

Pass the Parcel

Mystery shopping exercise

November 2014



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Produced by Citizens Advice

For more information contact:

Xanthe Couture: xanthe.couture@citizensadvice.org.uk

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About us

On 1 April 2014, Consumer Futures (previously Consumer Focus) – the statutory representative for consumers of postal services across the United Kingdom, for energy consumers across Great Britain, and for water consumers in Scotland – became part of the Citizens Advice Service. Our responsibility for post in Northern Ireland transferred to the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland.

Citizens Advice Service in England, Wales and Scotland

The Citizens Advice Service provides free, confidential, and impartial advice to help people resolve their problems. As the UK's largest advice provider, the Citizens Advice Service is equipped to deal with any issue, from anyone, spanning debt and employment, to housing and immigration, plus everything in between. We value diversity, promote equality, and challenge discrimination.

The service aims:

- To provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives
- To ensure that individuals do not suffer through ignorance of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available; or through an inability to express their needs
- To exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally.

Citizens Advice Bureaux deliver advice services from over 3,500 community locations in England and Wales, run by 382 independent registered charities. Citizens Advice itself is also a registered charity, as well as being the membership organisation for these 382 member bureaux. In Scotland, 61 Citizens Advice Bureaux helped more than 330,000 clients with over one million issues in 2013/14. More than 2,200 trained volunteers and 600 paid staff ensure that thousands of people in Scotland receive vital advice every day.

Method

We commissioned GfK Mystery Shopping to conduct an exercise to test consumers' experiences of competition in the parcels market. This involved mystery shoppers across the UK sending parcels to mystery shoppers in other parts of the UK, using one of a variety of parcel operators. Each assessment consisted of two parts:

- The first required the sender to keep a detailed record on the information given in response to a request for the operator's most basic parcel product.
- The second required the recipient to collate detailed information on the delivery process, including their experiences of retrieving the parcel following unsuccessful delivery on the first attempt.

The questionnaires completed by the senders and recipients can be found in Annex 1; Annexes 2 and 3 contain the sender and recipient briefings respectively.

A total of 760 parcel despatch assessments were attempted, resulting in 688 successful despatches and 581 successful receipts. Fieldwork took place between 7 May and 8 June 2013.

No shopper taking part in the exercise worked for any of the organisations being evaluated.

Throughout the report, base sizes of less than 30 are indicated as 'low base'. These results can only provide indicative findings.

Parcel operators and products

For this exercise we wanted to provide a broad representation of the various services available across the UK. We therefore tested a range of parcel operators with UK-wide networks, and a variety of methods for despatch and delivery. We instructed all sender shoppers to use the cheapest product and not to select any additional services (such as a safe place option or nominated delivery times). If they were asked about content value, they were told to state that this was around £10.

Please note that there is a difference between the sending company and the delivery company for some assessments. For example, the parcel brokers Mail Boxes Etc. and Parcel2Go are sending companies, but the delivery company used depends on which was selected by the sender from the selection offered by the broker. Parcelforce can be accessed directly via a post office or via a parcel broker, and thus some of the deliveries made by Parcelforce were sent via a parcel broker. Similarly, myHermes has two sending options (Parcelshop and Courier Collection) but it is one delivery company. The tables below set out the sending and delivery companies used.

Method

Table 1. Comparison of the sending companies used

Sending company	Product	Purchase location	Despatch location	Receipt method	Delivery/collection location
Royal Mail	Second Class	Post office	Post office	Delivery	Recipient's home
Parcelforce	express48	Post office	Post office	Delivery	Recipient's home
myHermes ParcelShop	Standard cheapest	Online	Local shop	Delivery	Recipient's home
myHermes Courier Collection	Standard cheapest	Online	Collection from sender's home	Delivery	Recipient's home
Collect+	Standard cheapest	Online	Local shop	Collection	Local shop
Mail Boxes Etc.	Standard cheapest	Online	Mail Boxes Etc. shop	Delivery	Recipient's home
Parcel2Go	Standard cheapest	Online	Collection from sender's home	Delivery	Recipient's home

Table 2. Comparison of the delivery companies used

Delivery company	Product	Purchase location	Despatch location	Receipt method	Delivery /collection location
Royal Mail	Second Class	Post office	Post office	Delivery	Recipient's home
Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	express48 /other	Post office/online via parcel broker	Post office	Delivery	Recipient's home
myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Standard cheapest	Online direct/online via parcel broker	Drop-off shop /collection from sender's home	Delivery	Recipient's home
Collect+	Standard cheapest	Online	Drop-off shop	Collection	Local shop
Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Standard cheapest	Online	Drop-off shop /collection from sender's home	Delivery	Recipient's home
Other via	Standard	Online	Drop-off shop	Delivery	Recipient's

Method

Parcel2Go	cheapest		/collection from sender's home		home
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Senders

'Sender' shoppers were asked to record the experience of attempting to send a parcel. They were instructed to send it, via a specific company, to the address of a specific recipient shopper who had agreed to their address details being used in this way.

In order to ensure consistency, all sender shoppers prepared a parcel approximately the size of a large cereal box (specifically 354mm to 450mm wide, 251mm to 350mm long (300mm for Collect+) and 80mm deep). This was intended to be too big to easily go through a standard letter box but within the correct dimensions to be despatched by the correct method selected for each sending company. The parcels were packed with waste paper with the aim of keeping them light (under 1kg) but also adequately solid so that they could not easily be squashed through a letterbox.

Shoppers were instructed not to travel more than 15 miles (from their home) to drop off or pick up their parcels from shops or post offices. The limit was imposed for practical reasons as well as being what we considered as a reasonable reflection of how far people would travel to drop off parcels in real life.

Recipients

'Recipient' shoppers were instructed to record their experience when receiving the sent items. Those expecting a delivery to their home (recipients of Royal Mail, Parcelforce, myHermes and other services via Mail Boxes Etc. and Parcel2Go) were instructed to try to be out, or to pretend to be out, when the parcel arrived to test the redelivery and/or collection options offered following first time delivery failure. In practice, while most shoppers who experienced first time delivery failure received a card through their door instructing them to collect the item, a small proportion were advised (also by card) that the parcel would be redelivered. Recipients of Collect+ were instructed to collect the item from a collection shop having received a text or email.

During the early stages of fieldwork, no limit was set on waiting time for deliveries and, in fact, one shopper waited 19 days. During the latter stages of fieldwork, shoppers were, by practical necessity, limited to waiting no more than 10 days for their parcels.

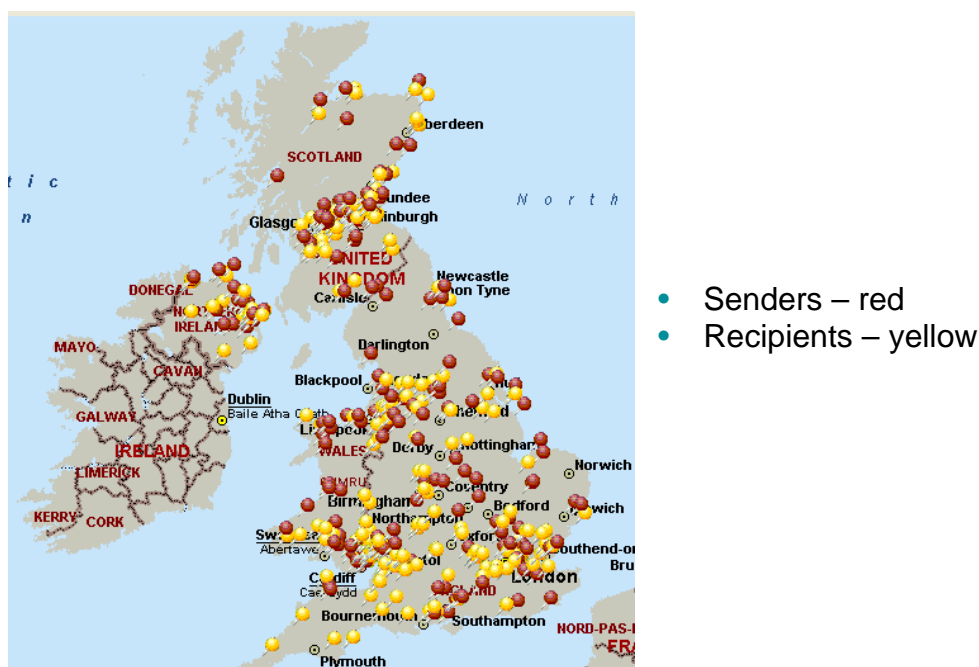
Sample

The sample was designed with the intention of representing:

- a range of sending and delivery companies
- countries (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)
- attempted delivery both within country and between countries
- population densities (urban, rural and remote; definitions are in Annex 4).

The map below shows the spread of sender and recipient addresses across the UK.

Figure 1. Assessment locations across the UK



A total of 760 *sender* attempts were made, but due to shoppers withdrawing from the survey for personal reasons (illness etc) only 746 *receipt* attempts were made. Of the 760 sender attempts, 72 were unable to actually send, primarily due to the drop-off point being 15 miles or more away. Shoppers were instructed not to travel this distance.

Of the 688 successfully despatched parcels, 581 were successfully received. The majority of the unsuccessful receipts were explained by the parcel not arriving within a waiting period of at least 10 days.

A breakdown of the sample structure showing despatch attempts across countries is shown below.

Table 3. Assessment sample by country

Sender country origin	All sender attempts	Sending to England	Sending to Wales	Sending to Scotland	Sending to Northern Ireland
Sending from England	197	54	49	47	47
Sending from Wales	186	49	44	48	45
Sending from Scotland	190	50	43	53	44
Sending from	187	51	45	45	46

Method

Northern Ireland					
Total	760	204	181	193	182

Geographies were defined as urban, rural or remote. These were defined in slightly different ways across countries (details are provided in Annex 4).

Table 4. Sender sample by country and geography

Sender geography	All sender attempts	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Urban	357	89	81	93	94
Rural	358	98	95	82	83
Remote	45	10	10	15	10
Total	760	197	186	190	187

Table 5. Recipient sample by country and geography

Receiver geography	All receipt attempts	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Urban	401	111	64	115	111
Rural	299	87	101	67	44
Remote	46	3	15	6	22
Total	746	201	180	188	177

Details of the sending and delivery company sample by country and geography are provided below.

Table 6. Sending companies by country

Attempted despatch country	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce	myHermes Parcelshop	myHermes Courier Collection	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.	Parcel2 Go
England	197	50	43	15	15	43	16	15
Wales	186	48	38	14	15	38	17	16
Scotland	190	46	40	15	17	37	17	18
Northern Ireland	187	48	34	16	14	36	19	20
Total	760	192	155	60	61	154	69	69

Table 7. Sending companies by geography

Attempted despatch country	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce	myHermes Parcelshop	myHermes Courier Collection	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.	Parcel2 Go
Urban	357	86	78	24	30	72	28	39
Rural	358	97	70	32	27	68	38	26

Method

Remote	45	9	7	4	4	14	3	4
Total	760	192	155	60	61	154	69	69

Table 8. Delivery companies by country

Attempted despatch country	All	Successful delivery	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
England	197	187	45	46	35	54	1	6
Wales	186	166	43	41	42	32	2	6
Scotland	190	171	45	46	37	37	3	3
Northern Ireland	187	164	59	38	27	30	2	8
Total	760	688	192	171	141	153	8	23

Table 9. Delivery companies by geography

Attempted despatch country	All	Successful delivery	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
Urban	357	384	94	104	75	96	2	13
Rural	358	267	84	58	59	52	5	9
Remote	45	37	14	9	7	5	1	1
Total	760	688	192	171	141	153	8	23

Pilot phase

An initial relatively large pilot phase of 100 attempted assessments was carried out to test the methodological approach, including the clarity and usability of the questionnaire and the shopper briefing instructions (the results were not included in the analysis of the main fieldwork). The pilot also demonstrated that there would be cases where the shopper would collect the parcel from the delivery person even though they tried to pretend to be out.

Following the pilot phase, a number of changes were made to the approach including tightening up the connections between sender and recipient shoppers for data analysis, implementing limits on the distance shoppers should travel to drop off or pick up their parcels and improving the clarity of the briefing instructions and questionnaires.

Results

Sending the parcel

The great majority (90 per cent) of sender shoppers were able to despatch their parcels successfully. However, they were instructed not to travel over 15 miles from their home to send the parcel and this was the primary reason for failure to despatch. Among this group of failed despatchers, the average distance to the nearest drop off point was 50 miles. The longest distance was in Scotland at 130 miles (Orkney to Aberdeen).

The overall proportion of shoppers failing to despatch was highest in Northern Ireland at 14 per cent.

In some cases there was a closer drop-off point but it was closed during the period of the survey. There was also a case of a road closure causing the shopper to be unable to select the nearest point.

Table 10. Failed attempts to send parcel by country

	All	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Base – all despatch attempts	760	197	186	190	187
Total failed to send	72 (10%)	13 (7%)	15 (8%)	17 (9%)	27 (14%)
Of which:					
Nearest drop-off point was 15 miles or further away	72%	69%	93%	71%	63%
Average distance where more than 15 miles away	50 miles	47 miles	52 miles	54 miles	45 miles
Distance range	15-130 miles	16-98 miles	22-67 miles	19-130 miles	15-71 miles
Other reason	28%	31%	7%	29%	37%

Unsurprisingly, the longest average distances in the over 15 mile category were in remote areas, with an average distance of 65 miles.

