



Code-Point[®]

User guide and technical specification

Code-Point

User guide

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Preface

This user guide (hereafter referred to as the guide) is designed to provide an overview of Code-Point (hereafter referred to as the product) and it gives guidelines and advice on how a customer might derive the maximum benefit from the product. It assumes a general knowledge of geographic information. If you find an error or omission in this guide, or otherwise wish to make a comment or suggestion as to how we can improve the guide, please contact us at the address shown below under contact details or complete the product and service performance report form at [annexe C](#) and return it to us.

Contact details

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The product makes use of Royal Mail PAF files and Postzon, Land & Property Services, ONS and National Records of Scotland (NRS) health authority codes.

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Back-up provision of the product

You are advised to copy the supplied data to a back-up medium.

Using this guide

The documentation is supplied in portable document format (PDF) only. Free Adobe® Reader® software, which displays the guide, incorporates search and zoom facilities and allows you to navigate within.

Hyperlinks are used to navigate between associated parts of the guide and to relevant Internet resources by clicking on the blue hyperlinks and the table of contents.

If you are unfamiliar with any words or terms used and require clarification please refer to the glossary at the end of the document.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Using this user guide

A glossary of words and terms used in this user guide can be found at [annexe A](#).

Code-Point® features

With each coordinated point, Code-Point products provide:

- information about the number and type of postal delivery points in the postcode;
- a positional quality indicator (PQI), which indicates the quality of the data underlying the Code-Point location coordinate (CPLC);
- the country indicator (either England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland);
- the postcode type;
- the National Health Service region and area codes; and
- the local government county, district and ward codes.

Applications of Code-Point

Code-Point can be used to display and analyse any data collected at the postcode level. This has led to the product being widely used in a variety of applications, including:

- site location;
- enable web searches;
- market analysis and profiling;
- health and epidemiology;
- resource allocation;
- end to end journey route planning
- socio-economic profiling; and
- sales targeting.

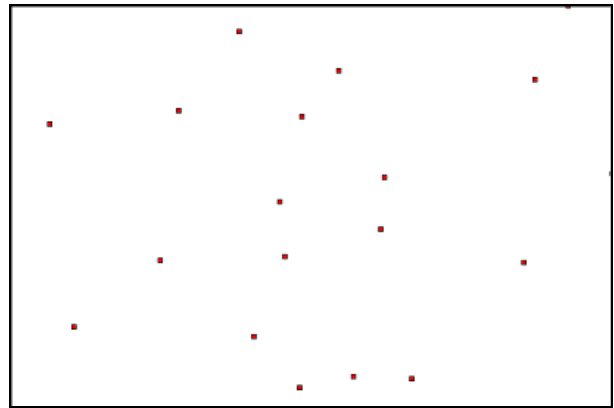
Chapter 2 Overview of Code-Point

Data overview

Code-Point is recreated quarterly using updates from Ordnance Survey field surveys and Gridlink® (a consortium made up of Royal Mail®, Ordnance Survey, the Office of National Statistics (ONS), Land & Property Services® (LPS) and the National Records of Scotland (NRS) via ADDRESS-POINT® and Boundary-Line™.

ADDRESS-POINT contains postal address data for 28 million postal delivery points. These delivery points may be premises that are shown in OS MasterMap® Topography Layer data, such as buildings, or they might be features that do not form part of the Topography Layer specification such as PO Boxes®, caravan parks, buildings under railway arches, temporary buildings and houseboats. All postcode units in Postcode Address File (PAF®) at the time of creation, which have valid and current postal delivery points, will be in Code-Point.

Example of Code-Point data (when viewed through a geographical information system (GIS) package)

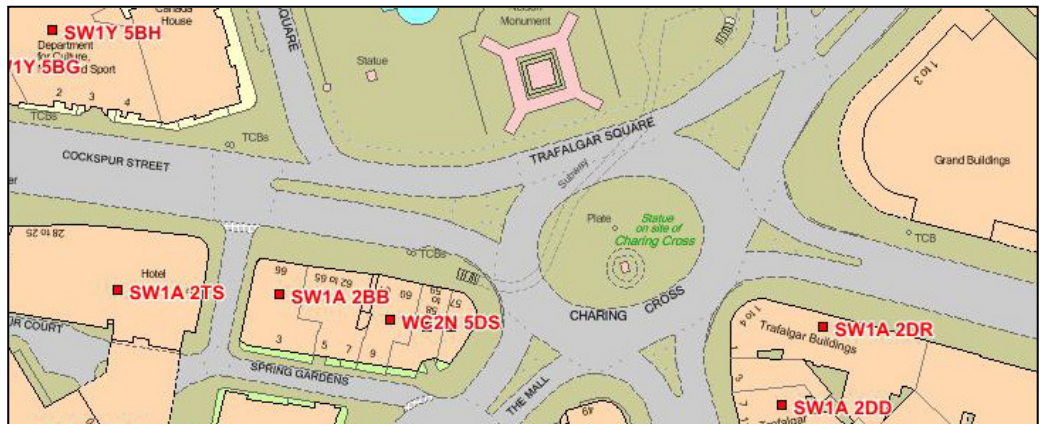


Example of Code-Point browser (when viewed through a GIS package)

Postcode	Legend	Positional_Quality	PO_Box_Indicato	Total_Delivery_Point	Delivery_Points_Sam	Domestic	NonDomestic	PO_Bo	Matched_Addres	Unmatched_Delivery_F	NHS_Regional_Co
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1A#	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AF	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AC	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AH	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AJ	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	2	2	0	2	0	2	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AL	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AN	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	3	3	2	1	0	2	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AP	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	2	2	0	2	0	2	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AC	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AR	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	S00
<input type="checkbox"/> AB10 1AS	Accurate to bldg, auto	10	N	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	S00

Example of Code-Point overlaid on to OS MasterMap Topography Layer

NOTE: to use Code-Point in this way requires a separate GIS package with the relevant licences.



Basic principles

- Each postcode unit will be allocated a National Grid reference (NGref) of a point that falls within the notional extent of the postcode unit – there may be a small number of instances where coordinates cannot be allocated.
- *NOTE: data in the BT (Northern Ireland) postcode area is geo-referenced to the Irish National Grid. Therefore, when loading BT into a GIS you should select the Irish Transverse Mercator Grid for the correct projection. If you do not apply the Irish projection, the BT centroid points will not be correctly positioned. For additional information relating to the Irish Grid, see http://www.osni.gov.uk/2.1_the_irish_grid.pdf*
- Multiple postcodes in a single block of flats or offices will share one NGref – these may be either large users or small users, or both.
- GSS codes are allocated using the Boundary-Line polygon that the CPLC falls within; currency is that of the latest available Boundary-Line data. Where addresses in a postcode fall in two or more administrative areas, only the codes for the area in which the CPLC falls are given.
- NHS codes are allocated using the premise that NHS areas are always supersets of administrative areas.

Government Statistical Service (GSS) codes

These codes are a unique system of referencing for administrative units.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has reconfigured its GSS coding structure (providing a unique system of referencing for administrative units and statistical geographies) to a new nine-character alphanumeric format, replacing the former alphanumeric format (up to six characters). This was fully implemented on 1 January 2011 by ONS.

Where new codes have been allocated, they should be used in all exchanges of statistics and published outputs that normally include the statistical codes.

The codes are allocated by ONS for England and Wales and by NRS for Scottish areas.

The GSS codes were imported into the August 2011 release of Code-Point.

The code is blank when the entity does not have a code.

The Welsh Local Health Boards are not included in Code-Point as they are a different 'level' of geography to health areas (Strategic Health Authorities and Health Boards) - they equate to Primary Care Trusts in England or Community Health Partnerships in Scotland. (which aren't represented in the data).

