



Consumer advocacy bodies:  
Statutory Notification  
of modification  
of Essential Condition 1

Publication date:

Notification  
1 April 2014



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## Section 1

# Decision

- 1.1 On 27 March 2012 we published our Statement ‘Securing the Universal Postal Service: Decision on the new regulatory framework’ (the “March 2012 Statement”).<sup>1</sup> This set out our decision on the regulatory framework for the postal sector, including the imposition of an Essential Condition under section 49 of the Postal Services Act 2011 (the “Act”) in accordance with section 53 and paragraph 3 of Schedule 6 of the Act. The Condition as made and notified on 27 March 2012 is available at Annex 13 of the March 2012 Statement (the “Essential Condition”).
- 1.2 On 5 December 2013, a draft statutory instrument under the Public Bodies Act 2011, the Public Bodies (Abolition of the National Consumer Council and Transfer of the Office of Fair Trading's Functions in relation to Estate Agents etc) Order 2014 (the “Order”), was laid before Parliament. The Order was made on 13 March 2014 to come into force on 1 April 2014 (SI 2014/631). It abolishes the National Consumer Council and transfers relevant functions to the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, the Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland.
- 1.3 On 30 January 2014, we consulted on a proposed modification of the Essential Condition to reflect the changes made by the Order. Our proposed modification replaced the defined term “Council” with a defined term “consumer advocacy bodies” in the definitions section and paragraphs 7.6 and 7.7 of the Essential Condition.
- 1.4 After a review of the responses received, set out in section 2 of the Statement accompanying this Notification, we have now decided in accordance with section 53 and paragraph 3 of Schedule 6 to the Postal Services Act 2011 and pursuant to powers in section 49 of the Act, to modify the Essential Condition to implement this change.
- 1.5 This notification does not include a marked-up version of Essential Condition because the changes are so small. A clean copy of the modified Essential Condition is set out in Schedule 1.
- 1.6 This revised version replaces the previous published version notified on 27th March 2012 and takes effect when this notification is published.
- 1.7 Ofcom is satisfied that this modification satisfies the general test in paragraph 1 of Schedule 6 to the Act and the requirements of section 49.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/review-of-regulatory-conditions/statement/>

Modification of E1

1.8 Copies of this Notice and the accompanying statement will be notified to the Secretary of State in accordance with paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 to the Act.

Signed by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Rowsell", written over a horizontal line.

**Chris Rowsell**  
**Competition Policy Director**

A person duly authorised by Ofcom under paragraph 18 of the Schedule to the Office of Communications Act 2002

**1 April 2014**

## Schedule 1

## Revised Essential Condition 1

## ESSENTIAL CONDITION 1

**1.1. Application, Definitions and Interpretation**

E 1.1.1	This Essential Condition shall apply to <u>regulated postal operators</u> .
E 1.1.2	<p>In this Essential Condition—</p> <p>(a) “<b>Act</b>” means the Postal Services Act 2011 (c.5);</p> <p>(b) “<b>Appointed Day</b>” means 1 October 2011;</p> <p>(c) “<b>Code Postal Packet</b>” means a <u>postal packet</u> conveyed in the provision of a <u>regulated postal service</u> or a universal service;</p> <p>(d) “<b>Consumer Advocacy Bodies</b>” means Citizens Advice, Citizens Advice Scotland and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland;</p> <p>(e) “<b>Damage</b>” means, in relation to a <u>Code Postal Packet</u>, any physical damage to a <u>Code Postal Packet</u> (other than damage caused by interference or accidental damage) occurring after the time of acceptance of that <u>Code Postal Packet</u> by the relevant <u>regulated postal operator</u> and before its delivery to the person to whom or at the premises to which it is addressed;</p> <p>(f) “<b>Interference</b>” means interference with a <u>Code Postal Packet</u> contrary to sections 83 or 84 of the Postal Services Act 2000;</p> <p>(g) “<b>Loss</b>” means the physical loss of a <u>Code Postal Packet</u>, other than as a result of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. having been <u>stolen</u>,</li> <li>ii. being incorrectly addressed,</li> </ol> <p>at any time after the acceptance of that <u>Code Postal Packet</u> by the <u>regulated postal operator</u> and before its delivery to the person to whom or at the premises to which it is addressed. Save where the context otherwise indicates, loss includes a failure by the <u>regulated postal operator</u> to deliver that <u>Code Postal Packet</u> within 15 <u>working days</u> of its due day of delivery;</p> <p>(h) “<b>Mail Integrity Code</b>” means the document of that name</p>

