilise information on Delivery Profiles.

## 1.2 Alternating Day Delivery Profiles

Alternating Day Delivery profiles can be modelled as in the following example where Delivery Routes are modelled as being Heavy or Light on particular days:

	Week 1							Week 2						
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Route A	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	N/S	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Light	N/S
Route B	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Light	N/S	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	N/S

Heavy
  Light
  Non-Service

### Light Days:

- Delivery points on a Route on a Light day are only opened by Premium mail, Priority mail, First Class and Parcel deliveries, therefore fewer delivery points are opened.
- Allows for more efficient routes while maintaining service standards.
- Deferrable non-priority mail does not open the Delivery Points on a Route and is therefore not delivered on Light days, except where the Delivery Point has been opened by priority mail and in this case then all deferrable mail would be delivered.

### Heavy Days:

- Delivery points on a Route on a Heavy day are opened by any deferrable mail items that are due to expire before the next 'Heavy' day.
- Delivery points are also opened by Premium mail, Priority mail, First Class and Parcel deliveries.
- Deferrable mail items are Access D+3 Standard, Access D+5 Economy, Retail 2c Sorted/Unsorted and Retail Economy.

## 1.2.1 Non-working days & Bank Holidays

The allocation of delivery profiles will consider all regional and national Bank Holidays and non-working days when calculating the schedule and will re-order the Heavy/Light days to ensure a consistent balance over the weeks concerned.

In the following example for the same Routes, the alternating Heavy and Light days pattern is changed from what it would have been, to a new more balanced split to accommodate the bank holiday Monday:

	Week 1							Week 2						
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Route A	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	N/S	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Light	N/S
Route B	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Light	N/S	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	N/S
	<div>Heavy</div> <div>Light</div> <div>Non-Service</div>													
	Week 1							Week 2						
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Route A	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	N/S	BH	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	N/S
Route B	Light	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Light	N/S	BH	Heavy	Light	Heavy	Light	Light	N/S
	<div>Heavy</div> <div>Light</div> <div>Bank Holiday</div> <div>Non-Service</div>													

## 2 The Walk Visibility Service

The Walk Visibility Service is a new service launched by Royal Mail to provide registered Customers with our planned delivery profiles for every delivery point in the country. The service will provide this Heavy/Light delivery profile information as a set of regularly generated files available for download, indicating the planned delivery profile for each of the ~32 Million Delivery Points across the country for two weeks into the future.

This service allows sending Customers to predict when mail items will be delivered by Delivery Point based on the product and the day that the mail is received into the Royal Mail network (with exceptions as detailed below).

### 2.1 Overview

The Walk Visibility Service is based on providing a set of Forward Calendar files. Each file gives one week of delivery profile information for all Delivery Points across the country.

Every week by Friday 3pm, two of these Forward Calendar files would be made available on the Royal Mail SFTP server for download, giving two weeks of information. Week 1 will be the week starting from Monday. Week 2 will be starting from the Monday after that.

On the following Friday, both files will be replaced. The new Week 1 file will cover the same period as the previous Week 2 file, but will contain variations due to changes and operational updates that have happened since.

### 2.2 Registering For This Service

For Customers that would like to register for this service and access to these files then the first step is to contact our Customer Solutions Team mailbox at [walkvisibility@royalmail.com](mailto:walkvisibility@royalmail.com) with the following information:

**Subject:**

Request to register for Walk Visibility Service

**Email:**

- a. Details of the relevant person in your team for Contact and Support issues – Name, email address and contact number.
- b. The IP address (or range) for the server you will be using to connect to the SFTP site
- c. (Optional) The DNS address of the server, if applicable

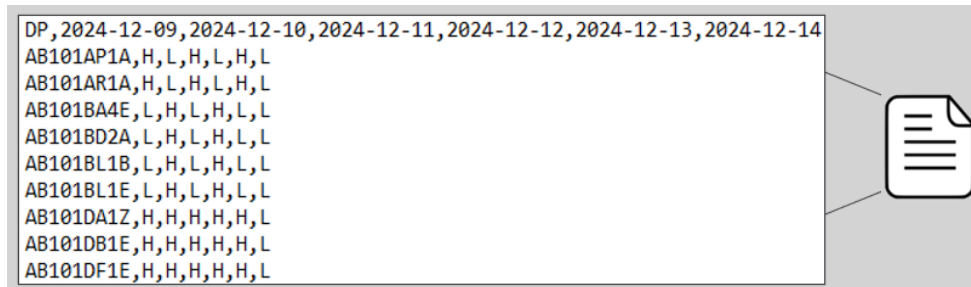
Once this has been received and processed by the team, then you will be provided with access details. You may then log into the SFTP server using any standard software and from the IP address you have specified. Note that attempts to log in using your provided credentials from any other IP address will fail to connect.

## 2.3 Forward Calendar Files

Forward Calendar files are CSV text files that are GZIP compressed and then shared on the SFTP site and updated every Friday at 3pm.

The files themselves are structured with a header containing 'DP' for the Delivery Point column, and then dates for each day of that week from the starting Monday. There are then separate rows for each Delivery Point with 6-days of delivery profile information per row. Each file represents 1 week.