NOTE: the new nine-figure coding format means that there is no longer a relationship between principal areas and their sub-divisions, for example, Hampshire County was 24, New Forest District was 24UJ and Milford Ward 24UJHM. Types of units will be distinguished by the first three alphanumeric characters (entity code) E for England and so on, 10 counties, 07 districts, 05 wards and so on. New administrations will be allocated the next available number within its type.

Application overview

Uses of Code-Point

Code-Point forms a nationally consistent postcode reference and is a standard link between databases and GIS. Identified below are some of the applications for Code-Point:

Citizen services

- Website searches
- Location finding
- Tourism
- Accessing public facilities
- Find my nearest

Government

- Statistical demographic analysis
- Crime analysis
- Flood warnings
- Pollution monitoring

Health

- Targeting of services to population needs
- Resource allocation
- Epidemiology
- Analysis of *What if...?* scenarios

Insurance

- Market analysis and profiling
- Geological and flood-risk analysis
- Personal and household risk assessment
- Incident area management

Retail

- Sales analysis by store
- Competitor analysis
- Customer buying profiles
- Store location
- Targeting promotions

Transport

- Routing
- Satellite navigation – end-to-end journey planning

Utilities

- Market profiling
- Consumption analysis
- Pressure-zone analysis
- Location finding

Scenarios

Medical research for health authorities

It is necessary for health authorities to be able to analyse and identify the effects and potential implications of contamination. Is the incidence of bronchitis uneven throughout a health authority's area?

Customer survey for market-research purposes

A questionnaire has been distributed to all houses within a large geographical area. The results and the relationships between groups of customers need to be analysed.

Incident analysis for emergency services

An ambulance service wishes to assess the efficiency and value of various mobile unit locations in reducing call-response times.

Insurance for financial services

An insurance company has been asked to quote structural insurance for a potential customer within the Southampton (SO) area. SO has been labelled, geographically, as a clay area and therefore, insurance companies could charge higher premiums because of the potentially higher incidence of subsidence.

Chapter 3 Code-Point explained

Postcode

Postcodes are an alphanumeric abbreviated form of address. Postcode units are unique references and identify an average of 15 addresses. In some cases, where an address receives a substantial amount of mail, a postcode will apply to only one address (a large-user postcode). The maximum number of addresses in a postcode is 100.

The postcode is held in Code-Point as a seven-character field. Although, when used in an address, the inward code (incode) should be separated from the outward code (outcode) by a single space, within Code-Point data, there may be 0, 1 or 2 spaces between these elements of the postcode. The following is a list of the valid formats of postcode held. An A indicates an alphabetic character; an N indicates a numeric character.

Format

Outcode	Incode	Example postcode	Example as held in Code-Point
AN	NAA	M2 5BQ	M2 5BQ
ANN	NAA	M34 3AB	M34 3AB
AAN	NAA	DN5 7XY	DN5 7XY
AANN	NAA	DN16 9AA	DN169AA
ANA	NAA	W1A 4WW	W1A 4WW
AANA	NAA	EC1A 1HQ	EC1A1HQ

Postcode example

Area	District	Sector	Unit
KY	12	8	UP

Please refer to the glossary for a further description of [postcode](#).

Position

Code-Point location coordinate (CPLC)

Code-Point provides an [NGref](#), to a resolution of 1 metre, for each postcode unit in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and is known as the [CPLC](#). A CPLC is normally allocated to a point that falls within the extent of the postcode unit. The point is given the ADDRESS-POINT coordinates of the nearest delivery point to the calculated mean position of the delivery points in the unit. A lower positional quality CPLC will be allocated to postcode units awaiting a surveyed position, or which relate to addresses that will not have a surveyed position.

Where several postcode units apply to one surveyed position, for example, a block of flats or offices, there is an identical CPLC for each. However, there may be instances where the CPLC position is imprecise or approximate, due to the manual allocation by Royal Mail of a postcode outside the recognised geographical extent of that postcode.

When discovered or notified to Ordnance Survey by customers these will be referred to Royal Mail for possible improvement.

Positional quality indicator (PQI)

The importance of checking the PQI, to establish CPLC positional quality, cannot be overemphasised. It indicates the positional accuracy of the Code-Point coordinates. There are seven PQI values for the positional quality of CPLCs. The order shown indicates the level of quality associated with the PQI; PQ10 is the most accurate and PQ90 the least. The PQI assigned to the CPLC will depend on the coordinates available in ADDRESS-POINT to generate the CPLC. If the ADDRESS-POINT PQI is PQ3 then the Code-Point PQI will be PQ10.

PQI	Description of source ADDRESS-POINT data
10	Within the building of the matched address closest to the postcode mean determined automatically by Ordnance Survey or Land & Property Services (BT postcode area only).
20	As above, but determined to visual inspection by NRS.
30	Approximate to within 50 m of true position (postcodes relating to developing sites may be within 100 m of true position).
40	The mean of the positions of addresses previously matched in ADDRESS-POINT but which have subsequently been deleted or recoded (very rarely used).
50	Estimated position based on surrounding postcode coordinates, usually to 100 m resolution, but 10 m in Scotland.
60	Postcode sector mean (direct copy from ADDRESS-POINT). See glossary for additional information.
90	No coordinates available.

Attributes

Attribute	Description
Postcode	Contains elements for postal area, district, sector and unit. See Postcode in this chapter.
Positional quality	Indicates the source of the data indicator used and, hence, the quality of the coordinates provided for each record. It is determined by the best available data in ADDRESS-POINT (not applicable to Northern Ireland (BT area)).
PO Box indicator	Denotes if the postcode is a PO Box
Total delivery points	The total number of both matched and unmatched delivery points in the postcode. Not in BT data for Northern Ireland.
Delivery points used to the CPLC where the PQI value is 10 or 20	Number of matched addresses in the postcode unit of the same positional quality in ADDRESS-POINT as the PQI for that postcode in Code-Point, provided that the Code-Point record has a PQI value of 10 or 20. Not in BT data for Northern Ireland.
Domestic delivery points	Number of non-PO box delivery points that have no PAF organisation name. Not in BT data for Northern Ireland.
Non-domestic delivery	Number of non-PO box delivery points that have a PAF organisation name. Not in BT data for Northern Ireland.
PO Box domestic delivery points	Number of PO Box delivery points. Not in BT data for Northern Ireland or where PQI is 20 in Scotland.
Matched addressed premises	Number of PQ3 ADDRESS-POINT delivery points in buildings or building subdivisions, after exclusion of duplicated coordinate pairs. Not in BT data for Northern Ireland or where PQI is 20 in Scotland.
Unmatched delivery points	Number awaiting improvement to PQ3 ADDRESS-POINT. Not in BT data for Northern Ireland or where PQI is 20 in Scotland.
Easting	Distance in metres east of National Grid origin.
Northing	Distance in metres north of National Grid origin.
Country code	Code used by ONS to identify the country in which the Code-Point georeference lies. See glossary .
NHS regional health authority code	English Pan Strategic Health Authority in which CPLC falls.
NHS health authority code	English Strategic Health Authority or Scottish Health Board in which CPLC falls.
Administrative county code	County in which CPLC falls.
Administrative district code	Unitary Authority, Metropolitan and Non- Metropolitan District, London Borough or Scottish Council Area in which CPLC falls.
Administrative ward code	Electoral Ward or Division in which CPLC falls.
Postcode type	Indicates whether the user is large, L, or small, S. Large postcode type users receive in excess of 500 pieces of mail. Small users receive 70 pieces per day.