	<p>annexed to this Condition;</p> <p>(i) <b>“Mail Integrity Objectives”</b> has the meaning given by paragraph 1.1 of the Mail Integrity Code;</p> <p>(j) <b>“public holiday”</b> includes, in relation to a particular territory, any day in relation to which OFCOM has by direction stated that exceptional circumstances require it to be treated as a public holiday;</p> <p>(k) <b>“Regulated postal operator”</b> means a <u>postal operator</u> which provides services in relation to which, had those services been carried out prior to the <u>Appointed Day</u>, it would have been required to hold a licence under the Postal Services Act 2000;</p> <p>(l) <b>“Regulated postal service”</b> means a <u>postal service</u> the provision of which, had it been carried out prior to the <u>Appointed Day</u>, would have required the provider to hold a licence under the Postal Services Act 2000.</p> <p>(m) <b>“Relevant Employees”</b> means permanent, temporary, casual or part time employees or workers (including those under a contract for service), who are (or may be) involved in conveying, receiving, collecting, sorting, delivering or otherwise handling <u>Code Postal Packets</u> or who are reasonably likely to have access to <u>Code Postal Packets</u> in the course of their work;</p> <p>(n) <b>“Relevant year”</b> means any year beginning on 1 April;</p> <p>(o) <b>“Royal Mail”</b> means Royal Mail Group Limited (registered number 4138203);</p> <p>(p) <b>“Serious incident”</b> has the meaning given in paragraph 2.6 of the Mail Integrity Code;</p> <p>(q) <b>“Stolen”</b> means misappropriated contrary to the Theft Act 1968;</p> <p>(r) <b>“Theft”</b> means misappropriation contrary to the Theft Act 1968;</p> <p>(s) <b>“Working day”</b> means any day which is not a Sunday or a <u>public holiday</u>.</p>
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E 1.1.3	<p>For the purpose of interpreting this Essential Condition—</p> <p>(a) except in so far as the context otherwise requires, any word or expression shall have the same meaning as it has been ascribed for the purpose of Part 3 of the Act<sup>2</sup>;</p> <p>(b) headings and titles shall be disregarded;</p> <p>(c) expressions cognate with those referred to in this Essential Condition shall be construed accordingly;</p> <p>(d) the Interpretation Act 1978 (c. 30) shall apply as if this Essential Condition were an Act of Parliament;</p> <p>(e) references to a day are references to a period of twenty-four hours beginning with one midnight and ending with the next, which period shall be treated to include a Saturday, a Sunday, a Bank Holiday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or other public holiday</p> <p>(f) the following shall be deemed to be directions issued by <u>OFCOM</u> agreeing that a day should be treated as a <u>public holiday</u> for the purposes of the definition of “public holiday” in this Essential Condition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Exceptions to Royal Mail’s universal service obligation – for 26 December 2009 in the UK, bank holidays on Saturdays in the UK, as local holidays in Northern Ireland and Scotland: a decision document</i> (Postal Services Commission, October 2009).</li> </ul>
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## **1.2. Obligation to comply with the Mail Integrity Code**

E 1.2.1	<p>Unless OFCOM otherwise consents, a <u>regulated postal operator</u> shall at all times comply with the <u>Mail Integrity Code</u>.</p> <p>For the purposes of this Condition E 1, any consent issued and not withdrawn by the Postal Services Commission prior to the <u>Appointed Day</u>, relating to:</p> <p>(a) Condition 8 of the licence held by Royal Mail under the Postal Services Act 2000 immediately before the <u>Appointed Day</u>; or</p> <p>(b) Condition 3 of a licence held by any other <u>postal operator</u> under the Postal Services Act 2000 immediately before the <u>Appointed Day</u>,</p> <p>shall be deemed to be a consent issued by <u>OFCOM</u> under this Condition.</p>
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<sup>2</sup> A table for information identifying such defined terms is provided at the end of this condition. This table is intended only as a guide and does not form a part of this condition. We make no representations as to its accuracy or completeness.



