

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 disagree. I believe approval should be withheld until a better opt-out arrangement is put in place. There may be many reasons why someone does not wish not to have items delivered via a neighbour - including privacy, security, etc.

In theory I WOULD agree with the introduction of such a system - because the trial suggests that it would work well in the majority of cases. However, I feel strongly that it CANNOT be rolled-out nationally until the current proposed opt-out arrangement, which could lead to negative consequences for those opting out, is considerably improved. Specifically:-

1. I do not want to display a sticker on my front door to announce my opt-out choice to all passers-by (I live on a main road with my front door a few feet from the pavement). It could attract unwelcome attention or lead people to think I do not want to help my neighbours - which would be a wrong impression.

2. I am happy to take items for my neighbours, but I do not want my mail to be left with anyone else. The current opt-out proposal does not take into account that possibility.

I will support the proposed new system only if the opt-out arrangement does not involve a publicly displayed sticker. The Royal Mail could instead quite easily keep a confidential list of those who have opted out - a list which is known only to the local postman or postwoman - not the whole neighbourhood. The current proposed opt-out arrangement is cheap for the Royal Mail, but potentially problematic for those who wish to opt out. I do not think it is fit for purpose as it stands.

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 - see answer to question 1

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

The consultation process itself is flawed. I first heard about this proposal via a Royal Mail leaflet posted through my door today (28 August 2012). I understand the consultation ends on 12 September - and this is an extended deadline. This is very unsatisfactory. If the consultation began on 22 July, people needed to be informed before the consultation period began, NOT at this late stage. Effectively, the consultation period for me is 15 days. What is the point of a consultation period which is almost over before the people being consulted even know about the issue? A suspicious person might think this is a deliberate tactic by Royal Mail to rush through the proposal for commercial rather than public service reasons.