

A6. Regulatory impact assessment

Introduction

- A6.1 This document sets out in summary form a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) for the Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) (Amendment) Order 2025,¹ which amends the Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) Order 2012 (the “**Order**”).²
- A6.2 Ofcom’s full reasoning is set out in the document, entitled “*Review of the universal postal service and other postal regulation*”, published on 10 July 2025 and available on Ofcom’s website at <https://www.ofcom.org.uk> (the “**Statement**”). Any conflict should be resolved in favour of that document.
- A6.3 Ofcom acts in accordance with Government practice that, where a statutory regulation is made, an RIA must be undertaken. We also comply with our duty under section 7 of the Communications Act 2003 (the “**2003 Act**”) which imposes a duty on Ofcom to carry out impact assessments where our proposals would be likely to have a significant effect on businesses or the general public, or when there is a major change in our activities.
- A6.4 Impact assessments provide a valuable way of assessing different options for regulation and showing why the preferred option was chosen. They form part of best practice policymaking. As a matter of policy, we are committed to carrying out and publishing impact assessments in relation to the vast majority of our policy decisions.
- A6.5 For further information about our approach to impact assessments, see the guidelines, [Better policymaking: Ofcom’s approach to impact assessment](#), which are on our website.
- A6.6 The assessment is consistent with the Government practice on RIAs and Ofcom’s duty under the 2003 Act.

Background

- A6.7 Under the Postal Services Act 2011 (the (“**2011 Act**”), Ofcom has responsibility for regulating postal services in the United Kingdom.
- A6.8 Ofcom’s primary statutory duty in relation to post, set out in section 29 of the 2011 Act, is to carry out our postal functions in a way that we consider will secure the provision of a universal postal service. In performing that duty, we must have regard to the need for the provision of a universal service to be: (a) financially sustainable, which includes the need for a reasonable commercial rate of return for the universal service provider on expenditure it incurs for or in connection with providing the universal service; and (b) efficient before the end of a reasonable period and for its provision to continue to be efficient at all subsequent times.

¹ See Schedule 1 to this annex.

² [SI 2012/936](#).

- A6.9 Ofcom’s primary duty in section 3 of the 2003 Act also applies to our postal functions. That duty is to further the interests of citizens in relation to communications matters, and to further the interests of consumers in relevant markets, where appropriate by promoting competition.
- A6.10 Under section 30 of the 2011 Act, Ofcom must by order provide a description of the services we consider
- A6.11 should be provided in the universal service, and the standards with which they must comply (the universal service obligation, or “USO”). That description and the relevant standards are contained in the Order. Before making or modifying such an order, Ofcom must carry out an assessment of the extent to which the market for the provision of postal services in the UK is meeting the reasonable needs of the users of those services (a “user needs review”).
- A6.12 In January 2024, Ofcom published a Call for Input (“CFI”)³ calling for a national debate on the future of the UK’s postal services, highlighting that letter volumes had halved since 2011. We set out evidence that, though people still rely on letters, their needs have changed, and therefore the universal service needs to change to better align with those needs. We suggested options for reform, including reducing the frequency of delivery days for letters and slowing down their delivery times. We explained that the consequences of a universal letters service that does not align with user needs include that people could pay higher prices than necessary. We also found the evidence to indicate an increasing risk of the current universal service obligation becoming unsustainable both financially and operationally. We therefore consider the need for reform to be clear and urgent.
- A6.13 Royal Mail, as the designated universal service provider, responded to the CFI with a proposal for modernising the universal service. In September 2024, we explained that this proposal largely aligned with one of the options for reform that we identified in our CFI.⁴ We noted that it could be effected solely through modifications to Ofcom’s regulation, including by modifying the Order, and therefore could be implemented quickly. Given the urgent need for reform, we considered it appropriate to carry out a detailed assessment of the proposal to consider whether it would be a suitable basis for reform of the universal service.
- A6.14 Having carried out such an assessment and having reached provisional conclusions on reforming the USO, as well as a preliminary review of user needs, Ofcom published its proposals in a consultation on 30 January 2025.⁵ That consultation set out Ofcom’s impact assessment of the proposals, and attached a draft regulatory impact assessment of the modifications that would be required to the Order in order to implement the proposals.
- A6.15 Ofcom received responses from 7,072 stakeholders. We have considered every such response, and have finalised our user needs assessment (see Annex A3 to the Statement) and our assessment of the impact of our proposals (see the Statement, in particular Section 5). As confirmed in the Statement, we have decided to modify the Order as set out below.

³ Ofcom, 2024. [The future of the universal postal service: Call for Input.](#)

⁴ Ofcom, 2024. [Future of the universal postal service - Summary of responses and next steps.](#)

⁵ Ofcom, 2025. [Consultation: Review of the universal postal service and other postal regulation.](#)

- A6.16 The Order currently specifies the following letters services as part of the universal service:
- a) At least one collection every Monday to Saturday from access points for letters;⁶
 - b) At least one delivery every Monday to Saturday of letters originating from anywhere in the world to the home or premises of every individual or other person in the UK and delivery points approved by Ofcom;⁷ and
 - c) Two classes of domestic single piece services:
 - i) Priority, for delivery one working day after deemed collection, i.e. First Class;⁸ and
 - ii) Standard, for delivery within three working days after deemed collection, i.e. Second Class,⁹where working days are every day except Sunday and public holidays in the place of collection or delivery of the postal packet concerned.¹⁰
- A6.17 Ofcom has decided to modify the description of services in the Order to specify the following:
- a) At least one collection every Monday to Friday of standard letters;
 - b) Delivery on any day from Monday to Friday of standard letters; and
 - c) A standard domestic single piece service with a routing time of three working days after deemed collection, where working days are every day except Saturday, Sunday and public holidays in the place of collection or delivery of the postal packet concerned.
- A6.18 The effect of these modifications will be to remove Saturday as a delivery and collection day for standard (i.e. Second Class) letters, and as a working day for the purpose of calculating the routing time for such letters. Though delivery of standard letters could be effected on any day from Monday to Friday, they will still need to be delivered within a routing time of three working days after deemed collection. In practice, therefore, standard letters will have to be delivered at least twice a week.
- A6.19 Ofcom has not made any substantive changes to the description of delivery and collection services for priority (First Class) and other letters (such as registered and insured letters). Priority and other letters will therefore still be collected and delivered every day from Monday to Saturday. We have however decided to make minor consequential amendments to these descriptions in order to distinguish between priority and other letters, and standard letters. We have also removed references to the UK as an EU country.
- A6.20 Ofcom has not made any changes to the delivery and collection services for parcels.
- A6.21 The precise modifications to the Order are as detailed in the Schedules to this RIA. Schedule 1 contains the indicative wording of the legal instrument to amend the Order, which Ofcom will register upon publication of the Statement. Schedule 2