Table 11. Failed attempts to send parcel by geography

	All	Urban	Rural	Remote
Base – all despatch attempts	760	357	358	45
Total failed to send	72 (10%)	24 (7%)	42 (12%)	6 (13%)
Of which:				
Nearest drop-off point was 15 miles or further away	72%	46%	88%	67%

Results

Average distance where more than 15 miles away	50 miles	42 miles	50 miles	65 miles
Distance range	15-130 miles	15-71 miles	17-100 miles	19-130 miles
Other reason	28%	54%	12%	33%

Across sending companies, Mail Boxes Etc. stands out with 65 per cent in total of all those shoppers attempting to send via this company being unable to do so, primarily on the basis of distance.

Results

Table 12. Failed attempts to send parcel by sending company

	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce	myHermes Parcelshop	myHermes Courier Collection	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.	Parcel 2Go
Base – all despatch attempts	760	192	155	60	61	154	69	69
Total failed to send	72 (10%)	0 (-)	0 (-)	13 (22%)	7 (12%)	1 (1%)	45 (65%)	6 (9%)
Of which:								
Nearest drop-off point was 15 miles or further away	72%	-	-	92%	-	100%	87%	-
Average distance where more than 15 miles away	50 miles	-	-	57 miles	-	25 miles	45 miles	-
Distance range	15-130 miles	-	-	22-130 miles	-	N/A (1 assessment only)	15-98 miles	-
Other reason	28%	-	-	8%	100%	0%	13%	100%

Other reasons for failure to despatch were broadly brand specific and can be summarised as follows:

myHermes Parcelshop

- Drop-off shop did not have correct cards

myHermes Courier Service

- Parcel was not collected during agreed times
- Shopper unable to get a collection time within two days
- Shopper unable to get a collection time within seven days

Mail Boxes Etc.

- No re-contact made with shoppers requesting quotes

Results

Parcel2Go

- Parcel too big or heavy (though within instructed dimensions for the mystery shopping)
- Unable to deliver to addresses in NI and Scotland
 - There were three cases where the shopper was informed on the website that the selected operator was unable to deliver to the recipient's home address. The recipients were all urban and located in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Aberdeen
- Quoted too high a price (£46.50)

Distance travelled to post office or drop-off shop

Successful senders travelling to a post office or drop-off store recorded the distance travelled. The geographical reach of post offices was clearly evident with over four-fifths of shoppers needing to travel no more than two miles to locate one. Collect+ also has a substantial reach with 74 per cent of shoppers finding a drop-off point within two miles. Almost two in three shoppers using myHermes shops and Mail Boxes Etc., however, had to travel over two miles.

Table 13. Distance travelled to post parcel

	Post office	myHermes Parcelshop	Collect +	Mail Boxes Etc.*	myHermes Courier Collection***	Parcel 2Go***
Base – all able to despatch parcel	347	47	153	23**	54	63
2 miles or less	84%	43%	74%	35%	39%	62%
More than 2 miles	16%	57%	26%	65%	61%	38%
Longest distance travelled	10 miles	13 miles	11 miles	15 miles	60 miles	60 miles

*One Mail Boxes Etc. shopper used a courier service although instructed to drop-off at a shop. After completing the form online, the shopper received a telephone call, was quoted a price and asked if they could drop the parcel off. However, the shop was 60 miles away and the shopper informed the caller it was too far. The caller then said they could collect and a time was agreed. Parcelforce arrived to collect the parcel and then the shopper received a message saying that there was extra to pay. The shopper tried to cancel but at that point the parcel had already been despatched and the shopper had to pay over £23.

**Low base

***Those shoppers using courier collections were also asked to check the distance to the nearest drop off point – had they selected this option. A number of these shoppers within the over two miles category noted there appeared to be no drop-off points in their area.

Post offices and drop-off shops were in closest proximity to shoppers within England and Wales and furthest away on average in Scotland.

Table 14. Distance travelled to post parcel by country

	All	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Base – all able to despatch parcel	570	155	140	141	134
2 miles or less	76%	77%	80%	72%	75%

Results

More than 2 miles	24%	23%	20%	28%	25%
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There was a strong link between geography and distance travelled, with only 9 per cent of shoppers in remote areas having a post office or drop-off point within two miles of their home.

Table 15. Distance travelled to post parcel by geography

	All	Urban	Rural	Remote
Base – all able to despatch parcel	570	271	266	33
2 miles or less	76%	93%	67%	9%
More than 2 miles	24%	7%	33%	91%

Purchasing in post offices

Post offices were used to send parcels by 347 shoppers in total.

Almost all shoppers felt the post office in question was open at a convenient time (99 per cent) and located conveniently (97 per cent).

Shoppers visited the post office with their parcel and asked for either Royal Mail Second Class or Parcelforce express48, depending on their assignment. If they were offered other products, they were instructed to state that they were posting on behalf of a friend who had asked them to use this product.

Most (87 per cent) post office users waited three minutes or fewer to be served. The longest waiting time was 10 minutes. Staff were perceived as polite, knowledgeable and understandable in almost all visits.

Table 16. Customer service in post offices

	All using post office	Requesting Royal Mail	Requesting Parcelforce
Base	347	192	155
Waiting time 3 minutes or less	87%	88%	87%
Staff were polite and friendly	98%	99%	97%
Staff were knowledgeable	96%	96%	96%
Staff provided understandable information	99%	100%	99%

Less than one-quarter were asked about parcel contents or arrival time requirements, while half were asked about the contents value. Those requesting Parcelforce were more likely to be asked contents, value and timing needs.

Table 17. Needs establishment among post office users

	All using post office	Requesting Royal Mail	Requesting Parcelforce
Base	347	192	155
Asked about contents of parcel	23%	17%	30%
Asked about value of contents	50%	36%	67%
Asked when the parcel needed to arrive	20%	10%	31%

Over three-quarters of post office users were given information about the delivery time.

Table 18. Information provided in post offices

	All using post office	Requesting Royal Mail service	Requesting Parcelforce service
Base	347	192	155
Given specific date of delivery	25%	8%	47%
Given a delivery time range	60%	72%	45%
No information provided about delivery timing	15%	20%	9%

No post office users received any further information once the parcel had been despatched.

Just under 6 per cent of those using a post office had a different experience from that anticipated. For those using Royal Mail Second Class, some were charged (or at least initially quoted) a higher rate than expected (this was sometimes due to the sender preparing a parcel outside the specified dimensions). For those using Parcelforce, a small number were encouraged to use express48 rather than Special Delivery. These can be illustrated as follows:

Sending by Royal Mail Second Class

- “The parcel was originally 70mm wide and I was told that it would cost me £5.65 to send even though it was within the dimensions instructed. I expressed surprise and was told that if I could reduce the width slightly it would cost me £2.60 or £3 to send. I went home and reduced it to just over 50mm and took it back whereupon it was accepted.”
- “Prices had risen on April 1st for items that do not fit through a letter-box so the second class delivery price was £5.20 rather than £2.60 so I had to withdraw cash to cover the cost.” (Note: This was the shopper’s perception. Although prices had risen, £2.60 should have covered the dimensions and weight of the parcel delivery requested.)
- “The parcel did not pass through the measurement tool used and I had to pay an extra tariff.”

- “The cashier asked me to put my parcel on the scale which I did, and asked if I wanted 1st or 2nd class delivery. I asked for 2nd class, and then she stated the price would be over £5 and some pence. I said “Oh is it over one kilo? I didn’t expect it to be as much as that” and then I said I was sending for someone else who had told me it would be probably around £3. The staff member then said “Just a minute, I’ll check it and see if it goes through the slot”. She then checked the size by testing it with the plastic template and said it was only £2.60p, adding that it is difficult to tell sometimes just by looking.”
- “Originally my parcel did not fit through the template for small parcels without catching so the post office staff member used additional tape to prevent this from happening.”

Sending by Parcelforce express48

- “The staff member tried repeatedly to persuade me to use Royal Mail’s special delivery service, as they said it would save me money and would be cheaper.”
- “The staff member tried very hard to dissuade me from using Parcelforce express48 service stating it was expensive and slow.”
- “The staff were very insistent that I use a different cheaper service despite repeated requests to send the parcel with the required service. It was quite uncomfortable as the staff actually told me to come back the next day after I had found out if I could send the parcel cheaper. Although they were trying to help me by suggesting a cheaper service, the insistence to use this made my experience quite uncomfortable and I considered trying a different post office nearby.”

In three cases, shoppers were unable to purchase the service instructed – these were all shoppers intending to purchase Parcelforce express48. In one case, the shopper was simply informed that express48 was the wrong service for them, in another case, on checking the receipt the shopper discovered they had been sold Special Delivery automatically. In the final case the shopper felt obliged to accept Special Delivery on being informed the price was half that of express48.

Shoppers were also instructed to ask for proof of postage. The majority (78 per cent) were given a till receipt with the recipient’s address and most of the remainder were given one without the recipient’s address. (Proof of posting without the recipient’s address/postcode may not be accepted as adequate evidence in the event of a claim for loss, damage or delay against Royal Mail.)

Those purchasing Parcelforce were significantly more likely to be given a receipt with the address than were those purchasing Royal Mail.

Results

Table 19. Proof of postage

	All using post office	Requesting Royal Mail	Requesting Parcelforce
Base	347	192	155
Given till receipt with recipient's address	78%	67%	92%
Given till receipt without recipient's address	22%	33%	8%
Informed could not have proof of postage	<1%	1%	-

Purchasing online

Online booking was used to send parcels by 341 shoppers in total.

For those using Mail Boxes Etc. and Parcel2Go the delivery companies selected were as follows.

Table 20. Delivery companies selected via online brokers

	Parcel2Go	Mail Boxes Etc.
Base – successfully despatched	63	24*
Parcelforce	-	16
myHermes Courier Collection	40	-
City Link	11	-
Yodel	5	-
TNT	4	-
Royal Mail	-	6
UPS	3	1
FedEx	-	1

*Low base

Most shoppers found the systems easy to use with the clear exception of those using Mail Boxes Etc., many of whom did not. 42 per cent of shoppers who were able to despatch their parcel had to wait for a quote via a re-contact from Mail Boxes Etc. as it was not automatically available on the site. These quotes came back via a number of routes – sometimes by email, sometimes by phone and sometimes directly from the drop-off shop.

Information on contents and value was automatically requested in around two-thirds of web visits (almost always on myHermes and Parcel2Go). Collect+ was least likely to request these details. However, shoppers' timing needs were only established on just over 20 per cent of visits.

Results

Table 21. Usage and information requested by online systems

	All using online	myHermes Parcelshop	myHermes Courier Collection	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.	Parcel 2Go
Base	341	47	54	153	24*	63
Sender perceived online system as easy to use	87%	94%	100%	93%	25%	83%
Website asked about contents of parcel	60%	98%	93%	21%	63%	95%
Website asked about value of contents	71%	100%	96%	42%	75%	97%
Website asked when the parcel needed to arrive	21%	28%	15%	16%	17%	33%

*Low base

Around two-thirds of online shoppers were given a time window for delivery, with the highest from Collect+ at 76 per cent and the lowest from Mail Boxes Etc. at just 13 per cent.

Very few shoppers were given an exact date for delivery, which is probably because this strongly depends on when the parcel is brought into the shop or collected for despatch.

Table 22. Information provided by online systems

	All using online	myHermes Parcelshop	myHermes Courier Collection	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.	Parcel 2Go
Base	341	47	54	153	24*	63
Given specific date of delivery	3%	-	4%	1%	17%	6%
Given a delivery time range	63%	43%	61%	76%	13%	67%
No information provided about delivery timing	34%	57%	35%	24%	71%	27%

*Low base

Experience of drop-off shops

Drop-off shops were used to send parcels by 223 shoppers in total following their online order.

Results

Almost all shoppers felt the drop-off shop in question was open at a convenient time (99 per cent) and conveniently located (94 per cent). Mail Boxes Etc. users were the exception, with 91 per cent believing the shop was open at a convenient time and 78 per cent believing that it was conveniently located. 98 per cent of all shoppers felt the drop-off point was easy to find.

The majority (97 per cent) of drop-off shop users waited three minutes or fewer to be served. The longest waiting time was five minutes in a Collect+ shop. Staff were perceived as polite and friendly in almost all visits.

Table 23. Customer service

	All using drop-off shop	myHermes Parcelshop	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.
Base	223	47	153	23*
Waiting time 3 minutes or less	97%	96%	96%	100%
Staff were polite and friendly	97%	96%	97%	100%
Staff were familiar with drop off process	92%	92%	92%	91%

*Low base

Time windows for delivery were not given as frequently as in post offices although many of these users had been given delivery information when ordering online. The exception here was those using Mail Boxes Etc., who were provided with a specific date in 65 per cent of assessments.

Table 24. Drop-off shops – information provided

	All using drop-off shop	myHermes Parcelshop	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.
Base	223	47	153	23*
Given specific date of delivery	11%	11%	3%	65%
Given a delivery time range	35%	34%	37%	30%
No information provided about delivery timing	53%	55%	60%	4%

*Low base

On eight Collect+ purchases, the shoppers noted that the website had stated three to five days for delivery but in the shop they were told delivery would be just 24 hours.

