

A Practical Guide



to Postal Services



Making a Postal Complaint



The Consumer Council

Postal Complaints

Know your rights if a postal company doesn't deliver good service.

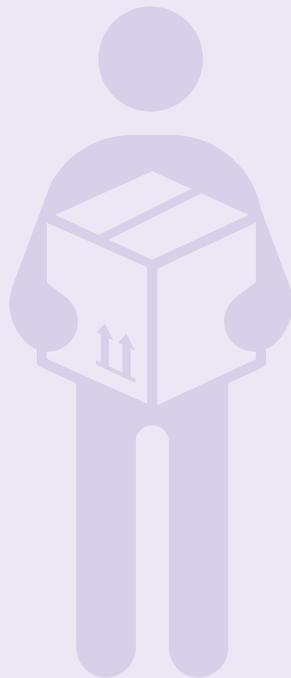
This guide provides advice on how to make a complaint or claim compensation, if something goes wrong when you are sending or receiving mail.

Where you can go to for assistance will depend on whether you were the sender or recipient of the goods in question and which postal operator was used.

The Consumer Council represents postal consumers providing independent advice and guidance on postal service issues.

If you need advice or require extra assistance, you can contact us on:

0800 121 6022 or
complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk



Common Postal Issues

The most common issues consumers experience include:

- Lost mail;
- Problems with receiving advice cards to notify you of an attempted delivery;
- Receiving items meant for other addresses (this is known as 'misdelivery');
- Delayed mail; and
- Damaged mail.

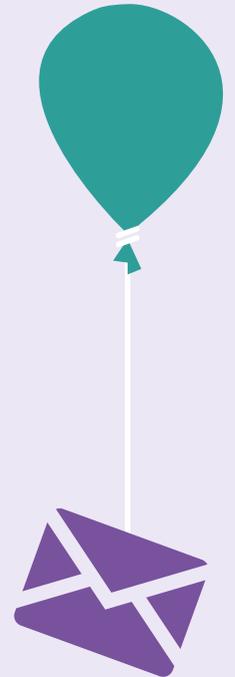
There are different processes in place for dealing with postal issues, depending on whether the problem relates to delivery in respect of goods ordered online.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**



If you get too much unwanted mail, such as advertising, coming through your door, the Mailing Preference Service may be able to help.

Sign up online at **mps@dma.org.uk** or telephone **028 7291 3310**.



Making a Postal Complaint

Postal complaints originating from online orders

Often when items are purchased online you are not aware of which company will be delivering your parcel. If you have a complaint about an online shopping delivery, contact the retailer as soon as possible. Online retailers usually hold the contract with the delivery company and must resolve the complaint on your behalf.

For free help and advice on making a complaint with an online retailer contact Consumerline on **0300 123 6262** or visit **www.nidirect.gov.uk/consumerline**.

For items bought through a private seller on an online market place such as eBay or Amazon Marketplace, you must still contact the seller initially. However, there are a number of options if you are not happy with the outcome. These include, eBay's Money Back Guarantee, PayPal Buyer Protection or Amazon A-Z Guarantee. Complaint procedures for these can be found on their respective websites.



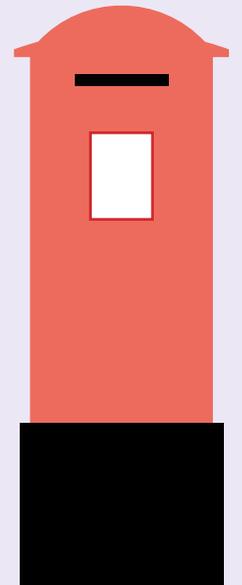
Postal complaints not originating from online orders

Perhaps you're sending birthday cards or presents to friends and family, and your items arrive damaged or are delayed. Or maybe you're waiting for items from relatives which haven't arrived. You may be able to claim compensation, but this will depend on the postal product used to send the item, for example, a signed for service.

For items sent using Royal Mail:

Prior to submitting a claim you should read the loss, damage and delay compensation policies for the product used, as this will explain when you may be entitled to compensation and how much compensation may be payable.

