

Appendix 1

Sunnybank, Thornbury, BD3 Postcode Request

Final Report

October 2021

**Produced by: Planning & Sustainable Development
Leeds City Council**

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Executive Summary

Leeds City Council has prepared this report to gather evidence relating to reported addressing and postcode issues affecting residents who live on the edge of the Leeds / Bradford local authority, and postal town boundary.

The ultimate decision whether to change a postcode falls with Royal Mail, and whilst there are no specific criteria, it is understood that the outcome is usually determined by operational need and capacity. It is the role of Leeds City Council, in this instance, to determine whether the postcode is responsible for the addressing issues, what options may exist to resolve the reported addressing issues; and whether a petition to Royal Mail to request consideration of a change is the appropriate outcome.

This final report summarises the responses from residents of three streets in Thornbury, Bradford, BD3, to a consultation that took place between September and December 2020.

Phase 1 sought to gain a better understanding of addressing and postcode issues that residents of this area have reported for a number of years. The residents have requested that Leeds City Council consider whether it is appropriate for a request to be made to Royal Mail for the postcode of these streets to be changed from BD3 (Thornbury, Bradford) to LS28 (Pudsey).

Phase 2 sought to gather additional feedback from those directorates and organisations that have been mentioned in the responses from residents, with a view to better understanding internal policies and procedures, and to raise awareness of the issues that residents were experiencing.

The final report concludes that, Royal Mail are unlikely to change the postcode for non-operational reasons, but with absolute acknowledgement of the seriousness of the issues raised in this report, that efforts should be focused on engaging with those service providers identified in this report. Further recommendations are provided for a way forward to resolve the issues that residents are experiencing, and these focus on a joint engagement strategy between Leeds City Council, Royal Mail and those service providers identified in the report to understand more about why the issues are occurring and what we can do collectively to help.

1. Introduction

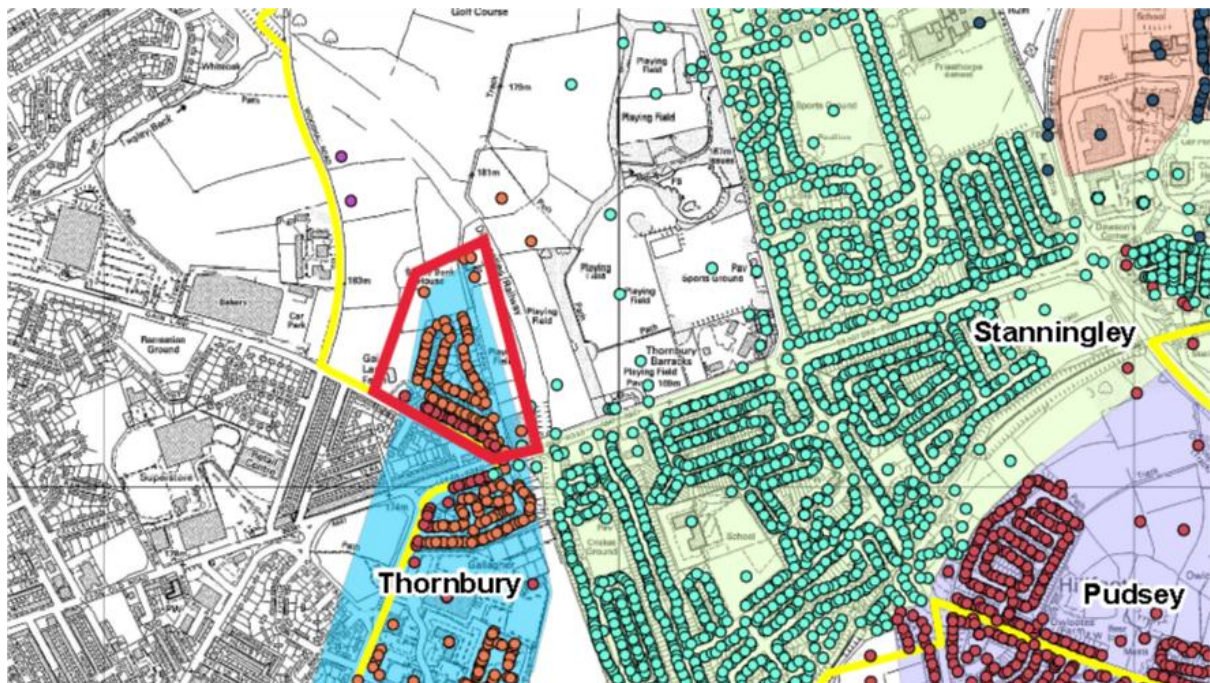
Leeds City Council's Street Naming and Numbering team were approached in January 2020 by Stuart Andrew MP, and residents of the Sunnybank streets in Thornbury, to request assistance with long standing addressing issues that affect addresses with BD3 postcodes that are located within the Leeds City Council boundary.