Overall, just over half the shoppers using drop-off shops received post-despatch communication about their parcel delivery. In almost all cases this was an email confirming arrival of the parcel in the shop. However, the level of communication varied

Results

sharply across companies with Collect+ emailing some 75 per cent of shoppers against a comparable figure for myHermes Parcelshop of just 9 per cent.

Table 25. Drop-off shops – post-despatch communications

	All using drop-off shop	myHermes Parcelshop	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.
Base	223	47	153	23*
Received information after despatch	56%	9%	76%	17%

*Low base

Just 3 per cent of shoppers experienced difficulty in despatching the parcel, although this rose to 13 per cent among those using Mail Boxes Etc. This appeared to be mainly due to miscommunications between the website and the shop. The following comments illustrate:

Mail Boxes Etc.

- “After leaving the shop I received an answerphone message at home later that day stating that the address and postcode of my parcel did not match and therefore the parcel would not be despatched that day as expected. I spoke to someone at the shop and confirmed that the postcode was correct. The staff member advised that the parcel would be despatched the following day.”
- “I had not been given an online price, and the person in the shop said that Parcelforce was the best option. I asked about the lack of prices online and was told ‘we can give you more choices than that’.”
- “When I went into the store, the staff member automatically wanted to send it by Royal Mail. Even when I said I had been quoted for another service she tried to talk me out of it saying that it would be much cheaper and quicker to send it by guaranteed next day delivery with Royal Mail.”

Collect+

- “The barcode would not scan at the first attempt.”
- “The label & barcode printed off from my computer could not be read by the store’s barcode reader and they were unable to manually input the barcode. I had to return back home to print off another barcode and then return to the store for the staff member to re-read the barcode which was a total journey of 34 miles before returning back home. I would have anticipated the female staff assistant to ring up the courier company and identify the correct barcode to input into the system.”

myHermes Parcelshop

- “The website indicates that the drop off shop is open 07:00-22:00. I arrived at 19:58, to be advised that “you’re cutting it fine” (time-wise) as the shop shuts at 20:00! If I had arrived a few minutes later the shop would have been closed and I would have needed to make another journey the next day.”

Results

Experience of couriers

Couriers were used to pick up the parcels from the sender's home by 118 shoppers in total following their online order. In 13 cases, although instructed to hand over the parcel in person, the shopper left it outside for collection because they were unable to wait in across a period of time and therefore missed the collection.

Among the 105 courier collections, most were not expected at a specific time. In the few cases where a specific time was expected, most adhered to this – the main exception being products purchased via Parcel2Go (other than myHermes).

Table 26. Courier timings

	All using courier	myHermes Courier Collection direct	myHermes Courier Collection via Parcel2Go	Other via Parcel2Go	Parcelforce via Mail Boxes Etc.**
Base	105	48	36	20*	1*
Parcel collected at time expected	10%	8%	6%	20%	100%
Parcel not collected at time expected	5%	2%	-	20%	-
No specific time expected	85%	90%	94%	60%	-

*Low base

**One Mail Boxes Etc. shopper used a courier service although instructed to drop off at a shop

The majority (96 per cent) of couriers were considered polite and friendly. Signatures were collected in only 68 per cent of all cases, and for only 45 per cent of Parcel2Go products other than myHermes.

Table 27. Customer service and signature

	All using courier	myHermes Courier Collection direct	myHermes Courier Collection via Parcel2Go	Other via Parcel2Go	Parcelforce via Mail Boxes Etc.**
Base	105	48	36	20*	1*
Staff were polite and friendly	96%	98%	94%	95%	100%
Asked to sign – either on paper or electronically	68%	67%	83%	45%	-

*Low base

**One Mail Boxes Etc shopper used a courier service although instructed to drop off at a shop

The percentage of users who were given time windows for delivery was similar to that given in drop-off shops, and again many of these users had been given delivery information when ordering online.

Table 28. Couriers – information provided

	All using courier	myHermes Courier Collection direct	myHermes Courier Collection via Parcel2Go	Other via Parcel2Go	Parcelforce via Mail Boxes Etc.**
Base	105	48	36	20*	1*
Given specific date of delivery	10%	8%	8%	20%	-
Given a delivery time range	46%	56%	39%	35%	-
No information provided about delivery timing	44%	35%	53%	45%	100%

*Low base

**One Mail Boxes Etc shopper used a courier service although instructed to drop off at a shop

Overall, 17 per cent of shoppers experienced some level of difficulty with the courier service, although some of these were connected to missing the collection and having to rearrange. The proportion rose to 25 per cent among those buying myHermes via Parcel2Go. The following comments illustrate some of the issues.

myHermes Courier Collection via Parcel2Go

- “I was not given a receipt automatically and when I asked for one, I was told that they did not use them anymore. I mentioned that it had said on the website that I would get a receipt and so the courier said that she could give me one from her receipt book, but that they were not used any more as they were not needed.”
- “I was not provided with a receipt. The Parcel2Go e-mail said the courier would give me a receipt but they did not and said that I would have this when I bought the service.”
- “I initially booked the collection for the Saturday, but due to unforeseen circumstances, I was not sure I would be available and therefore amended this, via the Parcel2Go website live chat service to have the collection on Monday 13/5/13. However, the courier arrived on the original collection date. As the collection had been changed, I had changed the despatch sheet on the parcel, as instructed by the online assistant. This then did not match the courier’s expected barcode, as he was expecting the Saturday collection. Fortunately I still had the original sheet, and was able to give him this as well as the replacement which was attached to the parcel.”
- “I arranged for the parcel to be collected on 17th May and had confirmation of this. However, on the 17th, a card from the courier was put through my letter-box to say they had tried to collect, could not and would call again the next day (18th). However, I was sat about 6 feet away from the door when the card came through and they did not knock on the door or ring the bell (which was working), so no attempt was made to collect the parcel. The parcel was collected the next day.”
- “When asked when it would get there he told me he had no idea, he just takes it to the depot.”

Results

myHermes Courier Collection direct

- “I did not expect this parcel to be collected two days earlier than booked, so had to quickly finish preparing it.”
- “The courier had run out of bar code labels.”

Parcelforce via Mail Boxes Etc.

- “I had problems regarding the price quoted and then being told I would have to pay extra.”

Unlike those using drop-off shops, very few courier users (just 5 per cent) received post-despatch communication about their parcel delivery (primarily confirmation and/or tracking details).

Pricing clarity

91 per cent of shoppers perceived that prices were clearly explained (90 per cent of those using post offices and 92 per cent of those using online services). Among those who did not perceive prices as clear:

- post office users: primarily caused by the fact that the price was simply stated to them and there was no explanation
- online users:
 - 48 per cent were using Mail Boxes Etc. (low base of 24) and could not get a quote online
 - 26 per cent were using Parcel2Go and experienced the quoted price changing as they proceeded through the booking process
 - 26 per cent were using Collect+ and mostly experienced a default price that was more expensive than expected.

Prices charged

Shoppers were instructed to purchase specific products and so, in many cases, it is possible to directly compare the actual price against the expected price. All shoppers were instructed to refuse any additional services offered, such as a signature on delivery or higher levels of compensation.

Uniform prices – Royal Mail

Based on the parcel measurements given to shoppers, we expected all Royal Mail purchases to be £2.60. In fact, although 68 per cent paid this amount, a substantial proportion (28 per cent) paid £5.20. In a couple of cases, the measurements may have veered slightly over the 80mm depth maximum by a couple of millimetres, but even this is in question as the measurements were, for practical reasons, approximate, and the great majority were well within Royal Mail’s Small Parcel dimensions of 350mm by 450mm by 80mm. It would appear that these parcels have incorrectly been priced as Medium Parcels.

Results

Table 29. Prices – Royal Mail

Including VAT	Base	Expected price	Modal price	% paying modal price	Other significant price points	Range
Royal Mail	192	£2.60	£2.60	68%	27% paid £5.20	£2.50- £5.20

Non-uniform prices – other companies

Table 30. Prices – other companies

Including VAT	Base	Expected price	Modal price	% paying modal price	Other significant price points	Range
Parcelforce	155	£11.96	£11.96	94%	No	£2.50- £11.98
myHermes Parcelshop	47	£3.00	£3.00	100%	No	N/A
myHermes Courier Collection	54	£3.30	£3.30	80%	19% paid £4.32	£3.00- £4.32
Collect+	153	At least £3.40	£3.49	76%	17% paid £3.99	£3.40- £4.99
Mail Boxes Etc. purchasing Parcelforce	16*	N/A	£15.59	38%	No	£3.96- £23.09
Mail Boxes Etc. purchasing other	8*	N/A	£3.60	25%	No	£3.00- £5.65
Parcel2Go purchasing myHermes Courier Collection	40	At least £3.30	£3.30	73%	15% paid £7.19	£3.30- £7.33
Parcel2Go purchasing other	23*	NA	£11.88	43%	22% paid £26.45	£10.19- £26.45

*Low base

Parcelforce

The great majority of Parcelforce buyers paid the expected £11.96. The small numbers of exceptions are cases where shoppers were recommended or pushed into either Second Class or Special Delivery.

Results

myHermes

All shoppers using myHermes Parcelshop paid £3.00 and most of those using myHermes Courier Collection paid £3.30.

A small number of myHermes Courier Collection users had to pay surcharges. Those purchasing direct paid a Saturday surcharge of either £1.02 or £3.30. These Saturday surcharges accounted for the small variations in price.

Collect+

Most Collect+ shoppers paid £3.49, but a substantial minority paid £3.99 and three shoppers paid £4.99.

Mail Boxes Etc.

This group of shoppers is relatively small and so these findings can only be indicative.

The highest prices overall were for Parcelforce purchased through Mail Boxes Etc. Most of those purchasing Parcelforce via Mail Boxes Etc. bought express48 for £15.59, and a few purchased the 24 hour product express24. All bar two paid between £9.99 and £15.60.

One shopper paid a much lower price of £3.96. This shopper received neither a quote on the website, nor by telephone. When they went to the drop-off shop, the assistant advised them to go the post office saying it would be cheaper. On insisting, the shopper was then informed the assistant had made a mistake and the price was just £3.96 for next day delivery. Another shopper paid a much higher price of £23.09. In this case, the nearest drop off shop was 60 miles away and they were therefore offered a courier service to pick up the parcel.

Those purchasing other services via Mail Boxes Etc. mainly selected Royal Mail Second Class (£3.52 to £3.60). The lowest price was £3.00 for a UPS delivery, while at the higher end one shopper selected Special Delivery and paid £5.65.

Parcel2Go

Most of those purchasing myHermes Courier Collection via Parcel2Go paid £3.30, while a substantial minority paid £7.19.

Prices for those purchasing other services via Parcel2Go depended on the company selected. Those selecting City Link paid £11.88. Those selecting UPS or TNT paid between £10.19 and £14.15. Finally, those selecting Yodel paid £26.45.

Prices – national and geographical variations

Little variation was present across sender or receiver countries and geographies and, even where apparent, this was explained more by product variation. Any differences recorded are explained below.

Results

Collect+

In all three instances when shoppers paid the highest price of £4.99 the parcel was sent from Northern Ireland. Shoppers sending from or to rural areas paid slightly higher prices on average.

Parcel2Go purchasing myHermes Courier Collection

Those sending from England paid lower prices on average, as did those sending from remote locations, while those sending to Northern Ireland and to recipients in remote locations paid markedly higher prices.

Overall sending experience

Among successful senders, satisfaction (extremely to fairly satisfied) was generally well over 90 per cent. The exceptions were Mail Boxes Etc. and Parcel2Go, both recording much lower levels at 58 per cent and 65 per cent respectively.

Table 31. Sender satisfaction across companies

Shoppers able to send parcel	All	All using post offices	Royal Mail	Parcelforce via a post office	myHermes Parcelshop	myHermes Courier collection	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.	Parcel 2Go
Base	688	347	195	152	47	54	153	24*	63
Extremely, very or fairly satisfied	89%	92%	94%	90%	92%	93%	95%	58%	65%
Extremely, very or fairly dissatisfied or neither/nor	11%	8%	6%	10%	8%	7%	5%	42%	35%

*Low base

Among those senders who were less than satisfied, the key reasons were:

- lack of detailed information about delivery timings
- prices outside expectations
- not taking care with the parcels
- post office staff being insistent that another service was more appropriate than express48
- website and label printing problems
- incorrect information regarding shop opening times on websites
- lack of specific time windows for home collections
- distance to drop-off shops
- specifically for Mail Boxes Etc. – the frustrations of not being able to get a price online.

Results

The verbatim examples below illustrate the range of sender experiences among those who were less than satisfied.

Post office – Royal Mail

- “The adviser provided little information and was very unclear on the delivery time scale. I was just told there was no set date. The proof of posting also does not show the delivery address.”
- “I was very dissatisfied as I was charged double price for sending the packet.”
- “I was overcharged at first and as I rarely send parcels I would have paid it if the brief had not indicated the approximate price to expect.”
- “The post office counter assistant threw my parcel a distance of about three meters into the post bag as opposed to getting off their seat and placing in the bag, potentially causing damage.”