Administrative and health authority codes

Administrative and health authority codes allocation to postcode is by point in polygon comparison against Boundary-Line data.

For administrative/NHS codes, a look-up table in Gridlink is used.

Postcodes with a PQI of 90 or 60 are not allocated codes.

Lineage

Code-Point is derived from Gridlink data – ADDRESS-POINT, which was initially created from a comparison of the Royal Mail PAF, Land-Line and the ROADS database datasets from Ordnance Survey and administrative and national health area codes created by ONS, LPS and NRS, but allocated using Ordnance Survey Boundary-Line data and positioned with an Ordnance Survey NGref.

It also contains the BT postcodes for Northern Ireland, locations for which are supplied by LPS.

Positional accuracy

Each CPLC is coordinated on the National Grid, with eastings and northings quoted to a resolution of 1 metre. The accuracy of each postcode unit coordinate pair is defined by the PQI, which provides a quality statement of that Code-Point record.

Attribute accuracy

The representation of postcode attributes is checked as part of Royal Mail maintenance of PAF and by Ordnance Survey when coordination and quality assurance of ADDRESS-POINT is carried out during field survey activity.

Logical consistency

Logical consistency is a measure of the degree to which Code-Point data agrees with its specified structure. Data is monitored to ensure that attributes are present in the correct format and in valid combinations.

Completeness

Code-Point contains coordinates for all available postcode units supplied to Ordnance Survey from the Royal Mail PAF. Resources are directed towards continually improving attribute and positional accuracy. Deleted postcodes are not included. Errors and omissions that are identified by customers can be referred to Ordnance Survey for investigation and, where appropriate, onward notification to Royal Mail.

Chapter 4 Creating single-space postcodes

Centroids only

Outward and inward bound representation

The current specification represents the postcodes in a set format, which defines the postcodes as having an inward and outward postcode 'code'. Code-Point postcodes have 0, 1 or 2 spaces between the in and out code.

The table below identifies how postcodes are currently shown in the data.

Postcode structure	Number of spaces
AANNNA	0 spaces (represented as AANNNA) for example: PO143RW
ANN NAA	1 space (represented as ANN<>NAA) for example: CB1 1DG
AN NAA	2 spaces (represented as AN<><>NAA) for example: B1 5AP

Single-space postcodes

The Code-Point postcodes are currently represented as above; however, there may be a user requirement to represent each postcode in a uniformed single-space format.

The aim of this section is to offer some guidance on how to process the Code-Point data to generate postcodes with a single space.

The single-space instructions are applicable to both the postcode point and unit polygon products. Microsoft[®] Excel[®], Microsoft Access[®], MapInfo[®] and ESRI[®] GIS formats have been included to provide guidance when using CSV and other formats.

The underlying theory for all of the methods is principally the same, in that all current spaces are removed and then a single space added before the third character from the right.

NOTE: the NTF format is not included in this chapter as it is not compatible to a single-space format.

CSV single-space postcodes using Microsoft Excel and Access

- Open the CSV file with Excel so the data is displayed in columns.

In a new blank column, click in the first cell of the new column (excluding the row column names).

- In the function line, enter in the following function command, where A1 is the column containing the postcode:

=TRIM(LEFT(A1,LEN(A1)-3))&"<s>"&RIGHT(A1,3)

Where <s> indicates a single space.

This should now produce a column containing postcodes with a single space.

The same method can be employed in Access, using an update query rather than the function line. The functions listed above are the same for Access and Excel.

MID/MIF and TAB single-space postcodes using MapInfo

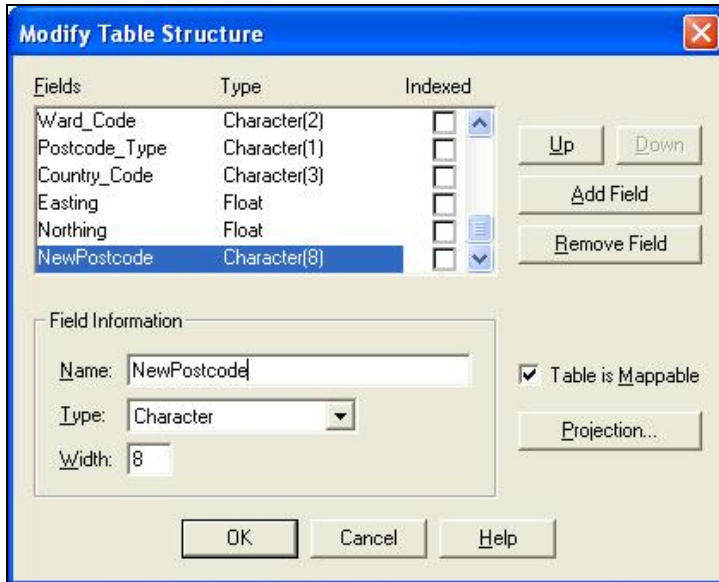
The process within MapInfo is the same, regardless of whether the original supply is in TAB or MID/MIF, as both are imported to MapInfo and opened as a .TAB file.

- First, open the Code-Point data in MapInfo and add a new column to hold the formatted postcode.

To add a column to the TAB file.

- Click on Table→Maintenance→Table Structure.

This opens the following *Modify Table Structure* dialogue box:



NOTE: if the Add Field/Remove Field buttons are missing, then it may be necessary to save a copy of the table and alter the copy.

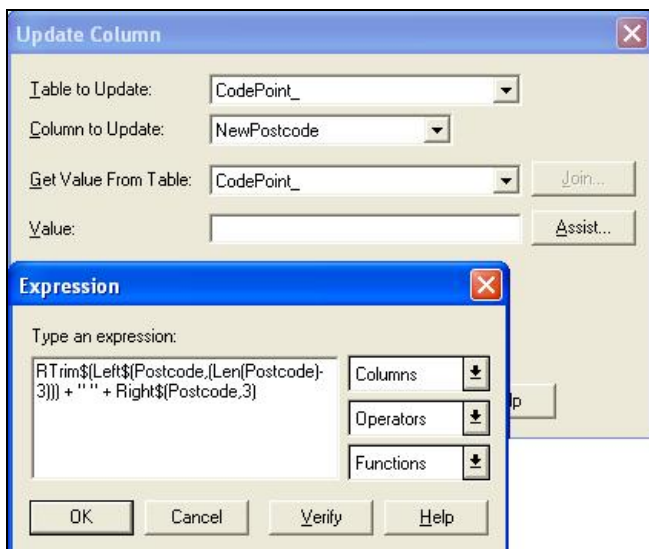
- Click on *Add Field*.

This adds a field to the end of the table.

- *Name* the new column 'NewPostcode' and give it a *Type* of 'Character' and a *Width* of '8'.
- Click the *OK* button to apply the changes.

The final stage is to update the new column.

- Click *Table* and then the *Update column* tab.
- Ensure that the *Table to Update* field has the name of the table you wish to update as its value.
- From the *Column to Update* drop down menu select the previously added column 'NewPostcode' making sure the *Get Value from Table* is the same table as in the *Table to Update* field.



- Click the *Assist* button.
- In the *Type an expression* box, key in the following function command:
`RTrim$(Left$(Postcode,(Len(Postcode)-3))) + "<s>" + Right$(Postcode,3)`
- Click the *OK* button to apply the update.

This will update your new column with a single-space postcode.

Shapefile single-space postcodes using ESRI ArcGIS®

These steps are based on the assumption that the data has already been imported into ArcGIS and that the user has the correct permissions to edit the Shapefile. It is advised to try this method on a copy of the original data, and not the only copy of the data, in case of error.