It was agreed that Leeds City Council would undertake a consultation of residents of the following three streets to gather current evidence of addressing / postcode issues:

Sunnybank Lane
Sunnybank Grove
Sunnybank Avenue

This would act as a 'test case' for wider discussions, regarding BD postcode issues located at the Leeds / Bradford Council boundary.

The location of these streets is shown by the red line boundary below.



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A consultation process was agreed with the resident's group, and was due to start in March 2020, however, following delays relating to COVID-19, the consultation ran from 7th September to 15th December 2020.

2. Background

Since the current Leeds City Council boundary was established in 1974, there has been an overlap with areas designated as Bradford (BD) and Wakefield (WF) postal towns for Royal Mail delivery purposes (see Table 1). It should be emphasised that this situation is not unique to Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield but is a feature of many postcode areas and local authority district boundaries across the country.

Table 1: Non-Leeds Postal Town postcode areas located within the Leeds City Council boundary.

Postcode	Locality	No of addresses
BD2	Fagley / Stanningley	1
BD3	Thornbury	388
BD4	Tyersal	800
BD10	Apperley Bridge / Rawdon / Calverley	117
BD11	Drighlington	2,690
BD18	Bingley	1
	Total (BD)	3,997

WF2	Kirkhamgate	14
WF3	Tingley / Carlton / Thorpe/ West Ardsley / East Ardsley / Robin Hood / Lofthouse	10,601
WF10	Allerton Bywater	2,541
WF12	Dewsbury	74
WF17	Batley	8
	Total (WF)	13,238

As noted above, this is a common occurrence nationally as there is no requirement for local authority and postcode boundaries to be synchronised. Indeed, there are also examples where LS (Leeds) postcodes are located within the boundary of Bradford Council (LS29 – Menston) and Harrogate Council (LS17 – Huby).

Local ward councillors and MPs have reported receiving concerns from residents especially in the BD3, BD4, and BD10 postcode areas; and as a result, Stuart Andrew MP undertook a consultation of 800+ residential addresses in these three postcode areas to assist in further understanding what the issues were, and what might be causing them.

Stuart Andrew MP has submitted a number of requests to Royal Mail to request that the postcodes be changed to LS28 including this example on 2017 relating to BD4 -

<https://westleedsdispatch.com/ls28-postcode-tyersal-royal-mail-decision/>

The latest correspondence from Royal Mail (dated 4th November 2019) confirmed that they would be unable to change the postcodes due to 'operational limitations of the Pudsey Delivery office'; and previous correspondence with Kelly Tolhurst MP (then Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility dated 23 August, 2019) confirmed that 'Royal Mail can only carry out a change if it can identify an operational need to do so'. This is

also supported by Royal Mail's code of practice - https://www.pafboard.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/PAF_Code_of_Practice_200618.pdf

Other than cited above, Royal Mail do not provide any further guidance or criteria on the grounds on which a postcode can, or should be changed; and there is no local precedent of a postcode change being successfully requested on this scale to provide a comparable basis.

3. Consultation

The aim of the consultation was to try and understand what issues are happening or had happened recently; and to try and determine what was causing those issues. Consideration would be given to whether there was anything that the Street Naming and Numbering service could do to resolve the addressing issues, or likewise, whether there was anything that Leeds City Council or external agencies could do.

It is recognised that changing a postcode is a last resort, but by better understanding the causes of addressing issues, Leeds City Council can assist in determining whether a recommendation to Royal Mail for a change of postcode to LS28 is the correct outcome; and it is important that there is certainty that such a change would resolve the issues that are being reported.