Post office – Parcelforce

- “I felt the experience was uncomfortable due to the nature of the staff member serving me, I felt I was being pushed into taking a service I had not asked for and the staff member was not listening to my repeated attempts to send the parcel as requested. I found the staff member’s attitude to be quite off-putting and I would not return to this location.”
- “The staff member was quite forceful in recommending a different service with my previous parcel, therefore I felt this transaction was a little tense.”
- “The staff member was polite enough but I disliked the way she looked unhappy about my requested method of posting. It was almost belittling, as she clearly thought it was incorrect.”
- “Waiting time seemed excessive which was exacerbated by the building being very warm. The assistant who helped was polite and friendly however she made me feel embarrassed when I did not take her recommendation of posting First Class which was a cheaper alternative. Even after informing her that I was posting on behalf of a friend who had stipulated which service to use she responded by saying “that’s mad” in quite a loud voice.”

myHermes Parcelshop

- “Having it all paid and set up from home was brilliant. However, I did not find the system easy to use, especially the difficulty printing the labels through Adobe.”
- “The website was easy to use and worked well. However, the incorrect opening times for the drop off shop, nearly caused a wasted journey. I was lucky that I arrived just as the shop was about to close. Therefore while my overall experience was satisfactory, because of the incorrect opening hours I am fairly dissatisfied.”

myHermes Courier Service

- “This Courier company gives no time window for collection.”
- “I had to wait in until collection was made. As I had no idea what time the courier was calling, this was very frustrating.”

Collect+

- “I like the service but it is too far to go to post a parcel.”

Results

Mail Boxes Etc.

- “The website quote system is not instant and a delivery can’t be booked online. The email response was very casual. A courier option was not given, even in the shop.”
- “I felt the face-to-face interaction from the Mail Boxes Etc. clerk was very informative as she took time to talk me through the delivery process. I felt dissatisfied, however, that the website could not provide me with an instant quotation as it took two attempts at inputting data and 24 hours to receive a price option from the company, which is inefficient for an industry which is dependent on speed and ease-of-use.”
- “I was unable to find any pricing on the website, although I had put in the dimensions and weight.”

Parcel2Go

- “The website was at best temperamental and the price kept changing. The collection was not within the time specified which necessitated me remaining at home all day awaiting collection.”
- “The website was very confusing as it was giving a range of options and messages that were clearly wrong relating to the size and weight of the package. I was also left sitting at home from 9am until the parcel was collected at 5pm.”
- “I was only provided with one option by the website for delivery which was disappointing as the delivery was expensive. I found the collection window of 12 hours to be constrictive preventing me from planning my day off in advance. Lastly, I felt the courier who collected the parcel, although polite and courteous, lacked knowledge in the timescales of the delivery. I did, however, appreciate the ease-of-use of the website and the inclusion of tracking details in the confirmation email.”

Sender suggestions for improvements

Sender shoppers were asked whether they could suggest any improvements to the experience of despatching parcels.

Suggestions often related to areas such as pricing clarity and further information about delivery timings. Other ideas included:

- simpler websites
- more convenient drop off shops
- more specific time slots for courier collections
- being able to get a quote online (specific to Mail Boxes Etc.).

Royal Mail via post office

- “I would like to have been given some information about the time scales of the delivery.”
- “The proof of posting needs an address on and the adviser could have been more helpful with delivery dates.”
- “It is ludicrous – the difference in price for such small differences in dimensions. The way the Post Office is changing its pricing system for parcels is making it more attractive to use a courier who will even collect from your home.”

Results

- “Perhaps having a large clear display of all of the different services, prices and requirements to achieve these prices, ie sizes, weight, time scales for deliveries. This would enable customers to consider their options before arriving at the counter.”
- “The member of staff did not ask me about the contents or value of the package or ask if I needed insurance. Also she did not recommend any other postal services.”
- “It would be an improvement if the waiting time could be reduced to less than five minutes.”

Parcelforce via post office

- “The assistant could have seemed more interested in serving me – she seemed a bit annoyed that she had been brought from the rear of the store to serve me.”
- “For the staff members, especially those that are more experienced, to actually talk to customers and explain and give more information regarding their services.”
- “Most of the staff members who serve in this post office are very miserable and hardly speak to the customers.”
- “The parcel could have arrived to the destination the next day, by Special Delivery, for a comparable price whereas sending by Parcelforce delivery was quoted as being a day later, which was Friday. Perhaps these two services should be combined up to a certain weight, as I would imagine, given the options and price of the two products, people would choose the Special Delivery Option.”

myHermes Parcelshop

- “Simplification of the website would help.”
- “It would have been helpful to have had some clear directions to the drop off points on the myHermes website.”
- “More drop off shops in my area would make it easier to send parcels.”
- “I think the shop staff should have more training regarding the myHermes service so they are more knowledgeable when dealing with customer queries.”
- “More locations to drop off parcels would make it more competitive with Royal Mail/Parcelforce.”

myHermes Courier Service

- “A specific time slot would have been useful.”
- “The training of couriers in customer service skills would enhance an otherwise easy to use and hassle free service.”
- “Further information on collection times and possible slots for collection as opposed to an all day time frame being provided.”
- “It would be useful if the courier could give a better indication of delivery dates, to within a couple of days. ‘Sometime next week’ and ‘depends on country you’re sending it too’ was a little vague.”

Collect+

- “A lot of paperwork to print off and it seemed a very laborious way of sending a parcel.”
- “The staff at the drop-off point have to be more friendly.”
- “I would like to have at least an estimated delivery date, if not an exact one.”

Results

- “A selection where you have to select the postage required rather than a default selection.”
- “The staff at the collection point could know more about timings of delivery.”

Mail Boxes Etc.

- “After filling in and submitting the online form, it should be possible to obtain a quote there and then instead of being told that someone from your local office would contact you with regard to this.”
- “I feel the whole system could be improved by providing instant quotes on the website. Further, I felt the company could have provided a variety of price quotes to give an idea of the options available.”
- “My parcel weighed approximately 250g, but, because of its dimensions, was considered as being a parcel weighing over a kilo. That does not seem right.”

Parcel2Go

- “They could provide more of a guideline for when the parcel would be collected.”
- “I would like a shorter window for collection or a revised ETA for the courier on the day.”
- “Perhaps a receipt could be given and a follow up email to advise the parcel is on its way.”
- “A simpler booking system adapted to match those of other competitors who are able to provide a user friendly platform. The service could also be improved by having a better allocation of time slots available to have the parcel collected.”

Receiving the parcel

Of the 746 receipt attempts, 581 (78 per cent) successfully received their parcels while 165 did not, for a variety of reasons. The lowest overall failure rates were for Royal Mail and Parcelforce.

The largest failure rate for a single company was unsuccessful despatch attempts by senders using Mail Boxes Etc. Sender failures were also the key reasons for receipt failures within the myHermes Parcelshop and myHermes Courier Collection groups.

In over half of the receipt failures, the receiver shopper did not receive the parcel (at least within the instructed waiting period). This was the key reason for non-receipt for a very high proportion of those waiting for parcels from Royal Mail, all of Parcelforce and Collect+.

There were only two other reasons for failure: a myHermes Courier Collection delivery was left with a neighbour who subsequently went on holiday, and a Parcel2Go delivery card was left on three days in a row with no further information provided.

Results

Table 32. Failed attempts to receive parcel by sending company

	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce	myHermes Parcelshop	myHermes Courier collection	Collect+	Mail Boxes Etc.	Parcel 2Go
Base – all receipt attempts	746	188	152	59	60	151	69	67
Total failed to receive	165 (22%)	25 (13%)	20 (13%)	19 (32%)	11 (18%)	28 (19%)	48 (70%)	14 (21%)
Of which:								
Parcel did not arrive	54%	96%	100%	32%	27%	93%	6%	50%
Sender could not send	44%	-	-	68%	64%	4%	94%	43%
Nearest pick-up point 15 miles or more away	1%	4%	-	-	-	4%	-	-
Other reason	1%	-	-	-	9%	-	-	7%

Excluding sender failures, this means that 674 parcels could have been received (as shown in Table 33). 13 per cent of these sent parcels were not received within the minimum 10 working days. On this measure, there was little variation across sending and delivery companies, with Collect+ customers experiencing the highest levels of non-receipt at 17 per cent.

Results

Table 33. Attempts to receive parcel by delivery company used excluding those where parcel not sent

	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
Base – all receipt attempts excluding those where parcel not sent	674	188	168	138	150	8*	22*
Parcel did not arrive	13%	13%	14%	10%	17%	0%	18%
Nearest pick up point 15 miles or more away	<1%	<1%	-	-	1%	-	-
Other reason	<1%	-	-	1%	-	-	-
Total failed to receive	14%	13%	14%	10%	18%	0%	18%
Total successfully received	86%	87%	86%	90%	82%	100%	82%

*Low base

Pre receipt attempt communication

Overall, just over one-quarter of recipients received some form of communication prior to receiving their parcel, although the proportions varied considerably. Over 80 per cent of Collect+ customers received some communication (senders using this operator had been specifically instructed to provide the recipient's email address or telephone number as recipients were using the shop collection service). As expected, neither Parcelforce nor Royal Mail sent pre receipt attempt communications.

Table 34. Pre receipt attempt communication

Delivery company	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
Base	581	165	143	124	123	8*	19*
Received some form of communication	25%	-	-	25%	81%	13%	17%

*Low base

Results

All Collect+ communications received were either a text or email informing the recipient that the parcel was ready for collection. In some cases, shoppers had also received a prior message stating that the parcel was 'on its way'.

myHermes mainly sent emails stating that a parcel had been sent. In many cases, this also included a tracking number. In one case, myHermes texted a message to the customer.

Methods of receipt

Of the 581 shoppers who successfully received their parcel, 316 (54 per cent) managed to be out, or to pretend to be out, when the parcel or card was delivered. A further 18 per cent did not need to pretend to be out as they received a text or email informing them the parcel was ready for collection. Most of the latter were Collect+ recipients who were expecting an email or text informing them that their parcel was ready for collection.

While the survey had intended recipients to be 'out' when parcels arrived in order to evaluate what happened next, unfortunately the remaining 28 per cent were unable to be 'out' and therefore received the parcel directly. (The pilot survey had demonstrated that there would be a proportion of shoppers who were unable to be 'out' for a variety of reasons, such as partners or guests opening the door, postman seeing residents through windows or arriving when residents were just leaving etc.)

Methods of receipt across companies for all deliveries, whether the recipient successfully pretended to be out or not, are summarised below. We have set the results within the context of whether they were as expected for each individual operator or not – for example, we would not expect Royal Mail postmen/women to leave a parcel outside, whether they left a card or not, but it is standard practice for myHermes delivery staff to leave an item in an outside safe place provided that a card is left.

Results

Table 35. Receipt methods

	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
Base	581	163	145	124	123	8*	18*
Total as expected or standard	72%	60%	80%	72%	80%	63%	73%
Parcel handed over directly at door	17%	22%	19%	22%	4%	25%	28%
Parcel handed over directly outside house	9%	9%	17%	8%	-	13%	11%
Parcel delivered through letterbox	3%	7%	1%	4%	1%	-	-
Parcel left with neighbour with card through door	7%	1%	16%	9%	1%	-	17%
Card received stating parcel would be redelivered	2%	-	3%	4%	1%	-	11%
Card put through door and parcel collected	13%	22%	25%	1%	1%	25%	-
Text/email received and parcel collected	17%	-	-	2%	80%	-	-
Parcel left outside house with card through door	8%	4%	4%	23%	5%	-	6%
Parcel left with neighbour without a card	4%	5%	5%	2%	2%	13%	17%
Parcel left outside house without a card	10%	20%	3%	13%	2%	-	6%
Something else	10%	11%	8%	13%	5%	25%	6%

Grey highlighting indicates an unexpected or non-standard method

*Low base

Results

Royal Mail

60 per cent of deliveries were as expected: either delivered, delivered to a neighbour with a card or a card left for collection. 29 per cent of deliveries were left outside (either with or without a card) or with a neighbour but without a card; these practices increase the likelihood of these parcels becoming damaged or lost. However, in over 50 per cent of these latter delivery methods the shopper was based in a non urban area and, while certainly not always the case, some of the comments suggest that informal arrangements are well known between postman/woman and householder.

- “It was left hidden under a mat. I think this is absolutely fine: I live in a quiet country lane and the postman always does this, and I have previously told him that this is OK to do this.”
- “The parcel was left in the garage. We have an arrangement with our postman if there is no one in the house – parcels which do not need signed for to be left there.”
- “The parcel was left in a box by my back door. This is agreed 'safe place' I have with my regular postman and where he often leaves parcels if I'm out.”

Parcelforce

80 per cent of deliveries were as expected, with 25 per cent needing to be collected. 8 per cent were left without a card.

myHermes

72 per cent of parcels were delivered via an expected route. However, 15 per cent were left outside or with a neighbour – but with no card. Again, over half of these were in rural areas in Wales or Northern Ireland although the verbatim comments did not suggest any agreements with delivery staff.

Collect+

80 per cent of all receipts were via the expected collection route, preceded by a text or email. The remaining parcels were delivered using a variety of methods but almost all involved an attempted delivery to the house, which was not expected. No specific patterns in terms of country, geography or dates are apparent across these deliveries.

Most of those categorising the delivery method as 'something else' in fact received the parcel via some combination of the other categories but could not find the exact definition.

