

Summary of Call for Input responses from individuals who did not confirm whether or not their responses were confidential

Following the publication of Ofcom's Call for Input (CFI) on the future of the universal postal service on 24 January 2024, we received 466 responses from individuals who did not complete our response form and so did not confirm whether or not their responses were confidential. 11 of this group identified themselves as Royal Mail postal workers.

As it is not clear whether or not we can publish these responses, we have chosen to provide a summary of them (see section 1 below). We have also decided to summarise separately the responses of those who identified themselves as Royal Mail postal workers (see section 2 below).

If any individual who responded to our CFI and did not complete our response form wishes to have their response published, they should write to us via futurepostaluso@ofcom.org.uk and provide their consent to Ofcom publishing their response. We keep contact numbers and email addresses confidential. Depending on their preference, we can also keep their name and/or some parts of their response confidential.

1. Individuals not identifying as Royal Mail postal workers

- **Many felt that reliability of the postal service is the most important issue.** They said that they are sending fewer letters as they are not sure they would arrive, or they would arrive late. For example, they had missed hospital appointments because letters had arrived after the appointment had taken place.
- **After reliability, responses suggested that affordability is the second most important issue.** Those who responded felt that higher stamp prices were leading to more electronic substitution, because people have been asked to pay more for a less reliable service.
- **Around half of individuals said they were opposed to any reduction in the number of delivery days or specifically a reduction to 3-day delivery.** Some 40% of respondents said the current USO should remain in place unchanged and that a reduction would represent a dilution of the Universal Service Obligation (USO). Common comments also suggested that any change would not meet the needs of postal users, particularly large mailers like publishers and public services e.g. the NHS and the DWP. For the 10% who specifically opposed a 3-day delivery model there was concern over the impact on small businesses and vulnerable customers as well as a belief that such a model would lead to redundancies.
- **A small number of individuals (<1%) specifically said they opposed reducing delivery days from six to five.**
- **Some 10% of respondents supported a reduced number of delivery days for letters.** Those who agreed with the options for reform stated that they would trade the six days of delivery for a more reliable five or three-day letters service. Some believed that a six-day letters service was no longer required due to developments in technology and changes in how people communicate. Others, who supported a reduction in delivery days for letters, argued that Saturday should remain a delivery day for letters and a weekday should be removed instead.
- **Relatively few respondents provided their views on delivery speeds for letters (i.e. First or Second Class) when compared to delivery frequency.** Some responses suggested that First

Class (next day) should not be removed or become a more expensive, premium option because public services who send letters which are important would use the cheapest, slower option. However, other responses suggested that First Class was no longer required and should be a premium option, with Second Class (within 3 working days) as the default option.

- **Several respondents suggested other options instead of reform. These included nationalising Royal Mail, a government subsidy, or changing the Universal Service Provider to another company.** Some argued that Royal Mail's current financial situation was caused by its excessive commercialisation and that nationalising Royal Mail would offer greater accountability and a postal service with more public focus. Others did not favour nationalisation, but suggested the government should cover any USO net cost with a subsidy. Finally, some considered that the problem lay with Royal Mail and argued that an alternative company should be found who could run the USO profitably.
- **Some responses believed that poor management was the reason for Royal Mail's current financial situation.** These responses suggested excessive executive pay and poor management of industrial relations were the reasons for Royal Mail's difficulties.
- **Others offered suggestions as to how the situation could be improved without changing the USO specification.** These included larger Ofcom fines for Royal Mail failing to meet quality of service targets, Royal Mail improving the efficiency of its operations, and Royal Mail paying its postal workers more.

2. Individuals that identified as Royal Mail postal workers

- **Overall, Royal Mail postal workers accepted reducing letter delivery days from six to five.** It was suggested that postal workers would welcome not working on Saturdays/at weekends. However, they did not support a move to a three-day service. It was argued that postal workers have an important social role as well as delivering post, so such a reduction in days would reduce contact with customers.
- **A common theme was that it was Royal Mail's poor management that was the reason for recent issues.** Some suggested that senior management do not understand how a postal network should operate, that staff are monitored too heavily, and that decisions to increase prices are encouraging electronic substitution of letters. Some raised management pay and suggested that postal workers had been told to prioritise parcels over letters.
- **Some suggested that the regulatory requirement for Royal Mail to provide access products to other postal operators was unfair.** Some suggested that if this was changed, it could increase the profitability of Royal Mail and/or reduce the extent to which other postal operators who used access products could profit from Royal Mail's effort.
- **Some suggested that Royal Mail should be nationalised.** This was based on the belief that too much money had been taken out of Royal Mail since privatisation.
- **Finally, there were comments that poor pay, training and lack of investment in infrastructure had led to low staff morale.**