When analysing addressing issues, Leeds City Council will consider the following three questions:

- 1. Is this issue caused by the postcode?**
- 2. Will changing the postcode resolve the issue?**
- 3. Are there other alternatives to changing the postcode which should be explored in the first instance?**

It should be noted that a recommendation from Leeds City Council to Royal Mail does not necessarily carry any more weight than previous requests, and that ultimately it would be Royal Mail's decision, but it was felt that the evidence to support such a request that Leeds City Council could provide, would be the most important factor.

The consultation letter to residents provided the following explanation of the purpose of the consultation:

The purpose of this consultation is to see whether any of the issues that you may be experiencing can be resolved without the need for a postcode change, however, any evidence that is gathered that supports the need to change the postcode, and cannot be resolved in other ways, will be collated and potentially used for a future application to Royal Mail.

Following initial investigations it was found that a discrepancy existed between Royal Mail's database and the official street name records held by Leeds City Council such that Sunnybank was incorrectly held as 'Sunny Bank' in Royal Mail databases rather than the correct version of 'Sunnybank'.

This was of particular relevance as there was already a street in Bradford called Sunny Bank Avenue with a BD5 postcode, and there was some suggestion that these two streets were getting confused.

The Street Naming and Numbering team agreed to undertake a consultation for the following purposes:

1. To consult residents on a proposal to correct the spelling in Royal Mail databases from Sunny Bank to Sunnybank
2. To consult residents on whether they support the suggestion to change their postcode from BD3 to LS28
3. To request details of addressing issues that had occurred in the previous three months prior to the consultation
4. To request details of addressing issues that occurred during the course of the consultation (7th September to 15th December 2020).

4. Consultation Results

In terms of the consultation undertaken, of the 73 properties that were written to as part of the consultation, 20 provided responses during the three-month period of consultation, which equates to 27%. The overall level of response is summarised below:

Phase 1 consultation with residents:

Table 2: Summary of consultation responses to questions 1 and 2

Consultation Question	Number of responses	Percentage of properties to respond	Number of responses in favour or with no preference	Percentage of respondents in favour
1	16	22%	15	94%
2	20	27%	20	100%

With regard to Q1 (the correction of the spelling error with Royal Mail), there were 16 responses of which 14 were in favour, 1 not in favour, and 1 had no preference. As this was felt to be an essential correction, which was supported by a clear majority of respondents, this change was implemented on the 9th November 2020, and requires no further action.

All 20 respondents supported the proposal for a further application to request a postcode change with Royal Mail (Q2).

The following is a summary of the issues that residents feel are caused by the current postcode:

Health:

Some of the residents have Bradford GPs, and some have Leeds GPs. For those with Bradford GPs there were examples where referrals and services had been delayed as the referral was made to Bradford Council rather than Leeds Council in error; or the referral was incorrectly rejected due to an assumption that the address didn't come under the Leeds Council area. This could delay social services referrals including house adaptation and request for support, which has a particular impact on the vulnerable.

Different services are run based on different areas, so the Yorkshire Ambulance Service covers the whole of Yorkshire; hospitals are run by Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS, and

Bradford Teaching hospitals NHS; and social care is run based on local authority boundaries. From the information provided by residents, it would appear that movement between the different systems can be complicated with referrals going to the wrong place and being rejected incorrectly. There would appear to be an issue with how some health services interface with one another, especially where assumptions have been made about postcode references. There could be a lack of joined up working which may be made worse when incorrect assumptions are made based on the postcode. Some examples cited included hospital in-patients whose discharge was delayed as the follow up support referral had gone to the wrong department or organisation. One example was given where the Leeds and Bradford referral systems were different therefore a user had to know which organisation the referral needed to go to, based on the postcode, to know which system to use.

ACTION: See Appendix 5 & 6 for responses from Community Health Services / CCG).

Ambulances, and the 111 service, will often take a patient to BRI, or Bradford out of hours by default even though in some cases patients will be under LGI, who will have all their records. One example cited in the 2019 consultation undertaken by Stuart Andrew MP was for a BD10 resident who received an ambulance from the Bradford area, but needed taking to LGI and was told that the ambulance driver did not know the route.

ACTION: See Appendix 1 and 4 for responses from Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

Some residents reported specific issues with Midwifery services, with care split between Leeds and Bradford and inconsistency with how care was managed.

COVID:

The initial months under COVID with different restrictions between Leeds and Bradford caused a huge amount of confusion. It was not clear to residents what was meant by 'Leeds' and 'Bradford', and some residents reported issues with employers who didn't understand that they could have a BD postcode but come under Leeds rules.