Receipt times

Shoppers expecting a delivery to their home were instructed to be out, or to pretend to be out, when their parcels arrived in order to be able to test what happened. In practice not all shoppers were able to be 'out'. However, this approach could unfairly distort receipt times because there might have been instances when the parcel would have been delivered first time if recipients had not had these instructions. Therefore, in order to calculate fair receipt times it is necessary to separate receipts that were:

Results

- successful on the first attempt (for example because the recipient did not manage to be 'out')
- unsuccessful on the first attempt (for example because the recipient did manage to be 'out')
- subsequent to contact by the operator (for example when the recipient collected the parcel from a neighbour after a card was left).

We will consider the times for both successful first time receipts and failed first delivery attempts as a proxy for real receipt times. Comparing tables shows the additional time required for successful receipt following a failed first attempt.

Table 36. Receipts that were successful on the first attempt*

Average number of days from when parcel despatched	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
Base: All receiving parcel successfully first time	107	70	89	16**	4**	12*
Recipient did not manage to be out/pretend to be out – therefore parcel put through letterbox/handed to shopper	2.1	2.8	3.2	3.0	1.3	2.7
Parcel was left on doorstep or near house with or without a card	2.5	3.6	3.3	3.0	-	4.5
Collected from neighbour (no card received)	2.6	3.7	3.3	5.0	2.0	2.7

*Excludes those shoppers where receipt method was 'something else'

**Low base

Results

Table 37. Deliveries that failed on the first attempt

Average number of days from despatch date to actually receive parcel	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
Base: All receiving parcel following contact by mail company – average days to first delivery attempt	38	63	17*	3*	2*	5*
Card left instructing shopper to collect parcel from somewhere else	2.2	2.3	3.0	5.0	2.0	-
Card left stating parcel would be redelivered	-	2.5	3.6	-	-	2.0
Card left instructing shopper to collect from neighbour	2.0	2.4	3.5	5.0	-	2.7

*Low base

Table 38. Successful receipts following contact by mail company

Average number of days from despatch date to actually receive parcel	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
Base: All receiving/collecting parcel following contact by mail company	38	63	19*	101	2*	5*
Collected parcel having received card through door or text message	3.5	3.9	5.0	4.5	2.0	-
Parcel redelivered	-	3.5	5.0	3.0	-	7.5
Collected from neighbour having received card	2.0	2.5	4.5	5.0	-	3.7
Base: All receiving parcel where 'something else' happened	18*	12*	6*	6*	2*	1*
Something else happened	2.8	3.0	4.7	3.5	5.0	2.0

Results

*Low base

Results

Most parcels were received within two to three days, with receipt times averaging 3.3 days (2.7 days assuming all attempted deliveries could have been received had the shopper been at home). Royal Mail attempted or successful first time deliveries were generally made in the shortest times. Other operators via Mail Boxes Etc. (that is non Parcelforce) were also delivered in relatively fast times, although there was only a small number of these parcels. The need to collect from Collect+ pushed up their average receipt time to over four days. myHermes items were also delivered in longer than average times. As senders were often not given any information regarding expected delivery times we cannot directly compare actual or attempted delivery times with expected times.

Table 39. Average receipt times

Average number of days from when parcel despatched	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
Base	163	145	124	123	8*	18*
Average – all receipts	2.6 days	3.1 days	3.6 days	4.3 days	2.6 days	3.6 days
Average – successful first time receipts and failed first delivery attempts	2.3 days	2.7 days	3.4 days	4.2 days	2.4 days	2.8 days

*Low base

Looking at only successful first time receipts or failed first delivery attempts (as a proxy for real delivery times), there is little difference across country or geography.

Table 40. Time to receive (actual or failed attempt) parcel across countries

Successfully received parcel	All	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Base	581	161	144	138	138
Modal number of days to receive – actual or failed attempt	2 days	3 days	2 days	3 days	2 days
% receiving in modal time	34%	32%	40%	33%	35%
Range	1-19 days	1-12 days	1-19 days	1-12 days	1-12 days
Average	3.1 days	3.0 days	3.1 days	3.1 days	3.1 days

Results

Table 41. Time to receive parcel (actual or failed attempt) across geography

Successfully received parcel	All	Urban	Rural	Remote
Base	581	315	231	35*
Modal number of days to receive – actual or failed attempt	2 days	2 days	2 days	2 days
% receiving in modal time	34%	31%	37%	34%
Range	1-19 days	1-19 days	1-15 days	1-9 days
Average	3.1 days	3.2 days	2.9 days	2.8 days

*Low base

Distance travelled to pick-up point

In total, 159 shoppers collected their parcel from a shop or depot. A large proportion of these were Collect+ recipients who had been instructed to collect their parcel. The others were cases where the shopper had been out at the time of delivery and a card had been posted instructing them to collect.

Royal Mail collectors (low base) were more likely to have to travel over two miles than those collecting from other companies.

Table 42. Distance travelled to collect parcel

All collecting parcel from shop or depot	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.
Base	159	29*	28*	1*	99	2*
2 miles or less	81%	66%	96%	100%	80%	100%
More than 2 miles	19%	34%	4%	-	20%	-
Longest distance travelled	12 miles	6 miles	5 miles	<2 miles	12 miles	<0.5 miles
Collection point	-	Primarily a Royal Mail depot	Primarily a post office	Royal Mail depot	Shop	Post office

*Low base

Those living in Northern Ireland were more likely to have to travel over two miles than those collecting from other countries.

Table 43. Distance travelled to collect parcel across countries

All collecting parcel from shop or depot	All	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Base	159	48	34	41	36
2 miles or less	81%	81%	85%	85%	69%
More than 2 miles	19%	19%	15%	15%	31%
Average distance over 2 miles	4.5 miles	4.8 miles	4.7 miles	3.8 miles	4.5 miles
Longest distance travelled	12 miles	12 miles	10 miles	4 miles	8 miles

Collectors living in rural areas had to travel further than those living in urban areas. Although only based on eight shoppers, the results indicate that those living in remote areas were much more likely to travel more than two miles.

Table 44. Distance travelled to collect parcel across geographies

All collecting parcel from shop or depot	All	Urban	Rural	Remote
Base	159	94	57	8*
2 miles or less	81%	94%	68%	13%
More than 2 miles	19%	6%	32%	87%
Average distance over 2 miles	4.5miles	3.3 miles	5.1 miles	4.0 miles
Longest distance travelled	12 miles	5 miles	12 miles	6 miles

*Low base

Parcel collection and redelivery experience

In general parcel collection points were considered convenient in terms of opening times, locations and ease with which they were found. Although based on low numbers, Royal Mail collection points scored least well on these measures.

Results

Table 45. Collection point convenience

All collecting parcel from shop or depot	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.
Base	159	29*	28*	1*	99	2*
Collection point open at convenient time	96%	83%	96%	100%	99%	100%
Collection point easy to find	98%	97%	100%	100%	98%	100%
Collection point in a convenient location	94%	79%	93%	100%	98%	100%
Collection point type	-	Primarily a Royal Mail depot	Primarily a post office	Royal Mail depot	Shop	Post office

*Low base

All bar one (where no indication of time was provided) of those shoppers experiencing a redelivery felt the options for redelivery were good.

Overall receipt experiences

Among recipients of the major delivery companies Parcelforce generated the highest levels of satisfaction with 89 per cent extremely to fairly satisfied, followed by Collect+ at 87 per cent. There was little difference between Royal Mail and myHermes, both of which scored in the low 80s.

Table 46. Recipient satisfaction across companies

Recipients who received parcel	All	Royal Mail	Parcelforce Direct or via Mail Boxes Etc.	myHermes Direct or via Parcel2Go	Collect+	Other via Mail Boxes Etc.	Other via Parcel2Go
Base	581	163	145	124	123	8*	18*
Extremely, very or fairly satisfied	85%	80%	89%	81%	87%	100%	94%
Extremely, very or fairly dissatisfied or neither/nor	15%	20%	11%	19%	13%	-	6%

*Low base

Results

Among those recipients who were less than satisfied, the key reasons were:

- the condition of the packaging – torn, crumpled or damaged
- lack of care of the package – being left in exposed, insecure or inappropriate places or being thrown over gates etc.
- parcels left in external areas but no card left to inform the recipient
- confusion over whether cards left related to collection from a post office or a neighbour.

Overall the packaging was found to be torn or damaged in 17 per cent of successful parcel receipts. Almost one in three (29 per cent) damaged parcels were ones that had been collected. A further 21 per cent were ones left outside the recipient's address.

The verbatim examples below illustrate the range of recipient experiences among those who were less than satisfied.

Royal Mail

- “The parcel had blown away into a neighbour's garden and the only reason I found it there was that I was looking for parcels on my arrival home. No card had been posted through the letter-box so I feel that had I not returned home when I did the parcel may have been lost.”
- “I was very upset that someone from Royal Mail entered my property without permission and left a parcel in my porch.”
- “This rating is due to the poor state of the package when I received it, the package was torn with the contents visible.”
- “The parcel was left on the doorstep in full view and exposed to the elements. If it had contained anything of value it could well have been taken without my knowledge of it even having been delivered.”
- “The parcel was attempted to be delivered on a Saturday afternoon. The postman did not try to leave it with neighbours or in a safe place. I have previously had a card from Royal Mail saying all parcels in future will be left with neighbours but this was not attempted.”

Parcelforce

- “I was happy that I could easily collect from the neighbour instead of having to go to the local depot; I was disappointed however that the package was clearly damaged.”
- “Having to leave a day between failed delivery and collection from the local post office is inconvenient.”
- “I received the card but thought it told me to go and collect the parcel. The map on the card was so bad I had to get a street atlas to understand it. Then I saw a box which said see the other side of the card to find where my parcel was. The box was ticked to say it would be delivered the next day and it was already 5pm and no parcel. I used the tracking number to find my neighbour had had the parcel since about 10.30am. We had been in for several hours but by now she was out and I had to wait until 9pm to get it.”

Results

- “I wasted a lot of time trying to find out which Post Office the parcel had been left at, due to not being able to read the card. Then I had to phone Parcelforce to give my postcode, only to find out the parcel had been left with a neighbour, there was not a card to say the parcel had been left with a neighbour.”

myHermes

- “The courier clearly threw the parcel over my back gate which was locked. They did not check where it went and it would have broken if there had been anything fragile inside it.”
- “The packaging was torn in places. The parcel was left with a trustworthy neighbour who delivered me the parcel immediately upon my return, however, I was disappointed to find that no card had been posted through my door advising of its whereabouts.”
- “The card said the parcel was ‘In window’. The parcel had been thrown through a high window that was open, it was bashed and could have set my alarm off.”
- “The packaging had been ripped and the delivery person tried to force the parcel through the letter box, which could have potentially damaged the contents.”
- “I received an email, then a card through my door to say the parcel was in the recycling bin.”

Collect+

- “I was asked by the outlet to provide photo ID. The instructions on the email only said to take a bill or bank statement. I was almost turned away without being given the parcel.”
- “The package was ripped open and the contents could have been lost.”
- “It was convenient to pick up a parcel from the shop so you do not have to wait in for a delivery. However, I received an email telling me it was there and when I went to collect it, it was not there and the staff at the shop could not give me an explanation apart from that it had not been delivered to them yet.”

Recipient suggestions for improvements

Recipient shoppers were asked whether they could suggest any improvements to the experience of receiving parcels.

Suggestions often related to areas of dissatisfaction such as the need to take more care of the parcel and to leave a card if the parcel had been left outside. Other ideas included:

- attempting delivery the following day if unsuccessful to avoid the need for the customer to have to go to a pick-up point
- longer opening hours for pick-up points
- generally more convenience at the pick-up point, such as better parking
- improved communications and ensuring communications and actual delivery times tie up
- inclusion of further information on any cards left such as exact addresses of pick-up points.

Results

Royal Mail

- “I feel that the least that should happen is that a card should be left to tell the recipient that a parcel was left. I also feel that more consideration should be given to the security of the parcel.”
- “It would be great if Royal Mail attempted to deliver any uncollected parcels the following day.”
- “Ensure that parcels are handled more carefully to avoid damage. Longer opening hours for the delivery office would be useful as it closed at 6pm and I am often not back from work until later than this time.”
- “Nearer collection point, parking bay, easier to find, more staff on.”
- “Less restrictive collection times at the collection offices.”
- “The office for picking up parcels should be in city centre or on bus route.”
- “It would be nice to have extended hours for the delivery office – even a couple of days per week. It would be nice if the postman could leave the parcel with a neighbour.”
- “Always leave a card through letter box to say the parcel has been left somewhere. If I had returned to my house after dark, I may have missed where it was.”
- “My only real difficulty is that the collection point is only open in the mornings. If you work in the mornings, unless you arrange for someone to collect your parcel this makes the process difficult. I would suggest the collection point needs to be open at least one afternoon/evening per week. I know this isn't always practical, but in town of 30,000 people where I live this would seem to be a more flexible approach to meet customer needs.”

Parcelforce

- “Putting a card through the letter box saying a neighbour has it.”
- “Opening hours should be printed on the card.”
- “I think it might have helped to have known on the day that the parcel had been despatched. I did receive an email telling me the parcel had been sent, but I actually received this email after the parcel had been delivered I think. I read the email on the lunchtime and the parcel had been delivered that morning already.”
- “Only improvement, which is very minor, would be longer opening times of the local post office, ie in the evening or on a Saturday to allow working people more opportunity to collect the parcel at a convenient time to them.”
- “I feel that the care of the parcel should be given a high priority as there is no point having a quick delivery with convenient collection points if your parcel is damaged when you receive it.”

myHermes

- “It is good to be able to track the progress of a parcel delivery, but it could be improved if they could tell you the delivery time within say a three or four hour parameter.”
- “The most important improvement would be to make sure any cards are placed directly through the letter-box of the recipient and not left in a communal area where the recipient may well not find it. I also think not having a collection depot/service is a problem. On the myHermes website it states there is a collection shop less than half a mile from my home yet this option is not mentioned at all on the card.”

