

Your response

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<p>Question 1: Do you agree that we have identified the correct aims, supporting principles and features of the USO? Do you consider that these should continue to be respected as far as possible when assessing potential changes to the USO?</p>	<p>Yes, universality, affordability and uniform pricing are key features. In particular affordability should be considered – currently prices are too high and more consideration should be given to how these can be reduced.</p>
<p>Question 2: Do you agree with our assessment of the direction of change in postal needs of residential (including vulnerable) users and SMEs? Are there other factors relevant to their future demand which we have not considered?</p>	<p>Volumes have been declining but this has been accelerated by continual price rises – the reduction in volumes could slow if prices could be stabilised or, preferably, reduced.</p>
<p>Question 3: Do you agree with our assessment of the bulk mail market? Are there other factors relevant to its future evolution which we have not considered?</p>	<p>Broadly speaking we agree, however for our business speed of delivery remains an important factor and moving to longer delivery times would negatively impact us. E-letters would not be a relevant or appropriate product for our needs.</p>
<p>Question 4: Are there specific events/changes that could trigger a significant change in demand for large mail users, including public services?</p>	<p>One off and hopefully short term events such as cyber attacks could lead to short term spikes of demand. Conversely, a future pandemic or similar could further drive adoption of digital services.</p>
<p>Question 5: Do you agree with our proposed approach to estimating the financial burden of the USO?</p>	<p>We consider the obligation on Royal Mail to provide ‘final mile’ deliveries for other providers to be an unfair burden.</p>
<p>Question 6: Do you agree with our considerations regarding the unfairness of the financial burden of the USO?</p>	<p>Unfairness is not the correct lens to view the USO through – we need the USO to exist so whichever provider is tasked with it should be resourced accordingly. We would prefer to solve the ‘unfairness’ through government subsidy if necessary.</p>

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<p>Question 7: Do you agree with our considerations regarding the impact of the financial burden of the USO?</p>	<p>We have no reason to doubt the figures given.</p>
<p>Question 8: Do you agree with our analysis of the different options available to change the USO and the impact of those changes on residential (including vulnerable) users, SMEs and bulk mail users? If not, please explain why and set out any option(s) which we have not considered.</p>	<p>Yes, most viable options for change have been set out in the consultation document. However, insufficient consideration has been given to increasing government subsidy to allow the current USO, or something close to it, to remain viable. We strongly support the principle that uniform pricing for all addresses should remain in place.</p>
<p>Question 9: Which option(s) do you consider would be most appropriate to address the challenges we have identified, while also ensuring that users' needs are adequately met?</p>	<p>A 5 day a week delivery service (with collections still at 6 days a week) would be preferable – we would be happy if the day which was removed was a weekday to maintain Saturday deliveries. We believe a reduction to a three day service would see large numbers of mailers, including ourselves, move to digital alternatives, threatening the long-term future of the USO.</p> <p>We would strongly favour reducing or abolishing Royal Mail's access obligations to other providers in order to reduce Royal Mail's costs.</p>
<p>Question 10: Do you have any other views about how the USO should evolve to meet users' needs?</p>	<p>Our first preference would be for the USO to remain as it is, however as this is unlikely to be the outcome, reliability of delivery is our number one concern as a business going forward – since 2020 the reliability of the service we receive has significantly declined. For context we send approx. 1400 large letter per week. We could live with a 5 delivery day a week service which was more reliable than at present.</p> <p>We would be reluctant to lose First Class as an option - we could only live without First Class as an option if we could have absolute certainty of Second Class reliably arriving within the specified timeframe (no more than 3 days from sending).</p> <p>We value the USO highly and would be happy to see it protected via government subsidy if necessary.</p>

Please complete this form in full and return to futurepostalUSO@ofcom.org.uk.