COMMENT: This was improved when Leeds started to come under additional restrictions and the wording was changed to emphasise that it was a council area i.e. the area that collects the bins.

When the NHS Track and Trace App was launched, initially, residents were told that they came under Bradford rules in error.

There were complaints that Royal Mail employees were delivering post but not wearing any PPE. This was of particular concern as the employee would potentially be delivering to Bradford Council properties for part of the time, and then crossing into Leeds Council to deliver to these residents at a time when the two areas had different levels of restriction.

An example was provided of a delay to the setting up of a mobile COVID testing centre on land at Gain Lane, after it was unclear which council area the land was located in.

ACTION: See Appendix 2 for response from Leeds City Council Public Health team.

BD5 Duplication:

Visitors, Taxi drivers and postal deliveries coming to Sunnybank Avenue, BD3 rather than Sunny Bank Avenue, BD5.

ACTION: Spelling error corrected with Royal Mail on 9th November. This still leaves two similar names in two different postcode areas however, there are also potential duplicates in LS8 (Sunny Bank Grove), and LS18 (Sunnybank Avenue).

Postal deliveries / Royal Mail:

It was felt that these BD3 properties receive a poorer level of service from Royal Mail deliveries compared to neighbouring houses in LS28. Postal deliveries now often arrive quite late in the afternoon (although COVID was acknowledged as a factor). It was questioned whether the 'operation reasons' cited by Royal Mail are an excuse rather than a true factor given the perception of a poorer service already.

Concerns with Royal Mail employees not wearing PPE (see COVID section).

ACTION: See Appendix 7 for response from Royal Mail.

Financial:

It was felt that the BD postcode led to higher insurance costs and lower house prices than would be the case if LS28. A number of residents reported that they had been refused car insurance in some cases, including examples where they had moved to the area and not had any issues in the past.

COMMENT: Neither of these issues are recognised by Royal Mail as being relevant (i.e. Royal Mail are not accountable for how third parties use the postcode to operate their decision making).

Mapping:

It was reported that those with the BD3 7DQ postcode had issues with delivery drivers finding them.

ACTION: Further investigation noticed that this appears to have been caused by an issue with how the postcode is plotted in Google Maps. This has been reported to Google by the SNN team.

Waste and Recycling:

Residents with valid permits were challenged by staff at Waste and Recycling centres due to BD postcode, and the assumption that they were Bradford council residents.

Leeds City Council:

Residents feel detached, not part of Leeds but not part of Bradford. Perception of less support from council and councillors, and a poorer quality level of service from all departments.

Phase 2: Additional consultation with Health Services

Following the conclusion of the consultation with residents it was clear that further clarification on policy was required from some of the health agencies cited in consultation responses, together with a need to raise awareness of the issues that residents are experiencing.

Representatives of the health agencies were asked whether they were aware of these issues; whether changes to their systems had been, or were to be, implemented to resolve issues such as these; and what their policy was in terms of how residents were allocated to different services.

It is clear from responses that service provision varied across different health service. Yorkshire Ambulance Service (Appendix 1 & 4) make decisions based on clinical need of the patient, current demand, and by postcode. However, Community Health services / CCG (Appendix 5 & 6) provided services were allocated based on GP registration rather than postcode; and social care referrals provided by local authorities are allocated based on local authority boundaries. Appendix 6 provided by Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust confirmed that the postcode of the resident is not relevant when making referrals, and therefore it can be inferred that changing the postcode would not alter where a resident was referred to.

An issue was raised by a resident following the closure of the consultation regarding Dental Hospital referrals and Leeds City Council attempted to contact the relevant CCG regarding this to clarify allocation policy for dental hospital services. A response is still awaited.

5. Conclusion

Residents living on the Leeds / Bradford boundary have to navigate confusing and varied systems, particularly relating to health and social care services, which other residents of Leeds or Bradford may not experience. It is also clear that the health services themselves may not have managed these referrals correctly in line with their own policies on some occasions. It is also possible that a resident's understanding of where they should be entitled to treatment is not in line with the policies set out by the service providers.