There is a claim form which can be picked up at the Post Office or it can be downloaded online at **www.royalmail.com** or you can contact Royal Mail's Customer Services team on **03457 740740**.



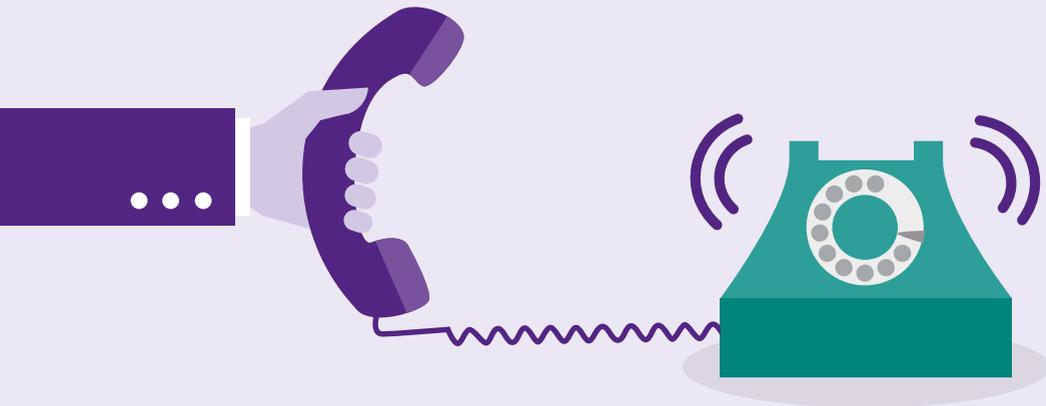
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If you have already complained to Royal Mail's Customer Services team or you are not satisfied with their response you can ask to escalate your complaint to Royal Mail's Postal Review Panel. This acts as the final stage in Royal Mail's complaint handling process.

The Postal Review Panel is a team that sits outside of Royal Mail Customer Services and is empowered to independently review complaints from customers who have used a Royal Mail service.

Remember: It is useful if you think about what you would like to happen to resolve your complaint – are you seeking an apology, an investigation or compensation?

If you remain unhappy after contacting the Postal Review Panel, you may be able to take your complaint to POSTRS, the Postal Redress Service (more details overleaf).



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For items sent using another postal operator: If another postal operator has been used and you are the sender, contact the operator to pursue any claim or complaint. (See Contacts Section)

If you are the recipient it is important to clarify which operator delivered the item, before pursuing a claim or a complaint.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**



You can get a certificate of posting free at any Post Office counter when you post something using Royal Mail.

Without this proof, it will be difficult to claim compensation if your mail is lost, so make sure you ask for one.



Who is POSTRS?

POSTRS is an independent body whose role is to resolve disputes between regulated postal operators and their customers.

What can POSTRS make the company do?

If they agree with your complaint, they can tell the company to do any or all of the following:

- Give you an apology or explanation;
- Pay you compensation for any loss that you may have suffered, within the limits set out in the terms and conditions; or
- Pay you up to £50 for any stress, anxiety or inconvenience suffered as a result of how the company handled your complaint.