Example:



```
DP,2024-12-09,2024-12-10,2024-12-11,2024-12-12,2024-12-13,2024-12-14
AB101AP1A,H,L,H,L,H,L
AB101AR1A,H,L,H,L,H,L
AB101BA4E,L,H,L,H,L,L
AB101BD2A,L,H,L,H,L,L
AB101BL1B,L,H,L,H,L,L
AB101BL1E,L,H,L,H,L,L
AB101DA1Z,H,H,H,H,H,L
AB101DB1E,H,H,H,H,H,L
AB101DF1E,H,H,H,H,H,L
```

Please note the following:

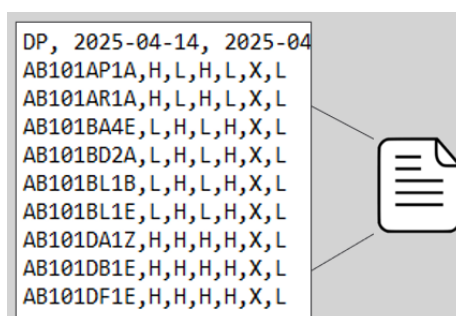
- This is a partial example showing only the top part of the file
- The expected file size will be 50-80MB as a GZIP compressed CSV file for one week of data for ~32M delivery points
- Once uncompressed, the file size will be ~700MB
- Delivery Points are listed as a combination of the Postcode and Delivery Point suffix, and will be listed without a space character
- Delivery Points may not be in strict alphabetical order
- As a CSV file, it would have 7 comma separated columns of data for the header and each row, and ~32M rows of data
- It only contains the Delivery Point and Delivery Profile information, and is therefore a very limited data set in comparison to the PAF (Postcode Address File) Service which provides much more detailed address information (see [www.poweredbypaf.com](http://www.poweredbypaf.com)).



The delivery profile will use the following letters for Heavy days, Light days and Non-working days:

L – Light day

X – This is a Bank holiday or Non-working days



For example, for the week including the Good Friday bank holiday on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April, the file would look similar to the above with the start date Monday being the 14<sup>th</sup> April and then an 'X' put for that bank holiday Friday.

## 2.4 File Release Schedule & Naming

Every Friday at 3pm, two new Forward Calendar files will be made available on the SFTP site (previous files would have been deleted on Friday morning).

File names would be structured with the following elements in terms of format:

- a) “FC” would indicate the file is a Forward Calendar file
- b) The date would be for the first day (Monday) within the week that is covered by this file.
- c) There will then be a date-time for when the file was generated. The date-time is ISO 8601 compliant as YYYYMMDDTHHmmssZ

### Example:

On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July at 3pm, the following two files would be made available and may have the following filenames (dependant on actual generation timings):

**File 1:** FC\_2025-07-07\_20250704T140125Z.csv.zip

**File 2:** FC\_2025-07-14\_20250704T140255Z.csv.zip

So in this case, File 1 is for week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025, and was generated on the 4<sup>th</sup> July at 2.01pm and 25 seconds.

File 2 is for the following week, commencing 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025, and was generated on the 4<sup>th</sup> July at 2.02pm and 55 seconds.

The next pair of files would then be generated on the following Friday which in this example would be Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July. Note that although there would already be an existing file for the week following (which would be for the 14<sup>th</sup> July), this would be deleted and replaced. This would ensure that any changes that have occurred in the interim to planned delivery profiles for that week would then be reflected in the new file.

## 2.5 Process

The service is expected to be used by Customers in the following way:

1. Every Friday at 3pm each week, two files will be made available in the SFTP folder. Each file represents 1 week of delivery profile information. The first file will be for the Monday immediately following the current Friday. The second file will be for the following Monday after that. Both files will contain 6 days of data (Monday through to Saturday).
2. After the set file publishing time of 3pm, Customers could configure a scheduled job to log into the SFTP server automatically and download the files, or could manually log in and download the files which will be around 50-80MB in size each. Customers could also choose to do this at any point after publishing according to their own processes.
3. As these files are GZIP compressed, Customers will then uncompress the files, with the uncompressed file size being around 700MB as CSV files. Each file contains ~32 Million rows and so most standard spreadsheet software will not be able to load the file fully, and instead a data loading solution should be used.
4. The files give two weeks of advance information, however they are generated on a weekly basis. This means that on the following Friday, the information contained for the second week can be updated with the newly generated file for that week.

Please note the following:

- On Friday morning, prior to the release of the two new files, the previously generated files on the SFTP server will be deleted.
- When processing data from the files, then Customers should always use this latest information to overwrite what has been loaded previously as this will be the latest version and will include updates and changes that have occurred to the delivery plans over the previous week.
- The files will be generated automatically each Friday without exception, and this would include non-working days and Bank holidays, etc.
- Files will be generated by 3pm according to UTC time.

## 2.6 Walk Visibility Customer Support

If you require technical support or have a data related issue then please contact us at [walkvisibility@royalmail.com](mailto:walkvisibility@royalmail.com).

If you have a business related query then please direct these to your Account Manager, Business Contract Holder or Network Access Contract holder.