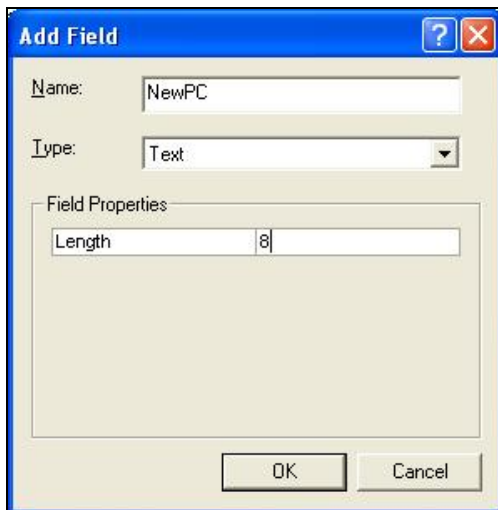
Once the Shapefile is open, the required new fields can be added.

- Right-click on the layer in the *Table of Contents* (down the left-hand side of the *map* window) and open the *Open Attribute Table*.

The first step is to add a new column to hold the newly formatted postcode.

- Click on the *Options* button then click on *Add Field*.

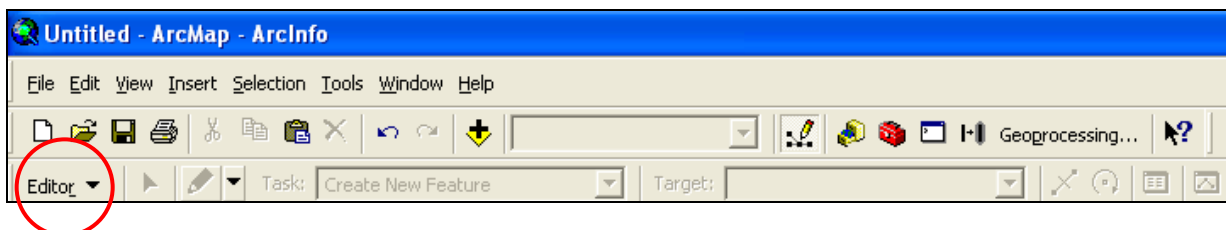
This opens the following dialogue box:



- Key in an appropriate name, for example, 'NewPC' in the *Name* box and change the *Type* box on the drop-down menu to 'text'; also change the *Field Properties Precision/Length* to '8'.
- Click *OK* and the field is added.

The final stage is to update the new column. In order to populate the fields, the table has to be made editable.

Return to the map window. Do not close the attribute table as it will be required later. Click on the *Editor* drop-down selection = ▼.

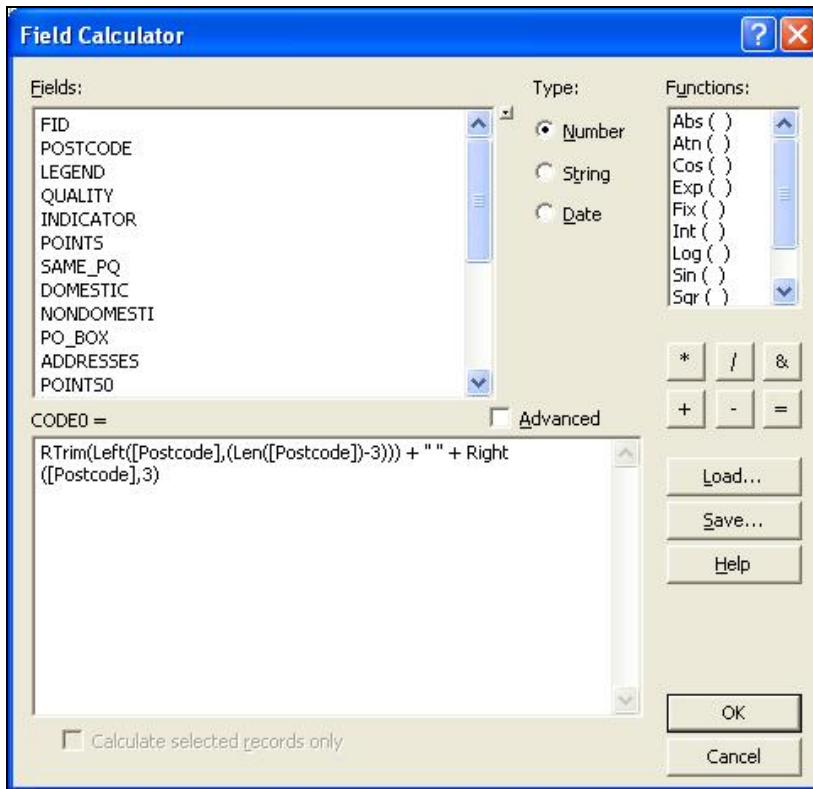


If this toolbar is not already loaded, then right-click on an empty part of the grey area on the map window and all the available tool bars will be listed. Simply click on the *Editor* tool bar and it will be loaded to the toolbar.

- Click the *Editor* drop down and select the first option, *Start Editing*.
- Once *Start Editing* has been selected, return to the attribute table.

- Right-click on the column name of the column added previously, for example, 'NewPC' and select *Calculate Values*.

This opens the following *Field Calculator* dialogue box:



- In the bottom dialog box, enter in the following function command:
RTrim(Left([Postcode],(Len([Postcode])-3))) + "<s>" + Right([Postcode],3)
- Click *OK* to update the column. This will update your new column with a single-space postcode.

Finally, go back to the map window, click on the *Editor* tool bar and select *Stop editing*. It will prompt to save the edits. Click *Yes*.

Chapter 5 Data measures

Ordnance Survey measures the data in its products in one or more of the ways set out in table 1 below.

Table 1: definitions of data measures

Data measure	Definition	Sub-measure	Definition
Completeness	Presence and absence of features against the specified data content*	Omission	Features representing objects that conform to the specified data content but are not present in the data
		Commission	Features representing objects that do not conform to the specified data content but are present in the data
Logical consistency	Degree of adherence to logical rules of data structure, attribution and relationships	Conceptual consistency	How closely the data follows the conceptual rules (or model)
		Domain consistency	How closely the data values in the dataset match the range of values in the dataset specification
		Format consistency	The physical structure (syntax): how closely the data stored and delivered fits the database schema and agreed supply formats
		Topological consistency	The explicit topological references between features (connectivity) – according to specification
Positional accuracy	Accuracy of the position of features	Absolute accuracy	How closely the coordinates of a point in the dataset agree with the coordinates of the same point on the ground (in the British National Grid reference system)
		Relative accuracy	Positional consistency of a data point or feature in relation to other local data points or features within the same or another reference dataset
		Geometric fidelity	The ‘trueness’ of features to the shapes and alignments of the objects they represent*
Temporal accuracy	Accuracy of temporal attributes and temporal relationships of features	Temporal consistency	How well ordered events are recorded in the dataset (life cycles)
		Temporal validity (currency)	Validity of data with respect to time: the amount of real-world change that has been incorporated in the dataset that is scheduled for capture under current specifications
Thematic accuracy (attribute accuracy)	Classification of features and their attributes	Classification correctness	How accurately the attributes within the dataset record the information about objects*

*When testing the data according to the dataset specification against the ‘real world’ or reference dataset.

Annexe A Metadata

Metadata, which is ISO 19115 UK GEMINI 2 compliant, can be found at <http://www.data.gov.uk> and also, metadata .xml files can be found at <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/xml/products/>.

Annexe B Product and service performance report form

Ordnance Survey welcomes feedback from its customers about Code-Point.

If you would like to share your thoughts with us, please print a copy of this form and when completed post or fax it to the address below.

