Below are key issues with the privatisation that you can mention when talking to the press, politicians, community groups and local businesses. Consider which points will be of most concern to your audience and lead with them. There is a detailed briefing on these issues in the resources section.

**DETERIORATION OF SERVICE**

Impact on customers: Evidence from Citizens Advice shows that privatising post offices results in longer queues and service times, inferior customer service and advice, poor disabled access, and fewer counter positions.

Worst retailer on the high street: WHSmith - the chain taking over these post office counters - was voted the worst retailer on the high street in the Which? 2018 survey. It has finished in the bottom two retailers for the last 8 years.

**IMPACT ON THE WORKERS AND LOCALITY**

A low wage employer: WHSmith's business model is based on poor quality, low wage and part time work, for which they rely on students. WHSmith advertised for flexible post office counter staff at an hourly rate of just £7.83p, in places where TUPE discussions with current Post Office staff had not taken place. The replacement of well-paid quality jobs with the lowest possible pay and poor conditions is an exploitation of staff and the local area.

High Street: Closing a post office can have a devastating impact on the high street as they are often sited in prime locations and provide lots of custom for surrounding businesses. With high streets already under threat, this latest assault could be the last straw for some of the 41 areas losing their standalone post office premises.

No consultation: Despite owning the post office – it is a public asset – the public are being deliberately excluded from having a say over whether they want their post offices to be privatised.

**A RUINOUS BUSINESS PLAN AND NO LESSONS LEARNT**

WHSmith could fold: Like Woolworths and BHS, WHSmith's high street stores could well fold due to their poor performance. This is being openly talked about by, for example, the Financial Times.

Nonetheless, Post Office Ltd has chosen this retailer to take over these post office counters, with no contingency plan should the worst happen. This is particularly unforgiveable, given that previously the Post Office Ltd located post office counters in ‘Bargain Booze', which also folded and forced them to cobble together a rescue plan.

Use of public money to privatise a public asset: To make matters worse, public money is being used to bankroll the privatisation. Everything from compromise agreements that help get rid of existing staff and avoid TUPE (which we estimate will cost at least £30m this time round), to installing counters in WHSmith's premises, is paid for with public money.

**THE FUTURE OF THE POST OFFICE – A PLAN FOR GROWTH**

Post Bank: Post Office Ltd's management of the business lacks the innovative plan for growth that is so desperately needed. This is clear from the fact that the modest profit it has made (£13 in 2017/18) is equal it's cuts to staff costs, and that it sees fit to hand our post offices to the worst retailer on the high street (which also has a poor record of providing this service and is itself in jeopardy).

Rather than ending the entire network by choking off the service through poor provision, they should be looking at new services such as a Post Bank.
The Minister has repeatedly said that this is a ‘commercial decision’ for the Post Office Ltd, and the Government only gives ‘strategic direction’, but when public money is being used and a public asset is at stake, then the Government has a responsibility to step in.