APPENDIX C
Valid Postcode Format

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Guidance on recording valid postcodes

The postcode is a combination of between five and seven letters/numbers which
define four different levels of geographic unit. It is part of a coding system created
and used by the Royal Mail across the United Kingdom for sorting mail. The
postcodes are an abbreviated form of address, which enable a group of delivery
points (a delivery point being a property or a post box) to be specifically identified.

Full valid postcodes can be located at the Royal Mail Postcode finder website,
http://www.royalmail.com/postcode-finder

Each postcode consists of two parts. The first part is the outward postcode, or
outcode. This is separated by a single space from the second part, which is the
inward postcode, or incode.

The outward postcode enables mail to be sent to the correct local area for delivery.
This part of the code contains the area and the district to which the mail is to be
delivered.

The inward postcode is used to sort the mail at the local area delivery office. It
consists of a numeric character followed by two alphabetic characters. The numeric
character identifies the sector within the postal district. The alphabetic characters
then define one or more properties within the sector.

For example: PO1 3AX

PO refers to the postcode area of Portsmouth. There are 124 postcode areas
in the UK.

PO1 refers to a postcode district within the postcode area of Portsmouth. There
are approximately 2,900 postcode districts.

PO1 3 refers to the postcode sector. There are approximately 9,650 postcode
sectors.

PO1 3AX. The AX completes the postcode. The last two letters define the ‘unit
postcode’ which identifies one or more small user delivery points or an
individual large user. There are approximately 1.71 million unit postcodes in the
UK.
**Valid Formats**

The following is a list of the valid formats of postcode. An ‘A’ indicates an alphabetic character, an ‘N’ indicates a numeric character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcode</td>
<td>Incode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>NAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANN</td>
<td>NAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAN</td>
<td>NAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AANN</td>
<td>NAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>NAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AANA</td>
<td>NAA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Where ▼ represents a space)

The following characters are never used in the inward part of the postcode:

C I K M O V

**Generic postcode format**

The following fields in the ILR for 2012/13 may require a generic postcode to be used in some cases:

- Current Postcode
- Postcode Prior to enrolment
- Delivery location postcode

Where this is the case the postcode should follow the format:

ZZ99\n9ZZ

and be left justified with a single space between the inward and outward components.

All of the postcode fields in the ILR are mandatory for 2013/14. If the postcode is unknown then generic postcode detailed above must be returned.

For 2013/14, the generic postcode of ZZ99 ZZZ, which was available in 2012/13 and previous years has been discontinued and must be replaced by ZZ99 9ZZ.