## **Annex to Essential Condition 1 - Mail Integrity Code**

### **Protecting the Integrity of Mail – A Code of Practice**

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This is the Code of Practice covering the protection of the integrity of mail. Its purpose is to achieve the following objectives (the "Mail Integrity Objectives"):
- (a) minimising the exposure of Code Postal Packets to the risk of loss, theft, damage and/or interference; and
  - (b) maintaining and improving regulated postal operators' performance in respect of the matters referred to in paragraph 1.1(a).
- 1.2 This Code sets out the requirements and procedures to be followed in order to satisfy the Mail Integrity Objectives.
- 1.3 This Code applies to:
- (a) regulated postal operators; and
  - (b) all Code Postal Packets conveyed, received, collected, sorted, delivered or otherwise handled by regulated postal operators.
- 1.4 Regulated postal operators should allocate responsibility to specific personnel within their organisations for implementation of and compliance with this Code.
- 1.5 In meeting their obligations under this Code, regulated postal operators should have due regard to the size and nature of their organisations and operations.

#### **2 Definitions and rules of interpretation**

- 2.1 In this Code, unless the context requires otherwise, the words include, including and in particular are to be construed as being by way of illustration or emphasis and do not limit or prejudice the generality of any foregoing words. The singular includes the plural and vice versa.
- 2.2 Nothing in this Code is to be construed as requiring a regulated postal operator to act unlawfully (for example, by breaching employment law in meeting the recruitment and vetting requirements set out in paragraph 3 of this Code).
- 2.3 This Code shall not be interpreted in any way which is inconsistent with the Mail Integrity Objectives.
- 2.4 Where this Code requires a policy to be established, that policy must be in writing and a copy must be given to the specific personnel within the regulated postal operator's organisation who are responsible for implementation of and compliance with the policy.
- 2.5 Where this Code requires regulated postal operators to allocate responsibility to specific personnel within their organisations to be responsible for implementation of and compliance with this Code (including any policy required by this Code), the

personnel responsible for implementation may be different from those responsible for compliance.

- 2.6 A **serious incident** for the purpose of this Code is an incident in relation to which the percentage of Code Postal Packets lost, stolen, damaged or interfered with in one incident exceeds 10% of the total volume of Code Postal Packets conveyed, received, collected, sorted, delivered or otherwise handled by a Relevant Employee that day.

### **3 Recruitment of Relevant Employees**

- 3.1 If a regulated postal operator employs or uses (or intends to employ or use) Relevant Employees, the regulated postal operator must:

- (a) establish, maintain and adhere to a recruitment policy in relation to the employment or use of Relevant Employees designed to facilitate the achievement of the Mail Integrity Objectives; and
- (b) allocate responsibility to specific personnel within its organisation for the implementation of and compliance with that recruitment policy.

- 3.2 The recruitment policy should include:

- (a) an explanation of the jobs, roles or types of work, as the case may be, in respect of which the recruitment policy should apply;
- (b) the types of information about a prospective Relevant Employee that the regulated postal operator requires;
- (c) the steps that the regulated postal operator requires to be taken to satisfy itself of the identity of the prospective Relevant Employee;
- (d) the steps which the regulated postal operator expects to be taken in order to confirm a prospective Relevant Employee's work history over at least the immediately preceding 5 years (or the entire period of that Relevant Employee's working life, if that period is shorter than 5 years);
- (e) a requirement for prospective Relevant Employees to declare any criminal convictions or any cautions or conditional discharges for offences relating to:
  - (i) postal packets; or
  - (ii) dishonest conduct generally (in particular, theft, obtaining property by deception or fraud)

and guidelines on how any such convictions, cautions or conditional discharges declared by prospective Relevant Employees will be taken into consideration in deciding whether or not to employ the prospective Relevant Employee.

- 3.3 For the avoidance of doubt, in respect of any regulated postal operator's existing permanent, temporary, casual or part-time employee or worker (including those under a contract for service) who is not (or might not be) involved in conveying,

receiving, collecting, sorting, delivering or otherwise handling Code Postal Packets in the course of his or her work and who is to be redeployed such that he or she will (or might be) so involved, such redeployment should be treated for the purposes of this paragraph 3 as effectively the employment or use of that individual as a Relevant Employee and be subject to the other provisions of this paragraph 3.

