UK Postcodes

This document explains the rules for constructing and validating UK postcodes..

Postcode construction

The postcode consists of four parts; the Area, District, Sector and Walk.

The Area and District form the first or "outward" half and specify the letter's journey from the receiving sorting office to the destination sorting office.

The Sector and Walk form the "inward" part of the journey, and assign the letter to a particular postman and identify the group of buildings to which it should be delivered

Formats

The following formats are valid for UK postcodes, where A represents a letter and N represents a single numeric digit:

Outward	Inward	Notes
AN	NAA	
ANN	NAA	
AAN	NAA	
AANN	NAA	
AANA	NAA	
AAA	NAA	Only used for Girobank, GIR 0AA

Rules

As of 2003, there are 124 postcode Areas (represented by either 1 or 2 letters), 2900 Districts and 9500 Sectors. Based on the current coding, the following rules are true:

- Letters Q, V and X are never used for the first character
- Letters I, J and Z are never used for the second character (except for Girobank)
- The only letters used for the third character are AEHMNPRTVXY
- The only letters used for the fourth character of the outward part are ABEHMNPRVWXY
- Letters CIKMOV are never used for the last two characters

Dave Willis Hints & Tips disclaimer

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