Your name:

Organisation:

Address:

.....

.....

Postcode:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Quotation or order reference:

Please record your comments or feedback in the space below. We will acknowledge receipt of your form within three (3) working days and provide you with a full reply or a status report within 21 working days.

If you are posting this form, please send it to:

Code-Point Product Manager, Ordnance Survey, Adanac Drive, SOUTHAMPTON, SO16 0AS.

If you wish to return it by fax, please dial +44 (0)8450 990494.

Any personal information that you supply with this report form will be used by Ordnance Survey only in the improvement of its products and services. It will not be made available to third parties.

Code-Point

Technical specification

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v2.12 – 11/2012

Introduction

Purpose of this specification and disclaimer

This is the technical specification (hereafter referred to as the specification) applicable to the Code-Point product (hereafter referred to as the product) which is referred to in the Framework Direct Licence, Specific Use Framework Partner Licence or your other customer contract.

Copyright

This specification, (including for the avoidance of doubt any mapping images reproduced herein), is © Crown copyright 2011. All rights reserved.

Any part of this specification may be copied for use internally in your organisation or business so that you can use Code-Point for the purpose for which it is licensed to your organisation or business (but not otherwise).

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No part of this specification may be copied or incorporated in products, services or publications that you generate for onward sale, or as free promotional or support materials, without the prior written consent of Ordnance Survey.

Using this specification

The documentation is supplied in portable document format (PDF) only. Free Adobe® Reader® software, which displays the specification, incorporates search and zoom facilities and allows you to navigate within. Hyperlinks are used to navigate between associated parts of the specification and to relevant Internet resources by clicking on the blue hyperlinks and the table of contents.

If you are unfamiliar with any words or terms used and require clarification please refer to the glossary at the end of the document at [annexe A](#) (attached to this specification).

Chapter 1 Introducing Code-Point

Requirements to use Code-Point

What you need to use Code-Point

Code-Point is a data product and does not include software for analysis but can be used with a variety of programs. Code-Point can be loaded onto any desktop PC. Consult your geographical information system (GIS) vendor to establish actual system requirements.

Supply definition

Code-Point is only available as national cover of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and is supplied on CD-ROM containing CSV and NTF data.

Update

Updates are supplied quarterly and provided as a complete resupply, but do not include deleted postcodes.

File sizes

File sizes for Great Britain are approximately: NTF – 306 Mb CSV – 192 Mb

Code-Point data structure

There are two folders in the root directory: *DOC* and *Data*.

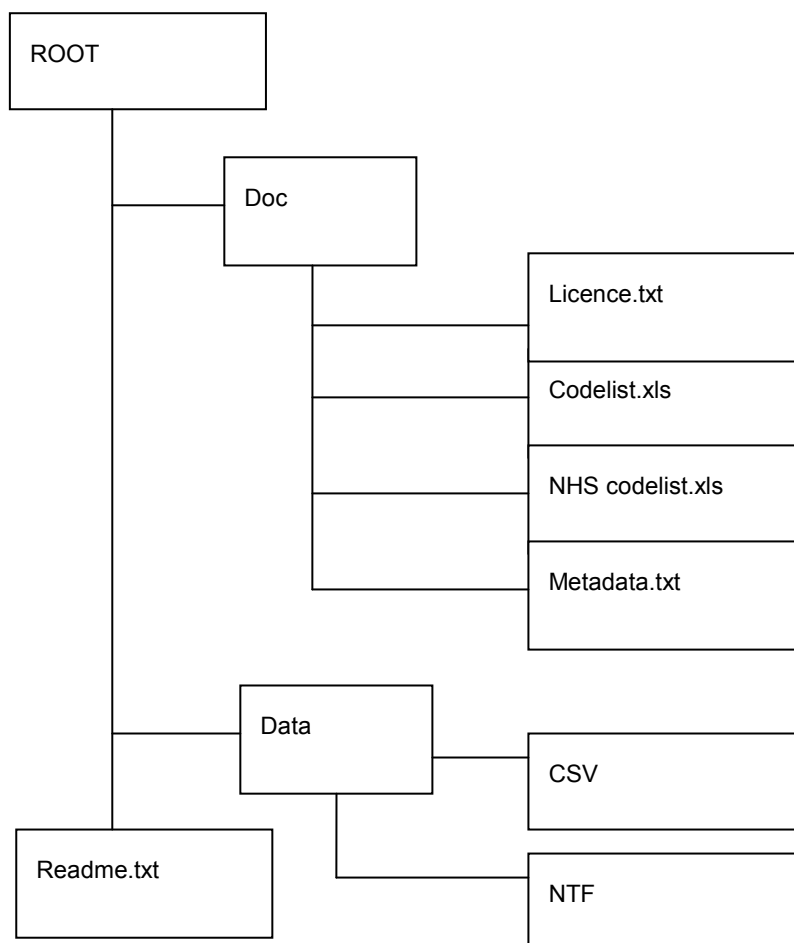
The *Doc* folder contains the following files:

- LICENCE.TXT – important licence information
- CODELIST.XLS – lookup table of GSS codes
- NHS_CODELIST.XLS – lookup table of health GSS Codes
- METADATA.TXT – number of postcode units in each postcode area
- Code-Point Open column headers – description of column headers

The *Data* folder contains the following sub-folders:

- CSV – Contains 121 postcode area files in CSV format.
- NTF – Contains 121 postcode area files in NTF.

Structure of Code-Point CD-ROM



Code-Point content

Code-Point provides the following data:

- administrative county code;
- administrative district code;
- administrative ward code;
- country code;
- National Grid CPLC;
- National Health Service regional health authority code;
- National Health Service health authority code;
- postcode type;
- PQI; and
- postcode unit.
- number of delivery points with the same PQI as the postcode unit itself;
- number of delivery points that are PO Boxes;
- number of domestic delivery points;
- number of non-domestic delivery points;
- number of premises with a matched address;
- number of unmatched delivery points;

- PO Box indicator; and
- total number of delivery points within postcode unit.

Formats

NTF

Code-Point is supplied in NTF v2.0 level 2, which has been formally recognised as a British Standard – BS 7567.

The structure of Code-Point supplied in NTF is described in [chapter 2](#) and [chapter 3](#) of the technical specification.

CSV

The structure of Code-Point supplied in CSV is described in [chapter 4](#) and [chapter 5](#) of the technical specification.

Chapter 2 NTF explained

An overview of the data in NTF

Introduction

This chapter gives an outline of the data structure of Code-Point in NTF. It should be read in conjunction with [chapter 3](#).

There are certain conventions used in the record examples, which are:

- [] Square brackets are placed around record names, for example, [VOLHDREC].
- { } A pair of braces denote field names, for example, {REC_DESC} is the record descriptor field.
- [] 21 A two-digit number following square brackets denotes the record descriptor, which uniquely identifies the record name between the brackets.
- <S> This is the space character (ASCII code 32).
- <3S> This denotes three successive space characters.
- % The percentage character (ASCII code 37).

Record size

NTF data is written to the supply media in variable length records, with a maximum physical record length of 80 characters, which includes {CONT_MARK} continuation mark and {EOR} record terminator.

Continuation mark {CONT_MARK}

Continuation records are used where the maximum physical record length of 80 characters does not permit a logical record to be transferred wholly within one physical record. The presence of a continuation record is indicated by the value of the continuation mark {CONT_MARK} that immediately precedes the record terminator {EOR}. The value of {CONT_MARK} is 1 if there is a continuation record present and 0 if there is not.

Record terminator {EOR}

The last character of each physical record is the end of record terminator, which is the percent character (%) (ASCII 37).