On the basis of the evidence collected during the consultations, the issues raised by the residents of the Sunnybank streets are similar to those raised both historically, and currently, by other residents living in properties with BD postcodes, but located within the Leeds City Council boundary. However, it is likely that those residents living in BD3 do experience a greater level of confusion. Unlike the other BD postcodes mentioned in this report, only a very small proportion of BD3 (Thornbury) properties are located within Leeds City Council, with the majority being located within Bradford Council.

Changing the postcode for these residents from BD3 to LS28 would resolve some of the issues that they are experiencing, particularly in relation to errors with referrals, and assumptions that all BD3 postcodes relate to Bradford council. However, the responses from Community Health Services / CCG indicate that changing the postcode will not affect where a resident is referred to, and that it is the GP to which a resident is registered that is key for their service provision. As social care provision is already provided by the Local Authority, and based on local authority boundaries, then this would also not be materially affected by a postcode change, albeit would provide a convenient synergy between Royal Mail and local authority boundaries which would eliminate confusion with some referrals. The response from Yorkshire Ambulance Service confirms that postcode could be a factor when deciding on a hospital to take a patient to, but that there would also be many other factors.

Royal Mail have confirmed that they would not change a postcode for the reasons cited in this report; and that there is no precedent for a postcode change for anything other than their own operational reasons.

'we have not and would not make changes to the postcode area responsible for a region unless it was done to improve the efficiency of our service. Disrupting the local mail delivery service for non-Operational reasons (such as another organisation mistakenly using a postcode area to define and deliver their non-mail services) would be illogical and contradictory to our responsibilities' (see Appendix 7 for full response from Royal Mail).

Based on the responses provided to this consultation, the conclusion of this report is that Royal Mail are very unlikely to change the postcode for non-operational reasons.

It is the view of Leeds City Council that efforts should be focused on resolving these issues directly with the service providers involved. The responses provided to this consultation also confirm that:

1. Evidence has been provided that a number of referral systems are *not* based on the postcode of the resident, and therefore changing the postcode will not resolve these issues.
2. Several examples provided by residents appear to show that there are failings with how referral systems are being applied, rather than the postcode.
3. There is no requirement for local authority and postcode boundaries to be aligned and there are many examples both nationally and in Leeds of properties within one District having postcodes describing a neighbouring District. In this example, it has been highlighted that in Leeds there are some BD and WF postcodes, and properties in adjoining local authority areas having LS postcodes. However, we have not been made aware of similar issues affecting properties with WF postcodes located within Leeds City Council; nor properties with LS postcodes located in neighbouring authorities.

Further engagement is required with partners in the health services to raise awareness of the issues that residents are experiencing. Any improvements that result from such engagement would benefit all residents that live on a postcode boundary. Royal Mail have indicated that they would support such engagement and have offered to assist with this.

6. Further Recommendations

- Officers will seek to raise the relevant issues set out in this report with appropriate senior managers within Leeds City Council representing Health and Social Care services, together with Royal Mail, to encourage engagement with external partners to raise awareness of these issues, and to work together to encourage improvement of systems and processes.
- That residents are encouraged to continue raising complaints directly with the organisations / services involved to highlight any issues with the level of service that they are receiving; and that they can also make Leeds City Council's Street Naming and Numbering team (address@leeds.gov.uk) aware of such complaints at the same time, which Leeds City Council can continue to monitor.

Appendix 1: Yorkshire Ambulance Service

Email response from **Yorkshire Ambulance Service** dated 1st October 2020 to issues raised by this consultation and also previous health related issues identified by Stuart Andrew MP's consultation in 2019.

Thank you for your email and the comments from residents about the services they receive in relation to their postcodes. We're not able to comment on the individual circumstances cited in these examples and would encourage anyone who has a particular concern or question to raise that with our patient relations team (who can be reached via yas.patientrelations@nhs.net) and they will be able to explore any issues for individual patients.

In terms of the services that we provide, both our A&E Operations service (providing emergency care through clinicians in our ambulances) and our NHS 111 service are provided across the Yorkshire and Humber region and, as a universal health service, are not influenced or restricted by postcodes across these areas of Bradford and Leeds. Our service is funded nationally and not subject to funding from council tax, which is paid to local authorities who then make decisions on their priority services.

Our staff attend patients based on the care that they need (and the appropriate clinical treatment) and the delivery of our services is guided by national standards on response times and not by postcode or local authority area. Each individual patient will be treated based on their specific needs at that time and based on operational information about demands on hospital and other health services.