Results

- “Hermes people should possibly wear a tabard that makes it obvious who they are working for.”
- “A predicted delivery date or an email when the package was out for delivery.”
- “The website had no means of contacting the company by phone if the parcel was not received.”
- “It would have been useful to know that delivery had been attempted and where the parcel had been left.”
- “Leave clearer instructions on the card as to what the process of redelivery is or if you need to collect the parcel from elsewhere.”

Collect+

- “Make it less laborious – took a lot of paper for printing and quite time consuming – I actually felt ‘all this just to accept a parcel’.”
- “The map on the website which shows all the local shops should have distance to my address so it is easier to find the closest one.”
- “An idea of an impending delivery would be good. Had I received a communication (text or email) I would have been able to let the company know where the package could safely be left or arranged to be at home.”
- “The text message only gave the shop name and post code, an address in the text would have been helpful.”

Summary of geographic variations

A key objective of this research was to consider any disadvantages faced by consumers based on their location when sending and receiving parcels.

Initial website reviews across the operators tested suggest there are some areas to which you cannot send items – either using specific services or at all. Examples include myHermes, whose deliveries take longer to the Highlands and Islands and Isle of Wight. The Parcel2Go website also refers to restrictions on next day services going to the Highlands and Islands, and some Parcelforce services are not available in certain postcodes.

A summary of key geographic survey findings is provided below.

- The proportion of shoppers failing to despatch was highest in Northern Ireland while the proportion of shoppers unable to despatch due to drop-off shop distance was highest in rural areas and in Wales.
- The longest average distances to drop-off shops in the over 15 mile category were in remote areas, with an average distance of 65 miles.
- There was a direct and strong link between geography and distance travelled. Senders in rural and remote areas were, on average, noticeably further from post offices and drop-off points, with only 9 per cent of shoppers in remote areas having a post office or drop-off point within two miles of their home.



Results

- Although surcharges (mainly for Saturdays) were noted in a few cases, the individual online providers tested within this survey did not appear to impose specified differential tariffs for the same service across countries or geographies. However, recipient location may be influencing price in a few cases. For example, most of those purchasing myHermes Courier Collection via Parcel2Go paid either £3.30 or £7.19. There is no definite reason for the two price points but a majority of those paying the higher price were sending to Northern Ireland against none of those paying the lower amount.
- There was no firm evidence that delivery times differed across country or geography.
- For recipients collecting their parcels, those living in Northern Ireland were more likely to have to travel over two miles than those from other countries.
- Although only based on a small number of shoppers, most collectors living in remote areas had to travel more than two miles to collect their parcels against just 6 per cent of those living in urban areas.

Annexes

Annex 1: Sender and recipient questionnaire

The final questionnaire used is included below. During fieldwork, this was separated into individual versions for senders and recipients.

Section 1A- SENDER Details					
1.2	Which country do you reside in?	England (Go to 1.3)	Wales (Go to 1.3)	Scotland (Go to 1.4)	Northern Ireland (Go to 1.5)
1.3	ENGLAND & WALES: Please select the most appropriate description of the area you live in.	Urban Location of more than 10,000 residents (Go to 1.6)	Rural Town or Town fringes / Villages (Go to 1.6)	Remote Remote rural locations with less than 3,000 residents and a 30+ min drive to your nearest urban area (Go to 1.6)	
1.4	SCOTLAND: Please select the most appropriate description of the area you live in.	Urban Location of more than 10,000 residents (Go to 1.6)	Rural Small towns of between 3,000-10,000 residents (Go to 1.6)	Remote Remote rural locations with less than 3,000 residents and a 30+ min drive to your nearest urban area (Go to 1.6)	
1.5	NORTHERN IRELAND: Please select the most appropriate description of the area you live in.	Urban More than 4,500 residents	Rural Villages or small towns of between 1,000 to 4,500 residents	Remote Hamlet, less than 1,000 residents	
1.6	Please provide the first part of your postcode				
1.7	Please note your age band.	25 or under	26-35	36-54	55+
1.8	Please note your gender	Male (Go to 2.1)		Female (Go to 2.1)	
Section 1B - RECIPIENT Details					
1.9	Which country do you reside in?	England (Go to 1.10)	Wales (Go to 1.10)	Scotland (Go to 1.11)	Northern Ireland (Go to 1.12)
1.10	ENGLAND & WALES: Please select the most appropriate description of the area you live in	Urban Location of more than 10,000 residents (Go to 1.13)	Rural Town or Town fringes / Villages (Go to 1.13)	Remote Remote rural locations with less than 3,000 residents and a 30+ min drive to your nearest urban area (Go to 1.13)	
1.11	SCOTLAND: Please select the most appropriate description of the area you live in	Urban Location of more than 10,000 residents (Go to 1.13)	Rural Small towns of between 3,000-10,000 residents (Go to 1.13)	Remote Remote rural locations with less than 3,000 residents and a 30+ min drive to your nearest urban area (Go to 1.13)	
1.12	NORTHERN IRELAND: Please select the most appropriate description of the area you live in	Urban More than 4,500 residents	Rural Villages or small towns of between 1,000 to 4,500 residents	Remote Hamlet, less than 1,000 residents	
1.13	Please provide the first part of your postcode				
1.14	Please note your age band.	25 or under	26-35	36-54	55+
1.15	Please note your gender	Male (Go to 7.1)		Female (Go to 7.1)	
Section 2 - SENDER Experience					
2.1	Were you able to despatch your parcel?	Yes (Go to 2.3)		No	

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2.2	Why were you unable to despatch your parcel? If the nearest drop off was 15 miles or more away – note how far it was. If other reason – please explain fully.	The nearest drop off point was 15 miles or further away. ✎ (Go to 10.1)				Other reason ✎ (Go to 10.1)		
2.3	On what date did you send the parcel?	D	D	M	M	Y	Y	
2.4	What day of the week was this?	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
2.5	Time bracket when you sent the parcel (i.e. when the parcel left your hands).	Morning - before 12.00		Lunch-time - 12.00-14.00		Afternoon – 14.01-17.30	After 17:30	
2.6	To which country were you sending the parcel? See Coversheet	England		Wales		Scotland	Northern Ireland	
2.6a	Note the destination postcode – i.e. the postcode to which you sent the parcel.							
2.7	Please confirm you included the assessment delivery insert (including your vin number, packet number and country) as instructed.	Yes				No ✎ Why not?		
2.8	Please confirm the dimensions of the item you sent.	✎						
2.9	Which mail delivery group did you use to send the parcel? This is noted on your Coversheet.	Royal Mail – (Scenario A)					1 – Go to 4.1	
		Parcelforce - (Scenario B)					2 – Go to 4.1	
		MyHermes Parcelshop - (Scenario C)					3 – Go to 3.1	
		MyHermes Courier Collection - (Scenario D)					4 – Go to 2.12	
		Collect Plus - (Scenario E)					5 – Go to 3.1	
		Mail Boxes Etc (Scenario F)					6	
		Parcel2Go – (Scenario G)					7	
2.10	Please note which delivery company you selected	Parcelforce					1	
		UPS					2	
		myHermes Parcelshop					3 – Go to 2.12	
		myHermes Courier Collection					4 – Go to 2.12	
		Other ✎					5	
2.11	Note the service you used – e.g. Yodel 48 or Parcelforce 48	✎						
2.12	For those using courier collections - we also asked you to check on the website to see how far the nearest shop was from your home- how far was this?	Less than half a mile	Half a mile to one mile	1 mile to 2 miles	More than 2 miles ✎ note the distance in miles	I did not use a courier collection		
Section 3 – SENDER Online Experience								
3.1	Did you find the online service easy to use?	Yes			No ✎ Explain fully why not			
3.2	Were you offered the option for the recipient to receive information, such as a text or email, about the parcel you were sending?	Yes			No (Go to 3.5)			
3.3	What channel was this?	Text Message		Email	Text and Email		Other ✎ Please explain	
3.4	Would you have had to pay for this service?	Yes			No			
3.5	On the website - were you asked about the contents of the parcel?	Yes			No			
3.6	On the website - were you asked about the value of the contents?	Yes			No			
3.7	On the website - were you asked by when you wanted the parcel to get to its destination?	Yes			No			
3.8	Were you informed when the parcel would be delivered to the recipient or be available for collection? If a range – specify exactly what range was provided.	Yes - I was given a specific date		Yes – I was given a time range – e.g. within 2 days		No Go to 3.10		

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	Given a till receipt WITH the recipient's address	Given a till receipt WITHOUT the recipient's address	Told I could not have proof of postage	Told I would have to buy Recorded or Special Delivery	Other – please explain ✎		
4.22	Were you informed when the parcel would be delivered to the recipient or be available for collection? If a range – specify exactly what range was provided.		Yes - I was given a specific date	Yes – I was given a time range – e.g. within 2 days ✎ Go to 4.24	No Go to 4.		
4.23	On what date did they say it would be delivered?		D	D	M	M	Y
4.24	Were you given any other information about the delivery		Yes ✎ Explain fully what was said		No		
4.25	How much did it cost? Note the total price including VAT		£				
4.26	Did you find the pricing was clearly explained to you?		Yes		No ✎ Explain		
4.27	Did you have to pay any postage surcharges, for example due to the recipient's location?		Yes ✎ please describe what these were		No		
4.28	Did you receive any further information from the Royal Mail/Parcelforce after your parcel had been despatched?		Yes ✎ please describe what information you received		No Go to 8.1		
4.29	How did you receive this information?	Text Go to 8.1	Email Go to 8.1	Phone Go to 8.1	Other ✎ please Go to 8.1		
Section 5 - Drop off shop SENDER scenarios							
5.1	How far was the drop off shop from your home?	Less than half a mile	Half a mile to one mile	More than a mile to 2 miles	More than 2 miles note the distance		
5.2	Please confirm this was the nearest drop off shop to your home?		Yes		No ✎ Please explain why you do not use your nearest drop off		
5.3	Please state the location of the drop off shop you went to.						
	Street Name		✎				
	Town		✎				
	County		✎				
	Postcode		✎				
5.4	Was the drop off located in another outlet e.g. another retail outlet, corner shop etc?		Yes		No (Go to 5.6)		
5.5	What type of outlet was it and what was the name of the outlet?						
	Multiples (e.g. Co-op, Spar, Londis, etc.) ✎	Independent ✎	Village/Corner shop ✎		Other – please specify		
5.6	Was the drop off point open at a convenient time for you?		Yes		No ✎ Explain not		
5.7	Do you feel this drop off point was in a convenient location?		Yes		No ✎ Explain not		
5.8	Was it easy to find the drop off shop?		Yes		No ✎ Explain not		
5.9	Did you have any difficulty despatching your parcel – i.e. did anything unexpected happen?		Yes ✎ Explain fully what happened.		No		
5.10	How long did you wait to speak to a staff member (record from when you entered until when you started speaking to the staff member who handled your transaction. Record in minutes (rounding up to the nearest minute). If you did not wait – record this as 00.						
5.11	Were you able to send the parcel using the service you expected – i.e. the one you had ordered online?		Yes		No ✎ Explain fully not		
5.12	Was the staff member polite and friendly?		Yes		No ✎ Explain fully not		
5.13	Did you feel the staff member was familiar with the drop off service and the process involved?		Yes		No ✎ Explain fully not		
5.14	Were you informed when the parcel would be delivered to the recipient or be available for collection? If a range – specify exactly what range was provided.		Yes - I was given a specific date	Yes – I was given a time range – e.g. within 2 days ✎ Go to 5.16	No Go to 5.17		
5.15	On what date did they say it would be delivered?		D	D	M	M	Y
5.16	Did the information you were given about delivery timing on the		Yes		No ✎ Explain	Not relevant – I was only given	

