

## Press Release: Are Royal Mail prioritising parcels over Mum?

***“With Mother’s Day around the corner, yesterday’s publication of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee’s report into recent postal service performance is a timely reminder of how much we Brits rely on sending cards to retain the emotional connections so important to our lives”.***

So says David Falkner, National Council Member of the Greeting Card Association (GCA); the not-for-profit organisation representing over 500 card publisher, retailer, distributor and agent members in this £1.5bn leading British creative industry.

David continues: ***“Our research<sup>1</sup> shows that two key reasons we love receiving cards are that they help us feel a connection with someone special and they help us know someone was thinking of us. For those of us who can’t see Mum this weekend, knowing she’ll get this little lift can make all the difference. I believe many of us would wholeheartedly support the Committee’s conclusion that the postal service is such a key part of the fabric of local communities<sup>2</sup>”.***

It is against this backdrop that the GCA was saddened to learn of the Committee’s conclusion (reported yesterday) that Royal Mail has [unjustly] deprioritised delivery of letters as a matter of company policy before, between and during the pandemic and periods of industrial action<sup>3</sup>, and welcomes the steps Ofcom will now be taking to establish if any such decisions taken by Royal Mail, meant Royal Mail breached its obligations to the British public<sup>4</sup>.

Clearly, these conclusions were only possible thanks to the diligent work of Citizens Advice and the extensive evidence submitted to the committee by postal workers up and down the country<sup>5</sup>.

***“Ofcom’s investigation matters to everyone who doesn’t get to see family and friends as much as they’d ideally like”*** says David. ***“Whilst I believe we’d all recognise the postal landscape is changing, it’s recently felt like much of that conversation was being undertaken by lobbying groups operating behind closed doors. This investigation offers the chance for us to have that debate as a nation, highlighting what options we want to hold onto to retain our connections with loved ones”.***

To this end, the GCA welcomes the Committee’s invitation to Royal Mail to consider the specific commercial opportunities available stemming from its ability to access ‘every household across the country on six days of the week<sup>6</sup>’, noting the stark contrast between this invitation and the recent

---

<sup>1</sup> GCA Consumer Survey Report

<sup>2</sup> Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee Royal Mail Seventh Report of Session 2022–23, Page 4.

<sup>3</sup> As above, Para 25

<sup>4</sup> As above, Para 27

<sup>5</sup> As above, not least at Paragraphs 23 and 28

<sup>6</sup> As above, Conclusion 12.

lobbying it has been reported was undertaken by Royal Mail to reduce their obligations to the British public.

As David Byk, who also sits on the GCA National Council, comments ***“You pay good money to have your card delivered to a loved one you may not be able to see on the day. For the British public, it must be particularly galling to note those prices are set to rise again for a service it has now been found Royal Mail aren’t delivering. Are Royal Mail prioritising parcels over mothers?”***

In light of yesterday’s findings, the GCA also welcomes the Committee’s call to the Royal Mail board to reflect on its decision to exclude the delivery of the USO from the long term pay and incentive structure for its senior managers, a recommendation the GCA believes is vital to the public interest.

The GCA looks forward to reviewing the findings of Ofcom’s enforcement investigation into Royal Mail’s delivery of the USO (due by the end of 2023) and of contributing to the subsequent Government report into the Future of the Universal Service Obligation and Royal Mail due no later than the end of 2024. The GCA would encourage all members of the public who feel strongly to do the same.

Meanwhile, David Falkner concludes ***“Most importantly, in a busy world, don’t forget to thank Mum this Sunday in whatever way works best for you”.***

ENDS

---

*For further information or to arrange an interview with Amanda Fergusson; CEO of the Greeting Card Association, please contact Sarah Selzer or Mark Chapman on 07970 672707, [sarah@prdirect.net](mailto:sarah@prdirect.net).*

#### **About the GCA:**

- The Greeting Card Association (GCA) is the not-for-profit organisation representing over 500 card publisher, retailer, distributor and agent members in this £1.5bn leading British creative industry.
- The British continue to send more cards per person than any other nation. Creatively, greeting cards are also a world-leading British industry, being trailblazers both in terms of innovative design and export.
- Contrary to popular opinion, the industry is surprisingly resilient, perhaps because:
  - Research shows that sending and receiving cards generates disproportionately positive feelings and wellbeing<sup>7</sup>
  - Young people still value card sending, with our own research (2019) highlighting 18-34 year olds sending more cards than a generation ago, a trend also backed up by USPS data.
- Greeting cards are directly responsible for the livelihoods of a wide range and number of people - artists, designers, writers, paper manufacturers, printers, envelope suppliers and many other associated trades and retail.

---

<sup>7</sup>Not least Mindlab, OBO Royal Mail, 2017. Tests carried out under laboratory conditions showed a clear, greater positive emotional response to handwritten letters and cards when compared to digital messages like email or social media.

