IDS acquires stake in Collect+ to strengthen Royal Mailâ€™s position as UKâ€™s largest out of home parcel point network

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International Distribution Services, owner of Royal Mail, has acquired a 49% stake in Collect+, marking a major milestone in the companyâ€™s multi-channel strategy to make collecting, sending and returning parcels as convenient as possible. Following the investment, almost 8,000 Collect+ convenience stores will feature Royal Mail Shop branding.

The new high street brand will be a one stop destination for collecting, sending and returning parcels, selling Royal Mail postage at the shops for the first time and open during extended hours including evenings and weekends. Selling postage over the counter gives customers the option of paying when they get to the shop rather than doing so beforehand online. This service is now live in 500 shops and will be rolled out more widely in the coming months.

Royal Mail and Collect+ first partnered in May 2024 to meet rising consumer demand for convenient parcel drop-off and collection points. Since then, Royal Mail customers have been able to drop-off returns and pre-paid parcels at almost 8,000 Collect+ locations across the UK.

Last month, Vinted became Royal Mail's first partner to offer its customers collection from the stores. More of Royal Mail's retail partners will follow soon to offer collection to the shops under the new Royal Mail Shop brand.

The new Royal Mail Shop outlets will fulfil demand for face-to-face parcel services on the high street that are open for extended hours, including during evenings and weekends. They are part of Royal Mail's rapidly expanded network of almost 24,000 Parcel Points - including 2,000 lockers, 11,500 Post Office branches, 1,200 Royal Mail Customer Service Points and 1,400 parcel postboxes – the largest multi-channel parcel network in the UK.

Royal Mail has also been on a drive to make it easier to use its 115,000 postboxes to send smaller parcels that will fit through a letterbox. Customers can now use the Royal Mail app to request proof of posting at postboxes, and the company is rolling out 3,500 postboxes of the future designed to accept larger parcels up to the size of a shoebox.

Alistair Cochrane, interim Chief Executive of Royal Mail, said: "The launch of the Royal Mail Shop brand creates a new and improved high street destination for all of our customers' parcel needs in one location. With postage available to buy in store, and opening hours including evening and weekends, the shops are giving customers greater flexibility in how they collect, send and return their parcels.

"This investment is one of the ways we're making Royal Mail more convenient. We have the UK's largest network of out-of-home parcel points — from lockers to solar-powered postboxes — and we're focused on being the nearest and simplest choice for our customers."

Nick Wiles, Chief Executive of PayPoint, said: "We are delighted that Royal Mail has invested into the Collect+ business, which has seen strong growth over the past five years as we have established it as the leading open out of home store network in the UK. The addition of Royal Mail over the counter services and Royal Mail Shop branding is an exciting development for our retailer network and is another example of how we deliver vital community services across the UK, including local banking, parcels and broader access to cash services."

Source: IDS

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