Transfer set

A transfer set normally equates to a single file.

Transfer set structure

Volume records

Each transfer set starts with a compulsory Volume Header Record [VOLHDREC] and terminates with a compulsory Volume Terminator Record [VOLTERM].

Database records

Database records transfer information common to all data and their presentation in the subsequent section(s). An NTF transfer set will comprise one database. The database commences with a Database Header Record [DBHREC], which sets up the database. It will be followed by a number of Attribute Description Records [ATTDESC] and Feature Classification Records [FEATCLASS].

Database Header Record [DBHREC]

This mandatory record indicates the commencement of a database and gives details of:

- the database name;
- NTF release date;
- the supply option; and
- creation date that applies to the whole transfer set.

Attribute Description Record [ATTDESC]

These records list and give descriptions of the attributes that can be applied to the features within the transfer set.

Feature Classification Record [FEATCLASS]

These records list and give descriptions of the feature codes that can be present within the transfer set.

Section records

The section records contain the Code-Point data within the postcode area being transferred by that section. It starts with the Section Header Record [SECHREC] and is followed by a number of Section Data Records that contain data on all the postcode units within the section. In Code-Point, these data records consist of a sequence of three logical records, which is repeated for each postcode unit within the section.

Section Header Record [SECHREC]

This mandatory record starts a section. It contains information and parameters essential for understanding, interpreting and processing some of the fields within the data. It establishes the unit of measure for X and Y coordinates, origins and other constants.

Point Record [POINTREC]

This record identifies the start of the data for a single postcode unit and contains a feature serial number that is unique within any one section.

Geometry Record [GEOMETRY1]

This record contains the coordinate position of the postcode unit identified in the previous point record. All coordinate values within Code-Point are given with a precision of 1 metre.

Attribute Record [ATTREC]

The Attribute Record gives the attributes or details of the postcode unit, for example, the postcode itself, PQI and so on. This logical record may have one or more continuation records to transfer all the attribute information.

Supply of data on media

Formatted media

Data requested on logically formatted media such as CD-ROM, as defined by current Ordnance Survey product specifications, will be written directly to the output device. The data files will be written to the medium sequentially.

See also [chapter 3](#).

Chapter 3 Record structures for the transfer of Code-Point in NTF

NTF record list

This list comprises the valid record types used in the Code-Point NTF transfer set.

Descriptor	Description	Record name
01	Volume Header Record – defines the donor and data type.	[VOLHDREC]
02	Database Header Record – transfers data about the database.	[DBHREC]
40	Attribute Description Record – defines attribute descriptions and their fields.	[ATTDESC]
05	Feature Classification Record – defines data classifications.	[FEATCLASS]
07	Section Header Record – coordinate and structure types, unit scale factors and so on.	[SECHREC]
15	Point Record – identifies the definition of a postcode unit.	[POINTREC]
21	Geometry Record – defines the two-dimensional geometry for a postcode unit.	[GEOMETRY1]
14	Attribute Record – defines the attributes or details of a postcode unit.	[ATTREC]
99	Volume Terminator Record – defines the end of the transfer set.	[VOLTERM]

Volume Header Record [VOLHDREC] 01

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	01	Record type identifier
DONOR	03:22	A20	ORDNANCE SURVEY<5S>	
RECIPIENT	23:42	A20	<20S>	Not used
TRANDATE	43:50	D8	20051110	Date of processing CCYYMMDD
SERIAL	51:54	I4	0000	Customer sequence number
VOLNUM	55:56	I2	01	Volume number (always 01)
NTFLEVEL	57:57	I1	2	NTF Level 2
NTFVER	58:61	R4,2	0200	NTF Version 2.00
NTFOR	62:62	A1	V	Variable length records
EOR	63:63	A1	%	Sets {EOR} to % on formatted media
DIVIDER	64:64	A1	\	Divider used to terminate variable length text fields
CONT_MARK	65:65	I1	0	No continuation record
EOR	66:66	A1	%	Record terminator

Record example:

01ORDNANCE SURVEY	2005111000000120200V	\0%
.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8	12345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890

Template

Database Header Record [DBHREC] 02

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	02	Record type identifier
DBNAME	03:22	A20	CODE_POINT_2005.4.0<S>	Database name – Code-Point dataset version
DDNAME	23:42	A20	DEFAULT_02.00<7S>	Standard NTF data dictionary name
DDDATE	43:50	D8	19920515	Date of standard data dictionary
DDBASE	51:70	A20	<20S>	Not used
DDBDATE	71:78	D8	00000000	Not used
CONT_MARK	79:79	A1	1	Continuation record follows
EOR	80:80	A1	%	Record terminator

Continuation of Database Header Record

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	00	Continuation record identifier
FCNAME	03:22	A20	CODE_POINT_03.02<4S>	Code-Point specification version 3.02 (see note)
FCDATE	23:30	D8	20051104	Creation date of dataset
DQNAME	31:50	A20	<20S>	Not used
DQDATE	51:58	D8	00000000	Not used
DATA_MODEL	59:60	I2	02	Data model type – spaghetti
CONT_MARK	61:61	A1	0	No continuation record
EOR	62:62	A1	%	Record terminator

NOTES: the Code-Point specification version number gives the major version before the decimal point (3 in the above example) and after it the supply option (2 in the example).

CODE_POINT_03.02 = Code-Point product

Record example:

```
02CODE_POINT_2002.1.0 DEFAULT_02.00      19920515      000000001%
00CODE_POINT_03.02      19990401      00000000020%
```

.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8
12345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890
.....

Template

Attribute Description Record [ATTDESC] 40

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	40	Record type identifier
VAL_TYPE	03:04	A2	PR	Attribute mnemonic, for example, PO Box indicator
FWIDTH	05:07	A3	001 or <3S>	Fixed width of attribute or three spaces if variable width
FINTER	08:12	A5	A1<3S>	Interpretation of field (A* if variable width)
ATT_NAME	13:*	A*	PO Box indicator	Name given to attribute
DIVIDER	*:*	A1	\	
CONT_MARK	*:*	A1	0	No continuation record
EOR	*:*	A1	%	Record terminator

NOTES: an attribute description will be needed to describe all attributes used in Code-Point data. All the attributes that may appear within the data are given in the record examples below.

Record examples:

```

40PC007A7 Postcode unit\0%
40PQ002I2 Positional quality indicator\0%
40PR001A1 PO box indicator\0%
40TP003I3 Total number of delivery points\0%
40DQ003I3 Delivery points with same PQI as unit itself\0%
40RP003I3 Domestic delivery points\0%
40BP003I3 Non-domestic delivery points\0%
40PD003I3 PO box delivery points\0%
40MP003I3 Matched address premises\0%
40UM003I3 Unmatched delivery points\0%
40CY009A9 Country code\0%
40RH009A9 NHS regional health authority code\0%
40LH009A9 NHS health authority code\0%
40CC009A9 Administrative county code\0%
40DC009A9 Administrative district code\0%
40WC009A9 Administrative ward code\0%
40LS001A1 Postcode type\0%

```

.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8
12345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890
.....

Template

Feature Classification Record [FEATCLASS] 05

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	05	Record descriptor
FEAT_CODE	03:06	I4	2801	Feature code
CODE_COM	07:16	A10	<10S>	Not used
STCLASS	17:36	A20	<20S>	Not used
FEATDES	37:*	A*	Unit Postcode Point	Textual description of feature classification
DIVIDER	*:*	A1	\	Divider used to terminate variable length fields
CONT_MARK	*:*	I1	0	No continuation record
EOR	*:*	A1	%	Record terminator

* = variable integer.