⁶ Article 7 of the Order.

⁷ Article 6 of the Order.

⁸ Paragraph 2 of Schedule 1 to the Order.

⁹ Paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to the Order.

¹⁰ Article 3(2A) of the Order.

contains a version of the Order marked up against the current Order, with additions shown in red text and yellow highlight, and deletions shown in struck through text and yellow highlight.¹¹

Impact assessment

A6.22 A full assessment of the impact of Ofcom's proposals is contained in the Statement. A summary is set out below.

Impact on citizens and consumers

- A6.23 As outlined above, the effects of Ofcom's modifications to the Order are to remove Saturday as a delivery and collection day for standard (Second Class) letters, and as a working day for the purpose of calculating their routing time. In practice, this will mean that some letters – namely those posted on a Wednesday to Saturday – could arrive one day later than they currently do (excluding Sunday, which has never been a delivery day).
- A6.24 We consider these changes will meet the reasonable needs of users - both individuals and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) - to a significant extent. We expect the needs of large users of mail to align with their end-users and that therefore their needs will also be met to a significant extent.
- A6.25 Our full user needs assessment is contained in Annex A3 to the Statement. In summary, we have found that users reasonably need a six day a week, next day priority letters service, albeit infrequently. This will continue to be available through the inclusion of a priority letters service in the Order. For the reasons set out in Annex A3 to the Statement, we do not consider that users have a reasonable need for non-priority letters to be delivered on Saturdays. However, we recognise that there may be a small proportion of users whose reasonable needs may not be met where they need to send an item to arrive on Saturday but cannot afford First Class. We expect this to occur only infrequently, given the rare occasions on which a letter must arrive urgently.
- A6.26 As regards speed of delivery, we have found that most users do not need non-priority letters always to arrive within three working days. However, there is a minority of users who may reasonably need this, and we recognise that reform of standard letters delivery may not meet that need. We consider the impact of this nevertheless to be limited, as only some letters sent by Second Class will arrive one day later than now, we expect in the vast majority of cases users will be able to send a letter a day earlier if necessary, and First Class will remain available for urgent items.
- A6.27 We have also found that users reasonably need a service which is reliable, and provided at an affordable and uniform price. Article 8 of the Order specifies that the end-to-end services in Schedule 1 to the Order, which include priority and standard single piece services, are to be provided at uniform and affordable prices. Standard letters are also currently subject to a regulatory safeguard cap to ensure affordability.¹² We have explained in Section 5 of the Statement that we believe our reform of the universal service should lead overall to lower price rises in the long

¹¹ The Schedules are available from Ofcom's website.

¹² [Designated Universal Service Provider Condition 3](#).

term, and would not lead to First Class prices being higher than would be the case in a reasonable counterfactual in which user needs are met to a broadly similar extent. We consider the risk to the financial sustainability of the universal service to be such that maintaining the status quo is not a reasonable counterfactual.¹³ Options for supporting its sustainability which are outside of Ofcom’s powers, such as a government subsidy or changing primary legislation, are also not reasonable counterfactuals. As compared to other options for regulatory reform – such as only having one class of letters delivery or slowing down both First and Second Class – we expect our modifications will better meet user needs, as well supporting the financial sustainability of an affordable universal service and therefore its continued provision. We will monitor prices to assess whether it would be appropriate to intervene to ensure affordability.

- A6.28 We have explained in Sections 3 and 5 and Annex A3 of the Statement that we are aware that some groups of users say they are more reliant on post. However, evidence shows that the needs of these users are similar to those of ‘typical’ users. As set out more fully in Section 5, we expect that to a significant extent reasonable user needs will be met by the changes to the Order. Further, we expect that users who are more reliant on post will particularly benefit from the continued availability of a universal service, which Ofcom’s reform of the USO will support.
- A6.29 In any case, the groups of users that say they are more reliant on post generally refer to their need to receive letters from large organisations such as financial institutions, the NHS, and other public bodies. These stakeholders also raised concerns about the impact of our proposals on the types of letters that they send. We explain in Section 5 of the Statement that the changes will likely have an impact on the bulk mail market, as we would expect it to lead to Royal Mail increasing the price of priority (i.e. D+2)¹⁴ access services. However, we explain in Section 7 of the Statement that we have decided to mandate a new D+3 access service¹⁵ that will be delivered alongside standard Second Class letters, as this will enable Royal Mail to maximise the costs savings from a reformed universal service, supporting its financial sustainability and continued provision.
- A6.30 Taking all of this into account, we consider that overall the modifications to the Order will have a limited impact on users, and that on the whole their reasonable needs will be met to a significant extent. If there is any adverse impact on users, this will be outweighed by the benefits arising from supporting the financial sustainability of the universal service, and therefore its continued provision for the benefit of all users. We also expect the potential adverse impacts of not reforming the USO – which could lead to the universal service being significantly degraded, or longer being available – outweigh any adverse impacts from the modifications. In addition, we anticipate that, in the vast majority of cases, users will reasonably be able to adapt their sending habits to minimise the impact of the changes, for example by sending a Second Class letter one day earlier if it needs to arrive within the current timeframes for delivery.

