
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order, which comes into force on 1 April 2012, sets out a description of the services that OFCOM consider should be provided in the United Kingdom as a universal postal service, and the standards with which those services are to comply, as required by section 30 of the Postal Services Act 2011 (the “Act”).

This is the first universal postal service order. Accordingly, the requirement in section 30(3) of the Act for OFCOM to carry out an assessment of the extent to which the market for the provision of postal services in the United Kingdom is meeting the reasonable needs of the users of those services before making a universal postal order does not apply to the making of this Order (section 30(4) of the Act).

Section 31 of the Act sets out seven minimum requirements that must be included in a universal postal service. The universal postal service described in this Order includes those minimum requirements together with additional requirements that OFCOM consider are appropriate.

Article 3 explains “routing times”, which are standards for the provision of postal services involving the conveyance of postal packets. Article 4 explains “delivery” requirements in the provision of those services.

Article 5 sets out the five kinds of postal services required as a universal postal service: delivery services (set out in article 6, implementing requirement 1 in section 31 of the Act); collection services (set out in article 7, implementing requirement 2 in section 31 of the Act); end-to-end services at affordable prices (set out in Schedule 1); free end-to-end services (set out in Schedule 2) and addressee services (set out in Schedule 3).

In Schedule 1, paragraphs 2 and 3 implement requirement 3 in section 31 of the Act (service at affordable prices in accordance with uniform public tariff), together with some requirements which go beyond the minimum. Paragraph 4 implements requirements 4 and 5 (registered items service and insured items service), together with some additional requirements. Paragraph 5 requires the provision of return to sender services, which is not part of the minimum requirements. Paragraphs 6 and 7 implement requirement 3(2) (conveyance of postal packets to places outside the United Kingdom). Paragraphs 8 and 9 require the conveyance of postal packets from places outside the United Kingdom; the delivery of such packets is part of requirement 1 (delivery of letters or other postal packets).

In Schedule 2, paragraph 1 implements requirement 7 in section 31 of the Act (legislative petitions and addresses) and paragraphs 2 to 5 implement requirement 6 (services to blind or partially sighted).

In Schedule 3, paragraph 1 requires redirection services, paragraph 2 requires post restante services and paragraph 3 requires retention services. These services are not minimum requirements under section 31 of the Act.

A full regulatory impact assessment of the effect that this Order will have on the costs of business is available to the public from OFCOM’s website at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk> or from the OFCOM library at Riverside House, 2A Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HA (Tel: 020 7981 3000). Copies of this assessment have also been placed in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the The Postal Services (Universal Postal Service) Order 2012.