Record example:

052801	Unit Postcode Point\0%		
.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8	12345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890	

Template

Section Header Record [SECHREC] 07

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	07	Record type identifier
SECT_REF	03:12	A10	SO<8S>	Postcode area covered by dataset
COORD_TYPE	13:13	I1	2	Defines rectangular coordinates
STRUC_TYP	14:14	I1	1	Defines vector data
XYLEN	15:19	I5	00007	Defines {X_COORD}, {Y_COORD} as seven-digit fields
XY_UNIT	20:20	I1	2	Defines X and Y units as metres
XY_MULT	21:30	R10,3	0000001000	Multiply X and Y coordinates by 1.000
ZLEN	31:35	I5	00006	Defines Z coordinates as six-digit fields
Z_UNIT	36:36	I1	2	Defines Z units as metres
Z_MULT	37:46	R10,3	0000001000	Multiply Z units by 1.000
X_ORIG	47:56	I10	0000000000	Origin of National Grid, zero
Y_ORIG	57:66	I10	0000000000	Origin of National Grid, zero
Z_DATUM	67:76	I10	0000000000	Not used
CONT_MARK	77:77	A1	1	Continuation record follows
EOR	78:78	A1	%	Record terminator

Continuation of Section Header Record

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	00	Continuation record identifier
XMIN	03:12	I10	0000000000	Not used
YMIN	13:22	I10	0000000000	Not used
XMAX	23:32	I10	0000000000	Not used
YMAX	33:42	I10	0000000000	Not used
XY_ACC	43:47	R5,2	00000	Not used
Z_ACC	48:52	R5,2	00000	Not used
SURV_DATE	53:60	D8	00000000	Not used
LAST_AMND	61:68	D8	00000000	Not used
COPYRIGHT	69:76	D8	19990401	Effective copyright date
CONT_MARK	77:77	A1	0	No continuation record
EOR	78:78	A1	%	Record terminator

Record example:

```
07SO      21000072000000100000006200000010000000000000000000000000000001%
0000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000019990401%
.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8
1234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890
```

Template

Point Record [POINTREC] 15

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	15	Record type identifier
POINT_ID	03:08	I6	000051	Feature serial number (range: 000001–999999)
VAL_TYPE	09:10	A2	<2S>	Not used
VALUE	11:16	A6	<6S>	Not used
FEAT_CODE	17:20	A4	2801	Point feature code
CONT_MARK	21:21	A1	0	No continuation record
EOR	22:22	A1	%	Record terminator

Record example:

15000051 28010%

.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8
12345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890
.....

Template

Geometry Record [GEOMETRY1] 21

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	21	Record type identifier
GEOM_ID	03:08	I6	000000	Not used
GTYPE	09:09	A1	1	Defines point geometry
NUM_COORD	10:13	I4	0001	Number of coordinate pairs
X_COORD	14:20	I7	0272530	Easting
Y_COORD	21:27	I7	0196956	Northing
QPLAN	28:28	A1	<S>	Not used
CONT_MARK	29:29	A1	0	No continuation record or
			1	continuation record follows
EOR	30:30	A1	%	Record terminator

Postcodes that have no coordinated position will be given zero coordinates ('00000000000000') and the positional quality indicator in the accompanying Attribute Record will be set to '0'.

Record examples:

2100000001000102725300196956 0%

.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8
123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890
.....

Template

Attribute Record [ATTREC] 14

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	14	Record type identifier
ATT_ID	03:08	I6	000000	Not used
VAL_TYPE	09:10	A2	PC	Attribute mnemonic
VALUE	11:*		SO515RU	Attribute value
CONT_MARK	*.*	A1	0	No continuation record or
			1	continuation record follows
EOR	*.*	A1	%	Record terminator

The pair of fields {VAL_TYPE} and {VALUE} will repeat to specify all the attributes required. It may be necessary to use a continuation record to specify all attributes.

The Attribute Record will contain all or some of the following fields:

Attribute mnemonic	Description	Fixed or variable	Size
PC	Postcode unit	F	A7
PQ	Positional quality indicator	F	I2
PR	PO Box indicator	F	A1
TP	Total number of delivery points	F	I3
DQ	Delivery points – used to create the CPLC where PQI value is 10 or 20	F	I3
RP	Domestic delivery points	F	I3
BP	Non-domestic delivery points	F	I3
PD	PO Box delivery points	F	I3
MP	Matched address premises	F	I3
UM	Unmatched delivery points	F	I3
CY	Country code	F	A9
RH	NHS regional health authority code	F	A9
LH	NHS health authority code	F	A9
CC	Administrative county code	F	A9
DC	Administrative district code	F	A9
WC	Administrative ward code	F	A9
LS	Postcode type	F	A1

Attributes with null data will be omitted from this record.

Each of the attribute mnemonics will be defined in an Attribute Description Record [ATTDESC] 40 at the start of the transfer set.

Record example:

```
14000000PCSO515RUPQ10PRNTP017DQ017RP016BP001PD000MP017UM000CYE92000001RHE190001%
00002LHE18000009CCE10000014DCE07000093WCE050046490%
```

.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8
12345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890
.....

Template

Volume Terminator Record [VOLTERM] 99

Field	Position	Format	Value example	Description
REC_DESC	01:02	A2	99	Record type identifier
FREE_TEXT	03: *	A*	*	Message (see note below)
CONT_VOL	*.*	I1	0	No continuation volume follows
EOR	*.*	A1	%	Record terminator

NOTE: the FREE_TEXT field will comprise the message: End Of Transfer Set.

Record example:

99End Of Transfer Set0%

.....1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8
12345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890
.....

Template

Chapter 4 Comma-separated values (CSV) explained

An overview of the data in CSV format

CSV is a method of delivering data. This is provided to suit customers who have a simple business use. CSV can be used in a word-processing package or presented as a spreadsheet. Code-Point information in CSV is held within individual fields. Each field is either textual, for example, SO515RU, or numeric, for example, 21. Within CSV, each field is separated from the next by a comma. If the field is textual, then the text is enclosed in double quotes, for example, "SO515RU".

This method of representation can also be referred to as a comma delimited file (CDF). All coordinate values within Code-Point are given with a precision of 1 metre.

See also [chapter 5](#).

Chapter 5 Record structures for the transfer of Code-Point in CSV

CSV fields

The CSV will contain the following fields separated by commas in the following order:

Mnemonic	Description	Format	Size	Description
PC	Postcode unit	A7	7	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
PQ	Positional quality indicator	I2	1	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
PR	PO Box indicator	A1	1	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
TP	Total number of delivery points	I3	*	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
DQ	Delivery points – used to create the CPLC where the PQI value is 10 or 20	I3	*	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
RP	Domestic delivery points	I3	*	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
BP	Non-domestic delivery points	I3	*	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
PD	PO Box delivery points	I3	*	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
MP	Matched address premises	I3	*	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
UM	Unmatched delivery points	I3	*	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
EA	Eastings	I6	*	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
NO	Northings	I7	*	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
CY	Country code	A9	9	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
RH	NHS regional health authority code	A9	9	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
LH	NHS health authority code	A9	9	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
CC	Administrative county code	A9	9	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
DC	Administrative district code	A9	9	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
WC	Administrative ward code	A9	9	
	Field separator	A1	1	,
LS	Postcode type	A1	1	

Those fields containing text, that is, alphanumerics (A), will be enclosed by double quotes, which have not been included in the sizes listed above.

Fields with null data will appear as " " for text or 0 for a numeric.

Each record will be terminated with a carriage return character (ASCII 13) and a line feed character (ASCII 10).