- 3.4 Regulated postal operators must reasonably regularly monitor implementation of and compliance with the recruitment policy.
- 3.5 Regulated postal operators must reasonably regularly review the recruitment policy and, where necessary, update or amend the policy to ensure that it continues to meet the Mail Integrity Objectives.

#### **4 Training Relevant Employees**

- 4.1 If a regulated postal operator employs or uses Relevant Employees, the regulated postal operator must:
- (a) establish, maintain and adhere to a training policy that provides for Relevant Employees to receive initial and ongoing training so as to facilitate achievement of the Mail Integrity Objectives; and
  - (b) allocate responsibility to specific personnel within its organisation for the implementation of and compliance with that policy.
- 4.2 Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph 4.1, all Relevant Employees must be informed of the provisions of sections 83 and 84 of the Postal Services Act 2000 and made aware of the seriousness of the offences detailed in those sections.
- 4.3 The training policy should include:
- (a) the levels of training required to facilitate achievement of the Mail Integrity Objectives;
  - (b) the levels of training required according to the differing responsibilities of, and work undertaken by, Relevant Employees in relation to Code Postal Packets;
  - (c) details of the minimum level of training required;
  - (d) an explanation of how the training will be provided;
  - (e) the frequency with which training should be provided; and
  - (f) details of how training is to be given, recorded and monitored.
- 4.4 Regulated postal operators must reasonably regularly monitor implementation of and compliance with the training policy.
- 4.5 Regulated postal operators must reasonably regularly review the training policy and, where necessary, update or amend the policy to ensure that it continues to meet the Mail Integrity Objectives.

## 5 Disciplinary Procedures

5.1 If a regulated postal operator employs or uses Relevant Employees, the regulated postal operator must:

- (a) make Relevant Employees aware of the standards of conduct in relation to facilitating achievement of the Mail Integrity Objectives the regulated postal operator requires Relevant Employees to meet; and
- (b) establish, maintain and adhere to a disciplinary policy in relation to the treatment of Relevant Employees who fail to meet the standards of conduct expected of them.

5.2 The standards of conduct and disciplinary policy should be such as to facilitate achievement of the Mail Integrity Objectives.

5.3 Regulated postal operators must allocate responsibility to specific personnel within their organisations for:

- (a) making Relevant Employees aware of the standards of conduct expected of them; and
- (b) the implementation of and compliance with the disciplinary policy.

5.4 The disciplinary policy should include:

- (a) an explanation of what constitutes a failure to meet the standards of conduct and the action to be taken in relation to any failures;
- (b) an explanation of how the regulated postal operator ensures that all Relevant Employees understand when a failure to meet the standards of conduct might also constitute a criminal offence and how this will be dealt with;
- (c) provision for appropriate records to be maintained detailing any action taken against Relevant Employees for failure to meet the standards of conduct; and
- (d) a process to identify consistent failure to meet the relevant standards of conduct and the taking of appropriate remedial action.

5.5 Regulated postal operators must reasonably regularly monitor implementation of and compliance with the:

- (a) standards of conduct; and
- (b) disciplinary policy.

5.6 Regulated postal operators must reasonably regularly review the:

- (a) standards of conduct; and
- (b) disciplinary policy

and, where necessary, update or amend the standards of conduct or disciplinary policy, as the case may be, to ensure that they continue to meet the Mail Integrity Objectives.

## **6 Security of Mail**

- 6.1 Notwithstanding the other requirements of this Code, regulated postal operators must establish, maintain and adhere to such other policies and procedures as may reasonably be necessary to facilitate achievement of the Mail Integrity Objectives, in particular in relation to the security of relevant premises, and the use of vehicles and equipment in the collection, conveyance or delivery of Code Postal Packets.
- 6.2 Regulated postal operators must allocate responsibility to specific personnel within their organisations for the implementation of and compliance with the policies and procedures specified in paragraph 6.1.
- 6.3 The policies and procedures should include:
- (a) regular risk assessment;
  - (b) the maintenance of records so that regulated postal operators can identify, as far as is reasonably practicable, which Relevant Employees were responsible for the conveyance, receipt, collection, sortation, delivery or handling of specific Code Postal Packets that have been interfered with; and
  - (c) the measures to be taken, including monitoring, to prevent or detect loss or theft of, damage to, or interference with, Code Postal Packets from or at premises, vehicles or equipment.
- 6.4 Regulated postal operators must reasonably regularly review the policies and procedures and, where necessary, update or amend those policies and procedures to ensure that they continue to meet the Mail Integrity Objectives.