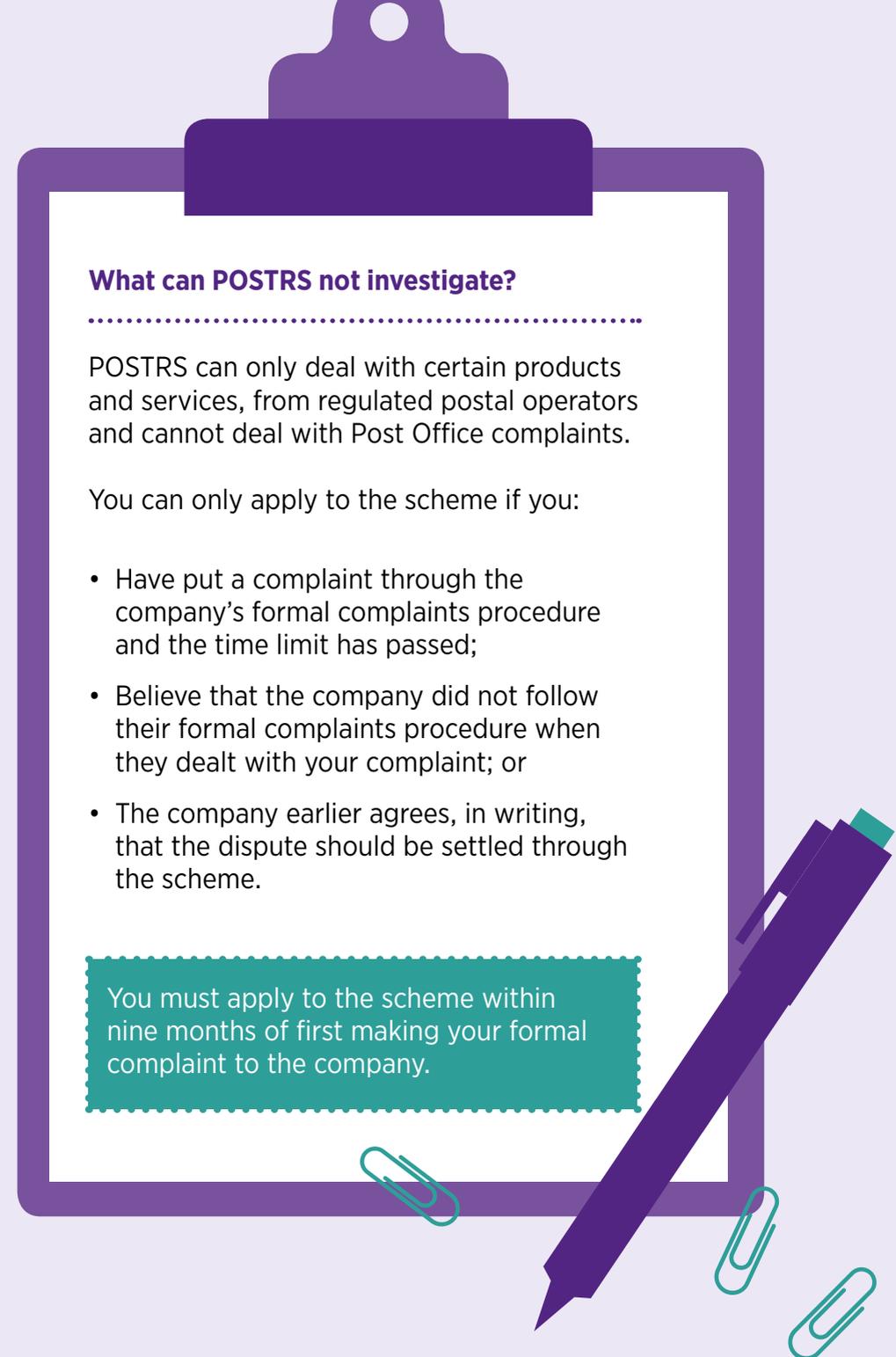
What can POSTRS not investigate?

POSTRS can only deal with certain products and services, from regulated postal operators and cannot deal with Post Office complaints.

You can only apply to the scheme if you:

- Have put a complaint through the company's formal complaints procedure and the time limit has passed;
- Believe that the company did not follow their formal complaints procedure when they dealt with your complaint; or
- The company earlier agrees, in writing, that the dispute should be settled through the scheme.

You must apply to the scheme within nine months of first making your formal complaint to the company.



Quick Guide

Does your complaint relate to the delivery of an online purchase?

YES

If there is a problem with the delivery of your online purchase or the parcel has not yet arrived, contact the seller as soon as possible. Under law the contract for delivery is between the seller and the delivery company. It is therefore the seller's responsibility to ensure the delivery of your online order within the agreed timeframe or within 30 days if no timeframe was agreed.

See our 'Guide to Shopping Safely Online' for more info – visit www.consumerCouncil.org.uk or call **0800 121 6022** to get your free copy.

If you are not happy with the seller's final response, contact Consumerline on **0300 123 6262** or www.nidirect.gov.uk/consumerline who can provide free help and advice.