Examples of a Code-Point CSV record:

```
"EX11AE",10,"N",3,3,3,0,0,1,0,291960,92581,"E92000001","E19000002","E18000010","E10000008","E07000041","E05003498","S"
```

Annexe A Glossary

The purpose of this section is to provide a glossary of terms used in the definition of products, services, licensing and other terms and conditions for Code-Point. Where terms refer to other terms within the glossary, they are connected by means of hot links to the relevant entries.

addressed premise

A permanent or non-permanent building structure with an address being a potential delivery point for Royal Mail.

Examples of an addressed premise would be: a house, a flat within a block of flats, a caravan site, a bollard to which several houseboats may be moored, or an organisation occupying the whole of a building.

ADDRESS-POINT

An Ordnance Survey addressing product that relates Royal Mail [Postcode Address File](#) (PAF) addressed properties within Great Britain to the [National Grid](#).

area-based postcode

A type of [large-user postcode](#) that is allocated to a small number of organisations who receive an exceptionally large amount of mail. These postcodes still relate to a geographical area but may overlap other sector areas or be scattered.

building

A physical, walled structure connected to foundations that has, or will have, a roof. This definition includes buildings surveyed at foundation stage.

CPLC(Code-Point location coordinate)

A [National Grid reference](#) for each [postcode unit](#). It is a two-dimensional coordinated point to a resolution of 1 metre. Coordinates are attributed from Gridlink using an accuracy hierarchy.

Country code

The code used by the Office of National Statistics to indicate the country in which the Code-Point georeference lies. This has replaced the PAF update date field.

Country	Code
England	E92000001
Scotland	S92000003
Wales	W92000004
N Ireland	N92000002

Comma-separated values (CSV)

The CSV file format is commonly used to exchange data between different applications, for example, Microsoft Excel and Access. Being text files, CSV files can also be viewed in *Notepad*.

delivery point

A Royal Mail-defined point to which mail is delivered. This may be a property (private address), organisation, mailbox or even, very rarely, the name of an individual. These categories are derived from the *Programmers' Guide* from Royal Mail. This is distinct from the addressed premise because there may be more than one organisation at an address.

Gridlink

Gridlink is the name given to a joined-up Government initiative involving Royal Mail, the Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland (NRS), Land & Property Services and Ordnance Survey. All these organisations are involved in the georeferencing of postcodes and the relating of postcodes to administrative and National Health Service areas and so on.

inward code or incode

See [postcode](#).

large-user postcode

A large-user postcode is allocated when:

- a firm or business at a new address regularly receives, in any one day, 500 or more items of mail in a town area or 50 or more items in a rural area;
- a private box (PO Box) is provided;
- Royal Mail Selectapost service is provided;
- a Business Reply or Freepost licence is taken out; or
- all Freepost and Business Replies have their own postcode.

matched address

An address, resulting from a match between the OS MasterMap Topography Layer data and PAF, which has been allocated a coordinate position. The match may be a result of either manual or automatic matching, the latter encompassing both full and 'fuzzy logic' matching.

National Grid reference (NGref)

The National Grid provides a unique reference system that can be applied to all Ordnance Survey maps of Great Britain. The map of Great Britain is covered by 100 km by 100 km grid squares, with the origin lying to the west of the Isles of Scilly. When a National Grid reference is quoted, the easting (left to right direction) is always given before the northing (upwards direction).

A National Grid reference (to 1 metre) will identify the spatial position of the [CPLC](#).

non-geographic postcodes

Special non-geographic postcodes are allocated to single organisations who receive an exceptionally large amount of mail. These are included in Code-Point.

National Transfer Format (NTF)

A vector interchange format used to distribute digital map products from Ordnance Survey that conforms to BS 7567 (Electronic transfer of geographic information (NTF)).

outward code or outcode

See [postcode](#).

PAF (Postcode Address File)

The PAF was created when all the separately held information was assembled and stored on a Royal Mail central computer system. PAF now contains the postal addresses and postcodes of approximately 28 million delivery points in Great Britain, including approximately 200 000 [large users](#).

positional quality (PQ)

The positional quality value is a flag used in Gridlink to indicate the positional accuracy of the Gridlink coordinates allocated to each postcode record.

All postcodes are to 1 m resolution, but Gridlink will seek to provide the most accurate coordinates according to the hierarchy detailed in the following table.

Status value	Description of status values
1	Automatically calculated to be within the building of the matched address closest to the postcode mean.
2	As for status value 1, except by visual inspection of OS MasterMap Topography Layer maps.
3	Approximate to within 50 m of true position.
4	Postcode unit mean – (mean of matched addresses with the same postcode, but not snapped to a building).
5	Postcode imputed by ONS by reference to surrounding known postcodes.
6	Postcode sector mean – mainly PO Boxes.
8	Postcode terminated. No postcodes of this type will be provided by Gridlink, nor should they be provided to Gridlink. Consortium members may wish to hold this information for historical purposes. The accuracy of the data is as indicated by its status value immediately prior to its termination.
9	No coordinates available.

positional quality indicator (PQI)

The positional accuracy of the Code-Point coordinates is indicated by a PQI. There are seven PQI values for the positional quality of CPLCs.

postal address

A postal address is a delivery point that is currently receiving mail. There may be many delivery points within an individual building structure as shown in OS MasterMap Topography Layer data.

postcode

An abbreviated form of address, made up of combinations of between five and seven alphanumeric characters. A postcode may cover between 1 and 100 addresses. The average number of addresses per postcode is 15.

There are two main components of a postcode:

- The outward code (also called outcode). The first two to four characters of the postcode, constituting the postcode area and the postcode district. It is the part of the postcode that enables mail to be sent from the accepting office to the correct area for delivery.
- The inward code (also called incode). The last three characters of the postcode, constituting the postcode sector and the postcode unit. It is used to sort mail at the local delivery office.

For example:

Outward		Inward	
NW	6	4	DP
			Unit
		Sector	
	District		
Area			

postcode area

An area given a unique alphabetic coding by Royal Mail to facilitate the delivering of mail. The area is identified by one or two alpha characters at the start of the full postcode, the letters being derived from a town, city or district falling within the postcode area. There are, at present, 120 postcode areas in Great Britain, for example, SO for Southampton, MK for Milton Keynes, B for Birmingham or W for London West. The postcode area code constitutes the first part of the outward code.

postcode district

A sub-area of the postcode area, specified by the character sub-string within the first half of a full postcode, which may be numeric, alphabetic or alphanumeric; for example, 42 from MK42 6GH or 1A from W1A 4WW. There are approximately 2 986 postcode districts in Great Britain.

NOTE: there are certain non-geographic districts. In these instances, a district code is allocated to cover all large users in the postcode area.

postcode sector

A sub-area of a postcode district, whose area is identified by the number third from the end of a full postcode. There are approximately 11 200 postcode sectors in Great Britain. An example of a postcode sector code is 3, from GU12 3DH.

postcode unit

A sub-area of a **postcode sector**, indicated by the two letters of the **inward postcode**, which identifies one or more **small-user postcode** delivery points or an individual **large-user postcode**. There are approximately 1.7 million postcode units in the UK.

Post office (PO) box

Generally, a non-geographic address allocated with a number by the Post Office®. PO Boxes within ADDRESS-POINT are now matched to the Royal Mail delivery office at which they are based (except in the BT postcode area), rather than the average of matched addresses within the postcode sector. This will enable PO Boxes to be matched with a PQI value of 10.

Postzon

A file marketed by Royal Mail that allocates a [National Grid reference](#) to each postcode unit. This coordinate is derived from a 100 metre square that contains the first of the range of addresses that form the postcode unit.