

Consultation response

Ref: 1812

Royal Mail – rollout of Delivery to Neighbour Scheme

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This consultation from Ofcom recommends approval to the national roll-out of Royal Mail's Delivery to Neighbour Scheme.

Key points and recommendations

- Age UK supports the proposal to make the Royal Mail's Delivery to Neighbour Scheme available on a national basis

1. Introduction

1.1 Age UK is pleased to respond to the Ofcom consultation on whether Royal Mail should be able to provide its Delivery to Neighbour Scheme nationwide. Most older people are retired and so more likely to be at home to receive parcels than people who work full time. However there will be occasions when they are out when a parcel arrives and have the inconvenience of either collecting it from the local delivery office or arranging for it to be re-delivered.

2. Question 1. Do you agree that Ofcom should grant approval to Royal Mail for the Delivery to Neighbour service?

2.1 Age UK supports the proposal to roll out the Royal Mail's Delivery to Neighbour Scheme on a nationwide basis. We are all aware of the reducing volumes of mail due to the increasing use of the internet for communicating. However, it was always likely that the increase in ordering via the internet would lead to an increase in the use of parcel delivery services. In this climate, improved convenience for customers in receiving parcels is to be warmly welcomed. It is also important that Royal Mail is able to compete with competitors and, given that all other delivery operators are allowed to do this, it is surprising that it has taken Royal Mail so long to ask for permission.

2.2 Maintaining the Universal Service is important to older people and it was of concern that the consultation, 'Securing the Universal Service', earlier this year reported this could be in danger given the dire financial position of Royal Mail. We think, as well as being more convenient for consumers, this service should reduce Royal Mail's parcel delivery costs.

2.3 However, we understand there may be some people who for a variety of reasons do not want their parcels delivered to their neighbours and we support the proposal there should be an opt out of the service. However we were concerned at the low level of awareness of this in the trial as outlined in paragraph 5.12 of the document. We think that having to apply for a sticker to say they are not part of the scheme could be a barrier to people taking up this option. We think a sticker should be contained in the information leaflet Royal Mail is intending to send out to all households.

2.4 We very much welcome the proposal from Royal Mail that they will retain liability for mail delivered to neighbours on the same basis as other mail, and will pay compensation. We think this could be an attractive selling point, so increasing the numbers of parcels Royal Mail deliver.