

To Whom It May Concern

My name is [x], and I am Managing Director of Paper Tiger, an independent greetings card retailer with four shops in Edinburgh. We have successfully traded for over 44 years in the greetings cards market, and understand the value of the Royal Mail in terms of human connections. I have previously attended OfCom consultations on the future of the USO.

In an increasingly digital world, the act of sending and receiving a physical card carries a special weight, conveying a level of thoughtfulness and personal attention that electronic communication often cannot replicate. They strengthen relationships, foster a sense of belonging, and provide a lasting reminder of our connections with others.

In that context, I am writing to express my significant concerns regarding Ofcom's current proposals in the Review of the Universal Service Obligation. It appears these proposals **fundamentally misjudge the actual needs of consumers** and, if implemented, will undoubtedly harm my business.

The consultation seems to **minimise the crucial aspects** of affordability, reliability, and timely delivery, despite the **unequivocal evidence** of a decline in postal service standards since 2021.

It is deeply troubling that a review initially focused on delivery frequency appears to be **turning into a justification** for negatively impacting the reliability and affordability of Royal Mail services – precisely the elements that Ofcom's own research confirms are **paramount to consumers**.

I am deeply concerned that this approach will only **accelerate the decline in letter volumes**, and is likely to **destabilise**, rather than bolster, the financial sustainability of the Universal Service Obligation (USO). A service that becomes less dependable and less accessible will inevitably be used less; this is a wilful attempt to destroy the service obligation.

Furthermore, I strongly oppose any reduction in service frequency or lowering of performance targets, particularly for First and Second Class mail. Such changes will **inevitably erode consumer trust** and affordability, disproportionately affecting those who rely most heavily on postal services. Again, this is an attempt to degrade and ultimately destroy the USO responsibilities of the Royal Mail.

Ofcom's own evidence reveals **significant consumer dissatisfaction** with current delivery times. Yet, the proposed changes would only **exacerbate these shortcomings**, potentially leading to further, and perhaps more heavy-handed, government intervention down the line. Does OfCom exist to serve the needs of business, or protect consumers?

I strongly urge Ofcom to **reconsider these proposals with a more realistic and consumer focused perspective**. The Royal Mail is a public service! The focus should be on preserving and enhancing the reliability, affordability, and timeliness of the Universal Service Obligation. A thriving postal service is essential to our wider society and the UK economy, and any changes must be approached with a clear understanding of their potential consequences. Failure to do so is a failure of OfCom to safeguard consumers and will have widespread and unforeseen consequences across the economy and in our wider society.

Best Regards

[x]

Paper Tiger

www.papertiger.co.uk