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	website match with the information you were given in the drop off shop?		fully	information in one of these not given information at all
5.17	Were you given any other information about the delivery	Yes ✍ Explain fully what was said		No
5.18	Did you receive any further information from the delivery company after your parcel had been despatched?	Yes ✍ please describe what information you received		No Go to 7.1
5.19	How did you receive this information?	Text Go to 8.1	Email Go to 8.1	Phone Go to 8.1 Other ✍ please Go to 8.1
Section 6 - Courier Collection SENDER Scenarios				
6.1	Did the courier collect from you in person or did you leave the parcel in a safe place?	Courier collected from me in person	I left the parcel in a safe place outside ✍ Please explain fully as you were instructed to have the courier collect from you Go to 6.12	
6.2	Were you given options for, or told there would be, a specific collection time or slot? If so and these were not extra, what information were you given about slot times.	Yes ✍ Please explain		No Go to 6.4
6.3	Do you think the times given would have been convenient if you used them in real life?	Yes		No ✍ Please
6.4	Was the parcel collected at the time you expected it to be?	Yes	No ✍ Please explain fully	I did not expect it to be collected at a specific time
6.5	Was the courier polite and friendly?	Yes		No ✍ Explain fully
6.6	Were you asked to sign something to confirm the collection had been made?	Yes – electronic device	Yes – paper form	No
6.8	Were you able to send the parcel using the service expected (e.g. Standard 3-5 day service to recipient's door)?	Yes		No ✍ Explain not
6.9	Were you informed when the parcel would be delivered to the recipient or be available for collection? If a range – specify exactly what range was provided.	Yes - I was given a specific date	Yes – I was given a time range – e.g. within 2 days ✍ Go to 6.11	No Go to 6.11
6.10	On what date did they say it would be delivered?	D	D	M
6.11	Did the information you were given about delivery timing on the website match with the information you were given by the courier?	Yes	No ✍ Explain fully	Not relevant – I was only given information in one of the other questions or not given information
6.12	Did you have any difficulty with the courier collection – i.e. did anything unexpected happen?	Yes ✍ Explain fully what happened.		No
6.13	Did you receive any further information from the delivery company after your parcel had been despatched?	Yes ✍ please describe what information you received		No Go to 8.1
6.14	How did you receive this information?	Text Go to 8.1	Email Go to 8.1	Phone Go to 8.1 Other ✍ Please Go to 8.1
Section 7 - Recipient Experience				
7.1	Were you able to receive your parcel?	Yes - Go to 7.3		No
7.2	Why were you unable to receive your parcel? If nearest pick up was 15 miles or more away – note how far it was? If other reason – please explain fully.	The nearest pick up point was 15 miles or further away. ✍ Go to 11.1		Other reason ✍ Go to 11.1
7.3	From which mail delivery group were you receiving the parcel? Check your Coversheet	Royal Mail – (Scenario A)		1 Go to 7.3
		Parcelforce - (Scenario B)		2 Go to 7.3
		MyHermes Parcelshop - (Scenario C)		3 Go to 7.3
		MyHermes Courier Collection - (Scenario D)		4 Go to 7.3
		Collect Plus - (Scenario E)		5 Go to 7.3
		Mail Boxes Etc (Scenario F)		6
		Parcel2Go – (Scenario G)		7
7.4	Please note which delivery company you received from:	Parcelforce		1
		UPS		2
		myHermes Parcelshop		3 – Go to 7.3
		myHermes Courier Collection		4 – Go to 7.3
		Other ✍		5

Annexes

7.5	Note the service you used – e.g. Yodel 48 or Parcelforce 48							
7.6	Which description best describes your property?	Detached property	Semi-detached property	Terraced property	Flat, apartment or maisonette WITH own entrance	Flat, apartment or maisonette WITH own communal entrance	Mobile home or caravan	Other – please describe
7.7	Did you receive any information from the delivery company before your parcel was received?				Yes – please describe what information you received			No Go to 7.9
7.8	How did you receive this information?			Text	Email	Phone		Other / Describe
7.9	What date did you actually receive the parcel in your hands? (use leading zeros – e.g. 1 January 2012 would be 01.01.12).			D	D	M	M	Y
7.10	What time bracket did you actually receive the parcel in your hands?			Morning - before 12.00		Lunch-time - 12.00-14.00	Afternoon – 14.01-17.30	After
7.11	Please confirm the Despatch VIN number found inside the parcel.							
7.12	Were you in or 'out' (actually out or pretending to be out) when delivery - (either the actual parcel or a card) was attempted? Remember you should aim to be 'out'.			I was in and opened the door to the delivery person please explain why you were unable to be out / pretend to be out		I was out / pretending to be out		I received a text or email when I was out so I did not pretend to be out
7.14	Please select the statement that best describes what happened.			The parcel was left outside my house WITH a card – please note where it was left				1 / Go to 7.26
				The parcel was delivered to a neighbour and a card was posted through my door				2 / Go to 7.26
				I collected the parcel from somewhere else having received a card through the door telling me to do this				3 / Go to 7.26
				I received a card telling me the parcel would be redelivered.				4 / Go to 7.26
				I collected the parcel having received a text message or email about the parcel				5 / Go to 7.26
				The delivery person knocked and I (or someone else from my household) opened the door and collected the parcel from them				6 / Go to 7.26
				The parcel was handed to me / another householder outside the house (e.g. in the garden / on the road outside)				7 / Go to 7.26
				The parcel was delivered directly through my letterbox				8 / Go to 7.26
				The parcel was left outside my house WITHOUT a card – please note where it was left				9 / Go to 7.26
				The parcel was delivered to a neighbour but no card was posted through my door				10 / Go to 7.26
Something else – please explain fully				11 / Go to 7.26				
7.15	On what date did you receive the card?			D	D	M	M	Y
7.16	What did the card include?							
	a. The card informed me the parcel had been left somewhere near the house (e.g. garage/garden)			1 / please describe - Go to 7.26				
	b. The card informed me the parcel had been left with a neighbour			2 / please describe - Go to 7.26				
	c. Information about where to collect the parcel			3 / please describe – Go to 7.18				
	d. Information about redelivery			4 / please describe				
	e. Instruction to make contact with the delivery company			5 / please describe – Go to 7.18				
	f. Something else			6 / please describe – Go to 7.18				
7.17	Did you think the options given for redelivery were good?				Yes			No / please describe
7.18	How did you eventually receive the parcel?	I collected the parcel from a Royal Mail depot please describe	I collected the parcel from a Post Office please describe	I collected the parcel from a shop / collection point (not the Post Office or Royal Mail)		The parcel was re-delivered to me Go to 7.24	Something else please describe Go to 7.24	
7.19	Please state the location of the collection point you went to.							
	a) Name of outlet							
	b) Street Name							
	c) Town							
d) County								

	e) Postcode				
7.20	How far was this collection point from your home?	Less than half a mile	Half a mile to one mile	More than a mile to 2 miles	More than 2 miles note the distance in miles
7.21	Was the collection point open at a convenient time for you?	Yes			No – Explain why not
7.22	Was it easy to find the collection point?	Yes			No – Explain why not
7.23	Do you feel this collection point was in a convenient location?	Yes			No – Explain why not
7.24	Was the delivery person or the staff you collected the parcel from polite and professional?	Yes	No please explain why not		I did not meet a delivery person or collection staff
7.25	Did you have to sign for the parcel?	Yes – electronic device	Yes – paper form	No	I did not meet a delivery person or collection staff
7.26	Which phrase best describes the state of the parcel.	The packaging was in perfect condition – not torn or crumpled Got to 9.1		The packaging was torn or crumpled please describe Go to 9.1	

Section 8 - SENDER overall experience

8.1	Based only on your assessment today - how satisfied were you with the overall experience? Please explain your rating.	Extremely satisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Very satisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Fairly satisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Fairly dissatisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Very dissatisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Extremely dissatisfied <u>Please comment</u>	
8.2	Please describe what happened on this assessment in your own words	Yes				No Explain why not			
8.3	Is there anything else you feel we should know about this assessment?	Yes				No Explain why not			
8.4	What would you see as the key improvements that could be made to made to the overall experience of delivering a parcel?					Cannot improve any further			
8.5	Please select the evidence you have and upload all relevant item images								
	a. SENDER: Proof of Postage						Yes		No Explain why not
	Proof of Postage Image Upload								
	b. SENDER: Image of parcel						Yes		No Explain why not
	Image of parcel Upload								
c. SENDER: Scan of complete despatch note from briefing notes that was included in parcel						Yes		No Explain why not	
Despatch note Upload									
END									

Section 9 - RECIPIENT overall experience

9.1	Based only on your assessment today - how satisfied were you with the overall experience? Please explain your rating.	Extremely satisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Very satisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Fairly satisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Fairly dissatisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Very dissatisfied <u>Please comment</u>	Extremely dissatisfied <u>Please comment</u>	
9.2	Please describe what happened on this assessment in your own words	Yes				No Explain why not			
9.3	Is there anything else you feel we should know about this assessment?	Yes				No Explain why not			
9.4	What would you see as the key improvements that could be made to made to the overall experience of receiving a parcel?					Cannot improve any further			
9.5	Please select the evidence you have and upload all relevant item images								
	END								

	a. RECIPIENT: Delivery Card/Note	Yes	No Explain
	Delivery Note Upload		
	b. RECIPIENT: Image of parcel received	Yes	No Explain
	Image of parcel Upload		
	c. RECIPIENT: Scan of complete despatch note from briefing notes that was included in parcel	Yes	No Explain
	Despatch note Upload		END
Section 10 – Mail delivery company used for assessors unable to SEND parcels			
10.1	Which mail delivery group was used? This is noted on your Coversheet.	Royal Mail – (Scenario A)	1 – END
		Parcelforce - (Scenario B)	2 – END
		MyHermes Parcelshop - (Scenario C)	3 – END
		MyHermes Courier Collection - (Scenario D)	4 – END
		Collect Plus - (Scenario E)	5 – END
		Mail Boxes Etc (Scenario F)	6
		Parcel2Go – (Scenario G)	7
10.2	Please note which delivery company was selected	Parcelforce	1 - END
		UPS	2 – END
		myHermes Parcelshop	3 – END
		myHermes Courier Collection	4 – END
		Other	5 – END
Section 11 – Mail delivery company used for assessors unable to RECEIVE parcels			
11.1	Which mail delivery group was used? This is noted on your Coversheet.	Royal Mail – (Scenario A)	1 – END
		Parcelforce - (Scenario B)	2 – END
		MyHermes Parcelshop - (Scenario C)	3 – END
		MyHermes Courier Collection - (Scenario D)	4 – END
		Collect Plus - (Scenario E)	5 – END
		Mail Boxes Etc (Scenario F)	6
		Parcel2Go – (Scenario G)	7
11.2	Please note which delivery company was selected	Parcelforce	1 – END
		UPS	2 – END
		myHermes Parcelshop	3 – END
		myHermes Courier Collection	4 – END
		Other	5 – END
		Unknown	6 – END
END			

Annex 2: Sender briefing instructions



Brief Summary of Assessment

- This is a SENDER assessment
- For this assessment you will prepare a parcel and send it via the delivery company specified on your Coversheet to the address specified on your Coversheet.



Estimated Length of Assessment

- In total, this assessment should take around 30 minutes to complete.



Profile

- You must not work directly for or have close friends or family who work for the following organisations:
 - Royal Mail
 - Post Office

- Parcelforce
- MyHermes
- Collect+
- Any other parcel delivery company
- You must not live in the Channel Islands.
- You must not live in a student hall of residence.



Date and Time Requirements

- You may send your parcel whenever is convenient for you.
- If your Coversheet stipulates you are to send from a Post Office or drop off point/outlet, you must use the nearest one to your home address ONLY.
- You must NOT complete this using an outlet/branch/collection point related to your work address.



Restrictions

- You are unlikely to be allocated more than ONE assessment on this job code.



Data Entry Requirements

- You must enter your results on the same day as you send the parcel.
- Failure to enter your results within the specified timescales will result in the assessment being deallocated and non payment.



Typing Rules

- When entering your results, please ensure your comments are written in full sentences with correct grammar.
- Do not type all in capitals.
- Use the past tense.
- Comments that are poorly written may delay payment as we may need to clarify details.



Contact Information

- If you have any queries regarding this assessment please contact us at cybershopqueries@gfk.com.
- Please include your name, assessor number and the VIN number of the assessment in your email.



Important

- Please ensure that you meet all of the above criteria before continuing to read the rest of the briefing notes below.
- Please Note: If you accept this assessment and do not meet the above criteria GfK reserve the right to cancel the assessment and for non payment.
- Rescheduling: If you need to change the date of your assessment please do so online.
- Instructions on how to do this can be found by clicking on Support and then User Guide.
- Please note that constant rescheduling may affect the amount of assessments you are offered.
- Cancelling of Assessments: If you find you can no longer complete an assessment please cancel it immediately.
- Instructions on how to do this can be found by clicking on Support and then User Guide.
- Please note that constant cancelling will result in the withdrawal of offers of assessments.



Briefing Notes

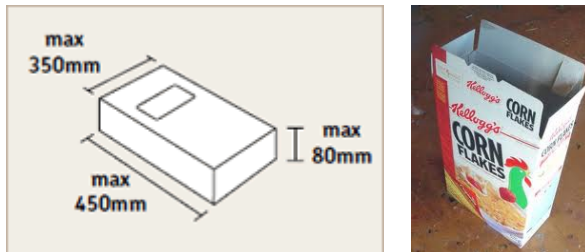
- This project has been set up to evaluate different delivery services.
- Your Coversheet will indicate which delivery service you must use.
- Prepare a parcel for posting. The parcel must be within the following size range – the ideal parcel size would be similar to a large cereal box. Adhering to these dimensions is very important so that you are able to use the cheapest delivery method (or express48 for Parcelforce) and so that the parcel does not

easily fit through a letterbox. We want it to be too big/bulky for the letterbox so that we can evaluate what happens when a collection card is left with the recipient

WIDTH – around but no more than 450 millimetres

LENGTH – around but no more than 350 millimetres (no more than 300 millimetres for Collect+).

THICKNESS – around but no more than 80 millimetres.



- Check – the parcel must weigh LESS THAN 1kg.
- You can pack the parcel with anything unwanted as long as it is bulky but light (fitting in with the weight restriction of under 1kg). We recommend you use waste paper. Ensure the parcel is reasonably solid to avoid it being able to be squashed through a letterbox.