In terms of how our staff treat and care for patients, there are a number of circumstances which would influence where we take patients for treatment or where we signpost them to for further care. This could be influenced by any treatment they are already receiving and the clinician who is providing it; it could be influenced by a particular care pathway that's in place in an area, which directs patients with certain conditions to a specialist hospital; it can also be influenced by services that are available in primary care and other services (such as GPs, pharmacies, dentists, mental health services). From the many examples that have been provided by residents, most of the services described are provided via acute hospitals, community services, voluntary or care sector and GP surgeries, rather than services provided by Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

Appendix 2: Leeds City Council Public Health team

Response from **Leeds City Council Public Health** team dated 12th October 2020 (with further amendments provide on 17/2/21 and 25/6/21) to COVID related issues raised as part of the consultation:

There are a few issues that we, as a local authority Public Health team, are in a position to clarify or comment on:

- Since residents shared concerns (as part of the wider postcode consultation) on 16th of September, Government has introduced further local restrictions in Leeds District. These are in line with restrictions that had already been in place for Bradford District. In its communications, Leeds City Council has clarified that restrictions apply to “the whole city even if you don’t have an LS postcode – if your wheelie bin gets emptied by Leeds City Council – they apply to you”.
- Sunnybank residents used the terms “major public health threats/risks” but we are not clear how to interpret this in practice. The examples provided relate to Covid restrictions, which are nationally determined, and access to healthcare, which are Clinical Commissioning Group(s) and NHS England responsibilities, not the Council’s. Please contact Leeds CCG directly in relation to concerns about NHS care: <https://www.leedsccg.nhs.uk/feedback/comments/>.
- Whilst it is helpful to know about gatherings in private properties, the enforcement of this is the remit of the Police. The Council’s enforcement functions focus on ensuring that commercial premises adhere to Covid-secure guidance.
- If you have coronavirus symptoms, you should get tested. All testing sites operate on an appointment only basis – please do not attend without an appointment. Appointments can be booked via the NHS online booking system: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/> or by calling 119. When booking, you will be shown a list of the nearest places to go for your test. It is important to be tested no more than five days from when your symptoms started.
- The Leeds CCG website provides information on the range of testing and vaccination options. Please use the hyperlinks below for further information <https://www.leedsccg.nhs.uk/health/coronavirus/coronavirus-where-to-go-for-testing/>
<https://www.leedsccg.nhs.uk/health/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine/>
- In relation to postcode information provided through the NHS Covid-19 App, we would suggest you provide feedback via the following link - <https://faq.covid19.nhs.uk/createcase/>.
- Finally, Leeds City Council is not in a position to comment on, or quality assure, the details of Royal Mail’s coronavirus policies. It appears that basic infection control i.e. “hands, face, space” and mitigation measures have been incorporated. As to (lack of) adherence to these measures by staff or on premises, we would advise customers to report these to Royal Mail directly.
- There is close working between Leeds and Bradford Public Health teams, alongside Public Health England teams, across council boundaries especially throughout the pandemic.

Appendix 3: West Yorkshire Police

Response from **West Yorkshire Police** dated 28th October 2020 to concerns raised in previous consultation undertaken by Stuart Andrew MP:

In my experience in both Bradford and Leeds, I haven't come across any real issue in terms of police response to incidents and any particular area that has suffered with the police ignoring addresses. When a call is generated to the police, the address will be placed into our computer systems and it will automatically generate which district the area falls into and a unit will be despatched as appropriate.

Clearly we have to have boundaries and those living in certain areas may not understand why they may come under a certain district and someone on the opposite side of the road comes under another, it just depends on where the boundary line is. I am not aware of any particular address or complaint that has come forward highlighting any particular issue or feeling that they are neglected by the police. From my time on West NPT I am confident that the residents on the Calverley and Pudsey boundaries with Bradford are getting an appropriate response to issues raised.

Appendix 4: Yorkshire Ambulance Service (response to resident)

Response from **Yorkshire Ambulance Services** received by resident and submitted as part of consultation dated September 2020. This was in response to a query as to what the standard / default response would be if an ambulance was requested by one of the Sunnybank postcodes.