## **7 Information and Reporting Requirements**

- 7.1 All incidents of loss or theft of, damage to, or interference with Code Postal Packets must be recorded in reasonable detail.
- 7.2 Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph 7.1, information to be recorded in relation to Serious Incidents includes:
- (a) the date, time and place of the incident;
  - (b) the number of (or where the precise number is not known, a reasonable estimate of the number of) Code Postal Packets the subject of the incident;
  - (c) as far as is reasonably practicable, the Relevant Employees involved in the conveyance, receipt, collection, sortation, delivery or handling, as the case may be, of the Code Postal Packets the subject of the incident; and
  - (d) any other particulars relating to the incident which it would be reasonable to record, including the factual circumstances in which the incident occurred.

- 7.3 Incidents which constitute Serious Incidents (together with details of the date, time and place of the incident and the number of, or a reasonable estimate of the number of, Code Postal Packets the subject of the incident) are to be reported to OFCOM as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any event, within 48 hours of the regulated postal operator becoming aware of their occurrence. The information required to be recorded in accordance with paragraphs 7.2(c) and 7.2(d) and any other information in relation to the incident that OFCOM may require should be reported to OFCOM as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 7.4 In respect of each period of three months in any year (each year ending on 31 March), each regulated postal operator must submit to OFCOM (as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within 28 days, after the end of each such period) a report detailing any prosecutions which that regulated postal operator has instigated in the relevant period and provide such information in relation to any relevant incident and prosecution that OFCOM may require.
- 7.5 Regulated postal operators must reasonably regularly review the information recorded under this paragraph 7 with a view to identifying any trends, patterns or other notable features (such as above average incident levels at certain premises).
- 7.6 Regulated postal operators must submit to OFCOM and the Consumer Advocacy Bodies annual reports not later than 3 months from the end of the year (being 31 March) to which those reports relate, which include:
- (a) the number of (or where precise numbers are not known, reasonable estimates of the numbers of) Code Postal Packets during the relevant year which were lost, stolen, damaged or interfered with; and
  - (b) details of any trends, patterns or other notable features (such as above average incident levels at certain premises) in relation to the incidence of loss or theft of, damage to, or interference with, Code Postal Packets.
- For the purposes of these reports, the references to “lost” and “loss” exclude items that are delivered after 15 working days of their due day of delivery and within the reporting year. Such items are to be reported in these reports as “substantially delayed”.
- 7.7 Regulated postal operators must also submit to OFCOM and the Consumer Advocacy Bodies with each annual report submitted under paragraph 7.6, a statement of the measures that the regulated postal operator intends to take to remedy any failures or patterns of failure to achieve the Mail Integrity Objectives and to reduce the numbers of Code Postal Packets lost, stolen, damaged or interfered with.
- 7.8 Regulated postal operators must allocate responsibility to specific personnel within their organisations for meeting the recording, reporting and other requirements of this paragraph 7.

## 8 Agents and Sub-Contractors

- 8.1 Each regulated postal operator shall ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, all of:
- (a) its franchisees, agents or sub-contractors (if any) who are involved in the conveyance, receipt, collection, sortation, delivery or handling of Code Postal Packets, comply with this Code as if this Code applied to the franchisee, agent or sub-contractor; and
  - (b) its agents or sub-contractors (if any) who are responsible for providing Relevant Employees to work for the regulated postal operator, comply with this Code as if this Code applied to such agent or sub-contractor.
- 8.2 Where the franchisee, agent or sub-contractor is a regulated postal operator, it shall be sufficient for the regulated postal operator which lets the franchise, appoints the agent or engages the sub-contractor, as the case may be, to rely on the direct application of this Code to that regulated postal operator in fulfilment of its obligations under paragraph 8.1(a).

### **Table of terms defined in the Act**

*This table is provided for information and does not form a part of this condition. We make no representations as to its accuracy or completeness. Please refer to the Act.*

<b>Defined term</b>	<b>Section</b>
<i>letter</i>	<i>65(1)</i>
<i>OFCOM</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>postal packet</i>	<i>27(2)</i>
<i>universal service provider</i>	<i>65(1) and Schedule 9 paragraph 3(3)</i>