



15th December 2006

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**CONDITION 7 NOTIFICATION:
The Launch of Postal Voting as a product**

Dear Derek,

In accordance with Condition 7 of the Royal Mail's licence I am writing to formally advise you, that from 2 April 2007, Royal Mail will convert to product status, a service, which has previously been offered as a bespoke; Postal Voting.

This product has been developed to facilitate customers who have a requirement to conduct time critical election campaigns. The Postal Voting product will concentrate on the handling of voting papers both during the election campaign and on polling day. It will only be available to customers conducting elections that require a response by mail.

The intention is to make this existing service easier to access, by avoiding the three month notification period required of individual contracts by Condition 7.

A copy of this letter is sent to Postwatch and will be published on Royal Mail's website within four working days.

Product Features

There are a number of individual elements to the Postal Voting product. Customers may select the elements that best suit their needs.

Outward mail packs

Voting papers can be sent out using any standard Royal Mail service.

Return of polling papers

The return items should be returned as 1st class Response Service Plus items in order to ensure next day delivery. These items are charged at the standard rate. Return items should however have purple flashes added in order to aid the following elements of the Postal Voting product.

Pre-Sorted Delivery

Customers have a choice of how their mail is sorted during the election campaign.

1. Postal Voting mail can be returned with and at the same time as all other day-to-day mail. Customers may take advantage of the existing Timed Delivery product if a specific time is required.
2. Postal Voting mail can be separated from all other day-to-day mail into a single selection. Mail will be delivered as per normal. Customers may take advantage of the existing Timed Delivery product if a specific time is required.
3. Postal Voting mail can be separated from all other day-to-day mail and further sorted according to customer requirements (eg to voting wards). This is classed as a Pre-sortation and is delivered through the Pre-Sorted Delivery product¹, albeit priced pro-rata to reflect the fact that campaigns will often last for days or weeks rather than months. Alternatively customers have the choice to come and collect mail from the Inward Mail Centre.

Mail Centre Polling Day Sweep

In addition to the provision of the above standard services² (albeit on pro-rata basis) the distinguishing element of the overall product is the ability to request a polling day sweep of the local Mail Centres. Due to the unique and essentially local nature of election campaigns Outward and Inward Mail Centres are, in the main, one and the same which enables Royal Mail to seek out all items posted within that local area and return them to the customer.

Features

- The identification (aided by purple flashes) and collation of postal vote responses to hand within the Mail Centre on the evening of polling day close.

¹ Pre-Sorted Delivery product which takes effect 02/04/07

² Pre-Sorted Delivery is being launched as product simultaneously as Postal Voting. Please see PSD notification

- Items collated within the local (Main) Mail Centre can be collected by the customer or delivered to the customer via dedicated delivery.
- Items collated within neighbouring (Secondary) Mail Centres must be collected by the customer.

Access

- Customers must plan elections with Royal Mail at least 12³ weeks in advance.
- Election specification Response Plus designs must be used for reply items. The design must include purple flashes to assist identification within the Royal Mail network.
- A pdf of envelope designs must be sent in order for Royal Mail to check that all elements have been included. An optional, but recommended, accreditation process will be available.
- Pre-sorted delivery, if the customer takes this option, will take place via prior arrangement with the Royal Mail account team, and must take place throughout the whole of the election campaign.
- Each customer's election campaign will be charged separately.

Pricing

A Postal Vote pricing calculator will be available via [Royal Mail's website](#) by the end of December 2006. This allows customers to obtain a price for the elements of Postal Voting that best meet their needs.

Compensation

Provided for the outward mail service, Response Plus and Timed Delivery elements as per the standard Royal Mail products.

Pre-Sorted Delivery

Compensation for sortation failure is as per Standard Pre-Sorted Delivery product. Table replicated below for ease of reference:

Percentage of mail provided unsorted	Percentage of the Daily Charge payable
90% or more	0%
75% to 89%	25%
51% to 74%	50%
50% or less	100%

In terms of delay if collection or delivery of pre-sorted mail is more than thirty minutes later than the agreed time, on a particular day, Royal Mail will refund 1%⁴ of the monthly fee for the Pre-Sorted Delivery element.⁵

³ Shorter planning periods may be possible by exception eg for by-election

Mail Centre Sweeps

If the agreed Mail Centre sweep fails to take place then the fee will be refunded.

Details of this product and pricing calculator will be posted on [Royal Mail's website](#) by the end of December 2006.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Waples
Regulation & Commercial Policy Manager

⁴ Up to a maximum of 5% per month

⁵ See also Pre-Sorted Delivery product notification.