Bradford Royal Infirmary would be the destination for urgent and emergency issues but dependant on the presenting condition (i.e. regional trauma centre is Leeds General Infirmary and primary angioplasty is also and LGI). Also another Health Care Professional could have booked the patient to a specific ward for an urgent case at either hospital and the crew would take to this destination.

Regarding mental health presentations the crew would hopefully contact First Response (the local crisis service) initially and agree a care plan. The outcome of this clinical discussion could be conveyance to ED, telephone consultation, home visit by MH team or conveyance to Lynfield Mount to for assessment.

Appendix 5: NHS Leeds Community Health Services

Response from **NHS Leeds CCG Communications** Lead dated 26th April 2021:

Patients who are registered with Leeds GP are able to access Leeds Community Health services regardless of their postcode. Likewise, patients who are registered with a Bradford GP should be able to access Bradford Community Services. For patients who live on the border, reciprocal arrangements can be made between the community service providers if necessary.

Appendix 6: Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust

Response from **Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust** dated 27th April, 2021:

At Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust we are the provider of community health and wellbeing services in the Leeds area and we are commissioned to deliver services to people as close to where they live as possible. Within this consultation points are raised specifically about Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust services and Yorkshire Ambulance Service, but not of our own services. We can confirm that we are commissioned by NHS Leeds CCG to provide services to people who are registered with a Leeds based GP and not based on postcode – so in this instance what postcode you live at is not relevant, it's which GP you are registered to. For any information about our services please visit - www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk or to feedback any issues people can contact us at - lch.comms@nhs.net

Appendix 7: Royal Mail

The following questions were sent to Royal Mail to request a formal response, and representatives of Leeds City Council met with Royal Mail to provide further information prior to the response being provided.

1. Previous correspondence from Royal Mail has cited that a postcode can only be changed for 'operational reasons' as determined by Royal Mail. It would be helpful if you could clarify what these reasons are from a service and business perspective? Are there other grounds on which a postcode could be changed, or are there other historical examples of where a postcode has been changed for non-operational reasons?
2. What evidence would Royal Mail require to agree a postcode change for non-operational reasons? Could evidence that there is an impact on delivery of Council or other public services for the affected residents be considered, for example?
3. What evidence would Royal Mail require of support from those properties that are affected? Would Royal Mail undertake a consultation of those affected or would this need to be done by the local authority, and what level of consent would be required?

The following response was provided by Royal Mail's Address Management Unit on 13th September 2021.

Thanks for your time the other week, and the examples you sent through of some of the problems that residents are experiencing, particularly in respect of health services. We're very keen to look into the problems reported to you in respect of the delivery of mail services. We would really appreciate it if you could provide us with any info that would help us investigate them.

The problems and suggested 'solution' appear to be based on a misunderstanding about the role of the postcode. There seems to be an 'expectation' that a postcode can just be realigned to fit with the boundaries for other organisations. I know your report is looking specifically into the issues raised by Leeds City residents in BD3/4, who don't appear to get certain services because they don't have an LS postcode. Are those same issues being experienced by Leeds City residents in Castleford (WF10) or the Selby District residents who live in Tadcaster (LS24)?

The postcode is not just an administrative code – it is a routing instruction that facilitates the efficient sortation and distribution of mail across our network. The Postcode Area bit of the code (LS or BD) indicates the offices responsible for the delivery of mail in that area and drives the automated delivery of letters and parcels to the right offices. It is dependent on the capacity in our offices and the staffing locally.

In answer to your questions, we have not and would not make changes to the postcode area responsible for a region unless it was done to improve the efficiency of our service. Disrupting the local mail delivery service for non-Operational reasons (such as another organisation mistakenly using a postcode area to define and deliver their non-mail services) would be illogical and contradictory to our responsibilities. We would much rather help to explain postcode geography to those using it mistakenly.

Royal Mail is always keen to work closely with local authorities and support the provision of their services. But ultimately we are responsible for the delivery of mail and our primary aim must always be to optimise our systems to achieve that. As we discussed, I remain more than

happy to work with you to talk about postcoding to the other agencies involved, and how they can better understand why it's inappropriate to expect the elements of the postcode to align with the boundaries of Local Councils and Health Authorities.

I hope that my responses are helpful in explaining why the suggestion being put forward doesn't appear to be the right one, and why Royal Mail does not believe a change to mail delivery operations is required in order to improve access to Local Authority and NHS services for Leeds residents.