

**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, for the reasons set out below.

My comments relate to the requirement for households which want to opt-out of the Deliver to Neighbour scheme to display a sticker prominently near their letterbox. The adverse consequences of this requirement do not appear to have been addressed in either the Royal Mail trial or the follow-up consultation documents, as follows.

Having thought this through, it seems to me that those households displaying the sticker are highly likely to be ones where no-one is at home during the day. After all, if someone is generally at home, the household does not have to consider opting-out of the scheme as someone will usually be around to receive parcels. It is households where people are likely to be out, and who don't wish their post to go to their neighbours, which are most likely to be displaying the sticker. Surely this means that displaying the sticker will make it obvious to any passers-by, including potential burglars, that the householders are likely to be out during the day? Neither the Royal Mail's trial report, nor the current OfCom consultation document, state whether the police have been asked to comment on this point, as to whether it could lead to increased levels of crime against opt-out addresses. At the very least, a police view should be sought and publicly stated before this scheme is allowed to proceed.

Also, another group of households who would probably choose to display a sticker are the disabled and elderly, who might not wish to (or might not be able to) accept mail on behalf of their neighbours, so that they don't have to answer the door at unexpected times to people whom they might not know well. Again, if these households were forced to display a sticker, it could mark them out to potential criminals as being worthy of attention.

A further group of households who would be likely to display a sticker are those who have difficult or 'problem' neighbours that they would not trust to receive their post. Being forced to put up a sticker to this effect is a very public declaration of this lack of trust, and could lead to increased tension or aggression from such neighbours. It seems to me that forcing opt-out households to visibly mark themselves as being 'different' with a sticker is simply unacceptable in this day and age.

As stated above, the consequences of forcing opt-out households to display a sticker have not been addressed at all as part of the trial. It is my view that the scheme should be changed so that there is no compulsion to display such a sticker. Given current levels of technology, surely the Royal Mail could avoid the need for stickers by holding the addresses of opt-out households at each sorting office, and checking any parcels against those details? If the number of opt-outs is small, this would not be a time-consuming process.

**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.:**

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