What else to include inside the parcel and what service to request

- Include within the parcel (on top of the contents) the completed Assessment Delivery Insert as found below.
- Failure to include this will result in non-payment.
- You must enter the 7-digit VIN number of your assessment (this will start 614...). THIS IS NOT YOUR ASSESSOR NUMBER WHICH WILL START WITH A '1'
- This sheet will identify the parcel you have sent to the recipient so it is very important that you complete it accurately.
- Make sure the parcel is packaged securely.
- Address it using the address given on your Coversheet next to ADDRESS TO BE USED FOR PARCEL. We would also recommend you include a return address if needed.
- The service option to use is shown in the scenario details below.
- If you are asked if you want any additional or add on services – say NO.
- If you are asked if the item is valuable state that the contents are worth around £10. Please have a suitable 'story' as to what and why you are sending your item e.g. birthday, swapping clothes/items with friend etc.
- Although we have listed approximate prices you need to record the actual price you were charged for the service.
- You will need to get a proof of postage slip or receipt or any other evidence that you have posted the parcel (you will need to scan this and upload to Cybershop – payment will not be made without it).
- Your method and company for despatch is shown on your Coversheet next to Scenario – check which one you are doing and then read the details for that particular scenario below:

Travel Limit

- If you are carrying out a scenario requiring you to drop off the parcel at a shop or post office - we do not want you to travel further than 15 miles (i.e. round trip of 30 miles) to drop off a parcel. Most journeys will be much shorter than this but if your nearest post office or drop off shop IS more than 15 miles away – please do not make the journey. Note the details at Q2.1-2.2, complete the remainder of questionnaire as appropriate. This will be considered as a valid completed assessment.

Scenario A - Royal Mail

- You will despatch the parcel from the nearest post office to your home. You MUST complete this from your home address.

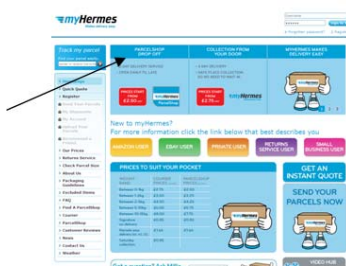
- Before you set out – check the post office opening times (<http://postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder>) and ensure you arrive while the post office is still open.
- Ask to send your parcel using the SECOND CLASS service.
- This is likely to cost you around £2.60.
- If you are asked to use any other service – say that you are actually posting on behalf of someone else and they asked you to use the second class service.
- Ask for proof of posting (you will need to scan this and upload it on Cybershop)
- Complete your questionnaire.
- When posting your parcel you MUST gather the following information, either by asking or from posters/signs in the branch:
 - When your item will be delivered
 - What the latest collection time is and whether you sent your item after this time

Scenario B - Parcelforce

- You will despatch the parcel from the nearest post office to your home. You MUST complete this from your home address.
- Before you set out – check the post office opening times (<http://postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder>) and ensure you arrive while the post office is still open.
- Ask to send the parcel using the express48 service
- If you are asked to use any other service – say that you are actually posting on behalf of someone else and they asked you to use the express48 service.
- This is likely to cost you around £11.60 including VAT.
- Ask for proof of posting (you will need to scan this and upload it on Cybershop)
- Complete your questionnaire.
- When posting your parcel you MUST gather the following information, either by asking or from posters/signs in the branch:
 - When your item will be delivered
 - What the latest collection time is and whether you sent your item after this time

Scenario C – myHermes Parcelshop

- Access the service on-line at <https://www.myhermes.co.uk>
- Click on Parcelshop drop off from the home page.

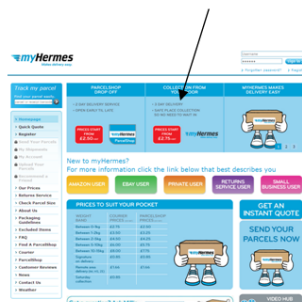


- Under Drop or Collect – choose - I'll drop them off at a myHermes Parcelshop
- If you are not already registered with my Hermes – you will need to register
- Click on the link to find the nearest ParcelShop to your home address and note the distance (you will need to record this on the questionnaire).
- Request the standard cheapest service that delivers to the recipient's home.
- Use the recipient address and postcode as shown on your CoverSheet.
- Select the lowest compensation level.
- Select that you do not require a signature on delivery.
- Do not select the safe place option or nominate a delivery time that costs more money if they are offered
- This is likely to cost you around £3.00 including VAT
- Take your parcel to the selected shop and complete your questionnaire

- When dropping your parcel you **MUST** gather the following information:
 - When your item will be delivered

Scenario D- myHermes – Courier Service

- Access the service on-line at <https://www.myhermes.co.uk>
- Click on Collection from your Door from the home page.



- Note – if you are not already registered – you will need to register
- Request the standard cheapest service to the recipients door
- Select the lowest compensation level.
- Select that you do not require a signature on delivery.
- Do not select the safe place option
- This is likely to cost you upwards of £3.30 including VAT.
- Before you leave the website – go to the shop drop off section and check the distance to your home of the nearest drop off shop – this is for information only but you will need to complete this on the questionnaire.
- Wait for courier to collect your parcel and complete your questionnaire.
- When the courier collects your item and you are there to hand it to them, you **MUST** try to gather the following information:
 - When your item will be delivered

Scenario E - Collect +

- Access the service on-line at <http://www.collectplus.co.uk/>
- Click on the link to find the nearest ParcelShop to your home address and note the distance (you will need to record this on the questionnaire).



- Select the option to send an item – **YOU MUST SELECT A COLLECT+ SHOP AS THE METHOD OF SENDING AND NOT DELIVERY TO THE RECIPIENTS HOME ADDRESS.**
- Locations near to the recipient will be shown with the following logo on the map:



- Select the jiffy bag up to 2kg option.
- Do not upgrade for compensation.
- This is likely to cost upwards of £3.40 including VAT.
- The Recipient's email or phone number will have been included on your Coversheet – you must include this in your online booking to ensure it is **ACCURATELY** populate. They will get a notification when the item is ready to collect so it must be right – if we find you have not entered this correctly we cannot pay you.
- Take your parcel to your selected shop and complete your questionnaire
- When dropping your parcel you **MUST** gather the following information:

- When your item will be delivered

Scenario F - Mail Boxes Etc

- Access the service on-line at http://www.mbe.co.uk/pack_ship/
- Input the country and where you are sending to and the parcel weight and then Click on Get Price under Quick price my Shipment.



- Input the measurements of your parcel.
- Choose the cheapest service and note the delivery company and service as you will need to complete these on your questionnaire.
- Input your details and under Comments say you would like to drop off at a despatch shop (the nearest one to your home address).
- Do NOT tick the 'Would you prefer us to call you to discuss arrangements for your shipment box'.
- Use the recipient address and postcode as shown on your cover sheet.
- Select the lowest compensation level.
- Select that you do not require a signature on delivery.
- Do not select the safe place option
- This is likely to cost you upwards of £12.00.
- Take your parcel to the selected shop and complete your questionnaire
- When dropping your parcel you MUST gather the following information:
 - When your item will be delivered

Scenario G - Parcel2Go

- Access the service on-line at <http://www.parcel2go.com/>
- Click on Quick Quote and input your parcel and delivery details.
- Select the cheapest service that collects from your door (your home not work).
- Complete your details
- Select the lowest compensation level.
- Select that you do not require a signature on delivery.
- Do not select the safe place option
- This is likely to cost you upwards of £3.30 but could be over £11.00
- Before you leave the website – check if there is a shop drop off option and check the distance to your home of the nearest drop off shop – this is for information only but you will need to complete this on the questionnaire.
- Wait for courier to collect your parcel and complete your questionnaire.
- When the courier collects your item and you are there to hand it to them, you MUST try to gather the following information:
 - When your item will be delivered

UPLOADED IMAGES - IMPORTANT

- YOUR ASSESSMENT IS INVALID WITHOUT A PROOF OF POSTAGE OR TILL RECEIPT.
- You must therefore upload
 - an image of the parcel you are sending
 - the completed Despatch note below
 - an image of your proof of postage/collection
- When uploading this image during data entry, you must ensure the full receipt is visible and no address, date or postage details are cut off otherwise we cannot validate your visit.

Annexes

- Failure to provide all THREE items of evidence may result in non-payment of your VIN.

****Assessment Delivery Insert – to be completed in CAPITAL LETTERS and included in your posted item (see below) ****

Assessment Delivery Insert – to be completed in CAPITAL LETTERS and included in your posted item

Parcels mystery shopping

Despatch vin number – i.e. YOUR vin number (on Coversheet)

6	1	4				
---	---	---	--	--	--	--

Despatch country

Circle the country from which you are sending the parcel.

England

Scotland

Wales

Northern Ireland

Despatch Postcode

Enter your home postcode

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Annex 3: Recipient briefing instructions



Brief Summary of Assessment

- This is a RECIPIENT assessment
- For this assessment you will be allowing your address to be used by another mystery shopper. The other mystery shopper will send you a parcel in the post. You will be try to be out when this parcel arrives.
- You may have to collect the parcel from a local shop
- You will receive or collect the parcel and complete your questionnaire.



Estimated Length of Assessment

- In total, this assessment should take around 30 minutes to complete.



Profile

- You must not work directly for or have close friends or family who work for the following organisations:
 - Royal Mail
 - Post Office
 - Parcelforce
 - MyHermes
 - Courier Collection
 - Collect+
 - Any other parcel delivery company
- You must not be currently using a mail redirect service.
- You must not live in the Channel Islands.

- You must not live in a student hall of residence.



Date and Time Requirements

- None



Restrictions

- You likely only be allocated (by GfK) no more than 1 assessment on this job code.
- GfK will advise if it is more than one.



Data Entry Requirements

- You should complete your questionnaire on Cybershop as soon as you receive the parcel in your hands, or when GfK advise it is a failed delivery.
- Failure to enter your results within the specified timescales will result in the assessment being deallocated and non payment.



Typing Rules

- When entering your results, please ensure your comments are written in full sentences with correct grammar.
- Do not type all in capitals.
- Use the past tense.
- Comments that are poorly written may delay payment as we may need to clarify details.



Contact Information

- If you have any queries regarding this assessment please contact us at cybershopqueries@gfk.com.
- Please include your name, assessor number and the VIN number of the assessment in your email.



Important

- Please ensure that you meet all of the above criteria before continuing to read the rest of the briefing notes below.
- Please Note: If you accept this assessment and do not meet the above criteria GfK reserve the right to cancel the assessment and for non payment.
- Rescheduling: If you need to change the date of your assessment please do so online.
- Instructions on how to do this can be found by clicking on Support and then User Guide.
- Please note that constant rescheduling may affect the amount of assessments you are offered.
- Cancelling of Assessments: If you find you can no longer complete an assessment please cancel it immediately.
- Instructions on how to do this can be found by clicking on Support and then User Guide.
- Please note that constant cancelling will result in the withdrawal of offers of assessments.



Briefing Notes

- This project has been set up to evaluate postal delivery services.
- We want you to either be out or pretend to be out when the parcel is delivered.
- If you are at home – then aim not to be visible to the delivery person and do not answer the door. Please try to ensure that no other member of your household answers the door.
- We realise that this will not be possible in all cases.
- As soon as you receive the parcel – you should complete your questionnaire on Cybershop
- GfK will advise if the parcel has been sent and you have not data entered your VIN – we will calculate if you should have received the item.
- You may receive a card to tell you the parcel is somewhere else – in which case you will need to go to collect it – this may be via a collection point.
- This project has been set up to evaluate different delivery services.

- Your Coversheet will indicate which delivery service you are waiting for.
 - Royal Mail
 - Remember you should try to be out when delivery is attempted
 - Parcelforce
 - Remember you should try to be out when delivery is attempted
 - myHermes
 - Remember you should try to be out when delivery is attempted
 - Collect +
 - You should receive a text or email (depending on your preferred contact method provided during recruitment) to let you know when your item is available for collection.
 - Other booked via Mail Boxes Etc
 - Remember you should try to be out when delivery is attempted
 - Other booked via Parcel2Go
 - Remember you should try to be out when delivery is attempted

Travel Limit

- If you are required to pick up the parcel at a shop or post office - we do not want you to travel further than 15 miles (i.e. round trip of 30 miles) to pick up the parcel. Most journeys will be much shorter than this but if your nearest post office or collection point IS more than 15 miles away – please do not make the journey. Note the details at Q7.1-7.2, complete the remainder of questionnaire as appropriate. This will be considered as a valid completed assessment.

Completing the questionnaire

- The routing on the questionnaire will direct you to the correct section to complete depending on what happened but to summarise:
- At Q7.11 note the despatch vin number which you should find inside the parcel.

Annex 4: Geographical definitions

Table : Definitions used across countries

Country	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Urban	More than 10,000 residents	More than 10,000 residents	More than 4,500 residents
Rural	Town or town fringes / villages	Small towns – 3,000-10,000 residents	Villages / small towns 1,000-4,500 residents
Remote	Remote rural locations with less than 3,000 residents and a 30+ minute drive to nearest urban area	Remote rural, less than 3,000 residents and a 30+ minutes drive to nearest urban area	Hamlet, less than 1,000 residents

Aims and principles

The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

The service aims:

- to provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

Citizens Advice

3rd Floor North
200 Aldersgate
London
EC1A 4HD

Telephone: 03000 231 231

www.citizensadvice.org.uk
www.adviceguide.org.uk

Citizens Advice is an operating name of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.
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Citizens Advice