¹³ See Sections 2 and 4 of the Statement as regards the urgent need for reform.

¹⁴ “D+2 access” refers to a service that aims to deliver mail within two working days after the access operator has collected it from the sender.

¹⁵ “D+3 access” refers to a service that aims to deliver mail within three weekdays after the access operator has collected it from the sender.

Where that is not possible, users will be able to send items by First Class on the rare occasions where this is needed.

Impact on Royal Mail

- A6.31 We estimate that our proposed reforms could save Royal Mail between £250m and £425m in financial year 2025/2026, with ongoing savings after that. As set out in Section 8 of the Statement, we consider the changes to be necessary to support the financial sustainability of the universal service. However, our analysis suggests that they will not be sufficient on their own. The longer term financial sustainability of the universal service will also be dependent upon Royal Mail realising the full potential net cost savings of the reforms, achieving significant growth in parcels, effectively managing the decline in letter volumes, and improving its efficiency by adapting its network to the volume and workload changes.
- A6.32 While Royal Mail will necessarily incur some transition costs to implement a reformed delivery model for standard letters, we expect the savings from reform to exceed any costs arising from its implementation.

Impact on investment and innovation

- A6.33 These savings should be achieved by granting Royal Mail more commercial flexibility and enabling it to operate more efficiently. As set out in Section 5 of the Statement, we expect that these cost savings will contribute to Royal Mail's ability to invest and innovate to improve customer choice and experience across the range of services it provides.

Impact on competition

- A6.34 We expect that Royal Mail's greater ability to invest and innovate should enable it to compete more effectively in the competitive segments of the postal market, in particular parcels. This should contribute to the continued development of a competitive postal market in the UK.
- A6.35 As noted above, we expect the changes to the scope of the USO will impact the bulk mail market, and we have also decided to make modifications to Royal Mail's access obligation as discussed in Section 7 of the Statement. We assess the impact of our decisions on the bulk mail market in that section, including the impact on competition.

Cost to business, including small business

- A6.36 Ofcom's user needs review in Annex A3 to the Statement assesses the needs of both residential customers and SMEs. While we consider the modifications will continue to meet the needs of SMEs to a significant extent, we recognise that some SMEs use single piece services and that they may have to incur some costs to reorganise their business to account for the changes to standard letter delivery. We also recognise a minority of SMEs said they needed Second Class letters to arrive within three working days. The increased costs for SMEs may therefore arise from having to send mail sooner, or using a priority service instead. However, we expect these costs to be manageable, and, as explained above, consider our proposals should lead to lower price rises in the long term than would otherwise be the case. This may therefore offset any costs arising from our proposals.

A6.37 We also consider any increased costs are proportionate to the benefits arising from the modifications to the Order, which will support the sustainability of the universal service, and therefore its continued provision. This will support Royal Mail in maintaining a network that provides services to the entire letters market. This will in turn support the various businesses that rely on the postal service, promoting economic growth and benefitting wider society.

Cost to Ofcom

A6.38 Ofcom has incurred one-off administrative costs associated with amending the Order. We believe these costs will be offset by the benefits to consumers outlined above.

A6.39 We do not expect there to be any ongoing costs.

Equality Impact Assessment

A6.40 The Statement includes Ofcom's full Equality Impact Assessment at Annex A2. The assessment outlines that our research indicates certain groups, such as older people, rural communities, disabled individuals and those who are digitally excluded, are more reliant on letters than others. However, our research found that even for groups with a higher stated reliance on post, their delivery needs under the universal service were similar to those of 'typical' users. Section 5 of the Statement explains why we consider the changes to the Order will meet reasonable user needs to a significant extent.

A6.41 We accept there is a risk of some adverse impacts on these groups, for example where users in these groups feel they need to switch to the more expensive priority service. This could be particularly impactful for those on low incomes or who are financially vulnerable.

A6.42 We also acknowledge that the changes are likely to affect different areas of the UK to different extents, especially where compounded challenges occur in many rural and remote places. However, the evidence suggests the level of variation will be relatively small.

A6.43 Overall, we expect the changes to have a limited impact on the groups of users identified above. We expect users will notice only limited changes to the nature of sending and receiving Second Class letters – they will no longer be delivered on Saturday, and those sent on Wednesday to Sunday may arrive a day later than currently (excluding Sundays). We expect that, in the vast majority of cases, users will be able to adjust their sending habits to mitigate the impact of the changes, and that it is reasonable for them to do so. We therefore conclude that any adverse impacts arising from the modifications to the Order are proportionate in that they are outweighed by the benefits of those modifications, and are no greater than is necessary to achieve our stated policy objectives (as set out in Section 2 of the Statement). The benefits of the modifications include supporting the financial sustainability and therefore the continued provision of the universal service, for the benefit of all consumers. Users who are more reliant on post will particularly benefit from a universal service continuing to be available. We also consider the potential adverse impact of inaction, and the risk this would pose to the universal service, to be far greater than any adverse impact of our decisions.

Summary of overall conclusion

A6.44 For all the reasons set out in the Statement and summarised above, we consider the benefits arising from our proposals to justify the costs. We are therefore modifying the Order as outlined above.

Declaration

I have read the Regulatory Impact Assessment and Ofcom's consultation document and I am satisfied that the benefits justify the costs.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. A. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'B'.

Natalie Black

Group Director for Network & Communications, Office of Communications

10 July 2025

Schedule 1 to Annex A6 – Indicative Order amending the Universal Postal Service Order 2012

2025 No. 0000

POSTAL SERVICES

**The Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) (Amendment)
Order 2025**

Made - - - - *10th July 2025*

Coming into force *28th July 2025*

The Office of Communications (“OFCOM”), in exercise of the powers conferred by section 30(1) of the Postal Services Act 2011⁽¹⁶⁾, make the following Order.

