

11 August 2009

Carmen To
Postcomm
Hercules House
6 Hercules Road
London
SE1 7DB

Dear Carmen,

Exceptions to the Universal Service – local holidays

Consumer Focus campaigns for a fair deal for consumers. We do this through research, policy, analysis, lobbying and by working with policy makers, providers and others who can make a difference to consumers' lives. We have a special remit to represent the interests of disadvantaged and vulnerable consumers.

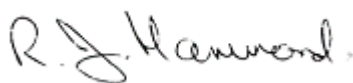
Consumer Focus has no objections to Royal Mail's application for exceptions to its universal service obligations on the following dates:

- Saturday 26 December 2009 (Boxing Day 2009) in the UK ;
- the day following the Battle of the Boyne bank holiday in Northern Ireland;
- certain local holidays in Scotland (to be taken instead of official bank holidays in Scotland);
- Due to a bank holiday falling on a Saturday and the Secretary of State has appointed the following Monday as the official bank holiday in its place, the Saturday may be taken as a holiday and the Monday (official bank holiday) will be a normal working day.

Consumer Focus agrees with Postcomm that it is important for all postal users to be made aware of the relevant dates when Royal Mail will not be providing a full delivery or collections service in the UK. To this end we believe that in addition to the communications arrangements proposed Royal Mail should display information in Callers Offices as well as Post Offices. These arrangements once finalised must be implemented as soon as possible. We would also welcome the opportunity to have oversight of the detailed consumer communications arrangements prior to their implementation so as to ensure that the public are sufficiently informed of the changes being proposed.

I hope these comments are helpful. My colleague, Cem Suleyman, would be pleased to follow them up with you either in person or via telephone/email (cem.suleyman@consumerfocus.org.uk, 0207 799 7932).

Yours Sincerely,



Robert Hammond
Head of Regulated Industries