

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, approval should not be granted. This seems less to do with improvement to the delivery service and more to do with closure of delivery offices. Bringing the Royal Mail into line with other providers is revealing because other providers give a lesser service. The aim of market liberalisation and competition was surely to lead to a better service supplied to customers not a reduction in service.

There are practical issues for those using the scheme such as if post is left with a neighbour who suddenly fell ill and was hospitalised or unexpectedly had to go away in a hurry e.g. to care for a relative living in a distant place, then the post could be stuck in the house for days, weeks or months without any access. This could present real difficulties where, for instance, legal documents with deadlines for replying were involved or urgent medical information needed to be communicated. I describe two scenarios but there are more which could prevent access to mail.

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.:

If the proposal does go ahead, the assessment has completely failed to address the situation of antisocial neighbours.

I'm involved in such a situation where I've experienced various problems with a neighbouring family over 15 years. I've reported them to the police and the council's antisocial behaviour section repeatedly. More recently, I've reported one individual to the community mental health service. I would opt out of the Delivery to Neighbour project. However there is a problem with the opt out sticker system. From how the sticker system has been described, it would be stuck on the outside of the door on or near the letterbox. I'm assuming it is not a sticker designed to go on the inside facing out since a lot of front doors are just wood and don't contain any transparent material such as glass.

This antisocial neighbour has sought to create inconvenience for me whenever an opportunity arises. From what has happened in the past, I can envisage the sticker being removed in my absence. I do not wish to be spending time ordering stickers again and again. Also stickers can fall off so it is not a reliable system. Furthermore I definitely would not want this neighbour getting access to any of my mail which could occur if the sticker has been removed or fallen off and I'm unaware of it. Any intended safeguards to stop interference with or destruction of mail only go so far when up against a calculating and determined antisocial party or parties.

An opt out database needs to be maintained by Royal Mail where people register to opt out. Post to be delivered to such an address is marked say with an O or some other mark to show the staff on the delivery round that the items are not to be left with a neighbour. Proper implementation of such a scheme would bypass the prospective defects of the sticker idea.

The sender of mail should have the opt out available as well which has not been properly examined. What applies to the recipient in fairness should apply to the sender. What's more,

the sender pays for the delivery service which results in greater discrimination. Senders such as law courts, the police or hospitals or any organisations sending confidential papers or material requiring the soonest attention will want reasonable certainty as to when the designated recipient actually gets hold of the sent mail. As with an opt out database, the sender could mark the mail to show it is opted out.

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

In the event of the Delivery to Neighbour plan proceeding, there's no reference to the opt out alternative which ought to bear the legal status that the rest of the scheme has. Its omission seems designed to let Royal Mail off the hook in light of the nature of the complaints arising from the trial and in expectation of further trouble if the project is rolled out. Given my remarks, the opt out database and the sender opt out should be specified in addition