Before making this Order, OFCOM have carried out a review of user needs in accordance with section 30(3) of the Postal Services Act 2011, given notice of their proposal to make an Order in accordance with section 403(4)(a) of the Communications Act 2003⁽¹⁷⁾ (“the 2003 Act”)⁽¹⁸⁾, published notice of their proposal in accordance with section 403(4)(b) of the 2003 Act and considered the representations made to them before the time specified in that notice in accordance with section 403(4)(c) of the 2003 Act.

Citation and commencement

1. This Order may be cited as the Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) (Amendment) Order 2025 and shall come into force on [*date*] 2025.

Amendments to the principal order

2. The Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) Order 2012⁽¹⁹⁾ is amended as set out in the following articles.

Amendments to Article 2

3. In article 2 (Interpretation)—

- (1) in the definition of “domestic” after “addresses”, insert “and collection points”;
- (2) in sub-paragraph (a) of the definition of “EU office of exchange”, omit “other than the United Kingdom”;
- (3) in sub-paragraph (b) of the definition of “EU office of exchange”, omit “other than the United Kingdom”;
- (4) after the definition of “insured item”, insert—

““letter” means—

⁽¹⁶⁾ 2011 c.5.

⁽¹⁷⁾ 2003 c.21.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Section 403 of the 2003 Act is applied to the power of OFCOM to make regulations under section 30(1) of the Postal Services Act 2011 by section 63 of the Postal Services Act 2011.

⁽¹⁹⁾ SI 2012/936, as amended by The Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) (Amendment) Order 2013 (SI 2013/3108).

- (a) any communication in written form on any kind of physical medium to be conveyed to the person or address indicated on the item itself or on its wrapping (excluding any book, catalogue, newspaper or periodical), and
 - (b) includes a postal packet containing any communication within paragraph (a) of this definition;”;
- (5) after the definition of “partially sighted”, insert—
““postal packet” means a letter, parcel, packet or other article transmissible by post;”;
- (6) after the definition of “post office” insert—
““priority and other letters” means letters conveyed by post under a service specified in Schedules 1 to 3 to this Order, except letters sent under a service specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to this Order;”;
- (7) after the definition of “single piece service” insert—
““standard letters” means letters conveyed by post under the service specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to this Order;”.

Amendments to article 3

4. In article 3 (Routing times), substitute paragraph (2A) for—
“(2A) “Working day” means, for—
- (a) priority and other letters and other postal packets, any day which is not—
 - (i) a Sunday, or
 - (ii) a public holiday in the place of collection or the place of delivery of the postal packet concerned; and
 - (b) standard letters, any day which is not—
 - (i) a Saturday,
 - (ii) a Sunday, or
 - (iii) a public holiday in the place of collection or the place of delivery of the letter concerned.”

Amendments to article 6

5. In article 6 (Delivery services)—
- (1) in paragraph 1 after “Saturday of”, insert “priority and other”;
 - (2) after paragraph 1, insert—
“(1A) Delivery on any day from Monday to Friday of standard letters—
 - (a) to the home or premises of every individual or other person in the United Kingdom, and
 - (b) to delivery points approved by OFCOM for the purposes of this paragraph.”; and
 - (3) in paragraph 3 after “(1)”, insert “, (1A)”.

Amendments to article 7

6. In article 7 (Collection services)—
- (1) in paragraph 1(a) after “points for”, insert “priority and other”; and
 - (2) in paragraph 1(b) after “points for”, insert “standard letters and”.

Amendments to paragraph 6 of Schedule 1

7. In paragraph 6 of Schedule 1, omit “other than the United Kingdom”.

Amendments to paragraph 6A of Schedule 1

8. In paragraph 6A(1) of Schedule 1, omit “other than the United Kingdom”.

10th July 2025

Natalie Black
Networks & Communications Group Director, Office of Communications
For and by authority of the Office of Communications

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order amends the Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) Order 2012 (S.I. 2012/936) (the “principal Order”), as amended by The Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) (Amendment) Order 2013 (S.I. 2013/3108).

OFCOM’s assessment of the extent to which the market for the provision of postal services in the United Kingdom is meeting the reasonable needs of the users of those services, carried out under section 30(3) of the Postal Services Act 2011, is available to the public from OFCOM’s website at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk> or from the OFCOM library at Riverside House, 2A Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA (Tel: 020 7981 3000).

Article 3 of this Order updates certain definitions to reflect the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union. It also adds new definitions which are relevant to calculating routing times under article 3 of the principal Order and to the delivery and collection obligations in articles 6 and 7 respectively of the principal Order.

Article 4 of this Order amends the definition of “working day” for the purpose of calculating routing times under article 3 of the principal Order. For priority and other letters and other postal packets, “working day” excludes Sundays and public holidays in the place of collection or delivery of the relevant postal packet. For standard letters, “working day” excludes Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays in the place of collection or delivery of the relevant letter.

Article 5 amends the delivery service in article 6 of the principal Order so that there is to be at least one delivery of priority and other letters every Monday to Saturday, in accordance with requirement 1 of section 31 of the Postal Services Act 2011. Standard letters are to be delivered on any day from Monday to Friday.

Article 6 amends the collection service in article 7 of the principal Order so that there is to be at least one collection of priority and other letters every Monday to Saturday, in accordance with requirement 2 of section 31 of the Postal Services Act 2011. There is also to be at least one collection of standard letters and other postal packets every Monday to Friday.

Articles 7 and 8 amend the description of the services in paragraphs 6 and 6A of Schedule 1 to the principal Order to reflect the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union.

Schedule 2 to Annex A6 – Marked up version of modifications to Universal Postal Service Order 2012

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2012 No. 936 POSTAL SERVICES

The Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) Order 2012

Made - - - - [date]
Coming into force - - [date]

The Office of Communications (“OFCOM”), in exercise of the powers conferred by section 30(1) of the Postal Services Act 2011(1), make the following Order.

