

## Royal Mail's collection and delivery times

Postcomm has been asking mail users for their views on Royal Mail's collection and delivery times in order to find out what their needs are at a time when Royal Mail's practices are changing - and whether those needs remain sufficiently protected by the current system.

Under Royal Mail's licence – granted by Postcomm, the independent postal regulator - the company is obliged to make at least one collection from every post box, plus one delivery to every address, each working day.

This is part of the requirement on Royal Mail to provide the 'universal service' – a core set of postal services priced at geographically uniform rates. But, while Royal Mail is obliged to make daily collections and deliveries, its licence does not specify the times at which they should be made.


Our review was launched following concerns over changes to the timings of collections and deliveries in some places – particularly rural areas.

In some places, Royal Mail had brought forward to as early as 9am its final collection from post boxes. Combined with the later delivery times that have resulted in some areas from the introduction of a single daily delivery, these very early final collections from post boxes meant that - for some mail users - final collections were taking place before the day's post had arrived.

These changes might have helped Royal Mail meet its targets for next day delivery of first class post, but they made it more difficult for mail users – especially those in 'vulnerable groups' (the elderly or the disabled, for example) or those living in rural areas - to communicate by post.

Postcomm's review concluded that the majority of customers were satisfied with the postal service they received – price, collection and delivery times, and ability to post their items, including parcels. However, there was evidence that early rural collection times were an issue that justified action to push back those times as close to midday as possible.

Postcomm recommended that Royal Mail review all collection points with a pre-midday collection time on Monday to Friday, with a view to pushing back those times in cases where the company's network could reasonably accommodate such a change.



Royal Mail's review is expected to conclude in February 2008, but, to date, approximately 60% of the boxes reviewed have had their collection times put back either to midday or closer to midday.

### Useful links

- **[www.psc.gov.uk](http://www.psc.gov.uk)** - Postcomm's website, for full details of the collections and deliveries consultation, as well as more information on Postcomm's work and background on the UK postal market
- **[www.postwatch.co.uk](http://www.postwatch.co.uk)** - website for Postwatch, the independent watchdog for customer services in the postal sector
- **[www.royalmail.com](http://www.royalmail.com)** - Royal Mail's website

Please contact Postcomm for a full list of titles available in this series of factsheets.

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Postcomm is the independent regulator for postal services in the UK. This is one of a series of fact sheets designed to provide background information on key issues in the postal services sector. Contact us at 6 Hercules Road, London, SE1 7DB. **Tel** 020 7593 2100, **Email** [info@psc.gov.uk](mailto:info@psc.gov.uk)

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