NO

If you are a sender or recipient and are experiencing problems with your postal service it is important to firstly determine the postal company responsible. (See the Contacts Section for a list of postal and parcel operators).

Always complain to your postal operator in the first instance. You can usually do this verbally or in writing but make sure to keep a clear record of your complaint.

Most operators will acknowledge your complaint and attempt to resolve your issue.

If you do not receive a satisfactory response, pursue your complaint in line with the operator's escalation process.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome and the postal operator is registered with the UK Independent Postal Redress Scheme (POSTRS), you may be able to refer the matter to them for free. For full details on whether they can help with your complaint, visit www.postrs.org.uk or telephone **020 7520 3766**.

Compensation

The amount of compensation you can claim for lost, damaged or delayed mail depends on the operator and service you used. It also will depend on whether you can provide proof of posting and evidence of the item's value.

Useful tips for proving your claim

In order to prove your claim, it is helpful to provide as much evidence as possible to show that the postal provider caused either loss, damage or inconvenience. Here are some examples of what you should think about before you make a claim for compensation:

- **Proof of posting** is normally a certificate of posting. For items sent using Royal Mail, this can be obtained from the Post Office. Alternatively if another postal operator is used, this can be in the form of a receipt or email confirmation from your postal operator.
- **Evidence of the item's value** can be a receipt or a bank statement showing the amount you paid when you bought the item.

NOTE

Royal Mail's 'Signed For' service only provides a signature on delivery, and does not track your items.

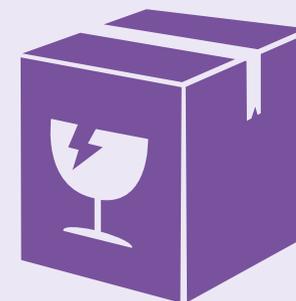
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- **Evidence of damage.** It is advisable to hold onto the packaging and take photographic evidence of both the packing and contents.
- **Evidence of non-receipt.** In some cases, if you dispute not receiving an item, you will be asked to provide evidence that you did not receive the postal item, or weren't available to acknowledge receipt. Obviously, this can be more difficult to prove. If possible, we would suggest asking the sender/operator for proof of the delivery/signature they have on record.
- Ensure that you used the **right service.** For example, items of high value, including money and jewellery, should be sent, for example, using a secure signed for service.
- **Package your item** in accordance with the postal operator's terms and conditions, including marking the item as 'fragile' if appropriate. If the item has arrived damaged, the packaging itself (or a photograph) may be asked for as evidence to any claim.
- **Addressed correctly** in accordance with the postal operator's guidance.

Remember:

There are limits to how far Royal Mail and other postal operators can investigate lost mail. Unless your parcel or letter is sent using tracked or Special Delivery, there may not be a way to trace it through the postal network.



Contacts

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and inclusion on this list does not imply a recommendation from the Consumer Council.

Parcel Collection

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Royal Mail | www.royalmail.com 03457 740 740 tweet @RoyalMail |
| Post Office | www.postoffice.co.uk 03457 22 33 44 |
| Parcelforce | www.parcelforce.com |
| Nightline | www.nightline.ie |
| Yodel | www.yodeldirect.co.uk |
| TNT express | www.tntdirect.co.uk |
| DHL | www.dhl.co.uk |
| UPS | www.ups.com |

Parcel Pick up / Drop off

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Collect+ | www.collectplus.co.uk |
| myHermes | www.myhermes.co.uk |
| Mailboxes etc | www.mbe.co.uk |

Business Consumers

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Royal Mail | www.royalmail.com |
| Whistl | www.whistl.co.uk |
| Postal Group | www.postalgroup.com |
| Fastway | www.fastway.ie |
| DPD | www.dpd.co.uk |





Complaints line: 0800 121 6022



Tele/Textphone: 028 9067 2488



Fax: 028 9065 7701



E-mail: info@consumercouncil.org.uk
complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk



Websites: www.consumercouncil.org.uk
www.nidirect.gov.uk/consumerline



Consumer Council Northern Ireland



ConsumerCouncil

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