

Additional comments:

At a loss to understand why your 'additional comments' section precedes the main questions, but my additional comments are as follows,

(1) While not actually opposed to 'delivery to neighbour' where the addressee has no objections to same, it puzzles me why Royal Mail could not content themselves with the opt-in approach, as opposed to the opt-out scheme proposed. Correct me if I am wrong, but surely this would not have required Ofcom approval; would have been far simpler to implement; and would not have challenged peoples rights to privacy, security etc. e.g. instead of sending out millions of their quite questionable leaflet ref. RMDTNE1, Royal Mail could have made better use of their time, energy and cash by sending every UK household an explanatory leaflet with a peel-off opt-in sticker i.e. employing the same technology as Royal Mail's very own Recorded Delivery label (simples!).

(2) While I have always been of the opinion that 'the jury was still out' on the merits of privatization of Royal Mail, with this latest proposal, we appear to have drifted a long way indeed from the days when all mail remained the property of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II until it actually hit the addressees doormat i.e. when the Royal Mail was a public body headed by our then Postmaster General.

Question 1:Do you agree that Ofcom should grant approval to Royal Mail for the Delivery to Neighbour service? If not please explain your answer. :

No, I do not agree that Ofcom should grant this approval, and for the following reasons,

(1) Letters/packets addressed to specific individuals/addresses are the property of said individuals, and Royal Mail has no right to hand these to anyone else, without their permission, and no doubt the reason why they are having to seek Ofcom approval.

(2) Given that most non-standard sized letters/packets will probably display the senders name, address and almost always their business, the approval of this proposal will compromise, if not breach altogether, the privacy of the intended recipient i.e. my neighbour has no right whatsoever to learn who I am dealing with, or what I may be dealing in, and no-one, not Royal Mail nor Ofcom, has the right to change that.

(3) I find it quite unacceptable, if not immoral, for Royal Mail, a 'for profit' Private Limited Company, albeit still with a UK Government held 'golden share', to expect me, a member of the general public, to have to opt-out of this so called 'service', rather than opt-in, if I am not in agreement. As for my having to display an 'opt-out' sticker on my door, this simply beggars belief, and establishes a quite ridiculous precedent. How long before every 'carrier' in the UK would expect the same, with all 'objectors' front doors displaying a range of unsightly stickers.

Question 2:Are there other consequences following the roll out of the service across the UK that we have not included in our assessment? If so, please explain.:

Yes, I do, and it is that,

(1) I believe that Royal Mail Group Ltd are, quite frankly, overstating their importance on this issue, by expecting 'objectors' to their proposed 'delivery to neighbour' scheme to (a) contact them by either registering online, or by telephone, and ultimately, (b) to quite publicly display their opposition to such an ill-conceived scheme, by use of a Royal Mail supplied sticker on their door.

(2) I also believe that, in many situations, such as in blocks of flats and other such 'close-living communities', the act of displaying an opt-out sticker may lead to individuals being stigmatized as un-neighbourly, and ridiculous as this will sound, possibly even leading to a Human Rights issue.

(3) Then there is the issue of security i.e. property security, particularly in an area prone to burglary etc. A not-so-good neighbour may have been asked several times in a week to take in packages. They may not have known that the addressee was away. The addressee may not have wanted the neighbour to know that they were away. An opt-in scheme, to which the addressee did not subscribe, would have maintained the status quo.

Question 3: Do you have any comments on the scope and wording of the proposed Notification and approval:

If this question is referring to Royal Mail's leaflet ref. RMDTNE1, entitled 'Out and about?' then yes, I do, and my comments are as follows,

(1) The whole thrust and tone of Royal Mail's leaflet, and this proposal, comes over as a bit of a 'done deal' which (subject to regulatory approval) will be implemented in late September. Frequently indulging in an 'assumption of perfect knowledge', as can be seen from the following comments, said document would appear to be well skewed in favour of Royal Mail. Quite unforgivable in my opinion when addressing the public on a matter which WILL undoubtedly affect them on a regular if not daily basis.

(2) While the leaflet mentions 'regulatory approval', it fails to name the regulator i.e. Ofcom, and one has to wonder just what percentage of the British public would know of Ofcom's involvement in such matters, or had even heard of them.

(3) The leaflet also fails to mention that Ofcom is conducting a public consultation on Royal Mail's proposed 'delivery to neighbour' scheme, and inviting responses from all stakeholders (a fact only discovered by accident by the writer). It will be very interesting to discover just how few stakeholders responded.

(4) The leaflet claims that in recent tests of 'delivery to neighbour' the results were really positive, achieving a staggering, and quite unbelievable in my opinion, satisfaction rate of 92%. The reader is then invited, in miniscule writing, to visit the Royal Mail website to view their survey results.

(5) The writer took up the invitation to view said survey results to discover (a) that the report received i.e. May 2012 'Redacted Public Version' was so heavily redacted as to be almost useless (why are there different versions?), however, I was able to learn (b) that the survey (and the 92%) was based on only 360 recipients, and 360 neighbours, spread evenly across

six locations, (c) that out of 400,000 leaflets delivered in an October 2011 trial, they received only 63 complaints (did the majority understand what it was all about?), (d) . . . I could go on, but there is little point.

(6) It was only by taking up the invitation to view said survey results that the writer discovered that Ofcom was conducting the public consultation on Royal Mail's proposed 'delivery to neighbour' scheme to which I am now responding.