

Service update

Issued Thursday 16th December 2010

Service summary

- Royal Mail teams are working hard across the country to operate services impacted by recent weather conditions, ahead of further expected snow and ice.
- We're deploying additional measures where we can in the continuing and forecast difficult conditions to collect, sort, transport and deliver the massive volume of seasonal mail now progressing through our network
- Deliveries are taking place in the majority of the UK as we do all we can to get mail to customers in all areas where it's safe and possible for us to do so.
- In Scotland, it's taking longer to deal with the mail affected by recent and current weather conditions, as well as the additional seasonal mail coming into and out of the region.
- We're really sorry for the disruption caused to our services and our customers as a result of prolonged and severe weather conditions.
- Customers should continue to post early and by the last recommended posting [dates](#) for Christmas to help us as delivery volumes grow and weather conditions deteriorate again this week.

In many areas the prolonged severe weather has restricted the normal movement of mail and prevented some customers from posting their mail over a period of time. As weather conditions eased, we began receiving those deferred mailings in a concentrated period of time, alongside the usual peak volumes received this time of year. Whilst we're continuing to deploy additional measures, resources and contingency plans as well as our usual Christmas plans to deal with these high volumes, there is likely to be a delay to some mail currently passing through our network due to compounded volumes and the expectation of more bad weather.

Customers are advised to continue posting their mail as early as possible and before the last recommended Christmas posting dates, which can be found at www.royalmail.com/greetings. Additionally, we're requesting that customers provide us with new forecasts where they've needed to change or defer mailings.

We're investing £20 million in additional measures – on top of our usual Christmas plans – to deal with the impact on services of the most severe weather in 30 years. This includes recruiting thousands of additional people, using extra lorries, making thousands of extra deliveries over the coming weekend, where it's safe and possible to do so, and getting as much additional resource into the most affected areas as we possibly can. Our enquiry offices are opening for longer this week making the collection of mail more convenient for customers.

We anticipate further increases in delivery volumes during the coming week as the Christmas mailings move through our network, though this may be further impacted by fresh snow falls and icy conditions. Royal Mail remains committed to delivering what customers need in the run up to Christmas.



Regional service information

The vast majority of deliveries and collections are now taking place across the UK. However, some items may take longer than others to travel through our network as a result of our contingency plans deployed to deal with the impact of the weather conditions and peak mail volumes. In order to keep as much mail moving as possible we're using alternative routes and modes of transport - via areas less impacted by recent weather conditions - and this may result in an extension or variation to usual delivery patterns. Further delays may also be experienced across some regions if current weather conditions continue to deteriorate.

Areas served by those offices dealing with exceptionally high volumes of seasonal or delayed mail, or in areas now affected by deteriorating weather conditions, may also experience delivery delays. Please check the information provided at www.royalmail.com/serviceupdates for the most-up-to-date regional information.

Scotland

Having experienced the most prolonged severe weather and with more snow forecast, we're facing significant challenges in Scotland than other areas and this is resulting in delays beyond a few days. A short reprieve in weather conditions has allowed us to make normal deliveries across almost all areas in the last few days. Some pockets of disruption still exist, where we are dealing with exceptionally high volumes of mail and using additional resources to get mail to customers as quickly as possible. We'll keep updating our web pages with further details at www.royalmail.com/serviceupdates.

Our Scottish teams are working really hard to process and deliver mail delayed by the weather conditions, as well as seasonal mail, and are using all available resources to help do this.

Mail posted in Scotland

To mitigate, wherever possible, the impact of the prolonged severe weather conditions in Scotland, we have been using other regions of our UK mails network to support the processing and distribution of mail posted in Scotland and destined for delivery in other parts of the UK. This allows us to keep as much mail moving as possible and delays to a minimum. It also allows the Scottish operational teams to concentrate on processing the mail due for delivery in Scotland and which has already been delayed by weather conditions ahead of potential further weather restrictions.

Mail due delivery in Scotland

Mail due to be delivered in Scotland but posted in other parts of the UK is being sorted and transported to Scotland for inward processing and delivery as quickly as we can. The severe conditions for two weeks in Scotland meant that, for a number of days, very little mail could move into the country; as a result there are delays to mail being processed and delivered in Scotland. We are despatching mail for delivery in Scotland using all available modes of transport (air, train, and road) and in as much volume as we can safely manage and are continually reviewing the further impact of deteriorating weather conditions on mail services throughout the region.

We're really sorry for customers in Scotland or posting to Scotland whose services have been and may continue to be disrupted as a result of the weather conditions.

Premium services update - Special Delivery™

Whilst we are continuing to accept and expect to deliver the vast majority of Special Delivery items, it's possible that some items may experience a delay as they move through our pipeline.

We therefore cannot guarantee next day delivery of all items in all parts of the UK. For that reason and to provide customers with clear guidance, the Special Delivery™ guarantee remains temporarily withdrawn. Please be assured we review this every day and will reinstate the guarantee as soon as we can deliver the service promise. We're really sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.

International mail services

Whilst the movement of import and export mail across the UK may be subject to some delay because of the recent severe weather and peak mail volumes, the majority of international mail is leaving the UK as planned. Further information about international services can be found online: www.royalmail.com/internationalupdates.

Increased security measures delays some mail to USA

In November, the United States Department of Homeland Security increased security measures for items carried on passenger airlines. As a result, mail entering the US from around the world, and including the UK, that would normally be sent via passenger aircraft must now travel by other means, including cargo planes.

The vast majority of items, including letters and Christmas cards, posted prior to the last recommended posting date of 10th December have been and will continue to arrive in the US in time for Christmas. However, these ongoing security issues, combined with the impact of recent severe weather on the movement of mail throughout the UK, are causing delays to some items bound for the US. We're really sorry for these unavoidable delays and are doing everything we can to keep mail moving out of and into the UK.

Since the middle of November and throughout the recent period of weather related service disruption in parts of the UK, we have implemented a number of contingency plans to ensure as much of our customers' mail reaches the US as quickly as possible. In finding alternative, available routes and transportation to the US, it's possible that the delivery pattern of some items may have been interrupted and not all mail will arrive in the sequence in which it was posted. Handling significantly increased volumes of mail at this festive time along with the complexity of reacting at pace to contingency arrangements, means we're unable to track individual items for customers or identify exactly when in the current arrival patterns deliveries are likely to take place.

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and are continuing to work to minimise disruption to our customers, whilst ensuring we comply fully with the US directives and regulations.

Keeping customers informed

Our service teams will continue to provide as much information as we can about how our network and services are doing throughout this busy period: for the most up to date information on the national and regional picture, please visit www.royalmail.com/serviceupdates, where you can also sign up to receive email [alerts](#).