

## **Additional comments:**

### **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 have repeatedly complained about parcels being left with complete strangers under a policy of leaving them with neighbours and do not understand why this is even being proposed as formal policy. I do not understand the references in the document to this being a new practice - it has been done by royal mail staff for many years and I have had numerous experiences of it, all poor. I have also had experience of it from private companies. I don't know if Ofcom has the power to prevent this but if it does, I believe that it should.

As well as having had parcels left with strangers when I have been out, I have also had problems with parcels being left with others when I have been in, but it has been harder for the postman to call at my door, so they just left the parcel with the first door they got an answer from in the block.

I also feel that naming the policy as being to leave parcels with a neighbour fundamentally misunderstands the nature of modern cities. As much as I would like to know my neighbours, I don't. As such the policy is in fact one of leaving goods with complete strangers and abdicating responsibility for delivering them to the person and address to which they have been addressed.

It appears that the proposal to approve are based on the self reported results of a royal mail conducted pilot. I would question the validity of making policy on the basis of such a pilot. There is a strong risk of bias, and while the Ofcom document states that it is satisfied that it covers urban areas even though it was not conducted in London I question this. I have lived in a number of cities and all are different. Also, different demographic groups, such as students, older people, longer term residents etc will have very different experiences. I also question the validity of the evaluation, and expect Ofcom to ask questions about how independent the evaluation was, how satisfaction levels were measured and what other options were provided for comparable satisfaction levels.

### **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.:**

The opt out approach: I would not want to visibly opt out as I would be concerned that among some neighbours this may provoke hostility and an accusation of mistrust, given that the method of opt out is so visible to everyone there is likely to be a stigma attached to it. This has not been considered.

Alternative: a much more suitable alternative solution to the problem identified is to extend the 'collect from your nearest post office' service so that it covered a wider area. At present this service is of minimal use as royal mail will only deliver to the post office closest to the sorting office that your parcel has been taken to. If they were to extend this and allow parcel to be collected from, for example, the post office closest to your workplace, this would be a much better option than having items left with strangers. This option appears not to have been considered and as such the consultation and policy analysis is incomplete and omits a

material consideration.

In the consultation document you identify failures of royal mail to deliver parcels at all as part of the justification for the policy. I do not understand or agree with this. If royal mail staff are simply delivering the notices rather than the parcels then surely this should be a disciplinary matter and not one that justifies a policy that is already being used and abused by postal staff. I believe that a consequence that has not been considered is that staff may well not only continue to fail to do all aspects of their job but actually

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

I have already received the notification from royal mail, which is worded as if the policy has already been adopted and is being prepared for roll out.

My belief, until I saw this link by going to the website to find out how to opt out and complain about the adoption of the policy, was that the policy had already been adopted and was inevitable.

I understand that the consultation is still open and that approval has not yet been given. If this is a genuine consultation then these notifications need to be withdrawn and corrected so that those who would otherwise wish to respond or object know that they have an opportunity to do so.

As a minimum I strongly urge Ofcom to make the policy opt in, not opt out. So that only parcels that have explicit instructions that they can be left with a neighbour can be included. I also urge much better consideration of alternative policies, such as wider redelivery options that include workplaces and post offices outside of the very narrow area currently provided. The fact that these have not been considered means that the assessment of the policy is incomplete and roll out at least premature.