Before making this Order, OFCOM have given notice of their proposal to do so in accordance with section 403(4)(a) of the Communications Act 2003(2) (“the 2003 Act”)(3), published notice of their proposal in accordance with section 403(4)(b) of the 2003 Act and have considered the representations made to them before the time specified in that notice in accordance with section 403(4)(c) of the 2003 Act.

Citation and commencement

1. This Order may be cited as the Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) Order 2012 and shall come into force on 1st April 2012.

Interpretation

2. In this Order—

“addressee services” has the meaning given in article 5(1)(e);

“blind” means registered as blind under the provisions of the National Assistance Act 1948 (4) or as severely sight-impaired under the provisions of Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 (care and support);

(1) 2011 c.5.

(2) 2003 c.21.

(3) Section 403 of the 2003 Act is applied to the power of OFCOM to make regulations under section 30(1) of the Postal Services Act 2011 by section 63 of the Postal Services Act 2011.

(4) 1948 c.29.

“Certificate of Posting” means a document issued or validated by a post office affirming that a postal packet has been deposited at the office for conveyance;

“deemed date of collection” has the meaning given in article 3(2);

“delivery office” means an office managed by a universal service provider for the purposes of processing postal packets immediately prior to the activity of delivery to the addressee;

“domestic”, in relation to a postal service, means the service is for the conveyance of postal packets from access points in the United Kingdom to addresses **and collection points** in the United Kingdom;

“end-to-end services at affordable prices” has the meaning given in article 5(1)(c); “EU

office of exchange” means a facility for—

- (a) the collection by a universal service provider of postal packets originating from a country within the European Union **other than the United Kingdom**, for onward conveyance and delivery within the United Kingdom; or
- (b) the deposit by a universal service provider of postal packets originating from the United Kingdom, for onward conveyance and delivery to a country within the European Union **other than the United Kingdom**;

“free end-to-end services” has the meaning given in article 5(1)(d);

“insured item” means a postal packet the value of which has been declared to a universal service provider and in respect of which, in the event of its theft or loss or damage in the course of its conveyance by post, the universal service provider has agreed to pay to the sender the declared value or such lesser sum as is consistent with the provision of the service at affordable prices;

“letter” means—

(a) any communication in written form on any kind of physical medium to be conveyed to the person or address indicated on the item itself or on its wrapping (excluding any book, catalogue, newspaper or periodical), and

(b) includes a postal packet containing any communication within paragraph (a) of this definition;

“letter box” includes any pillar box, wall box, or other box or receptacle provided by a postal operator for the purpose of receiving postal packets, or any class of postal packets, for onwards conveyance by post;

“meter” means a method of evidencing payment for postal services provided by a universal service provider which involve the conveyance of a postal packet, through which the sender having paid in advance for postage applies an impression to a visible surface of the postal packet using a franking machine licensed by the universal service provider;

“partially sighted” means certified by an ophthalmologist, doctor or ophthalmic optician as having vision which cannot be improved using optical aids (including magnifiers) or additional illumination to allow 12 point sized print to be read at a comfortable reading distance;

“postal packet” means a letter, parcel, packet or other article transmissible by post;

“post office” means any premises or vehicle in the United Kingdom from which postal services are provided directly to the public;

“priority and other letters” means letters conveyed by post under a service specified in Schedules 1 to 3 to this Order, except letters sent under a service specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to this Order;

“proof of delivery” means a copy of a signature, or other evidence from the recipient in confirmation of receipt, obtained on delivery of a postal packet;

“registered item” means a postal packet which has been registered with a universal service provider in connection with its conveyance by post and for which an amount determined by the universal service provider is payable by the universal service provider to the sender in the event of theft or loss

of or damage to it in the course of its conveyance by post;

“routing time” means the target maximum time for conveying postal packets from the access point to the delivery point in the provision of a postal service;

“ROW office of exchange” means a facility for—

- (a) the collection by a universal service provider of postal packets originating from a country outside the European Union, for onward conveyance and delivery within the United Kingdom; or
- (b) the deposit by a universal service provider of postal packets originating from the United Kingdom, for onward conveyance and delivery to a country outside the European Union;

“single piece service” has the meaning given in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1;

“standard letters” means letters conveyed by post under the service specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to this Order;

“tracking facility” means a facility enabling a sender to monitor the progress of a postal packet through the postal network.

Routing times

3.—(1) Routing times are expressed using the formula $D + n$, where—

- (a) “D” means the deemed date of collection; and
- (b) “n” means the number of working days between D and the delivery date, including the delivery date.

(2) “Deemed date of collection” means—

- (a) in the case of a postal packet deposited at an access point in the United Kingdom on a day on which no collection is required under article 7, the next day on which a collection is required under article 7;
- (b) (i) in the case of a postal packet deposited in the United Kingdom as described in sub-paragraph (ii), the next day on which a collection is required under article 7;

(ii) sub-paragraph (i) applies where the postal packet is deposited at a letter box on which, or at a post office at which, a time for last collection is advertised, after that time on a day on which a collection is required under article 7;

- (c) in any other case where the access point is in the United Kingdom, the date of deposit;
- (d) in the case of a postal packet deposited at an access point outside the United Kingdom after a last collection time notified in accordance with the rules of the country in question, the next day on which a collection is required under the rules of that country; and
- (e) in any other case where the access point is outside the United Kingdom, the date of deposit.

(2A) “Working day” means, for—

- (a) priority and other letters and other postal packets, any day which is not—
 - (i) a Sunday; or
 - (ii) a public holiday in the place of collection or the place of delivery of the postal packet concerned; and
- (b) standard letters, any day which is not—
 - (i) a Saturday,
 - (ii) a Sunday, or
 - (iii) a public holiday in the place of collection or the place of delivery of the letter concerned.

(3) Where the formula as applied to the delivery of a particular postal packet results in delivery being required—

- (a) in the United Kingdom, on a day on which a delivery is not required under article 6; or
- (b) outside the United Kingdom, on a day on which under the rules of the country of delivery no delivery is required;

compliance with the routing time shall be achieved if delivery is effected on the next day on which a delivery is required.

