



**POLICY FOR THE FAIR AND APPROPRIATE TREATMENT OF DISABLED
CONSUMERS**

October 2023

Introduction

In this document, we set out our policy for the fair and appropriate treatment of disabled consumers in relation to the collection, delivery and receipt of relevant parcels¹ in the UK. Parcelforce Worldwide and Parcelforce are trading names of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Royal Mail Group Ltd is a private limited company registered in England and Wales No. 4138203, whose registered office is at: 185 Farringdon Road, London, EC1A 1AA. We take our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 very seriously and we are committed to ensuring that all consumers, including disabled consumers, are able to access our services.

This policy supports fair and appropriate treatment of disabled consumers, setting out the postal services that are available for consumers, how our Customer Service advisors will safeguard disabled consumers who contact us, and how we will ensure our staff receive appropriate training.

Parcelforce Worldwide provides a number of services to support disabled consumers

We offer a number of services and features that can help support disabled consumers:

- **Deliver Without Signature** providing a photograph on delivery for consumers rather than rely on a consumer's ability to sign for an item
- **Alternative delivery arrangements and reasonable adjustments** – for those unable to get to the door to receive a delivery we offer inflight opportunities to tell us to deliver on an alternative day, deliver to a neighbour or a convenient post office.²
- **Delivery Preferences**, giving consumers more control over their doorstep experience.

Consumers can share their delivery and collection preferences with us

In this section we set out how consumers, including disabled consumers, can communicate their needs and preferences to Parcelforce in relation to the delivery of parcels that are addressed to them.

We have given consumers greater control of their doorstep experience. This includes how they receive their mail. Consumers have the ability to select a safe place for mail to be delivered if they are not home (subject to the sender of the item opting for a no signature required delivery), to deliver to a neighbour or a post office of their convenience. This helps all consumers, including disabled consumers, by allowing them to select the option that is right for them. Consumers are also able to set preferences to help them answer the door and receive a delivery or arrange for a collection. For example, disabled consumers can ask for more time for them to get to the door or for their delivery driver to knock loudly. A step-by-step guide to setting Delivery Preferences is available on our website.³ Consumers who do not have access to the Parcelforce app can contact our Customer Service advisors via a range of contact channels that support a range of consumer communication needs.⁴ We want to make sure that all consumers are able to register their Delivery Preferences with us and our Customer Service advisors can support consumers in registering their Delivery Preferences with Parcelforce Worldwide.

¹ "Relevant parcel" means a postal packet that is larger in dimensions than a relevant letter, and weighs no more than 31.5 kg as set out in Ofcom's Consumer Protection Condition 5.

² Inflight Redirections give consumers the option to change delivery options when their parcel is on its way

³ <https://www.parcelforce.com/delivery-options>

⁴ Consumers can get in touch via <https://www.parcelforce.com/contact-us> by calling 0344 800 44 66 or by writing to at Parcelforce Worldwide, Correspondence Team, PO Box 486, Wakefield, WF1 9AG. The Relay UK service is available by calling 180010344 800 44 66.

How we will respond to consumers delivery and collection preferences

In this section we set out how we meet the needs of consumers after they have registered their preference.

Once a consumer has registered their Delivery Preference with us, we will follow the instruction for any mail delivered or collected by Parcelforce. When delivering and collecting mail, our staff carry a handheld device (a PDA). The PDA will alert the postman or woman to any relevant Delivery Preferences at that address when delivering or collecting mail.

If multiple people at an address register different preferences, we will deliver or collect mail for each individual according to their registered preferences. The only exception to this is where a consumer at an address has included a Delivery Preferences for an additional accessibility need (e.g. knock louder, allow more time to get to the door). In these cases, we will apply the instruction to any mail delivered to that address.

We are keen to ensure that our Delivery Preference instructions remain up to date and relevant to those that live at the address. We will follow a consumer's registered Delivery Preference for one year. At the end of the year, consumers will be notified that their Delivery Preference is about to expire. It is very simple for consumers to confirm they want their Delivery Preference to stay in place via the Parcelforce app, or via our Customer Service team.

All relevant employees or workers working for, or on behalf of, Parcelforce are expected to follow our standards on the correct delivery and collection of mail, including following consumers' Delivery Preferences. This includes our permanent employees, those working on fixed term contracts and temporary staff working directly for Parcelforce, Self Employed workers or via an agency.

Our Customer Service advisors will safeguard disabled consumers who contact us

In this section we set out how our Customer Service advisors will interact with a consumer once it has been identified that the consumer may have additional needs.

It is important to us that consumers can communicate with us effectively and we welcome feedback on our processes. In situations where things go wrong with a delivery or collection, it is crucial that consumers can resolve issues quickly and easily. This includes consumers who may have additional communication needs. We have published a clear complaints handling process⁵ which includes a variety of ways to get in touch with us via post, telephone, webform, email and including options for deaf, hearing or speech impaired consumers via Relay UK. We will make reasonable adjustments, where appropriate, to accommodate consumers' needs when communicating with us. For example, we will respond to consumers in other formats such as braille or large print text if requested. Our Customer Promise⁶ is also published on our website and includes a commitment that our Customer Service advisors will take ownership of any complaint we receive. If consumers are not happy with how their complaint is handled, we have a clear route of escalation.

Our staff are encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of disabled consumers

We know that post can be particularly important for some disabled consumers. We are committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to all consumers. and having properly trained delivery staff

⁵ <https://www.parcelforce.com/help-and-advice/sending/problem-or-complaint>

⁶ How to make a complaint <https://www.parcelforce.com/help-and-advice/sending/problem-or-complaint>

is key to this. Delivery Preferences training has been rolled out to all frontline delivery and collection staff to ensure they understand the importance of following consumers' requests. All staff joining Parcelforce already undergo extensive induction training, and this now includes training on Delivery Preferences. Delivery Preference training will also be included in ongoing refresher training undertaken by all delivery staff.

Our Customer Service advisors undergo extensive training as part of their induction, with regular updates to ensure their training remains up to date and accurate. This includes training also includes the creation and maintenance of our delivery preferences for consumers with specific requirements on delivery.

How we will evaluate the effectiveness of our policy

Being the most trusted delivery company in the UK is a key part of our promise to consumers. An important part of this is understanding how consumers are impacted by our policy. We have set up a feedback mechanism that will help us to assess the effectiveness of this policy.

It is important to us that we are able to assess the effectiveness of how we deliver services for disabled consumers. To help give us insight into consumer's experiences, we have commissioned a third party to undertake a 'mystery shopper' programme on our behalf. Part of this includes that an alert is immediately raised if a panellist experiences any incidents of non-compliance with Parcelforce's delivery or collection policies. We encourage our panellists to give feedback on whether their individual needs were met, and whether they believe the person providing the service was appropriately trained. We will also encourage feedback on any other communications they have had with Parcelforce (for example via our Customer Service team).

On an annual basis, we will review the results of our mystery shopper programme alongside other internal metrics that measure compliance with our doorstep procedures. We will record any complaints that we receive about our Delivery Preferences service and will analyse these both on an ongoing basis, and as part of our annual review of our policies. These will be reviewed by senior management at Parcelforce to ensure that our policies are meeting the needs of disabled consumers. Parcelforce will retain the information used in the annual review, and other underlying data in line with our data retention policy. This data will be available for a period of three years.