Delivery

4. Where a service described in this Order requires delivery of a postal packet, delivery shall be effected if—

- (a) the postal packet has been delivered to the postal address marked on the postal packet;
- (b) the postal packet has been delivered to a person named as an addressee on the postal packet;
- (c) the postal packet has been delivered to another delivery point requested by the addressee or approved by OFCOM for the purposes of this paragraph; or
- (d) an unsuccessful attempt has been made to deliver the postal packet in accordance with sub-paragraph (a), (b), or (c) and a universal service provider offers the addressee a choice of redelivery within a reasonable period and an opportunity to collect the postal packet from any of the following places—

(i) a post office;

(ii) a delivery office; or

(iii) another collection point approved by OFCOM for the purposes of this paragraph.

The universal postal service

5.—(1) The universal postal service shall comprise—

- (a) the delivery services described in article 6;
- (b) the collection services described in article 7;
- (c) the services described in Schedule 1 (“end-to-end services at affordable prices”);
- (d) the services described in Schedule 2 (“free end-to-end services”); and
- (e) the services described in Schedule 3 (“addressee services”).

(2) It is a characteristic of the universal postal service that its component services are available for all postal packets which meet the requirements (if any) set out in this Order for the provision of the service in question.

(3) Nothing in this Order requires the doing of anything in relation to a postal packet of a type falling within section 33(1)(a) or (b) Postal Services Act 2011.

Delivery services

6.—(1) At least one delivery every Monday to Saturday of **priority and other** letters originating from anywhere in the world—

- (a) to the home or premises of every individual or other person in the United Kingdom; and
- (b) to delivery points approved by OFCOM for the purposes of this paragraph.

(1A) Delivery on any day from Monday to Friday of standard letters—

- (a) to the home or premises of every individual or other person in the United Kingdom, and**
- (b) to delivery points approved by OFCOM for the purposes of this paragraph.**

(2) At least one delivery every Monday to Friday of other postal packets originating from anywhere in the world—

- (a) to the home or premises of every individual or other person in the United Kingdom; and
- (b) to delivery points approved by OFCOM for the purposes of this paragraph.

(3) The requirements in paragraphs (1), **(1A)** and (2) do not need to be met on any day which is (in the part of the United Kingdom concerned) a public holiday.

Collection services

7.—(1) At least one collection—

- (a) every Monday to Saturday, from access points for **priority and other** letters for the end-to-end services at affordable prices and the free end-to-end services; and
- (b) every Monday to Friday, from access points for **standard letters and** other postal packets for the end-to-end services at affordable prices and the free end-to-end services.

(2) The requirements in paragraph (1) do not need to be met on any day which is (in the part of the United Kingdom concerned) a public holiday.

End-to-end services at affordable prices

8. The end-to-end services at affordable prices shall be provided—

- (a) at affordable prices determined in accordance with a public tariff which is uniform throughout the United Kingdom;
- (b) on fair and reasonable terms; and
- (c) every day on which a collection is required by article 7.

Free end-to-end services

9. The free end-to-end services shall be provided—

- (a) free of charge throughout the United Kingdom;
- (b) on fair and reasonable terms; and
- (c) every day on which a collection is required by article 7.

Addressee services

10. The addressee services shall be provided—

- (a) at affordable prices determined in accordance with a public tariff which is uniform throughout the United Kingdom, save as specified in paragraph 2 of Schedule 3;
- (b) on fair and reasonable terms;

and shall be available for acquisition every day excluding any day which is a Sunday or a public holiday in the place of acquisition.

11. Nothing in this Order is to be read—

- (a) as requiring a service to continue without interruption, suspension or restriction in an emergency; or
- (b) as preventing individual agreements as to prices from being concluded with customers.

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Communications For and by authority of the Office of
Communications

SCHEDULES

SCHEDULE 1

Article 5(1)(c)

End-to-end services at affordable prices

Single piece service

1. “Single piece service” means a postal service for the conveyance of an individual postal packet to the addressee, for which the price per postal packet is not subject to any discounts related to—
 - (a) the number of postal packets sent in connection with the person who paid for the service;
 - (b) the positioning or formatting of text on the postal packet;
 - (c) the use of markings which facilitate the use of machines to sort postal packets;
 - (d) presortation into geographical areas for delivery; or
 - (e) the purchase of any other conveyance of the same or any other postal packet.

Priority services

2. One or more domestic single piece services for the conveyance of postal packets other than insured items, which—
 - (a) have a routing time of $D + 1$;
 - (b) are capable of purchase by postage stamp and by meter and may be capable of purchase by other reasonable methods;
 - (c) include provision of a Certificate of Posting free of charge on request if the postal packet is deposited at a post office; and
 - (d) include provision of proof of delivery on application by the sender.

Standard services

3. One or more domestic single piece services for the conveyance of postal packets other than insured items, which—
- (a) have a routing time of D + 3;
 - (b) are capable of purchase by postage stamp and by meter and may be capable of purchase by other reasonable methods;
 - (c) include provision of a Certificate of Posting free of charge on request if the postal packet is deposited at a post office; and
 - (d) include provision of proof of delivery on application by the sender.

Registered and insured services

- 4.—(1) One or more domestic single piece services for the conveyance of insured items weighing no more than 10 kilograms and registered items weighing no more than 10 kilograms, which—
- (a) have a routing time of D + 1;
 - (b) have a target delivery time of 1pm, except where this is not reasonably possible;
 - (c) include provision of a tracking facility;
 - (d) include provision of proof of delivery on application by the sender; and
 - (e) are paid for in advance.
- (2) One or more domestic single piece services for the conveyance of registered items weighing more than 10 kilograms and insured items weighing more than 10 kilograms which convey the postal packet to the delivery point within a reasonable period.

Return to sender services

- 5.—(1) One or more domestic single piece services for the conveyance of postal packets meeting the description in sub-paragraph (3) back to the sender within a reasonable period, where—
- (a) the postal packet has been conveyed in the provision of a universal postal service and delivery to the addressee named on the postal packet has not been effected; and
 - (b) the sender's address is legibly marked on the postal packet.
- (2) For the purpose of this paragraph, the definition of "single piece service" shall apply as though the words at sub-paragraph (e) of that definition were replaced with "the purchase of a conveyance of any other postal packet".
- (3) The description set out in this paragraph is—
- (a) as to the postal packet's maximum dimensions—
 - (i) if the postal packet is a right circular cylinder—
 - (aa) the length plus twice the diameter does not exceed 1040 millimetres; (bb) the length does not exceed 900 millimetres; and
 - (cc) the diameter does not exceed 900 millimetres;
 - (ii) if the postal packet is not a right circular cylinder, the dimensions of the postal packet (measured at their widest points) do not exceed 610 millimetres by 460 millimetres by 460 millimetres; and
 - (b) as to the postal packet's minimum dimensions (measured at their narrowest points), each dimension of the postal packet exceeds 0.25 millimetres.

Fast outgoing European Union services

6. One or more single piece services for the conveyance of postal packets to EU offices of exchange for onward delivery to each country within the European Union—~~other than the United~~

Kingdom, where—

- (a) the postal packet is conveyed to the EU office of exchange within a period that is—
 - (i) reasonable; and
 - (ii) compatible with a routing time for the provision of an end-to-end service of D + 3;
- (b) the service or services are capable of purchase by postage stamp and may be capable of purchase by other reasonable methods; and
- (c) the service or services include provision of a Certificate of Posting free of charge on request if the postal packet is deposited at a post office.

Slow outgoing European Union services

6A.—(1) One or more single piece services for the conveyance of postal packets meeting the description in sub-paragraph (2) to EU offices of exchange for onward delivery to each country within the European Union ~~other than the United Kingdom~~, where—

- (a) the postal packet is conveyed to the EU office of exchange within a period that is—
 - (i) reasonable; and
 - (ii) compatible with a routing time for the provision of an end-to-end service of D + 30;
- (b) the service or services are capable of purchase by postage stamp and may be capable of purchase by other reasonable methods; and
- (c) the service or services include provision of a Certificate of Posting free of charge on request if the postal packet is deposited at a post office.

(2) The description in this sub-paragraph is—

- (a) at minimum—
 - (i) the weight of the postal packet exceeds 100 grams; and
 - (ii) the dimensions of the postal packet, measured at their narrowest points, exceed 245 millimetres by 165 millimetres by 5 millimetres;
- (b) at maximum as to weight—
 - (i) if the postal packet contains items that are not printed papers, its weight does not exceed 2 kilograms;
 - (ii) if the postal packet only contains printed papers, its weight does not exceed 5 kilograms;
- (c) at maximum as to dimensions—
 - (i) if the postal packet is a right circular cylinder—

(aa) the length plus twice the diameter does not exceed 1040 millimetres; (bb) the length does not exceed 900 millimetres; and

(cc) the diameter does not exceed 900 millimetres;

- (ii) if the postal packet is not a right circular cylinder—

(aa) the sum of the length, width and depth (measured at their widest points) does not exceed 900 millimetres; and

(bb) the greatest dimension (measured at its widest point) does not exceed 600 millimetres.

Fast outgoing rest of world services

7.—(1) One or more single piece services for the conveyance of postal packets to ROW offices of exchange for onward delivery to each country of the world outside the European Union, where—

- (a) the postal packet is conveyed to the ROW office of exchange within a period that is—
 - (i) reasonable; and
 - (ii) compatible with a routing time for the provision of the end-to-end service of D + 7;
- (b) the service or services are capable of purchase by postage stamp and may be capable of purchase by other reasonable methods; and
- (c) the service or services include provision of a Certificate of Posting free of charge on request if the postal packet is deposited at a post office.

Slow outgoing rest of world services

7A.—(1) One or more single piece services for the conveyance of postal packets meeting the description in sub-paragraph (2) to ROW offices of exchange for onward delivery to each country of the world outside the European Union, where—

- (a) the postal packet is conveyed to the ROW office of exchange within a period that is—
 - (i) reasonable; and
 - (ii) compatible with a routing time for the provision of the end-to-end service of D + 72;
 - (b) the service or services are capable of purchase by postage stamp and may be capable of purchase by other reasonable methods; and
 - (c) the service or services include provision of a Certificate of Posting free of charge on request if the postal packet is deposited at a post office.
- (2) The description in this sub-paragraph is—

- (a) at minimum, each dimension of the postal packet, measured at their narrowest points, exceeds 0.25 millimetres;
- (b) at maximum as to weight—
 - (i) if the postal packet contains items that are not printed papers, its weight does not exceed 2 kilograms;
 - (ii) if the postal packet only contains printed papers, its weight does not exceed 5 kilograms;
- (c) at maximum as to dimensions—
 - (i) if the postal packet is a right circular cylinder—
 - (aa) the length plus twice the diameter does not exceed 1040 millimetres; (bb) the length does not exceed 900 millimetres; and
 - (cc) the diameter does not exceed 900 millimetres;
 - (ii) if the postal packet is not a right circular cylinder—
 - (aa) the sum of the length, width and depth (measured at their widest points) does not exceed 900 millimetres; and
 - (bb) the greatest dimension (measured at its widest point) does not exceed 600 millimetres.

Incoming European Union services

8. One or more single piece services for the onward conveyance and delivery within the United Kingdom of postal packets collected from EU offices of exchange, where the postal packet is conveyed from the EU office of exchange to the delivery point within a period that is—

- (a) reasonable; and
- (b) compatible with a routing time for the provision of the end-to-end service of D + 3.

Incoming rest of world services

9. One or more single piece services for the onward conveyance and delivery within the United Kingdom of postal packets collected from ROW offices of exchange, where the postal packet is conveyed from the ROW office of exchange to the delivery point within a reasonable period.

SCHEDULE 2

Free end-to-end services

Legislative petitions and addresses

1. A domestic postal service for the conveyance of legislative petitions and addresses within a reasonable period.

Meaning of eligible item in relation to services for blind or partially sighted persons

2. In paragraphs 3 and 4 of this Schedule, “eligible items” are—
- (a) books, papers and letters which are prepared for use by blind or partially sighted people;
 - (b) papers sent to anyone to be prepared or impressed so blind or partially sighted people can use them;
 - (c) relief maps;
 - (d) machines, frames and attachments for making impressions for blind or partially sighted people to use;
 - (e) writing frames and attachments for blind or partially sighted people to use;
 - (f) Braille instruction manuals;
 - (g) games (including card games) for blind or partially sighted people;
 - (h) mathematical appliances and attachments for blind or partially sighted people;
 - (i) recordings of readings from printed sources, such as books, journals, newspapers, periodicals or similar publications;
 - (j) equipment used to play such recordings;
 - (k) metal plates impressed or sent for impressing for use by blind or partially sighted people;
 - (l) supplies of covers, envelopes and labels for sending articles for use by blind or partially sighted people;
 - (m) watches, clocks, timers, tools and measuring equipment designed for blind or partially sighted people to use;
 - (n) walking sticks adapted for blind or partially sighted people;
 - (o) harnesses for guide dogs;
 - (p) computer disks and CDs which are prepared for blind or partially sighted people.

Domestic services for blind or partially sighted persons

3.—(1) A domestic postal service having a routing time of D + 1, for the conveyance of eligible items weighing up to 7 kilograms in aggregate per postal packet—

- (a) to blind or partially sighted persons;
- (b) from blind or partially sighted persons; or
- (c) from organisations representing blind people or providing a service specifically designed for blind or partially sighted persons.

(1A) The service required under sub-paragraph (1) includes provision of a Certificate of Posting free of charge on request if the postal packet is deposited at a post office.

(2) The service required under sub-paragraph (1) does not include the conveyance of registered items or insured items.

International services for blind or partially sighted persons

4.—(1) The services described in sub-paragraph (1A) for the conveyance of eligible items to EU offices of exchange and ROW offices of exchange for onward conveyance to any country in the world other than the United Kingdom—

- (a) to blind or partially sighted persons;
- (b) from blind or partially sighted persons; or
- (c) from organisations representing blind people or providing a service specifically designed for blind or partially sighted persons.

(1A) One or more services for the conveyance of postal packets weighing no more than 7 kilograms, where the postal packet is conveyed to the EU office of exchange or the ROW office of exchange (as the case may be) within a period that is—

- (a) reasonable; and
- (b) compatible with a routing time for the provision of the end-to-end service of D + 7.

(1B) The services required under sub-paragraph (1) include provision of a Certificate of Posting free of charge on request if the postal packet is deposited at a post office.

(2) The services required under sub-paragraph (1) do not include the conveyance of registered items or insured items.

SCHEDULE 3

Addressee services

Redirection services

1.—(1) One or more services for addressees providing that during a specified reasonable period all postal packets that are to be delivered by a universal service provider to a particular addressee should be conveyed to a postal address other than that marked on the postal packet (“the redirection address”) within a reasonable period.

(2) This service is not required—

- (a) where the redirection address is outside the United Kingdom and—
 - (i) the postal packet contains registered items or insured items; or
 - (ii) the postal packet exceeds 100 grams in weight, 240 millimetres in length, 165 millimetres in width or 25 millimetres in thickness;
- (b) in relation to postal packets to a particular addressee or from a particular sender or class of sender, where the provision of the service in relation to those postal packets would create a substantial risk of crime;
- (c) where the address marked on the postal packet or the redirection address relates to premises in relation to which it is reasonable not to provide the service; or
- (d) where the redirection address is a delivery office or a post office.

Poste restante services

1.—(1) One or more free of charge services for addressees, which provide—

- (a) for the address of any specified post office in the United Kingdom to be used as an addressee’s postal address for a reasonable period, and
- (b) for postal packets meeting the description in sub-paragraph (2) for that addressee to be held at that post office for a reasonable period for collection by the addressee, provided, in relation to any post office, that it is reasonable for the post office concerned to be used to provide the service.

(2) The description set out in this paragraph is—

- (a) as to the postal packet’s maximum dimensions—
 - (i) if the postal packet is a right circular cylinder—
 - (aa) the length plus twice the diameter does not exceed 1040 millimetres; (bb) the length does not exceed 900 millimetres; and
 - (cc) the diameter does not exceed 900 millimetres;
 - (ii) if the postal packet is not a right circular cylinder, the dimensions of the postal packet (measured at their widest points) do not exceed 610 millimetres by 460 millimetres by 460 millimetres; and
- (b) as to the postal packet’s minimum dimensions (measured at their narrowest points), each dimension of the postal packet exceeds 0.25 millimetres.

Retention services

1.—(1) One or more services for addressees which provide for a delay for a specified reasonable period to the target delivery date otherwise applicable to any postal packets meeting the description in sub-paragraph (2).

(2) The description set out in this paragraph is—

- (a) as to the postal packet's maximum dimensions—
 - (i) if the postal packet is a right circular cylinder—
 - (aa) the length plus twice the diameter does not exceed 1040 millimetres; (bb) the length does not exceed 900 millimetres; and
 - (cc) the diameter does not exceed 900 millimetres;
 - (ii) if the postal packet is not a right circular cylinder, the dimensions of the postal packet (measured at their widest points) do not exceed 610 millimetres by 460 millimetres by 460 millimetres; and
 - (b) as to the postal packet's minimum dimensions (measured at their narrowest points), each dimension of the postal packet exceeds 0.25 millimetres.

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